Human Trafficking

What does our Church say?

- From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (usccb.org)
  "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ...It is a crime against humanity.” – Pope Francis

Current Advocacy Position:

"As an institution that actively opposes evil in all its forms, the Church publicly identifies with the poor, the suffering, and those in despair. In this light, the bishops of the United States have been active in the fight against human trafficking. The Church has worked closely with government entities, private organizations, and individuals who are committed to eradicating this evil. Human Trafficking is calculated as a 150-billion-dollar industry, it has become the fastest growing source of illicit profit for criminals worldwide."

- From the United Nation's International Labor Organization’s 2016(ilo.org)
  "Nearly 40.3 million people are victims of modern slavery, of whom 24.9 million are entrapped in forced labor, and sexual slavery and 15.4 million subjected to forced marriage."

What does our local community say?

- There are 54 local (Cedar Rapids area) victims of human trafficking advertised on one web page every month, points out Teresa Davidson, ARNP, MSN, MA, president of Chains Interrupted. The average age of entry into sex trafficking is 12 to 14, and the average lifespan of a trafficking victim is seven years after they’ve entered “the life.” Only one or two percent of the victims ever get out of this life. One of every three runaway teenagers in Iowa is lured into prostitution within 36 hours of leaving home, according to information from Chains Interrupted. There are health care concerns for those who emerge from human trafficking, as well as safety, PTSD and other emotional issues, and problems of nutrition.

What can I do?

- From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (usccb.org)
  Become a Shepherd (Stop Human Trafficking and Exploitation. Protect, Help, Empower, and Restore Dignity) educates lay and religious leaders about human trafficking from a Catholic perspective. Email MRSShepherd@usccb.org for a toolkit to get started. You can organize workshops, discussion groups, prayer sessions, and community outreach.
  January has been designated as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. In addition, January 11th, is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day."
  There are many ways to get involved-call and/or check out the website below to see how you can help. Thank you!

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