

TRAFFICKING

“The gift of our internationality sharpens our consciousness of universal needs and calls us to foster within ourselves and others a responsible concern for the people of the world.

Alert to rapidly evolving conditions in a changing society we discern which conditions we are called to address.”

You Are Sent, #36, GD

Prepared by:
School Sisters of Notre Dame
**SHALOM NORTH
AMERICA**

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700,000 to 2 million women and children are trafficked across borders each year. International trafficking is a significant problem in the area of human rights and a gruesome crime, affecting men, women and children. Women are the predominant targets of traffickers and suffer harm of a different nature and degree than male victims, It is also necessary to treat trafficking in adult women and children separately. Children receive different kinds of rights and protections than adults, both internationally and domestically.

Invitation to Reflection

We invite you to engage in this process of theological reflection on the trafficking of women. We hope it will lead you to action that responds to calls from women religious around the world to address this issue.



We understand theological reflection as a process that brings together insights from experience, culture and our theological tradition and leads to thoughtful action as a result. By allowing yourself time to share this experience in your EFC, local community, or other small group, we believe that you will come to a better understanding of the magnitude, causes, and consequences of this abuse.

The goal of this packet is to introduce us to the suffering and oppression of women and children who are enslaved by trafficking. It will offer us ways to begin thinking about and then naming some ways we might respond to the problem.

How to begin

We propose the following steps.



1. View and discuss the video, **“Sisters and Daughters Betrayed”**

(available from your Province SHALOM contact) as a way to begin to comprehend the experience of women who are trafficked. You might also reread S. Joan Hart’s article, “The 21st Century Slave-Trade in our Backyard” in the May 2001 issue of *NAMA News* to see how close to home this issue is. Do you have any firsthand knowledge/experience of trafficking?

2. Reflect together on the fact sheets provided. Discuss the questions regarding the influences in our culture which contribute to this problem.
3. Pray together using *You Are Sent*, the scripture stories (see Tradition & Prayer sheet) OR passage that comes to mind when you think of this issue. *Ask yourselves:*

What does our theological tradition say about women, their roles, and our obligations to promote their human dignity?

What does *You Are Sent* have to say to this issue? Our SSND charism? The Mandate? The Call?

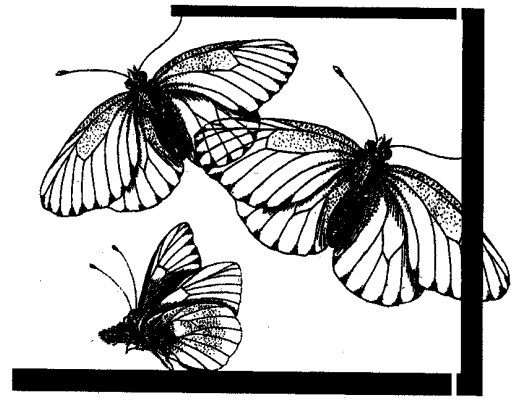
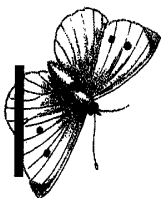
Are there other sources from our Catholic tradition that come to mind?

4. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, action, a *response that flows from our faith.*

What are we being called to do, now, in the concrete? What are you being called to do? Prayer is a given. Those in the ministry of prayer in a special way support and enrich our action. Out of our prayer, how else can we respond/act?

The Leadership Conference on Women Religious (LCWR) challenges us to “educate others.” With whom can you share your new awareness? The Union of International Superiors General (UISG) calls us to address this “insistently at every level.” How will you do that? How can we SSNDs who are “especially sensitive to youth and women” (*You Are Sent* C 24) find ways to oppose the trafficking of women and children?

5. Complete Action-Responses Sheet and mail to your SHALOM contact.
Prepared by S. Eileen Reilly, SSND



“The LCWR and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) stand in support of human rights by opposing the trafficking of women and children for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor and will educate others regarding the magnitude, causes and consequences of this abuse.”

LCWR and CMSM Joint Resolution

“Trafficking of women reaps greater economic gain than drugs, a significant factor in their exploitation. How mind-boggling is it to you to discover how far reaching and extensive is this practice of trafficking in women?”

Canadian Religious Conference, Ontario (CR00)

“We publicly declare our determination to address insistently at every level the abuse and sexual exploitation of women and children with particular attention to the trafficking of women which has become a lucrative, multinational business. ~

Declaration of Women Religious Leaders in Rome - UISG

EXPERIENCE

VIDEO

"Sisters and Daughters Betrayed"

The viewing of the video plus the discussion could take up to 69 minutes. After viewing the video, here are some questions to help the group process the experience:

Telling the story:

1. The external story--What did you learn about trafficking from viewing this video? Who's involved? What's going on? When? Where? How can it be happening?
2. The internal story--What feelings were touched in you as you recall the experience of watching the video?
3. From your telling of the story, what factors underlie this practice of treating women and children as commodities?

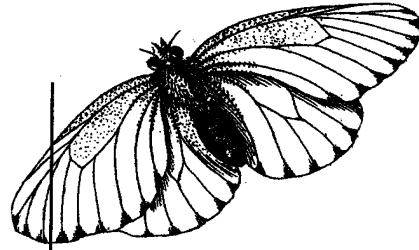
The video gives five factors:

- 1) entrenched criminal networks,
 - 2) government resistance to change,
 - 3) poverty,
 - 4) low status of women,
 - 5) migration from poor to rich nations.
4. Why is this "modern form of slavery" allowed to continue?

Prepared by S. Joan Hart, SSND

School Sisters of Notre Dame
SHALOM NORTH AMERICA
March, 2000

Trafficking in women and children is an international



"The internationality of our congregation affects all we are and do; it aids and challenges us in carrying out our mission."

YAS, #36, GD



phenomenon. Every country where SSNDs serve in ministry is either a sending or a receiving country.

Trafficking of human beings is the third largest source of profit for international organized crime, after drugs and arms, with revenue amounting to billions of dollars each year.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES



We will call her Eliza. Eliza, 14, worked cleaning hotel rooms in the Mexican state of Veracruz when a man, Rogerio Cadena approached her parents at their home, telling them about a well-paying job he could get for her doing the same work north of the border.

Eliza was eager to go. Her parents were reluctant. But the smooth-talking man said she would be in good hands.... She was taken across the border by a "coyote" - a people-smuggler. She was taken to Houston and from there to Orlando. It was then that she was told she would have to work as a prostitute until she paid off a \$2200 debt for her passage out of Mexico.

In November, 1997, federal agents executed a search warrant at six of the Cadena brothels in Florida. Eliza was freed, as were seven other women. Cadena was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison.

School Sisters of Notre Dame
SHALOM NORTH AMERICA
March, 2002

“CULTURE” - the way that human beings create meaning in history; contains both grace, *the presence of God* and limits, *sinfulness*.

Questions for reflection and discussion

Some people may feel very uncomfortable or even embarrassed studying or discussing a topic like trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Why? What factors might cause that response? How might that influence one's perception of or concern for women involved in prostitution who are victims of trafficking?

What are some symbols, assumptions, values, and deeper meanings underlying this issue?

How have the media (television, movies, magazines) influenced or manipulated the image of women? What do commercialism and marketing say about the role or image of women? How might we as consumers consciously or unconsciously be supporting that image?

How do the patterns of organized interaction (*the structures*) affect the situation of trafficking. economic, political, educational, legal, family? What resources are available to the women and children who are trafficked? Who has the power to affect their lives? How do these people get their power? Who benefits and who loses from the exercise of power by those who have it?

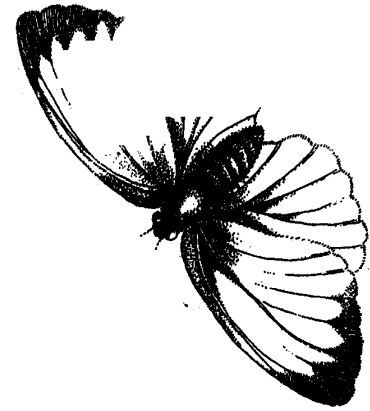
Men who engage in sexual promiscuity are often perceived as “just sowing their wild oats”, while women who engage in similar promiscuous behavior are labeled as whores or sluts or tramps. What causes such a double standard?

We live in a culture which thrives on a high level of consumption and convenience, often without awareness of or concern for how that level is achieved or maintained. We don't often stop to consider the migrant field labor or sweatshop factory labor as we buy brand name food and clothing or save money at huge department stores or shopping centers. What does our participation in our consumer culture have to do with the exploitation of workers? In what ways might we be ‘using’ people as commodities for our enjoyment or convenience?

Prepared by: S. Jeanne Wingenter, SSND

FACT SHEET

Trafficking of Women



Valentina, a 27-year-old Ukrainian psychologist and social worker, who arrived in Israel in the summer of 1998, believed she was going to work as a company representative. Instead she was taken to an apartment where she was held for two months and forced to work as a prostitute.

Eventually, Valentina succeeded in escaping captivity but was then arrested by Israeli authorities for not having proper documents or a visa. When Amnesty interviewed her, Valentina had no idea how long it would be before she would be allowed to return home.

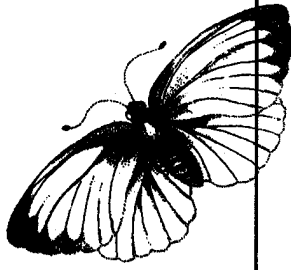
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Facts that relate to the trafficking of women and children in the United States and Canada

Facts to consider:

- Trafficking is first and foremost a human rights issue because it involves slavery-like treatment of women.
- Trafficking is also a multi-faceted issue that involves crime, economics, migration, labor, health (both public and private), and victim's assistance for victims of violent crimes.
- Though trafficking in women is a long-standing issue globally, it is relatively new for U.S. policymakers. In essence, trafficking in women is the use of force and deception to transfer women into situations of extreme exploitation.
- Examples include Latvian women threatened and forced to dance nude in Chicago; Thai women brought to the U.S. for the sex industry, but then forced to be virtual sex slaves; hearing-impaired and mute Mexicans brought to the U.S. enslaved, beaten, and forced to peddle trinkets in New York City.
- In recent major trafficking cases, there have been reports of trafficking instances in at least 20 different states, with most cases occurring in New York, California, and Florida.
- Primary source countries for the U.S. appear to be Thailand, Vietnam, China, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine, and Czech Republic. Women have also been trafficked to the U.S. from Philippines, Korea, Malaysia, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Brazil and Honduras.
- Traffickers move women and children into the U.S. using a variety of ports of entry. Major ports of entry are: Los Angeles, Houston, New York's JFK, Chicago's O'Hare and the San Francisco International Airport.
- In Canada, traffickers have flown into Toronto and Vancouver and transported the women overland to the U.S.



- Trafficking to the US is likely to increase given weak economic conditions and few job opportunities in the countries of origin, low risk of prosecution and enormous profit potential for the traffickers, and improved international transportation.
- A review of the trafficking cases shows that the penalties appear light, especially when compared to sentences given to drug dealers, and do not appear to reflect the multitude of human rights abuses perpetrated against the women. In the U.S., the statutory maximum for selling anyone into involuntary servitude is only ten years per count, whereas the statutory maximum for dealing in 10 grams of LSD or distributing a kilo of heroin is life.
- In Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada an Immigration and Naturalization Service investigator reports that a group of Canadian pimps, calling themselves the West Coast Players, are actively involved in trafficking Canadian teenagers to Los Angeles for the sex industry.
- Profits in the trafficking industry provide a major source of income for the crime rings. In most of the major recent trafficking cases in the U.S., the traffickers made anywhere from one to eight million dollars in a period ranging from one to six years. Traffickers charge the women inflated prices for securing the alleged jobs, travel documentation, transportation, lodging, etc. To increase profits, the women are kept in poor, crowded conditions.
- It is common for trafficked women to be charged to buy their passport back. The fee is usually around \$900 for women from the newly independent states of central and east Europe.

Prepared by: S. Cathy Arata, SSND



Source:

“International Trafficking in Women to the United States: A Contemporary Manifestation of Slavery and Organized Crime” by Amy O’Neill Richard, November 1999 Center for the Study of Intelligence

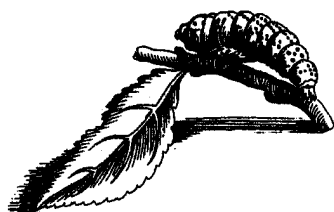
FACT SHEET

Trafficking of Girls

We the Children...



The Convention on the Rights of the Child in one Protocol denounces the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography..



The International Labor Organization Convention 182 commits nations to eliminate trafficking as a component of the worst forms of child labor.

“We were all children once. And we all share the desire for the well-being of our children which has always been and will continue to be the most universally cherished aspiration of humankind.

Thanks to the heightened awareness of child rights stirred by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, egregious violations are being systematically exposed and actions taken. NGOs and the mass media are playing an increasingly active role in drawing public attention to special protection issues, which include ... the trafficking and sexual abuse and exploitation of children ... and other forms of violence, much of it gender-based.”

Report of UN Secretary-General, May 2001

Moving children away from their normal environment in order to exploit them is called trafficking. Girls are an overwhelming majority among trafficked persons, especially those trafficked into prostitution. The trafficking of girls, as with boys, almost always involves a degree of deception, coercion or agreement between adults. Trafficking is not only recruitment and transportation, but also the exploitative and abusive living and working conditions in the wide range of situations into which children are trafficked. All of this leads to the violation of fundamental human rights of girls.

Facts to consider:

- Girls between 13 and 18 years of age constitute the largest group within the sex industry into which 1 to 2 million women and children are trafficked each year, from less economically developed to industrialized countries.
- Virtually every country in the world, both economically developed countries from the north and economically developing countries from the south, is affected, with estimates of 500,000 girls below 18 as victims of trafficking.
- A majority of victims are women under the age of 25. With the fear of HIV/AIDS, customers soliciting sex have driven traffickers to recruit younger victims, some as young as 7, thinking erroneously that they are too young to have been infected.
- With estimates of 1 million women and girls of various nationalities being trafficked into Thailand, reports indicate 20,000 to 30,000 women and girls from Myanmar (Burma) are trafficked into brothels in Thailand and 5000-7000 Nepali girls are trafficked into India every year.



The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), (article 6) obligates State parties to “take all measures, including legislation, to suppress the traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.”

UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in its supplementary Protocol deals specifically with Preventing, Suppressing and Punishing Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

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Positive initiatives:

- In Thailand girls are now protected under the purview of the Prevention and Suppression of the Trafficking in Women and Children Act, 1996.
- In 2000, the U.S. passed The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act which: criminalizes all forms of trafficking in persons; doubles the sentence for persons convicted operating slavery-like practices in the U.S. to a maximum of 20 years.
- In Cambodia, psycho-social intervention and skills training is being provided to young victims of commercial sex.
- The Nepal Cabinet adopted a National Policy to Control Trafficking and Prostitution of Girls recommended by the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare, 1998.
- In India, a great deal of media attention has been directed to issues of trafficking and prostitution.
- NGOs are directing their energies toward programs for girls with a focus on recovery, repatriation, and reintegration.

Needs:

- The public needs information, education on the issue of violence against girls particularly trafficking, prostitution, and sexual exploitation in order to advocate for them.
- Doctors and health professionals need to identify and respond appropriately to child victims of gender-based violence.
- Adolescent girls need to be taught about the nature of gender violence; they need to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and an awareness that accepting violence is not part of being female.

Prepared by: S. Ethel Howley, SSND

Sources: • Today's Child, Tomorrow's woman, Deepa Grover on behalf UNICEF

- Eapro & UNICEF Rosa Thailand, 2000.
- U.S. Congressional Research Service Report 98-649C, Francis T. Miko, Specialist in International Relations, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, May 10, 2000
- www.un.org/law/treaties



Tradition



Prayer

Scripture and You Are Sent:

As we continue the theological reflection process, we are invited to reflect on our own Catholic faith tradition as well as SSND tradition and to finally discern what insights we can gain on this topic of trafficking in women.

1. As you read the Prologue to *You Are Sent* what strikes you? Imagine what each of the persons mentioned as part of our spiritual heritage might have to say about this topic. From your knowledge of *You Are Sent* are there other passages that come to mind immediately?

2. Encouraged and strengthened by Mother Theresa’s theme, “Trust and Dare,” ponder what risks this issue raises for us, what fears we face and whether there are any initial steps to dare, even in our thinking and speaking.

3. Reflect on *You Are Sent*, C #34. How can we live out the call to “extend Eucharist in our daily lives, as we hold in our hearts those who are enslaved? How will it effect how we celebrate Eucharist? Will it make any difference in our daily lives?

4. Reflect on *You Are Sent* C #22&26. What can we do to help victims of trafficking “reach the fullness of their potential” as individuals created in God’s image? How can we contribute to a sense of global responsibility for this issue?

5. Choose one or both of these Scripture passages and share your thoughts on the questions proposed.

John 2:13-22

The Passover was near and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple, he found the people selling cattle, sheep, and doves and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, Jesus drove all them out of the temple, with both the sheep and the cattle.

PRAYER for an end to TRAFFICKING

O God, our words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of women and girls deceived and transported to unknown places for purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse because of human greed and profit at this time in our world.

Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are being transgressed through threats, deception and force. We cry out against the degrading practice of trafficking and pray for it to end.

Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted. Make real your promises to fill these our sisters with a love that is tender and good and send the exploiters away empty-handed.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with them, that together we will find ways to the freedom that is your gift to all of us.

Prayer composition:
S. Gen Cassani, SSND

School Sisters of Notre Dame
SHALOM NORTH AMERICA
March, 2002



Jesus' response to the lack of respect for the temple was swift and strong.

What are you feeling as you learn more about the lack of respect for women around the world? What response is appropriate?

To many in the temple, this situation seemed overwhelming. And yet Jesus found a way to respond.

How do you respond when you feel overwhelmed?



He also poured out the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. Jesus told those who were selling the doves, “take these things out of here, stop making this into a marketplace.” The disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” The religious authorities then said to Jesus, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The authorities then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years and will you raise it up in three days?” But Jesus was speaking of the temple of his body. After Jesus was raised from the dead the disciples remembered that Jesus had said this; they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Luke 13:10-13

Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. Just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand straight. When Jesus saw her he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.

What “spirits” (i.e. forces) contribute to crippling women who are trafficked? What “spirits” cripple you?

What would contribute to freeing these women? What would contribute to freeing you to respond?

Catholic social teaching reminds us that the dignity of each human person is derived from the fact that each person is created in the image of God.

What are the forces in your life that cause you to forget your inherent dignity? If you can imagine yourself as a woman who has been trafficked for sex trade, what forces contribute to your loss of dignity?

Prepared by: S. Eileen Reilly, SSND