

## A WOUND ON THE BODY OF CHRIST

*"Human Trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ."*

Pope Francis, April 10, 2014

**We come together...**



...in the spirit of Vincent de Paul who challenged the owner of galley slaves with the words, "These are your people, Sir! You will have to answer for them before God"

...in the spirit of early Daughter of Charity Barbe Angiboust who placed her body between a galley slave and the guard who wanted to beat him



...in the spirit of Elizabeth Ann Seton who joined with other women to minister to immigrant women workers, often defrauded of wages and sexually abused

...in the spirit of Blandina Segale (SC), Servant of God (1850-1941) who rescued victims of human trafficking in New Mexico and Cincinnati, facing armed guards to rescue women from the brothels.



Vincent, Barbe, Elizabeth and Blandina saw what was before them.

**Today, Vincent challenges us:**

***"DO WHAT IS BEFORE YOU."***

Did You Know?

♥ **Major sports events are venues of increased human trafficking**

We, the members of the Federation, raised awareness of the evil prior to Super Bowls and the Kentucky Derby by talking with hotel managers, civic leaders, the media; we place soap and lip balm with the national hotline number (1-888-373-7888) in the hotel rooms and in public places.

- ♥ We show solidarity with the victims of human trafficking by wearing or displaying the United Nations "blue heart".

The "blue heart" represents the sadness of human trafficking and the cold-heartedness of those who buy and sell human beings.

- ♥ We serve as witnesses in court for women who are victims, not perpetrators, of prostitution.



Today Elizabeth reminds us:

**"BE PREPARED TO MEET YOUR GRACE IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE."**

Did you know?

- ♥ There is a national coalition of US Catholic Sisters against human trafficking (USCSAHT)
- ♥ Many congregations also collaborate with regional groups to address various dimensions of human trafficking.
- ♥ We, the members of the Federation, are among the 70+ Congregations that co-sponsor Stop Trafficking, an informational newsletter fostering awareness, advocacy and action around the issues of human trafficking.
- ♥ We sponsor, collaborate or volunteer in various residential "safe houses."
- ♥ At least three Congregations have taken a "Corporate Stance" against human trafficking.

Today Vincent insists:

**"LOVE IS INVENTIVE UNTO INFINITY"**

### Marcel's Story

I am part of "Street Outreach" in Cincinnati. Once a week we load a van filled with gift bags of personal care items, water and notes of encouragement. After giving the police department a description of our vehicle and destination, we hit the streets.

#### **Human Trafficking Facts**

- An estimated 29.8 million people are enslaved around the world
- Of those enslaved
  - 80% are female
  - 50% are under 18 years of age
- An estimated 17,500 foreign nationals are trafficked into the USA each year
- Over 100,000 USA children are victims of trafficking within the USA.
- Human trafficking includes
  - sweatshop laborers
  - agricultural laborers
  - domestic servants
  - nannies
  - manicurists
  - restaurant workers
  - hotel workers

**Informative  
Human Trafficking  
Websites**

Stop trafficking Newsletter:  
[www.stopenslavement.org](http://www.stopenslavement.org)

Blue Heart Campaign:  
[www.unodc.org/blueheart](http://www.unodc.org/blueheart)

New York Lifeway Network:  
<http://lifewaynetwork.org>

When we see a lone woman, we stop and two of us get out. The others watch for signs of trouble from pimps watching from windows, doorways or rooftops. If the van lights start flashing, we get back in right away.

We offer the woman a gift bag, talk with her briefly and give her a business card with an invitation to come to a safe place the next day. There she will find all kinds of help: counseling, a meal, a place to relax; help in getting medical care. If she is ready, she will be referred to a safe shelter.

It's a privilege to be able to offer a woman compassion.

We want to tell her she matters - that we care - that we can help.

We recently approached a woman who said she had been walking around all day asking God for help. Then we came. She was in tears, but told us she had a safe place for that night. She promised she would come to "The Well" (a safe place) the next day. I prayed she would not lose her resolve. But she did not come.

Maybe next time.

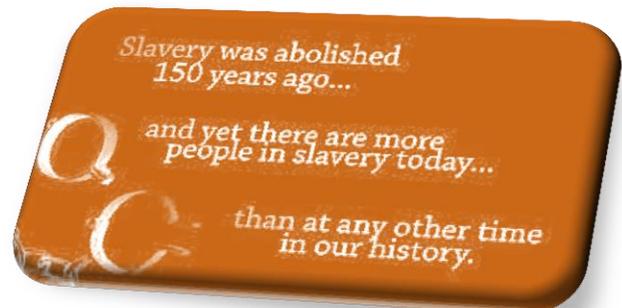
Marcel DeJonchere SC

### Reflection Questions

What insights have I gained from reflecting on human trafficking, "an open wound on the body of contemporary society"....?

How can I personally participate in efforts against human trafficking?

How do Vincent's words, "These are your people," motivate us to future action?



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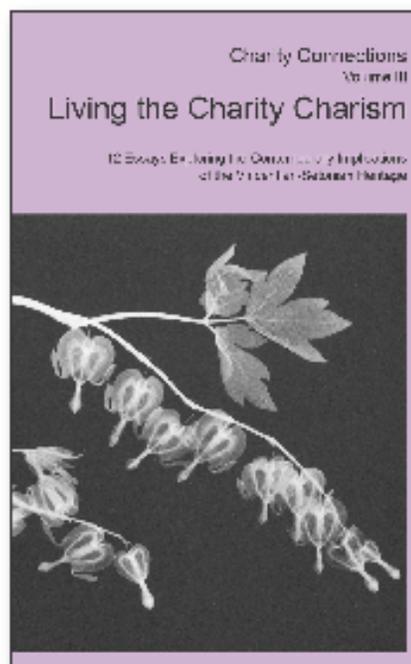
<http://sisters-of-charity-federation.org/>

*Sisters of Charity Federation*  
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Since 1988 a group of representatives from Sister of Charity Federation member congregations has been gathering to reflect on aspects of our Vincentian-Setonian heritage and charism. Since its inception the Charity Connections group has developed two issues per year accompanied by reflection questions. Each issue deals with a theological, historical, Scriptural, relational or social justice topic. The first 13 of the issues were produced in 1996. Issues 14 through 25 were produced in 2008. We are now pleased to make available issues 26 through 37 in this booklet.

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