

WOMEN AND TRAFFICKING

“You Tube”:

learn more about human trafficking

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOr6jViUhMc>

GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A MERCY CONCERN

Recently at a Mercy gathering in Burlingame, Sister Elizabeth McMillan RSM presented a paper entitled “Global Human Trafficking: A Mercy Concern”. In this paper she begins by expressing “The Bad News: Exploitation of the Vulnerable” highlighting the socio-economic climate which makes people extremely vulnerable to human trafficking.

Sister McMillan goes on to discuss the attempts made to monitor and control international trafficking. She defines countries of origin and countries of destination emphasising that the main countries of destination are US, Australia, Canada and the UK. She states that within Oceania, Australia is high on the list of destinations for those trafficked primarily from Thailand and the Philippines.

Sister McMillan highlights “Mercy” in the context of global trafficking, she does this through profiling countries in which Sisters of Mercy are working and gives the reader a glimpse of the issues of trafficking in that particular country. Accompanying her commentary is a number of maps which highlight the serious nature of trafficking throughout the world.

Sister McMillan concludes on a positive note by stressing that there are many organisations committed to ending trafficking in our world. She includes those organisations in her appendix. Finally she leaves Sisters of Mercy throughout the world with the following question:

“What might we be called to do with the special charism given to Catherine to rescue and care for endangered women and children?”

Download Paper: Mercy International Association
<http://www.mercyworld.org/mirc/papers.html>

Did you know?

- The US State Department’s *Trafficking in Person Report* (2006) states that a minimum of 600,000-800,000 people are trafficked across borders each year and of those 80 percent are women and girls, and up to 50 percent are minors.
- That in the above report, Australia is identified as a destination country for women from Southeast Asia, South Korea, and the People’s Republic of China trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation.
- In 1999, in response to increasing concern about the trafficking of women into sexual servitude, the Australian government introduced the Criminal Code Amendment (Slavery and Sexual Servitude) Act 1999. However, the tragic death of Puangthong Simaplee, in Villawood detention centre on September 26, 2001 after being trafficked to Australia to work in sexual servitude, illustrated that legislation criminalising trafficking will have little effect if the visa arrangements and victim support provided to trafficked persons are inadequate. (Source for above points: Bum, J.M., Simmons, F. 2006, “Trafficking and Slavery in Australia: An evaluation of victim support strategies”, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 15, pp. 553 -570)
- In June 2004, the Australian Government released a Commonwealth Action Plan to Eradicate Trafficking in Persons. This Action Plan has four elements: prevention, detection and investigation, criminal prosecution, victim support and rehabilitation. The action plan was designed to meet Australia’s obligations under the Trafficking Protocol. Australia ratified the Protocol on September 15, 2005.

Specific Issues Committee: Women and Poverty
Leonie Crotty, Miriam Grech, Angela Reed, Anne Ryan

Miriam Grech RSM In educational and social work ministries, Miriam experienced many vulnerable and disadvantaged families and particularly ministered to women and children experiencing poverty or abuse in various ways, many of whom were victims of domestic violence. Miriam lives by the belief that in empowering, supporting, nurturing, encouraging and assisting other people, we actually enrich our own lives.

Anne Ryan RSM is the Initial Formation Co-ordinator for the Melbourne Congregation and works for justice in various areas. She also works as a Transpersonal Art Therapist.

Angela Reed RSM co-ordinated Mercy Care, crisis accommodation for women and children escaping family violence. She has been active in developing social justice awareness programmes and is currently on study leave.

Leonie Crotty RSM has a breadth of experience in Catholic school education, particularly in the formation of teachers and leaders. Leonie aims to ensure that the Gospel imperatives of mercy and justice are valued, understood and lived with integrity wherever she goes.

SOME MYTH BUSTERS

"Trafficking happens to anyone of any age"

FACT: Most trafficking victims are **women between the ages of 18-24**. Women from other age groups are also vulnerable to trafficking. It is least likely for middle-aged men to be trafficked, although men of this age group may migrate illegally for work purposes.

"Only people from rural areas are trafficked"

FACT: Trafficking victims come from **both rural and urban areas**, and so there is no clear predictor based on residence.

"Only uneducated women become victims of trafficking"

FACT: **Both university-educated and under-educated women** can become victims of trafficking. In fact, according to some women, they were approached about working abroad while students at university. Undereducated women, however, tend to have fewer employment opportunities and therefore may be more vulnerable to trafficking.

"Economic status has no impact on trafficking"

FACT: Generally, **poor women** are the most vulnerable to trafficking, because they lack other avenues for supporting themselves and their families. However, even women of average income can become involved in trafficking when seeking employment opportunities.

"Trafficked people come from broken homes"

FACT: Most trafficking victims are **single** (sometimes through divorce or separation), many of whom are single mothers and the sole providers for their children. Other forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, increase the risk of trafficking occurring. Women who come from nuclear families and have good relationships with their parents or their husband or partner are less likely to become trafficked.

(Source: RMIT University HUSO2197 Human Trafficking)

Keep up to date with Websites and Films ...

Project Respect (Based in Melbourne) <http://www.projectrespect.org.au/>

is an Australian non-government organisation which challenges exploitation of and violence against women a particular focus on women trafficked to Australia for prostitution, and other women experiencing harm and violence within the sex industry. Project Respect is co-ordinating the development of a national network against trafficking in women and girls for prostitution.

Anti-Slavery Project (Based at University of Technology Sydney) <http://www.antislavery.org.au>

is dedicated to eliminating slavery in all of its forms through a range of direct service and advocacy programmes.

The **Human Trafficking.org** <http://www.humantrafficking.org/> project is one of the leading internet-based information resources on human trafficking.

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia: Women and Poverty <http://www.mercy.org.au/ourfocus/wap.cfm>

Trafficked (Film Australia) http://www.filmaust.com.au/programs/whats_new/default.asp

A former police officer (Chris Payne) investigates how a young Thai girl was sold as a sex slave to a Sydney brothel.

The Jammed <http://www.thejammed.com/> Now available for sale on DVD.

From: Specific Issues Committee, Women and Poverty (Sisters Leonie Crotty, Miriam Grech, Angela Reed, Anne Ryan)
The Committee warmly invites your response to the article or the issue.

Email: women.poverty@mercy.org.au

Contact: Carmel Heagerty RSM, Institute Justice Co-ordinator

Email: Institute.Justice@mercy.org.au