

# Turn on the Light

## AN “I AM HUMAN TRAFFICKING” SOLIDARITY PRAYER WALK



### MATERIALS

- Audio-visual equipment and internet access
- Video, “[I am Human Trafficking](#)” from CRS University.
- Video, “[Lead, Kindly Light](#),” from CRS YouTube channel, or reflective music
- Copies of the solidarity vigil for leader, cantor and readers
- Music for “[Christ, Be Our Light](#),” [Bernadette Farrell, OCP](#), and song sheets for participants
- Bible open to Matthew 5:13–16
- Candle for each participant: Consider [purchasing fair trade candles from Prosperity Candle](#), which include a prayer for victims of human trafficking, and lining the route of your solidarity walk with additional candles.
- Lighter or matches
- Symbolic objects to represent each story:
  - First station: fair trade coffee and other fair trade items
  - Second station: books, cards, pens
  - Third station (optional): An item to represent a local story (see “Preparation” below)
- “I am the Cause. I am the Solution” buttons and stickers. Email [university@crs.org](mailto:university@crs.org) to request them to be sent to you if needed.
- If handwriting/handsigning - letter writing materials
  - Baskets to collect letters
  - Copies of letters to members of Congress personalized for your community.
  - Pens for participants

### PREPARATION

- This prayer vigil is designed as a solidarity walk. Beginning indoors, participants then prayerfully walk with candles to stations outside to hear stories. Afterward, they move inside for the letter writing and a closing prayer. The walk can be as simple as going around a building. Adjust it as needed for space or inclement weather.
  1. Set up the indoor vigil space:
    - Light the candles and place them in front of the room/church.
    - If handwriting/handsigning - Place baskets, copies of letters to Congress and pens near the candles.
    - Test videos.
    - Place a Bible and a copy of the solidarity vigil at the podium or lectern.
  2. Set up the outdoor walk:
    - Map your route.
    - Choose two to three places you’ll stop to hear the stories. Place symbolic objects (see materials list) at each stop.

- Optional: Include a third station about the Church’s work to combat human trafficking in your community. The [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ anti-trafficking program](#) or your [local Catholic Charities office](#) may have a story.
  - Optional: Line the route of your solidarity walk with candles.
- Prepare cantor to lead [“Christ, Be Our Light,” Bernadette Farrell, OCP](#).
- Prepare one leader and four to five readers. Give each reader copy of this solidarity vigil with their part highlighted.
- Prepare someone to play the video(s).
- Prepare the letters to your members of Congress, as necessary, depending on your choice out of the below options.

#### PREPARE THE LETTERS TO YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. CHOOSE FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS

- Option 1 - Online Letters: instruct participants to sign the online letter at this [link](#) (which can also be navigated to via <http://university.crs.org/human-trafficking> and selecting the “Advocate to Congress” button). Participants will need to access the Internet. You can either set up laptops/tablets connected to Wifi or rely on participants to use their smartphones.
- Option 2 – Handwritten/Handsigned letters
  - COPIES: Each participant will need three copies of the letter: one for each of their two senators and one for their representative.
    - To make copies of the letters, you will need to insert the text from the most recent [action alert](#) into the to blank letter template available [here](#) to download and adapt.
    - There is also a section, where you should ask attendees to personalize with a closing remark, such as a story or reason in their own words to share why they care.
  - ADDRESS: Decide if you will ask participants to use their home or university address.
    - Option 2A - Home Address
      - During the letter-writing section, offer to show participants how to find their members of Congress online at <https://www.confrontglobalpoverty.org/find-members-congress/>. Ask them to enter their ZIP code when prompted. After they enter it, the names of their two senators and representative will pop up. They should write the full names of their senators and representative at the top of each letter.
      - They should put their home address at the bottom of the letter underneath where they will sign their name.
    - Option 2B - University Address
      - Pre-address the letters with the senators and representative information corresponding to your University’s district at the top of the letter.
      - Pre-insert the University address at the bottom of the letter underneath where they will sign their name.
  - DELIVERY: Decide how you will get your letters to your senators and representative.
    - Your letters will have the most impact if they are hand delivered to the local offices. [Check out these tips](#) on how to set up a meeting with your members of Congress.
    - If you are mailing letters to several states and/or districts, be sure to mail the letters separately to each senator and representative. You can find senators’ addresses by visiting [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), and representatives by visiting [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).
  - MEDIA & FOLLOW UP: It helps to send along a copy of any press coverage of the solidarity vigil along with the letters. Also, be sure to follow up with each member of Congress you sent a letter to so you’ll know whether they received it.

## Welcome and opening prayer

**LEADER:** We gather together to pray for all people who experience human trafficking.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...

God of Light,  
We pray for all of the people—  
men, women and children—  
hidden in the darkness of slavery.

Help us shine your light into the  
homes, streets, factories and brothels  
in our own neighborhoods and around the world  
where people are enslaved.

The darkness is as light, to you, O Lord.  
No person in any corner of the world  
is hidden from your sight.  
Help us shine your light.

Amen

## Opening song

**CANTOR LEADS:** “Christ Be Our Light,” Bernadette Farrell, OCP

## Gospel reading

**READER ONE:** A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

[Jesus said:]

“You are the salt of the Earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” (Matthew 5:13-16)

The Gospel of the Lord,

**RESPONSE:** Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

## Turn on the light

**LEADER:** In the Gospel reading, Jesus says that we are the light of the world, sent to shine our light before others. Being the light and turning on the light ever more brightly means that we are called to take time to pray about, educate others on, and take action to change the social injustices that are often kept hidden. As you may know, human trafficking is one of these injustices. We recall the truth of the mantra, “I am the Cause. I am the Solution. I am Human Trafficking.”

Human trafficking is modern slavery that happens in both our local communities and to our brothers and sisters around the world. Men, women and children are kidnapped or coerced into labor or sexual exploitation.

Trafficking includes forced work on farms, and in factories, hotels, restaurants and other industries. Hours are long, conditions are poor, and workers labor for little or no money. Victims of sex trafficking may work in brothels, strip clubs or on the streets. Human trafficking is an insidious evil—prevalent but often unnoticed. Victims are too afraid to speak up. Their traffickers threaten further harm to them or their families if they do.

Human trafficking is the third most profitable organized crime, after drugs and weapons sales, with close to \$150 billion in annual revenue.

Traffickers exploit already vulnerable people—women and children, migrant workers, indigenous and displaced people and those living in extreme poverty. Human trafficking is most prevalent in societies with wide economic and social disparities. Fifty-five percent of forced labor victims and 98 percent of sex-trafficking victims are women and girls.

Tonight, we pray that we might turn on the light so that trafficked individuals—sometimes hidden in plain sight—will be seen. We also pray that we may shine our light on the root causes of human trafficking: the many injustices that cause our global brothers and sisters to live in desperate circumstances, risking their safety to earn money to support themselves and their families.

[PLAY VIDEO: "I am Human Trafficking"](#) from CRS University.

We will now listen to stories that illustrate the darkness of labor and sex trafficking. We'll pray for all of the children, women and men affected and reflect on ways we can shine a light on this injustice. Please take a candle and then follow me as we begin a prayerful walk. We will sing the chorus of "Christ Be Our Light" (or remain silent) as we walk, and pause in two (or three) places to pray for victims of labor and sex trafficking. As we walk, we remember that trafficking victims are often forced from one place to another, and that we may be passing them by without noticing them.

[CANTOR TO LEAD:](#) Chorus of "Christ Be Our Light," Bernadette Farrell, OCP

Participants walk outside to first station.

## Solidarity walk

[READER TWO:](#) The story of modern slavery on Brazilian coffee farms often starts when workers are recruited by labor brokers, or "gatos," and transported to remote farms.

Gatos often promise legitimate work as a ruse. So while workers may "freely accept" employment, they are doing it under false pretenses about the work and pay.

From the moment workers step onto the buses that take them to the farms, they incur debt: Gatos charge workers for the trip. And the moment they leave their communities, the workers are cut off from the social support networks they turn to in times of need. The distance between the farms and the communities they call home makes them even more vulnerable.

Living conditions on these farms are squalid: Imagine houses with dirt floors and no running water, no trash cans and no system for disposing of solid waste. Workers sleep on thin mats because there are no beds. They cook over open flames on the floor because there are no stoves. There is no refrigeration. Workers must pile their trash near their homes, walk long distances for water, and go to the bathroom in forests or open fields. The work is grueling. The days are long. Food is scarce, expensive and of poor quality. Breaks are limited.

Payments are often irregular and frequently less than what was promised. And deductions are made for lodging, food, supplies and equipment. Some workers are not paid at all.

From the moment they start their journey into forced labor, workers begin piling up debt. They must work to pay for transportation to the farm, protective equipment, rent for the miserable lodging, and for food and supplies from stores owned by the farm.

Workers often have no idea they are in debt until they try to leave and are told they can't go until they settle their accounts.<sup>1</sup>

[Pause]

God, help us turn on the light in farms and factories where laborers are mistreated and trapped.

One way we can be the solution is by buying coffee, food and other goods that are made in ethical working conditions. We help sustain human trafficking by purchasing coffee grown on farms like the one described. So the next time you go to the store, check to see whether your grocery list includes fair trade items, even if they cost a few dollars more. As we just heard, sometimes a deal on our end comes at a great cost to someone else.

**CANTOR LEADS:** Chorus of "Christ Be Our Light," Bernadette Farrell, OCP

**PARTICIPANTS WALK TO NEXT STATION.**

**READER THREE:** "If I had tried to escape, the brokers would have beaten me ... They kept wooden rods."

These were the words of 22-year-old Shanti,\* a victim of sex trafficking in India's brothels.

Shanti's path from a rural village to a big-city brothel was one that many young girls in India have unwittingly followed. Growing up in farm country taking care of cattle and doing household chores, as a teenager Shanti knew little about city life. And she knew nothing about human trafficking—the buying and selling of people into forced or unpaid begging, prostitution or labor. When a local money lender encouraged Shanti to take a job as a housekeeper in Mumbai, she agreed.

A few days later, Shanti realized something had gone terribly wrong. She said, "I was told he sold me and another girl for [\$1,200]."

Shanti worked for her "brokers" for 3 years, unable to leave. Once when she was sitting outside the brothel, her madam accused her of trying to escape. "The madam hit me with a burning stick," she said, showing the scar.

Shanti and other women in the brothel were finally set free after a police raid. They might have had nowhere to go, but a Catholic Relief Services partner in India that works to end sex trafficking provided counseling, job skills training and other services. CRS projects supported by Catholics in the United States assist poor and vulnerable people in more than 100 countries worldwide.

Shanti learned bookbinding and got a job at a print shop, where she and several dozen other young women make business cards, notebooks and other items.<sup>2</sup>

Without support and other options, many women who escape prostitution may be sexually exploited again.

[Pause]

God, help us turn on the light in the brothels, on street corners and wherever women are victims of sex trafficking. May we support the work of Church—locally and around the world—to put an end to this crime and help victims recover.

For more than a decade, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been a national leader in the fight against sex and labor trafficking. The USCCB and its partners have provided services to victims of human trafficking, assisting more than 2,232 survivors and more

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\*Name changed.

1. Story adapted from "This is What Modern Slavery Looks Like," Coffeelands blog <http://coffeelands.crs.org/2015/12/this-is-what-modern-slavery-looks-like/>

2. Story adapted from "Helping Survivors of India's Sex-Slave Trade," <http://www.crs.org/stories/helping-survivors-indias-sex-slave-trade>

than 500 of their family members. CRS has worked internationally through more than 100 programs in more than 35 countries to reduce human trafficking and, through public-private initiatives, has recently engaged corporations to help eradicate slave labor.

**CANTOR TO LEAD:** Chorus of “Christ Be Our Light,” Bernadette Farrell, OCP

[optional: PARTICIPANTS WALK to next station, which would highlight a local story.]

**PARTICIPANTS EXTINGUISH THEIR CANDLES AND WALK BACK INDOORS TO THEIR SEATS.**

## Letter writing

**LEADER:** We should not only support efforts to help those who have been trafficked re-enter society, we also must work to stop human trafficking by exposing the unjust conditions that allow it to flourish.

Pope Francis says: “How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry: “Where is your brother?” (Gen4:9) Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother or sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in the rights of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labor? Let us not look the other way. There is greater complicity that we think. The issue [of human trafficking] involves everyone.”

We will now send letters to Congress advocating on behalf of those whose lives have been impacted by human trafficking, and in the hope that we can prevent future lives from the same suffering. We make a difference when we lift up our voices together, but it’s also important that you personalize your message to your members of Congress. I invite you to take a few moments to edit the letter by adding your name, a few lines about why this issue is important to you.

### [IF DOING ONLINE OPTION]

Please use your smart phone, laptop or tablet and navigate to <http://university.crs.org/human-trafficking> and select the “Advocate to Congress” button on the page. You will be asked to enter your information. Remember to personalize your message on why this is important to you! You can edit the letter within the text box. An email will be sent to both your senators and your representative.

### [IF HANDWRITING LETTERS WITH HOME ADDRESS]

In a moment, I will distribute three letters and a pen to each person: one for each of your senators and one for your representative. If you do not know your senators and representative, use your smartphone or laptop/tablet to navigate to [confrontglobalpoverty.com/toolkit](http://confrontglobalpoverty.com/toolkit). Scroll down and click on the “Find” button under the “Meet with Congress” section. Simply enter your zip code. You may need to enter your full address if your representative’s information does not populate. Remember to personalize your message on why this is important to you! Sign your name and write your home address on the bottom.

### [IF HANDWRITING LETTERS WITH UNIVERSITY ADDRESS]

In a moment, I will distribute three letters and a pen to each person: one for each of each of the senators and one for your representative who represent our University. Remember to personalize your message on why this is important to you! Sign your name at the bottom.

*[Tell the group how the messages will be delivered, either by mail to district offices or in person.]*

**PLAY VIDEO:** “[Lead, Kindly Light](#)” from CRS’ YouTube channel or play reflective music while participants write their letters.

## Closing prayer

READER FOUR: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

Dear Jesus,

In your name, we close our prayer tonight.  
As we bring forth light to defy the claims of darkness,  
As we bring forth joy and song to defy the claims of sadness,  
As we bring forth a spirit of generosity to defy the claims of want,  
As we bring forth peace to defy the claims of war.

That in the darkest, saddest, most wanting, warring corners of the world,  
All may look to Bethlehem,  
Where in the humblest of circumstances,  
In a time of repression,  
From the person of a poor refugee woman,  
In the filth of a manger,  
In the form of a most vulnerable child,  
You came among us to say, "No, there is a light in this world."

Let us be a light to others.  
Let us be the fruit of the branch of Jesse's tree.  
Let us be the bearers of the indescribable gift that is your grace.  
And so defy all false claims on your people and their dignity.

May you be born anew, into every season  
Into every age  
Into every land and every human heart.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Amen

## Closing song

CANTOR LEADS: "Christ Be Our Light," Bernadette Farrell, OCP