



THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

*“But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in the pits or hidden away in prisons, They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, ‘Send them back.’”* Isaiah 43:22

*“They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink.”* Joel 3:3

*“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*  
John 10:10

## SISTERS TAKE CORPORATE STAND AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING (2008)

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Human trafficking, being quoted as modern day slavery, has been all over the news lately, both in the U.S. and abroad. According to [Humantrafficking.org](http://Humantrafficking.org), “The United States of America is principally a transit and destination country for trafficking of persons. It is estimated that 14,500 to 17,500 people, primarily women and children, are trafficked to the U.S. annually.” Today, illegal sale of humans is a multibillion dollar industry tied with the illegal arms industry as the second largest criminal industry in the world, surpassed only by drug trafficking. Moreover, it is the fastest growing criminal industry. It is with this in mind that the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia take great joy in announcing to you that the congregation, as a result of a recent referendum, has declared a corporate stand against the trafficking of human persons.

A first step in implementing this stand is to petition congress to support putting an end to human trafficking. We have also been working with Catholic Social Services and other agencies to determine how we can be of assistance to those who have been trafficked and are now trying to re-establish their lives. Follow-up actions and activities will continue to be solicited from the congregation and pursued.

This corporate stand is one concrete way for the congregation to “take the necessary risks to be a healing, compassionate presence in our violent world, especially with women, children, and those who have no voice.” [Commitment Statement, 1996]

The Sisters of St. Francis is a congregation of nearly 600 Catholic women religious who are dedicated to serving others, especially those who are economically poor, marginal, and oppressed.

## RATIONALE

We would like to share with you a sampling of the rationale which was given in support of a corporate stand on human trafficking.

- We support the dignity of each individual; therefore we are against human trafficking.
- In light of our Christian tradition, our Franciscan charism, and basic principles of human life, we have a responsibility to speak out to do what we can to eradicate this blatant abuse of human dignity.
- Fear limits possibilities. Those who are victims of trafficking live in fear and sometimes loss of hope. We can not be fearful to step out and take a stand for those who look to us.

## STATEMENT

Recognizing that every human person is created in God's divine image, and, therefore, is worthy of respect and dignity, as Sisters of St. Francis, we choose to take the concrete action of a Corporate Stand against the Trafficking of Human Persons.

## ACTION STEPS

- We will pray for an end to trafficking, for those trafficked, and for the perpetrators of trafficking.
- We are actively engaged in shareholder advocacy with several corporations in the travel industry. Many have signed onto the ECPAT code preventing sexual exploitation of minors on company premises and alerting/educating employees on this issue.
- We would ask that consideration be given to on-going fundraising projects for gift cards to places such as Target, K-Mart, grocery stores, etc. These cards will be given to those in need for their use.
- We will support shelters/housing for trafficking victims through volunteerism as needed, as well as seeking funding.
- We invite and encourage all of our retreat centers to plan and offer educative programs on trafficking.
- Interpreters within the congregation will be called upon as needed. If necessary, the congregation will provide monetary resources for interpreters.
- A list will be developed of certified counselors in the congregation who would be willing to donate time and talent.
- We will be requesting names of doctors/dentists who might be approached for free screenings and possible care.
- We will request clothing, furniture, linens, and kitchen supplies as needed;
- We will solicit from the congregation and, if necessary engage, tutors in ESL, math, budgeting, U.S. law, and culture.
- We are open to considering any other skill, talent, or connection that may be able to offer help to trafficking survivors.