



**ON THE
PATH TO SOLIDARITY**
**Prayer for the U.N. World Day
against Trafficking in Persons**
[July 30]

Opening Song: *(Choose appropriate music, if desired.)*

Opening Prayer:

Leader: Human trafficking is an evil born of greed, of separation, of indifference and apathy. It is a sin that attempts to deprive persons of their humanity and dignity, to deny them their fundamental right to develop as full human beings—spiritually, economically, politically, socially, and culturally—to reduce them to market goods, easily discarded and displaced. Pope Francis tells us that in committing this atrocity the traffickers’ humanity is diminished as well, but that this institution would not be possible without the complicity and callousness of our culture and society. ^[5, 6, 7]

Merciful God, open our hearts to love our brothers and sisters as ourselves, to recognize in them your divine likeness. Open our eyes to our own hypocrisy and selfishness and to the inequality and disparity around us that we may choose another path.

Amen.



Our brothers and sisters have been displaced.

Reader: In many regions of the world, we see the destruction of creation directly linked to the displacement and decimation of peoples. Conflicts, natural and manmade disasters, economic expansionism and extractivism force peoples to flee their homes for survival. Many indigenous and other vulnerable peoples must leave their traditional ways of life behind and move to urban centers in search of opportunities. They leave in desperation, not knowing whether they will find acceptance or support in their destination communities, not knowing whether they will ever be able to return home. These devastating circumstances leave them susceptible to the false promises of traffickers.

Suggested Reflection. How do I benefit from this displacement of my brothers and sisters? In which ways am I willing to accompany them in their struggles?

Prayer for the Displaced

Our brothers and sisters fled their homes in anguish and fear.

Loving God, grant them refuge and peace.

Displaced, they long for comfort and belonging, for a better life.

In your mercy, let their hearts not be troubled for you are with them.

Amen.

Our brothers and sisters have been made vulnerable.

Reader: As we see in the Amazon and the Congo, extractive industries degrade the environment on which all life depends while often promoting the very conditions that allow labor and sex trafficking to thrive. The valuation of personal profit over people and planet lies at the root of such iniquity. Such practices require the willful disregard of human rights, where the marginalized of society—especially indigenous people and women—are disproportionately affected by these crimes against humanity and creation.

We stand witness as disparity, social exclusion, and desperation render our brothers and sisters vulnerable to trafficking. Let us embrace our anguish and act against this grave injustice.

Suggested Reflection. In what ways do I benefit from a system of greed that values profit over people and planet? In which ways am I complicit? What am I willing to change about myself in order to promote equity and equality for all?

Prayer for the Vulnerable

Our brothers and sisters have been made vulnerable to the whims and greed of the few.

All-powerful God, grant them the courage and strength to persevere.

Our laws and systems have failed to protect them.

In your wisdom, guide the minds and hearts of our leaders that justice might prevail.

Amen.

On creating hope and manifesting change

Reader: We cannot overlook suffering. “Rather, everyone, in his or her own situation, should work actively to eliminate the causes of misery and build bridges of fraternity, the fundamental premise for authentic human development”.^[4]

“No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful.”^[2]
“It is a matter of integrating the diverse peoples of the earth. The duty of solidarity obliges us to seek just ways of sharing, so there may not exist that tragic inequality[.] ... Only the path of integration among peoples allows humanity a future of peace and hope.”^[3]

“What is involved in the creation of ‘a better world’? The expression does not allude naively to abstract notions or unattainable ideals; rather, it aims at ... efforts to provide dignified living conditions for everyone, at finding just responses to the needs of individuals and families, and at ensuring that God’s gift of creation is respected, safeguarded and cultivated.”^[1]

Suggested Reflection. How can I become present to the suffering around me? What commitments am I willing to make in the name of solidarity and in pursuit of a better world?

Prayer for Transformation

We have become overwhelmed with fear and despair, with the troubles of our world.

Compassionate God, rekindle our hopes and reignite our passion for justice.

We have lost our way; through our indifference, we have failed our brothers and sisters.

In your goodness, transform our hearts and guide us on the path to solidarity.

Amen.



We are called to act.

As we come together in prayer and reflection, let us also commit to take actions to end the institution of human trafficking in manners which befit our cultures and realities, wherever we live and serve. We invite you to consider the following possible courses of action. To learn more about these issues, please see our list of recommended resources at the end of this prayer service.

- Spend time reflecting on ways in which our personal, societal and cultural pursuit of inexpensive goods and services might inadvertently feed the demand for labor trafficking.
- Help prevent human trafficking in your own locale by working with others to ensure that vulnerable people have access to basic goods and services and opportunities for integral human development.

- To help prevent human smuggling and trafficking, continue advocating for more accessible pathways for safe and orderly migration globally.
- The Vatican's Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking document asserts that in order for human trafficking to end, there must be profound shifts in our personal, societal, economic, and cultural values and systems. Pray that these necessary, but elusive, transformations become reality.

Resources

- Migrants and Refugees Section, Integral Human Development. (2019). *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*.
- Pope Francis. (2020). *Querida Amazonia*.
- Synod on the Pan-Amazon. (2019, October 26). *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*.

References

1. Pope Francis. (2014). Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World.
2. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si': On care for our common home*, paragraph 205.
3. Pope Francis. (2017, Apr. 4). Address to participants in the Conference organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, marking the 50th anniversary of the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*.
4. Pope Francis. (2018, January 8). Address to the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See for the traditional exchange of New Year greetings, paragraph 20.
5. Pope Francis. (2018, February 12). Address to participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking.
6. Pope Francis. (2018, May 5-8). Address to the Participants in the International Forum on Modern Slavery (Buenos Aires).
7. Pope Francis. (2019, March 8). Address to Participants at the Conference on "Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Listening to the Cry of the Earth and of the Poor".

