



**U.S. Catholic Sisters  
Against Human Trafficking**

*Ending Slavery Is Everyone's Work*

**DATE:** Jan. 31, 2023

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## **International Day of Prayer Brings Awareness to Human Trafficking Worldwide**

*U.S. Catholic Sisters participate in webinars to shed light on the darkness that surrounds this crime*

**Brighton MI** -- U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking plans to participate in the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking along with two webinars to further educate and bring awareness to this affront to human dignity on Feb. 7-8.

This year's theme, "Journeying in Dignity," coordinated by Talitha Kum, will feature sister-led networks around the world that will share how they are tackling human trafficking in their countries and the importance of getting youth involved along with time for prayer, reflection and renowned speakers from national organizations dedicated for their efforts to address human trafficking. Talitha Kum is an international network of consecrated life working to end human trafficking.

The number of both at-risk groups and people suffering from trafficking violence has increased in 2022. This can be explained by the exploitation of vulnerabilities caused by instability due to armed conflicts, violence, and climate and economic crises.

Those attempting to flee in hope of safety or employment find themselves at the mercy of inadequate laws to protect migrants and asylum seekers. They find themselves easily entangled in the webs woven by traffickers. In addition, traffickers have increased their use of information technology for recruitment and exploitation, luring victims on social media and posting fake jobs on the internet.

Human trafficking is the process by which people are forced or lured by false prospects, recruited, relocated, and forced to work and live in exploitative or abusive conditions. It is a complex reality, often linked to migration. Human traffickers use violence, which includes physical, psychological, or spiritual. People are reduced to objects to be used and exploited for profit.

Victims of trafficking may be forced into sexual exploitation, child, early and forced marriages, or labor exploitation in various industries such as domestics, agriculture, hospitality, mining and manufacturing, construction, or fishing.

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“It’s important to highlight the connection between migration and human trafficking. Catholic sisters work in both the social service and public policy arenas on these issues and we see how they intersect,” said USCSAHT President Sister Ann Oestreich, Talitha Kum’s North America representative. “Passing and enforcing just and comprehensive immigration reform is a key element in addressing human trafficking, which always preys on the most vulnerable people in every society.”

The time for the North America's block is set: 9:35 a.m. - 10:20 a.m. Eastern. Canada will be first, and the U.S. presentation will follow. The presentation is 21:40 minutes. Following the US presentation, there will be a 10-minute closing prayer. For more information on the International Day of Prayer, visit: [preghieracontrotratta.org/](http://preghieracontrotratta.org/) or [www.prayagainsttrafficking.net/](http://www.prayagainsttrafficking.net/) or view live here: [preghieracontrotratta.org/yt/en](http://preghieracontrotratta.org/yt/en) or on Talitha Kum’s Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/talithakum.usig/>

Other opportunities for human trafficking awareness will include:

### **Webinar: St. Josephine Bakhita – A Saint for Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking**

**Feb. 7 at 2 PM EST/1 PM CST**

This webinar will feature:

- Sr. Joanna Okereke HHCI, US Conference of Catholic Bishops/Cultural Diversity
- Katie Boller Gosewisch, US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking Executive Director
- Marsha Forson, USCCB/Migration Refugee Services

**Register:** [bit.ly/407KvcJ](http://bit.ly/407KvcJ)

### **Webinar: Celebrating St. Bakht Josephine (The patron saint of human trafficking survivors)**

**Wednesday, February 8th at 3-4 p.m. EST**

Come celebrate St. Bakhita Feast day and learn why she is an important person in the crusade against human trafficking.

Hear from **Executive Director Anne Haines** of the [St. Bakhita Catholic Worker House](http://St. Bakhita Catholic Worker House) about their program in Milwaukee Wisconsin that helps survivors heal.

**Register:** <https://bit.ly/3VAJfLx>

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## **Webinar: Catholic Sisters Impact on Helping Trafficking Survivors Thrive**

**Feb. 8 at 7:30 EST/6:30 CST:**

This webinar features an overview of the history of Catholic Sisters working to end trafficking and support survivors, the current work of USCSAHT, reflections from a house serving survivors, reflections for a scholarship recipient, and survivor retreats that sisters have been involved in. Panelists include Theresa Flores; Jean Schafer, SDS; Kathlyn Mulcahy, OP; and Dawn Schiller

Please join the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Office of Justice Community Organizer on the Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita for Part Three: National Human Trafficking Awareness Advocacy/Networking,

**Zoom Link:** [bit.ly/3XMb0Tx](https://bit.ly/3XMb0Tx)

## **Movie Discussion: "A Story to Stop Sex Trafficking"**

**Feb. 13 at 7 p.m.**

Ever wonder what goes into making a movie about human trafficking? Join USCSAHT for a candid view from the Producer Paula Gluck and Survivor Consultant Barbara Freeman on what went into making the film. This film is an excellent look into familial trafficking in the U.S. **Watch the movie for a nominal fee at: [The Turn Out](#) ahead of time, then join us for the discussion on Feb. 13 at 7 p.m. EST.**

**Registration:** <http://bit.ly/3jxHguw>

## **The Book Club is Back**

Meet the Author: March 29th at 7 p.m. EST.

Join us for a rare look into a book about the sex trafficking of males. Male survivor and thriver, **John Michael Lander** shares his story about being an Olympic-bound athlete and the vulnerabilities which led him to become sexually abused and trafficked. This book will open your eyes to the evil underbelly of sexual abuse and trafficking of athletes! After reading the book, **Meet the Author** and have time to ask him questions! **Purchase book Here:** [Surface Tension](#)

**Registration:** <http://bit.ly/3Yc0B3y>

"The fact that human trafficking is the 2nd leading crime in the US needs to be shouted from the highest mountain top," said Program Director Theresa Flores. "We need more awareness that this is happening to vulnerable boys and girls in every zip code!"

*USCSAHT was founded in 2013 by a group of Catholic Sisters committed to ending human trafficking and supporting survivors. They dreamed of creating a national network of resources and support made up of many different congregations and other mission-aligned partners. Today, this member-based organization has grown to include more than 110 congregations of women religious and another 70+ individuals and groups spread throughout the United States. USCSAHT is also the U.S. member of Talitha Kum, an international network of consecrated life working to end human trafficking.*

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