

# Working Towards Freedom

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING STUDY GUIDE

in response to the CCCB Pastoral letter on human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Canada ,  
[“For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free”](#)



**St. Josephine Bakhita**

*Patron Saint of Trafficked Survivors*

*Feast Day: February 8 which is also the International Day  
of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking*

## Who is St. Josephine Bakhita?

St. Josephine Bakhita, a model of profound forgiveness and transformation, was born into a family of six, three brothers and three sisters in the district of Darfur in Central Africa in 1869. She had a very happy early life, particularly enchanted by nature, and playing outdoors.

All this abruptly ended when, at 9 years old, while walking with a friend in the fields, she was kidnapped and forced into slavery. Being sold several times by her captors, she suffered extreme physical violence and mental torture causing her to forget her birth name. Her kidnappers gave her the name Bakhita which means “Fortunate.”

In 1883, she was bought by an Italian diplomat who sent her to Italy to work as a maid for the daughter of a family friend studying with the Canossian Daughters of Charity. It was there that Bakhita came to know about God whom “she had experienced in her heart without knowing who He was.” In 1890, she was baptized and received the name, Josephine.

Later, when the Italian family came to take their “property” back to Africa, Josephine expressed her desire to stay. When the family insisted that she go, she remained firm; later writing: “I am sure the Lord gave me strength at that moment.” With the support of the Canossian Sisters and the Patriarch of Venice, she won her freedom and later entered the novitiate.

For the next 50 years, she led a life of simplicity, prayer and service as cook, sacristan, and doorkeeper, always showing kindness to everyone, especially children in the streets. In her final years she suffered from sickness and haunting memories of the beatings and floggings she received while in slavery. She died in 1947 and was canonized in 2000.

A young student asked Bakhita, “What would you do, if you were to meet your captors?” Without hesitation, she replied, “If I were to meet those who kidnapped me, and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands. For if these things had not happened, I would not have been a Christian and a Religious today.” Such an attitude of forgiveness is an example of the grace of God’s abundant love and serves as a challenge for all.

**Let us pray:** Saint Josephine Bakhita intercede, we implore you, for all those who are trapped in trafficking and slavery today. May their captors let them go, and may this evil be erased from the face of the earth. Once you regained your freedom, you did not let your suffering define your life. You chose a path of kindness and generosity. Help those blinded by greed and lust who trample the human rights and dignity of their brothers and sisters. May we all follow your example of forgiveness and courage. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

## The Purpose of the Guide

This guide was created as a call to mission; to reduce the harms of human trafficking in our local communities and uphold the dignity of every child of God. Pope Francis describes the church's mission as a "permanent state" that calls us to go to the "peripheries" of society. The primary and supplementary document of reflection used in this study guide is the 2021 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops [Pastoral Letter on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Canada](#)<sup>1</sup>.

Divided into **four sections** this guide delves deeper into the pastoral letter and animates it in your specific community context. Each section of this guide follows a particular learning model of **See, Learn, Pray, Act**. The intent of these reflections is to bring people together in dialogue in local parishes and other community settings. Although in-person settings are ideal the guide is also setup in a way to be used over online communications platforms.

**While group settings are highly encouraged individuals can navigate the studies without a group.** *Please note: the content which you are about to read is personal and sensitive in nature.*

## Before studying with the Guide

Download or provide printed copies of the 2021 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops [Pastoral Letter on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Canada](#)<sup>2</sup>

## How to use the Guide

1. Welcome participants.
2. Pray the prayer listed above invoking the intercession of Saint Josephine Bakhita.
3. Allow participants time to introduce who they are. (This may be repeated in subsequent sessions if new people have joined).
4. Facilitator ought to decide which of the suggested resource (s) to be discussed during each session. Note it is recommended to study one section per session. Each session could include some content, scriptural passage, prayerful reflection, and dialogue and possible communal or individual actions.
5. Work through the specific section while allowing time for questions and comments between each subsection, remembering to leave space for silence.
6. After the last section participants may be invited to share what challenged them and what actions they might undertake.
7. The facilitator or volunteer can lead a brief closing prayer.
8. Decide a date for the next gathering.

## SECTION 1

### What is Human Trafficking and the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church

**Preparation:** Read Page 2 & 3 of the CCCB Pastoral Letter then reflect on the statements below:

1. “Things have a price and can be for sale, but people have a dignity that is priceless and worth far more than things.” - Pope Francis, “Ethical consumerism and our Catholic Faith”, Stephanie Rapp, Oct. 30, 2017
2. “Buying sexual services from a prostitute has nothing to do with love; instead, it is a serious offence against human dignity.” [Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking](#)<sup>3</sup>, (2019) P. 13
3. Read closely an excerpt in pastoral letter titled “Survivor Voices” on page 2. Imagine being treated as a physical object to be used and abused repeatedly, like Casandra, ([full story](#)<sup>4</sup>).

**A. See:** Human trafficking, says Pope Francis, is an “atrocious scourge,” an “aberrant plague,” an “open wound on the body of contemporary society.” This “global phenomenon ... exceeds the competence of any one community or country ... We need a mobilization comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself.” [Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking](#).<sup>5</sup>

People have a  
dignity that  
is priceless.

- Pope Francis -

**B. Learn:** Reflect on the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church & the reality of human trafficking.

1. Watch: [Catholic Social Teaching](#)<sup>6</sup>, Rev Fred Kammer, SJ or [Life and Dignity of the Human Person](#)<sup>7</sup>, Bishop Barron.
2. How do the Catholic Social Teachings intersect with the Preamble to the current law, (PCEPA) – [The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act? Preamble](#).<sup>8</sup>
3. [Human Trafficking Trends in Canada 2019-2020](#)<sup>9</sup>

**C. Pray:** Beatitudes: Matthew 5: 3-12 and Luke 6: 24-30

1. How do you apply the beatitudes to our world today?
2. How are you being called today to live the beatitudes?



**D. Act:**

1. Share what you have learned with your family and friends
2. Teach your children the true meaning of consent, danger of online trafficking and pornography.
  - We help parents [protect their kids online](#).<sup>10</sup>
  - [Parents Against Child Sex Abuse](#)<sup>11</sup> empowers parents to protect their children
  - [Solving the Public Health Crisis of the Digital Age](#)<sup>12</sup> – connecting pornography to trafficking/exploitation.

**Further References:**

1. [Labour and Sex Trafficking \(pg 17\)](#)<sup>13</sup>
2. [Human Trafficking in Canada](#)<sup>14</sup>

**Follow some current stories:**

1. [Winnipeg man wanted in Philippines for allegedly paying to watch child sex abuse: search warrant](#).<sup>15</sup>
2. [BC mixed martial arts teacher charged with sexual exploitation of minor he was training: RCMP](#).<sup>16</sup>

**Read about the interconnection of economy, human trafficking, and women: [“The Power of Care”](#)**<sup>17</sup>

Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society....

- *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium Et Spes* – Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on Dec.7, 1965

## SECTION 2

### Who are buyers? Who are the prostituted persons?

**Preparation:** Read Page 4 & 5 of the CCCB Pastoral Letter.

- A. See:** Casandra, a survivor, writes a letter to the people of Canada  
– [How I was recruited into Sex Trafficking \(2019\)](#)<sup>18</sup> or [watch the interview](#)<sup>19</sup>.

**B. Learn:**

1. [Addressing Misconceptions – Pimps and Traffickers](#)<sup>20</sup>
2. [Who are the Buyers?](#)<sup>21</sup> Lecture on Ending Commercial Exploitation, Valiant Richey.
3. [Wall of Jericho](#)<sup>22</sup> – the resilience of human trafficking victims.
4. Treating Sex as work masks the harm done to prostituted persons. Prostitution is inherently harmful.
  - Melissa Farley, [“Bad for the Body, Bad for the Heart” Prostitution Harms Women Even If Legalized or Decriminalized](#).<sup>23</sup> Violence Against Women. Volume 10 No. 10, pp. 1087-1125 (download the pdf).
5. Consider the impact of human trafficking on racial inequalities.  
Prostitution – form of colonization.  
Read: Farley, M., Lynne, J. and Cotton, A. (2005) [Prostitution in Vancouver: Violence and the colonization of First Nations Women](#)<sup>24</sup>. Transcultural Psychiatry, 42(2), 242-271.

In reality, prostitution is not a job, but harmful to the person and to society. It is a system of oppression and sexual exploitation of the most vulnerable and marginalized in our society.

**Exercise/Activity:** List the power imbalances that you recognize between buyers of sexual services and those who are bought.

	BUYER	vs	PROSTITUTED PERSON
Average age			
Level of education			
Economic stability			
Gender			
Marital status			
Ethnic background			
Risk to exposure to abuse			
Educational opportunities			

**C. Pray:** Meditate on the story of the bent over woman. Luke 13:10-14.  
How does this story relate to the Christian call to mission?

**D. Act:**

1. Research in your local area the number and location of brothels. Inquire with your city, the process of licensing, regulation, and monitoring.
2. [Ten Things men can do to prevent Gender Violence](#)<sup>25</sup>
3. Consider advocating for offender prostitution programs in your community rate that can reduce recidivism rates by 40%. [Read about STOP a program created by CEASE](#).<sup>26</sup>
4. Read [submission brief](#)<sup>27</sup> by Hennes Doltze to the Justice Committee of Parliament.
5. Refer to prostitution and pornography as sexual exploitation/violence against women.
6. Believe victims/survivors of sexual violence – [Listen to Survivors](#).<sup>28</sup>

**Further References:**

1. [Who Buys Sex?](#)<sup>29</sup> Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market Demand Buyer Resist
2. [Buyer Resist](#)<sup>30</sup> Learn how buying sex is a problem
3. [Intersections of Family Homelessness and Human Trafficking](#)<sup>31</sup>

Any sexual act that is not a free gift of self falls short of God's plan for the flourishing of the human person.

- Pope Francis -

## SECTION 3

### The intersectionality of sexual exploitation

**Preparation:** Read Page 7 of the CCCB Pastoral Letter.

**A. See:** [Jessa's Story: Survived Being Sold into Child Porn & Sex Slavery](#)<sup>32</sup>

**B. Learn:** Pornography and prostitution are interconnected.

1. Trailer of [The Heart of Man](#)<sup>33</sup> which is a timeless tale of a father's relentless pursuit of his son -- interwoven with interviews of top thought-leaders on brokenness, identity, and shame or [rent and watch the full movie](#)<sup>34</sup>. Beautiful, heart wrenching and healing!
2. [Raised on Porn](#)<sup>35</sup> exposes the ways pornography has become the new sex education for children and unpacks the dangerous lifelong implications of this global phenomenon for anyone that watches pornography. We recommend the film for mature teens and older. (No porn graphics)
3. Exiting pornography and/or prostitution is not only a major healing process but takes several years and many resources/assistances. Read *Exiting Prostitution: Moving Through Stages of Change During a Pandemic*. Angie Henderson, PhD. & Megan Lundstrom, MA, Avery Centre.
4. "The Church is committed to raise awareness of the growing need to support victims of these crimes by accompanying them on a path of reintegration into society and the recovery of their human dignity. The Church is grateful for every effort made to bring the balm of God's mercy to the suffering, for this also represents an essential step in the healing and renewal of society as a whole." [Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking](#)<sup>36</sup>. P.31 & 32.

**C. Pray:** Reflect on the following passages from Scripture:

1. What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8
2. Is not this the fast that I choose: to loosen the bonds of injustice, to undo thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6

*God of compassionate love, we give you thanks that you call us out of silence to act to end all forms of violence. We pray for women who are trafficked; those raped and do not know how to find words to name their pain or a way into the future. We pray for the transformation of our society which often find it easier to judge the victim than to solve the problems of injustice. We pray for right and just relations between women and men that together we may transform and overcome all forms of violence and*



*learn to celebrate our diversity and interdependence. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**D. Act:**

- Research the services in your area that assist survivors in their recovery. Support a local agency that is working to assist youth and young women to exit.
- [Know the warning signs of being lured into exploitation](#)<sup>37</sup> and have ready the HOTLINE number 1 833 900 1010.
- Become aware of the intersections between sex and labour trafficking to begin to understand the shared root causes of many forms of human trafficking.
- As data demonstrates that a high percentage of people trafficked struggle with addiction and the majority are at risk to homelessness have resources in your place of work, school, office, or place of worship to direct people in need of resources

**Further References:**

1. [Economic Barriers Facing Survivors of Trafficking](#)<sup>38</sup>
2. [Prostitution is not a job and never will be. Here's why.](#)<sup>39</sup>
3. [Culture Reframed.](#)<sup>40</sup>

Our degree of humanity is  
how we treat a woman's body.

*- Pope Francis -*

## SECTION 4

### The Equality Law

**Preparation:** Read Page 6 & 8 of the CCCB Pastoral Letter.

**A. See:**

1. [End Demand, End Exploitation on Defend Dignity](#)<sup>41</sup>
2. Read and reflect on the preamble to the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA)

*Whereas the Parliament of Canada has grave concerns about the exploitation that is inherent in prostitution and the risks of violence posed to those who engage in it.*

*Whereas the Parliament of Canada recognizes the social harm caused by the objectification of the human body and the commodification of sexual activity.*

*Whereas it is important to protect human dignity and the equality of all Canadians by discouraging prostitution, which has a disproportionate impact on women and children; Whereas it is important to denounce and prohibit the purchase of sexual services because it creates a demand for prostitution;*

*Whereas it is important to continue to denounce and prohibit the procurement of persons for the purpose of prostitution and the development of economic interests in the exploitation of the prostitution of others as well as the commercialization and institutionalization of prostitution;*

*Whereas the Parliament of Canada wishes to encourage those who engage in prostitution to report incidents of violence and to leave prostitution; And whereas the Parliament of Canada is committed to protecting communities from the harms associated with prostitution.*

The law, Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act was enacted in December 2014. It clearly makes it illegal to purchase another person's body for sexual gratification. Thus criminalizing the purchase of sexual services. The law states:

1. Decriminalizes the selling of sex (unless the prostituted person is found working in proximity to where minors would gather, such as schools, day cares centres, etc.).
2. Makes it illegal to benefit from the exploitation of another person.
3. Makes it illegal to advertise the sexual services of another person.
4. The government set aside \$20 million dollars over a five-year period, to provide programs for those who wish to exit.

**B. Learn:** Study why legalization and/or decriminalization will not work:

1. Does Legalizing Prostitution Protect Women and Girls? [Equality Now – Legalizing Prostitution Fact Sheet](#).<sup>42</sup>
2. Read: [10 Reasons for Not Legalizing Prostitution by Janice Raymond, CATW](#)<sup>43</sup>

**C. Pray:** “The rebirth of humanity began from a woman. Women are sources of life. Yet they are continually insulted, beaten, raped, forced to prostitute themselves and to suppress the life they bear in the womb. Every form of violence inflicted upon a woman is a blasphemy against God, who was born of a woman. Humanity’s salvation came from the body of a woman: we can understand our degree of humanity by how we treat a woman’s body.” - Pope Francis, Jan. 1, 2020.

1. Meditate on the words of the Magnificat, The Prayer of Mary – Luke 1:46-55

**D. Act:**

1. [Read the Brief from London Abused Women’s Centre which compares the Equality model with Decriminalisation and Legalization](#)<sup>44</sup>
2. Explore the [resources at The Centre to End Human Trafficking](#)<sup>45</sup>
3. Write your MP, MLA, Mayor, Chief of Police endorsing the PCEPA and calling on all levels of government to strengthen and enforce the law in every jurisdiction of Canada. For sample letters go to Take Action – [www.defenddignity.ca](#)

**Further References:**

1. For full report. [Choosing the Nordic Model: Championing Women’s Equality and Human Rights](#)<sup>46</sup> London Abused Women’s Centre
2. [Canada’s Prostitution Laws: Promoting Security and Equality for Women](#)<sup>47</sup>. Dr. Janine Benedet, QC
3. [Swedish Laws, Policies and interventions of Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings](#)<sup>48</sup>. Gunilla Ekberg February 2018
4. [10 Reasons to Oppose Full Decriminalization of Prostitution](#)<sup>49</sup> – NCOSE Jan 2022

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.cccb.ca/announcement/2021-pastoral-letter-on-human-trafficking-and-sexual-exploitation-in-canada/>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CCCB-Human-Trafficking-Pastoral-Letter-2021-1.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://migrants-refugees.va/documents/en/email/pastoral-orientations-on-human-trafficking.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://thekit.ca/living/voices/sex-trafficking-canada-cassandra-diamond/>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://migrants-refugees.va/documents/en/email/pastoral-orientations-on-human-trafficking.pdf>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://youtu.be/c1iTmOj0LqQ>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABRI2ZSs58E&feature=youtu.be>
- <sup>8</sup> [https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/annualstatutes/2014\\_25/page-1.html](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/annualstatutes/2014_25/page-1.html)
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/human-trafficking-trends-in-canada-2019-2020/>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://sekuva.mykajabi.com>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.paxa.online>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.culturereframed.org>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ENG-Human-Trafficking-Trends-in-Canada---2019-20-Report-Final-1.pdf>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/human-trafficking.html>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/marshall-ruskin-philippines-1.6333933>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/b-c-mixed-martial-arts-teacher-charged-with-sexual-exploitation-of-minor-he-was-training-rcmp-1.5766732>
- <sup>17</sup> [https://preghieracontrotratta.org/files/documenti/EN\\_The\\_Power\\_of\\_Care.pdf](https://preghieracontrotratta.org/files/documenti/EN_The_Power_of_Care.pdf)
- <sup>18</sup> <https://thekit.ca/living/sex-trafficking-canada-cassandra-diamond/>
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rg6xCRemYw4>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://www.demandabolition.org/research/facts-men-buy-sex/>
- <sup>21</sup> <https://vimeo.com/344588565>
- <sup>22</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WS4KfjQHIMA>
- <sup>23</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240698342\\_Bad\\_for\\_the\\_Body\\_Bad\\_for\\_the\\_Heart\\_Prostitution\\_Harms\\_Women\\_Even\\_if\\_Legalized\\_or\\_Decriminalized](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240698342_Bad_for_the_Body_Bad_for_the_Heart_Prostitution_Harms_Women_Even_if_Legalized_or_Decriminalized)
- <sup>24</sup> <https://prostitutionresearch.com/prostitution-in-vancouver-violence-and-the-colonization-of-first-nations-women/>
- <sup>25</sup> <https://mvpstrat.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/English.pdf>
- <sup>26</sup> <https://ceasenow.org/sex-buyers/prostitution-offender-program-john-school/>
- <sup>27</sup> <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/JUST/Brief/BR11603027/br-external/DoltzeHennes-e.pdf>



- <sup>28</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5rZon5hgwE>
- <sup>29</sup> <https://www.demandabolition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demand-Buyer-Report-July-2019.pdf>
- <sup>30</sup> <https://www.buyerresist.ca>
- <sup>31</sup> <https://unanima-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Intersections-Publication-2.pdf>
- <sup>32</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pikvDbI31sU>
- <sup>33</sup> <http://heartofmanmovie.com>
- <sup>34</sup> <http://heartofmanmovie.com>
- <sup>35</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzPylqS01qU>
- <sup>36</sup> <https://migrants-refugees.va/documents/en/email/pastoral-orientations-on-human-trafficking.pdf>
- <sup>37</sup> <https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/are-you-a-victim/>
- <sup>38</sup> <https://humantraffickingsearch.org/economic-barriers-facing-survivors-of-trafficking/>
- <sup>39</sup> <https://nordicmodelnow.org/2020/03/12/prostitution-is-not-a-job-and-never-will-be-heres-why/>
- <sup>40</sup> <https://www.culturereframed.org/our-work/>
- <sup>41</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNjH6lt2PhM>
- <sup>42</sup> [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/equalitynow/pages/219/attachments/original/1527091037/Legalizing\\_Prostitution\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf?1527091037](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/equalitynow/pages/219/attachments/original/1527091037/Legalizing_Prostitution_Fact_Sheet.pdf?1527091037)
- <sup>43</sup> <https://rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/10-reasons-for-not-legalizing-prostitution/>
- <sup>44</sup> <https://www.lawc.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2018-trafficking-brief-for-website.pdf>
- <sup>45</sup> <https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca>
- <sup>46</sup> <https://www.lawc.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Choosing-the-Nordic-Model.pdf>
- <sup>47</sup> <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/JUST/Brief/BR11605444/br-external/BenedetJanine-e.pdf>
- <sup>48</sup> <https://feminismandhumanrights.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/overview-swedish-laws-and-policies-thb-gunilla-s.-ekberg-180224-.pdf>
- <sup>49</sup> [https://endsexualexploitation.org/wp-content/uploads/NCOSE\\_10-Reasons-to-Oppose-Full-Decrim\\_FINAL\\_web-version\\_w-citations\\_2-15-22.pdf](https://endsexualexploitation.org/wp-content/uploads/NCOSE_10-Reasons-to-Oppose-Full-Decrim_FINAL_web-version_w-citations_2-15-22.pdf)



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