

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Hilarion Mitchell

Spotlight on Human Trafficking

Pope Francis, 'Spes non confundit' Section 10.

"During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind. I think of prisoners who, deprived of their freedom, daily feel the harshness of detention and its restrictions, lack of affection and, in more than a few cases, lack of respect for their persons."

February brings awareness to Human Trafficking.

- Feb. 2: International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking
- Feb. 7: World Day of Social Justice
- Feb. 8: Feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita,
- Feb. 22: Trafficking Awareness Day

Feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita

St. Josephine Bakhita is the patron saint of victims of Human Trafficking.

She was born in 1869, in a small village in the Darfur region of Sudan. She was sold into slavery at age nine and her captors named "Bakhita," meaning "fortunate" in Arabic.



League Position Paper 2024 Human Trafficking

The Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

The CCCB-Human-Trafficking-Pastoral-Letter-2021, the act of buying sexual services violates CST and in particular

- The Life and dignity of the human person
- The rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person
- The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Organizations

- Defend Dignity
- EVE - formerly Exploited Voices now Educating.
- The Joy Smith Foundation
- IWIN



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What is Human Trafficking?

Paddy Fitzgerald Nolan, Life Member, Peterborough Diocese
Committee: OPC Social and Economic Justice Team

Victims suffer physical or emotional abuse and often live and work in horrific conditions. They may also face fatal consequences if they attempt to escape. This crime represents a consistent and pervasive assault on the fundamental human rights of its victims. (Department of Justice Canada).

Forty five (45%) of all human trafficking reported cases are from Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, Montreal and London. Over 90% of the cases never make it to court.

Human Trafficking Warning Signs

- Unexplained absences from work/school
- Dresses less appropriately than did previously
- Withdrawn, depressed, distracted
- Wearing expensive clothing, accessories or shoes
- Has a tattoo or symbol such as bar code or money
- Attending parties out of their league
- Signs of abuse, bruises, cuts
- Behaves in a sexualized manner

Immediate Danger call 911 or your local police service,
(<http://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/>) 1-833-900-1010 it's confidential toll free 24/7

Manipulation and Control Tactics

- Abuse (emotional, sexual, physical)
- Threats
- Violence
- Isolation, taking full control of their identification, documents and or money
- Lies
- Addiction

continued on next page....

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High Risk Groups

- Women, girls, boys and men who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+
- Homeless
- Average recruitment age 13 years old
- Those with self-esteem, or are bullied, discriminated, poverty, social and or family issues
- Indigenous women and girls
- Addiction and or mental illness or developmental disabilities

Labour Trafficking

- Migrant workers
- Newcomers to Canada
- Homeless
- People who do not speak English or French

Legislation

Combating Human Trafficking Act, 2021 and the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017

Ontario Anti-human Trafficking Strategy focuses on

- Raising awareness
- Protecting victims
- Intervening early
- Supporting survivors
- Holding offenders accountable

Bill S-263 An Act respecting the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking.



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The Federal Government Consultation on Euthanasia Advance Requests Medical Assistance in Dying (euthanasia)

opened on Dec. 12, 2024

Betsy Currier, Life Member, Sault Ste. Marie Diocese
Committee: OPC Social and Economic Justice Team



Some of the questions in the consultation are misleading as they imply support for euthanasia. Before completing, read Alex Schadenberg, Executive Director, Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. [EPC Guide to answering the online "consultation" on euthanasia by advance request.](#)

Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, [EPC Guide to answering the online "consultation" on euthanasia by advance request.](#)

Survey Link: [National conversation on advance requests](#)

Deadline Response: Completed before Feb. 14, 2025.

Social & Economic Justice Team Report: Legislation Update

Betsy Currier, Life Member, Sault Ste. Marie Diocese
Committee: OPC Social and Economic Justice Team

Ontario and Federal Elections

Premier Doug Ford confirmed that an Ontario general election will be held on February 27, 2025. The federal election is looming with the resignation of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.



Make your voice heard! Begin now to determine who the candidates are in your area and think of issues important to you. What makes a good political candidate?

continued on next page....



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Social & Economic Justice Team Report: Legislation Update

Betsy Currier, Life Member, Sault Ste. Marie Diocese
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Ontario and Federal Elections

Create a list of qualities and characteristics you would like to see in a political candidate. Then do some research to consider the candidates running. Evaluate the degree to which the candidate's ideas reflect the characteristics that are important to you.

1. Elections have consequences. Every vote matters!

Do you want to make a positive impact in your community? Voting gives you that chance! You have the power to make key decisions on the quality of life you want for yourself, your family, and your community. It gives you a say on important issues that affect you like affordable housing, women's health, economic justice, environmental protection, quality education, housing and employment, etc.

To have a say, it's essential to vote.

2. It's your right. Not voting is giving up your voice

Voting is the voice of the people, the mechanism through which we express our hopes, dreams, and aspirations for a better future. It is the great equalizer, where every individual, regardless of background or status, possesses the same weight in shaping the course of our province or country. If you don't vote, other people get to choose who represents you. Use your right. Exert your power.

3. It's your money

One way or the other, every person in our community pays taxes – both citizens and non-citizens. And yet, most people don't know how that money is being used. Voting is your chance to choose how your tax dollars are spent, such as additional funding for health care and social services.

4. The community depends on you!

Our communities are made up of family, friends, loved ones, neighbours, and children. Some may not know how important voting is, while others cannot vote. Voting isn't just a civic duty; it's a profound responsibility to represent not only yourself but also those who cannot advocate for themselves, including loved ones who depend on your voice.

Make sure your voice is heard. Vote!