January, 2014
Human Trafficking Month
Prayer

Leader: We gather in unity with all those who are in captivity because of the epidemic of human trafficking in our world. We take minute to breathe peace into our hearts and into the world.

Creator God, you desire that all might have fullness of life:  LORD, HAVE MERCY!
Spirit of Love, you invite us to care for all you have made:  CHRIST, HAVE MERCY!
Merciful One, you summon us to free captives everywhere:  LORD, HAVE MERCY!

Reader:
Marina is a girl who has all hope stolen from her. On the streets from an abusive home at age 12, she wandered alone. She scavenged food from dumpsters and spent cold nights under bridges in the company of other runaways. Approached by a nice looking man who spoke kindly to her as she was panhandling on a street, Marina thought her prayers were answered. He offered her a position looking after his children. He promised money, a home and safety. Unfortunately, Marina found a place to live, but was virtually a slave in the household. It wasn’t too long before the man began to abuse her sexually.

Leader:
This is a common story and also a frequent way that young girls are lured into a life of slavery. Others are directly approached to provide sex for money. Both boys and girls are promised jobs that become, in fact, indentured servitude. With all these victims we raise our voices with passion and supplication in these words from the Psalms:

(Participants may each read a petition or they may be done antiphonally)

Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against the ungodly; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.

Save me, O God, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues.

Deliver me and rescue me from the hands of the wicked, whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful.

You hear, O God, the desire of the afflicted; you give them courage, and you listen to their cry, defending the orphan and the oppressed.

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.

God is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Why, O God, do you stand far off?
Leader: We cry out in prayerful solidarity. And yet that is not all our God asks of us. Action for justice is called for. Here is a short list of ways we can do that.

(Read the list slowly. Hear where God is inviting you to act.)

- Research legislation related to human trafficking in your state. Contact your legislative leaders about pending bills.

- Get signs and brochures from [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking) and put them in libraries, schools, and other public places.

- Adapt and use the sample letter at [www.cbisonline.com/page.asp?id=1017](http://www.cbisonline.com/page.asp?id=1017) when you travel and stay at motels/hotels.

- Contact your community or parish justice leader and make sure some education about human trafficking is happening.

- Go on line to learn about those who are working against human trafficking: Polaris Project, ECPAT-USA, and Stop Enslavement.

- Check to see if there are shelters for trafficked boys/girls or men/women in your area. Do they have any needs you can assist with?

- Spread the word: talk about the issue with your acquaintances.

Leader: God, we are in awe of your grace. You raise up in every generation witnesses to take up the torch of justice and freedom. Strengthen us as we hear the call to confront the reality of human trafficking. May we help to lead the exodus from slavery to freedom for those bound victims of greed and power.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen