

HUMAN TRAFFICKING, A NEW FORM OF SLAVERY.

PASTORAL ORIENTATIONS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On January 17, 2019, the “PASTORAL ORIENTATIONS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING” prepared by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development¹ was presented in the Press Room of the Vatican. The document, published in a brochure of 36 pages, little known, in our opinion, to the majority of Catholics, aims to “provide a *reading* of Human Trafficking and an *understanding* that motivate and sustain the much-needed long-term *struggle*”.



Pope Francis attaches enormous importance to the plight of the millions of men, women and children who are trafficked and enslaved. They are among the most dehumanized and discarded of people in the modern world and all over the world. Human trafficking, he says, is an “atrocious scourge,”² an “aberrant plague”³ and an “open wound on the body of contemporary society.”⁴

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0V7ioCObQs&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3TYPgVDg5PDGzK5CQxu8j8z78vcA534X4cLjMnjgtWypNEKoa2ehZ66rM>

3 “Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ.”⁵ ... HT victimises millions of people all over the world and today constitutes a widespread, insidious reality in several business sectors, particularly domestic work, manufacturing, hospitality and agriculture. HT takes place in many different ways and situations: sexual exploitation, forced marriage, slave labour, servitude, forced begging, organ-harvesting, reproductive exploitation and other forms of abuse and exploitation. It is embedded in private, commercial, and even public and governmental enterprises. HT is a reality “which affects the most vulnerable in society: women of all ages, children, the handicapped, the poorest, and those who come from broken families and from difficult situations in society.”⁶ HT is a terrible abuse of the dignity and human rights of men and women, girls and boys.

4 The variety of its forms, the heterogeneity of its victims and its many types of perpetrators make HT a very complex problem. Those wishing to plan effective services are immediately confronted with significant challenges. Such complexity requires a multidisciplinary approach in order to understand the phenomenon and its causes, to identify the processes and persons involved in it - victims, perpetrators, and consumers (knowing or unwitting) - before appropriate responses can be shaped.

6–7 The *Pastoral Orientations* are deeply grounded in the Church’s reflection and teaching, in the insistent teachings of Pope Francis and in the longstanding practical experience of the Church in response to

¹ The Migrants and Refugees Section (M&R) began operations on January 1, 2017. It was established by Pope Francis who is directing it for the time being. Responsible for dealing with the issues of trafficking in persons and migrants and refugees, its mission is to help the bishops of the Catholic Church and all those who serve these vulnerable groups.

² Pope Francis, *Greeting to the OSCE Conference*, 3 April 2017

³ Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 30 July 2017

⁴ Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking*, 10 April 2014

⁵ Pope Francis, *Address to Participants in the International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking*, 10 April 2014.

⁶ Pope Francis, *Address to the New Ambassadors Accredited to the Holy See on the occasion of the Presentation of the Letters of Credence*, 12 December 2013.

the needs of men, women, boys and girls caught up in human trafficking as well as that of many international Catholic NGOs.

The document delves deep into the subject in a broad spectrum while simultaneously providing a **reading** of the phenomenon, **its causes and origins**, which aims to produce an adequate **understanding** of its dynamics and its articulations, to support the necessary **fight** against trafficking.

8 The “*Pastoral Orientations*” suggests a range of responses, some of which favour, in particular, the **culture of encounter** that Pope Francis promotes as a necessary step towards new life in every area of human injustice and suffering.

17 -18 **The simple fact that the deep cause of trafficking is the exploitation of persons for commercial reasons means that stamp HT out, “society itself will have to change”.** Everyone will need to simplify their needs, control their habits, rein in their appetites. “Simplicity, moderation and discipline, as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few,” and this “implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures.”

The economic, social and cultural phenomena that are shaping modern societies need to be subjected to profound ethical assessment.

36 **The document then notes that even though trafficking in human beings and migration are separate realities**, “increasingly restrictive immigration policies” mean that those who promote irregular migration end up promoting trafficking, taking advantage of the situation of the weakness of people. In every case, “The most radical form of prevention is, thus, upholding *the right to remain* in one’s country and place of origin and ensuring that people have access there to basic goods and integral human development... and providing more accessible legal pathways for safe and orderly migration”.

45 The last point is **the return of HT survivors**: “They should be assured a safe return, proper assistance in their place of origin and effective protection against being trafficked again or subjected to retaliation or harassment by the traffickers. Supportive services should be available to survivors and their families. Job-training and ready access to employment are very important. Without full reintegration, the terrible trajectory of HT will not be dismantled, nor will stigma and suffering be left behind, nor the HT survivor made whole or offered a chance to live a life worthy of his or her human rights and dignity.”

The “Pastoral Orientations” are available in various languages and formats.

<https://migrants-refugees.va/documents/en/read/a4/pastoral-orientations-on-human-trafficking.pdf>

<https://migrants-refugees.va/documents/es/read/a4/pastoral-orientations-on-human-trafficking.pdf>

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