



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING
A
SERIOUS CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY
AND
A GLOBAL ISSUE**

**SUGGESTED INPUT FOR LIFE ORIENTATION (LO)
SYLLABUS
FOR
HIGH SCHOOLS**

AIM OF SYLLABUS

- To have a clear knowledge of what Trafficking in Persons means
- To guard learners against becoming victims of trafficking
- Build a critical sense in the learners
- Link material with that of Life Orientation (LO) - the means of protecting oneself
- To be alert to different kinds of trafficking
- To know who the traffickers are and how they operate
- To understand the consequences of trafficking
- To be familiar with how and why trafficking occurs
- To be able to discern and report suspicious situations to parents and educators
- To be in solidarity with the victims of traffickers
- To pray for an end to human trafficking.

ACTIVITIES

- Role play
- Discussions / debates
- Reflections
- DVDs eg:
 - Sold Sisters
 - Human Trafficking
 - Trafficking in Persons
 - Anna
 - Escudo
 - etc.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Defining the term 'Trafficking in Persons'
3. Scope and dynamics
4. Different kinds of trafficking
5. Who are the traffickers?
6. The *modus operandi* of traffickers
 - 6.1 Recruitment phase
 - 6.2 Transportation phase
 - 6.3 Exploitation phase
7. Methods of controlling victims
8. The consequences of trafficking
 - 8.1 for the State
 - 8.2 for the individual
 - 8.3 for the community
9. Trafficking in Persons - a serious violation of Human Rights
10. Prevention Methods and questions for reflection
11. Case studies
12. The Catholic Church's Social Teaching
13. Theological Reflection
 - 13.1 Human Trafficking in Southern Africa: a Faith Context
 - 13.2 Reflection Questions
14. 10M's Help Line
15. Prayer to end Trafficking in Persons

1. Introduction

In our post-modern liberal world we find it incomprehensible that slavery still exists; that the buying and selling of people and the exploitation of their labour is actually happening. Yet it is doubtful that any country in our global village is untouched by trafficking, especially the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. It is said to be the third most lucrative business in the world after drugs and arms.

Human Trafficking in the 21st century is generally referred to as "Modern Day Slavery" or "New Slavery." Some have even suggested that slavery is more common now than at any time in world history -- from the ancient Egyptian period, through the Roman Empire to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The term "New Slavery" is particularly apt for today's context because of two variables unique to the modern period: modern day slaves are (i) cheap and (ii) disposable. Children especially are sold for very low prices. Victims regularly encounter health problems and are then discarded because they are no longer of use to their bosses.

Due to the underground nature of the trafficking business, there are no official records of trafficked individuals and, therefore, estimates vary widely. Some estimate that there are 27 million in slavery worldwide. It is a reliable fact, however, that South Africa is one of the regions of the world where trafficking is a massive problem. Cape Town and its surrounding regions have been identified as a centre for what Jonathan Lucas of the UN describes as, "one of the fastest growing and most lucrative enterprises in the world - human trafficking". Human trafficking is a serious human rights violation. It is a total disregard for the dignity of the human person and its consequences - individual as well as social - are grave.

Unless trafficking/slavery becomes a serious item of the public agenda, victims will continue to proliferate and suffer. One of the best defences against trafficking in persons is education, as traffickers routinely rely upon deception. Many people who end up being trafficked are tricked into it. Once tricked, traffickers have control and the individuals become enslaved victims of violence. Severe suffering in the form of physical and mental abuse always follows.

Our aim here is to assist learners to be informed and conversant in the reality of human trafficking; and to protect potential victims of trafficking by helping them develop a critical sense, which will enable them to be alert and guarded against trickery of various kinds. In this way we can arm ourselves with the resources and the awareness, which we then can spread to others, so that we may finally eradicate this evil practice from our planet Earth.

2. Defining the Term "Trafficking in Persons"

Trafficking in Persons is about the exploitation of vulnerable people -- be it that of women, children or men. It is also very much a process which consists of three phases: (i) **Recruitment** (ii) **Transportation** (iii) **Exploitation**. The process very often ends up in forced labour - be it forced commercial sexual exploitation or different forms of economic exploitation. The terms *forced labour* and *slavery* have become synonymous today. The trafficker or slaveholder is in a position where he/she exercises rights of ownership over another, uses the other for personal and financial gain, and withdraws the freedom of the individual.

The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially Women and Children, known as the Palermo Protocol, Art. 3 defines trafficking as:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of person having control over another, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

The Palermo Protocol established the ground-rules and basic mechanisms for inter country cooperation to tackle this transnational crime. Trafficking, however, can occur both internationally and domestically, as is the case with South Africa. Trafficking can take many forms. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world where child labour is increasing, according to a global ILO (International Labour Organisation) study completed in 2006. Under the Palermo Protocol a child is any person under the age of 18 - which is the same as the South African Constitution.

3. Scope and dynamics

No one knows the exact extent or statistics of human trafficking. It is estimated that 27 million are in slavery worldwide and that at its most general level 12.3 million people are trafficked worldwide at any given time (US Dept of State, Trafficking in Persons Report, 2006). Trafficking is both trans-national and intra-national. In Africa, trafficking patterns seem to run from North to South. Countries in western and central Africa are most often originating countries, and those in the south and east are transit or destination countries. Within the SADC countries, South Africa is regarded as a hotspot. Women and children are favourite targets for well-organised trafficking rings, which operate freely for lack of solid laws against this practice. Organisations working with trafficked women say that more than 1,000 Mozambican women are trafficked each year, mostly to South Africa. Other reports say that every month thousands of children are smuggled by greedy opportunists and syndicates across our international and provincial borders. Once on the other side, they are sold into slavery.

4. Kinds of Trafficking

- Many of the women and young girls trafficked are sold into prostitution. Even women married to compulsive gamblers are being raped or forced into prostitution by loan sharks after being used as collateral by their addicted husbands. Young boys (and occasionally men) are also sold for sexual exploitation.
- Children are sold as domestic workers, for criminal activities, or for hard labour on farms.
- Young girls trafficked from Mozambique are sold as wives to the mine workers.
- Young people are forced into pornography.
- People are abducted for organ removals.
- Men and boys are trafficked for construction industries and illegal sweatshops

5. Who are the traffickers?

There are different categories of traffickers:

- The single person trafficker
- Second wave trafficker (former victims turned traffickers)
- The pretty woman trafficker (for men who find certain women exotic)
- Syndicates
- Relatives
- Gangs

6. The *modus operandi* (way of operating) of traffickers)

6.1 Recruitment phase

Usually some kind of trickery:

- Advertisements in newspapers and other media for other employment
- False job offers that promise good salaries
- Promise of a better life
- Bribes for go-betweens - usually someone that the recruitee trusts - boyfriend, girlfriend, relative - to lure the victim. This method is increasing.

6.2 Transportation phase:

- Can be smuggled or taken legally across borders
- Held in transit houses once across border.
- Passports and documents confiscated by traffickers.
- Drugged, raped, gang raped at the transition houses to be broken in for prostitution, if being trafficked for the sex industry.

6.3 Exploitation phase:

- The small time trafficker sells victims to anyone who needs them.
- Syndicates and triads move victims around internally and internationally
- Victims can be bought and sold over and over.
- Victims are made to work long hours to make the maximum profit for the trafficker.
- Victims can be disposed of when no longer of use to the trafficker.

7. Methods of controlling victims

Traffickers make use of psychological and financial control, mechanisms which may minimise the need for physical violence.

- **Debt Bondage**
A debt bond is usually a high figure amounting to thousands of Rands that in no way relates to the actual expenditure incurred by the traffickers.
The traffickers often add their "fees" to the travel costs to create an even larger debt bond.
The trafficker holds the costs of food and accommodation against victims.
- **Isolation**
Travel documents are confiscated by the traffickers if victims are taken to another country - this robs the victims of their official identity and makes it difficult for them to seek help.
Victims can be kept in places where they cannot speak their mother tongue and are kept away from anyone with similar background. They are often prevented from making any kind of phone call, or sending or receiving any kind of communication.
Victims can be kept locked in rooms for fear they escape.
 - **Confiscation of documentation and money**
The victim has no freedom of movement without proper documentation; without money the victim is trapped
 - **Blackmail**
 - **If trafficked to another country illegally, traffickers exploit the victims' fear of police and fear of being deported.**
 - **Use of violence**
Violence can be physical and psychological to create fear in the victim.
 - **Use of threat of reprisal against the victims' families.**

8. The consequences of Trafficking in Persons

8.1 For the Country

Trafficking is increasingly being taken over and controlled by organised criminal networks, which leads to the growth / increase in the size and capacity of these organised criminal networks. This poses a range of serious risks to the stability of societies in general, especially the integrity of society, honest labour relations, etc.

8.2 For the Individual

Most importantly, at the humanitarian level trafficking inflicts very grave and sometimes fatal harm to victims. Short and long term effects include:

- Diseases and stunted growth in minors
- Ostracised by family and communities

- Loss of moral and spiritual development opportunities
- Drug dependency
- Permanent damage due to physical violence
- Severe psychological damage from premature/forced sexual activity
- Exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV / AIDS
- May be treated as criminals and face difficult re-integration on returning home.

8.3 For the Community

Trafficking also has detrimental consequences for the community, as there is a greater presence of criminal organisations and these groups can lead to problems of national security. Repeated violations of national legislation ultimately result in a decline in public confidence in government.

9. Trafficking in Persons- a serious violation of human rights

Trafficking in Persons violates fundamental and universal human rights which are protected by international documents.

RIGHTS	INFRINGEMENTS
The right to life, liberty and security	Limitation of liberty; abuse
The prohibition of torture and inhuman degrading treatment	Physical, psychological and sexual abuse
The prohibition of slavery and servitude	Being kept in complete dependence
The prohibition of coercion and compulsory work	Forcing someone to work and perform sexual services
The right to freedom and dignity	Deprivation and limitation of freedom
The right to privacy	Complete absence of privacy
The freedom of thought, conscience and religion	Limitation or refusal
The freedom of expression and speech	Complete absence of freedom of expression; retaliation for such
The right to marriage and family	Refusing the right to marry or forcing someone to marry
The right to rest and leisure time	Decreasing rest and leisure time to a minimum or completely taking it away
The right to health	Damage to health, deprivation of basic needs
The right to freedom of movement and the choice of residence	Refusing, preventing its exercise
The right to communicate	Complete denial or limitation or supervision
The right to work in appropriate working conditions	Complete denial, inhuman conditions
The right to adequate wages	Seizing of wages or decreasing them to a minimum
The right to education	Deprivation of one's intellectual growth

10. Prevention Methods

Recruitment is the beginning of the process of Trafficking in Persons. Therefore it is of utmost importance that young people, especially when leaving school, remember to:

BE SMART
BE AWARE
BE ALERT
BE QUESTIONING

Your protection in life needs to be safeguarded at all times. Every choice you make has consequences. Let the choices be the right ones. At all times question the safety of your choices so that your security and your dignity is in no way violated.

Questions you need to ask yourself

- What would you do if someone offered you a very lucrative job in South Africa or overseas?
(Before answering this question please read Case Study *STAR.*, Friday May 2, 2008).
- How would you go about checking out if a job offer is genuine or not?
(read Thabo's story)
- If the job offer was overseas would you check with the embassy of that country to see if it were genuine?
- If the company! business appears genuine, all the same would you take time to be sure it has not an underground operation attached to it; would you bring a parent, friend to see the place; would you ask for a contract to be drawn up between you and the employer so that people would know all the details where you are and who is responsible for your employment, wages etc?
- Would you sign a contract you don't understand?
- Would you ask to actually see a contract before you travel and more especially if all your travel expenses are being paid?
- If things were to go wrong would you have a plan B?
- Do you have an emergency 'password' that only you and your family know, when you are away from home?
- If travelling to a job away from home would you check out emergency phone numbers: e.g., embassy, nearest police station, etc and where they are located?
- If standing at a bus stop how would you guard against abduction if a taxi or car with people in it stopped to ask you a question?
(read Case Study: *REKORD*, July 13, 2007)
- Would you still check out the genuineness of a job even if a trusted friend or sibling was the one who coaxed you into taking the job offer?
(read Sara's Story)
- Would you accept to go out for a drink with someone you hardly know or is just passing through?
(read Pam' s story)

11. CASE STUDIES

STAR, Friday, 2. 2098

'Police have rescued eight women who were lured into forced prostitution through a "R4000 a week job" newspaper advert.

The women - six from Gauteng and two from the Free State- had been promised lucrative jobs at an "upmarket club" in Welkom.

Police said one of the women told a patron about their ordeal at Club Gemini, where they were forced to "entertain clients".

"A well- known Gospel singer was told about the crime and immediately blew the whistle, and the organised Crime Unit pounced on the club on Tuesday", said police spokesperson Puleng Motsoeneng.

Motsoeneng said the women, who are in their 20s, were held in rooms at the back of the club, where they met their clients. "You would not think of it when sitting in the club itself. It looks like an ordinary drinking spot. The rooms are very clean and this is where it all went down, she noted.

"These women were assaulted and sometimes electrocuted (sic) if they did not abide by their boss's demands," said Motsoeneng.

The eight women, some of whom had been kept at the club for three weeks, were never paid the promised salaries, but instead found themselves indebted to their employer, who was charging them for food and accommodation ... '

(By Poloko Tau)

REKORD, July 13, 2007

At least two women have come forward to tell horrific stories of how they were repeatedly raped after being abducted and tied to beds. Both say Nigerian immigrants injected them with a paralysing drug, kidnapped them and locked them in rooms with other girls. "There were nine girls of all races with me in the room and some were as young as 8-years- old. About six men took turns to come into the room, inject us with heroin and rape us. They said they were doing this to break us in for prostitution. We were naked and they kept our feet and hands tied to the beds", says Lisa van der Westhuizen (27). Lisa says she was abducted at a bus stop in Braamfontein and taken to a house in Hillbrow where she was kept for four days until she managed to escape and run to a nearby police station. "I covered myself in a sheet I found in the house before I escaped and blood was dripping down my legs all the way to the police station."

Lisa, who is recovering from heroin addiction, says another woman who is currently receiving treatment, was abducted in Arcadia under the same circumstances only two weeks ago. (by Anelie Blackie)

SARA'S STORY

Sara is an 18-year old woman from Lusaka, Zambia. She has finished school and has no money to further her education and her family is struggling to put bread on the table. Her uncle, David, lives in Cape Town., but occasionally comes home. On one of his visits, Uncle David tells Sara that there are good restaurant jobs in Cape Town for young women. He says that if she comes to Cape Town with him, he will help her find a good job so that she can earn money to send home to her family and be able to save some also to further her education. Sara agrees to go to South Africa but when they arrive in Cape Town, he takes away her ID documents, including her passport. Uncle David tells Sara that she must pay for all their living expenses by working as a prostitute. Sara is very afraid, but when she refuses, he threatens to turn her over to the police as her time for staying in the country has expired and she is now an illegal immigrant. Eventually, after being threatened and beaten, Sara agrees to work as a prostitute for her uncle. She dare not tell her family what has happened to her for fear of being further beaten by her uncle and what might happen to her family. Uncle David tells the family that Sara did not heed him. She just pushed off and he does not know where she is.

PAM'S STORY

Pam is an 18 year old South African who lives in Durban. She does not have much money, but manages to make ends meet by working as a waitress near Durban Harbour. Most of the customers who frequent the restaurant are seamen from foreign countries, and many of them are known to Pam since they make a practice of stopping by whenever their ship is in port.

One night, while she is working a late shift, she meets a man, Li, whom she has met several times before. Li is a seaman on a Chinese shipping vessel that has just come in. When he recognises Pam as a waitress who had served him on a previous occasion, he asks her out for a drink at the conclusion of her shift. Pam agrees, but no sooner are they out of sight of the restaurant than Li knocks Pam down and puts a cloth over her face until she loses consciousness.

When she wakes up, she finds herself in a small room, and unable to escape because of a locked steel door. There are no windows, but she can feel the ship moving, and realises that she must be out at sea. A short while later two strange men enter the room and Pam is raped. Over the next few days and weeks a pattern emerges; Pam is raped by a variety of men she doesn't know. They come into the room in which she is held, day or night, singly or in small groups. She is raped more than 10 times a day for a period of several months, although she quickly loses track of time. She is fed once a day - a small bowl of rice and a pitcher of water and once every few days she is given a large pitcher of water and soap with which to wash. As far as she can tell, she is at sea for much of the time, although she suspects that the ship has come into port at least once.

After several months Pam contracts a sexually transmitted disease. When this becomes known to the men who come to rape her, Pam is badly beaten and loses consciousness. She wakes up near the restaurant where she once worked in Durban Harbour and immediately goes to the police with her story.

THABO'S STORY

Thabo is 15 years old. He struggles in school and failed his English in the end of the year examination. That meant Thabo had to repeat his class. A new teacher from another country told Thabo's mother that there was a good finishing school in Ficksburg and that Thabo could go there for three months and then he would be sent for training to eventually qualify as a male nurse. Thabo and family were delighted at the prospects. A lady came in a taxi to pick Thabo up from home. There were other young boys in the taxi. At Ficksburg, Thabo and the other boys were met by another taxi driver who took them to a house there. There were a few men and women in that house. There was a lot of discussion among them and they looked at us now and again. The boys did not hear exactly what they were saying but one of the men was talking about a farmer and how much money the farmer was willing to pay per head.

A woman came to look the boys up and down and said she was interested in the pretty ones. She took Thabo and two other boys by taxi to the finishing school in Johannesburg as they thought. Once in Johannesburg the boys were drugged and locked in a bed room. Thabo was collected and taken to a hotel room by two women. A big middle aged man entered the room. The two women quickly went outside the door and the big man locked the door and took the key. Thabo started screaming and banged on the door while the big man was undressing himself. A waiter knocked on the door and someone opened the door while Thabo was jumping over the bed away from the grasp of the man. Thabo ran out of the room, down the stairs and out of the hotel. He ran and ran. He had some money in his shoe and got a taxi home.

12. The Catholic Church's Social Teaching

The Church has the responsibility to safeguard and defend the human dignity and rights of every person. Various Church documents and pronouncements postulate this truth.

Benedict XVI: Migrations: A Sign of the Times (2006)

"[T]rafficking in human beings - especially women ... flourishes where opportunities to improve their standard of living or even to survive are limited. It becomes easy for the trafficker to offer his own 'services' to the victims, who often do not even vaguely suspect what awaits them. In some cases there are women and girls who are destined to be exploited almost like slaves in their work, and not infrequently in the sex industry, too." Though I cannot here closely examine the analysis of the consequences of this aspect of migration, I make my own the condemnation voiced by John Paul II against 'the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture which encourages the systematic exploitation of sexuality'."

(Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women, 29 June 1995, n. 5)

Work among Trafficked Women in Thailand Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of the Migrants and Itinerant People

"If we claim to be Jesus' Followers, we cannot remove ourselves from the world in which we live. We cannot turn a blind eye, a deaf ear or a cold shoulder to the cries of our sisters and brothers who are being abused and exploited. We have to stand in solidarity with them because they mediate God's presence for us. We have to do all in our power to bring an end to the poverty and oppression of millions of human beings. We cannot remain undisturbed at appalling violation of their rights as human beings. The desecration of the human being is also the desecration of God's temple and this is an insult to God. "We have to bear witness together to our common conviction concerning the dignity of people. When any person is oppressed, we are all diminished. When any part of creation is abused or destroyed, our lives are improvised."

John Paul II: Letter To Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran (2002)

"The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights. Already the Second Vatican Council had pointed to 'slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as instruments of gain rather than free and responsible persons' as 'infamies' which 'poison human society, debase their perpetrators' and constitute 'a supreme dishonour to the Creator' (*Gaudium et Spes*, 27). Such situations are an affront to fundamental values which are shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person."

The International Conference "Twenty-First Century Slavery: The Human Rights Dimension To Trafficking In Human Beings" Vatican, 15 May 2002

John Paul II: Letter to Women (1995)

"[W]hen we look at one of the most sensitive aspects of the situation of women in the world, how can we not mention the long and degrading history, albeit often an 'underground' history, of violence against women in the area of sexuality? At the threshold of the Third Millennium we cannot remain indifferent and resigned before this phenomenon. The time has come to condemn vigorously the types of *sexual violence* which frequently have women for their object and to pass laws which effectively defend them from such violence. Nor can we fail, in the name of the respect due to the human person, to condemn the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture which encourages the systematic exploitation of sexuality and corrupts even very young girls into letting their bodies be used for profit." (5)

John Paul II: The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992)

2414 The seventh commandment forbids acts or enterprises that for any reason - selfish or ideological, commercial, or totalitarian - lead to the *enslavement of human beings*, to their being bought, sold and exchanged like merchandise, in disregard for their personal dignity. It is a sin against the dignity of persons and their fundamental rights to reduce them by violence to their productive value or to a source of profit. St. Paul directed a Christian master to treat his Christian slave "no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother, ... both in the flesh and in the Lord."

Vatican II - Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
Gadium et Spes (1965)

"Coming down to practical and particularly urgent consequences, this council lays stress on reverence for man; everyone must consider his every neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity (8) so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus.(9)

In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbour of every person without exception. and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign labourer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord, "As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me" (Matt. 25:40).

Furthermore, whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are supreme dishonour to the Creator." (27)

13. Theological Reflection

What is theological reflection?

Theological reflection today starts from the ground up. It begins with our own experiences. Each one of us is our own theologian. Theological reflection helps us to articulate our experience in the light of faith, so that each experience becomes a faith filled experience.

There are many ways to interpret our experiences and the pressing issues of our time. Depending upon who we are, we may interpret these issues through different lenses: the lenses of economics, or national identity, or human rights. As Christians, it is important that we first and foremost reflect upon the world in light of the Gospel. This means that, from a position of faith, we seek to understand how God is acting in the world and in us, and we are eager to comprehend what may otherwise seem utterly incomprehensible. By reflecting theologically, we hope to see with the eyes of Christ, who alone can show us meaning and truth, and guide our thoughts and actions in the most fruitful ways. To reflect theologically is to accept with great humility that there is much we do not yet see or know, and that we always depend upon the Spirit to illumine God's presence, especially in those places where it seems most hidden. Theological reflection grounds us and challenges us at the same time. All lenses of interpretation have value, and for the Christian, theological interpretation always offers the richest insights and helps us to understand our experiences in light of our faith.

13.1 Human Trafficking in Southern Africa: a Faith Context

"My sheep were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. So this is what the Creator Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. " (Ezekiel 34:6, 11-16)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that at any given time, 2.5 million people are in forced labour, including sexual exploitation, as a result of trafficking. Approximately 800,000 people are trafficked across national borders each year, which does not include the millions trafficked within their own country². South Africa is considered a "source, transit, and destination country for trafficked men, women and children," and has been placed on the Tier 2 Watch List for the fourth consecutive year by the standards established by the Palermo Protocol - the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially Women and Children. The South African government "does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, although it is making significant efforts to do so". It will remain on this Tier 2 Watch List until it demonstrates full compliance with these internationally-approved minimum standards.³

¹ International Labor Organization. "A Global Alliance Against Forced Labor" (Geneva: International Labor Office, 2005).

² United States Department of State. "Trafficking in Persons Report, 2008" (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/ris/tiprpt/2008/105389.htm>).

³ Ibid.

Trafficked persons are abducted or deceived into highly organized criminal rings where they are immediately stripped of their rights, dignity and agency. As the US Bishops write, "Trafficking in persons-in which men, women, and children from all over the globe are transported to other countries for the purposes of forced prostitution or labour-inherently rejects the dignity of the human person and exploits conditions of global poverty." ⁴ Isolated from loved ones, they are forced into dangerous and dehumanising forms of sexual and physical labour. They receive no pay, and are often without the means and wherewithal to escape their bondage. Eventually, they become alienated from others and from themselves⁵. Their rescue often must come from a third party. Trafficked persons are very much like sheep "scattered over the whole earth."

In John's gospel, Jesus tells us, "I am the good shepherd ... and I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10:14). To join the fight against human trafficking is to join Jesus in his search for these lost and scattered ones. The promise of the gospels is that the work we do to rescue and bring to safety the vulnerable and powerless is work we never do alone. Always, we are joined by a God who has gone before us, who opens our eyes, and leads us to His scattered children.

"I have no hands but yours," Jesus tells us. In other words, *I cannot rescue them without you*. We turn our backs on this imperative at our own peril; to accept this summons to search for the lost sheep is to accept Jesus' promise of life.

⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope" (USCCB,2003).

⁵ International Office of Migration. *Eye on Human Trafficking* 11/26. Pretoria, 2006.

13.2 Questions for Reflection

1. Who are the lost and scattered ones in our society today?
2. What does it mean to you to be Jesus' hands on Earth for the lost and scattered?
3. How can we be instruments of Jesus' hands to help those victims of trafficking?
4. How do we "collaborate with the one whose fierce love for the powerless is stronger than the evil hands into which they have fallen?"

14. IOM'S HELP LINE

IOM's (International Organisation for Migration) Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP) offers help and support to victims of human trafficking.

0800555999
24 hours toll free service

For more information you can also contact the Counter Trafficking in Persons Desk (CTIP) of the Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life (SA) / Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference.

Telephone no. 012- 3236458

15. Prayer to end Human Trafficking

O, God, our words cannot express
what our minds can barely comprehend
and our hearts feel when we hear
of men, women, and children
deceived and transported to unknown places
for the purpose of exploitation.
Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry
that their dignity and rights are transgressed
through threats, deception and force.
We cry out against this degrading practice of trafficking
and pray for it to end.
Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted.
Let Your tender love and care surround them and deliver
them from evil and the exploiters' hands.
Give us the courage and wisdom to stand in solidarity
with them, that together we will find ways to the freedom
that is your gift to all of us.
Amen

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and to Susan Kreston who are two main sources of information.

Melanie O'Connor HFB, CTIP Desk 399
Khanya House
Pretoria, 0001
PO Box 941
Pretoria, 0001
Tel. + 27 12323 6458
Fax + 27 123256125