

# **Human Trafficking**

## **A Catholic Faith Based Response**

**A Diocesan Presentation On Behalf of  
The Florida Catholic Conference of Bishops**



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# A Parish Educational Presentation

Approved By The Florida Catholic Conference of Bishops

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# Introduction

## What Is Human Trafficking?

- A form of modern-day slavery
- Involves the exploitation of persons for commercial sex or forced labor, plus the inability to extricate oneself from that situation
- Often involves crossing an international border but does not require moving a victim
- Traffickers use *force, fraud, or coercion* to control their victims
- Cases can be prosecuted on a variety of grounds

# Is it really happening in Florida?

## Yes!

- **Human trafficking has become pervasive in Florida in the past decade:**
  - **Sex trafficking of immigrants and U.S. citizens**
  - **Forced labor in Florida's fields, restaurants & resorts**
  - **Domestic minor sex trafficking of teenage runaways**
  - **House slavery (“domestic servitude”)**



# The Challenge to the Catholic Community

- “The Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners” (Isaiah 61:1)
- The only Old Testament command repeated more frequently than that of caring for the stranger is that of worshipping the one God

**Slavery Still Exists.**

# **Catholic Social Teaching on Human Trafficking**

- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Pope John Paul II
- Pope Benedict XVI
- Vatican Council II
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

# Catechism of the Catholic Church

The seventh commandment forbids acts or enterprises that for any reason lead to the enslavement of human beings, to their being bought, sold and exchanged like merchandise, in disregard for their personal dignity. It is a sin against the dignity of persons and their fundamental rights to reduce them by violence to their productive value or to a source of profit.

- Paragraph no. 2414

# Pope John Paul II

The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights...Such situations are an affront to fundamental values which are shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person.



continued...



# Pope John Paul II

The alarming increase in the trade in human beings is one of the pressing political, social and economic problems associated with the process of globalization; it presents a serious threat to the security of individual nations and a question of international justice which cannot be deferred.

- Letter on the Occasion of the “Twenty-First Century Slavery – The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings” Conference 2002

# Pope Benedict XVI

One of the recognizable signs of the times today is undoubtedly, migration . . . Naturally in this “sign of the times” various factors play a part. They include both national and international migration, forced and voluntary migration, legal and illegal migration, subject also to the scourge of trafficking in human beings.

- Migrations: A Sign of the Times,  
World Day for Refugees and Migrants Message, 2006

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# Vatican Council II

... Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons;

continued...

# Vatican Council II

All these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury.

Moreover, they are supreme dishonor to the Creator.



- Gaudium et Spes, 1965

# U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Human trafficking will never be truly defeated without eliminating the consumerism that feeds it and prosecuting those actors in receiving countries, including our own, that benefit because of the exploitation of vulnerable human beings...

continued...



# **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops**

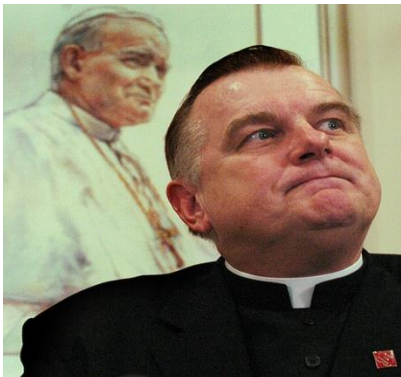
Human trafficking is a horrific crime against the basic dignity and rights of the human person. All efforts must be expended to end it. In the end, we must work together – Church, state, and community – to eliminate the root causes and markets that permit traffickers to flourish; to make whole the survivors of this crime; and to ensure that, one day soon, trafficking in human persons vanishes from the face of the earth.

- On Human Trafficking, 2007

# U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Catholic Church... in the United States stands ready to work with our government to end this scourge. We cannot rest until trafficking in human persons is eliminated – from the globe.

- Statement of Bishop Thomas G. Wenski  
Chair of USCCB Committee on Migration, 2004



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# Scope of the Problem

- An estimated 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year.
- An estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked each year.
- An estimated 244,000 American youth are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- More than 40% of trafficking victims are subjected to forced commercial sexual exploitation, with over 95% of sex trafficking victims being women and young girls.



# A Very Lucrative Business

- Yields an estimated \$31.6 billion in profits each year
- After drug trafficking, human trafficking is the most lucrative business for organized crime
- Unlike drugs and arms traffickers, human traffickers can continue to exploit their victims after the initial point of sale
- Human trafficking has become a preferred business for criminal syndicates around the world, including U.S. gangs.



# Victims Are Often “Invisible”

- Many are illegal and fear U.S. authorities
  - Traffickers exploit this fear
- Victims may be physically isolated or guarded; others are held through psychological coercion
- Many victims do not speak English
- Many victims have no idea where they are in the U.S. and face tremendous cultural barriers
- Many do not realize that they are victims or that they have rights under U.S. law

# Traffickers Seek Out and Exploit Victim Vulnerabilities

- Undocumented status
- Alcohol or drug dependency
- Teenage Runaways
- Homelessness



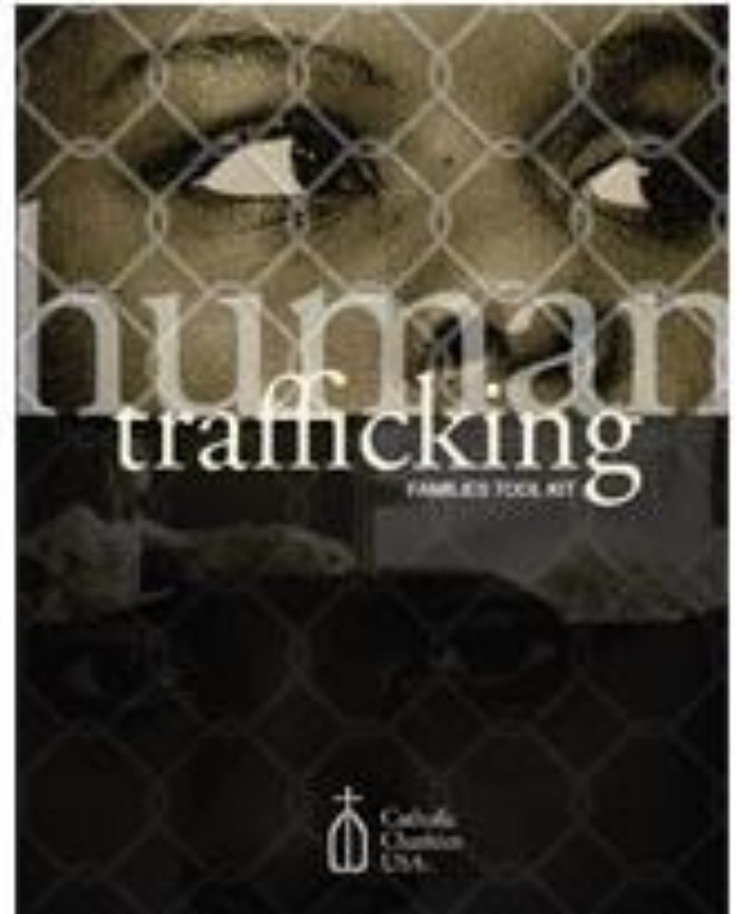
# Activities For Which People Are Trafficked

- Prostitution
- Exotic dancing
- Agricultural work
- Landscape work
- Domestic work and child care (“domestic servitude”)
- Factory work
- Massage /Day Spa
- Begging/street peddling
- Restaurant work
- Construction work
- Carnival work
- Hotel housekeeping
- Ship-building & welding
- Day labor
- Nail Salons
- Manual labor

# Traffickers Use Multiple Means to Control Their Victims

- Beatings, burnings, rapes, and starvation
- Isolation
- Psychological abuses
- Drug or alcohol dependency
- Document withholding
- Debt bondage
- Threats of deportation
- Threats against the victim's family or friends in his/her home country

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# Smuggling vs. Human Trafficking

- Trafficking should not be confused with smuggling which is the illegal movement of a person across a border with their consent
- But those who are smuggled into the United States are vulnerable to becoming trafficking victims.



# Smuggling Versus Human Trafficking

- Smuggling
  - An offense against the integrity of the U.S. borders
  - Requires illegal crossing of the U.S. border
  - Smugglers typically make their money once the alien has reached the U.S. border; their “business relationship” with the immigrant then terminates
  - Can become trafficking once a person is forced to provide labor or services
- Trafficking
  - An offense against a person
  - Involves compelled labor or service
  - Traffickers may use smuggling debt as a means to control victims
  - Traffickers maintain ongoing control over victims, even after the border is crossed

# Human Trafficking Defined

U.S. law defines three types of human trafficking victims:

- 1.) Those under 18 involved in commercial sex acts
- 2.) Those 18 or over involved in commercial sex acts induced through force, fraud, or coercion
- 3.) Those forced to perform labor and/or services in conditions of involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery through force, fraud, or coercion



# Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Defined By Federal Law

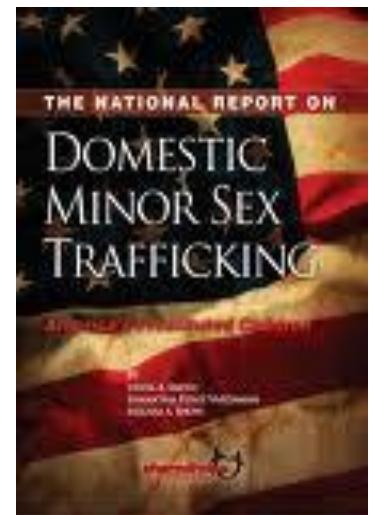
- **Domestic minor sex trafficking** occurs when a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident who has not attained 18 years of age is engaged in a commercial sex act.
- A “**commercial sex act**” is any sex act which anything of value is given to or received by any person. This includes:
  - Prostitution
  - Exotic dancing/stripping
  - Pornography



# Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

Child victims of trafficking are often exploited for commercial sex, including prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism. For child victims of exploitation, the destructive effects can create long-term health problems that include both physical and mental symptoms.

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# What Children Are At Risk of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking?

- ❖ Youth of any ethnicity, race, or religion
- ❖ Youth of any socio-economic class
- ❖ Female, male, and transgender youth
- ❖ Youth of all ages, including teenagers
- ❖ **Vulnerable youth**



# Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that at least 100,000 U.S. children are victims of sex trafficking each year, including children as young as 12.
- There are estimates that at any given time as many as 30,000 to 40,000 pre-teen and teenage runaways reside in Florida. As a group, all are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.

# Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

Runaway and “throwaway” children throughout the U.S. are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. Youth running away from unstable home environments where they suffered sexual or physical abuse are often lured by pimps with promises of love, security, and belonging.





# **How and Where They Fall Victim**



**On-Line/The Internet  
Facebook / Myspace.com**

**The Mall  
The Street  
School  
The Park**

# Who Are Domestic Minor Sex Traffickers?

- A pimp, a boyfriend, father, mother, brother, uncle, a coach, a teacher or anyone exerting control over a minor, even a peer
- Not always organized criminals
- Both men and women of varying ages
- Any ethnicity or race
- Anyone who benefits from the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor or facilitates the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor

# General Facts on Trafficking

- Victims are typically exploited by someone from their own country.
- Victims rarely self-identify when they are approached or rescued.
- Physical security is the greatest perceived need of most victims.
- Traffickers often allow victims to attend church, using this to control the victim.



# Who Investigates Human Trafficking?

## Federal Agencies

- ICE – Immigration Customs Enforcement
- FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigations



## Local Law Enforcement

- Police / Sheriff
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (Orlando)
- Vice Unit

# Who Provides Victim Services?

- **NGO – Non Governmental Organizations**
- **Faith-Based Organizations**
- **Social Service Providers**
- **Catholic Charities**
- **Lutheran Family Services**
- **Salvation Army**
- **Covenant House**
- **Domestic Violence Shelters**

# Florida Trafficking Trends

- **Labor trafficking is the most prevalent type of trafficking throughout Florida**
- **Florida's agricultural sector has witnessed numerous cases of farm workers enslaved to pick lettuce, tomatoes, etc.**
- **Traffickers are often farm labor contractors**



# Florida Trafficking Trends

- **Labor trafficking of immigrants in Florida's resort and hotel industry an emerging trend**
- **Victims are told they owe exorbitant debts that they must pay off to their traffickers**
- **Victims typically sleep in overcrowded residences near where they are exploited**



# Florida Trafficking Trends

- **Sex trafficking remains a scourge throughout Florida**
- **The internet has become the new “virtual street corner” for prostitution**
- **Sex trafficking is also occurring in strip clubs, massage parlors, and brothels**



# **Florida Trafficking Trends**

- **Domestic minor sex trafficking is an urgent issue in Florida**
- **Florida remains a mecca for runaway youth from around the country, many of whom are forced into prostitution on Florida's streets, malls, and runaway shelters**
- **Very few residential facilities or services exist for minor victims of sex trafficking**

# Florida Trafficking Trends

- **Psychological coercion has become the preferred mode of exploitation by traffickers**
- **Document confiscation, threats of deportation, and threats against family members are often used against immigrants**
- **Shaming and internet blackmail are often used against U.S. citizen victims**



# Engaging the Catholic Community

- **Educate people in our Catholic faith communities about human trafficking**
- **Utilize resources that enhance public awareness of how modern slavery occurs**
- **Read and download materials from the Rescue and Restore website**

**[www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking)**

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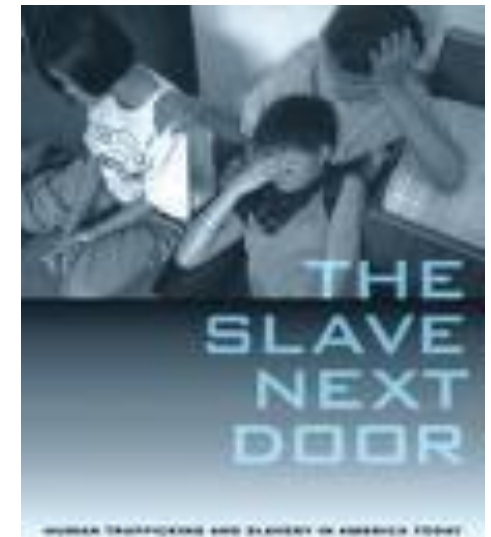
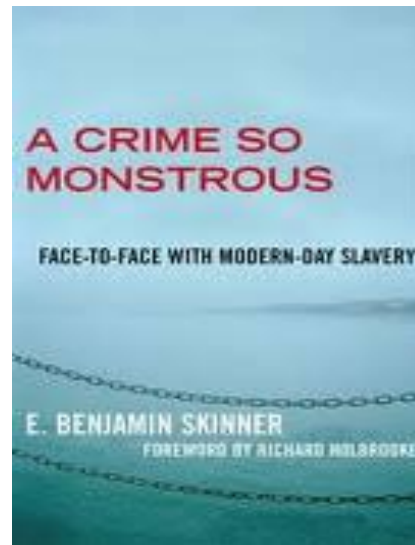
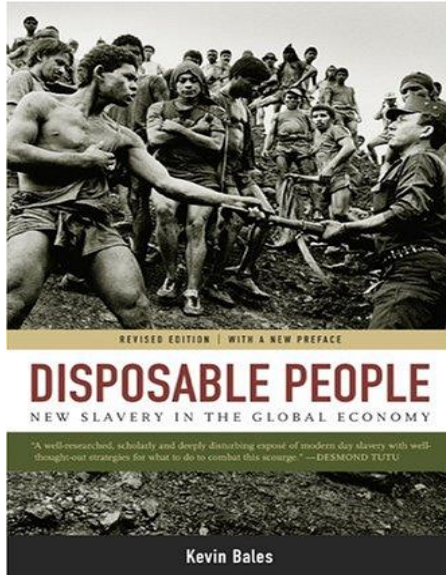




# Engaging the Catholic Community

- Educate yourself... watch a movie/video about human trafficking, read a book, do an internet search, watch for news stories on television, attend a community class on the subject of Human Trafficking.
- Keep your eyes open...**LOOK BENEATH THE SURFACE.**
- Report suspicious activity to the authorities.
- Pray for victims and traffickers

# Movies & Books



# Other Website Resources

- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Office of Migration and Refugee Services ([www.usccb.org/mrs/trafficking/index.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/mrs/trafficking/index.shtml))
- The Florida Catholic Conference ([www.flacathconf.org/humantrafficking](http://www.flacathconf.org/humantrafficking))
- Florida Strategic Plan on Human Trafficking, Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights ([www.cahr.fsu.edu](http://www.cahr.fsu.edu))
- Shared Hope International – Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking ([www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org))

# Victim Assistance



- **Florida's Catholic communities represent a tremendous source of support for trafficking victims.**
- **Some Catholic Charities offices in Florida have contracts with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to provide assistance and case management to survivors of human trafficking. These services are made possible through a federal grant administered by USCCB.**

# **What Can Your Parish Provide?**

- **Pro bono legal, medical, or dental care?**
- **Donations of food, clothing, and furniture?**
- **Emergency housing?**
- **Temporary jobs for trafficking victims?**
- **Assistance with learning English?**
- **Direct companionship & mentoring?**
- **Bilingual assistance?**
- **Used car/transportation help?**

# CONTACT

If you think you have identified a victim of trafficking, please contact:

1. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center at **1-888-3737-888** to locate services in your area.
2. Call **911** for all emergency situations.



# QUESTIONS



**Thank you for taking the time to  
educate yourself about the subject of  
Human Trafficking.**

**Through education we can bring awareness.**

**Through awareness we can provide help.**

**Through help we can provide hope.**

**Our Catholic Faith Calls Us To Action!**

# We acknowledge the following sources of information:

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- United States Department of Health and Human Services
- Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights
- Regional Community Policing Institute – St. Petersburg College
- Clearwater Area Task Force Against HT