

Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery Destitute peoples and the message of Jesus Christ

PREFACE

Following a wish expressed by Pope Francis, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, together with the FIAMC (the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations), are organising a preparatory workshop on 2-3 November 2013 in the Casina Pio IV. This will examine human trafficking and modern slavery in order to establish the real state of this phenomenon and an agenda to combat this heinous crime. For example, the natural sciences today can provide new tools that can be used against this new form of slavery, such as a digital registry to compare the DNA of unidentified missing children (including cases of illegal adoption) with that of their family members who have reported their disappearance.¹

No one can deny that 'the trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights' and is an accelerator of criminal profits in this new century. The Second Vatican Council itself observed that 'slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as instruments of gain rather than free and responsible persons' are 'in-famies' which 'poison human society, debase their perpetrators' and constitute 'a supreme dishonour to the Creator'.² In one of the few documents of the Magisterium of the Popes on this issue, quoted above, the Blessed John Paul II added that 'such situations are an affront to fundamental values which are shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person'. The horrible in-

crease in this crime, the Pope continued, is a new challenge for the social sciences and natural sciences in the context of contemporary globalisation: 'the alarming increase in the trade in human beings is one of the pressing political, social and economic problems associated with the process of globalisation; it presents a serious threat to the security of individual nations and a question of international justice which cannot be deferred'.³

According to the recent *UNODC 2012 Report on Trafficking*,⁴ the UN started being aware of this increasing crime only in the year 2000, together with the emerging effects of globalisation, and subsequently drafted a *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, supplementing the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, which has been signed by 117 parties.⁵ According to the *2012 Report*, the International Labour Organisation estimated that between 2002 and 2010 '20.9 million people were victims of forced labour globally. This estimate also includes victims of human trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation' (p. 1). Each year, it is estimated that about 2 million people are victims of sexual trafficking, 60% of whom are girls. Human organ trafficking reaches almost 1% of that figure, thus affecting around 20,000 people who are forced or deceived into giving up an organ (liver, kidney, pancreas, cornea, lung, even the heart), not without the complicity of doctors, nurses and other medical staff, who have pledged to follow Hippocrates' oath *Primum non nocere* instead. But these chilling figures 'represent only the tip of the iceberg,

¹ Prof. José A. Lorente (University of Granada), DNA-PROKIDS program, www.dna-prokids.org

² *Gaudium et Spes*, 27, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

³ Letter of John Paul II to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran on the Occasion of the International Conference "Twenty-First Century Slavery – The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking In Human Beings", www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20020515_tauran_en.html

⁴ www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Trafficking_in_Persons_2012_web.pdf

⁵ http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en



as criminals generally go to great lengths to prevent the detection of their activities' (p. 16). Some observers speculate that, within ten years, human trafficking will surpass drugs and weapons trafficking to become the most profitable criminal activity in the world. Recent trends, however, indicate that human trafficking is already in the first place, so that far from being a declining social crime, it is becoming ever more threatening.⁶ International sex trafficking is not limited to poor and undeveloped areas of the world – it is a problem in virtually every region of the globe. Countries with large (often legal) sex industries create the demand for trafficked women and girls, while countries where traffickers can easily recruit provide the supply. Generally, economically depressed countries provide the easiest recruitment for traffickers. The regions that produce the most sex trafficking victims are the former Soviet republics, Asia, and Latin America.

Because of the enormous sums of money involved and the human scandal and moral degradation of this traffic, which lead to pessimism and resignation,⁷ many international institutions often turn their backs on this tragedy. This is why it is so important for the PAS and the PASS, together with the Federation of Catholic Medical Associations, to follow the Pope's wish directly and *sine glossa*. Today, against these new forms of slavery we need to adopt the venerable attitude of the Catalan Jesuit St. Peter Claver who saw African slaves in Latin America as fellow Christians and, when he made his solemn profession in 1622, signed in Latin: *Petrus Claver, aethiopum semper servus* (Peter Claver, always servant of the Africans).

In short, this great saint embodied the Christian revolution, unknown to the Greeks and the Romans and to all previous civilisations, which began explicitly with the famous letter to Philemon of St. Paul who urged him to consider Onesimus 'no longer as a slave, but as more than a slave, as a dear brother'. In other words, we must declare in our time with the Second Vatican Council: 'everyone must consider his neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus'. In definitive terms, we must make our own the very words of the Lord: 'whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me' (Mt. 25:40).

We must thus be grateful to Pope Francis for identifying one of the most important social tragedies of our times and having enough confidence in our Catholic institutions to instruct us to organise this workshop. As he said during the canonisation of the Mexican saint, Guadalupe García Zavala, 'this is called "touching the flesh of Christ". The poor, the abandoned, the sick and the marginalised are the flesh of Christ. And Mother Lupita touched the flesh of Christ and taught us this behaviour: not to feel ashamed, not to fear, not to find "touching Christ's flesh" repugnant. Mother Lupita had realized what "touching Christ's flesh" actually means'.⁸ Pope Francis' words are a clear reaction, following of Jesus Christ's message, to this new form of contemporary slavery which constitutes an abhorrent violation of the dignity and rights of human beings.

+ MARCELO SÁNCHEZ SORONDO

⁶ María de los Ángeles Palacio de Arato, *Trata de personas y prostitución en la provincia de Córdoba*, Córdoba (Rep. Argentina) 2013, p. 17.

⁷ *The Whistleblower*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Whistleblower is an important documentary film about this issue.

⁸ Homily of Pope Francis, Saint Peter's Square, Seventh Sunday of Easter, 12 May 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130512_omelia-canonizzazioni_en.html

STATEMENT ON TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Vatican City, November 2013

Each human being is a free person, whether man, woman, girl or boy, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people – men, women, girls and boys – are equal and have the same freedom and dignity constitutes a grave crime against humanity.

Despite the efforts of many, trafficking in human beings – the most extensive form of slavery in our twenty-first century – is a plague on a vast scale in many countries across the world. Victims are hidden away in private homes, in illegal establishments, in factories, on farms, behind closed doors, in families, houses and other places in the cities, villages and slums of the world's richest and poorest nations. This situation is not improving but, on the contrary, is probably deteriorating.

There is now a compelling need to put an end to trafficking in human beings and all forms of exploitation, particularly prostitution, forced labour, the harvesting of human organs and the use of children as drug dealers and in the production of pornographic material, especially on the Internet.

Trafficking in human beings in all its forms, and in particular trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution, must be declared a crime against humanity. Traffickers should be prosecuted on the basis of clear international and national laws, including the confiscation of the profits derived from their illegal activities, and the victims ought to be fully compensated from such funds.

All stakeholders, at all levels, have a moral and legal duty to eradicate this grave violation of human rights and strive to ensure that all human beings co-exist in freedom, equality, harmony and peace, in accordance with the values common to our shared humanity. With the support of academics, moral and religious leaders, together with the influence of a global movement and social networks, we must expose these hidden crimes by using today's technology and working through good and just national and international institutions. **It is our moral imperative to make ours the last generation that has to fight the trade in human lives.**

We suggest that:

The Holy See

1. *Signs and ratifies the 1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.*
2. *Signs and ratifies the 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the 'Palermo Protocol').*
3. *Ratifies the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.*
4. *Commits the Permanent Missions of the Holy See in international organisations to insisting upon the urgency of a global strategy against trafficking in human beings.*
5. *Encourages the ratification of the International Convention on Migrant Workers (18 December 1990) and the Domestic Workers Convention of the ILO (16 June 2011) and advocates the inclusion of domestic workers and agricultural workers in national labour laws.*
6. *Promotes a movement to ensure the commitment of the Catholic Church and of all men and women of good will to stopping human trafficking and prostitution; one that is stated in the clearest and most decisive terms.*
7. *Encourages male religious Orders to work alongside female religious to alleviate the immediate suffering and long-term social exclusion of trafficked persons.*

International Organisations

8. *Forcefully stress that the trafficking in human beings is first and foremost a severe form of human-rights violation.*
9. *Insert as a specific objective the ending of trafficking in human beings in the new post-2015 Global Development Goals.*
10. *Take all possible actions to reduce the demand for all forms of exploitation damaging to human life and especially sexual exploitation.*
11. *Establish codes of conduct and specifically a policy of zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation*



and other abuses deleterious to human life and well-being.

Governments and National Authorities

12. Prepare national action plans to address trafficking in human beings, including measures to avoid re-trafficking, in cooperation with civil society organisations, including faith-based organisations.
13. Establish a national mechanism to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings and to protect its victims.
14. Ensure the necessary political, legal and financial support to the courts, the administrative offices and the security forces involved in action against trafficking in human beings at all levels, including enhanced 'Witness Protection Schemes' for those trafficked who are willing to testify in court or supply information to the police that improves the chances of apprehending traffickers and accessories to this crime.
15. Resist hasty, automatic and involuntary repatriation of those who have been trafficked and develop programmes for their housing and re-training, in the expectation that these will result – when desired – in the granting of a work permit in the host country.
16. Take urgent action to curb the demand that fuels all forms of exploitation, especially sexual exploitation, and criminalise the clients of prostitution as a deterrent against sex trafficking. This entails recognition that the trafficking of women, girls and boys is intrinsically linked with legalised prostitution systems and the commercialisation of sex.
17. Ensure that businesses are sufficiently regulated and held accountable for abuses that occur. Prohibit the supply of sexual material and advertisements for sexual activities in hotels and other public places.
18. Consider the key role of the Internet and especially pornography in facilitating the online recruitment of victims for trafficking in human beings and legislate against possible damage involved. Promote the incorporation, at point of sale, of 'default settings' on computers precluding access to pornographic material.
19. Introduce a compulsory system of birth registration, incorporating DNA identification in cases of risk or need.

20. Ensure the full confiscation of assets from criminals.
21. Ensure appropriate compensation to victims.
22. Target financial investigation, increased prosecution and conviction for traffickers.
23. Intensify the training of all relevant actors and particularly front-line officials in the work against trafficking in human beings.
24. Prioritise the eradication of child trafficking, including trafficking for sexual exploitation, and ensure the early identification of children who may be victims. To this end consider innovative means such as the establishment of national DNA databases to identify and prevent child trafficking.

Civil Society Organisations

25. Promote enhanced awareness campaigns concentrating specifically on different forms of exploitation, especially targeting the demand for sexual and labour exploitation.
26. Create networks of associations of professionals relevant to the work against trafficking in human beings and protecting and assisting its victims pro bono.
27. Create online resources to address this global phenomenon and to foster appropriate action.
28. Lobby for the establishment of free national 'Helplines' for victims and their wide public visibility.

The Business Community

29. Introduces strict codes of conduct and legislation on transparency for supply chains that are free of trafficked and other forms of enslaved labour.
30. Raises awareness about the serious risks and damage involved in the 'race to the bottom' to minimise labour costs, risks that exist per se and because they frequently entail forced labour.

Christians

31. Ensure the effective and systematic involvement of Bishops' Conferences, bishops, clergy, Congregations, parishes, schools and media instruments in knowledge about, and action against, trafficking in human beings.
32. Incorporate the subject of human trafficking into pastoral care in formation courses and create an advocacy community opposed to such trafficking

that is specially trained to dialogue with diplomatic communities, the business world, police/security forces and others on behalf of victims.

33. *Create working groups on the topic of trafficking in human beings, focusing on concrete actions and preparing position papers on key issues that could form the basis for future statements (by Church leaders).*
34. *Strengthen public knowledge and support popular understanding and quality research regarding all forms of exploitation associated with trafficking.*

All Religions

35. *Reinforce inter-confessional and ecumenical networks locally, regionally and internationally in order to create an ever-growing pool of resources to help victims.*
36. *Provide access for those from local churches and other faith groups to training and resources to promote an appropriate community-level response in all activities connected with trafficking in human beings.*

37. *Educate people on the phenomenon and scale of trafficking in human beings and stress that this is a grave form of human rights' violation.*

38. *Give victims access to monasteries, convents and religious houses and make every effort to assess their pressing needs.*

39. *Coordinate the work against trafficking in human beings by all faith-based organisations and ensure the active participation of nuncios, religious representatives and diplomats.*

40. *Establish a World Day of prayer, fasting, action, and reflection on trafficking in human beings.*

41. *Reach out to all people, women, men, girls, and boys, and raise awareness of their moral duty to refrain from any activities, including any involvement in the sex industry, that fuel trafficking in human beings.*

All People of Good Will

42. *Cooperate to forward these proposals, by acting together and sharing information, with the aim of eradicating this grossly inhumane practice of our times.*