



"If we close our eyes and ears, we will be accomplices of human trafficking: Pope Francisco"



February 8th, World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking"

## Opening prayer.



Lord God,

Today we gather in your presence to reflect on a painful reality that affects millions of human beings around the world: human trafficking.

We ask you to open our hearts to the injustice that so many people, created in Your image and likeness just like us, are suffering today through slavery and exploitation.

Grant us the courage to raise our voices for those who cannot speak, to see those who are invisible, and to act with compassion and justice.

May Your love inspire us to fight for the dignity, freedom, and rights of every person, without distinction.

We pray for all those trapped in trafficking, that they may find the strength to be freed and the help they need. May justice be done, and may all live in the freedom You have given us.

Guide our steps to be instruments of change, love, and hope in a world where injustice still prevails.

We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

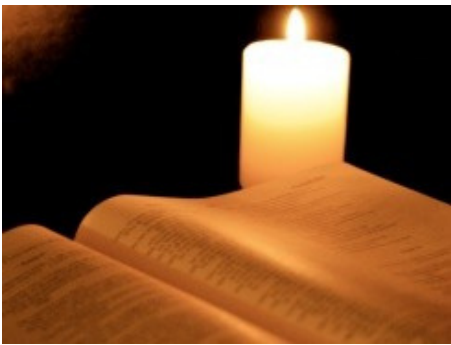


## Introduction

February 8th is International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking, in memory of St. Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese woman who was a victim of human trafficking in the 19th century and fought against slavery. Her feast day has become a day to raise awareness about the importance of protecting trafficking victims and fighting this injustice.



"The World Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking is an opportunity for us to come together in solidarity and reflection on the harsh reality faced by millions of people worldwide due to exploitation and abuse. Through prayer, we can ask for their liberation, healing, and dignity, and also commit ourselves to being an active voice against this injustice. Every prayer and action, no matter how small, has the power to transform lives and contribute to a fairer future. Today, more than ever, we need to remind ourselves that we all have a responsibility to fight for the freedom and dignity of every human being.



### **Suggestions for the Word of God**

Isaiah 58:6

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

This verse reminds us of the call to fight against oppression, to set free those who are bound, and to seek justice for the vulnerable. It’s an invitation to act and bring justice for those who suffer.

Luke 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

These words of Jesus remind us that He came to free the oppressed and the captives. He invites us to follow His example and fight for the freedom of those who suffer from human trafficking.



**Proverbs 31:8-9**

**“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”**

This verse emphasizes the importance of being defenders of those who have no voice, such as the victims of human trafficking. It calls us to fight for justice and defend the most vulnerable

**AS A CLARETIAN FAMILY, WE WANT TO BRING TO MIND HOW OUR SAINT, FATHER CLARET, CONFRONTED THIS EVIL DURING HIS MISSION AS ARCHBISHOP OF SANTIAGO DE CUBA (1850-1857). SOME KEY ASPECTS OF HIS DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF THE SLAVES:**



**Denunciation of slavery**

**Claret considered slavery to be an immoral institution contrary to Christian principles. In his homilies and writings, he denounced slavery as a form of oppression and exploitation.**

### Defense of human dignity

Claret defended the human dignity of slaves, emphasizing that they were children of God and deserved to be treated with respect and dignity. He advocated for their freedom and the abolition of slavery.

### Material and spiritual assistance

Claret provided material and spiritual assistance to slaves. He regularly visited plantations and barracks, where he preached and administered sacraments. He also distributed food, clothing, and medicine among the slaves.

### Promotion of education

Claret considered education to be key to the liberation of slaves. He promoted the education of slaves, establishing schools and training programs for them.



### Opposition to the slave trade

Claret firmly opposed the slave trade, which was a common practice in Cuba during his time. He denounced the trade as a form of exploitation and oppression, and advocated for its abolition.

### Influence on the abolition of slavery

Although Claret did not live to see the abolition of slavery in Cuba, his work and defense of the rights of slaves contributed to creating a climate of opinion that favored abolition. Slavery was finally abolished in Cuba in 1886.

"Questions for reflection".

1. What can we do as a Claretian family in the face of this evil that affects our world, our society?
2. What does the phrase of Pope Francis: "If we close our eyes and ears, we will be accomplices of human trafficking" inspire in us?



Lord God,

Thank you for allowing us to reflect on this painful reality that affects so many people around the world. We ask that You not leave us indifferent to the suffering of our brothers and sisters, but rather that You move us to act with love and justice.

May we, guided by Your compassion, become instruments of liberation and hope for those trapped in the darkness of exploitation. Strengthen our faith so that, with Your help, we can fight for a more just world, where the dignity of every human being is respected and protected.

We pray for all the victims of human trafficking, that they may find comfort, freedom, and a future filled with peace.

May Your light illuminate the path toward justice and the restoration of those who have been deprived of their freedom and humanity.

We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus.