

Our Stand Against Human Trafficking

A message from the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters, sponsors of Avera

There are more human slaves in the world today than ever before in history.¹ Knowing this hurts our hearts and challenges our minds, because we know that we as a society can do better. Human respect, dignity and the sanctity of life are central tenants upheld by the Christian church, the Catholic faith and the Sisters of the Benedictine and Presentation orders.

An estimated 30,000 victims of sex trafficking die each year from abuse, disease, torture and neglect. Eighty percent of those sold into sexual slavery are under 24, and some are as young as 6 years old.² Human trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and the exploitation of women and children for profit represent a direct assault upon our central tenants.

The Sisters believe that those who have a vision for life should take a stand against this form of evil. We must collaborate. We must work with all faith-based organizations, community leaders, law enforcement and other concerned individuals from all walks of life to ensure that this type of evil does not dismantle the very core of our civilization. Only together can we ensure a civilization in which we all want to live, where we are all valued and where we have assurance that our families and our neighbors are safe.

Awareness and education are two necessary tools to bring an end to human trafficking and there are two vital elements for both to be successful. First, communities need to know the dangers of human trafficking and how traffickers operate. The other is to stop the criminalization of victims of human trafficking.

By law in the U.S. and most countries, human trafficking has the elements of force, fraud or coercion. Yet many victims are not under lock and key – rather, they are watched and brainwashed with fear and intimidation. So our prayer is that people will understand the law, have grace for the victims and desire justice for the criminals.

We pray for the rescue of all victims, restoration of their lives and families and the redemption of their hearts. We pray that God's grace and his gifts of strength and courage will fall upon all who are working diligently to stop these atrocities.

We can all find inspiration in the words of Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Sisters:

In the face of fear . . . chose to be daring
In the face of anxiety . . . chose to trust
In the face of impossibility . . . chose to begin.

¹ Skinner, E. Benjamin. 2008. *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-to-Face with Modern-Day Slavery*. New York, NY: Free Press.

² [Millions Suffer in Sex Slavery.](#) NewsMax. April 24, 2001. Accessed: December 26, 2010.