

PRAYER RESOURCE GUIDE 1

Today, I call heaven and earth to witness against you: I am offering you life or death, blessing or curse.

Choose life then, so that you and your descendants may live.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20



STOP THE DEMAND
FOR TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN & CHILDREN



All-loving and merciful God,
You call us to love one another.

Forgive us when we allow our hearts to harden.

Show us the ways we can work together to stop the demand for trafficking in persons.

In your tender mercy be with those who are caught in the violence of trafficking; open our hearts to receive your call to choose and reverence all life.

Give us all courage to act in the name of Jesus,

to remove the anguish and suffering from the torn women and children of this world.

We ask this through Jesus, our companion and friend.

Amen.

Kay Chernush for the U.S. State Department

The buying and selling of persons, especially women and children for sexual exploitation, is today's most common form of slavery. The practice is driven by demand from buyers of sex (according to statistics, they are mostly men), which is fuelled by pornography and profit. Sexual exploitation and prostitution are rooted in poverty and the structural inequalities between women and men, more particularly in discrimination against women. These oppressive acts are inherently violent and demeaning of all persons. We campaign to stop the demand for trafficked women and children. (excerpt from the UNANIMA International vision statement)



Theological Reflection

Some questions to guide your reflection

1. What personal experience have you had that relates to any part of the campaign vision statement?
2. Does this text bring to mind any other scripture passages?
3. What patterns in our society contribute to the destruction of dignity and the reverence of life?
4. What elements in our particular culture promote the increase in demand for sexual trafficking?
5. What is your experience of sexuality being used as power? Was God there?
6. How do you see God calling you as you reflect on this statement?
 - a. What concrete action can you take? What can you commit to?
 - b. When?



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SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

The following scripture passages may be used for your prayer and reflection.

Ecclesiasticus 4:1 Contemplate the tears of the oppressed.

Demand demeans the dignity of all human beings, especially the most vulnerable. We hold the tears of those who are bought and sold for profit as we pray to know how we are called to stop the demand.

Isaiah 58:6-13 Is not this the sort of fast?

We contemplate the fast God asks of us. We contemplate the violence of trafficking. We pray that by our concrete actions, we may work together to do away with all that creates ruin in the lives of those who are trafficked. May God bless us with saving justice as we work to stop demand.

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 Release the prisoners.

The buying and selling of women and children for sexual exploitation is today's most common form of slavery. We pray for the grace to work for freedom and to stop the demand that enslaves so many of our brothers and sisters.

Psalms 139 I have formed you ...

"All human beings ... are clothed in the same personal dignity" (Pope Benedict XVI). We are made in the image and likeness of God. Demand is fuelled by pornography and profit. Help us to affirm the dignity of all people by working to address all the issues that fuel demand.

Jeremiah 29:11 I know the plans I have in mind for you ... peace, not disaster.

The abuse of power, poverty, the structural inequalities between women and men create disaster in our world.

This is not what our Creator intends for us. We pray that we may work toward a world of peace and equality. We pray to stop the demand.

Lamentations 2:18-19 Cry then to the Lord ...

Let us cry out to our God in lamentation for the pain of trafficked women and children; let us cry out with them against the violent act of trafficking and the demand that perpetuates it.

Mark 10:13-15 Jesus and the children

Children are bought and sold, oppressed and demanded for sexual exploitation. Those who profit from the sex industry drive the demand and destroy the lives of thousands of children. We pray to remember the innocence that is destroyed by trafficking and by the demand for children.

Mark 5:25-34 Cure of the woman with a hemorrhage

What does the woman's faith say to us? What do we ask of God as we contemplate the suffering of the vulnerable; the suffering of the lives of those destroyed by the demand for trafficking?

Luke 24:1-8 The angel's message

"He is not here. He has risen." May all our lives be blessed with hope. May we come together as we look for ways to live God's call.



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