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Subject: World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking

*Dear Sisters, Formands, and Lay Missionaries Scalabrinians*

*"This is a day of prayer. Yes, there is a need to pray to support the victims of trafficking and those who accompany the processes of integration and social reintegration. We need to pray that we may learn to approach with humanity and courage those who have been marked by so much pain and despair, keeping hope alive."*

*(Pope Francis 08.02.2021)*

Today we celebrate the eighth World Day of Prayer, Reflection, and Action against Human Trafficking with the topic "The Power of Care - Women, Economy, and Human Trafficking," in continuity with the previous year, when we reflected on the connection between the economy and human trafficking. The theme of this year 2022 also focuses on the economy with special attention on women, as they are the most affected by the violence of human trafficking. At the same time, women have a fundamental and essential role in the process of transforming the economy of exploitation into an economy of care.

According to the United Nations Strategic Plan 2022-2025, "Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)"<sup>1</sup>, facing a general improvement in the conditions of women globally, until the pandemic arrived, the inequalities recorded in all the most important areas of social life remain significant: health, work, education, and politics.

In compliance with the United Nations statistics on human trafficking (UNODC 2020 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons), women and girls represent 72% of identified trafficking victims. The percentage of women and girls increases significantly in the context of trafficking for sexual exploitation, and this market represents 2/3 of the profits generated by exploitation<sup>2</sup>.

Without a doubt, combating this crime has become one of the most significant challenges of this age. This is due not only to its impact as a form of modern slavery but also to its capacity for personal and social damage that erodes the deepest part of the socializing. In its multiple forms, it constitutes one of the most dramatic manifestations of the commodification of the other, because it disfigures the victim's humanity, destroying his/her freedom and dignity, his/her sexual, physical, and mental integrity.

<sup>1</sup> "Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)" Strategic Plan 2022-25, pages 3-4  
<sup>2</sup> Profit and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour, International Labour Organization, 2014.



According to Pope Francis,

“Human trafficking finds fertile ground in the approach of neo-liberal capitalism, in the deregulation of markets aimed at maximizing profits without ethical limits, without social limits, without environmental limits. Choices are not made on the basis of ethical criteria, but by pandering dominant interests, often cleverly obscured by a humanitarian or ecological veneer. An economy without trafficking is one of care, that is, taking care of people and nature, offering products and services for the growth of the common good. An economy that cares for work, creating employment opportunities that do not exploit workers through degrading working conditions and grueling hours.”

We know of the countless initiatives that the Sisters, Formands, and Lay Missionary Scalabrinian are carrying out on this day. We join the events in the distinct realities and contexts we work in articulation through networking with ecclesial, civil, and governmental organizations. Once more, we are called to unite our voices and prayers and strengthen concrete actions, denouncing everything that dehumanizes the person.

Let us ask the Lord, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, that we may celebrate this day in communion and solidarity with the people who suffer this drama, so that our reflections and prayers may be accompanied by concrete gestures that contribute in order that each person may be a free protagonist of his/her life and an active part in the construction of the common good, so that the earth may become a place of brotherhood and sharing, where no one is excluded and all are called by name.

*Sr. Neusa de Fátima Mariano, mscs*  
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General Superior, General Councilors and General Secretary



**The power of care**  
*women, economy,*  
*human trafficking*  
**February 8th, 2022**