

National Human Trafficking Awareness
Day
Prayer Service & Toolkit
January 11, 2024



**ALLIANCE TO END
HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Founded and Supported by U.S. Catholic Sisters

“Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that’s become ever more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals, but the foundational values of society.”

– Pope Francis

Introduction:



National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11 raises awareness of the persistent issue of human trafficking. This day is specifically dedicated to **awareness and prevention** of the illegal practice. Since the Senate established this day of observance in 2007, it has drawn massive public support from individual donations to government-organized events. The horrific injustice of human trafficking can affect people of any race and background, and on this day we are all called to fight human trafficking wherever it exists. Learn more [HERE](#).

Human Trafficking Background and Overview:

- Human Trafficking is a \$150 billion world market that impacts an estimated 50 million people worldwide.
- Victims of human trafficking are hidden in our neighborhoods. They are being recruited from our schools. They are growing our food, working in our nail salons, and they are there when we go on vacation and stay in hotels. They are hidden in plain sight.
- This affront to human dignity happens through force, fraud, and coercion.
- Traffickers thrive where vulnerability is high; where people are desperate and their options are limited or nonexistent. People on the move and recent immigrants are at particular risk of exploitation by traffickers because of their precarious social and economic circumstances. The International

Organization for Migration estimates the number of international migrants to be at least 281 million people. They are refugees, asylum seekers, labor migrants, and those displaced by conflict or natural disasters. They are fleeing floods, famine, war, violence, endemic poverty, organized crime, political corruption, and the effects of climate change. They are both desperate and resilient. The adverse circumstances that force people to flee their homes can lead migrants to be deceived in exploitative recruitment abroad. Migration routes too often lead migrants into the hands of organized trafficking networks, exploitative employment, or situations of extortion.

- However, immigrants are not the only ones who are forced into a life of servitude. It's happening to our youth in our communities.
- Human trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal industry in the world. It is the second most lucrative and is soon expected to surpass the illegal drug trade. Drugs can be sold once, but people can be sold multiple times, with many victims being sold 15 to 30 times a day.
- Child online sexual exploitation is rampant. Furthermore, it's hard to detect, threatens lives, especially of the most vulnerable, and if unaddressed, will have daunting and irreversible impacts on families and society.

The Church's Position on Human Trafficking (USCCB):

- The elimination of human trafficking is a priority issue for the Catholic Church because every life is a gift from God and is sacred, it deserves to be protected and nurtured; we each have a responsibility to fight against the violation and degradation of our brothers and sisters.
- The Catechism of the Church forbids acts that cause the enslavement of humans. During the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Church further stated "slavery, prostitution, the selling of women, and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as mere tools for profits rather than free and responsible persons are infamies and supreme dishonor to the creator." (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965).
- In 2014, Pope Francis stated during his Declaration on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: "[M]odern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labor and prostitution, and organ trafficking, is a crime against humanity. Its victims

are from all walks of life, but are most frequently among the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.”

• Men and women religious have also played an integral part in the battle against human trafficking. In 2001, nearly 800 women leaders of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) passed a resolution dedicating over one million members “to work in solidarity with one another within our own religious communities and in the countries in which we are located to address insistently at every level the abuse and sexual exploitation of women and children . . .” [The Alliance to End Human Trafficking](#) is the domestic response to this call.

AEHT’s Anti-Trafficking Programs and Initiatives:

- *Education & Outreach:*

- Education and Awareness are key to helping prevent and end human trafficking! If you would like to schedule a presenter to come teach the basics of understanding human trafficking and how to prevent it, or create a customized presentation for your audience, please use our [speaker request form](#) to see if we have a presenter available in your area.
- We have prepared educational materials on a variety of topics related to human trafficking such as root causes, children, women, labor, pornography, migrants and refugees, sporting events, and organ removal among others. These 2-4 page guides are perfect for individuals or small groups who want to engage in deeper reflection on issues related to human trafficking. See the full list here: [AEHT Modules](#).
- Another great way to learn more about human trafficking is through radio, podcasts, and videos. We have curated a list of recommended media resources related to human trafficking for your ongoing education: [Human Trafficking Media Resources](#).
- The Stop Trafficking newsletter promotes awareness of human trafficking, provides best practices in advocacy, and recommends actions to counter human trafficking and empower survivors. [Read the latest Stop Trafficking newsletter here](#).

- *Coalition Building*

- We believe by working together and sharing our time, talent, and resources, we can have a greater impact on ending human tracking and supporting survivors across

the country. Please consider joining our network as a member today. Together we can realize a world without human trafficking and with a network of services and resources to inform the public, prevent the crime and assist survivors to achieve a fulfilling life!

- **Become a member of The Alliance to End Human Trafficking today:**

<https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.salsalabs.org/sitemembershipform/index.html>

- *Advocacy*

- [Catholic Social Teaching](#) proclaims that “action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world”¹ are a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel. In response to this call, AEHT will faithfully engage in advocacy that addresses both the root causes of human trafficking and the needs of victims and survivors.
- Here you can find helpful resources for engaging in effective advocacy, including how to plan a visit with your legislator. [See our advocacy resources.](#)
- Our advocacy priorities address the root causes of trafficking and their connections to other important global issues. [See our advocacy priorities.](#)
- Take action to end human trafficking, support survivors, and protect the vulnerable! See our [current advocacy campaigns.](#)
- Sign up to Receive the Latest News and Action Alerts From Alliance to End Human Trafficking: <https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.salsalabs.org/email-sign-up/index.html>

¹*Justice in the World, 1971.*

- *Access to Survivor Services*

- Hear from survivors who have directly benefited from our educational scholarships, direct support, and programming by members around the country. You can be part of this positive impact by joining us or donating today! [Survivor Stories](#)
- AEHT members are connected to organizations and houses across the country that provide a variety of services to survivors of human trafficking. Learn more about these houses and the work they are doing here: [Member Run Houses](#)
- One of the ways YOU can help support survivors of human trafficking is by supporting their ongoing education directly, donating to our scholarship fund, or

hiring them for a job. Learn more about these opportunities here: [Education & Employment](#)

Talking Points:

- Alliance to End Human Trafficking (AEHT) is a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor services, and engages in advocacy to eradicate human trafficking. We work to inform the public, prevent this assault on human dignity, and assist survivors to live fulfilling lives.
- Alliance To End Human Trafficking envisions a world without human trafficking with a network of services and resources to inform the public, prevent the crime, and assist survivors to achieve a fulfilling life.
- Our members include 200+ congregations of Catholic Sisters, coalitions and organizations working to end human trafficking and individuals who share our mission. *Ending human trafficking is everyone's work!*
- Prevention is key to ending human trafficking, so education and advocacy are necessary but women and men need access to services to help them heal as well.
- Pope Francis calls human trafficking one of the most troubling of the world's open wounds. It goes against our Catholic Social Teaching and robs people of their dignity.
- Many victims come from other countries where they are promised the American dream of getting an education and finding work only to have their passports confiscated, and fear of their safety or the safety of their family. They are taught not to trust law enforcement and speaking another language further diminishes their ability to seek help. Their dreams are turned into nightmares when they are forced to enter the sex industry, labor on farms, in hotels among other industries for 12 -to 14-hour days with no hopes of escaping their new-found life.

Opening Song:

Choose an appropriate song or hymn

Scripture Reading:

Light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.

Ephesians 9:14

Response to the Reading:

Leader: It is only in the past decade or so that most people heard of human trafficking. Many people still believe that "It does not happen here." Human trafficking occurs in every nation and city, suburb and rural areas. Everywhere. The more people who are aware that human trafficking is occurring in their neighborhood, the greater chance of people not becoming victims, and the greater chance of victims becoming survivors. Let us take a moment and reflect on how each of us can bring light to this issue.



Prayers of Petition:

God, we ask that you show us what is ours to do to bring light to the offense of human trafficking so that others may not become victims. **Leader:** Our response to each petition is: ***Loving God, hear our prayer.***

- For light to show each of us steps we can take to decrease our complicity as consumers to labor trafficking
- For all those being exploited online, may they be enlightened on how to safely end these relationships
- For migrants and new immigrants, may they be safeguarded from trafficking by openness and care of those they meet and by appropriate legislation that will help them be less vulnerable
- For all those who do not have safe housing and are vulnerable to trafficking, may they find a protective and loving community in which to live
- For providers of human trafficking, may they restore life to the survivors of human trafficking
- For traffickers, we ask that their eyes be opened to the human dignity of all people

Message of Pope Francis:

Journeying for dignity, against human trafficking, without leaving anyone behind. I would like to repeat some of the beautiful expressions: “Walking *with open eyes* to recognize the processes that lead millions of people, especially young people, to be trafficked for brutal exploitation. Walking *with an attentive heart* to discover the daily paths of thousands of people in search of freedom and dignity. Walking *with hope guiding our feet* to promote anti-trafficking actions. Walking *together hand in hand* to support one another and build a culture of encounter that leads to the conversion of hearts and inclusive societies, capable of unmasking stereotypes and protecting the rights of every person.

I hope that many people will accept your invitation to walk together against trafficking: walking together with those who are destroyed by the violence of sexual and labor exploitation; walking together with migrants, displaced persons, those who are searching for a place to live in peace and family. Together with you, young people, to reaffirm courageously the value of human dignity.

[Pope Francis, 8 February 2023](#)



Leader:

Let's take a few moments of quiet to consider: what one action can I take to increase awareness of human trafficking in my neighborhood?

[Moment of Silence]



Closing Prayer:

God, help us see that human trafficking affects all of us. Show us what is ours to do to increase awareness of human trafficking so that people do not become victims. Help us become more aware of how social media, poverty, homelessness, immigration status may make children and others vulnerable to exploitation. Enlighten us on how our obsession with consumerism serves to feed the demand for cheap labor. Help us to commit to incorporate one action in our lives that will serve to stop the demand and help people not become victims of human trafficking. Amen.

Closing Song:

Choose an appropriate song or hymn

Some suggestions:

- Christ, be our light *Bernadette Farrell*
- Here I Am, Lord *John Michael Talbot*

Possible Actions:



1. Contact the Governor of your state. Ask them to ensure that the National Human Trafficking Hotline phone number (**888-373-7888**) and text line (**233 733** or BeFree) is featured prominently on all state websites and in all state-run restroom on Interstate highways
Note: This toll free hotline and text line answers calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year in more than 200 languages.
2. Engage with your community to create and lead awareness campaigns about human trafficking. Encourage grassroots efforts to educate community members on recognizing the signs of trafficking, reporting mechanisms, and supporting survivors.
3. Work with legal experts and advocacy groups to identify and propose legislative changes that strengthen anti-trafficking laws. Advocate for policies that increase penalties for traffickers, protect survivors, and improve the overall legal framework for combating human trafficking.
4. View our new [10th-Anniversary video](#) and share it with others!
5. Purchasing survivor-made goods is a fun way to help support survivors who are learning new job skills and working to become independent. Check out [this page](#) for a list of organizations that sell fair trade and survivor made items.
6. [Donate](#) to support the work of AEHT or support a local anti-trafficking organization.

Social Media Post Suggestions:



"You've got what it takes to change this world not because of anything you do, but because of what God can and does through you."

Dan Dematte, Holiness Revolution



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#EndHumanTrafficking #WearBlueDay

The countdown to #WearBlueDay is on! Participating on January 11 is easy – all you need is a piece of blue clothing. Consider sharing a photo on social media using the hashtag #WearBlueDay and spread the word. Find out more <https://go.dhs.gov/ZSX> #WearBlueDay #EndHumanTrafficking

Learn more about @DHSBlueCampaign and #WearBlueDay here: dhs.gov/blue-campaign/wearblueday

JAN. 11, 2023

#WEARBLUEDAY



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Join us in wearing blue on January 11th to help bring awareness to #humantrafficking with @DHSBlueCampaign. I wear blue because [*insert why you are wearing blue*]. Share your photos with #WearBlueDay

Today is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day and #WearBlueDay. On this day, the Alliance and Blue Campaign invite the public to take photos of themselves, friends, family, and colleagues wearing blue clothing and share them on social media with the hashtag #WearBlueDay #EndHumanTrafficking.