

SOCIETY'S ROLE IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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Good Morning your Eminencies, Excellencies, Cardinals, Esteemed members of the clergy and Law Enforcement. What an honor to be asked to speak here today.

In thinking about the definition of Society, it really encompasses everyone, working in synergy: governments, religions, civil society, the private business sector, law enforcement, educational institutions, the media, and individuals from all walks of life. We depend upon each other, bound together by an inextricable web of common humanity, and yet we forget this. Dear people, the very existence of a thriving *slave business in human beings as products* in our 21st century, means that our society, our bond to each other is severely broken. As Bishop Sorondo related in his report on the working group on "Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery – Destitute Peoples and the Message of Jesus Christ" a recent study indicates that modern day slavery may be overtaking drug trafficking to become the number one criminal activity in the world. How have we let this come about??? How have we let 29 million people in our midst be relegated to a life where they are under the boot and lash of masters with not one shred of compassion for their suffering, not even for the most vulnerable among them, the children, who make up an alarmingly growing portion of today's victims. Traffickers who think nothing of taking sex-trafficked children, who have grown too weak or psychologically unwell to serve in brothels, and selling them again for their parts, their organs. God must be crying as he looks down and sees the inhumanity mankind is visiting upon its poor. That we are all tolerating, and facilitating, by not doing enough. By creating demand for human misery, whether it be through purchasing commercial sex, or cheaply made goods whose slavery-filled supply chains we ignore because everyone loves a bargain, and CEOs love a profit.

The suffering undergone by victims is enormous. They have been denied all dignity, all personhood, by their exploiters. One man who'd trafficked thousands of young Latin American girls into Spanish sex clubs told me, "a woman is like this glass. She is an object, a mercantile thing to be traded; we don't care about her feelings, just threaten her and her family and make her work by force." A labor victim in California told me her sweatshop trafficker said "in this country you are lower than a dog. People here care about animals, create whole societies for their protection. No one here cares about

you!" When I asked if a man, with daughters of his own, could enjoy buying the virginity of a 13 year-old Cambodian girl when she was clearly in her own words "heartbroken," she said he felt "very happy, but for me, I feel very bad." A domestic labor and sex-trafficked teenager under lock and key as a house slave to a practitioner of black magic explained *her* spiritual nadir: "The man threatened to kill me all the time, and I finally begged him to, but he didn't, saying, "but if you dare run away, I'll kill your brother!" I felt I had nothing in this world, nothing left to give, except to keep my brother alive." Thusly she was manipulated into enduring more unthinkable abuse.

All of them had their dignity and self worth stripped away. Systematically destroyed by criminals who think of them as means to profit, nothing more. Right now, according to Luis CdeBaca, US State Dept. Ambassador at Large on Human Trafficking, only 1% of slaves in the world are discovered or rescued. Only one chance in a hundred to ever see the light of day shining on their face, living the life that God wished for them. How is this possible, in our communications age, where people through technology are supposedly more connected than ever, there are more slaves living in the world today than any other time in recorded history?!! What a tragic failure on all of our parts.

Personally speaking, as Christians, our call is clear. To stand with the oppressed, to fight for justice. I want to thank Pope Francis for making this issue a defining call to action in his papacy. For advising Bishop Sorondo to undertake a deep and lasting investigation of this evil and how to combat it. For fomenting the Pontifical Academies of Science and Social Science's Working Group study and calls to action. For addressing new ambassadors in December with this directive: "Human trafficking is a *crime against humanity*. We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that's become ever more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals but the foundational values of society." For having his Church be a founding member of the Global Freedom Network, making history by joining leaders of *other* faiths, and titans of the business world, in this joint initiative. For speaking so eloquently, before his papacy, on our absolute moral imperative to root out slavery, in his homily of September 4th, 2009, "No to slavery... No to children, men and woman (treated as) discarded material. It's our flesh that's at stake here! It's our flesh that's being sold! The same flesh I have, that you have, is on sale! And you're not going to be moved for the flesh of your brother?!" And I must confess I *tweeted* another of his Holiness' truths from his Sept. 7, 2008 homily: "Those of us who do nothing... are complicit in

exploitation, slavery... We are complicit through our silence, through our inaction, through our apathy.”

The message is clear. We must all wipe the slumber from our eyes and jump up to act. How? It must start at the very top and go all the way down to the individual in our global society. Governments must make *real* commitments to creating comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation with a truly victim-centric thrust, and there is vigorous work to do *in every country on the globe* at this level. Privately in my own country I spend much of my time trying to bring individual states’ laws up to standard with the US Federal anti-trafficking legislation; not one is currently whole in its response to full criminalization of labor and sex trafficking offenders and full justice, decriminalization and restitution for its victims. I was privileged to be part of a drafting session at the UN for the Global Plan of Action on Human Trafficking, a road map for countries building their anti-slavery protocols, a very useful tool with suggestions for a human rights approach to building those laws. It is imperative that at every level of a law and order approach to these crimes an equal amount of energy, funding and resources is devoted to the victims and survivors’ protection, rehabilitation and reintegration, which given the nature of their trauma is extensive. On this note while I applaud Secretary May’s efforts to pass a tough British anti-trafficking bill, I urge the addition of a stronger victims protection and services component. One cannot work without the other: a prosecutor needs a witness, but more importantly, a crime needs a victim who eventually sees justice, liberation and self-value.

Globally prosecutions and convictions are staying about level while the crime of slavery and profits from it are going up, up, up. The political will of the governments of the world needs to be galvanized in extremis. Politicians pay lip service to caring about slavery, but in reality, very poor results give light to the lie. The lie that they actually care about the poor marginalized people that the traffickers target because of this position of anonymity, desperation and powerlessness in the first place. Pope Francis can exert great moral influence on world leaders, as he did when Archbishop in Argentina, and moved the government to pass the comprehensive law promoted by a trafficking victim’s mother, Susanna DiMarco. He recently met with President Obama; the two spoke of their shared interest in fighting this terrible blight. But did you know that the US annual budget for all anti-trafficking initiatives, both domestically and abroad, amounts to what is spent on only a few hours of “The War on Drugs?” Or that the defense budget is 526 billion US dollars a year, but the yearly anti-trafficking budget under 30 million... Meanwhile there are no open beds

in residential care centers in which to put waiting lists of labor and sex trafficking survivors. Is this tolerable, morally tenable in any conceivable universe, that we should spend so, so much on ways to kill and so little to liberate souls we know writhe in the agony of slavery? I implore the Pope to call the leaders out to live their words of concern through *concrete* action and *robust* funding. You have the ear of the whole world right now, and inspire so many; you may nudge the leaders into morality yet.

And what of poverty. We know that poverty is the number one cause of vulnerability to being trafficked. The unfair distribution of wealth has long concerned Pope Francis; now in any meaningful discussion of poverty, a slavery lens must be brought to bear. Likewise any strategy working on international development, girls' and boys' education, immigration policy, etc., must be examined through this lens. Governments and faith leaders must invest in innovative ways to build families up, so they don't accept risky offers from traffickers to try and improve their feeble lots, or knowingly sell themselves or their own daughters into prostitution to get themselves out of horrendous debt, only to find themselves trapped in another more insidious debt bondage. Again, if a tiny portion of those astronomical defense budgets were used to build up the poor, think what change could occur!

I have been privileged to be part of UNODC's Blue Heart campaign, which works to illuminate the problem and mobilize action on human trafficking both on the government and vulnerable population level. I have been very gratified to hear from people we worked with such as Rosi Orozco, at whose Mexico City shelter my heart was first shattered then put back together by the incredible pathos and bravery of children rescued from brothels, one as young as four when she started. Our campaign and the movement have had legs, far more legislation and prosecution is occurring, and the girls I interviewed are now entering University!

UNODC has available training courses, as do groups such as CAST, (Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking) to educate members of law enforcement, and members of the prosecutorial, defense and judiciary staff on modern day slavery. I *urge global* adoption on a *countrywide* level of such training courses, (and I don't mean one hour internet cheatsheets but substantial sessions) because everywhere instilled, a commensurate rise is seen in discovery of victims, arrest, prosecution and conviction of traffickers. But it can't stop there. *All*

civil society needs this training, so workers in the travel and hotel industry can be whistle-blowers rather than tacit or even complicit enablers, emergency room staff can recognize injured victims, schoolteachers can tell when a child is vulnerable to victimization... A recent visit by two different licensed investigators failed to notice Filipino labor trafficking victims as the sole 24/7 staff of an eldercare facility in California, only concerned about staff/patient ratio – training would have turned those people into rescuers. I know the church has some of these training protocols – please ready and offer them around the world.

A vital resource for victims is 24/7 secure national hotlines where they can call or text for help, and when they wish, they will be passed onto law enforcement. The US hotline, run by Polaris, has discovered more victims than any other source including law enforcement, both through people calling for help and by tips called in by people who recognized a suspicious situation. Every country must have one, and the Church can help by advertising it throughout its diocese.

There is incredible potential worldwide to create grassroots youth movements as is happening in Cambodia. I interviewed a wonderful young girl, 16 years old, part of the Student Development group for Voices of Change, who leads groups of trained boys and girls from her school door to door to warn locals and migrants in the surrounding countryside of the danger of trafficking recruiters preying heavily on people seeking work in the Mekong Delta. It is a relatively inexpensive but innovative way for countries to take ownership of this fight through fresh young faces eager for justice, not corruption. This could be a huge opportunity for Catholic youth mobilization – young armies of hope, worldwide, protecting their neighbors.

I greatly admire everything the Catholic Church has been doing, in the US and other parts of the world, to fight trafficking: the leadership of the USCCB with their Amistad and Shepherd programs, the laudable activity of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, the work being done by men religious (such as the lifeline for those trafficked on fishing boats, the Apostolates of the Sea) and *especially women religious* around the globe, such as Talitha Kum (“arise”), RENATE (Religious in Europe Network Against Human Trafficking) and the LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) having taken national and regional leadership in the US and elsewhere to stop modern slavery and provide holistic care for victims. They proactively promote ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking)’s corporate code of conduct for the travel industry and hotels. Sisters have successfully brought

awareness to the World Cup and the Superbowl being hubs for trafficked sex. ACRATH in Australia and APWRATH and AMRAT in the Asia Pacific countries harness the good work of regional religious there.

Pope Francis' personal leadership has been extraordinary. But I would like to suggest that slavery be on the table of *every* diocese, *every* parish priest to include it in his homilies. Each diocese could have its own anti-slavery coordinator, as has been proposed in the UK and Wales. If this problem were talked about on Sunday morning in every church in the world along with clear, *actionable* suggestions for those in attendance (rather than it being relegated to a social justice group within the church) you could unleash the power of a billion Catholics on traffickers. A billion sets of eyes to find victims and bring traffickers to justice, a billion pairs of hands to rebuild lives, a billion hearts to give love to the survivors. A billion *Samaritans*. Once a moral person knows, *really* understands, the depths of suffering induced by slavery, he or she cannot stand back and do nothing. And as followers of Christ, we are compelled to do something to help. "As you do unto the least of my followers, so you do unto me..."

And who was more dear to Christ's heart than little children, who according to our latest UNODC report make up 27% of global trafficking victims, and in some regions such as the Middle East and Africa comprise a shocking 68%. Big numbers, on the rise: do not forget every single one of them is a child, crying out for our help, as their poor hearts are broken, their little bodies are stunted by back breaking work, maimed for forced begging, battered by beatings, and defiled by repeated rape or forced prostitution. But do not write them off! Each one of them has an incredible capacity to rebound and grow and contribute given rescue and the proper loving care. They are by no means lost causes unless we turn our backs to their situation. I can no longer meet a child survivor without seeing my own children's eyes in theirs; I wish this also for you.

Please make no mistake, there is no such thing as a "child prostitute." The UN's Palermo Protocol, prompt ratification of which is on the Vatican's proposed to do list from the Working Group's paper (and we *heartily* urge ratification, along with enacting the other six recommendations for the Holy See!) recognizes it is beyond the legal, mental and psychological capacity for anyone under 18 to consent to their own sexual exploitation and enslavement. They are not perpetrators, but *victims* of the crime of sexual trafficking. The real

criminals are the pimps and the buyers of their services, who rarely see any consequences to their actions whatsoever.

Several recent studies in different countries have found the majority of men using the services of pubescent girls were opportunistic buyers, often family men, teachers, doctors, lawyers, pastors, CEOs, or government officials who may not know or care they are exploiting children, rather than pedophiles. Pimps train youth to present as older and willing; many buyers think they are. Some men took the option of a younger girl when presented because it seemed safer on a health level, but had not been explicitly seeking that. Sadly, this trend drives the taste of men buying sex towards younger and younger girls, *because they are there*. The traffickers are creating demand for children, female and male, flooding the market with them. The average age for entry into commercial sexual exploitation is the early teens but recently skews younger and younger.

This is a unique opportunity for the Pope and his church to speak to world culture about the harm wrought on children by what was previously held as a victimless crime. Traditions of boys turning into men by visiting prostitutes, enjoying commercial sex the night before their wedding, or celebrating a successful business trip or football win by a brothel visit must be *unlearned*. Millions of men look up to His Holiness as a spiritual father, and this is the new value system to be taught to them, and in turn that they teach to *their* sons, that men are the champions of girls, not their oppressors, that spiritual liberation is impossible when a man is soliciting commercial sex, because he is creating a market for sexual slavery of children, whether he thinks he has been with one or not. I would also like to urge that moving forward, one of the explicit pillars of the Global Freedom Network should be protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation.

On the law enforcement side, far more must be done to create negative lasting consequences for the *buyer*. In a poll done of frequent purchasers of commercial sex, an overwhelming number said they would stop if their car was impounded, if a letter was sent home, and if they were put on a permanent sex offenders list for having sex with a minor. Just think what a mandatory prison sentence might do. In California there is an innovative but as of yet underused statute which requires an automatic mandatory fine of 25K USD if caught purchasing the sexual services of a minor, the proceeds of which go towards a fund for the victims of sexual trafficking. If this became commonplace around the world, would so many men still risk buying sex? But in the US, time and time again I have heard from survivors that at point of

sale it is almost always the minor who is arrested, not the pimp, not the buyer, and that police have what I find to be an odd sympathy for the john: "Go on, go home to your wife and kids (!) We don't want to ruin your life." A conspiracy of silence only further proves to the victims they are worthless, rightless, in the eyes of those who should be defending them.

Former President Jimmy Carter recently praised Pope Francis for appointing eight people (half of whom are women) to a committee to look into the abuse of children by priests. We in the anti-trafficking movement applaud his Holiness' integrity and transparency, his willingness to be open about finding ways to stop the abuse of children in any way by anyone associated with the church, perhaps by building stronger partnerships with law enforcement. We know sexual abuse is one of the greatest precursors to vulnerability to trafficking in children, and believe the Church can prevent children from future trafficking by stamping out any abuse in its ranks, and providing lasting and substantial services to restore survivors of such abuse, giving them back their dignity and self worth.

The Church can also take a leadership role in harm reduction by providing aid and support to impoverished families undergoing stress. Children are at much higher risk of sexual abuse and exploitation when their families lack the capacity to care for them safely, sometimes leading to those children entering foster care or orphanages where their vulnerability to victimization only increases. The Church can become a safe haven through which vulnerable families can get help before their children are harmed. Perhaps it can help put pressure on local government agencies to revamp foster care, as well as vetting orphanages in the developing world, both systems which are sources not only of abuse but actual points of trafficking in many cases.

Law enforcement must be trained specifically how to handle child interviews on point of discovery, and this is an area women religious could be very effective as specially trained accompanying presences to reduce further traumatization and re-trafficking. Especially in situations where the children are interviewed by immigration authorities, we see a real lack of understanding of the larger wellbeing of the child. Children apprehended along the U.S.-Mexican border are often turned over to Mexican immigration officials and/or rapidly deported, often recorded as voluntarily because children agree to or even request it. But this is primarily because they do not know their rights, believing they have only two options: deportation or U.S. jail. They are sent out of the country without follow up or identification and vetting of caring

adults, leaving them vulnerable to further abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence. The church and its sisters could be a safety net for these children across the globe.

When children are brought in via immigration raids that discover trafficking, or in sex trafficking cases, often the first action of Law Enforcement agents is to arrest them, sometimes touted as being for their own good, to get them off the streets and out of harms way. Although well-meaning, this criminalization has severely deleterious effects on not only the child's future capacity for employment but on her or his *longterm self-perception*. Expungement and advocacy for older kids now in the job market is crucial to prevent further exploitation, and indeed is part of the cornerstone of Safe Harbor legislation which looks to explicitly decriminalize children in sexual exploitation. But the best response would be turning the children over immediately upon discovery to services, not putting them through the criminal justice system at all. Again this is an area in which religious can partner with law enforcement in the best interests of the child survivor, ensuring no further scarring is done.

We see this same conflict of interest among adult populations of trafficking victims when brought in by authorities; sometimes, in the need to gather information on cases, terrible mistakes are made, often over long periods of time, that can seriously revictimize survivors. In some cases, immigration authorities' primary mandate is to deport as many illegal migrants as possible, and they seriously overlook potential trafficking victims. Better legislation needs to protect these people, so they are not deported back into unknown horrors waiting in their home country, also leaving prosecutors devoid of a complainant witness.

In other cases, discovery is just botched by lack of knowledge. I know of a case in Thailand where an Uzbek sex trafficking operation was raided, but despite the urgings of an accompanying faith-based group, the police brought all the women back to the station in one van, during which trip the mamasan berated and exhorted her victims in Uzbek not to reveal anything to the police. They were then interviewed in front of each other, and all but two refused to give any valuable testimony because they were within earshot of the madam. The case eventually fell apart because of her intimidation and the two had to run for their lives, on the heels of a perjury conviction because they recanted out of fear. Here is an ideal locus for partnership between the church acting as victims' advocates and law enforcement so both sides get what they need.

I strongly urge implementation of one of the UN Global plan of action's pillar recommendations which respects suspected victims' dignity, vulnerability and human rights: granting them a "period of reflection", a substantial cooling off period in which they can come down off the trauma and find the wherewithal to meaningfully cooperate with law enforcement. Further, once interviews are conducted, they should be done all at once, even if their content is for multiple agencies, using modern recording technology, so their story must not be relived again and again; in the case of female trafficking victims, a female officer is recommended or at very least a woman accompanying her in the room because more than likely her abusers were men. (And do not think that rape is the exclusive purview of sex traffickers: labor trafficking victims are very frequently raped as well). One stop centers, which incorporate a safe house (but not incarceration) environment away from their abusers, a technologically equipped interview protocol, a medical examiner to collect all physical evidence including rape kits, and a counselor to immediately attend to their psychological needs are ideal. Perhaps the church can be mobilized to partner in the establishment of more of these intake centers worldwide, which do not feel so much like an interrogation center but a place of help. The victims must then *not* be placed in jail-like detention centers while they await their trials for extended periods, as happens in many parts of the world. It is treating the victim of a crime like a criminal.

Infrastructure needs building to better serve the needs of these survivors in limbo. Perhaps here we can follow the suggestion made by the working group of using the many properties owned by the church for facilities for survivors, because right now the need for safe, well managed restoration sites grossly outweighs the supply in every country. I strongly encourage the replication of the good work that two groups of women religious are doing in California and NY, running shelters and personally fulltime being with the recovering survivors. Please encourage your religious (the men as well!), your clergy and your lay congregation to bring their particular skill sets to the table, be they languages, legal degrees, etc., for the good of the recovering survivors as they navigate their way through court cases, visa and job applications. Perhaps the church can also put pressure on the private sector to create jobs for the recently liberated – one of the great areas of concern now is that trafficking victims, who have been rehabilitated and given job training, are not finding employment, in Europe and elsewhere, which greatly exposes them to the risk of re-trafficking due to economic desperation and low self-esteem. And race, sadly,

matters; we are seeing victims of EU countries treated preferentially to those from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Let us all rail against that.

In the case of aftercare of sex-trafficked children, including pastoral aftercare by faith-based groups, the key ingredient to success is beyond therapy. Yes, cognitive therapy is vital, in which the child explores what has been done to them and how it does not have to define them. But my experience has led me to believe the more crucial element to a successful recovery is the child being consistently *loved*, to allow them to *experience* then actually *believe* they are not trash, not subhuman. This is why the den mothers, house moms, or adoptive parents of these young survivors are so important. The great love of the sisters could be brought to bear on this all over the world. Every successful aftercare program I have seen was precisely thus because their key ingredient was love, in an extremely patient, tolerant, longlasting form – a Christ-like love, full of Marian devotion.

But don't rely on my advice. Ask survivors what would have been best when they were first discovered, for they are their own best advocates. No legislation, nor law enforcement, nor aftercare protocol should be created without their expert and compassionate input. They will guide all of us to the most victimcentric of Human Trafficking responses.

SUPPLY CHAINS

Very laudably, one of the Global Freedom Network's stated goals is get 50 multi-national businesses to modern slavery-proof their supply chains. I hope this is only the beginning, that you recruit many more of these companies, but with a caveat. There must be real teeth to the vetting of these supply chains, not done in house but by an impartial external auditing team, to insure accuracy. As Andrew Forrest said, many of his contemporaries believed they were slavery free, then discovered they all used the same supplier, which did use slave labor to bring in low prices. Capitalism and free markets have a tendency to lionize the lowest bidder, the system not caring how a third party contractor got so cheap as long as the profit margin's the widest. And then *you* are biting into a chocolate bar made with beans picked by tiny child slave hands, or soaking in a porcelain tub created with pig iron smelted by trafficked men.

Laws are being created or updated in the US (in regards to any government contracted goods and services) and in the state of California to mandate this vetting of supply chains; the church must use influence to make these laws include stringent third party auditing,

make them universal, and universally *enforced*. Paper tigers do people living in slavery no good at all. Likewise, please exhort your parishioners to know what they are buying; websites are cropping up like KnowtheChain.org where people can find out what retailers are doing to ensure their products are slavery free. Point of purchase is where the war can really be won, for if consumers choose to buy products which are guaranteed to be slavery free, then eventually they will edge out those made at the expense of human lives and the demand will decrease. Right now we are all guilty of keeping those slave labor sweatshops in business through our ignorance in the checkout lane.

On law enforcement side – the forces of developed countries must help less developed ones build a protocol, not only by training, a crucial first step, but then making sure that some of those trained will be put into the business of searching out traffickers. Then comes mentorship, to give the staff the experience of staying with a case longterm – Martin Reeve of UNODC SE Asia would stay with Thai Police forces at least two years in the field.

There, as in everywhere in the world, he consistently ran into two problems: One, that there was a general practice of waiting for the case to come to the police, i.e. through a victim walking through the door, rather than evidence-led cases built on long-term, intel gathering investigations of the suspected criminal networks (like any other mafia investigation would be). When a case lacks this evidence, the witness testimony would be the sole determining factor in the court, placing undue stress on a person who is already traumatized and may feel they, or their family, are in danger by testifying. In the case of child sex trafficking, this also means the child must be raped in order for the court to have a complainant witness.

The second problem he relayed to me, endemic even in the most developed of our countries, is that human trafficking cases were not high priority. Simply put they lacked the shine and esteem of other kinds of cases - newspapers ran proud pictures of police with bags of cocaine - not so much with rag-tag bands of huddled trafficking victims. And we see a definite correlation between media attention paid to trafficking cases and their increasing or decreasing numbers.

I believe the church may help valorize the priority of these cases in its partnership with law enforcement. It can encourage, worldwide, proactive police-work going out there *looking for slavery*. It can ask command staff to make this an expectation of their squadrons, to

make these cases promotion material. Training, plus political will, plus consistency of personnel vetted in the theme will greatly increase the number of successful victim discoveries, arrests, prosecutions and convictions.

In closing, I want to stress: Partnerships! The church is taking great steps to magnify the effects of its good works sharing with other organizations all having the same goals, including law enforcement, other faith-based organizations and secular NGOs. I have felt giant frustration observing situations when the good of the victim or survivor is underserved because of a disconnect between groups, such as law enforcement and victims' aid groups that can't see they have the same ultimate goal. The traffickers have billions of dollars and criminal networks to achieve their evil; let's throw every resource each group or individual in society has at them, working in concert, to really level the playing field, learning and building from each other. Divisions not created by who's an NGO, who is a different religion, who is in the legal system... A sister in California said she was amazed at a joint task force comprised of several different law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and her own order, able to accomplish remarkable things together impossible on their own. . I have seen miraculous transformations for the streetchildren of Pattaya in a shelter run by a Catholic woman and a Buddhist man. The key, again, was undying love for the survivors it served. And yesterday we heard proof of the incontestably positive results of partnership between law enforcement from various countries, and with women religious and NGOs, yielding rescue and rehabilitation for survivors and punishment for traffickers who had destroyed lives with impunity. Only together may we rebuild a healthier society which eradicates slavery.

Lastly, I want to share words two survivor friends passed along: Jessi said "In all the groups and homes I've gone through the common thread among victims is abuse/neglect in the family. So prevention starts there. And two, rescue is important... but the church needs to step up and take a leadership role in restoration. There's no point in rescuing someone and leaving them broken with no resources. That only recycles the underlying problem." And Holly, "As a survivor of child sex trafficking and an advocate for victims worldwide, I want to sincerely thank Pope Francis and the Vatican for addressing the crime of human trafficking. As a young teenager, I felt isolated and stigmatized after I had been trafficked for sex on the streets of Atlantic City, New Jersey, so much so that I had attempted suicide only days after my "rescue". It took me years to overcome and heal. Today, I am a college graduate, a biologist, and an author. But when I think of

your passion to address this issue, I think of that 14-year-old girl and the many young girls and boys like her today, and I'm grateful. Thank you." -- Holly Austin Smith, Author of "Walking Prey."

I want to thank you once again, your focus on this is a blessing to all people living in and recovering from slavery worldwide.