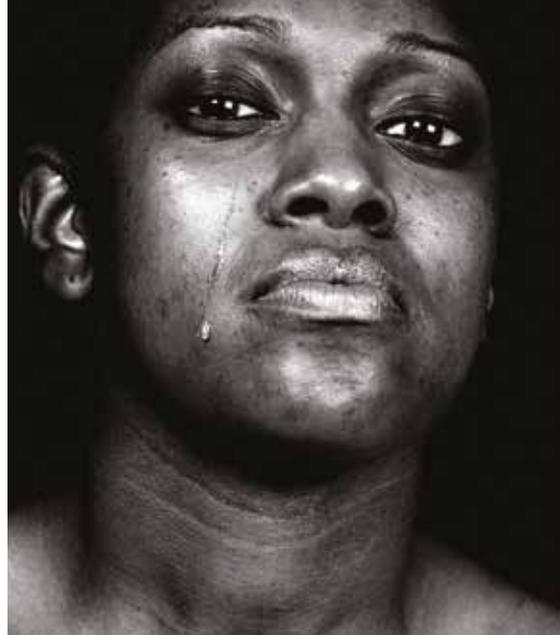


‘The trade in human beings violates the God-given dignity of so many of our brothers and sisters, and constitutes a true crime against humanity.’

POPE FRANCIS

NOVEMBER 2016



7 October
2018

**DAY for
LIFE**



We pray for the victims of human trafficking that they may be helped to rebuild their lives after the traumatic experiences they have gone through.

AMEN



TESTIMONY

‘My name is Daia*. I’m from a small town in Edo State, Nigeria. My family were very poor and from a young age I was always chasing a “better life”.

‘At 18 I met and fell in love with Victor*, from Lagos. I was so impressed by his fine clothes and his confidence. Victor suggested going together to London – he said he had friends there and a job for me, cleaning in a hair salon. I was so excited. Victor travelled ahead and I was to follow him.

‘After a long journey I arrived in Dublin. I had never heard of this place but thought it was just another stopover on my way to London. Victor had arranged for someone to meet me. This man took me in his car. But we did not go to Victor, or to the hair salon, or to London. He took me to a brothel. I have been here ever since.’

* This is a true story. Names have been changed to protect identities.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY

Jesus tells us, ‘I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.’ (John 10:10 NJB).

But many people do not have life to the full. They have fallen victim to the scourge of human trafficking and modern slavery which are an assault on a person’s innate human dignity. People are not commodities to be traded ruthlessly for criminal profit.

Indeed, this is something that is happening in communities across our country, not just in our big cities. It’s not only happening in brothels and nail bars, but on farms, building sites and factories as well. Nor is this a problem confined to immigrant communities, it is affecting our own citizens too.

Trafficking is a growing problem and the UN estimates that over forty million people worldwide are in slavery. In Ireland each year the

number of victims of trafficking is approaching one hundred. Irish people are also trafficked in the UK where it is estimated that the total number of victims each year is over thirteen thousand from all countries.

Criminals exploit some of the most vulnerable and desperate people. We can act together to stop this. It is a crime hidden in plain sight. It is difficult to investigate, and the police need our help to identify and stop the traffickers and rescue and support the victims.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

The Catholic community can make a real difference to help solve this problem – to help victims find freedom and live life to the full. There are many organisations working to put a stop to human trafficking and modern slavery. One of these, the Santa Marta Group, works internationally to bring the Catholic Church and law enforcement agencies together to eradicate slavery. To read more visit www.santamartagroup.com. A diocese or local Church community can effect real change for trafficked people.

Day for Life is celebrated yearly by the Catholic Church in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. It is a day dedicated to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition. We encourage you to deepen your understanding of Catholic Social Teaching on this important question by exploring the material we have made available on www.chooselife2018.ie/Day4Life/.

We wish to thank Ruhama for its support in the preparation of this pastoral message on human trafficking. Ruhama is involved in advocacy and assists women affected by prostitution including victims of sex trafficking. See www.ruhama.ie.