

November 19, 2016



AGAINST TRAFFICKING - THE CRY OF MILLIONS OF CHILDREN AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN THE WORLD. Every 2 minutes, a child is being prepared for sexual exploitation. More than 200 million children today are child labourers. 73 million of these children are below 10 years of age. Every year 22 thousand die due to work accidents. Approximately 30 million children have lost their childhood through sexual exploitation over the past 30 years.

In light of this reality, the Third International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Trafficking in Persons (IDPAT), will be celebrated on 8 February 2017, with the theme: “They are children! Not slaves!” Today, November 17, 2016 was chosen as the day to announce our third annual day of prayer because it is the eve of “Universal Children’s Day”, an initiative of the United Nations. This initiative is the occasion for the signing of a joint declaration on the situation of migrant children.

The event will be celebrated on the Feastday of St. Bakhita who, in her life, experienced the pains of slavery. The International Day is promoted by Talitha Kum (UISG-USG), the Worldwide Network of Religious Life against Trafficking in Persons together with a Committee with representatives from: the Co
gregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace,
Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People
,
Pontifical
Academy of Sciences

Caritas Internationalis (CI), World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) and the Anti Trafficking Working Group of the Justice and Peace Commission of the International Unions of Superiors Generals (UISG-USG)

The first International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Trafficking in Persons was supported by Pope Francis and was celebrated in 154 countries around the world.

The program in Rome included: a prayer vigil, Mass and participation with banners at the Angelus in St. Peter's Square during which Pope Francis spoke of the event in the following words:

"Dear brothers and sisters, today, 8 February, the liturgical memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese Sister, who as a child had the traumatic experience of being a victim of trafficking, the International Union of Superiors General of Religious Institutes have promoted the Day of Prayer and Reflection against trafficking in persons. I encourage all those who are committed to helping men, women and children enslaved, exploited, abused as tools of pleasure and often tortured and mutilated. I hope that those who have responsibilities in government will seriously strive to eliminate the causes of this shameful scourge, a scourge unworthy of a civilized society. Let each of us be committed to being a voice for our brothers and sisters, humiliated and deprived of their dignity. Let us all pray together.

To celebrate the Third International Day of Prayer, activities are scheduled in Rome during the week before 8 February. Seminars, opportunities for communal prayers and cultural events are being planned.

According to the latest official statistics of the United Nations, one in every three victims of trafficking are children. Africa with 68%, presents the highest rate of children victims of human trafficking. Worldwide, children are trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced marriage, illegal adoptions, forced labour, organs removal, begging, criminal acts (i.e., child soldiers, drug smuggling) and witchcraft.

Therefore it is urgent to listen to the cry of these little ones all over the world and to remind everyone that they are children, not slaves!

COMITATO ORGANIZZATORE: Unione Internazionale delle Superiori Generali-Unione dei Superiori Generali (UISG/USG) – Congregazione per gli Istituti di Vita Consacrata e le Società di Vita Apostolica ([CIVCSVA](#)) – Pontificio Consiglio Giustizia e Pace – Pontificio Consiglio dei Migranti e Popoli Itineranti – Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze – Caritas Internationalis – Unione Mondiale delle Unioni Femminili Cattoliche (WUCWO) – Anti-Trafficking Working Group (UISG/UISG)

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Interviews and Material on World Day of Prayer and Awareness against Trafficking in Persons are available on our social media:

<http://bit.ly/2fYwDuj>

<http://bit.ly/2eT9jNw>

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