

## Reflection Monday Week 5 St Josephine Bakhita 2021

Josephine Bakhita, through whom we offer our novena, was born near Jebel Agilere in South Darfur (Sudan) 1869. Kidnapped when still very young, she experienced the cruelty of slavery as she was sold several times in slave markets of Africa. Finally, she was rescued by an Italian family and brought to Italy where she not only became a Christian but also felt the call to consecrate her life to God as a sister. She joined the Canossian Daughters of Charity and lived the rest of her life at Schio, a small village near Vicenza. She died on 8 February, 1947. Her feast day in 2015 marked the first international day for prayer and reflection on human trafficking. It is estimated that internationally between 20 and 40 million people are in modern slavery today. It is estimated that internationally, only .04% survivors of human trafficking cases are identified, meaning that the vast majority of cases of human trafficking go undetected. Human trafficking earns global profits of roughly \$150 billion a year for traffickers, \$99 billion of which comes from commercial sexual exploitation. Globally, an estimated 71% of enslaved people are women and girls, while men and boys account for 29%. In 2018, over half (51.6%) of the criminal human trafficking cases active in the US were sex trafficking cases involving only children. Reports indicate that a large number of child sex trafficking survivors in the US were at one time in the foster care system. Advocates report a growing trend of traffickers using online social media platforms to recruit and advertise targets of human trafficking. The average age a teen enters the sex trade in the US is 12 to 14 years old. Many victims are runaway girls who were sexually abused as children.

What is clear from the book of Genesis is that we were not made, any of us, to end up being trafficked. Jesus came to set us free from that horrific evil. Trafficking is a terrible blight on humanity and as we seek to heal the earth of our atrocities, we are called to do that same for Human Trafficking. We pray in special way for all who are trafficked and for their freedom.

*Loving and compassionate God, we pray for the millions of victims of trafficking.*

*Free them from the chains of modern-day slavery.*

*Heal their pain, renew their hope, and restore their sense of worth and human dignity.*

*Convert the hearts of all those whose actions contribute to the exploitation of the most vulnerable members of the human family.*

*Touch our hearts so that we will be instruments of your justice, love and peace.*

A chap finds an old bottle and rubs it. Suddenly a genie pops out and announces, "You have 3 wishes, speak your first." The chap says, "I had a very bad encounter with a lawyer last week, he fleeced me like a sheep. My first wish is to have a world without lawyers! My second wish is that you make me the richest man in the world. And my third..." The genie interrupts him, "Sorry, but you have no more wishes left." "What?!" exclaims the chap, "but you said I get 3 wishes!" "Well," smirks the genie, "sue me."