
January, 2019 Monthly Reflection

by Sisters Against Trafficking

Study, Pray, Act

By Carol Davis OP

“Everybody knows about human trafficking, you don’t need to do so much education.” She said.

“Really,” I responded. “Then why do we still have millions still victimized? Why are there so many innocents lured into the commercial sex exploitation and trapped into endless labor?”

The conversation was unfinished. I’ve been thinking about my friend’s comment.

I have the privilege of walking with sexual abuse survivors for thousands of hours over 28 years in the context of counseling, spiritual direction and leading retreats throughout the United States. Many of those survivors told me about the trauma of being sold, kidnapped or coerced into commercial sex industry by strangers and by people they trusted including family members. They have also shared experiences of medical care practitioners, teachers, law enforcement, guidance counselors, hairdressers, family members and neighbors who missed the signs. That’s why we educate. [These signs](#) are worth reviewing. Print them out and post them at your church, in your office, in your classroom, at your neighborhood bank’s bulletin board. Here it is on my office bulletin board.



On the other hand, perhaps my friend has an underlying point. Some of you may remember the old poster that said, “If being a Christian was a crime, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” In other words, would there be evidence in the way we live, spend time, care about each other near and far, and how we care about our earth. Would there be signs in the way we grow and evolve in following the

Gospel? Our education, our knowledge ought to lead to some action. James put it this way, "Faith without works is dead." Review the second chapter of the Letter of James. Some survivors I know have shared stories of an act of kindness that gave them hope, a helping hand that led the way to freedom, a trained nurse practitioner who recognized what she saw leading to an eventual arrest of a trafficker. Education needs to be applied.

At the same time, we must maintain prayer, for that is at the heart of our loving relationship with the One Beyond All Names. It is at the heart of transformation, individually and collectively. Perhaps some variation of this prayer of the faithful could be used in a service at your church.

Introduction: Gracious One, You understand and share our deepest suffering, we thank You for the privilege of gathering here today because we want to be your people of compassion and healing, as well as Your agents of change. We trust that You hear us as we pray:

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

For Pope Francis and all church leaders, that they call themselves and everyone to work diligently to remove all stumbling blocks that keep people in slavery. We pray to the Lord.

For all Christian communities that we honor each person as son and daughter of God truly believing that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. We pray to the Lord.

For all nations that they grow in the courage, spiritually and politically, to reach beyond constructed borders to free hearts and bodies from the tyranny of human trafficking. We pray to the Lord.

For survivors of all trafficking including commercial sex trafficking, labor trafficking, debt bondage and those whose organs have been stolen, that they will find freedom, healing and compassionate love, we pray to the Lord.

For all those children, adolescents and adults who have died at the hands of traffickers, that they will find ultimate healing in God, we pray to the Lord.

For traffickers who are lost to their own humanity, that they encounter the Divine and remember who they are, we pray to the Lord.

Conclusion: Gracious God, remember too, the deepest prayer that we hold in the silence of our hearts..... You are the One who can bring New Life from death. You raise us up. Receive our prayer and sustain Your people in the Spirit of love and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our brother.

Amen.