

# Prayer Service

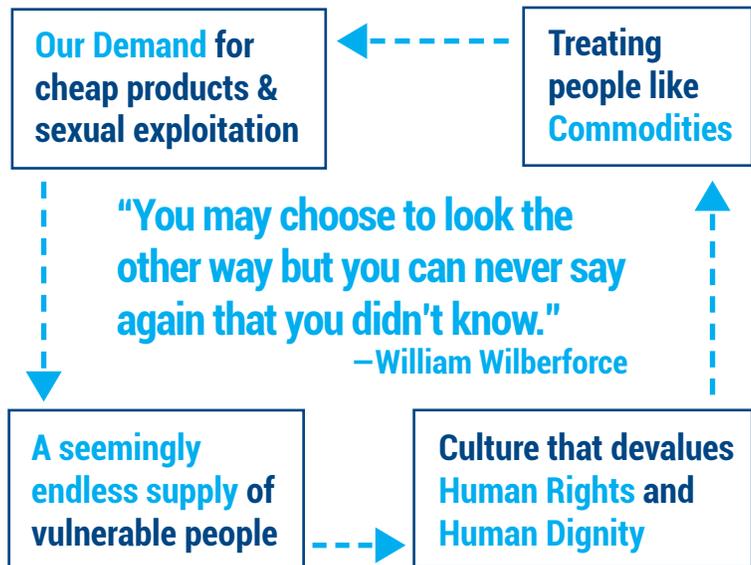
January 2016

## For an end to Human Trafficking

► **Setting:** On the ritual table put a cloth, candle and items that may have been touched by human trafficking.

► **Opening Song:** Select a song, such as *We Shall Overcome*, *We Are Called*

**"Statistics are human beings with the tears wiped off."**  
—Paul Brodeur



► **Leader:** 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 1:**

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 2:**

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 3:** 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 heart.

► **Leader:**

**We pray for the millions of women, men and children currently held in slavery.**

**Response:** Listen to their every word and give them heart.

For young girls and women exploited on the streets. **R**

For child laborers, child soldiers and children exploited in pornography. **R**

For those in bonded labor—in agricultural fields, mines and factories. **R**

► **Leader:**

**For the perpetrators and organizers of human trafficking.**

**Response:** Transform and touch hearts to respect the dignity of each person.

For governments and corporations, that they will address the systems that make human trafficking possible. **R**

For each of us, that we will do our part to stop the demand for human trafficking. **R**

► **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.

► **All:** God of justice we thank you for opening our hearts to the suffering of all those who live as slaves for people seeking sex or cheap products. Now that we are aware of this crime against humanity, give us the wisdom and courage to do our part to end human trafficking so that all may know healing and justice. Amen.

► **Take Action:**

Change the way food companies do business: [www.behindthebrands.org/](http://www.behindthebrands.org/)

See how many slaves are working for you: [www.slaveryfootprint.org](http://www.slaveryfootprint.org)

For educational materials visit: [www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org)  
[www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/](http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/)

Join or start a monthly human trafficking vigil to raise awareness: [www.ipjc.org/](http://www.ipjc.org/)

If you suspect human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1.888.3737.888

Let's stop  
**reading**  
statistics  
and start **changing** them.