

Resolution on Human Trafficking

Let it be resolved that:

As the principles of Catholic Social Teaching affirm the dignity of the human person, the solidarity of the human family and the special claim of the poor and vulnerable on society, it is reprehensible that trafficking of human persons, especially of women and children, is a growing phenomenon in this age of globalization. Human trafficking is a gross violation of human rights. Actions to prevent this abuse and protect and help victims are a moral and ethical responsibility.

Rationale:

Human trafficking is a huge international business. Both adults and children are sold and trafficked to and from countries all over the world. The U.S. government estimates that 50,000 people a year are trafficked to the United States for various purposes. It is estimated that 15,000 children are trafficked to the U.S. each year.

Despite these high estimates, few victims have actually been identified and helped. This is even truer of child victims, very few of whom have been found.

In 2000 the U.S. Congress passed historic legislation, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. It authorizes funding for trafficking prevention and for services for trafficking victims. Unfortunately because of ignorance on the part of many service providers, law enforcement, and others in the community, when trafficking victims are found they are often not recognized as trafficking victims and are either deported or are not offered the services to which they are entitled.

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act also provides a new visa category (T-visa) to allow certain trafficking victims to stay in the U.S. instead of being deported immediately. Unfortunately, the regulations surrounding this visa make it very difficult to access.

There is no systematic data collection about instances of human trafficking anywhere. Not being able to gain information about cases of human trafficking impedes the world community's ability to understand the phenomenon, measure its extent, and help victims.

Within the United States, trafficking of children for sexual exploitation is a problem, with pimps using trafficking routes up and down the east and west coasts.

Call for Specific Actions:

USCMA requests its members to:

Urge the U.S. government to fund research on child trafficking to help identify not only the children but the conditions under which they are suffering.

- Lobby the U.S. government to fund services for all victims of human trafficking, especially for children.
- Advocate for U.S. government to fund the training for law enforcement officials in recognizing the trafficking victims and to fund the services to which they would be entitled.
- Lobby the U.S. Congress to take corrective action to make access to the T-visa easier for victims of trafficking.
- Pressure law enforcement to put more emphasis on enforcing laws against child trafficking within the United States
- Learn more about the problem of trafficking and the needs of victims in order to create an environment in which trafficking victims feel comfortable coming forward to identify themselves and reach out for.