

International Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking to be observed on February 8

February 5, 2021

WASHINGTON - The International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking will be observed on February 8. Designated by the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development as a time of remembrance for victims and survivors of labor and sex trafficking, the annual observance coincides with the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita.

St. Bakhita, born around 1869 in Sudan, was kidnapped and sold into slavery, and trafficked to Italy. Pope John Paul II canonized St. Josephine Bakhita in 2000, highlighting that in this saint, "we find a shining advocate of genuine emancipation." Today, human trafficking is pervasive throughout the world, and no one is immune to its evils or its impact, including in our country's fifty states. Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration released the following statement regarding the Church's commitment to raising awareness of and eradicating human trafficking:

"Let us reflect upon our responsibilities as individuals and as a Church to make the well-being and protection of victims of human trafficking a priority. We are called by our Holy Father to take a firm stance against this terrible violation of the dignity of the human person and to do everything in our power to eradicate it."

In observance of this important day, USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services will partake in an online prayer service with opening remarks by Bishop Dorsonville. To take part in the prayer service, obtain more information [here](#).

For help in raising awareness about human trafficking throughout the year and expanding anti-trafficking ministries at the local level, visit USCCB's Become a SHEPHERD program for downloadable educational materials and resources.