

World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking

Pope Francis designated 8th February, the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, as the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking.

Learn, pray and act to mark this day with your community.

LEARN

Name: St Josephine Bakhita

Feast Day: 8 February

Birthplace: Darfur, Sudan

Born: 1869 (approximately)

Died: 8 February 1947

Canonised: 1 October 2000 by Pope St John Paul II

Patron saint of Sudan, South Sudan and trafficked people



Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan, into a well respected, comfortable and loving family.

However, at about eight years old, Josephine was kidnapped by slave traders, who forced her into slavery. This time was so scary that Josephine forgot her own name, so she took one given to her by one of the slave traders, Bakhita, which is Arabic for “lucky”.

Josephine’s final owner was an Italian diplomat, and so began her journey from slavery to freedom. Whilst her owner did business in the Middle East, she stayed in Italy with the Canossian Sisters, working as a nanny.

During this time, Josephine came to know Jesus; she recognised that true freedom and hope come from him, and that he offers fullness of life to all people.

Italy did not recognise slavery and so finally Josephine was free. After being baptised in 1890, she joined the Canossian Sisters in 1893. As an African woman with a deep sense of compassion and experienced slavery and oppression, Josephine was able to help and advise the Sisters who were going to serve in Africa.

Teachers

Suggested text: *The Singing Mermaid* by Julia Donaldson

This book tells the tale of a mermaid who was promised fame and fortune if she joined the circus, but only to discover she had been tricked and was held captive in a tank.

You could use this book to illustrate the concept of trafficking for a younger audience and highlight how she was helped to become free.

PRAY

Prayer

Saint Josephine Bakhita,

You remained strong and brave through years of slavery. You used your knowledge and experience in helping to prepare Sisters who were going to work in Africa. Your gentle manner brought peace and strength to all.

Help us to have courage when times are hard; help us to be strong and supportive to anyone in need; help us always to remain close, as you were, to Jesus, and show his love to all.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: As we honour the memory of St Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of trafficked people, let us pray that God's freedom and justice will come for all.

1. We pray for all people who have been trafficked or sold into slavery, that they will know freedom. God of life, hear us.

Response: God of life hear our prayer.

2. We pray for organisations that work to rescue people enslaved, that they will continue their good work. God of life hear us.

Response: God of life hear our prayer.

3. We pray for all people who are living in poverty which makes them vulnerable to trafficking, that they will have the resources they need to live life to the full. God of life hear us.

Response: God of life hear our prayer

4. We pray for our local community, that we will continue to learn and care about others who are suffering and find ways to help. God of life hear us.

Response: God of life, hear our prayer

ACT

People are trafficked to work in fields, market gardens, mines and factories to produce products and services at low cost.

Purchase goods that are not touched by slave labour. In the lead up to Easter, chocolate is a good place to start. This Easter when buying gifts for friends and family ask your parents to look for these logos.



Produced in collaboration with [ACRATH](#) and [Caritas Australia](#).

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