

Experience of the Kawsay Network in Rioja, Argentina

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I would like to share with you my experience as a member of the Kawsay network. This network consecrated life in Argentina, Peru and Uruguay is fighting for a society free of human trafficking. Kawsay is a Quechua word which means, "To live now, to live already".

As Religious and members of the Assumption Together, responding to the call to care for threatened lives and the invitation to go to the suburbs, we joined the Kawsay network in La Rioja in 2017 under the name of "Assumption Together".

Teresita Salas (AJ) and I started, along with Brother Miguel Cespedes OP and the lay member Graciela Cabrera. There are currently 13 members, two couples, several young women and myself. Lay people and religious members have joined together to face this challenge. Our main objective is to raise awareness about the reality of death and its prevention, in order to take care of our children and young people. To achieve this, we have organized workshops in public and private schools; in parishes, as well as with groups of parents who do family catechism and with young people who are being confirmed. We are present at the Diocesan Youth Camp. Furthermore, we also carry out different interventions in public, in squares and gathering places, to celebrate different events.

We work in a network with the different groups in the north-west region, on the coast and in Buenos Aires, as well as with NGOs and the police to fight against human trafficking. In Argentina, this kind of exploitation is a federal crime. It is therefore possible to avoid obstruction of the investigation if the local police are involved. Our dream is to find a location where victims are welcomed and are offered psychological and spiritual support, so that they could be able to rebuild their lives.

I feel that the Spirit is leading us to commit ourselves to these new horizons, where "life cries out", and also that our youth is very sensitive to this issue, to taking care of the "Communal House", and wishes to make its own contribution and to participate in the development of a more humane society.

PRAYER:

We read the psalm thinking of the people who live as captives in human trafficking networks:

Psalm 10

Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?

Why do you hide in times of trouble?

In his arrogance, the wicked man hunts down the weak,

Who are caught in the schemes he devises.

His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue.

R/ Save us, Lord

They walk the streets and wait to kill innocent people.

Their eyes are on the unfortunate;

Like lions crouching in their hiding places, they wait to pounce on the weak.

R/ Save us, Lord

Like hunters, they capture the powerless and drag them into nets.

Their poor victims are crushed, they fall under the force of the evil ones.

The evil ones think: "God does not look at us!"

R/: Save us, O Lord

You see the oppression and the violence, you take it into account and you deal with it.

The victims trust you, you are the help of the orphans and the abandoned.

Bring justice to the poor and the oppressed, and do not let human beings cause more violence on earth.

R/ Save us, Lord

CLOSING PRAYER

God, help us to counter with our lives all forms of slavery. Let us pray with St. Bakhita to end human trade. Give us the wisdom and courage to be close to all those who have suffered from your wounds in their body, heart and mind, so together we may fulfil your promise of life and love. Guide us towards a faith that commits us to building a better world for all your sons and daughters.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.