



## STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

### January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Slavery isn't dead. Human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, is the illegal trade of people for exploitation or commercial gain. It is a form of modern-day slavery. On any given day, 40 million men, women, and children are victimized by human trafficking.

Examples of trafficking include the girl forced into prostitution at a truck stop to the man discovered in a restaurant kitchen, stripped of his passport and held against his will. All trafficking victims share one essential experience: the **loss of freedom**.

Other examples are:

- ◆ Forced and bonded labor, child labor debt bondage among migrant laborers, non-voluntary domestic servitude
- ◆ Forced sex and sex trade, child prostitution, sexual and gender-based discrimination and violence, child soldiers
- ◆ Forced marriage
- ◆ Corruption war and violent conflict, organized crime
- ◆ Racism, abuse and social violence, media images and cultural norms that promote internalized oppression.

Trafficking in persons has been outlawed globally by three UN conventions known as the Palermo Protocols. In the U.S., the **Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)**, created in 2000, equipped the United States government with new tools and resources to “mount a comprehensive and coordinated campaign to eliminate modern forms of slavery domestically and internationally,” as defined by the U.S. Department of Justice. The TVPA is an application of a law already added to our Constitution; it is a way to follow through on the 13th Amendment's prohibition of slavery and involuntary servitude.

### Actions

1. **Be a conscientious and informed consumer.** Find out more about who may have picked your tomatoes or made your clothes at [ResponsibleSourcingTool.org](https://www.responsible sourcing tool.org), or check out the Department of Labor's [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#). Encourage companies to take steps to prevent human trafficking in their supply chains and publish the information, including supplier or factory lists, for consumer awareness.
2. **Donate to Dawn's Place.** This is a safe and secure residential program for international and American women who are making the journey from commercial sexual exploitation to a life of freedom, choice, and independence. The Executive Director is Sister Kathleen Coll, SSJ. [www.ahomefordawn.org](http://www.ahomefordawn.org)

(Information from the *Interfaith Toolkit on Human Trafficking* for Human Trafficking Awareness Month), Sisters of Saint Joseph, Los Angeles, CA)