



# MODERN SLAVERY

“THE ACT OF RESCUING SOMEONE FROM  
SLAVERY... IS SEEN AS AN EXTENSION OF  
CHRIST’S REDEMPTIVE SACRIFICE”

POPE LEO XIV: DILEXI TE



**caritas**  
diocese of east anglia



the DIOCESE of  
EAST ANGLIA

# WHAT RECENT POPES SAID ON SLAVERY

Pope Paul VI in 1965 called slavery “a supreme dishonour to The Creator.”

Pope Benedict XVI said, “the Church cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight.”

Pope Francis urged us all to “do something about it”: “The voice of

its victims...is the voice of Jesus crying out to us.” He wanted us to “find” people who are enslaved. He wanted them to be “free”.

Pope Leo XIV tells us “God has a special place in his heart for those who are... oppressed, and he asks us... to make a decisive and radical choice in favour of the weakest”.

## What does Jesus say about freedom?

*“He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,”* (Luke 4: 17-20).

Jesus said this on his very first day of preaching. He chose that passage from Isaiah to read to everybody in the Synagogue in Nazareth.

Later, in his parable about our division at the end of our lives, one from the other as sheep from goats, (Matthew 25:32.) Jesus asks us to tackle injustice, to help people lacking freedom,

He tells us in that parable, “I was a prisoner and you came to me... When you did it to one of the least of my brethren here you did it to me.”

# HOW MANY SLAVES IN THE UK TODAY?

**Modern Slavery (MS) is an umbrella term including Human Trafficking (HT), forced: labour, prostitution, marriage and criminality**

## 30,000

This is the approximate number of souls found in the UK in slavery in 2025 by citizens and front-line services. This is up from 24,000 in 2024.

## 5,999

Children were found in MS in 2024, but it is estimated there may be another 50,000 enslaved children (most trapped in criminal gangs) waiting to be found.

## 122,000

There is also this "dark" figure: those unknown but estimated to be hidden – waiting to be found by us.

This last UN figure was estimated to be the number of people in the UK (known and unknown) in MS. Many believe this total has risen to around 200,000.

## 5,000

This is the number of enslaved souls estimated to be suffering in our R C Diocese of East Anglia. See more at Resource 3 on the Diocesan website MS pages; shown on the back page or using this QR code:



## British

is the largest nationality group of perpetrators and survivors found in MS over the last 16 years.

# THE PATRON SAINT OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE

**St Josephine Bakhita: Feast Day 8th February**



Josephine was given the name Bakhita or “Lucky” by the Arab slave traders who stole her. She was aged 7 when she was

taken near her village home in Darfur, Sudan, and forced to walk barefoot about 600 miles to be sold at market.

She was canonised by Pope John Paul II in 2000.

She was sold and resold five times to “owners”, who whipped and cut her and poured salt in the wounds.

Even while a slave, she became a modern, proud and independent woman, always looking out for the underdog.

Her last “owner” took her to Italy. Read more of her life at Resource 2 via the QR code on the previous page.

## WHAT DOES OUR CARDINAL VINCENT NICHOLS SAY ABOUT MODERN SLAVERY?

“Their fate is not distant from us. Your awareness of this outrageous abuse of our fellow human beings is essential. For with awareness comes a determination to act. We can make modern slavery simply unacceptable.”

“It’s the local action as well as leadership... that can help establish a new moral compass, which is geared directly to the healing of the wound of human trafficking and the defence of human dignity.”

# SEEING IS BELIEVING

It's worth watching "Shady Chocolate" or "The Dark side of Chocolate" on YouTube with your family to see the deception and broken promises: the avoidable suffering of the disposable Ivory Coast child slaves who provide that free labour indirectly for our big name chocolate producers.

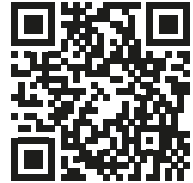
Apply this illustration of the chocolate industry to all the goods and services that are vulnerable to exploitation and you

will see the scale of the problem; but also, what consumers can do to stem the demand.

## How many slaves work for you?

Find out by daring to take the survey here:

(This works best on a laptop or desktop)



# HELP: LEARN, SPOT and REPORT SIGNS!

We hold the gift of freedom in our phones.

All we need to do is to make a single call — yes, it really is that simple. As a result someone oppressed will probably be freed by the police.

Each of us can act to enable freedom for captives by simply:

- Learning the Modern Slavery signs
- Watching out for those signs
- Reporting anonymously whenever we see them

We have already enabled freedom

for between 3-9 people.

Who are you going to call? The MS helpline **0800 0121 700**.

There is a list of the signs to look out for both on our website and via the page 3 QR code.

So "do unto others . . ." Become a Freedom Watcher! Join us. We'll explain more.

That single call may have a phenomenal impact on someone's life. Imagine it was you. Please contact us: see back page.

# WHAT DO THE POLICE ASK US TO DO ABOUT MODERN SLAVERY?

"I would like to ask people to be our 'eyes and ears' and to let us know about potentially suspicious activity."

"A colossal difference can be made to people's lives with even small pieces of information being reported. If you even slightly suspect modern slavery or human trafficking then please contact the MS Helpline and report your concerns on **0800 0121 700**."

Please put this number in your phone.

## BE OUR EYES AND EARS

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MS/HT) have become embedded in global society. It is everywhere: "hidden in plain sight" in our communities, on our streets in our towns and villages.

It is in the footprint of the goods we buy, in our kitchens, our wardrobes, our living rooms, cars.

"Communities have an important role to play in recognising abuse."  
Norfolk Constabulary



Appeal

Can you help?



"All Catholics should proactively engage in making societies more just, respectful and inclusive, eliminating all forms of exploitation." Pope Francis

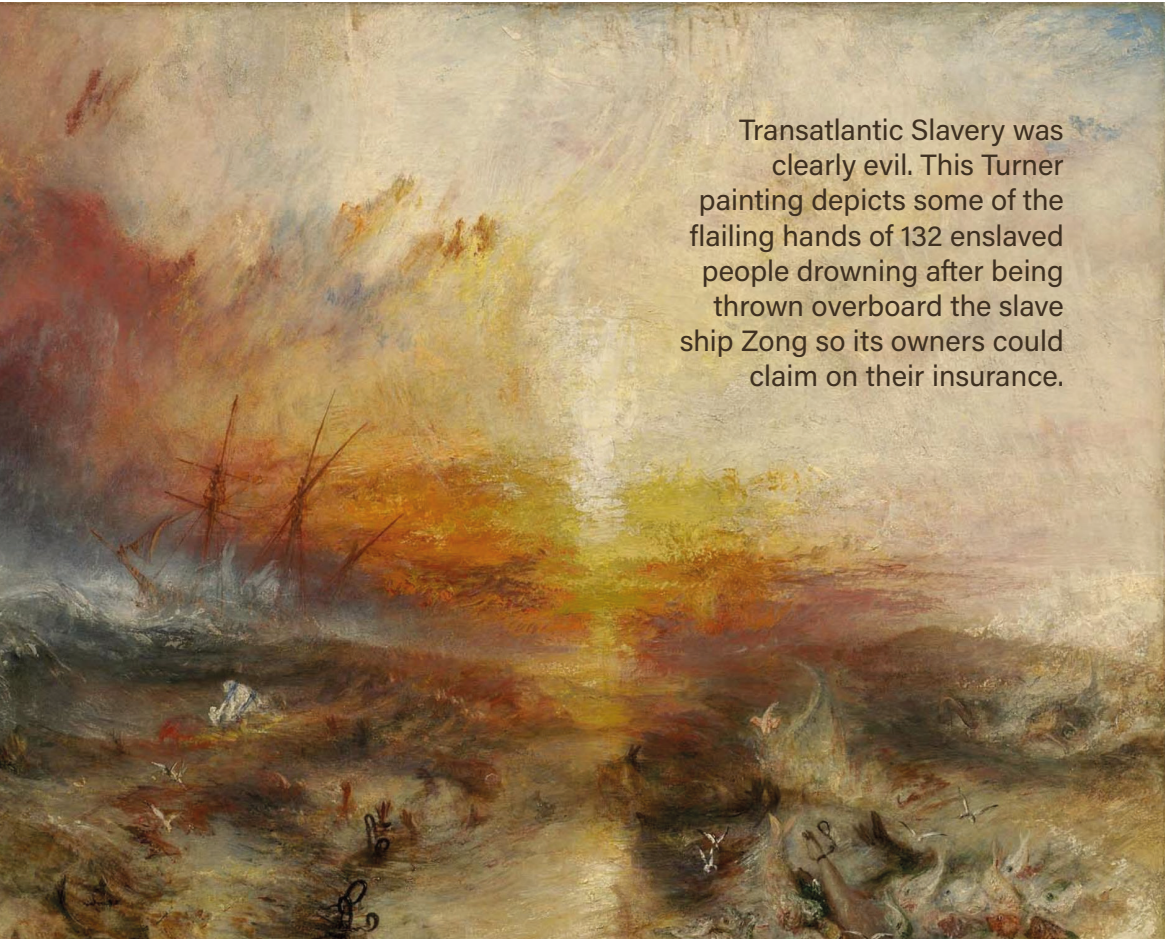
It's clear that one of the very things Catholic Social Action is all about is to protect people from Modern Slavery, and to find them so they can be rescued.

# I WANT TO HELP END SLAVERY - WHAT ELSE WORKS?

Here's some other things you can do:

- Learn more from the QR Codes and spread the word at work and at home
- Use your consumer power to insist supplier companies should prove there is no child or forced labour in their supply chains. A simple template message is at Resource 6 via the QR Code on page 3
- Provide anti-slavery organisations with funds to support their work
- Restrict our purchases to fairly traded goods whenever possible
- Urge our political representatives to promote and/or strengthen anti-slavery laws
- Sign the Petition to ban the import of products made with slave labour. Sign here...





Transatlantic Slavery was clearly evil. This Turner painting depicts some of the flailing hands of 132 enslaved people drowning after being thrown overboard the slave ship Zong so its owners could claim on their insurance.

250 years later, slavery is back with a vengeance, hidden in plain sight. Slavery crushes the souls of more people today than ever before.

The 39 Vietnamese suffocated occupants of this shipping container were likely to be enslaved in UK cannabis farms.

Little has changed. Will you suffer it to continue?



**TO LEARN MORE AND VOLUNTEER, CONTACT DIOCESAN CARITAS CO-LEAD ON MODERN SLAVERY SIMON JOHN ON [JOHN\\_SIMONG@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:JOHN_SIMONG@HOTMAIL.COM) OR VISIT [WWW.RCDEA.ORG.UK/CARITAS-EAST-ANGLIA/MODERN-SLAVERY/](http://WWW.RCDEA.ORG.UK/CARITAS-EAST-ANGLIA/MODERN-SLAVERY/)**