

PRAYER FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING



CALL TO WORSHIP

"A haunting cry of our time" is how Helene Hayes, RGS, described human trafficking, "a cry that matters deeply and must be answered". Part of Helene's response was interviewing trafficked women from around the world with the intent to "publish a book which places the voices of these trafficked women, the world's most silent, dispossessed and nameless of women, at its center".

Helene didn't get to write her book; she went home to God on January 6th, just 5 days before the 2013 Global Human Trafficking Awareness Day. But the sacred stories of the women beg to be told and it up to us to do so, to finish "Helene's book", as it were, by committing ourselves once again to the task of ending modern day slavery.

Let us begin with prayer...

ANT. If you close your ear to the cry of the poor, you yourself will cry out and not be heard. (Prov. 21:13)

Psalm 88 (to be read slowly and as if spoken by a trafficked person)

O Beloved, Heart of my heart,
I call to You for help by day;
I cry out in the night.
Let my prayer come before You,
bend your ear to my cry!

For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life seems like dust.
I have fallen into a pit of despair;
I have no strength and I feel powerless,
like one from whom you have turned,
like the soil people walk upon.
You alone can comfort me in the deep pit,
in the darkness of fear.

Separation from You is an agony;
hopelessness threatens to overwhelm me.-

Through You alone can I pray for my enemies,
for those who ignore my plight.

I am I a prison, chained by fear;
I am weary of tears.
Every day I call upon You O Beloved;
I lift up my hands in supplication.
Will you raise me from this living death?
Will you mend a broken heart?

Let not your steadfast love pass me by;
have mercy on me O Comforter!
Reach your hand into the darkness of my fears;
by your saving grace, forgive my unholy ways.

O Merciful Redeemer, I cry to You;
each day my prayer comes before You.
Let not separation keep me from your Heart;
be my strength as I face the darkness inside.

Too long have I let fear control me,
projecting onto others the demons dwelling within.
Let your love encircle and envelop me;
in your mercy raise me up.

Let peace become my companion all day long;
by night free me from the bonds of fear.
Let me be reconciled with family and friends and may I know You
as Loving Companion Presence as in days of old. Amen.

(from Psalms for Praying by Nan Merrill)

ANT. If you close your ear to the cry of the poor, you yourself will cry out and not
be heard. (Prov. 21:13)

READING 1: What was the hardest part of being trafficked?

...being a prostitute, having no choice,
...I was 11 years old when they took me
...the violence of the customers
... a hatred grew within me

MOMENT OF SILENCE

RESPONSE: (Sing or Say) Shepherd me, O God beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life. God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want, I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love, I walk by the quiet waters of peace.

READING 2: What was your greatest fear during the time you were trafficked?

...that I would be killed by a customer,

...that all my dreams would vanish,

...one of the girls jumped from a building and died, and I envied her,"

...that I would lose my mind

MOMENT OF SILENCE

RESPONSE: (Sing or Say) Shepherd me, O God beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life. God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want, I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love, I walk by the quiet waters of peace.

READER 3: The last question asked the women what their experience of the interview was. Many said that it was difficult to go back there in memory but if it could help one girl not to experience what they had been through, it was worth it. Another woman, when answering this question said of her experience of being trafficked: "It was painful. I accept that it happened. I survived. And I struggle every day."

MOMENT OF SILENCE

RESPONSE: (Sing or Say) Shepherd me, O God beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life. God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want, I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love, I walk by the quiet waters of peace.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Shepherd God, may every beat of my heart give me the courage to undertake those works which others say are folly to attempt.

May every breath I take be a prayer for your mercy for the world's most silent, dispossessed and nameless of women.

May all those with whom I make eye contact know they are precious in your sight.

May all those I touch hold fast to their dreams.

And may I always be open to receiving your love that I may respond to the haunting cry of our time. Amen.

-adapted from prayer of SME

Submitted by Judy Mannix, JP Contact NY