

# Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation



**'When we hear the cry...'**  
our joint mission today

*A Conference on working  
against Human Trafficking  
in Europe*

**4 - 9 September 2011**  
**Trzebinia, Poland**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**



**European Conference for Religious**  
**4 – 9 September 2011**, Trzebinia Poland  
**Human Trafficking – 'When we hear the cry....'**  
*our joint mission today*

It has been little more than a year since RENATE began its preparation for the European conference for Religious against trafficking. The goal of the conference was to meet, interact with and learn from experiences of Religious engaged in counter-trafficking work, across Europe. Individual religious willing to become involved in this ministry were also welcome. The limited number of places was allocated in such a way as to ensure participation from Eastern, Central and Western Europe, and from as many countries as possible.

The working language of the Conference was English. After the participant list was closed, RENATE arranged translation from English into Polish, Italian and Albanian along with whisper translations in French, German and Portuguese.

The Salvatorian Centre of Spiritual Formation in Trzebinia (near Cracow) in Poland was chosen as the venue. The Conference took place from September 4th - 9th 2011.

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## When we hear the Cry

A Conference on working against Human Trafficking in Europe

**Venue: Salwatorianie**

Ul. B Glowackiego 332-540, Trzebinia, Poland

**September 4 – 9, 2011**

## Programme

### Sunday, September 4

12 Noon onwards: **Registration**

5.00 pm Welcome, Short Presentation on Renate and Opening Addresses

7.00 pm Evening Meal

8.00 pm Social event helping us to get to know a little about one another

### Monday, September 5

**Liturgy 'When we hear the cry'**

9.15 am Keynote Address by Ian Linden:

Analysis of Culture and the Actual Situation in East and West, Opportunities and Dangers

10.00 am Response from Sister Adina Balan

Response from Sister Dagmar Plum

10.45 am Coffee Break

11.15 am Discussion Groups and Questions

1.00 pm Lunch

2.30 pm Group Photo

3.00 pm Issue Groups – each group will run for two sessions of 45 minutes each.

7.00 pm Evening Meal

8.00 pm Information Market

### Tuesday, September 6

**Liturgy Word of God – before morning and afternoon sessions**

9.15 – 10.00 am Hands-on Experience of running a shelter in Poland: Sister Anna Balcham

10.00 – 10.30 am Questions

10.30 – 11.15 am Coffee Break

11.15 am Hands-on Experience of running a shelter in Albania: Marijana Meshi

12.00 pm Buzz session and questions

1.00 pm Lunch

3.00 pm Workshops

3.1 Law and Trafficking: Sister Adina Balan

3.2 Women's Rights for Freedom, Justice and to Speak their Truth: Ana Stakaj and Sister Imelda Poole

3.3 Legalising Prostitution means legalising violence against women: Sister Dagmar Plum

3.4 Lobbying: Sister Marie Hélène Halligon

3.5 Demand: Sister Patricia Mulhall

3.6 Prophetic Role as women religious in counter trafficking: Sister Eugenia Bonetti

3.7 Catholic Social Teaching can help in raising awareness: Sister Maura O'Donohue

6.00 pm Evening Meal

7.15 pm Presentation on research by 'In Via' Berlin on ways the Internet can trap victims

Buzz groups and questions

### Wednesday, September 7

**Liturgy Offering and Prayer of the Faithful**

Field Visits

Three different options

- Visit Shelter run by Sister Anna at Katowice
- Auschwitz by coach or
- Visit boarding school for girls in trouble in Krakow

### Thursday, September 8

**Liturgy Kneading the Bread that we are and that nourishes us**

9.15 am Keynote Address by Mary Grey: Created for Dignity and Wellbeing – a theology and spirituality responding to the trafficking of women

10.00 am Response from Sister Maura O'Donohue

Response from Polish priest

Response from Sister Ann Teresa Herrity

11.00 am Coffee Break

11.30 am Discussion Groups

12.30 pm Liturgy: Kneading the bread

1.00 pm Lunch

3.00 pm Discussion of Proposals re Practical Outcomes from this Conference

7.00 pm Evening Meal as we relax with Polish Singing Group and Dancers, with local drinks.

### Friday, September 9

**Liturgy Breaking of the bread and Sending on our Mission**

9.15 am Continuation of work of previous afternoon and Outcomes

12 noon: Closing Liturgy and Sending

1.00 pm Lunch and departure

The time needed from Krakow airport to the conference centre is approximately 2 hours. You will be met at Krakow Train Station.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **When we hear the Cry...**

When you hear a cry you cannot simply pass it by without checking the reason for this cry. Someone might need your help. If the cry is loud it cannot be missed. However, there are many, many people in need, who will not cry out. One reason can be that they are too frightened to express their feelings. Another reason can be that they do not recognise their dangerous situation and so do not see themselves as being in trouble. They feel their cry would be voiceless. It can only be noticed by someone who notices the reality of their story disguised under the happy mask which the person is wearing. The mask is born from naivety, which keeps the belief of a great future, fully alive. They believe that once a debt is paid to the ‘benefactor’ all will be well. But, the money given is never enough and the vicious circle of bondage goes on and on and on. There are thousands of stories with a similar scenario: women and girls who have been promised a better life, ready to follow unknown destinations in order to help their families back home. Very soon brutal reality reveals the real reasons why they were duped. Ashamed of themselves, devastated mentally and physically by forced prostitution, they are often unable to come back to the origins of their birth. The stigma is too heavy to carry in front of the family.

### **What can we do?**

How can we unite our forces to work against Human Trafficking in Europe? Are we able to fight off the root of the problem, which is as old as the world itself? Where do we see our strengths as Women Religious? Could we involve others in the work which benefits the rescued? What, why, how and when? These are the questions the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference of Religious in Europe Networking against Trafficking and Exploitation raised, during their meeting in Trzebinia from September 4th - 9th 2011.

### **Where are we from?**

72 Women Religious representing their missions in 18 European countries, gathered together. Most of them already work against trafficking within various Congregational frameworks. However a number of beginners willing to get involved in this work, were also present. The list of countries represented were: Albania, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom and the United States of America (Facilitator's homeland).

### **Cordial Welcome**

The words of cordial welcome were given by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, the Archbishop of Cracow. His Eminence arrived on Sunday afternoon to open the Conference of RENATE. He expressed appreciation to the Sisters involved in the ministry of contemporary times, “in which – as John Paul II said – the horizons of the European continent, which despite great signs of faith and witness and an atmosphere undoubtedly more free and unified, feels the consequences of moral and spiritual havoc”. “However” - he admitted - “in this bleak image of Europe, for the faithful mission of the Church, there are so many signs of hope. Religious Congregations are such signs – as through their Gospel-shaped lives and pastoral work they lead us “to call forth that creativity in the care of

those most in need, which has marked so many founders of Religious Institutes.” (Eccelsia in Europa, 38)”. Archbishop Dziwisz underlined, that through inter-Congregational co-operation and international structures, the work can be done with redoubled power and effectiveness. And the most important possession of the biggest potential, which is not to be found even in the most wealthy organizations, is the union with Christ, Redeemer of the world.

These words of welcome were extended by Sister Danuta Wróbel, councillor of UCESM (Union of the European Conferences of Major Superiors) and Father Michał Pastuszka, superior of the Salvatorian Centre of Spiritual Formation in Trzebinia. Following these opening words of welcome, Sister Imelda Poole – one of the co-founders of the network - presented the history and the work of RENATE. The first evening closed with a social event, enabling participants to get to know one another a little better.

### **Conference Programme**

The conference was designed for sharing and exchanging experiences. Each day began with the Holy Mass celebrated in the beautiful chapel at the centre run by the Salvatorian congregation and the daily liturgy evolved, drawing the threads of the conference together in prayer and reflection. The two keynote speakers: Professor Ian Linden and Professor Mary Grey animated the proceedings and were followed by reflective responses and discussions in groups. The programme was rooted in the shared experience of the reality of the work at the shelters for the victims of trafficking. Two presentations were given of a ‘hands-on’ experience in the running of a shelter in Albania and in Poland. By comparing and contrasting the two experiences, the participants were enabled to assess the different methodologies used in this work. Another important part of the programme was the workshops giving a choice of seven topics and issue groups to look at future action. The findings of research carried out by “In Via” Berlin, explaining ways in which the Internet can trap victims, was also a challenging part of the programme. Half way through the proceedings, Field Trips were organised, to give participants an opportunity to visit a shelter in Poland, a school for girls in trouble or to visit the Museum at Auschwitz which included visiting the nearby Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The network of women religious in Europe – known as RENATE – is committed to working together against human trafficking and exploitation. The network organized a Conference for representatives of women religious from all over Europe. It took place in the Salvatorian retreat Centre in Trzebinia near Krakow, 4th-9th September 2011. The 72 participants came from 18 countries: Albania, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. Those invited had demonstrated their commitment to the work of human trafficking and to helping survivors. Together they sought ways of both sharing their experience and coordinating their work into the future.

Two key note speakers were invited. Professor Ian Linden, currently Director of Policy of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, and formerly Director of The Catholic Institute for International Relations. Professor Mary Grey is a Professor of Theology at the University of Wales, Lampeter, a fellow at Sarum College, Salisbury, and a visiting Professor at St. Mary's University College, Twickenham.

Prof. Ian Linden's input and the responses raised questions and points for discussion:

- ✓ How can we encourage the victims to speak out about their experiences?
- ✓ What might be some recommendations for prevention work with women against trafficking?
- ✓ The victims do not often consider themselves as victims but as the guilty ones. What are some strategies to deal with this?
- ✓ How do we get men religious to work with this problem?
- ✓ Are we at the cutting edge or are we just clearing up the mess left by the traffickers?
- ✓ We are a small Church in a big world. We used to be a big Church in a small world. Has the Church still got a prophetic voice in this field of work? If so, where is it heard?
- ✓ The driving engine is the demand. How do we conscientise both men and women to work against it?

Professor Mary Grey's input entitled Created for dignity and well-being -dwelt on the theology and spirituality of response to the issues around trafficking of women. Her key concept introduced the group to the spirituality of sumud – an Arabic word meaning steadfastness, perseverance.

In discussion, issues arose relating to some further questions:

- ✓ How do we discover/share the greater wisdom amongst us when we work together?
- ✓ How do we listen to alternative points of view/ different theologies; different languages; different cultures, when we know the most important thing in our ministry is to show the women their dignity?

There were two presentations of a 'hands-on' experience of running shelters for victims of human trafficking, the first located in Poland and the second in Albania.

Seven topics for workshops included:

Law and Trafficking, Women's Rights for Freedom, Justice and to Speak their Truth, Legalising Prostitution Means Legalising Violence Against Women, Lobbying, The Demand, The Prophetic Role of Women Religious in Counter Trafficking and Catholic Social Teaching. This stimulated the participants to look at how their work can be developed after the conference and also together as a network.

A further issue which was addressed by "In Via" Berlin exposed the dangers relating to trafficking. The insidious work of human traffickers is on the increase as they make greater use of the internet to attract and recruit victims.

The day field trips offered half way through proceedings enabled the participants to touch a grass root reality in choosing to visit either a shelter for trafficked victims and boarding school for girls at risk, or Auschwitz.

Consequent to all of this listening, discussion, and reflection, the following proposals for RENATE surfaced:

- ✓ The conference is recognised as providing a resource for the sharing of materials, information and training;
- ✓ The steering group is to include equal numbers of members from Eastern and Western Europe;
- ✓ Links with UCESM (European Religious Conference) to be made;
- ✓ The website is to be translated into more languages
- ✓ RENATE to lead the global Olympic campaign(2012) for UISG (Union of Major religious Superiors)
- ✓ Training on social communication for the members to be introduced;
- ✓ Training on fund-raising for members to be introduced;
- ✓ Ongoing commitment of all to the annual Joint campaign for European Day against Trafficking, October 18th.
- ✓ A commitment has been made to work together into the future.

Being of one voice, one heart and one passion enables the group to work not only in solidarity but also to think together strategically. This is the way that the Mission of RENATE is evolving. It has made a commitment to work not only with the victims but to study the roots of the problem and to forward the mission of RENATE in the light of these insights.

### III. ADDRESSES AND EXPERIENCES

#### Keynote Addresses and Responses

##### Keynote Address by Professor Ian Linden

Professor Ian Linden, currently Director of Policy of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, came to share his life-long experience of working to enable poor communities to solve their own problems, with support from skilled workers. Working as Director of The Catholic Institute for International Relations for many years, was an invaluable experience in influencing decision-makers, secular and religious alike, to support liberation movements and to guard against human rights abuses. Prof. Ian Linden's role for this conference was to show his own perspective, and the way he sees the context of the conference in the light of the Church's social teaching over the years. His paper was entitled: "Analysis of Culture and the Actual Situation in East and West, Opportunities and Dangers".

Prof. Ian Linden pointed out that one of the most striking features of the Catholic community is that it is a "Global Church" responding to globalisation - and this is reflected in its response, led by Women Religious, to human trafficking. *The networks of international Religious Orders and Societies have allowed a rapid and unprecedented compassionate response to what amounts to a new form of slavery.* Prof. Ian Linden said that Women Religious are the leaders and on the front-line not only in pastoral care and education but also in advocacy of those in trouble. He added that, *many states are signatories to the Council of Europe Convention on Trafficking and to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. But the actual response to victims of trafficking from state law enforcement varies enormously according to the resources allocated.*

An analysis was given of the shocking increase in numbers of people being trafficked – in 2010, in the Greater London alone, there was an increase of 250% and annually Human Trafficking yields up to \$32 billion in profits. It comes a strong second in the ranking of global criminal enterprise after the drugs trade and third if the illegal arms trade is included. Prof. Ian Linden explained that this hugely profitable criminal activity expands as the drugs trade merges into that of the trafficking of human persons. *There is less focussed international attention. Special state prevention organisations are small or insignificant.* How come, Europe with its human rights, the founders of the beautiful idea of union, faces sexual slavery?! - Prof. Ian Linden asked. This is the dark side of globalisation.

*The European Union was a proud expression of the post-war quest for justice and peace. It was in its origins strongly influenced by the lay Catholicism of the majority of its key founders. But it has fallen far short of its ideals, much proclaimed, of being a Europe of values and a Europe of Human Rights. This is not simply a failure of European governments. European societies have been prone to fear of minorities, xenophobia, and the valueless and fickle celebration of wealth and celebrity coupled with voting behaviour that has encouraged growing gaps between rich and poor. Governments wishing to redistribute wealth have to do so by stealth or they are punished at the polls. The Church has often been a prophetic voice in this respect. The gender gap has not been closed and the exploitation of women continues.* He concluded that, it would be hard to argue that in the persistence of its patriarchal culture, the Church is today, as much part of the problem as of the solution.

Prof. Ian Linden in his summary drew attention to the roots of the Christian understanding of human dignity that lie in the account of creation found in the first book of Genesis: an account of

how human beings, mankind (Adam), though creatures created by God, are made “in the image and likeness of God”. He recognised the turning point in the Church with the publication of the encyclical “Pacem in Terris” by Pope John XXIII. This offered the fullest Catholic perspective on human rights to date. *Each human person, “Pacem in Terris” explains, “has rights and duties which together flow as a direct consequence of his Nature, what is most human in mankind. These rights and duties are universal, inviolable and inalienable”.*

He stated: *The Church’s stance on natural law and human rights is not that they are the unique product of a Catholic discourse – they are manifestly not - but available to all. The Church in the Council’s thinking promotes their realisation as the gathered people of God not as an exclusive club with access to a special knowledge, not as a private religion of the elect, but as a “sacrament of all humanity” sharing in the common heritage of humankind. We are all heirs to this complex history that has brought human dignity and human rights together, and you encounter their violation in human trafficking.*

Reflecting on the mission of the Church in the globalised era, Prof. Ian Linden underlined the importance of strategic thinking in working against Human Trafficking. The linkages provided by networks within and between Religious Orders and other organisations such as CARITAS, he sees as one of the great strengths of the global Church. *To extend these links to the full, it would be helpful to create a secure directory with a full range of organisations, country by country, working to combat human trafficking, secular, religious and ecumenical, on a secure website.* Another vital thing according to Prof. Ian Linden, is to look to the possibility of deacons to get involved in the work. (This was said in the context of the Church in the UK). He raised also the issue of ethnic minority groups, using the same pattern of materials translated into different languages. In the final words of the input several questions were formulated to animate the discussion later. How to involve women (victims) to testify? The model of criminalisation of the demand – decriminalisation of women on the streets, criminalisation of men creating demand...? Could we involve Muslim women, Jewish women, Hindu Women into the work? They would surely understand. Is this one of the challenges we must face today?

### **The need for effective legislation by Sister Adina Balan (Romania)**

There were two responses to Prof. Ian Linden's address. The first one presented by Sister Adina Balan focused on the legal tools in the work against human trafficking. Following the 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP, USA), Sr. Adina said about 12.3 million adults and children were trafficked in 2009, at a rate of 1.8 people per 1,000 worldwide. *According to this Report, the aggregate number of prosecutions and convictions has been steadily rising over the last three years and successful prosecutions of sex trafficking offences far outnumber successful forced labour prosecutions. Unlike sex trafficking, labour trafficking crimes are often committed by persons perceived as respected members of society or accomplished business leaders, who are less likely to be investigated than unsavoury characters involved in organized crime or living unlawfully off the proceeds of the commercial sex trade.*

Sr. Adina raised the issue of economic reality of human trafficking driven by profits. *If nobody paid for sex, sex trafficking would not exist. If nobody paid for goods produced with any amount of slavery, forced labour in manufacturing would be a thing of the past. Increasingly, anti-trafficking actors are looking to combat modern slavery from the demand side rather than focusing on arrests and prosecutions (the supply side) alone.*

She presented different dimensions of trafficking followed by difficulties with recovery process. *Reintegration presents a challenge in terms of developing profitable livelihood strategies for victims and following up on their progress. Perhaps even more challenging is developing strategies to support trafficking victims who do not want to return home, or who are unable to do so. These victims need assistance to organize an entirely new life, requiring better opportunities to become educated and to pursue sustainable employment opportunities.*

Sr. Adina concluded: *Prevention keeps trafficking from taking place again; curative treatment aids those who have already been victims. To be effective, legislation needs to consider all sides of the trafficking industry and deal with those sides accordingly.*

### **Personal remarks about the dignity of women by Sister Dagmar Plum (Germany)**

The second response to Prof. Ian Linden was by Sister Dagmar Plum who added a few personal remarks about the dignity of women and their human rights in Christianity and the Church. She noticed: *In the Bible it is always women who turn the tide at decisive points of the Judeo-Christian salvation history. They are also the first witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus and propagate his message to other disciples. Later we find women in leading positions as Christianity was expanding and being consolidated in the new communities.*

Sr. Dagmar recalled the orthodox thinking in Roman times, when hierarchy was carried over into the church and there was no place for women in such structures. *Principally women were regarded more as animalistic than men and less reasonable. Men did not see the problem as being based in their own incapacity of keeping their own drives under control, but deflected it onto the woman, by declaring them as instinct-driven creatures.*

*This outsourcing of women in church and society was not only common practice in the past, it is an ongoing problem.(...) Contrary to the image of women of his time, which painted women in dark colours, Jesus never participated in the humiliation of women. Quite the contrary he took men to task who condemned women and even wanted to stone women. He exemplified through his own life an unbiased association with women, without admittedly making a point about the removal of the structural gender inequality.*

Sr. Dagmar shared her experience of work in a Detention Centre where she regularly meets the victims of trafficking in women, who would never speak with a man about their exposure to violence. *For the church these women are a side show – she said. They do not regard it as one of their key tasks to help these women. There are even said to be bishops, who would prefer religious sisters to stay away from this kind of work.*

Prof. Ian Linden's input and two responses raised questions and statements from the audience, as follows:

- ✓ How can we encourage the victims to speak out about their experiences?
- ✓ Recommendations for prevention work with women against trafficking.
- ✓ The victims do not often consider themselves as victims, many trafficked girls consider themselves as guilty.
- ✓ How do we get the men religious to work with this problem?
- ✓ Are we at the cutting edge or are we just clearing up the mess left by the traffickers?
- ✓ We are a small Church in a big world. We used to be a big Church in a small world.

- ✓ The driving engine is the demand, the whole market is driven by that and both men and women need to work against it.

The discussion on the keynote address and the issues raised continued in the following group work.

The first full conference day ended with an Information Market – a chance to widen knowledge between participants and exchange impressions of the day.

### **Keynote Address by Professor Mary Grey**

Mary Grey – Professor of Theology at the University of Wales, Lampeter, a fellow at Sarum College, Salisbury, and a visiting Professor at St. Mary's University College, Twickenham. Over 20 years ago, together with her husband, Dr. Nicholas Grey, they founded a charity named 'Wells for India'. This was to bring water and dignity to the poorest people of Rajasthan. She has a special interest in the lives of the women. Prof. Grey joined the RENATE Conference to share her findings of research focused primarily on Feminist Liberation Theology and Spiritualities and the relationship between Social Justice and Theology. She presented her paper entitled: "Created for Dignity and Wellbeing – a Theology and Spirituality responding to the Trafficking of Women".

Prof. Grey stated: *It is largely assumed in the rich countries of the world that Liberation Theology has had its day: but as all Liberation Theologies tell us, "the poor are even poorer and the rich care even less". Nowhere do all factors come together more clearly than in the trafficking of women and young children. Here above all, the gravity of the situation calls for the return of prophecy. For speaking out, for naming the issue for what it is – a great evil, and for effective action.*

She raised important questions: *How can the Church refuse to recover a prophetic theology, and not content itself with turning a blind eye at worst, or vague criticisms, at best- that in any case never reach the perpetrators? So, what would be the dimensions of this prophetic theology? In answer to that she led the attention to a new focus for theology. It is at the same time a theology and spirituality involving risk (...). We all risk criticism and being ostracised by "decent people" because we involve ourselves in an issue that people would prefer not to know, to talk about and take action. Believe me, this is always the case with Feminist Theology – in the academy it has acquired a kind of respectability by being named Gender Studies. (But this often means that it loses its cutting edge – and, sadly, there is no action!).*

From her recent experience at a conference in Palestine, she said what was stressed there: *violence is to be overcome by non-violent resistance, inspired by the non-violent Jesus. To live by a non-violent spirituality is to overcome fear: that is our calling, our witness. And Jesus is our example. (...) A spirituality against the violence of trafficking is a spirituality "for life", which envisions transformed, healing relations between women, men and children – she continued; a society committed to this vision is en-fleshing (or embodying) the dream of the new creation, by telling the truth about the way we are called to relate in mutuality and justice, yet we fail to relate justly. We need to put our energies into change and transformation.*

Prof. Grey presented a remarkable spirituality developed in Palestine among Arab Christians, called the spirituality of "sumud" – an Arabic word meaning steadfastness, perseverance. To practise "sumud" means to remain steadfast on one's own land, to remain steadfast in service to one's homeland to the struggle for freedom. *The spirituality of "sumud" brings together many aspects of a relational theology and a spirituality seeking justice. Spirituality in its simplest meaning is the life*

*of the Spirit. (...) That means calling on a type of imagination that is prophetic in remembering and seeing differently, an imagination that summons us to live out of a new reality that does not yet exist – but can be embodied in every liberating act, in acts of simple kindness and love, in moments of joy and thanksgiving for small victories won.*

Prof. Grey said that Liberation Theology and Spirituality teach us that people need to be empowered to move from being victims to agents of their own freedom. *God's call is precisely this - to the restoration of dignity and true identity that is at the heart of a liberation spirituality of justice.* She recalled the document “Mulieris Dignitatem”, written by Pope John Paul II, where he called for the dignity of women to be restored throughout the world as a matter of justice.

Prof. Mary Grey appealed: *The trafficking of women and children needs to be named by the prophetic Church as sin. Even if this will always be a sensitive area, there needs to be openings for the evil of this issue to be made clear at all appropriate pastoral levels. People need to hear Human Trafficking named and preached against. Part of the scandal of sexual abuse of priests against children was silence and deception as to what was actually going on. The Church must be seen to be facing the truth about the violence in women's lives, the hypocrisy and failure to act, by turning a blind eye to what men are doing to women and the climate of fear in which trafficked women are often forced to live.*

#### **Four points from Sister Maura O'Donohue**

There were three responses to Professor Mary Grey. The first one was presented by Sister Maura O'Donohue. She made four points and drew on her own personal experience showing the potential we have to make an impact if we take up the challenge which Prof. Grey has put before us.

*I had not bargained for trafficking – Sr. Maura repeated after Professor Mary Grey – until I witnessed it at first hand in Thailand back in the early 1990s.* Over the years she found that the problem was not endemic to Asia, but was worldwide. Women and children, including young men and boys are sold not just for cheap labour or servicing the sex industry, but also for their organs. She said that 10% of all kidney transplants in the world come from trafficked persons and so few of her medical colleagues would be aware of this fact. And most decent professional people today are not bargaining for the reality of human trafficking.

In the second point Sr. Maura drew attention to the compassionate listening that is the bridge enabling the victims to become agents of their future. She recalled the experience of the testimony given by five trafficked people in front of the UN in Geneva. Sadly the delegates of the member nations showed much greater concern in praising their own national governments for the legislation they were bringing in, than to the horrific realities described by those giving their personal testimony.

She discussed the attitude of the Church that is generally reactive and defensive rather than prophetic. She shared the chinks of light from her own experience when invited by one Irish bishop to address his clergy on the topic, she was given a very encouraging reception. *We know of priests in other countries who are blazing a trail in this field. We need to continue to inform and encourage them. As they take up the issue of trafficking, they are helped to re-examine their own attitude of the tradition that men are superior to women. As we all know our Church has a long way to go on this topic – she said.*

The last point concerned the aspect of a prophetic theology that has to be a relational theology. *Justice has to be at the heart of this theology, just as mysticism has to be its handmaid. Mary has clearly told us that prayer will help us focus, will help us overcome fear. We shall be praying together to bring about a society that relates in mutuality and justice. Our prayer will give us energy to bringing about the transformation that is required. Only a mystical theology will sustain us and give us the steadfastness and perseverance – she concluded.*

### **Theological opposition of Father Józef Tarnówka**

Father Józef Tarnówka appreciated the abundance of thoughts presented by Professor Grey and decided to focus on two issues, which he considered to be an addition.

He agreed that Church does not undertake enough actions regarding the problem of trafficking of women. At the same time he questioned the perception of the Church by Prof. Grey. A call for “a return of the prophetic dimension of church” was found to be worth stressing. He linked that with the subversive reading of scriptures that Prof. Grey proposed, e.g. refusing to see Eve as responsible for sin in the world, and consequently all women as temptresses and bearers of sin. Father Tarnówka recalled the assumption that the biblical text is inspired and it comes from God who has chosen to reveal Himself to the human person. He made a strong comment asking: *Do we have the right to change the text when it does not fit our theology or our way of understanding God and the world? To change Revelation means to change God's way of looking at the world and at human history. It means to perceive the Incarnated Word, Jesus Christ, as somebody changing his concept of salvation of the human person.*

He said that in the combat against human trafficking, the Church – also as an institution – is not an opponent but an ally. Quoting a chapter of “Gaudium et Spes, ” he showed the Church’s awareness and its consciousness, both as an institution and as God’s people, and its desire to make conscious to all people of good will, the scale of the threat to the person if the commandment to love is not taken seriously. He explained that the Divine factor in the Church - as an institution and as a community of faith - exists alongside the human factor. This makes such realities as sin and holiness, or the lack of understanding and God's wisdom, exist so close to each other, that in our thinking we translate individual acts and the attitudes of people in the Church as an act of the institution as a whole, making it responsible for immoralities and mistakes.

He concluded: *What remains is hope that God in his kindness will grant us, his Church, the ability to proclaim more prophetically and to act more effectively, and that this will bring his Kingdom closer to all people.*

### **Response from Sister Ann Teresa Herritty**

The last response to Professor Mary Grey's speech took us some years back, when Sr. Ann Teresa Herritty moved to Southampton and met Mary Grey – as part of the Vision group. Sr. Ann Teresa was working with women in street-based prostitution at that time. *While encouraging us in this work, Mary Grey also constantly challenged us to do more than simply deal with the symptoms. We listened to her and, as a result, we began to study the roots of prostitution and to see what was going on globally. This led to an awareness of sex-trafficking.*

Their common letter to all the women’s congregations inviting them to attend a meeting, resulted in the establishment of The Medaille Trust – a Charity set up by Religious in the UK to help trafficked

women, men and children who had been trafficked. This is done by providing safe housing and also by raising awareness of this slavery. The charity has a Safe House which can accommodate 8 women and their babies and a newly opened house for trafficked men, most of whom will have been trafficked for labour exploitation. At this point she stressed: *If we hadn't been challenged by Mary Grey 14 years ago, none of this would have happened.*

Sr. Ann Teresa welcomed Prof. Grey's challenge to return to the prophetic dimension of the Church. *I believe that as Religious we are called to be on the margins of society and to work with the poorest of the poor – she said and added - I imagine that we all see trafficked people in this category. If we are faithful to live this prophetic dimension it will ultimately impact on the Church as institution.* She was happy to hear about Liberation Theology which for her is an essential aspect of the prophetic dimension of the Church.

Prof. Mary Grey's speech and three responses raised questions and statements from the audience, as follows:

- ✓ We had a chance to listen to different opinions. What kind of wisdom is there among us when we are together?
- ✓ We need to listen to the different points of view with patience, and not necessarily adopt them.
- ✓ Listening to the presentations and discussions in a foreign language does not allow some of us to follow all the detail. But we all came in the Name of God and we all find our own clarity. God inspires all of us.
- ✓ Difference of thinking depends on whether you come from the East/West – that influences the way of our ministry. The most important thing in our ministry is to show the women their dignity, to commit ourselves together with others, men and women. We cannot do the work on our own.
- ✓ I find myself very inspired by Mary Grey – enthusiasm by what she was saying, passion, and conviction. I particularly like the “sumud”
- ✓ What happens to us when we have these experiences? We need to move on to the further work in practice. Deep respect, ability to accept differences in opinion, to ask the life experiences of the other.

The discussion on keynote address and raised issues continued further into the group work.

## **Hands-on Experience**

The Conference Programme offered two presentations of a ‘hands-on’ experience of running a shelter for victims of human trafficking, the first located in Poland and the second in Albania. That enabled participants to recognise the patterns of similarities and the cultural differences between Western and Eastern (Central) Europe.

The Polish shelter is located in the region of Silesia and is run by the Sisters of Mary Immaculate. This 24 hours centre was opened in 2004 to help women, girls and children – the victims of domestic violence, human trafficking and forced prostitution. A year later it started preventive activities like visiting schools with an awareness programme about human trafficking. Since 2008 there are regular trainings for teachers, social workers and students. In 2009 a Professional Street-working Programme has been created to prepare for work in this specific environment. The centre has a therapeutic tutorial that helps to teach the methods for supporting children. Women can

observe their own mother/child relationships, they can look back, and gain the strength to live here and now, as well as in the future. The shelter can accommodate 13 women with children. It is run with the help of social workers who were brought to the place by the courage and enthusiasm of Sisters. Trafficked women from other countries or states outside Silesia are permitted to stay there for 30 days to recover from their experience of being trafficked and reflect on how they want to pursue their case. Their stay for a prolonged period is conditional – they have to be prepared to take the trafficker to court for conviction. The woman has to be prepared to testify in court. Victims of trafficking are brought to the centre by designated Police for Human Trafficking.

Among the daily problems which the Sisters are facing, there are two that are hard to overcome: money and law. Sisters do not have any state support for the activities they are involved in. They need to rely on self-creativity in respect to fund-raising. There is some local funding but that limits only to the victims that are registered locally. Here the second difficulty appears – law regulations. If the victim is a foreigner or even native but from another district, the support from local authorities does not apply. This separation of citizenship from human rights is very harmful especially when it comes to any medical treatment that is often necessary. It is not available under the state scheme. The third problem is that there are few sisters who are willing to do this work. The sisters pleaded to the Polish sisters in the conference to come and help: “We have so much work, we are only two sisters who have been working full time for ten years, we need some time off for study and reflection. Please come and help us!”

The work of the Albanian shelter presented at the conference is run by the organisation “Different & Equal”. This NGO has been created in May 2004 to provide high quality services for the protection and reintegration of victims of abuse, exploitation and trafficking. The main activities of the organization are reintegration assistance for former Albanian victims of trafficking and their children and prevention activities through supporting vulnerable groups, especially vulnerable youth groups. They undertake income generating activities for the beneficiaries and organise trainings for other NGOs and state institutions. A very important task is also to support the National Referral Mechanism and establishment of the Transnational Referral Mechanism for the victims of trafficking. Services provided for the victims of trafficking are closed in a three phase reintegration programme. They begin with accommodation and preliminary assistance, through semi-independent living phase till the independent living.

The challenges that “Different & Equal” faces are:

- Finding opportunities for the long-term accommodation of the beneficiaries who cannot return to their families of origin.
- Finding employment for the former victims of trafficking is rather difficult due to many reasons.
- Many of the beneficiaries require more health care than the other segments of the population especially in relation to STDs and HIV/AIDS. The Ministry of Health is not yet helping the victims of trafficking to receive free health care.
- Addressing the complicated issue of social stigma for the victims of trafficking.
- Re-establishment of the relationship with the family of origin.
- Assessing the families and finding alternative places of residence for minors.
- Dealing with cases with mental health problems
- Finding sufficient financial resources to offer reintegration services to the victims from D&E.

## Workshops

The Conference programme offered seven topics for the workshops:

#1 Law and Trafficking (Sister Adina Balan)

#2 Women's Rights for Freedom, Justice and to Speak their Truth (Ana Stakaj, Sister Imelda Poole)

#3 Legalising Prostitution Means Legalising Violence Against Women (Sister Dagmar Plum)

#4 Lobbying (Sister Marie Hélène Halligon)

#5 Demand (Sister Patricia Mulhall)

#6 The Prophetic Role of Women Religious in Counter Trafficking (Sister Eugenia Bonetti)

#7 Catholic Social Teaching (Sister Maura O'Donohue)

Due to the unequally spread interest among participants, two workshop groups were merged. Sr. Adina spoke about Law and Trafficking explained the basic definitions of: exploitation, forced labour, trafficking, labour rights, slavery and servitude, exploitation of the prostitution of others and other forms of sexual exploitation, removal of organs. The issues discussed were: means used by traffickers, force and coercion, fraud, deception and abuse of power, abuse of a position of vulnerability. Sr. Adina recalled legal documents and rights vital in working against trafficking. These are: The Palermo Protocol and its human aspects, rights related to proceedings, rights related to assistance, right to information. Sr. Dagmar led the second part of this group workshop on the subject of 'Legalising Prostitution Means Legalising Violence Against Women'. In Germany, her home-country, prostitution has been legal since 2002. The forms of violence and humiliation that prostitutes are exposed to are accepted as 'normal' by the majority of the population. She raised the questions: Do we want our younger generations to grow up with the image of women who can be bought, tormented and sometimes even killed? What does the acceptance of sexual violence tell us about ourselves, our society and the position of women in modern day Europe?

Group No.2. offered a workshop on 'Women's Rights for Freedom, Justice and to Speak their Truth'. This was led by Ana Stakaj and Sister Imelda Poole. Both experts gave a background to the situation of women in Albania who are vulnerable to being trafficked. They presented the known reality and the measures which the project, WRAJ FT has taken to respond to the needs of these women according to their expressed desires. They discussed, with illustrations of story and pictures, the processes undertaken which will lead to women's empowerment, their growth in dignity and economic independence. They also looked at a strategy for developing a women's network in Albania and in the Southern Balkans. Finally they engaged in a sharing of ideas, from other countries in Europe, which help in the prevention of vulnerable women being trafficked both within their own countries and across the borders.

Group No.3. gathered around the issue of Lobbying. The leader, Sister Marie Hélène Halligon, shared her experience from the USA where she was GS Justice and Peace representative in 2008-2009. She used power point presentation for a better knowledge of the UN mechanisms and gave examples of lobbying together with other NGO, Congregations. The participants could get familiar with the means of UN events, surveys and petitions. Sr. Marie Hélène stressed the importance of communication between and within congregations.

Group No.4. focused on human trafficking through the prism of demand, as the engine driving human trafficking. Sister Patricia Mulhall led participants in analysing the reasons for demand and the growing market for sex trafficking. They considered consumerist behaviour which commercialises and commodifies women's bodies, and the prevalence of pornography creating growth in demand. The group worked on case-studies, statistics, cultural practices, to explore the three main elements of human trafficking: buyers, bought, business. The workshop outlined

approaches to demand, using examples. It offered suggestions for lobbying and campaigning, especially holding governments to account, and making links with NGOs and international bodies such as UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Group No.5. looked at the Prophetic Role of Women Religious in Counter Trafficking under the supervision of Sister Eugenia Bonetti. They dealt with one of the major concerns of almost all Congregations: the attention paid to women, who are so often vulnerable, discriminated against, marginalized and submitted to a male patriarchal culture. Religious families, throughout the centuries, have been able to adapt themselves to the changing condition of women. They have also rediscovered the validity and actuality of their own charism in facing today's challenges. The group had to face questions: Why do religious care for those who are considered the waste of our society? Why do they reach out to immigrant women "imported" from different countries for sexual exploitation? And the answers were found in the prophetic role of "the sequela Christi" in light of the Gospel. *We are still called to be faithful to our call and to our charism.*

All participants who had wished to participate in the workshop on Catholic Social teaching were given the script for this workshop which was cancelled due to the ill health of the coordinator. Sr. Maura O'Donohue recalled the teaching from Biblical times through to today: the words of prophets denouncing such inhuman treatment, the writings of the Fathers of the Church and many Popes down through the centuries to the days of Pope Benedict XVI, as well as Jesus' attitude to women. All this should help in shaping the outlook that condemns this modern form of slavery called human trafficking.

## **Internet Research**

A presentation based on the research carried out by "In Via" Berlin on ways the Internet can trap victims, was a valuable asset to the RENATE conference. It was presented by representative of this Catholic organisation that was established 100 years ago in Berlin.

"In Via" has its roots in the Catholic railway mission and the association for the protection of girls. Its present name (Latin for "en route") is at the same time programmatic: "In Via" is offering counselling and attendance in schools, employment and society, particularly to girls and young women, aiming at supporting them en route to their independence. Alongside with the railway mission "In Via" covers a differentiated offer of counselling for youths, support in finding employment, professional qualification, and support for migrants, learning opportunities and leisure time activities. "In Via" established a coordination and counselling centre for women affected by trafficking in human beings in 1997 in Berlin, expanding to Land Brandenburg in 2011. This centre offers support and counselling to women affected by trafficking in human beings or other challenging situations like marital abuse or exploitative working situations. The counselling is free of charge and is taking place in different languages (German, English, French, Polish, Romanian, and Russian).

"Lost in Cyber World" is "In Via"'s project explaining the dangers harboured by the Internet. The idea behind this research evolved from experience collated over the past four years in the "In Via" advice centre for women affected by human trafficking. Human traffickers increasingly recruit their victims over the Internet. In chat rooms and Web forums, perpetrators hold out the prospect of attractive jobs or lure young women with marriage proposals or friendship requests. Increasingly, young German women and children are also affected. Running from February 2010 to January 2012, this project focuses on the development of preventive measures for sensitising and protecting

against dangerous encounters on the Internet. One of the objectives of the project is to provide information on the dangers and risks harboured by the Internet while broaching the issue of problematic online behaviour practised by adolescents among their peers. This project involves five European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which have been fighting against trafficking in women for years. The information and training materials developed within the framework of this project are to be distributed by the international networks against human trafficking, Coatnet and La Strada, and/or made available to other European organisations for their preventive work with young people.

Rapid development in the area of IT is also accompanied by very dynamic social development. Internet usage has become part and parcel of our everyday lives as well as having fundamentally changed our habits as regards information and communication. Information technology offers a wide variety of possibilities while simultaneously harbouring many risks and dangers. Apart from the phenomena associated with online crime and dangers such as phishing (describes attempts to obtain data on an Internet user), botnets (most botnets are used for sending spam – unwanted advertising e-mails – or viruses), gambling or similar, questionable behaviour by adolescents within virtual social networks has developed to become a challenge for parents and educators.

## **Field Visits**

Half way through the Conference field trips were offered to all participants.

The first group paid a visit to the shelter for the victims of violence, human trafficking and forced prostitution run in southern Poland. They could touch the reality described the other day by the Sisters of Mary Immaculate, who run this place. There was a cordial welcome from Father Jan Morcinek, Rector of St. Stephen's Parish in Katowice. He gave a brief insight to the charity projects created for the parishioners and other people in need. Thanks to his hospitality the group could use a Parish hall for the meeting with the unit of local Police, that is working against human trafficking and exploitation. The lecture explained the structure of Police in Poland with a special attention to the number of police involved directly in the work with traffickers and their victims. Presentation included some statistics and law aspects that are vital to the problem. After the meeting was finished, participants moved to the shelter to see the chink of light on the way to freedom from sexual slavery and exploitation. The meeting with some of the girls and their children, although shy but welcoming with a smile. It was very encouraging. The same group went later to see a boarding school for girls in trouble led by Divine Mercy Sisters in Cracow-Łagiewniki. Very informative meeting with Sister Miriana made all familiar with the Youth Educative and Rehabilitation Centre named after Saint Faustina. This is the place where Sisters run a dormitory and three schools for girls aged from 15 – 18 years old, who need help and moral renewal. They have a choice to attend to high school or vocational school where two professions can be learnt: hairdressing and cooking.

The second group of participants left for Auschwitz Birkenau – The Second World War Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp. They started their visit in the Centre of Dialogue and Prayer to make themselves ready for the difficult experience that was waiting ahead. An Irish sister introduced the group to the theme of the Holocaust by showing a short film and explaining the purpose of the centre for Dialogue and Prayer. After that introduction the group went to the former concentration camp which is now a museum. Three very professional guides waited the group to explain and show the impressive remains of this terrible part of Europe's history. The museum of Auschwitz shows the horrific scenes of the life of the prisoners who lived there and who formed a labour force for the regime. After this the group went to the other part of the museum; Camp

Birkenau, the extermination part of the camp. One of the very many striking images was the text in one of the Auschwitz buildings: “The one who does not remember history is bound to live through it again.” Overwhelmed and very impressed by all that was seen the group returned in a silent bus to the conference centre where the day was ended by listening to a beautiful piece of music by Polish composer – Henryk Mikołaj Górecki.

Auschwitz has become one of the most powerful symbols of our civilisation and 20th century history. To visit Auschwitz is a serious journey and a deeply personal experience for everybody. The place shows expressively the anatomy of evil – both the obvious horrors and their link with hidden, everyday evil. It was the largest Nazi extermination camp, and site of the biggest genocide. Between 1940-1945, the Nazis killed about 1,500,000 people here, mainly Jews, but also Poles, Gypsies, Russians POWs and members of other nationalities. The area is well preserved and nowadays it houses the Holocaust Museum, listed as being UNESCO Heritage. Once you get to Auschwitz, the tour included a 15-minute documentary movie serving as an introduction, then a visit to the brick-mortar barracks in Auschwitz I, and the extensive, depressing area of the large wooden huts, and the extermination camp at Auschwitz II – Birkenau. The biggest impression is made by the shocking gas chambers, the crematoria, death cells, human hair and shoes, barbed wire and the creepy, silent watchtowers. The new camp at Birkenau was to hold 100,000 prisoners and people from all across from Europe were brought here and unloaded from the train into the gas chambers. The architects who designed Birkenau built suffering into the plans. Birkenau had no provision for adequate water or waste disposal and putting so many people together meant that the barracks were breeding grounds for disease. It was at this sub camp, where the Nazi’s perfected their technology to carry out industrial mass murder. It was a very disturbing place to visit.

## IV. OUTCOMES

### Discussions

There were several sessions for discussion groups and questions, usually closing each major address or presentation. Participants in smaller teams could share their impressions, opinions, ideas and introduce them to others at the plenary.

The most important points raised during these sessions were:

- ✓ to build co-operative network among congregations – on the national level
- ✓ the importance of collaboration with ethnic minority chaplains
- ✓ the importance of interfaith collaborative efforts
- ✓ the Church needs to connect with all agencies involved in eradicating trafficking
- ✓ to acquire male congregations for co-operation
- ✓ the need for dialogue between male/female religious
- ✓ the importance of the work of reintegration (difference in this work between the countries of origin, destination, and transit and especially between Eastern and Western Europe)
- ✓ the demand: prevention work, and formation regarding this issue
- ✓ work to promote human dignity in schools, families, work, etc. – no action is too small – no action will be wasted
- ✓ to sensitise society regarding the problem of human trafficking
- ✓ awareness raising about human rights and the rights of victims of trafficking
- ✓ to do more for justice and punishment of traffickers
- ✓ how to combat trends in fashion that are sexually provocative - even for children.

### Issues

Conference programme offered five topics to consider during issue groups session. These were:

- ✓ Reintegration of Victims
- ✓ Website Technology
- ✓ Preventive Work with Girls
- ✓ Global Olympic Campaign 2012
- ✓ European Day against Trafficking – 18<sup>th</sup> October

Participants could learn about each subject and discuss it within the group. They collected their ideas and indicated solutions that were presented to the plenary on the posters. Listed areas of exploration brought thoughts that will help in the future work of RENATE.

### Proposals for the future of RENATE

Who is RENATE? Do we all know what RENATE stands for?

Brief History of RENATE: In 2007 USMI invited Religious from all over the world to come together to discuss the phenomena of trafficking and the way forward for religious in combating this evil. This group, called INRATIP, made the choice to work together to form another

international body under the umbrella of UISG (Union of International Female Superiors General). In 2009 this dream was realised and the international group of religious called TALITHA KUM was established. At this gather some of the members of TALITHA KUM, who were from Europe, realised that there was in fact no network of religious working in Europe. A decision was made to call together any sisters from Europe who would be interested in establishing such a network. The first gathering of sisters from Europe took place in The Netherlands at the administration base of SRTV, courtesy of the Dutch sisters who founded this organisation. RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation), is grateful to them for enabling these first meetings of RENATE to be realised. This group of fifteen sisters and a core group of six sisters, plus the two workers employed by SRTV, established RENATE on a legal footing with financial underpinning by 2010. The mandate for this initial group was to call a conference to launch RENATE with an inclusive number of Religious from Eastern, Central and Western Europe. This was realised in Trzebinia in September 2011.

The participants of RENATE conference in Trzebinia were asked to declare their willingness to commit themselves to the future of RENATE. Their engagement was split according to the five issues discussed earlier (reintegration of victims, website technology, preventive work with girls, global olympic campaign 2012, European day against trafficking - 18<sup>th</sup> October). They could put their names on the lists verifying their responsibility between being a co-ordinator and communicator of the action or being a performer willing to work on the task when a coordinator calls. A good number of sisters declared themselves willing to cooperate in the developing work of the network. This has been noted along with some names who have volunteered to join the new steering group of RENATE into the future.

The following proposals for RENATE were formulated:

- ✓ steering group made of equal numbers of members from Eastern and Western Europe
- ✓ conference seen as a resource group for personnel, materials, information, training
- ✓ Links with UCESM could give better recognition
- ✓ website translated into more languages
- ✓ common social campaign Euro 2012
- ✓ training on social communication for the members
- ✓ training on fund-raising
- ✓ meetings to exchange information
- ✓ joint campaign for October 18<sup>th</sup>.

The conference of RENATE has been a rich gathering which has affirmed us in our call to work together against this crime of modern day slavery. Being of one voice, one heart and one passion enables the group to work not only in solidarity but also to think together strategically. This is the way that the Mission of RENATE is evolving. It has made a commitment to work not only with the victims but to study the roots of the problem and to forward the mission of RENATE in the light of these insights. The work will continue and the steering group will ensure that the new mandate will be realised involving others in all future actions whether it be in preventive work, lobbying and campaigning or in direct action. “Yes, we can” – is the motto, Yes we can live in a world where we can work persistently in the cause of human rights and dignity for all.

## V. PRESS RELEASES

RENATE communications officer ensured that the media was provided with regular up-dates on the conference in Trzebinia. All Press Releases were issued daily at 07.30h CET in English, Polish, German, French and Italian. There were also two interviews for the Polish section of Vatican Radio and the local Radio eM in Katowice (Poland).

All the papers and outcomes were included on the website of RENATE [www.renate-europe.net](http://www.renate-europe.net)

### PRESS RELEASE 05 September 2011

On September 4, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow told a gathering of 75 women religious: "You are involved in a ministry that is very important in contemporary times, in which – as John Paul II said – the horizons of the European continent, which despite great signs of faith and witness and an atmosphere undoubtedly more free and unified, feels the consequences of moral and spiritual havoc... Physical, emotional and mental violence is spreading out and its victims are vulnerable people, deprived of their dignity and often treated as an object of trade."

He was addressing the opening session of a Conference organized by the group "Religious in Europe Networking against Trafficking and Exploitation" (RENATE), which runs at Trzebinia, Poland September 4-9.

The seventy-five participants come from seventeen countries of east, central and western Europe.\* Cardinal Dziwisz, who was Secretary to Pope John Paul II, and made several references to the Post Synodal Document of 2003, *Ecclesia in Europa*\*. He reminded his audience "In *Ecclesia in Europa* (86), we read:

‘Preferential love for the poor is a necessary dimension of Christian existence and service to the Gospel. To love the poor, and to testify that they are especially loved by God, means acknowledging that persons have value in themselves, apart from their economic, cultural, and social status, and helping them to make the most of their potential.’

He continued: "Through your inter-congregational co-operation and international structures, you can work with redoubled power and effectiveness. You are in possession of the biggest potential, which is not to be found even in the most wealthy organizations: your potential is your union with Christ, Redeemer of the world."

The Conference is conducted through English, with simultaneous translation to Polish, Shqip, German, Italian, French and Portuguese. Almost all the participants speak more than one language. The process is facilitated by US-born Sister Clare Nolan of the Good Shepherd Sisters.

The Keynote Address on Sep 5 is by the well-known British analyst, Ian Linden, on the opportunities, challenges and dangers in the situation of human trafficking. Theologian Mary Grey is present to make a theological reflection at the end of each day's proceedings. On Sep 8 she will deliver an address aimed at helping the group to develop a theology and spirituality that will energise those who take up the issue of trafficking of people.

Hands-on experiences of running shelters for survivors of trafficking in Albania and Poland will be

backed up with Workshops on Law and Trafficking, Lobbying, Women's Rights for Freedom, Catholic Social Teaching, addressing the question of Demand for purchased sex, and a workshop on the prophetic role women religious can play in countering this world-wide crime.

The liturgical team has prepared a creative week-long ritual of Scripture readings and responses, leading to the kneading and baking of bread from the wheat of many countries. The Conference will end with sessions to plan practical outcomes with closer networking and co-operation throughout Europe in addressing the issue. Then all will relax at an evening session of Polish entertainment, food and drinks.

The participants include a representative of the International Union of Superiors General and also one from the Conference of Religious of Europe.

\*Countries represented are: Albania, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Uk.

\*\*[www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_20030628\\_ecclesia-in-europa\\_en.html#fn14](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa_en.html#fn14)

PRESS RELEASE 06 September 2011

In his keynote address to 75 women religious gathered in Trzebinia, Poland, British analyst Ian Linden said researchers estimate that in 2010 the increase in the number of people trafficked globally could be as much as 250%. It is thought that 85% of this trade is for sexual exploitation. While there are many causes of this situation, two great powerful forces can be identified – poverty and gender.

Trafficking provides huge wealth to those who control it, \$34b annually. It is the third major criminal activity in world, after drugs and the illegal arms trade. As police become more effective in the drugs trade, many gangs move into trafficking.

He asked how it has happened that Europe - despite the vision of its founding fathers - could have come to experience a new form of slavery? The cold war divided Europe, he said, and it split the church as much as it split the political reality. He identified what he calls economism - that state of mind in which economics is the dominant criterion for judging everything. Individualism is associated with a second great theme, choice. Choice carries over to sexual choice – men can choose whatever form they want to choose. Totally accessible porn on Internet has to be making some impact.

The Church has often failed to be the “counter-culture” that it proclaims as necessary in the face of injustice and gross violations of human dignity.

Many of the participants in the Conference, who come from 17 countries of Europe, are already working with victims of trafficking or in the field of education for prevention. There was a strong reaction from the audience to Ian Linden’s suggestion that among the practical steps they might take would be to invite the deacons in their parishes to take up this issue.

Why only the deacons? What of the priests and bishops? What is urgently needed is for every bishop to issue a Pastoral Letter on the issue of Human Trafficking. It is lamentable that in 2003 when the International Conference of Superiors General in Rome was asked to take up this issue, only the women religious took action. To date, sisters have experienced great difficulty in getting

priests and brothers to join their national networks - as if the problem of human trafficking were a women's issue.

'You are at the cutting edge of the church's mission', Ian Linden told the nuns. This was strongly challenged. 'We are far from being at the cutting edge', said Sister Estrella Castalone of the Union of Superiors General, Rome, echoing the thoughts of many of the participants. 'We are at the trailing edge, I say, we are only cleaning up the mess left by the traffickers. As if we were saying to them take these women, do what you will and then when you have finished give them to us to clean up their wounds and comfort them. But nothing heals the wounds of a trafficked person. The Church has a long way to go in addressing the problem of human trafficking.'

In her reflection summing up the work of the day, theologian Mary Grey reminded participants that they came to the Conference to listen to the cries for help from voices that cannot speak their own story, voices of women, children and men trapped in fear and danger. "Our temptation is to stop, to say we have had enough, to talk about something pleasurable, trafficking is not fun, but that is what our commitment is. We take risks all the time, of criticism, of being ignored, of being put down even by our own congregations or hierarchy, of being silenced, all have experienced some degree of that. But, is not that the cost of discipleship, which all the prophets have risked since voice of Isaiah? Through the ages his voice comes to us, be not afraid I am with you."

#### PRESS RELEASE 07 September 2011

It is believed that up to 20% of children in Europe have already received electronic messages that fall within the category of cybergrooming, sexting or cyberbullying. A plea to help children and their parents to fight this crime was made to 75 nuns from 17 countries of Europe gathered for a Conference on Human Trafficking at Trzebinia, Poland on Tuesday.

Pictures posted on the Internet never go away, said Barbara Erritt, a social worker with the Berlin-based Catholic charity In Via. She appealed to the nuns when they return to their own countries to raise awareness among adults about the need to protect children from the dangers of the Internet. She stressed the importance of speaking in schools about these topics and teaching children to shout 'no' when cyberbullying starts.

A short film on cybermobbing revealed different ways children are manipulated. Previous generations of youngsters, she said, could shout at one another one-to-one or one-to-ten and there was usually someone around who could help when a child was seriously bullied. But today, within the space of ten minutes, ten thousand people can receive a message posted on the Internet. It can be very difficult for a parent to reach a child who is the victim of cybermobbing or other hurtful online experiences.

When a forum of hatred is created against a child, the ceaseless messages received to the child's mobile phone are deeply disturbing. Sometimes the child is subjected to terrifying noises and/or degrading messages about themselves or a parent. The consequences for the child who is targeted are deeply traumatising while for the others it is presented as a mere game. Research has shown that the effects of such activities of mental violation are very similar to sexual abuse.

"Children are groomed to remove their clothes and pose with erotic gestures before the webcam," Mrs. Erritt told her audience. "In Germany, as a result of 'happy slapping' captured on a mobile phone camera and posted on the Internet, several children had to leave their small town. Two

months ago in Germany, three children ended their lives by suicide after meeting in a Suicide Forum on the Internet."

The website [www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org) has been created to help fight these new phenomena which children are unable to deal with unaided.

#### PRESS RELEASE 09 September 2011

The conclusion of the Conference on Human Trafficking attended by 75 religious women from 17 countries of Europe at Trzebinia, Poland, drew commitment to continue the work of raising awareness about trafficking, educating for prevention and coming to the help of victims.

On September 8 the British feminist theologian, Mary Grey, called for a return of the prophetic dimension of the church. Seeking to develop a theology and spirituality that responds to the issue of human trafficking, she regretted that it is largely assumed in rich countries today that liberation theology has 'had its day'. Liberation Theology and Spirituality teach us that people need to be empowered to move from being victims to becoming agents of their own freedom. The dimensions of a prophetic theology, she said, require a new focus for theology.

The trafficking of women and children needs to be named as sin by the prophetic Church. People need to hear the evil of trafficking named and preached against at all appropriate pastoral levels. "We gather here near the city of Krakow, the birthplace of the former Pope, John Paul II. It was he who wrote the document, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, and he called for this dignity to be restored throughout the world as a matter of justice.

"A Christology against the violence and injustice of trafficking understands a compassionate Jesus in solidarity with the victims, yet an empowering Jesus giving courage to break the cycles of violence and fear through the strength of his ever-present Spirit", she said. "But the deep-seated nature of what we deal with is so all-encompassing that we have to be realistic about the long-term nature of the struggle.

"Our task is to keep querying the subordinate position of women both in Church and society, seeing this linked with false theories of gender and sexuality. Re-education in terms of men and women as equal partners in relationships of justice and mutuality is urgent. Linked with this is the need to examine what models of power are operating in Church, society and in our relationships. Subversive memory recovers voices that restore dignity and agency to women in cultures that continue to undervalue them."

Dr. Grey also underlined the need for a mystical spirituality. "The shocking nature of the degree of suffering and exploitation that women experience, demands that prophetic anger and truth-telling go hand in hand with mystical faith", she said, citing Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila and Dorothee Soelle: 'all things begin in mysticism and end in politics, only to begin again'.

The call for a new focus for theology was welcomed by Sister-doctor Maura O'Donohue in her response. As a missionary and a medical doctor, she told her audience, she was appalled by the fact that 10% of all kidneys available for transplant in the world come from trafficked persons.

Another respondent, Fr. Józef Tarnówka, praised Mary Grey for her 'brilliant speech' but took issue with her on the suggestion that we need to read Scripture 'subversively'. Dr. Grey spoke of

‘reading Scripture against the grain of the text’ i.e. reflecting on Scripture to discover what we have not yet learned, challenging ourselves to grasp what is healing and redemptive in the text. Fr. Tarnówka proposed a contrary thesis: that Christianity is a religion of redemptive powerlessness revealed in the Cross of Christ.

This provoked much discussion among participants. Many of those who had known life under Marxist communism were inclined to be highly suspicious of the terms ‘feminist’ and ‘liberation theology’. Many others commented with enthusiasm on the renewed call for a theology and spirituality that encourages a pastoral approach which seeks to restore dignity to the oppressed victims of trafficking and help them to regain control over their lives.

## VI. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX No. 1.

#### **Prof. Ian Linden: Analysis of Culture and the Actual Situation in East and West, Opportunities and Dangers**

##### Human Rights and Human Trafficking

Human trafficking yields up to \$32 billion in profits annually. It comes a strong second in the ranking of global criminal enterprise – after the drugs trade - third if you include the illegal arms trade. These are the dark side of globalisation.

One of the most striking features of the Catholic community as a “Global Church” responding to globalisation has been its response, led by Women Religious, to human trafficking. You are leading and on the front-line. Whether in pastoral care, education or advocacy, the networks of international Religious Orders and Societies have allowed a rapid and unprecedented compassionate response to what amounts to a new form of slavery. (1) Many states are signatories to the Council of Europe Convention on Trafficking and to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. But the actual response to victims of trafficking from state law enforcement varies enormously according to the resources allocated.

Human trafficking is a hugely profitable criminal activity for organised crime but, in addition, the risks are less than in the drugs trade. There is less focussed international attention. Special state prevention organisations are small or insignificant.

A stash of cocaine is incontestable evidence of guilt. A terrified and intimidated woman without documents, unwilling to testify in court, is not. Some 80% of the 2 million strong trafficking globally is for sexual exploitation, according to a UN study, and about 18% for domestic servitude. It is not diminishing. In the last year reported trafficking increased by 250% in the Greater London area. This is in the UK, which is one of the very best for state resources allocated, with a Trafficking and Prostitution Unit in its Specialist Crime Directorate of 45 staff and dedicated detectives.

Human trafficking is a fundamental human rights issue. People are trafficked, to quote the UN definition “by means of threat, use of force or other means of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of receiving and giving of payment ... to a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”. The highest level of vulnerability is obviously found in poor women, gender as male power over women; poverty provides the push of increased income and the pull of deceptive offers for those who harbour unreal dreams and naive aspirations.

##### Ambiguities of modern Europe

The Cold War split the Church almost as much as it split Europe. So links between eastern and western Europe have had to be recuperated since the fall of the Berlin Wall. This recuperation has required respect and understanding between different Church cultures, experiences and traditions. The transition from bureaucratic communism to a new materialism and individualism in Eastern Europe has been matched by what has been called economism, and anti-immigration sentiments, in the West. Even within Religious life the pressing task is creating “partnerships of difference” for the Common Good.

The communications revolution has accentuated existing tendencies in European society: most notably individualism and the sexualisation/exploitation of youth for market led profit. Bikinis designed for seven year old girls may be bought at PRIMARK. After puberty, enormous pressure is exerted on girls to lose their virginity or be branded, and feel like, “freaks”. “Trophy wives” noted for the type of good looks used to advertise perfumes and cosmetics adorn the arms of the wealthy as tangible expressions of their wealth or celebrity. A night out for young city (financial?) dealers spending their bonus money is likely to include a lap dancing club, and certain types of businesses include “escorts” in their “entertaining”. It amounts to a taste of the trappings of wealth and celebrity without the reality. The culture differs country to country but there are certain common features: money is translated into sexual choice and the “consumption” of sexual services becomes part of the “service economy” and its culture.

The European Union was a proud expression of the post-war quest for justice and peace. It was in its origins strongly influenced by the lay Catholicism of the majority of its key founders. But it has fallen far short of its ideals, much proclaimed, of being a Europe of values and a Europe of Human Rights. This is not simply a failure of European governments. European societies have been prone to fear of minorities, xenophobia, and the valueless and fickle celebration of wealth and celebrity coupled with voting behaviour that has encouraged growing gaps between rich and poor. Governments wishing to redistribute wealth have to do so (Stealth is not a widely known expression, is there another more commonly known word?) by stealth or they are punished at the polls. The Church has often been a prophetic voice in this respect. The gender gap has not been closed and the exploitation of women continues. But it would be hard to argue that in the persistence of its patriarchal culture, the Church is today not more part of the problem than part of the solution.

Given the dominance of this culture in the mass media, human trafficking seems less of an aberration (abnormality). It falls at the criminal intersection of a sexual revolution and savage capitalism. In a world where choice is presented – most notably in politics - as an ultimate value, choice of sexual partners and sexual acts, is but one large item in the market for commodities. So what would be the underlying socio-economic features of a country that trafficked people for exploitation abroad, the supply side of women as sexual commodities? First would be a 1.1 million labour force, average age 28, in an essentially agricultural country out of which over a third emigrate for work to provide 10% of the country’s GDP in remittances. Second would be the ranking – by the World Bank - as most corrupt state on its continent with the highest level of organised crime and very low government salaries so bribery was a standard part of income. That, as a matter of fact, would be Albania. But many other countries fit the general profile.

The question what would be a typical European country creating the demand for trafficked people is less easy to answer because demand is very widespread, not limited to any one social class, profession or occupation. Research does not give any very clear picture. The statistical evidence suggests that the percentage of men, both single and married, middle-aged, old and young, who have paid a prostitute once, several times or regularly has varied from country to country and from decade to decade. It is hard to believe that the easy access to pornography created by the communications revolution does not stimulate demand but there is no evidence of any dramatic increase in Europe from available statistics. What has clearly been changing is the nationality of prostituted women: from nationals to foreign trafficked women, and with rising incomes for women, to drug-addicted nationals on the street forced to sell their bodies to satisfy their addiction, a diverse selection of women seeking income this way for a variety of reasons. There is also a degree of ethnic specificity between clients and the women that they seek.

But the figure of a million people sold for sexual exploitation annually worldwide reveals to what extent human persons in a dehumanised world remain reduced to their fundamental materiality as human bodies, cut off from other human relationships by exploitation and manipulation, and turned into commodities. Off-street trafficked women in London, for example, can be expected by those who control them to have over twenty sexual encounters each working day.

Trafficking, like the drugs trade, is obviously a consequence of continuing demand in a globalised world. Globalisation and the communications revolution has brought pornography into the lives of millions of people who would have in the past sought it out with difficulty, but likewise it has created a new form of prostitution, providing a new degree of control over access to a dehumanised relationship-less sexual experience.

## Human Dignity

A major question is why has a Europe that created a Human Rights Convention and has seen itself as a purveyor of European values generated such a spectacular phenomenon as a new form slavery. An easy answer would be that the exploitation of poor foreign women does not arouse outrage simply because the feminist movement has faltered and European societies see immigrant communities as a threat or a nuisance. This will not do as an answer. There is a deeper level that needs to be explored linked to the juridical weakness of treatment of human rights violations and, the concept of human rights itself. The Church's promotion of "human dignity" has been too easily rejected by European societies.

Some would say that the Church's promotion of "human dignity" relies on simply too vague a concept. It suffers allegedly from being what has been called a "floating signifier", signifying something different in different cultures, so it cannot be a universal value. It is better, so the argument goes, always to talk of human rights. I disagree. It seems to me that human trafficking is precisely about the violation of human dignity as a universal value transcending borders and cultures. It also, of course, entails the violation of a number of human rights.

I will try to explain why I want to make this point and why I think the antecedents (another simpler word? background) of the struggle you are engaged in are important. Human trafficking is a theological issue, and you are heirs to a theological development in understanding human rights that needs to be explored as you reflect on what you are doing. I will then make a few suggestions on how the struggle against trafficking might be carried forward in coming years in the Church. It is a complex practical issue requiring careful strategies.

## From Human Dignity to Natural Rights

The roots of the Christian understanding of human dignity lie in the account of creation found in the first book of Genesis: an account of how human beings, mankind (Adam), though creatures created by God, are made "in the image and likeness of God". In the contemporary Middle Eastern ideology of kingship only kings were described in such a fashion. So this amounted to an unprecedented and revolutionary revelation. "Thou hast made him little less than a god crowning him with glory and honour", the psalmist marvels (Psalm 8 verse 5), reacting to this vision of humanity.

St. Thomas Aquinas makes it clear that human beings are not made as images of God rather they are made *ad imaginem* (to the image of God). This cannot, of course, be a question of physical likeness. So a very poor analogy would be a coin carrying the head of an emperor, and, a much

better one, a work of art subtly bearing the impress of the artist. (2) The analogy is developed in the Christian expression “artisans of a new humanity” used increasingly in Latin America from the 1960s to describe Christians’ co-operation with God’s work of liberating redemption. And in doing this work Christians believe human beings draw on or discover traces of God’s own - utterly different and loving - creativity and redemptive power.

Nonetheless the Christian concept of “the image of God” does not underestimate the degree to which sin flaws human beings as God’s works of art, and thus flaws their work as artisans of a new humanity. It would be difficult to do so after the ghastly secular communist and fascist experiments in 20th century Europe. Jacques Maritain described the great binary opposition at the heart of human beings. Sainthood reveals humanity’s capacity to “touch the hem of God” while not losing the ability to grasp the abyss of evil. The three great sources of criminal profit in a globalised world provide a contemporary glimpse of this grasp.

It is against this background that the second Vatican Council proclaimed the *imago dei* as always anchored in an historical reality, and was insistent that it cannot be understood outside its full realisation in the relationship to divinity found in Jesus Christ. To pursue the analogy, the Redeemer is God’s perfect self-portrait as the craftsman and exemplar of a redeemed new humanity. The historical changes that we see accompanying contemporary globalisation are therefore key to discernment and theological reflection. (3)

For Christians the plan of creation can therefore never be divorced from the plan of redemption. (4) Human dignity is bestowed both as the product of having been created and redeemed – in both cases as the recipients of a loving gift – and the resulting capacity to seek, encounter and ultimately know God. This is true of the most exploited, to those reduced to nothing but their fundamental humanity as suffering, trapped, exploited people. All life has an inherent directionality. A fully Christian anthropology cannot but evoke gratitude and awe. “The name for that deep amazement at man’s worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say: the Good News”, Pope John Paul II wrote. (5)

Aquinas himself still retained a mediaeval and hierarchical understanding of the word “dignity” by applying it as an attribute only of “persons” who were “dignitaries”. (6) This limited vision of whose human dignity had to be honoured was to change after 1492, in many ways the beginning of globalisation.

### From Natural to Human Rights

After Europe’s “discovery” of the New World and the resultant debate about human equality and “universality”, by extension this requirement to honour was extended to all human beings and nations. It was their due. Obedience to God, based on humanity’s unique God-given nature as a creature, now required that human dignity be observed universally. The encounter with “the Other” in the New World opened up a new chapter in human rights thinking. In the words of Archbishop Renato Martino, addressing the ILO in 2005, but applicable to this assembly: “In the age-old history of the Church, the concept of a common humanity, stretching to the extreme limits of the earth, introduced to human civilisation a dynamism raising the dignity of the individual and at the same time expanding this dignity beyond any boundary or border”.

Two other concepts filled the space later occupied by this new idea of the universality of human dignity; these were an overlapping pair of concepts: “natural rights” and “justice”. The Dominican Friars who in the half century from 1511- 1561 led the denunciation of the savage Spanish conquest of Latin America, Anton Montesino, Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolome de Las Casas , proclaimed

the right to liberty and the right to property of the subjugated Native Indian population whom the conquistadores were enslaving. Their reasoning derived from their theology. “If we want to be sons of Christ and followers of the truth of the gospel, we should consider that, even though these peoples may be completely barbaric, they are nonetheless created in God’s image”, wrote Las Casas. (7)

In *Sublimis Deus* issued in 1537 by Pope Paul III, and in his pastoral instruction to the Archbishop of Toledo, Juan de Tavera, the Indians’ rights to liberty, property and self-determination were officially acknowledged in Church’s official teaching. In the same year the term *jura hominum* appeared in a contemporary text denoting the more subjective sense of “human rights” in which human rights discourse would later be framed. (8)

It might have been expected from the victory of the Dominican Salamanca school – named after the university where Francisco de Vitoria was professor - that the Church’s promotion of objective natural rights would evolve seamlessly into the modern concept of subjective, “inalienable” human rights of today. For a variety of political reasons, revolutions and liberalism, this did not happen.

In consequence the Church’s attitude to human rights in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was characterised by “hesitations, objections, reservations and, on occasion, even vehement reaction on the Catholic side to any declaration of human rights made from the standpoint of liberalism and laicism”. (9)

So it was that when Catholic Social Teaching started to consider itself self-consciously as an organic body of doctrine developing over time, beginning in 1891 with Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, the Church avoided, and intermittently condemned, Liberal language about “human rights”, and spoke either of the rights and duties of specific sections of society, notably workers, or spoke more generally about “human dignity”. (10) “No-one may with impunity outrage the dignity of man, which God Himself treats with great reverence”, Pope Leo wrote referring to the condition of the European working class. But he immediately insisted that there was “no question here of rights belonging to man, but of duties owed to God”. (11)

But it was the positive impact of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 on Catholic thinking that completed a transition to subjective rights and finally resulted in a comprehensive official promotion of the importance of human rights in the early 1960s. The encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (Pope John XXIII) offered the fullest Catholic perspective on human rights to date and not one that was inherently inaccessible to non-Christians. Conscience is given great weight in later official teaching even described as “the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, [where he] is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths”. (12)

Each human person, *Pacem in Terris* explains, “has rights and duties which together flow as a direct consequence of his Nature, what is most human in mankind. These rights and duties are universal, inviolable and inalienable”. But if human dignity is considered from the viewpoint of divine revelation, rather than the possession of intelligence and free will, from a supernatural rather than natural perspective, “inevitably our estimate of it is incomparably increased”. In a very Thomist way this is not a matter of either/or. (13)

The publication of *Pacem in Terris* was in retrospect a turning point. During the second Vatican Council the Catholic Church finally made its own the contemporary discourse of human rights in the UN Declaration. The Vatican as a member state, though, formally endorsed only some of the rights listed. The motivation for this document remained the same as for earlier pronouncements:

the attempt to spell out the simple demands of ensuring human dignity. (14) As the declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae* (Human Dignity) says: these requirements “have come to be known to human reason through centuries of experience”. (15)

The Church’s stance on natural law and human rights is not that they are the unique product of a Catholic discourse – they are manifestly not - but available to all. The Church in the Council’s thinking promotes their realisation as the gathered people of God not as an exclusive club with access to a special knowledge, not as a private religion of the elect, but as a “sacrament of all humanity” sharing in the common heritage of humankind. We are all heirs to this complex history that has brought human dignity and human rights together, and you encounter their violation in human trafficking.

### Human Rights and Secular Allies

The premise of the UN Charter and Declaration, and other legal provisions for upholding human rights, is that they are implemented as claims made on states. They are thus rights primarily accruing to citizens of particular states. Humanitarian “law” is international but in the final reckoning depends on states treating it as law. It is instructive to note how few rich countries have signed the International Convention on Migrants and their Families for example. And when they do sign an international agreement, as in the case of the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and its subsequent global extension in the 1967 protocols, how much energy is exerted in trying to circumvent its humanitarian provisions.

But to a great extent in practice, in the “developed world” at least, human rights become coterminous with citizenship rights. The European Convention on Human Rights, for example, becomes “real” i.e. contains realisable rights, to the extent that is incorporated into the national law of the member states, in other words to the extent that their citizens can, if necessary, claim their rights through recourse to law. That is why it is important that states sign up to the European Convention on Trafficking and to pass relevant national legislation.

The way in which human rights seem to disappear outside the nation-state, as into the mists, is telling. Trafficked people, inasmuch as they are formally “aliens” and have lost all their citizenship rights, are test cases for belief in, and commitment to, subjective human rights as such, understood as a general, universal and subjective right conferred simply by being a human being.

As Hannah Arendt rightly pointed out, once human beings lose their citizenship rights as did Jews under the Nazis they de facto lose their human rights. For “people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships except that they were still human”, (16) their predicament is akin to a Hobbesian “state of nature”. Far from a Christian account of what is “natural” to humanity, this condition beyond citizenship may often result in abandonment to an utterly inhuman fate. The logic of Arendt’s claim is thus a startling paradox. “I am deprived of human rights at the very moment at which I am reduced to a human being ‘in general’, and thus become the ideal bearer of those ‘universal human rights’ which belong to me independently of my profession, sex, citizenship, religion, ethnic identity etc.”. (17)

So contemporary human rights discourse is not the exemplar of rationality countering vague ideas about human rights derived from a religious account of human dignity that it is presented. Subjective human rights have their own inherent philosophical and practical difficulties and lacunae. The non-citizen with nothing but their “bare life” – and the most vulnerable trafficked people are reduced to that – reveals the philosophical fragility of a purely humanist grounding of

inalienable human rights, as well as the obvious practical difficulties of making human rights meaningful as essentially an entitlement claim on the state. A religious belief with its foundation in the *imago dei*, human dignity with natural law as the foundation of human rights is thus no more, nor less, of a contentious assertion, or a call to ethical action, merely another way of deriving and grounding a universal conception of human rights.

The trafficked person, the migrant, the destitute African villager in a failed state all raise profound questions about secular accounts of rights in the most immediate and obvious way. What does it mean that they have inalienable human rights, if it is not an affirmation of a religious anthropology, an act of faith in a humanity created by God. And thus is it through (?) faith in God's loving kindness that humankind is able to build a more human world? In this profoundest of senses the Church does have an insight and vision to share with the international community, the European Union and the United Nations which, faced with these realities, increasingly confronts them with a mixture of concern and cynicism. Such a Christian anthropology survives the paradox of the "ideal bearer of human rights", the human being with only his/her "bare life", as pre-eminently the non-citizen without rights.

Sustaining this vision of a horizon far greater than the nation-state, with - in the worship and life of the Church - intimations of the universal human family and its dignity as the *imago dei*, is an urgent necessity at a time of rapid globalisation. Its urgency is experienced in the plight of trafficked people. It should complement and support derivations of human rights drawn from secular understandings of human development.

The Church's own past failings in respect of human rights should make it impossible for promotion of such a vision and insight to turn into a new and perverse triumphalism, rather than the beginning of a renewed dialogue with other religions and with the secular world. This is surely the theological relevance of the Church's struggle against trafficking, a powerful witness to this truth (18). Meanwhile we need to hold on to the human rights discourse, whatever its limitations, as the "boundary discourse of *vera justitia*" (19).

### Strategic Thinking

I hope this theological thinking about what you are doing, with due historical humility, situates you where you want to be: as champions of human dignity in the complex modern space of globalisation. It is in many ways a new space, one that you are occupying effectively, perhaps far more so than most of the Church. So what now needs to be done?

1. One of the great strengths of the global Church is the linkages provided by networks within and between Religious Orders and other forms of organisation such as CARITAS. To extend these links to the full, it would be helpful to create a secure directory with a full range of organisations, country by country, working to combat human trafficking, secular, religious and ecumenical, on a secure website. This would include, to the degree security concerns allowed, all available accommodation possibilities in a particular country. Criminal gangs work internationally. The Church must do so to combat them.

2. The development agencies have had considerable success in achieving collaborative efforts across Europe in CIDSE. It would be highly effective to create a virtual advocacy community for Europe on human trafficking to relate to diplomatic communities, police (obligations under the UN Convention and national referral mechanisms) and immigration authorities. This could connect with key groups involved in education and awareness-building plus pastoral care in SE Asia and

Africa. Such a virtual community might be able to put the issue of creating adequate safe accommodation on the agenda for European Union funding across a number of different countries. It could also work for decriminalisation of women victims on the Swedish model. Such a group would be in a position to formulate a comprehensive strategy. UNANIMA performs such a function at the UN.

3.The Nigerian experience, where Nigerian Sisters brought the problem to the attention of the Bishops' Conference who issued a short but punchy pastoral letter on the topic, provides a model for a number of different countries of origin. The Nigerian bishops called for women's organisations to become involved in education and awareness building. Making this part of the work of the diaconate, as will occur in UK, is also a useful model that can be replicated: monitoring of job adverts, and adverts offering sexual services in liaison with police services could be part of their work, as well as referral. This should be placed on the agenda of the meeting of SECAM/COMECE by a supportive bishop so that protection exists against delation (?) to Rome by the ignorant and the ill-informed, with subsequent problems for pastoral work.

4.Trafficking for forced labour or domestic servitude is most likely to be detected by ethnic minority chaplaincies, deacons and parish priests and is often difficult to identify. These need to be integrated into systems of referral and given training on how to identify male – for example Vietnamese boys in illegal casinos who can be required to perform sexual acts on older men - and female trafficked people in their communities. Above all some systematic education for Church pastoral workers is needed.

5.Church workers may be given more trust than secular authorities and police. Trafficking is best stopped by the criminals being arrested and successfully charged on basis of victims' information. Best practice in gaining and handling such information in relationships of trust needs to be shared across borders. It goes without saying that providing information is the last thing trafficked women will wish to do as they will be in fear of reprisals to self and family.

6.It would be utopian to believe that demand could be eliminated but it could be reduced. Advocacy for the Nordic model of Sweden, Norway and Iceland versus the failed Dutch approach of legalisation of prostitution and criminalisation of forced trafficking is central. Sweden's 1999 laws eliminated criminal penalties for prostitutes and penalised all those on the demand side of the prostitution business. An initial step is working to ban advertising of "sexual services" and make popular local protest against sex clubs and lap-dancing clubs more politically effective. These entail good relationships with local authorities and legislators and evidence-based advocacy rather than moral outrage. Positive relationships with women MPs are likely to be critical.

#### Footnotes

1. For example CARITAS Lithuania plays an outstanding role. I am indebted to Detective Inspector Kevin Hyland and several others for insights which feature in what follows.

2. De Iustitia et Jure 4.1.107b 47; Summa Theologiae 2a 2ae, Q.66, art. See Fergus Kerr *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism*, Oxford Blackwell, 2002, 124; Robert Murray "The Image of God: delegated and responsible authority" in *Priests and People* February 2000, 51. Likewise St. John Chrysostom wrote of the "gentleness and mildness" of God as being the key qualities understood in the imago. Homilies on Genesis 8:6-8 translated R.C. Hill in *Fathers of the Church Catholic University of America Press*, 1990, 109. Pope Benedict XV spoke of not compromising "the equilibrium of nature, the fruit of order in creation, rather to take care to pass on to future generations a world capable of feeding itself", see Message to the Director-General of the FAO on

- World Food Day, 2005. Note that comparable verses from the Holy Qur'an are : Al-Rahman, 16, Loqman, 20, Al-Ja thiath 13, Baqarah, 22, Ghafer, 64,. Naba, 6, Hud, 61, Nisa, 1
3. Roger Ruston *Human Rights and the Image of God* Canterbury SCM Press, 2004, 55; Rowan Williams in *Grace and Necessity: Reflections on Art and Love* Morehouse, USA, 2005 takes up the theme from the position of the artist's openness to transcendence.
  4. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 31 "one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combatted and justice to be restored". Paul VI, 1974
  5. *Redemptor Hominis* 10. Pope John Paul II 1979
  6. Rushton *Human Rights*, 113 n.8
  7. Bartolome de las Casas *In Defence of the Indians* (1552) quoted in Rushton *Human Rights* 146
  8. In column 4759 of Volmenus's *Historia diplomatica regum Bataviarum* 1537 quoted by M. Villey *Le Droit et les Droits de l'homme* PUF, Paris 1983, 174
  9. *The Church and Human Rights* Pontifical Commission "Justitia et Pax", Vatican City, 1975, 18 and see Benedict XVI *Deus Caritas Est* Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2006, 56 (27)
  10. This was the beginning of the idea that "human dignity" was in some sense a way of avoiding "human rights" language.
  11. *Rerum Novarum* 57-58 Pope Leo XIII, 1891; c.f. the treatment of exactly the same topic in *Mater et Magistra* in 1961 248-25
  12. *Pacem in Terris* 9,10, 11-27
  13. *Gaudium et Spes* CTS 1966, 16
  14. Joseph Gremillion *The Gospel of Peace and Justice* Orbis Books 1975, 10-13
  15. *Dignitatis Humanae* 1965, 9
  16. Hannah Arendt *The Origins of Totalitarianism* New York, 1958, 29
  17. Slavoj Zizek "Against Human Rights" in *New Left Review* July-August 2005,127
  18. The Jesuits in their southern province of the United States, for example, did not emancipate all their slaves until 1839 - the Church has often failed to be the "counter-culture" that it proclaims as necessary in the face of injustice and gross violations of human dignity.
  19. Ethna Regan *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights* Georgetown University Press 2010 for a discussion of this theme in an Augustinian perspective.

### **Response to Prof. Ian Linden from Sr. Adina Balan**

"We cannot rest until trafficking in persons is eliminated from the globe"  
Bishop Thomas Wenski, Chair of USCCB Committee on Migration. 2004

Over the course of the past decade, awareness of trafficking in persons among governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the general public has increased dramatically. Much concern has focused on assessing the mechanisms by which countries identify victims of trafficking and provide them with shelter, recovery, and reintegration services. The [International Labor Organization](#) estimates that 2.4 million people were trafficked between 1995 and 2005. The [2010 Trafficking in Persons Report](#) reports that 12.3 million adults and children were trafficked in 2009, at a rate of 1.8 people per 1,000 worldwide.

According to this Report, the aggregate number of prosecutions and convictions has been steadily rising over the last three years and successful prosecutions of sex trafficking offences far outnumber successful forced labour prosecutions. Unlike sex trafficking, labour trafficking crimes are often committed by persons perceived as respected members of society or accomplished business leaders, who are less likely to be investigated than unsavoury characters involved in organized crime or living unlawfully off the proceeds of the commercial sex trade.

The demand for cheap goods, services, labour, and sex opens opportunities for the exploitation of vulnerable populations. And it is on this demand that human trafficking thrives. People are bought and sold as commodities within and across borders to satisfy demand from buyers. Poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunity, social upheaval, and political instability facilitate traffickers' ability to recruit victims, but they do not in themselves cause trafficking.

The economic reality is that human trafficking is driven by profits. If nobody paid for sex, sex trafficking would not exist. If nobody paid for goods produced with any amount of slavery, forced labour in manufacturing would be a thing of the past. Increasingly, anti-trafficking actors are looking to combat modern slavery from the demand side rather than focusing on arrests and prosecutions (the supply side) alone.

It was on May 15, 2002, on the occasion of the International Conference "Twenty-First Century Slavery — The Human Rights dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings" that Pope John Paul II wrote:

*"The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and grave violation of fundamental human rights. Already the Second Vatican Council had pointed to 'slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as instruments of gain rather than free and responsible persons' as 'infamies' which 'poison human society, debase their perpetrators' and constitute 'a supreme dishonour to the Creator' (Gaudium et Spes, 27)... Who can deny that the victims of this crime are often the poorest and most defenceless members of the human family, the 'least' of our brothers and sisters? ... The disturbing tendency to treat prostitution as a business or industry not only contributes to the trade in human beings, but is itself evidence of a growing tendency to detach freedom from the moral law and to reduce the rich mystery of human sexuality to a mere commodity."*

The impact on victims is harsh and long-term. Victims may suffer chronic pain or injuries from dangerous jobs, infection from contagious diseases, and the consequences of rape and sexual abuse. Additionally, many experience fear, depression, and shock and guilt so severe that their social and psychological development is severely damaged. International victims have the added stress of coping with a foreign culture and language.

*"When I came through this door for the first time, I was completely destroyed," Erica says. "Everything was in dark colours. I was very aggressive and nervous. I didn't know how to get on with my life."*

Trafficked persons have varied backgrounds: they are women and girls as well as men and boys of all different ages; they come from many different countries, and are of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They have been trafficked for different purposes—marriage, agricultural labour, work in informal sector industries, domestic labour, participation in dangerous sports such as camel racing, armed conflict, prostitution, child pornography—and they have drawn on various resources to overcome cruelty and maltreatment.

Each different type of trafficking has different dimensions. And not only does trafficking in persons have multiple dimensions, but each can have other implications at each stage of the trafficking spectrum. For instance, measures for prevention and protection have implications on human rights and gender. Measures for repatriation and return impact on migration. Measures for recovery impact on gender and child dimensions.

According to

Article 6 of the Palermo Protocol

*States have an obligation to provide assistance to victims of trafficking (including appropriate housing; counselling and information; medical, psychological and material assistance; and employment, educational and training opportunities).*

The ideal situation for facilitated recovery is a safe location that covers that basic needs (food, shelter and medical support), has a limited number of people (between five and ten) in a family-like setting, trained counselling staff, freedom of movement and a playground for children. The goal is to help stabilize the survivors through a structured short-stay program in order to get them back into a safe, protective family or community environment as soon as possible.

Reintegration programs have the potential to respond to the challenges that remain in empowering victims to make their own decisions and gain the confidence to act upon them over the long term. Individual, focused, recovery plans are organized around the reintegration of victims of trafficking in either their communities of origin or in new communities.

Each factor involved in the recovery process faces Challenges with Reintegration:

- Initial factors still present
- The danger of re-victimization
- Few opportunities for self-sustainable living
- Few options for support after reintegration
- Very few agencies provide interventions to both the children and families
- No activities to increase income-generating capacity of families
- Systematic challenges with reintegration interventions:
- Lack of follow up support after reintegration
- No market is available for the skills after training
- Profit made too small to live on due to lack of market networks
- Lack of easy access to health services although health issue is critical

Reintegration presents a challenge in terms of developing profitable livelihood strategies for victims and following up on their progress. Perhaps even more challenging is developing strategies to support trafficking victims who do not want to return home, or who are unable to do so. These victims need assistance to organize an entirely new life, requiring better opportunities to become educated and to pursue sustainable employment opportunities.

Victims of human trafficking face major problems being reintegrated into their home communities when they are freed from the situation into which they were trafficked. Social stigma and personal emotional scars must be overcome during the process of reintegration. Victimized women may have been treated by law authorities as criminals, either for prostitution or illegal migration, and, therefore face additional problems of employment or other forms of reintegration. Assisting victims to resettle and start a new life is a daunting challenge for concerned governmental agencies and NGOs. In addition to psychological and social considerations, the victim faces the practical financial consideration of providing for life's essentials. In many source countries, reintegration resources are not available in communities to assist the victim with work-related training or to provide financial support during the transition period. Poor economic conditions that contributed to the vulnerability of the victims to traffickers also prevent the provision of effective assistance for reintegration. However, there are some positive examples of government agencies, international donors, and NGOs working together to establish programs that provide practical assistance and help returning victims reintegrate and become productive members of their communities.

Victims of human trafficking may suffer from anxiety, panic disorder, major depression, substance

abuse, and eating disorders as well as a combination of these. For some victims, the trauma induced by someone they once trusted results in pervasive mistrust of others and their motives. This impact of trauma can make the job of first responders and those trying to help victims difficult at best.

*“We can’t address issues of employment, life skills, or anything else until we address the trauma. How can we expect someone to get a job when they can’t even get out of bed or are afraid to leave the shelter?”* A case manager

In addition to emotional problems, physical health problems can also predominate and result from the trauma of physical injury or indirectly through stress-related illnesses. For example, service providers report victims often complain of stomach pain, headaches, and other unexplained ailments. Given the impact of these trauma symptoms on the emotional and physical well-being of victims, it is not surprising that some victims of human trafficking experience difficulties obtaining and holding down a job, paying bills, and reintegrating back into society.

Many of the health and social needs of trafficking victims stem directly from their experience with trauma and the brutal reality of unremitting threats or actual physical and sexual violence. Meeting these needs, in particular providing mental health treatment and trauma-informed services, is not without challenges. Service providers report the following barriers and challenges to getting victims help in dealing with their trauma.

Limited availability and access to appropriate mental health services. Issues of affordability and access to services, as well as responsiveness of those services to the complex needs of survivors, are common issues identified by service providers. Providers uniformly point to access to mental health services as a significant challenge for both international and domestic victims.

*“I felt shame and wanted to forget what had happened to me. I needed to be strong. But I could not stop the nightmares. Talking to [therapist] helped me.”*

For most victims, *shame* is seen as one of the greatest barriers preventing them from seeking mental health services. Providers note that the stigma associated with mental illness is an especially prominent challenge in engaging foreign-born and male victims in treatment.

*Secrecy* is a trademark of the women and girls involved in sex trafficking; victims may not define their experience as abusive, or attempt to escape. The shame and stigma of sex trafficking may lead them to conceal their involvement in prostitution, even in therapeutic relationships where success is dependent on frank disclosure and “working through” the trauma (Herman, 2003). In addition, if a victim does not define her experience as abusive, no matter how dangerous, she will not likely seek help or engage in recovery (Ugarte et al., 2003).

*Difficulty establishing trusting relationships with victims.* For both law enforcement and service providers, getting victims to trust them and accept help is a huge obstacle. They acknowledged that while building trust takes time, time is something that often worked against both law enforcement and providers. Many of the services available for victims are described as time limited. The mistrust of victims often is due to their histories of betrayal from families, service systems, and in some cases, law enforcement and governments. But in addition, a victim’s mistrust is often compounded by fears that connections with law enforcement and/or service providers can compromise their physical safety (e.g., the trafficker will find them, they will be deported, or they will be sent back to an abusive home).

Reintegration ideally continues the support which began in the safe house or shelter prior to the return and may include medical attention, psychosocial support, life skills development training, job-skills training, etc. A functioning return and reintegration process is the result of linking together the components of a comprehensive response – to create a framework of protection and a “process” of support.

However, focusing primarily on providing curative treatment will not get at the root of the problem or at the issues that help foster environments where a crime such as trafficking can take place, such as human rights issues, gender and economic inequalities, and sensationalism of the sex industry. Anti-trafficking legislation also needs to consider preventative treatment. Prevention keeps trafficking from taking place again; curative treatment aids those who have already been victims. To be effective, legislation needs to consider all sides of the trafficking industry and deal with those sides accordingly.

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### **Response to Prof. Ian Linden from Sr. Dagmar Plum**

5th September 2011 in Trzebinia

Ian, many thanks for your speech. I like to add a few personal remarks to it about the dignity of women and their human rights in Christendom and the church.

We all know that almost 2,000 years had passed before the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in 1948. Many of these rights are predominantly men’s rights to this very day. Not even these have ever once been implemented worldwide, now less than ever in favour of women. All the same they represent a giant leap in the direction of universality.

It is important to remember that no historical process or no history of ideas approach to human rights can claim for itself sole copyright for the breakthrough of human rights in the 20th century.

Nevertheless I would like at the beginning of my response to highlight briefly a copyright of human rights. It concerns the most prominent female perception in the work of the great Greek tragedian SOPHOKLES (5 Century B.C.). Presumably many of us have read the story of the royal princess ANTIGONE at school. Through her the thought of a universally valid divine law which could not be annulled by any human law influenced the public consciousness of the people and became part of the occidental tradition. For Antigone the law of the gods stands above the law of the King, who had forbidden her to bury her brother. She demanded the right from the King to bury him after his violent death knowing that she would be killed herself because of her disobedience.

In the Bible it is always women who turn the tide at decisive points of the Judeo-Christian salvation history. They are also the first witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus and propagate his message to other disciples. Later we find women in leading positions as Christianity was expanding and being consolidated in the new communities. For all that it seems that the women permitted these positions to be taken from them without a whisper.

In Roman times orthodox thinking i.e. a hierarchy was carried over into the church. There was no place for women in such structures. Even worse: women, who appeared in public, were regarded as debauched. Principally women were regarded more as animalistic than men and less reasonable. Men did not see the problem as being based in their own incapacity of keeping their own drives under control, but deflected it onto the woman, by declaring them as instinct-driven creatures. The men of the church decided that women were not to be accorded public appearances. Their sin was greater than the men's. Women were to be treated like children and slaves, because they were of lesser value and without male supervision could contribute nothing requiring brain power. Therefore they had to stay at home, in the house looking after the family, they were out of sight and easy to keep under control.

This outsourcing of women in church and society was not only common practice in the past. It's an ongoing problem. But can only men be held accountable for the subordination and lack of opportunities of women in the church?

Contrary to the image of women of his time, which painted women in dark colours, Jesus never participated in the humiliation of women. Quite the contrary he took men to task who condemned women and even wanted to stone women. He exemplified through his own life an unbiased association with women, without admittedly making a point about the removal of the structural gender inequality. His concern was the coming Kingdom of God, the affliction of the people, the sick, the religiously marginalized and the socially disadvantaged. The Kingdom of God is as equally valid for women as for men. Jesus gave a new assessment of women, but equally the man as a new creation in the already present Kingdom of God. Gender played absolutely no part in this. (Ceming, p.164)

In the light of the messianic hope from which Jesus lived, I wonder how it is with us today? When at that time the question of gender was incidental for God's kingdom, why has Jesus's norm not established itself in Christendom and the church? Why is this womanhood - given as a virtue by God - still the most important disqualifying criterion in the institutional church? The eschewal of the potential of women is detrimental to the church and impedes the holistic proclamation of the message of Jesus, in areas to which only women have access.

With respect to St. Paul the question of women's rights is depicted inconsistently. But I would like to stress his letter to the Galatians 3:28: "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither

slave nor freeman, there can be neither male nor female – for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. With these words St. Paul catapulted Christianity from the beginning way beyond the ancient religions and installed them into history like an explosive device (Gerl, p32).

With the contemporary French philosopher Alain Badiou I found a fascinating discussion about Paul. For Badiou, Paul made the unpredictable Christ-event to the point of departure of a radically different way of thinking. The new community of believers according to Paul is neither based on shared values nor shared cultural roots, nor through shared ancestry, but for one reason and one reason only, the faith of the individual to the basic event, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. For Paul a human being is, when they allowed themselves to be touched by the Christ event, open for a new, not yet existent identity.

It is no wonder then that so many women sought refuge in the Christian message, which contained freedom and God’s love and no traditional predefinition of a certain, often denigrating picture of women.

I belong to the Medical Mission Sisters, which was founded in 1925 by the first sister doctor in the Catholic Church. Anna Dengel, the founder, firstly placed the congregation at the service of Muslim women in what is today Pakistan. Many of these are still not allowed to visit a male doctor. The practice of surgery and obstetrics was forbidden for religious sisters and priests since the 14th century. But the sisters overcame the barriers within the patriarchal Roman Catholic Church as an organization of medical professional women committed to bring relief to the suffering women (without excluding men). Anna Dengel would never have founded a society without the permission to practice medicine as a witness of God’s healing power and she would not have entered a different community for the sake of being a religious. After 11 years the Vatican accepted her charism and her mission.

If there were no women that spoke out publicly and concerned themselves with the victims of human trafficking and forced prostitution and forced labour, then this problem would not exist at all or be swept under the carpet, despite the fact that it is an age-old problem.

I work in a Detention Centre and regularly meet there victims of trafficking in women, who would never speak with a man about their exposure to violence.

For the church these women are a side show. They do not regard it as one of their key tasks to help these women. There are even said to be bishops, who would prefer religious sisters to stay away from this kind of work.

As Ian has pointed out, several centuries were to elapse, before the Catholic Church officially accepted the human rights, which also drew a change in the picture of women in its wake. After 2000 years Pope John XXIII broke through the traditional picture of women in his encyclical ‘Pacem in terris’ (1963). From today’s perspective this encyclical represented a paradigm shift in the church.

I quote part of article 41 of Pacem in terris: ‘... the part that women are now playing in political life is everywhere evident... Women are gaining an increasing awareness of their natural dignity. Far from being content with a purely passive role or allowing themselves to be regarded as a kind of instrument, they are demanding both in domestic and in public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons’.

Since the Papacy of John XXIII an atmosphere of change has prevailed, such as I once experienced to a lesser degree though at the fall of the wall in Berlin. For those among us, who entered a religious order in these times, it seemed at least possible at the beginning, to allow God to come into his own and to commit to a new beginning in favour of a just(gender equity) and peaceful

world. I was deployed in Africa and Asia. I heard about trafficking in women and forced prostitution for the first time in the Philippines. It would never have entered my head even to imagine such a thing could happen in Europe. I regarded the problem as a matter of poverty, a lack of education and unavailable chances of earning an income. Yet to change that, this was only a matter of time and the level of development aid.

At the end of the 90s I finally returned from my duties abroad and was shocked. Slavery had returned to Europe in the form of commercialised sex slavery and forced labour. Ever since, the trade in the buying and selling of women has thrived. In the countries, in which prostitution has been legalised (Germany is one of them), every man can buy the sexual organs of a woman (many of them come from Eastern Europe) apparently demand anything and everything that he desires. Men's appetite is the measure of all things, which determine demand and services. I have been to several brothels and have met there mostly migrants. Sexism and racism are close relatives. And with regard to gender equality, there is a deadly silence. In prostitution the power divide is unequivocal.

Finally I must confess that the title of the conference "When we hear the cry"...did not appeal to me at first. Of course, where women are concerned, there are tears. During my preparation I was grateful for the title, because a woman can shout, scream and cry and learn to speak again, and demand her rights. A woman is not merchandise. Despite fear, violence and even death there is nevertheless a messianic hope in her outcry which inspires us and keeps us moving.

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## APPENDIX No. 2.

### Prof. Mary Grey: Created for Dignity and Wellbeing – a Theology and Spirituality responding to the Trafficking of Women

#### Introduction

I feel very humble in front of all of you here – who are so committed and have so much experience in dealing with this cruel issue of trafficking, the cause of so much unspeakable suffering for women and children. Because of the level of your expertise, I will not dwell on the causes<sup>1</sup> and contemporary shifts with regard to the trafficking of women - which others here are addressing in some detail. I will focus on what I was asked to do, namely to develop a theology and spirituality in the face of such a serious issue.

I would like to begin by telling you my own introduction to the trafficking of women – that happened before I met Sister Ann Teresa and became aware of the pioneering work of the Medaille Community in the UK. Since 1987 I have been involved with poor communities in the villages of Rajasthan as part of the work of the charity *Wells for India*.<sup>2</sup> One day a group of local prostitutes came to the newly-deepened well and found out about our work. They came the next day to the Field Centre - about 40 of them, who lived in colonies along the Delhi- Mumbai highways, where truck drivers drove day and night: these men were their customers. These desperately poor women were resigned and hopeless as regards their own position – they felt there was no possible escape - but determined that their children would have a different life. So Project *Asha* was born. (*Asha* means *hope* in Hindi). This was a hostel where the children would live and go to school – and the mothers would have access to their children whenever they wanted. The children responded very well – we became very attached to them, both boys and girls. But we hadn't bargained for trafficking. When the girls reached the “right” age they began to be kidnapped and sold in Mumbai (Bombay). The men who controlled the women saw our project as a good money-making possibility. Sometimes it was possible to get them back – but not always. Yet the Director of the Joint Women's Programme in Delhi, Mrs Chatterjee, encouraged us to carry on. She said that prostitution and trafficking flourished in India because of the lack of political will to eradicate it and because of an alliance between police, some members of the government and business men. Sadly, eventually, our Project *Asha* had to close. But one small, tangible success was achieved - one of the children, Suman, became happily married at a suitable age, and now works for an NGO against trafficking.

#### Acknowledge progress and new awareness

I think our first point is to acknowledge that we are in a new situation. Our coming together here is

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<sup>1</sup> As your own website states, these include- poverty, gender-based violence and gender discrimination within the family and community, patriarchy, illiteracy, low level of education, Unemployment, lack of ‘decent’ work-opportunities, lack of Social Services, single parenthood, Sex Tourism, Lack of information about the realities and dangers of trafficking, Racism, xenophobia and discrimination, Absence of legal immigration channels, breakdown of social and cultural values, breakdown of communities.

Trafficking is further fed by - easy profits made from exploitation, involvement of trans-national organised criminal networks, lack of appropriate legislation and lack of implementation of existing legislation, insufficient penalties against traffickers, lack of political will to tackle trafficking, criminalization of victims, demand, commodification of women, consumerism and many more dimensions.

<sup>2</sup> *Wells for India* was founded in 1987 by my husband Dr Nicholas Grey and myself. Its focus is water security- and related health and justice issues.

witness to this. The steady, ongoing commitment of so many groups and the types of work they undertake and the networking you are all developing, is the proof that the issue begins to be taken seriously.<sup>3</sup> There are many examples of this from all of you gathered here – of the work done with safe houses, for example.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, the Church begins slowly to awaken to its responsibilities. Not only through the vision that so many of you have, the assistance from congregations of men, (including financial), the commitment of Caritas and the encouragement from the Holy See, as well as the inspiration of brave priests like Fr Shay Cullen in the Philippines and groups like CHASTE — Churches alert to Sex-trafficking across Europe) — all this points to a new climate. But it's not enough. The Catholic Church is a global institution with vast educational, missionary and pastoral networks. It has struggled recently with the shame of child abuse by clergy that has been widespread- and repercussions still rumble on. But its action has been largely re-action although preventative structures are in place in some regions. This attention has obscured and hindered urgent action in the face of the appalling wrong of trafficking. What I would like to call for in this lecture is a return of the prophetic dimension of Church *especially in its educational task*.

It is largely assumed in the rich countries of the world that Liberation Theology has had its day: but as all Liberation theologies tell us, “the poor are even poorer and the rich care even less”. Nowhere do all factors come together more clearly than in the trafficking of women and young children. Here above all, the gravity of the situation calls for the return of prophecy. For speaking out, for naming the issue for what it is – a great evil, and for effective action. For centuries women's bodies have been abused through violence (in many forms), through prostitution – tolerated as something to be lived with because of male needs, especially in war, military life, migration, travelling business men - but trafficking ranks as far worse - through fear, coercion, repeated violence, being kept without food, total loss of control and even the identity of the woman taken away... and many more aspects. How can the Church refuse to recover a prophetic theology, and not content itself with turning a blind eye at worst or vague criticisms at best- that in any case never reach the perpetrators? So, what would be the dimensions of this prophetic theology?

## **Towards a prophetic theology in solidarity with women *as victims of violence and trafficking***

### **1. A new focus for theology:**

We need to recognize that this is a new focus for theology. To live, struggling against trafficking against women and children is inspired by a new theologically radical focus. It is at the same time a theology and spirituality involving risk, as Professor Maaïke de Haardt warned in her lecture to the Dutch sisters.<sup>5</sup> We all risk criticism and being ostracised by “decent people” because we involve ourselves in an issue that people would prefer not to know, to talk about and take action. Believe

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<sup>3</sup> Types of assistance include: shelter, housing, referrals, health-care, Telephone hotlines, Legal assistance, Counselling, Vocational training, education, Substance rehabilitation, Advocacy and information campaigns, Protection against harassment and threats, including death threats, Linking with family, assistance for voluntary returns, assistance for reintegration in country of origin, assistance in obtaining visa to remain in country of exploitation when return is impossible

<sup>4</sup> In particular the representative of the UISG (International Union of Superiors General of congregations for Women), Sister Eugenia Bonetti, has made clear what can be done: her congregation has established almost 100 small shelters run by sisters who offer hospitality to 6-8 persons for a period of time that varies from 6-12 months, or even more, with programmes of human, social and spiritual re-integration. These communities became families for those who are without a family, and are important reference points even after finishing the project of social re-integration. They began this project in the early 1990s, incurring all the expenditure for the running of these communities until 1998, when they began receiving money from the Government.

<sup>5</sup> Sources is Resources/ Renate website, [www.renate-europe.net](http://www.renate-europe.net).

me, this is always the case with Feminist Theology – in the academy it has acquired a kind of respectability by being named Gender Studies. (But this often means that it loses its cutting edge – and, sadly, there is no action!). Maaïke de Haardt wrote wisely:

Besides stamina it also requires a kind of survival mentality. The way the prostitution of many victims of traffickers is a kind of survival sex, the protest against trafficking is a kind of survival crusade; while knowing better, not letting go of the conviction that every human being is dignified. It is a crusade against the political, social and often religious obliviousness (of trafficking against women).<sup>6</sup>

The God we believe in created both women and men in his image, *imago Dei*. This God calls all to just relationship and communion with Divine Mystery. God's incarnate son Jesus came to give fullness of life (John 10.10). A Christology against the violence and injustice of trafficking understands a compassionate Jesus in solidarity with the victims, yet an empowering Jesus giving courage to break the cycles of violence and fear through the strength of his ever-present Spirit.

Recently, I was in Palestine, in Bethlehem, for a Conference on Empire- Babylon, Greece, Roman, Turkish, British – but now Israeli and American. What was stressed there was that violence is to be overcome by *non-violent resistance, inspired by the non-violent Jesus*. To live by a non-violent spirituality is to overcome fear: that is our calling, our witness. And Jesus is our example. Here the Jesus of Luke's Gospel, in the context of warning his followers of the great persecutions that are to come, tells them even so not to fear:

Not a hair of your head shall be destroyed: *through your unflinching endurance* you will take possession of your lives. (Luke 21.18-19)

A spirituality against the violence of trafficking is a spirituality "for life", which envisions transformed, healing relations between women, men and children; a society committed to this vision is en-fleshing (or embodying) the dream of the new creation by telling the truth about the way we are called to relate in mutuality and justice, yet the way we fail to relate justly, and how to put our energies into change and transformation. It is also a spirituality for the long haul: the deep-seated nature of what we deal with is so all-encompassing that we have to be realistic about the long-term nature of the struggle. Again, I learnt a lesson from Palestine that I offer here.

There is a remarkable spirituality developing in Palestine among Arab Christians, namely, the spirituality of *sumud* – an Arabic word meaning *steadfastness, perseverance*. In this context, where the occupation of the Israeli army and daily persecution are the issues. To practice *sumud* is to remain steadfast on one's own land...to remain steadfast in service to one's homeland to the struggle for freedom.<sup>7</sup>

Jean Zaru's book, *A Palestinian Woman Speaks* gives a remarkable example of women's resistance in the refugee camps in Ramallah. (Although this is a different context from trafficking, it gives a wonderful example of the strength of women's non-violent resistance). Punished by having gas and electricity supplies cut off, the women tried to find ways of baking bread by collecting wood and rubbish and making a communal fire. But the soldiers came and tried to put the fire out and destroy the dough. The women resisted, shouting:

Go tell your leaders that no matter what you do, no matter what kind of restrictions you impose on us, we will not allow our children to starve. We will find a way to bake bread, and all your efforts to destroy our spirits are not going to succeed. What God has created no one can destroy!

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<sup>6</sup> Maaïke de Haardt, "A Spirituality of Risk" – see [www.renate-europe.net](http://www.renate-europe.net)

<sup>7</sup> Jean Zaru, *Occupied with Non-Violence: A Palestinian Woman Speaks*, (Minneapolis: Fortress 2008), p. 72.

This is *sumud*, she concludes.<sup>8</sup> The spirituality of *sumud* brings together many aspects of a relational theology and a spirituality seeking justice. Spirituality in its simplest meaning is the life of the Spirit. It embraces the human spirit, human dynamism for life, human *zeitgeist*, (spirit of the times), the energy grounding hope, itself linking with the Divine, the Universal Spirit of life, shared by all faiths, and people of no official faith. But the meaning of spirit that unites us in the most literal way of all, is *the Spirit as breath of life grounding hope*. Taking a deep breath, in the Dark Night of violence and the oppression of trafficking, means connecting with this spirit, calling on resources for the long haul and refusing to give way to the suffocating effects of criticism, the horror of what we experience, and the enormity of the task. The most ancient meaning of “taking a deep breath” is drawing deep on this Spirit, breath of life, keeping hope alive and energising hope for changed life.

Secondly, taking a deep breath means calling on a type of imagination that is prophetic in remembering and seeing differently, an imagination that summons us to live out of a new reality that does not yet exist – but can be embodied in every liberating act, in acts of simple kindness and love, in moments of joy and thanksgiving for small victories won. The kinds of inspiring stories I read in the magazine of the Medaille Trust, for example. More than ever, in times of despair, it is important to draw strength from those memories and traditions that empower us.<sup>9</sup> Let us remember Josephine Butler, for example, the English woman who campaigned tirelessly against prostitution and double standards of morality in 19th century Britain. How did she retain her own “*sumud*” or steadfastness? By a two-pronged spirituality, both prophetic and mystical. (We will return to this ). In taking the long breath of *sumud*, – we share God’s own *hesed*, steadfastness, compassion ... and God’s own vulnerability.

## 2. The Inspiration of Liberation Theology

Liberation Theology and Spirituality teach us that people need to be empowered to move from being victims to agents of their own freedom. But with trafficked women and children all freedom and agency have been forcibly removed. Yet you are all witnesses to the courage it has taken for women to escape their kidnappers and the “*sumud*” necessary to stay with the process of recovery from trauma, towards new life and healing. She has already taken the first step. *Compassionate listening* is our first response. For someone to be heard, “heard into speech” (the phrase of Feminist Theology), the truth of her story acknowledged, and then treated with consistent acts of kindness - this is the path to recovery of dignity and true identity. Scripture is redolent with God’s promise of being called into new life, the past forgotten.

Do not remember the former things,

Or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing... (Isaiah 43.18-19).

God’s call is precisely this - to the restoration of dignity and true identity that is at the heart of a liberation spirituality of justice. We gather here in Trzebinia not far from Krakow, the birthplace of the former Pope, John Paul II. It was he who wrote the document, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, “The Dignity of Women” and he called for this dignity to be restored throughout the world as a matter of justice.[1] Dignity with justice. Again to cite Josephine Butler – because her spirituality blazed with the desire for justice:

Justice, justice is what we with them desire. Our hearts cry out for justice, our souls are a thirst for justice. Like the Hebrew prophet of old, we are sometimes constrained to exclaim “Justice has

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.72-3.

<sup>9</sup> See Mary Grey, “Deep Breath – Taking a Deep Breath: Spiritual Resources for a Pedagogy of Hope, in Toine van Teeffelen ed., *Challenging the Wall*, (Bethlehem: Arab Education Institute 2009), Ch.1, pp.9-10.

fallen in the streets”.<sup>10</sup>

How she – how we - are to keep the fires for justice blazing, how we keep commitment ever strong, is the challenge for our spirituality of *sumud*.

### 3. The naming of trafficking as sin.

The trafficking of women and children needs to be named by the prophetic Church as sin. Even if this will always be a sensitive area, there needs to be openings for the evil of this issue to be made clear at all appropriate pastoral levels. People need to hear the trafficking named and preached against. Part of the scandal of sexual abuse of priests against children was silence and deception as to what was actually going on. The Church must be seen to be facing the truth about the violence in women’s lives, the hypocrisy and failure to act, turning a blind eye as to what men are doing to women, and the climate of fear in which trafficked women are often forced to live. Following Jesus’ example in the compassion he showed to the prostitute in John’s Gospel (Chapter 8), his mercy to the woman at the well – who was given a new dignity in evangelising the Samaritan community, his table fellowship with prostitutes, and his assertion that prostitutes were nearer to the Kingdom of God than some of the Pharisees, this must be the challenge to a prophetic Church to confess that it has not had a good track record in the way it has regarded female sexuality throughout history. Overcoming the reluctance to face the truth about the exploitation of female sexuality is a part of this.

Marie Fortune, of the Centre for Domestic Violence, in Seattle, USA, has developed a helpful pastoral response against violence based on the prophet Micah’s exhortation to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God – and the process she describes is also useful for us in the context of trafficking:

Truth telling, acknowledgment of the violation, compassion, protection of the vulnerable, accountability, restitution and vindication are the requirements for doing justice and mercy in the face of violation and injustice.

Forgiveness, she says, becomes an option only when some form of justice is being done. And the hardest part of the forgiveness, so great is the damage done to self-esteem, *is for the victim to forgive herself*.<sup>11</sup>

### 4. The Subversive Reading of Scripture

A prophetic church must engage with reading Scripture *subversively*. We pluck up courage to engage with Scripture and the texts of tradition, identifying the passages which ignore or condone violence against women, (such as the story of the murder of the concubine in Judges 19), and highlighting the strands/ stories which can be a resource in the struggle. So, reading Scripture *often against the grain of the text* is what is meant. It means re-reading Genesis, refusing to see Eve as responsible for sin in the world, and consequently all women as temptresses and bearers of sin. Remember the words of Paul in a text which has been very influential through history:

Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing. (1.Tim 2.11-15)

Leaving aside the question as to whether Paul actually wrote this text, (which can be

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<sup>10</sup> Josephine Butler, *Catherine of Siena: a Biography*, (London: Dyer Brothers 1892), p.10

<sup>11</sup> Marie Fortune has several works on the subject: see Marie Fortune, *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex invades the Pastoral Relation*, New York, Harper and Row, 1989; *Forgiveness and Abuse: Jewish-Christian Reflections*, (Haworth Press 2004); *Sister, Save Yourself Direct Talk about Domestic Violence*, (New York: Pilgrim 2006).

counterbalanced by other Pauline texts, more positive for women), and reading this in the context of trafficking, it is easy to see how harmfully Scripture can be interpreted. *Submission* and *silence* are recommended as well as a woman's presumed responsibility for sin and evil. Childbearing - whatever the context - is to be her only salvation.

Phyllis Trible's inspiring study *Texts of Terror* is a stellar example of a subversive reading: here she re-tells the tales of four Biblical women, so that the injustice inflicted on them is now mourned, and that they become vindicated through our struggles.<sup>12</sup> All these stories point to Near-Eastern cultures that did not value women and female sexuality except as useful for bearing the necessary sons to carry on the race. The story of Hagar, (Genesis 16, 21) was an inspiration also for Josephine Butler. Given as a concubine to Abraham, bearing him a son Ishmael, Hagar was taunted and flung out into the desert by Sarah, but nevertheless received a revelation from God and was the first Biblical woman to be given the promise of a son.

This despising of female sexuality- linked with racism, (recall that Hagar was Egyptian in a Jewish world) - is still rife in the world today in all religions and far beyond the world views of Christianity/Judaism. It is one major reason why trafficking is so difficult to grasp hold of. In India, for example, the girl child is still unwanted by comparison with boys. In Rajasthan, (North West India) the number of incidences of the killing of the girl child at birth or soon after has continued to rise steeply. A recent memorandum of Women's Organizations has called for action:

We the members of women, social and human rights organizations are shocked to see that the Right of a girl child to be born and survive with dignity is being openly violated all over the state. We feel that since this is a non-issue for the government therefore there is no seriousness in addressing this vital concern.<sup>13</sup>

Again the issue of *dignity*- at the centre of our project - is highlighted here. Reading the Bible against the grain of the text is to challenge what is actually redemptive and healing. It means challenging the myth of redemptive violence - that good can be achieved through murder and cheating. Texts like Exodus 15, 1-10, (still read in our Churches during the Easter vigil) celebrate God's apparent violence in drowning the Egyptians to save the Israelites and thereby sanctioning violence as redemptive. Subversive memory recovers voices – sometimes imaginatively, if they have been silenced – that restore dignity and agency to women in cultures that continue to undervalue them. Remember the persistent widow who would not give up in the face of the unjust judge?<sup>14</sup> Remember the Syro-Phoenician woman who pleaded with Jesus on behalf of her small daughter and changed Jesus' view as to his own mission?<sup>15</sup> Remember, finally, Mary of Magdala, whom the West wants to remember as a forgiven prostitute, and not to honour her as witness to the Risen Jesus and foremost among the disciples.

## 5. Eradicating the roots of violence

Eradicating the roots of violence as redemptive means facing the truth about the hierarchical dualisms (in which women are always inferior) which still maintain it. Dualisms such as male/female, mind/body, reason/emotion, active/passive, culture/nature, human/animal... Women are always identified with the weaker side of the equation, and this is significant in cultures where it has become the norm to abuse women's bodies, to commercialize and commodify them. Healing requires the re-valuing of women's bodies. This is powerfully expressed in a novel by the Afro-

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<sup>12</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror*, (Fortress, Philadelphia. 1984).

<sup>13</sup> Source is communication from Om Prakash Sharma, (Programme Manager, Wells for India), 5th April 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Luke 18, 1-8.

<sup>15</sup> Mark 7.24-30.

American writer, Toni Morrison, *Beloved*. It tells the story of Sethe, an escaped slave in the context of American slave trade. Here the wonderful grandmother figure, Baby Suggs, encourages and empowers the women who have escaped with her:

“Here”, she said, “in this place here, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it. They don’t love your eyes; they’d just as soon pick’ em out. No more do they love the skin on your back. Yonder they flay it. And O my people they do not love your hands. They only use, tie, bind, chop off and leave empty. Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them. Touch others with them, pat them together, stroke them on your face,’ cause they don’t love that either. You got to love it, you!”<sup>16</sup>

There can hardly be a more moving passage in contemporary literature where the need to love the female bodies which have been abused, and violated is described as an urgent priority for healing. Baby Suggs, a woman of great authority, leads her people to healing by teaching them to love their own despised, abused bodies.

Our own task is to keep querying the subordinate position of women both in Church and society, seeing this linked this with false theories of gender and sexuality. *Re-education in terms of men and women as equal partners in relationships of justice and mutuality is urgent.*

Linked with this is the need to examine what models of power are operating in Church, society and in our relationships. The power of domination, *power over* is so accepted as default model of power. If violent gun crime or military might are the accepted ways to settle disputes, it is unsurprising that violence is prevalent and considered normal in sexual relationships and promulgated through pornography on internet. *Re-education in terms of the peaceful settling of conflict involves transforming models of power as domination to **power as shared. Power as courage to be, power as courage to resist evil.*** In dealing with trafficking we have seen how vital it is to stress power as courage to survive, to persevere (*sumud*). The Church has to change its language of virtue in this context: **to stress submission, silence, sacrifice and obedience is to reinforce the parameters that keep women locked into the horrors of being kept as slaves.** That women are publicly valued should also be reflected in the language we use for worship. Sadly, despite a few token changes, the language of the liturgy is still exclusive of women. The Scripture writer is still heard as addressing men only. If women’s presence is only assumed and implicit, the tacit message that she is not valued remains powerful.

## 6. Called to be mystics.

I have called for prophetic speaking out and naming the truth. But there is another side to the spirituality needed and that is mystical. The gravity of the issue, the shocking nature of the degree of suffering and exploitation that women experience, demands that prophetic anger and truth-telling goes hand in hand with mystical faith. The fourteenth century mystic, Julian of Norwich did not arrive at her wonderful statement, “All shall be well; all manner of things shall be well” without long years of wrestling with the visions that Christ was giving her, against the background of the Black Death in Europe, corruption in the Church and desperate poverty surrounding her. Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement in America found great comfort in mystics like Teresa of Avila. The late German theologian, Dorothee Soelle, a great activist for peace and social justice, embodied the old adage: *all things begin in mysticism and end in politics, only to begin again.* In her search for a mystical language she came close to Julian’s teaching on prayer: “If there

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<sup>16</sup> Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, (New York: Random House 1987),p.88.

is any verb for the language of mysticism, it is praying”, she wrote. <sup>17</sup>With the language of prayer she discovered the hope of penetrating beyond domination and control. The language of prayer draws us, she says, into paradox, and silence. *To pray is also not to give way to despair.*

So it is no accident that Josephine Butler, in her campaigning internationally, found great inspiration in the life of St Catherine of Siena, and wrote a biography of her. <sup>18</sup> In Catherine’s life she discerned both prophetic action and mystical contemplation. Action came most easily to Josephine, but increasingly she needed mystical prayer to come through the dark nights of despair, as Catherine did. Complete identification with Christ’s sufferings, and total trust in God’s grace characterized her mystical faith. Working for an end to trafficking and justice for women and children, we also need Julian’s mystical trust that “All will be well”; that God’s purposes for a world of peace and right relation will come to be. And I end here with Josephine Butler’s words, with her faith in the coming of the Redeemer:

The light of day will fall upon all the dark places of the earth, now full of the habitations of cruelty, and there shall come forth, at the call of the Deliverer, the thousands and tens of thousands of the daughters of men now enslaved in all lands to cruelty and lust... but rising in inherent Majesty, the Redeemer’s Kingdom will strengthen and extend, wise as the limits of nature’s boundary, far as sin has diffused its poison. <sup>19</sup>

If the Church as a whole can recover prophetic action grounded in mystical faith, if theology can commit to a new focus, then God’s very passion and dream for right relation and justice for some of the most wronged women of history will become a reality – that restores at last their dignity and well-being.

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Mary Grey, April 2011.

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<sup>17</sup> Dorothee Sölle, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Minneapolis: Fortress 2001), pp.292-3).

<sup>18</sup> See above.

<sup>19</sup> Josephine Butler, *Hour before the Dawn*, cited by David Scott, “Josephine Butler and St Catherine of Siena”, in Alison Milbank ed., *Beating theTraffic: Josephine Butler and Anglican Social Action on Prostitution Today*, Winchester: George Mann Publications 2007, p.65.

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## **Response to Prof. Mary Grey from Sr. Maura O'Donohue**

Good morning,

Like me you will all have been deeply touched by Dr. Mary Grey's address, so very well researched and reflected upon. Each of us will have taken to heart different aspects of the many points she has put before us. It is my privilege over the next ten minutes or so to draw attention to a few of the points that I found particularly important and to suggest how I see the practical advantage of embracing the theology and mysticism outlined by Mary.

I will make just four points and draw on some personal experience to show the potential for us to make an impact if we take up the challenge Mary has put before us:

In speaking of her experience with the project Wells for India, she mentioned that they had not bargained for trafficking. I can say that I had not bargained for trafficking until I witnessed it at first hand in Thailand back in the early 1990s. From that time I saw the necessity of being committed to raising awareness. Over the years I found that the problem was not endemic to Asia, but was worldwide. The trafficking routes from countries of origin, to countries of transit, to countries of destination are a virtual web of international trade in human beings. This appalling reality drives me, as I know it also drives you to commitment. Women and children, including young men and boys are sold not just for cheap labour or servicing the sex industry, but also for their organs. Are you aware that of all kidney transplants in the world, 10% come from trafficked persons. As a medical doctor this gives me nightmares. So few of my medical colleagues would be aware of this fact. Only in the past month I spoke about it to my own personal doctor who is a lecturer in the College of Physicians, and he told me he was totally unaware of this reality. Most decent professional people today are not bargaining for the reality of human trafficking. That makes our task here very urgent indeed.

I was delighted to hear Mary draw our attention to Liberation theology. In this context she reminds us that it is our task to help those who have escaped from the horror of trafficking to move in time from feeling victims to becoming agents of their future. As Mary said, this requires of us great skill as compassionate listeners. Two years ago at the UN in Geneva, I listened to a panel of five trafficked people, including one man, as they told their story to the delegates of the member nations of the UN. I can say that the response of the delegates showed much greater concern in praising their own national governments for the legislation they were bringing in, than to the horrific realities described by those giving their personal testimony. Afterwards I spoke to the members of that panel, be we have befriended one of them in particular. It is in listening to people like these that we become sensitised and educated and motivated for the difficult task we have in hand, for the long haul commitment that Mary has outlined for us.

A third point from Mary's address that made a big impact on me was the question of the attitude of

our Church. Mary rightly pointed out that the general attitude is reactive and defensive rather than prophetic. The topic of trafficking is rarely if ever preached about. We must listen to Mary's call that trafficking be named as a sin. We cannot blame the Pope for this, because Pope Benedict has denounced trafficking on several occasions, as did his immediate predecessor, and of course we know that the Social teaching of the church gives us a great body of material around this justice issue. As Mary said, we must work solidly to help our church to take a prophetic stance. In my experience there are chinks of light. Last year I was invited by one Irish bishop to address his clergy on the topic, and I was given a very encouraging reception. We know of priests in other countries who are blazing a trail in this field. We need to continue to inform and encourage them. As they take up the issue of trafficking, they are helped to re-examine their own attitude of the tradition that men are superior to women. As we all know our Church has a long way to go on this topic. But it is not only the men of the church, who need to be called to review their attitude. In Ireland, when our religious network APT, joined forces with other agencies in the task of address the demand for purchased sex, we found that decent men who were leaders of the Trade Unions and other similar organisations, quickly came on board to support our campaign, which gives us a lot of hope.

My fourth and last point refers to Mary's clarification that a prophetic theology has to be a relational theology. Justice has to be at the heart of this theology, just as mysticism has to be its handmaid. Mary has clearly told us that prayer will help us focus, will help us overcome fear. We shall be praying together to bring about a society that relates in mutuality and justice. Our prayer will give us energy to bringing about the transformation that is required. Only a mystical theology will sustain us and give us the steadfastness and perseverance. Our prayer will also enable us to listen with compassion and organise ourselves to network so that we can share our experiences, and create agencies that will be equipped to respond to the needs of survivors as well as addressing the question of prevention, advocacy and support for survivors.

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- 1.Wells for India
  - 2.Had not bargained for trafficking
  - 3.Coming together like this is a way of making an impact
  - 4.Church awakens slowly to its responsibilities, reaction rather than prophetic dimension
  - 5.For centuries women's bodies have been abused, but trafficking ranks far worse
  - 6.What would be dimensions of this prophetic theology
  - 7.New focus for theology
  - 8.Survival mentality
  - 9.Calling to overcome fear
  - 10.Called to relate in mutuality and justice and put energies into change and transformation
  - 11.Be realistic about long-term nature of the struggle
  - 12.Steadfastness and perseverance
  - 13.Relational theology and spirituality seeking justice
  - 14.Two aspects, prophetic and mystical theology (Josephine Butler)
  15. Inspiration of Liberation Theology: empower to move from being victims to agents of freedom
  - 16.Requires compassionate listening
  - 17.Commitment is challenge
  - 18.Naming of trafficking as sin
  - 19.Preach against
  - 20.Sexual abuse of priests: silence and deception
  - 21.Church must face truth about violence in women's lives... climate of fear... compassion of Jesus to prostitute, new dignity
  - 22.Church has not good record in relation to female sexuality
  - 23.Forgiveness only an option when some form of justice is being done

- 24. Victim to forgive herself
- 25. Subversive reading of scripture, Jud 19, murder of concubine, against the grain of the text, re-read Genesis
- 26. Racism – Hagar Egyptian in Jewish world
- 27. Dignity at the centre of our project
- 28. Challenging myth of redemptive violence, that good can be achieved by murder and cheating
- 29. Eradicating the roots of violence, facing truth about hierarchical dualisms, women always inferior
- 30. Our own task is to keep querying subordinate position of women in church and society
- 31. Call to be mystics
- 32. To pray is not to give way to despair

**Response to Prof. Mary Grey from Fr. Józef Tarnówka (translated from Polish original)**

Trzebinia 08.09.2011

It is impossible to address all the abundance of thoughts presented in her brilliant speech however I will focus on two issues which I consider to be an addition.

Professor Gray is right. The actions regarding problem of trafficking in women which Church does undertake are not enough. However her perception of the Church requires additional comments. It is true that “the Catholic church is a global institution with vast educational, missionary and pastoral network” yet it is also true that the strength and weakness of the church depends on the collaborations of its male and female members with the grace of God.

A call for “a return of the prophetic dimension of church” is undoubtedly justified and worth stressing. Supposing we are not reading the text of st. Paul’s letter to Corinthian “subversively”. It should be stressed that Church - both as institution and as people, baptised and faithful, - ought to be constantly learning to accept God’s Spirit and His gift.

Paul – is accept his text as inspired, God tells as about a diversity of his gifts.(1Cor 12, 4-11)  
 “12:4 Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. 12:5 And there are different ministries, but the same Lord. 12:6 And there are different results, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. 12:7 To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all. 12:8 For one person is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, and another the message of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 12:10 to another performance of miracles, to another prophecy, and to another discernment of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 12:11 It is one and the same Spirit, distributing as he decides to each person, who produces all these things.

Looking for theology and spirituality responding to trafficking of women, Professor Grey proposes responses given by liberation theology and subversive interpretation of Scripture - for prophetic theology in solidarity with women. Undoubtedly the suggesting of spirituality without violence “sumud”, of which examples we find in ancient Socrates and modern Gandhi is undoubtedly a valuable input. It is certainly “challenge to a prophetic church to confess that it has not had a good track in the way it has regarded female sexuality in the history”.

In the combat against human trafficking, Church – also as an institution – is not an opponent but an ally. Let me quote “Gaudium es spes” this council lays stress on reverence for man; everyone must

consider his every neighbour without exception as another self... whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are supreme dishonour to the Creator.” (Art 27)

This longer quotation show awareness of the Church and that it is conscious, both as institution and God’s people, and it wants to make conscious all people of good will, of the scale of the threat to the person if the commandment to love is not taken seriously.

Also Catechism of Catholic Church (article No. 2414) says: “It is a sin against the dignity of persons and their fundamental rights to reduce them by violence to their productive value or to a source of profit. St. Paul directed a Christian master to treat his Christian slave "no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother . . . both in the flesh and in the Lord" (Flm 16).” The same Document in article No. 2455 explicitly says: “The moral law forbids acts which, for commercial or totalitarian purposes, lead to the enslavement of human beings, or to their being bought, sold or exchanged like merchandise”.

“To read the Bible against what the text proclaims means to ask what really is redemptive and healing,” Mrs Gray says in her paper. Such an approach presupposes that the inspired text does not know what is redeeming and healing. If the text is inspired, it comes from God and is the way He has chosen to reveal Himself to the human person. Do we have the right to change the text when it does not fit our theology or our way of understanding God and the world? To change Revelation means to change God's way of looking at the world and at human history. It means to perceive the Incarnated Word, Jesus Christ, as somebody changing his concept of salvation of the human person. “Do you remember the Syrophoenician woman, who pleaded with Jesus on behalf of her small daughter and changed Jesus’ view as to his own mission?” is an example of a naturalistic interpretation of Mark 7:24-30, which deprives God not only of his divine wisdom, but also of his saving love, because we do not understand his pedagogy.

However, if we assume that a biblical text is not inspired, the whole discussion does not make sense, because then the text would have historical meaning at the most. Of course I am far from taking a literal approach to biblical texts. Interpretation is something necessary. The Scripture itself points to this need: “Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the Holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God” 2 Peter 1:20-21.

At this point, let me return to the beginning. “Awakening of the prophetic imagination expressed in a different way of seeing and remembering things,” which is being called for, as well as the prophetic action of the Church rooted in mystical faith, requires a quick look at the biblical understanding of prophecy.<sup>20</sup> There is something we call the gift of prophecy and then there is the gift of explaining prophecies. Prophecy is always God's initiative and God's free choice. A prophet speaks in the name of God; if he or she does otherwise, he/she is not a true prophet. Secondly, a

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<sup>20</sup> The very first time the Bible uses the term “prophet” is in regard to Abraham, in the interesting context of his wife Sarah, who was taken by Abimelech, and God commanded the king to “return the man’s wife so that he may intercede for you, since he is a prophet.” Cf. Gen 20:7

prophet is engaged in an exceptional, mystical, relationship with God. And thirdly, a prophet restores faith, “perceiving the world with God’s eyes.”

The Divine factor in the Church - as an institution and as a community of faith - exists alongside the human factor, which makes such realities as sin and holiness, or the lack of understanding and God’s wisdom, exist so close to each other, that in our thinking we translate individual acts and attitudes of Church people into the institution as a whole, making it responsible for immoralities and mistakes.

This is very well visible in the “need to examine what models of power exist in the Church, in our society, and in our relationships,” called for by our speaker. For sure it is referring to an incorrect understanding of power by individual members of the Church, in its institutions, and in its communities. However, power in the Church has been clearly defined by Christ, e.g. in Matthew 20 ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant. (...) Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Therefore it is necessary to examine ourselves and our institutions, asking whether we, as the Church, follow this model of power.

The process of the final liberation of human beings began with Christ. Unfortunately, one has sometimes to wait long for progress in this regard. Implementing often comes centuries after understanding. In 1880 Leo XIII reminded us in his encyclical letter *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* that St. Jerome (347-420) had already written these important words: “Among us, what is not allowed for women to do, is not allowed for men, either, and the same concerns slaves.” This shows equal rights of men, women and slaves, and the dignity of women and slaves is protected. Looking from the perspective of time this was certainly a prophetic teaching of the Church. I am not sure whether everybody knows that civilized and Christian Switzerland introduced the right to vote for women only in 1970, and even then not in all cantons: the last one implemented it in 1990.

What remains is hope that God in his kindness will grant us, his Church, the ability to proclaim more prophetically and to act more effectively, which will bring his Kingdom closer to all people.

### **Response to Prof. Mary Grey from Sr. Ann Teresa Herritty**

I have known Mary since I moved to Southampton 14 years ago. Mary was part of a Vision group that came to our house and supported and challenged us in our ministry.

We were working with women in street-based prostitution at that time and, while encouraging us in this work, Mary also constantly challenged us to do more than simply deal with the symptoms. We listened to her and, as a result, we began to study the roots of prostitution and to see what was going on globally. This led to an awareness of sex-trafficking.

At about the same time two of us were invited to go to Rome to attend the First Pontifical Conference on the Liberation of Women on the Streets and Trafficked Women. It was there that we were inspired by what the Religious had been doing in Italy for trafficked women. They had simply opened up their convents and brought the women back to live with them. We were very aware that the UK is very different from Italy but we knew that we could certainly learn from them.

On our return from Rome we wrote to all the women’s congregations and invited them to attend a meeting in Southampton. We shared what we knew of the problem of trafficking and invited those who could, to form a working party to take this further. This resulted in the establishment of The

Medaille Trust – a Charity set up by Religious in the UK in order to help trafficked women, men and children. This is done by providing safe housing and also by raising awareness of this slavery. TRAC is the awareness-raising and campaigning arm of the Medaille Trust. It provides resources for groups, conducts training days and workshops. TRAC members give talks on the work of Medaille so as to raise awareness of the issue of trafficking and as part of the fight against human trafficking.

Until this year, most of the money we have had has come from Religious Orders. Now, for the first time, we are benefiting from some Government funding. This means that we have a Safe House which can house 8 women and their babies. We also have a house for trafficked men which started this month.

We are hoping to open another house for trafficked men in the North of England, most of whom will have been trafficked for labour exploitation. We have wanted to work with men since the beginning, but are only now receiving the funding to do this.

If we hadn't been challenged by Mary 14 years ago, none of this would have happened. I also know that Mary and her husband had been doing fantastic work in Rajasthan many years before we met, and she had her college students involved in this work as well.

I welcome Mary's challenge to return to the prophetic dimension of the Church. I believe that as Religious we are called to be on the margins of society and to work with the poorest of the poor, and I imagine that we all see trafficked people in this category. If we are faithful to live this prophetic dimension it will ultimately impact on the Church as institution.

To my delight Mary mentioned Liberation Theology, which for me is an essential aspect of the prophetic dimension of the Church. Liberation Theology has inspired me for a long time. Jon Sobrino's essay 'Through the Eye of a Needle' has a special relevance for me. In this essay he says:

Without the poor there is no salvation  
Without the poor there is no Church  
Without the poor there is no Gospel

When I first read this I knew exactly what he was saying and I knew from my own experience of friendship with women on the streets that it was absolutely true. One woman I had worked with many years ago said to me:

'Please don't see me as your work. I am your friend!' She and the other women we worked with, constantly challenged me to become more and more unselfish. What they asked of me demanded a greater trust in God as I moved from places of security, into the unknown and launched out into deeper and more frightening waters.

In the light of Jon Sobrino's words and my own experience of the truthfulness of them I visited one of our Safe Houses in order to speak to the Staff. I wanted to know what impact the women were having on their own lives. This was a wonderful experience for me; I kept hearing comments such as:

'I have had my ups and downs in life, but when I am with the women I realise what a charmed life I have had by comparison.'

'I love my job!' 'I feel so privileged to be with the women.'

The manager of the house told me that this was the most challenging ministry she had ever had, but also the most rewarding.

Mary I found your paper very inspirational. You have a breadth of experience of working with and for women who are in extremely difficult circumstances and you continue to be a voice for them – a voice for those who have no voice! Thank you for this Mary and thank you for your inspirational life.

## **VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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