

A close-up portrait of St. Josephine Bakhita, a woman with a serene expression, wearing a dark, textured head covering with a large, dark, circular ornament on top. The background is a soft, light gradient.

8 FEBRUARY 2019

BAKHITA DAY

Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita

resources

For dioceses, parishes, schools,
small groups and individuals



ST JOSEPHINE BAKHITA DAY

8 February 2019

Friday 8th February is the Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita - the patron saint of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. On this day Catholics are encouraged to pray for all those affected by the crimes of modern slavery and human trafficking, and the people that volunteer and work to eradicate this crime. This year the particular focus is on those who are caught up in forced labour and labour exploitation both in the UK and beyond.

The Santa Marta Group is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales whose mission is to bring the global Church and law enforcement together to combat and eradicate modern slavery.

ARSINTE'S STORY

Arsinte was approaching 60, a mechanic and driver in Romania, living close the Hungarian border. In 2013 he was approached by men who asked him if he would be willing to drive vehicles from Ireland to Romania. Arsinte jumped at the chance, he came from an impoverished background, and even with his skills work was hard to come by.

He flew to Dublin, where at the airport he was met by his traffickers. They told him that he was now their property, and they sold him to a gang for 400 euros. Arsinte lived in fear, constantly under threat from his traffickers, and was forced to work on vehicles with no pay, and without proper accommodation. Later he was moved to another part of the country, and made to shoplift and scavenge in bins for food.

Arsinte refused to be involved in this criminal behaviour and made the extraordinarily brave decision to go to the police for help.



Catholic Trust for England and Wales
39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX
company no. 4734592 registered charity no. 1097482





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MODERN SLAVERY BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

There are an estimated 40 million victims of modern slavery worldwide. Modern slavery now ranks as the second most profitable worldwide criminal enterprise. Modern slavery is a serious crime in which people are coerced or deceived into a situation where they are exploited, for the purpose of making a profit. This exploitation can take many forms including; forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced criminality and organ harvesting. It is believed that modern slavery affects every country in the world and here in the UK some recent figures suggest there are in excess of 100,000 victims hidden in plain sight.

Labour exploitation currently makes up the greatest percentage of modern slavery cases in the UK. Victims of forced labour are made to work long hours, often in tough conditions without the training and safety measures in place. The majority, if not all, of wages are taken by the traffickers. This often accompanied by threats and violence. Cases of labour exploitation have been widely reported in car washes and nail bars however victims have been found in the manufacturing, entertainment, hospitality, agriculture, and construction industries.

The eradication of modern slavery and the pastoral care of victims is a priority for the Catholic Church. Pope Francis continually draws the attention of the Church and the wider world to the moral and human crisis evident in this widespread exploitation.

“Faced with the tragic reality of rising contemporary slavery, no one can wash their hands of it without being, in some way, an accomplice to this crime against humanity. This immense task, which requires courage, patience and perseverance, demands a joint and global effort on the part of the different actors that make up society.”

(Pope Francis to the participants of the 2nd International Forum on Modern Slavery, May 2018)



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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

These are some draft bidding prayers which you may want to use in addition to your usual intentions.

For Pope Francis, that God may grant him wisdom as he calls all people to unite against the scourge of modern slavery. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

For Church leaders across the world, that they continue to be at the forefront in the fight against modern slavery. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

For all Catholics, that God inspires them to take action to support and care for survivors of modern slavery in their communities. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

For those trapped in slavery, that their perpetrators be brought to justice and that their dignity as human being is respected. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

For those in forced labour, strengthen them in body, heart and spirit and raise up those who can rescue and help them. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

For survivors of modern slavery, that they might find the support and care they need to start a new life. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

For legislators and law enforcement agencies; may they strengthen and protect the rights of workers. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**



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SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

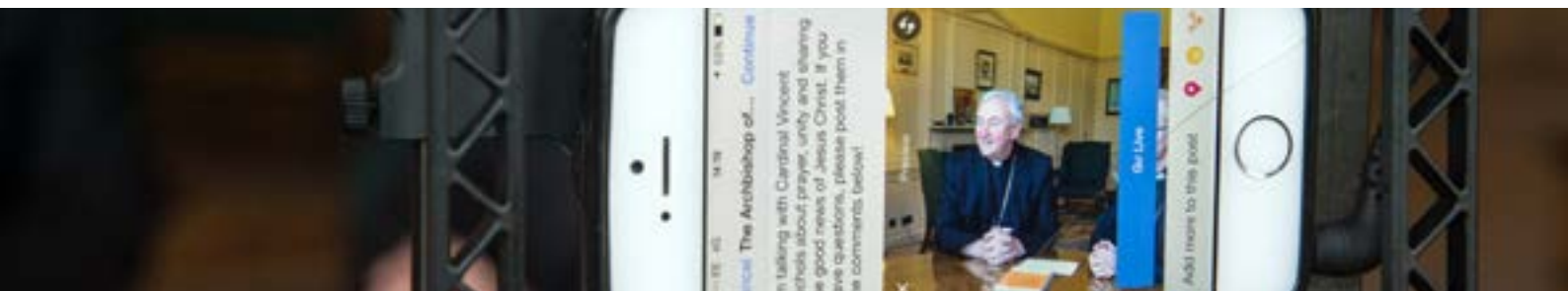
The following can be used as tweets or Facebook posts, depending what outlet your Diocese/parish/school/community uses. Follow **#BakhitaDay**

Leading up to the Feast Day

- Did you know more than 40 million people are living in modern slavery today?
<https://bit.ly/2GG4IBQ>
- How can you help a victim of modernslavery? First spot the signs <https://bit.ly/2Bvv8QF>
- Pope Francis described modern slavery as 'an open wound on the body of Christ'
<https://bit.ly/2AaF5Dh>
- The Church is committed to fighting modern slavery on a global level, learn more at www.santamartagroup.com

On the Feast Day

- On Bakhita Day we pray for survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery
<https://bit.ly/2Bvv8QF>
- At least 100,000 people are living in modern slavery in the UK today
- On Bakhita Day we thank all those that work to eradicate modern slavery
- Today is the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, learn more here
www.santamartagroup.com/santa-marta





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ABOUT ST JOSEPHINE

St Josephine Bakhita, also known as 'Mother Moretta' (our Black Mother) bore 144 physical scars throughout her life which were received after she was kidnapped at the age of nine and sold into slavery. Such was the trauma experienced that she forgot her birth name and her kidnappers gave her the name Bakhita meaning 'fortunate'. She experienced the moral and physical humiliations associated with slavery.

In 1882 her suffering was alleviated after she was bought for the Italian Consul. In this family and subsequently in a second Italian home, she received from her masters, kindness, respect, peace and joy.

A change in her owner's circumstances meant that she was entrusted to the Canossian Sisters of the Institute of the Catechumens in Venice. It was there that Bakhita came to know about God whom, 'she had experienced in her heart without knowing who He was' since she was a child. She was received into the Catholic Church in 1890, joining the sisters and making final profession in 1896.

The next fifty years of her life were spent witnessing to God's love through cooking, sewing, embroidery and attending to the door. When she was on door duty, she would gently lay her hands on the heads of the children who attended the nearby school and caress them. Her voice was pleasing to the little ones, comforting to the poor and suffering. She was a source of encouragement to many and her constant smile won people's hearts. Surrounded by the sisters, she died on 8 February 1947.

For more visit: www.santamartagroup.com/santa-marta



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HELPING TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

If you suspect that someone is in danger, please call **999** - it's best to keep it simple.

Do not attempt to intervene yourself, as you may put yourself and those around you, including the potential victim, in danger.

If you would like to report any non-emergency suspicious activity, then call **Crimestoppers** confidentially on **0800 555 111**.

If you have a concern within your parish, please report it to the **Parish Safeguarding Representative** or the **Diocesan Safeguarding Office**.

For more information on human trafficking visit www.santamartagroup.com

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- Fearful of police/authorities
- Fearful of the trafficker, believing their life or the lives of family members are at risk if they escape
- Show signs of physical and psychological trauma e.g. anxiety, lack of memory of recent events, bruising, untreated conditions
- Anxious about telling others of their situation
- Be unaware they have been trafficked and believe they are simply in a bad job
- Have limited freedom of movement
- Look malnourished or unkempt
- Be unpaid or paid very little
- Have limited access to medical care
- Seem to be in debt to someone
- Have no passport or mention that someone else is holding their passport

