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People are NOT for sale

This guide is to facilitate reflection, dialogue and action on this ACSJC publication. It may be used for personal reflection or in a meeting with a group of other interested people.

Catholic Social Justice Series paper No. 79

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY: A RESPONSE FROM AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council & ACRATH

Who are the people affected by human trafficking?

People trafficked today are often restrained by violence or the threat of violence or by manipulation and lies. (p 6)

- ✚ Read the snapshots of the contemporary face of human trafficking and slavery (p 5–6)
- ✚ View 3 very short video clips on workers in restaurants, agriculture and domestic labour at <http://www.antislavery.org.au/>
- ✚ What strikes you about these stories? What questions do these stories raise for you?

What is the response of the Catholic Church?

Pope Francis has been a passionate advocate in the fight against human trafficking. He has described human trafficking as ‘a despicable activity, a disgrace for our societies, which describe themselves as civilised’. His words and actions are inspiring many within the Church and beyond to take up the cause of those who are violated. In his 2015 World Day of Peace Message, No Longer Slaves, But Brothers and Sisters, he challenged us to be aware of how we might be complicit in promoting human trafficking and slavery through our consumer habits, reminding us that purchasing is not only an economic but also a moral action. (p 5)

In 2015, inspired by the 2014 example of Pope Francis and World Faith Leaders, faith leaders in Australia signed a declaration pledging their support to help end modern slavery and establishing the Australian Freedom Network. Archbishop Denis Hart, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, committed the Australian Catholic Church to participate in this network. (pp 5-6)

- ✚ Scan the Church’s response to slavery and exploitation (pp 3-6).
- ✚ How are we as Christians called to respond to this problem of human trafficking?

What are the issues?

- ✚ Recall the video clips at the beginning of the session.
- ✚ View the 60 sec video clip from the UN at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jz1QZZhx-bg>

ACRATH collaborates to ensure slavery-free supply chains of goods such as chocolate, cotton, clothing, electronic goods and seafood. We challenge the Australian demand for cheap goods, cheap sex and cheap services and reject the commodification of people. (p 18)

- ✚ Explore one or more of the following forms of human trafficking and slavery:

1. Human trafficking – forced labour

Forced and exploited workers may be on building sites or in agricultural work or in boxing rings, in abattoirs or in convenience stores or in domestic work in diplomatic households or private homes.

They may be in massage parlours or brothels. Forced and exploited overseas workers in these settings have a common story: they arrive in Australia with high hopes of working for an Australian wage, but then they experience severe exploitation. (p 18)

- ✚ Read the section on forced labour (pp 18–21)
- ✚ Discuss: What can you see is being done about this area? What else could be done?

2. Human trafficking – forced marriage

*On 8 March 2013, International Women’s Day, the Prime Minister announced a new Australian law, the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Act 2013. The Act described the **rights of people to choose if, whom and when they marry.** (p. 22)*

- ✚ Read the section on Forced Marriage (pp 21–25)
- ✚ Discuss: What can you see is being done about this area? What else could be done?

3. Human trafficking – Slavery-free supply chains

ACRATH has campaigned through and with our networks for slavery-free supply chains for cotton, clothing, electronic goods and seafood imported into Australia. We have-experienced considerable success: several companies have moved to slavery-proof their supply chains. But we want to see government action to ensure all products imported into Australia have slavery-free supply chains. It is not enough to pick off companies one by one. Australian consumers need to be confident that no product they purchase has slavery in its supply chain. (p 25)

- ✚ Read the section on Slavery-free supply chains (pp 25–26)
- ✚ Discuss: What can you see is being done about this area? What else could be done?

What can you do? What can we do together?

In 2005 two Catholic sisters met in a Brisbane coffee shop and began to plan a response by Australian religious orders and congregations to the problem of human trafficking ...

This was the beginning of ACRATH’s work. (pp 10–11)

Pope Francis’ 2015 World Day of Peace Message addressed the issue of human trafficking addressing not only Catholics but every person of good will:

Let us ask ourselves, as individuals and as communities, whether we feel challenged when, in our daily lives, we meet or deal with persons who could be victims of human trafficking, or when we are tempted to select items which may well have been produced by exploiting others. Some of us ... close our eyes to this. Others, however, decide to do something about it, to join civic associations or to practice small, everyday gestures ... [W]e are facing a global phenomenon which exceeds the competence of any one community or country. In order to eliminate it, we need a mobilisation comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself. (p 29)

- ✚ Read Appendix: Action people can take to stop human trafficking (pp 29–31)
- ✚ Reflect and discuss: What action might I take personally? What might a group of us do locally? What broader networks could we join or support to address this global crime against humanity?

More information?

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