



## **Atlantic-Midwest Province School Sisters of Notre Dame Corporate Stance Against Human Trafficking**

We, the members of the Atlantic- Midwest Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, in union with other individuals and groups worldwide, regard modern day slavery/human trafficking as an affront to the dignity, and God-given rights of the human person. Therefore, we oppose modern day slavery/human trafficking as a fundamentally immoral and socially reprehensible global practice.

Human Trafficking is not new to us. We have a tradition of responding to urgent needs. In 1858, our Foundress, Blessed Theresa of Jesus, accepted the request of a missionary who had purchased seven young girls from Sudan at a slave market in Cairo, to receive the girls, give them safe shelter, and assist them in their recovery. They were welcomed at the Motherhouse in Munich where they were given the physical and spiritual attention which their human dignity deserved.

Today, however, human trafficking is an immensely profitable global, criminal enterprise. It involves the recruitment, transport, harboring, and receiving of men, women, and children for the purpose of exploitation. This exploitation, which occurs by means of threat, force, fraud or coercion, encompasses forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and the removal of organs. Although we are aggrieved by the global scale of this heinous crime, we are also inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the SSND documents which challenge, as well as call us to

- discern which world conditions we are called to address. (You Are Sent, 1986)
- address such crises of our time with “audacity and hope,” ( Acts, 23<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter)
- go out into the whole world, into the tiniest villages, into the poorest dwellings, wherever we are called to bring the Good News of the Reign of God," (Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, Letter 144. 1839)

Pope Francis has reminded us that the deepest cause of human trafficking is the rejection of another's humanity. In response to his words as well as our call to commit our resources and ministries toward education that transforms and eliminates the root causes of injustice, (Love Cannot Wait, 2012),

### **we commit ourselves to end modern day slavery/human trafficking by**

- addressing the root causes of forced labor and sexual exploitation which include poverty, lack of education and employment, greed and corruption, as well as mindsets and practices that defile and exploit human dignity,
- empowering victims of human trafficking to recover their dignity, rights, and the possibility of developing their full human potential,
- continuing to study and pray about the evil of modern day slavery/ trafficking, the systemic nature of its causes and its scope, and our responsibility to educate others in our area of influence about human trafficking
- advocating for the rights of workers who are exploited for their labor,
- growing our influence as consumers and investors by insisting on slave-free supply chains while supporting those companies that engage in good practices. We will only use hotel chains who have adopted the Elimination of Child Prostitution And Trafficking (ECPAT) Code or similar policies to combat sex trafficking,
- encouraging Sisters and Associates to support national, state and federal anti-trafficking legislation and collaborate with anti-trafficking groups in their local areas.

**With a deep passion for human rights we, the School Sisters of Notre Dame,  
will make the eradication of human trafficking a priority, knowing that God, as always,  
will guide our work and bring it to fruition.**