

Transformation Through Suffering: A Journey With St. Josephine Bakhita



Patron Saint of Sudan and Trafficked Persons

b. 1889 – d. February 8, 1947

PREPARATIONS

Items needed:

- Framed photo of St. Josephine Bakhita - (included with this resource)
- Photos of trafficked persons (included with this resource)
- Small table, chains, candle, and matches
- 16 readers will be needed for this service
- Place photo of St. Josephine Bakhita, a candle, and chains on a small table.
- Display photos of trafficked persons around the small table

Optional: Human trafficking is global crisis and affects the society as a whole.

- Provide links of a chain to all readers. At the end of each of excerpt, the designated reader will connect his or her link to the previous chain link.
- At the final excerpt, the entire chain will be linked to form a circle.
- All participants are invited to hold a section of the chain as the group sings, “*Were You There When They Crucified My Lord.*” (<http://bit.ly/1QM9URt>)

CALL TO PRAYER (Begin the service by playing instrumental music - <http://bit.ly/1QM9URt>.)

Leader: Let us turn our thoughts to the life of St. Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese woman, born in 1869. As a child, she was kidnapped, sold, and resold into slavery. The pain of being ripped apart from her family, and the perpetual brutal beatings she endured caused her to forget the name given to her by her parents. Her captors gave her the name Bakhita, which means “lucky one.”

As we walk with St. Bakhita, let us be mindful of the more than 20.9 million women, men, and



children who, like Bakhita, experience the brutality and anguish of human trafficking, a modern day trade that is found in every nation. These victims face a cruelty that has no place in a civilized world: children are forced to be soldiers, young girls are beaten and forced into prostitution, and migrants are exploited and compelled to work for little or no pay. It is a crime that can take many forms, and one that tears at our social fabric, strains our common humanity, and violates what we stand for as Gospel

people. Human trafficking does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, gender, or religion. Anyone can be a victim.

Pause for a moment of silence.

St. Bakhita represents more than 20.9 million people trafficked in the world today. Together, let us walk the journey with the innocent and oppressed of today. Let us reflect on how we can stand in solidarity with trafficked persons, who, like Bakhita, have the courage to believe in a world free of slavery and injustice.



Reader 1: “I was around nine years old when one morning, after breakfast, I went with one of my friends, who was eleven or twelve years old, on a walk in our fields, away from the house. Having finished our games, we decided to go pick some herbs. All of a sudden we saw two armed strangers come out from behind a hedge. They approached us, and one of them said to my friend, ‘Let this little one go over there by the woods to pick up a bundle for me. She’ll be right back. You continue on down the road, and she will meet up with you soon.’ Their plan was to separate me from my friend, because if she were present when they captured me, she would have sounded the alarm. I did not suspect anything. I quickly went and obeyed, as I always did with my mother.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)



Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Our world is stained with a history of slavery. How does the sin of modern day slavery mirror comparable practices used by slave traders during Bakhita’s time?
- What can you learn about slavery from the Scriptures?
- Who is particularly vulnerable to enslavement? What makes these individuals vulnerable? Reflect on how traffickers prey on the innocent or the most vulnerable.

Optional: Reader 1 lays the first piece of the chain on the floor.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And, we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 2: “As soon as I entered the woods, looking for the bundle that I could not find, I realized that those two were right behind me. One grabbed me roughly with one hand while he pulled out a big knife from his belt with the other. He put the point of the knife against my side and with the demanding voice said, ‘If you scream, you are dead. Now move it. Follow us.’ The other one pushed me, aiming the barrel of his gun at my back. I was petrified. With eyes wide open and trembling from head to toe, I tried to yell, but a lump in my throat prevented me. I was unable to speak or cry. Violently pushed through the woods, along hidden pathways and over fields, I was made to walk at a fast pace until evening. I was dead tired. My feet and legs were bleeding from stepping on sharp rocks and from walking through thorny brambles. All I could do the whole time was sob, but those hard hearts had no pity. Finally, passing through a field of watermelons, which were very plentiful in that area, we halted for a rest. They gathered a few melons and handed me a piece to eat. I could not swallow any, though I had not eaten since morning.



All I could think about was my family. I called for my mommy and daddy with indescribable anguish. But nobody could hear me there. What was worse, those two ordered me to be quiet with terrible threats. So tired and on an empty stomach, I was forced to continue the journey on foot through the whole night.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Take a moment to reflect on how the threats of Bakhita’s kidnappers lodged fear into her very being—to the point that it prevented her from calling out for help.
- Unlike historical slavery, human trafficking is not legal anywhere in the world. Today trafficked persons remain trapped physically, psychologically, financially, and emotionally by their traffickers. Spend some time reflecting on what you can do to stand in solidarity with those who are trafficked domestically and globally.
- Abject poverty, inequality, and the devaluation of women are driving factors in all forms of human trafficking. Out of desperation, some parents entrust their children to traffickers who promise safety and, at least, regular meals for their children. Yet, the children are seldom treated as well as promised. Other parents who are unable to provide for their children may make the heart-wrenching decision to give their children to others in the hope of providing a better future for the child or sell them out of despair. Pause for a moment and feel the anguish of a mother who has no option but to sell her daughter in order to feed her other children.

Optional: Reader 2 links his/her chain to reader 1’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And, we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 3: “At dawn we arrived in their village. I could not have gone any farther. One of the men grasped me by the hand and dragged me to his home and put me in a storage room full of tools and scraps of wood. There was no bed or covering of any kind. The bare earth would have to serve as both. I was given a piece of dark bread and was told, ‘Stay here.’ Then the door was closed and locked with the key. I was kept there for over a month. A little hole in the ceiling was my window. The door was opened only momentarily to give me a little bit of food. How much I suffered in that place cannot be put into words. I still remember those hours of anguish when, exhausted from crying, I would fall to the floor, limp, completely numb, while my imagination carried me back to my loved ones far, far away.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)



Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Imagine for a moment that you are Bakhita. What was once familiar in your life has been clouded with betrayal, fear, despair, ill treatment, hunger, and exhaustion. What are you feeling? Are you willing to continue walking a journey that may lead to even more cruelty?
- What empowers Bakhita and trafficked persons of today to cling to hope? Is there a way out for the Bakhitas of today? How can you effectively journey with them?

Optional: Reader 3 links his/her chain to reader 2's chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 4: “Soon we were on the road. Just seeing the countryside, the sky, the water, just being able to breathe fresh air gave me a bit of life again, even though I did not know where I would end up. The journey lasted eight straight days always on foot through the woods, over hills, through the valleys, and deserts. This is how the caravan was arranged: first the men, then the women. Everyone had a thick chain fastened around his neck, locked with the key and padlock, connecting two or three in a row. Woe to anyone who bent over or stopped—the poor necks of that person and his companion. You could see big, deep wounds around all the necks. It was so pitiful. They strapped big loads onto the back of the strongest men, who then had to carry them for miles and miles. These poor men! How they were turned into beasts of burden. We little ones did not have chains. We walked at the end of the line with the owners. We stopped only for a few hours to rest and have some food. Then the chains were removed from the necks and fastened to the feet, one step away from the next person, so as to prevent anyone from running away. This was also done to us little ones, but only at night. [In my mind]...I saw my parents, brothers, and sisters, and I hugged them all with joy and tenderness, telling them how I'd been kidnapped and how much I had suffered. Other times I would be playing with my friends, and I felt happy. But alas, when I returned to the hard reality of my horrible situation, I was overcome by a feeling of discouragement that seemed to shatter my heart.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)



Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Bakhita bore witness to the slave owners' cruelty toward on her companions. How do you think this affected Bakhita, both emotionally and spiritually?
- In the face of so much evil in the world, how can Bakhita help us to persevere in faith that God is loving and good?
- In what businesses or industries within your community might trafficking be occurring? Chances are you have been in the presence of a trafficked person—perhaps in those places that are hotspots for human trafficking: nail salons, massage parlors, airports, sporting events, casinos, amusement parks, farms, construction and factory facilities, and hotels. Take a moment to think, really think, about a time when you saw someone who appeared to be out of place or who was being treated ruthlessly. Did it ever occur to you that this person could have well been a victim of trafficking? Are you surprised to learn where human trafficking takes place?
- How can you increase your awareness of traffickers' hidden tactics? How can you and your parish community monitor hotspots for trafficking?

Optional: Reader 4 links his/her chain to reader 3's chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 5: “Finally, we reached the slave market. We were brought into a big room to await our turn to be sold. The weakest and sickly were the first to be sold off, for fear that if they got worse the traders would lose their profits. The two of us who were the smallest were always close to one another, since our feet were tied together by the same chain. When nobody was watching, we would tell each other our stories, how we had been kidnapped. We talked about our dear families, and our talks increased our desire to return to our families more and more. As we lamented our unhappy fate, we also thought about plans somehow to escape. The good Lord, who was watching over us—though we did not realize it at the time—gave us such an occasion. The owner put us in a separate room and always locked us in, especially when he had to leave the house. It was almost dinnertime. Having returned from the market, he led to the house a mule loaded with ears of corn. He came and undid our chains, ordering us to unload the corn, and to feed the mules. He then departed, absentmindedly leaving the door unlocked. We were alone and without chains. God's providence—now was the time. A glance of mutual agreement, a handshake, a quick look around, and, nobody in sight, we were off as fast as our poor legs could carry us, running toward the open countryside without knowing where we were going. The whole night was one continuous, anxiety-ridden race through the woods and over desert terrain. Panting, and out of breath, in the darkness we could hear wild animals growling. When they got close, we saved ourselves by climbing up trees.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.



PRAYER SERVICE

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Reflect on Bakhita and her companion’s courage to escape from their slave owner. Consider some of the historical figures in the Old and New Testament who were subjected to slavery and ill-treatment. How did their faith sustain them?
- Oftentimes, we question why trafficked persons do not try to run away from their traffickers. Why might it be difficult for an enslaved person to walk away from his/her situation?
- Human trafficking is certainly an international issue, but it also very much domestic. Our first citizens, Native Americans, have become the most vulnerable when it comes to human trafficking. It is true that casinos and high-paying oil industry jobs are vital sources of employment and development. But there is a dark side to the multibillion-dollar boom in the oil fields, which stretch across western North Dakota into Montana and part of Canada, and the dice-rolling casinos in the Southwest and elsewhere—they serve as platforms for human trafficking. Are you surprised to learn this? What can you do to ensure that employment opportunities do not violate the rights of others?

Optional: Reader 5 links his/her chain to reader 4’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 6: “I thought that once these dangers were over I would quickly be able to find my dear family again. This gave me courage, and I suffered everything willingly for this goal. Alas, who knows how far away from them I traveled instead...Toward dawn we halted to catch our breath. How exhausted we were! Our hearts were beating like hammers, our bodies were dripping beads of sweat, and sharp pains of hunger pierced our stomachs: we had nothing to eat. The intense desire to be reunited with our families and the fear of being tracked down gave us the strength to continue the race, but not as if it had been at the start. Where were we going to end up? Near sundown we saw a little cottage. Our hearts began to beat rapidly. We strained our eyes to see if it was our house. It was not. What bitterness, how disillusioned we felt! As we stood there thinking about what to do next, a man appeared right in front of us. Frightened, we were about to flee. But he stopped and politely asked us: ‘Where are you going?’ We remained silent. ‘Come now, tell me: Where are you going?’ ‘To our parents. Over there,’ we replied in confusion, pointing vaguely. He then realized that we were runaways. ‘All right then,’ he said. ‘Come and have a little rest, and I’ll take you to your parents.’” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)



Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- The above passage transports us to a time in Bakhita’s life where she imagines that the dangers of her journey are over. Exhausted from running, she lets go of her fears, believing that her situation cannot get any worse. Do you think Bakhita’s emotions and physical exhaustion prevented her from making a wise decision? Think of a time in your own life when you felt unsafe. What emotions did you experience? How did your emotions influence you not to give in to fear or to make what might be considered a reckless decision?
- Nongovernmental and government agencies have joined efforts to combat human trafficking, prosecute the perpetrators, and help victims recover and rebuild their lives. National and global initiatives have been launched to help healthcare workers, airline flight crews, and other professionals better identify and provide assistance to victims of trafficking. Reflect on how you can support these efforts.
- Trafficked women often work with traffickers and become complicit in the trafficking process through such activities as supervising other trafficking victims and even engaging in the recruitment into the commercial sex industry. Reflect on why a trafficked person might engage in these types of activities. How do you make sense of the relationships between victims and perpetrators in the world of human trafficking? Do you think these women should be prosecuted for siding with the traffickers? Why or why not? What symptoms of Stockholm Syndrome do they exhibit?



Optional: Reader 6 links his/her chain to reader 5’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 7: “Believing his words, we followed him into the cottage. As soon as we were inside, he immediately laid us flat on the ground. He gave us little water, but we were so worn out that we could not drink it. Then he left us alone for about an hour. After a brief sleep we were awakened. The man took us to his house, gave us food and drink, and then led us to a big pen full of goats and sheep. He made some space for an angareb (bed intertwining cords on a wooden frame) and then tied our feet together with a big chain, telling us to stay in the pen until we were told what to do next. Here we were slaves again! So much for taking us to our parents. How we cried, how we suffered. We were left there among goats and rams for days, until a slave trader passed through. Then we were taken out of the pen and sold to that man.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.



Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Bakhita and her friend clung to hope that one day they would see their families again. On their journey, they met a polite man who seemingly wanted to help them. Instead, he was part of the slave trade. Reflect on why Bakhita would let down her guard and trust a complete stranger.
- Human traffickers have many faces. Both men and women commit trafficking crimes. What would cause a person to exploit another person—stripping away his/her dignity? Reflect on the methods that traffickers use to recruit their victims.
- Refugees who are fleeing war, poverty, and the effects of climate change are making dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea and West Africa—risking their lives in the pursuit of a fundamental human right, that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security.” Along their journeys, many are vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. How can you encourage your parish community to ensure that the rights of refugees be protected? How can you and your parish community respond to Pope Francis’s call to every parish to open its doors to refugees?

Optional: Reader 7 links his/her chain to reader 6’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 8: “We traveled for two and a half weeks, always following the same male-female sequence as before. In one village, I was moved to tears to see a poor slave who was in such a bad way that he could not stand up by himself anymore. I begged the owner to let him sit down and rest a while. He did not believe me and he begin to beat him like an animal. I saw him fall to the ground, moaning, ‘I’m going to die. I can’t go on.’ But the inhuman owner hit him even more to make him get up. Seeing that the slave could not move any longer, the owner had to remove the chains that fastened him to his partner. The poor man was whimpering so pitifully that it broke my heart. The owner, now enraged, ordered us to keep going while he stayed there with that unfortunate man. What happened to him? We never saw him again.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.



“Human Trafficking
is an open wound
on the body of
contemporary society,
a scourge upon
the body of Christ.
It is a crime against
humanity.”

- Pope Francis



Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Bakhita witnessed the inhumane treatment of her fellow slaves. She tells of begging the owner not to hit a slave who was unable to stand. Reflect on what Bakhita must have felt knowing that she could not help someone in need.
- What do you most admire about Bakhita? How can you imitate her?
- Think of a time in your life when you witnessed another person being mistreated. Did you come to this person's rescue? Did you console him/her? Why or why not? What did you learn from this experience?
- What does the word compassion mean to you and how do you live it out in your life? How can you offer compassion and comfort to victims of human trafficking, as well as to their families?

Optional: Reader 8 links his/her chain to reader 7's chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 9: “When we finally arrived in the city, we were brought to the house of the Arab leader. He was an extremely rich man and already owned a large number of slaves, all in the flower of their youth. My companion and I were destined to be handmaids of the young ladies who were his daughters, who came to like us. The owner's intention was to present us as gifts to his son when he got married. In that house I was treated well and lacked for nothing. Yet, one day, I do not know what mistake I made, but it involved the owner's son. He immediately took his whip to strike me. I fled to the other room in order to hide behind his sisters. I have never done such a thing before. Enraged, he tore me away from there by force and threw me to the ground. With his whip and his feet he gave me many, many blows, and finally with the kick to my left side he left me for dead. I do not remember anything after that. I must have been carried by slaves to my bed, where I remained for more than a month. After recovering from the beating, I was assigned to other work. But my time was up. I was to be sent away from that house at the first opportunity.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)



Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Nowhere has it been written that Bakhita used violence against her captors. Would you describe her as passive or nonviolent? What qualities of nonviolence does she exemplify? How does she personify the nonviolent Jesus?
- In addition to physical abuse, what methods do traffickers use to control their victims?
- Domestic servitude is a form of trafficking that is extremely difficult to detect because the work is performed in private residences and is, by nature, a hidden form of employment. Reflect on the vulnerabilities of abuse and exploitation that domestic workers are subjected to. What are the responsibilities of the church in preventing exploitation and protecting the rights of domestic workers? Why are many trafficking crimes hidden and accepted in our communities?

Optional: Reader 9 links his/her chain to reader 8's chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 10: “Such an opportunity came three months later, when I was sold to a new master. He was a general in the Turkish army. With him were his elderly mother and his wife. Both of the women were quite inhumane toward the poor slaves, who were engaged in the most demanding labor in the kitchen, did the laundry, and worked in the fields...The blows would fall on us without mercy. I do not remember a day going by without being hit...All the slaves slept in one big room... and went to sleep on the floor naked. Those who got sick were not given a single glance but were abandoned. No thought was given to helping them, let alone to offering them medical treatment. When they were about to die, they were thrown out in the fields or on the manure heap. The poor slave suffered many abuses and lashings for no reason. For example, one day we happened to be



present when the master was arguing with his wife. Just to take it out on someone, he ordered two of us down to the courtyard and commanded the soldiers to throw us to the ground to be flogged. They began this cruel punishment with full force and left both of us covered in blood. I remember how they took aim at my thighs with the cane, taking away skin and flesh and giving me a long lash that left me immobile and in bed for months. All of this had to be endured in silence because no one came to dress our wounds or offer us a word of comfort. How many of my ill-fated companions died from the blows they suffered.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.



Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- What principles of Catholic social thought were taken away from Bakhita and her companions?
- What factors contribute to the rise of human trafficking? How do poverty, migration, war, and terrorism feed into the trafficking trade? How does human trafficking fuel violence and organized crime?
- Child or adult forced laborers make many products that we purchase today. Pause for a moment and ask yourself: “Are some of the items that I own touched by slavery? What is my “carbon footprint” when it comes to human trafficking?” During this Lenten season, take the slavery footprint quiz: www.slaveryfootprint.org.
- Why would a business, knowingly or unknowingly, use child labor in their supply chains? What can they do to ensure that their products are not made by the hands of forced laborers?



Optional: Reader 10 links his/her chain to reader 9’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 11: “It was customary that slaves bore on their bodies particular marks or grooves in honor of their owner. These marks were obtained through tattoo incisions. Up until now I did not have any tattoos, while my companions had many, on their faces and arms. Well, one day on a whim the lady of the house decided to give a gift to those who had not been tattooed. A woman who was an expert in this cruel art was sent for. She led us beneath the portico, with our mistress behind us, whip in hand. The woman prepared a plate of white flour, another with salt, and razor. She ordered the first among us to stretch out on the ground. Two of the strongest slaves were commanded to hold her, one by the arms and the other by the legs. She bent down over the unfortunate one and with the flour began to make around sixty marks on her stomach. I could see it happening all before my eyes, thinking that I was next in line. Once the marks were all made, the woman took the razor, and down it went, cutting each and every mark that had been traced. The poor slave moaned as the blood dripped down from every wound. Once the operation was completed, she took the salt and began rubbing it hard into each wound, so that it would enter inside the cut, making it larger in order for the slits to remain open. What agony, what torment! That unfortunate one trembled all over, and I trembled too, waiting to undergo the same cruel fate.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.

PRAYER SERVICE

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Bakhita’s story summons us to become ever more vigilant to violence against women by their traffickers. How can the education of women and young girls help in the abolition against human trafficking? What can be done to educate young men about gender equality and respect toward women?
- James Luther Adams, a Unitarian parish minister, social activist, and prolific writer believed that society is not transformed by individual changes in attitude, but by the mobilization of social power through people working together. Do you agree or disagree? Why? How do the principles of Catholic social thought challenge us to transform individual change to institutional change? How can working together abolish the practice of modern day slavery in today’s world?

Optional: Reader 11 links his/her chain to reader 10’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 12: “...it was my turn. I could not move for the life of me, but one look at the lady of the house and at her raised whip immediately made me get on the ground. The woman, having been told to spare my face, began to make six cuts on my breast and up to sixty on my stomach. Then forty-eight on my right arm. I could not tell you how I felt. It seemed I was dying at every moment, especially when they rubbed in the salt.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- Imagine that you are in the room with Bakhita. What can you do to bring her solace? Can your words serve as a healing balm for her battered mind, soul, and body? Learn from Bakhita what gives her the courage to keep on living.
- Many studies show that there is an increase in the demand for commercial sex services surrounding large sporting events such as the Super Bowl, World Series, NBA and NHL playoffs, professional golf tournaments, horse races, as well international sporting events including the summer and winter Olympics. Do you believe this to be the case? Why do you think this happens?



Optional: Reader 12 links his/her chain to reader 11’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.



Reader 13: “Lying in a pool of blood, I was then carried to bed, where I remained for hours, unconscious. When I regained consciousness, I saw my companions next to me, who, in comparison with me, suffered atrociously.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- What are some of the health consequences of trafficked persons?
- What aspects of trafficking weigh most heavily on your heart or make you most angry?
- Today, boys and girls under the age of 18 are involved in conflicts worldwide. Why are children more likely to become child soldiers if they are separated from their families, displaced from their homes, living in combat zones, or have limited access to education?
- How can a child live through, and come out of a situation, as described above, and go on to lead a “normal” life? Why do we as a society allow our children to become weapons of war? What can you and your parish community do to protect today’s children and future generation from modern slavery?

Optional: Reader 13 links his/her chain to reader 12’s chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 14: “For more than a month, the three of us were condemned to stay there, spread out on a mat without a cloth to dry the water that constantly flowed from our wounds, which the salt had left half opened. The scars are still with me. I can honestly say that the reason I did not die was that the Lord miraculously destined me for better things.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- How does Bakhita’s story challenge your perception of those experiencing trafficking?
- What message does Bakhita have for those who have renounced God because of excessive suffering?
- The church is often viewed as providing social services, social witness, education, and social action. What percentage of time and effort does your community devote to social change, to providing support for trafficked persons, and to combatting human trafficking? What obstacles have you observed that interfere with social change efforts?

Optional: Reader 14 links his/her chain to reader 13’s chain.



Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Reader 15: “[The Turkish] general...since he had a large quantity of slaves, he chose ten, I was among them. He sold the rest. We left Kordofan on camels, and after a number of days of traveling we stopped at a hotel in Khartoum. There he sent out word that he had slaves for sale. The Italian consul, Calisto Legnani, came forward. He asked me to bring him coffee. He looked me over from head to foot, but I did not think he had any plans of buying me. I learned that he did only the next day...This time I was truly lucky, because the new master was very good and very fond of me. My job was to help the chambermaid with housework. I did not get scolded, punished, or beaten; it did not seem true that one could enjoy such peace and tranquility. The years or more passed without change.” (Excerpt taken from *Bakhita: From Slave to Saint* by Roberto Italy Zanini.)

On arrival in Genoa, Mr. Legnani, at the request of his friend, Augusto Michieli’s wife, Bakhita accompanied the new family who settled in Zianigo (near Mirano Veneto). When their daughter Mimmina was born, Bakhita became her babysitter and friend. A change in her owner’s circumstances meant that she was entrusted to the Canossian Sisters Institute in Venice. It was there that Bakhita came to know about God whom she had experienced in her heart without knowing his existence. “Seeing the sun, the moon, and the stars,” Bakhita said to herself, “who could be the Master of these beautiful things?” And she felt a great desire to see God, to know, and to pay God homage. (The Holy See: <http://bit.ly/1Trv880>)

Pause for a moment of silence.

Leader invites participants to pause for a moment of personal or communal reflection.

- As a slave, Bakhita was subjected to various forms of abuse and stripped of her dignity as well as her cultural identity. She was taken in by a family who treated her with respect. Reflect on what you have learned from Bakhita about suffering, compassion, nonviolence, hope, and trust. How did Bakhita’s experience of slavery prepare her to be of service to God’s people as a Canossian sister?
- In what ways did Bakhita’s story change or challenge your assumptions about human trafficking?
- Human trafficking has become an increasingly common topic of conversation. We hear it mentioned in our news segments, we see it as the subject of our movies and documentaries, and we even hear about it in discussions around the Super Bowl. However, little is said of the root causes that lead to human trafficking, potential solutions, and campaigns to end trafficking. Why is this the case?
- What are some ways that people are combatting slavery today? Are you able to identify three people and three organizations that work to end human trafficking and provide support to trafficked persons?
- What’s one thing you can see yourself doing as a response to combatting modern day slavery?



Optional: Reader 14 links his/her chain to reader 1's chain.

Leader: We adore you, Jesus, here and in every community gathered in our world today.

All: And we bless you, because, by your example of justice, you call us to walk with Bakhita and our trafficked sisters and brothers to end the scourge of human trafficking that plagues our world.

Leader invites participants to hold the chain as the group sings the African spiritual, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble
(Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble)
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross?
Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble
(Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble)
Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross?

Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble
(Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble)
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?

Were, were you there when the stone was rolled away?
Were you there when the stone was rolled away?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble
(Tremble, tremble, tremble, tremble)
Were you there when the stone was rolled away?



HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS MODERN DAY SLAVERY



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- **Education for Justice** provides a Toolbox on Anti-Human Trafficking consisting of a variety of prayers, litanies, prayer services, and film discussion guides rooted in scripture and Catholic Social thought.
 - <https://educationforjustice.org/resources/anti-human-trafficking-toolbox>
- **U.S. Sisters Against Human Trafficking** is a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor services, and engages in advocacy in an effort to eradicate modern-day slavery.
 - <http://www.sistersagainstrafficking.org>
- **UNANIMA International** is a non-governmental organization (NGO) advocating on behalf of women and children, trafficked persons, immigrants and refugees, and the environment.
 - <http://www.unanima-international.org>
- **Polaris Project** offers an overview of human trafficking and works toward long-term solutions.
 - <http://www.polarisproject.org>
- **Slavery Footprint's** website allows consumers to learn how their consumption habits may contribute to the demand for exploitative labor and to take steps to make ethical purchases by shopping for Fair Trade products. Fair Trade certification ensures that no child or slave labor contributed to the making of a product
 - <http://slaveryfootprint.org>
- **Slavery Map** is a crowdsourced map that allows people to map documented cases of human trafficking in their communities.
 - <http://www.slaverymap.org>
- **Free the Slaves** is a community-based model dedicated to alerting the world about slavery's global comeback and to catalyzing a resurgence of the abolition movement.
 - <http://www.freetheslaves.net>
- **The U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor & Combat Trafficking in Persons** leads the United States' global engagement against human trafficking and pursues policies, partnerships, and practices that uphold the "3P" paradigm of prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims, and preventing trafficking.
 - <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/>



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