

**A PRAYER SERVICE FOR WORLD DAY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING
– JULY 30TH -**

SETTING ... Light a candle in the center of your group as a symbol of hope that with the prayer of many there may come a flicker of light in a situation marked by despair.

LEADER: We gather uniting with the world community, seeking justice for all human beings, especially those suffering from human trafficking. Because of the abuse, the threats, the fear, the hopelessness ... they are “VOICE-LESS”. The human family must rally in response to their silent cry – “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” *Proverbs 31: 8-9*

Together let us stand in solidarity with millions worldwide who suffer in a situation of bondage. In their memory, let us hold a moment of silence.

LET US PRAY ...

CREATOR GOD, For freedom you made us, In your image and likeness you created us, Free to love and be loved.

- We pray against all powers and people that conspire to destroy your children’s freedom, trap them in poverty, steal their power, and render them vulnerable to systems and schemes which make them slaves.
- We pray for leaders and legislators, activists and agitators, and people of compassion everywhere, that they may be strong and effective in their plans and actions to protect the vulnerable and secure their freedom.

SAVIOR GOD, For freedom you have redeemed us, To be restored in your image and likeness, Free to love and to be loved.

- We pray for children, women and men, the victims of human trafficking, tricked, trapped and trafficked into, out of and around our land.
- We pray for their freedom. We pray that in their captivity You will look upon them and give them hope. We pray for their liberation, healing and restoration into the perfect freedom of the children of God.

HELPER GOD, For freedom you are with us, Recreating us in your image and likeness, Free to love and be loved.

- We pray against those who recruit, move, harbor or receive children, women and men through the use of force, coercion, abuse, deception and all other means for the purpose of exploitation.
- We pray for those who work alone and together to discover, liberate and restore children, women and men who have been trafficked as slaves. We pray they will be given

all the resources of finance, time and strength they need as they bring freedom to the victims of human trafficking.

THREE IN ONE GOD, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for freedom you made us, redeemed and recreated us, Free to love and be loved. We pray your Kingdom come. We pray justice and mercy flow like a stream. We pray freedom for all your children. Amen
(An adaptation of “A Freedom Prayer” by J. Read)

Readings (from resources by the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center)

Reader 1: The International Labor Organization estimates that 21 million people—three out of every 1,000 people globally—are victims of forced sexual exploitation or forced labor in industries including agriculture, construction, domestic work and manufacturing. The victims of this crime of human trafficking each have a name and each have been robbed of their human dignity and freedom.

Reader 2: It happened in a suburban neighborhood to an 8-year-old girl. “For two years I was raped, tortured and smothered on a daily basis. I would cry myself to sleep every night.” What made her story extra shocking was how it happened. She wasn’t kidnapped by a stranger or abused by a relative. It took place after school each day at the hands of a neighbor. And it wasn’t just her; her younger sister, a male cousin, a whole slew of kids in her neighborhood were caught up in this child pornography ring. “No one ever came looking for us because we never went missing,” she said, describing how she went through great lengths to hide the abuse from her single mother. “From 3-6 every day I went and had sex with strangers.” The trafficking ended when she was 10 because the neighbor suddenly moved away. Now a 42-year-old registered nurse, she has spoken publicly to warn others of a plague that many mistakenly believe is confined to third-world countries. —Asbury Park Press, NJ

Reader 3: There is nothing but a jagged line of splinters where his teeth once were—a painful reminder of the day he was beaten and sold on to a Thai fishing boat where Burmese fisherman Myint has been forced to work 20-hour days as a slave, enduring regular beatings from his captain and eating little more than a bowl of rice each day. He paid a middleman two years ago to smuggle him across the border into Thailand and find him a job in a factory. When he arrived he discovered he’d been sold to a boat captain. “I told them I wanted to go back. But they wouldn’t let me go.” For the next 20 months the boat trawled international waters, catching “trash fish,” inedible species of fish later ground into fishmeal for Thailand’s multibillion-dollar farmed prawn industry. The supply chain runs from the slaves through the fishmeal to the prawns to UK and US retailers. The product of Myint’s penniless labor might well have ended up on your dinner plate. —www.antislavery.org

Reader 4: Together we can and must employ our energies so that these women, men and children can be freed, thus putting an end to this horrible trade...This cannot continue. It constitutes a grave violation of the human rights of those victimized and is an offense against their dignity, as well as a defeat for the worldwide community. People of good will...must not allow [them] to be treated as objects, to be deceived, raped, often sold and resold...and in the end either killed or left devastated in mind and body, only to be finally thrown away or abandoned. It is shameful. —Pope Francis

All: God, hear the longing of your family trapped in human trafficking, listen to their every word and give them comfort and strength.

Leader: Let's take a few moments to think about one action we will take to work for justice for our sisters and brothers who are trafficked.

(Pause for quiet reflection)

I invite anyone who wishes to share an action s/he will take.

Leader: Let us pray

Closing Prayer: Compassionate and loving Creator of all, we thank you for the gift of time to ponder the horrific realities of human trafficking. We pledge to do what is possible to stop this local and global tragedy. May our efforts, combined with the efforts of our local and global sisters and brothers, transform local and global trafficking realities into dignity and justice for all. This we ask with great confidence in you, our compassionate and loving Creator of all. Amen.

Praised Be the Incarnate Word!

(Opening from the SNJM Anti-Trafficking Committee)