



# PRAYER FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

This brief liturgy can be used in a variety of settings. It may be duplicated for free distribution.

## OPENING PRAYER

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Living God, you freed the people of Israel from cruel slavery in Egypt and led them to a promised land “flowing with milk and honey.” We ask you to liberate today all the children, women, and men who are enslaved by the cruel yoke of human trafficking in our nation, and around the world.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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Psalm 142: 2-8

**R:** *I cry out to you Lord, for you are my refuge.*

With my own voice I cry to the LORD;  
with my own voice I beseech the LORD.  
Before him I pour out my complaint,  
tell of my distress in front of him. **R.**

When my spirit is faint within me,  
you know my path.  
As I go along this path,  
they have hidden a trap for me. **R.**

I look to my right hand to see  
that there is no one willing to acknowledge me.  
My escape has perished;  
no one cares for me. **R.**

I cry out to you, LORD,  
I say, You are my refuge,  
my portion in the land of the living.  
Listen to my cry for help,  
for I am brought very low. **R.**

Rescue me from my pursuers,  
for they are too strong for me.  
Lead my soul from prison,  
that I may give thanks to your name.  
Then the righteous shall gather around me  
because you have been good to me. **R.**

## READING FROM SCRIPTURE

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Exodus 3:7-10

But the LORD said (to Moses): I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry against their taskmasters, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them up from that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.... Now indeed the outcry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them. Now, go! I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

## REFLECTION

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*An individual or group reflection on the scripture readings or the needs of refugee and migrants may take place here.*

## PETITIONS

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Trusting in God’s love and care for the oppressed, let us lift up prayer for victims of human trafficking, saying: “Hear us, God of freedom.”

For an end to the coercion and exploitation of vulnerable persons at factories, farms, and brothels, we pray:

For an eradication of the poverty and lack of opportunity that breeds human trafficking, we pray:

For a greater awareness of the reality and signs of human trafficking in our midst, we pray:

For cooperation between governments and social service agencies to neutralize traffickers and their networks, we pray:

Other intercessions may be offered here.

**Our Father...**

#### CLOSING PRAYER

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God of liberation, we pray for all your children who are enslaved by human trafficking. Free them from their bondage, heal them of their wounds, protect them from further harm, turn the hearts of their oppressors, and sustain them with hope for a new beginning in safety and peace. Amen.

#### SIGN OF PEACE

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*All present may share with each other an appropriate sign of peace.*

#### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

February 8 is the “International Day of Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking,” first initiated by Pope Francis in 2015. February 8 is also the memorial of Saint Josephine Bakhita, a patron saint of trafficking victims. A native of Darfur, Sudan, she was kidnapped by slave traders at age 9 and suffered for many years as a horrifically abused slave in Sudan and Italy. She developed a sustaining relationship with God in the midst of her pain, was eventually emancipated, and became a religious sister. She died in 1947 and was declared a saint in 2000.

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