



BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT *because we are Catholic.*



“This Holy Year will bring to the fore the richness of Jesus’ mission echoed in the words of the prophet: to bring a word and gesture of consolation to the poor, to proclaim liberty to those bound by new forms of slavery in modern society...to restore dignity to all those from whom it has been robbed.”

– Pope Francis

POPE FRANCIS HAS DECLARED 2016 AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR OF MERCY. HE IS ASKING US TO BE MORE AWARE OF GOD’S MERCY IN OUR LIVES AND, JUST AS IMPORTANTLY, TO FIND WAYS WE CAN EXTEND THAT MERCY TO OTHERS THROUGH SERVICE.

Year of Mercy: Liberty for Victims of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking – modern day slavery – is present in every community – whether affluent or underprivileged. Women, men and children are working against their will – sometimes in households and businesses we pass by every day. No community is free of this scourge. Pope Francis has repeatedly asked the world to find ways to expose and combat trafficking.

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is the control of one person by another, depriving them of their freedom for the purpose of exploitation – including sexual exploitation and forced labor or services. It often starts out subtly.

- A well-dressed woman in a suburban mall approaches a young girl with offers of a better job or tells her how pretty she is and she could model.
- A boyfriend slowly entraps his girlfriend into the word of sex trafficking.
- An immigrant is lured by false promises of a high-paying job.

All of these unsuspecting victims fall prey to the promise of a better life. Many of the victims come to the United States for more opportunities only to be fooled into a situation that they cannot escape.

The crime takes on many forms. Labor trafficking is often visible in plain sight but just as easily overlooked. Restaurants, nail salons, the agricultural industry, private households and sweatshops are a few places where forced labor is widespread. Even young children selling magazines door-to-door are often victims.

Sister Marilyn Wilson and Terry Jelley run the Catholic Network to End Human Trafficking (CNET). They work within the Diocese of San Jose and area law-

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WORKS OF MERCY

The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

– Catechism of the Catholic Church- 2nd Edition

enforcement agencies to assist victims and educate others about the horrors of this modern day slavery.

Sister Marilyn's involvement in this issue grew slowly as she began to see the signs of trafficking around her community. Terry worked for the airline industry and was aware of human trafficking for many years. After retiring and entering the pastoral ministry program at Santa Clara University she soon devoted her life to combating the problem. When the weight of this issue seems too much to bear, Sister Marilyn recalls a survivor's story and this motivates her to keep fighting, to keep educating and to keep saving.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Alert authorities to a situation that looks suspicious, it helps them track these offenders. Never confront a person you suspect may be a victim unless they are hurt and need immediate help. (Their assailant could be watching.) Observant citizens can be the best way to combat this horrific problem. These traffickers prey on ignorance so it is vital that we all know the trafficking warning signs.

Advocating and building awareness of the situation is another way to help. A law recently passed that requires businesses to inform their patrons of human trafficking by displaying posters in their establishments. Sadly, this is not being enforced everywhere. You can help spread the word by contacting your local District Attorney's office and see how they comply with this new law.

Catholic Charities is always in need of volunteers and items to assist the victims of trafficking as they seek to rebuild their lives. Supporting groups that provide housing and assistance for these victims is crucial to the success of ending this horrific practice.

Recently the Oakland Diocese, Catholic Charities of the East Bay and Alameda County opened the first of many safe houses for victims of sex trafficking. Bishop Michael Barber believes that "it's imperative that the church take the lead in building an awareness of this and offer victims a safe place to rediscover their dignity and self-worth."

By becoming a responsible consumer you can purchase items that do not come from sweatshops and purchase free trade items like coffee, tea or chocolate.

Pray for the victims.

WARNING SIGNS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Signs of physical abuse
- Deprived of food, water, sleep or medical care
- Restricted communication
- Large numbers of occupants in a single residence
- Always accompanied when outside their residence
- Outside locks on doors and windows
- Lack of identification documentation
- Sex, service and migrant exploitation



Sister Marilyn Wilson, Terry Jelley and Deacon Warren Hoy

To alert authorities, plug this number into your phone- 1-888-3737-888 or text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733)

For more information, go to:

California Catholic Conference:
[cacatholic.org/policies-issues/human dignity](http://www.catholic.org/policies-issues/human-dignity)

Vatican Website:
<http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>

Year of Mercy Website
<http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en.html>