

## Prayer Service for Human Trafficking Awareness Day January 11, 2010

**Opening Song:** Select a song of your choice, such as *God of Day and God of Darkness* or *For the Healing of the Nations*

**Leader:** As we gather to mark Human Trafficking Awareness Day, let us begin by observing a moment of silence in solidarity with the more than 27 million women, men and children who suffer each day from this modern form of slavery.

[Moment of Silence]

**Reader 1:** “Again I considered all the oppressions that take place under the sun; the tears of the victims with none to comfort them! From the hand of their oppressors comes violence, and there is none to comfort them!” ~ Ecclesiastes 4:1

**Leader:** We join our tears with the victims of human trafficking. Let us now listen to the voices of human trafficking survivors, as they tell their stories in their own words.

**Reader 2:** “I can’t describe to you the feeling of terror. No child should ever have to know that kind of fear. I didn’t know what I was going to have to endure that night, for how long, or if I was going to come back home.” ~ Theresa, survivor of child sex trafficking in the U.S.

**Reader 1:** “You had to do what they said, or they said they would kill you. They treated us like animals.” ~ ‘Miguel,’ victim of agricultural trafficking on a Texas ranch (real name withheld for safety concerns)

**Reader 2:** “I did the same thing every day. I was stuck. I did not feel hopeful of what my future was going to be because I could not see what was going to happen tomorrow. Now, I feel hopeful, I can dream. I can see myself doing something with my life in two weeks, in two months. I am free now.” ~ Lulu, trafficked from Asia to Los Angeles

**Leader:** Let us pause to reflect on their stories. [brief pause]. Together, we respond:

**All:** God of freedom and love, we are saddened by the stories of Theresa, Miguel and Lulu and inspired by their strength. Give comfort to survivors of human trafficking and freedom to those still held captive by modern day slavery.



## Litany for a Hopeful Tomorrow

**Leader:** When we become aware of the reality of human trafficking, we can easily feel overwhelmed. But let us remember the words of Lulu, a survivor of human trafficking. “Now, I feel hopeful. I can dream. ... I am free now.” We join Lulu in dreaming for a hopeful tomorrow and for an end to modern day slavery. Our response will be, *We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.*

**Reader 1:** For the estimated 27 million women, men and children currently held in slavery-like conditions. May human dignity be restored to those who have been bought, sold or kidnapped for the monetary benefit of others.

**Response:** *We pray for a hopeful tomorrow*

**Reader 2:** For those in bonded labor, in agricultural fields, mines and factories, who have been reduced to tools of production, commodities rather than human beings. **R**

**Reader 1:** For those forced to become soldiers, made into tools for violence. In particular, we pray for child soldiers in Darfur and Burma. **R**

**Reader 2:** For children exploited and objectified in the commercial sex industry, that they may be free to play, learn and grow up in freedom and safety. **R**

**Reader 1:** For those who cannot return home due to the stigma of prostitution, disease or shame, that they may receive the solace, healing and support they need. **R**

**Reader 2:** For women, who are estimated to make up 80% of human trafficking victims, and for changes in societal attitudes that deny the equality and dignity of women. **R**

**Reader 1:** For victims of trafficking in our own local community—in domestic servitude, in local businesses, in forced prostitution. May we have eyes to see and take steps to make our community slave-free. **R**

**Reader 2:** For the success of efforts to stop the demand for human trafficking. May we as consumers support fairly traded products and stop the demand for cheap products at any cost. And for efforts to stop the demand for the commercial sex industry that turns women and children into commodities. **R**

**All:** God of hope, guide our actions as we strive to make this dream for a hopeful tomorrow a reality. Help us to end human trafficking in our lifetimes.



**Leader:** Let us end our time together by taking a few moments of quiet to reflect on the following question:

- ☞ What hopes and dreams are stirring in your heart and mind about the issue of human trafficking?

After the quiet, I will invite us into a time of sharing one hope or dream that is stirring in our hearts.

[Quiet Reflection]

**Leader:**

- ☞ *If a small group is gathered:* I invite you to share (briefly) one hope or dream stirring in your heart.
- ☞ *If a larger group is gathered:* I invite you to turn to the person next to you and share (briefly) one hope or dream stirring in your heart.

**Leader:** (After all have shared). Let us end now by saying our closing prayer together.

**All:** God of all peoples, awaken our hearts and deepen our commitment to work for a world where every person is free and able to live their lives fully and joyfully. We ask for conversion of heart for traffickers and for strong laws that protect victims. Help us to grow in our awareness that we are all connected. Give us wisdom, inspiration, and courage to stand in solidarity, so that together we will find ways to the freedom that is your gift to all your people. Amen

**Closing Song:** *We Shall Overcome*

*Survivor testimonies excerpted from [polarisproject.org](http://polarisproject.org), [www.castla.org](http://www.castla.org), and [chron.com](http://chron.com)*

