



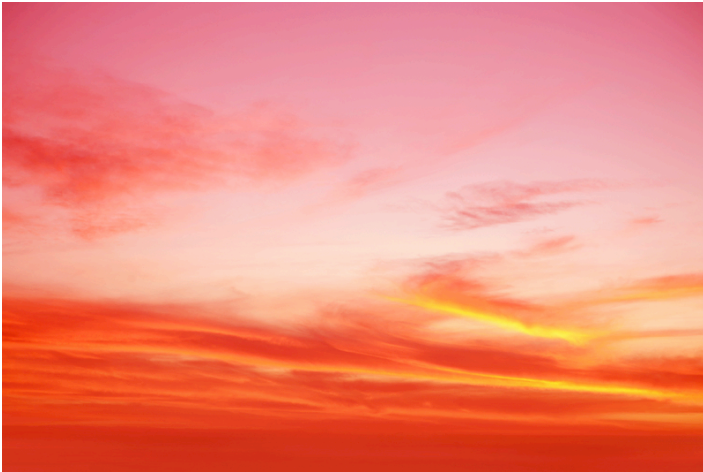
## **PENTECOST NOVENA**

### **TRAFFICKING IN BRAZIL**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts and minds of the faithful to work for the liberty and dignity of all persons.

We count on your help for the courage of Pentecost in our day. Trafficking is a tough and dangerous nut to crack.

**What are we talking about?**





**What are we talking about?** The buying and selling of human beings for sexual exploitation is a modern form of slavery, the most common and most lucrative form of slavery in our day. After the sale of weapons and drugs, the third source of profit is the sale of women and children.

We are talking big money and precious lives.

In 2007, the international trafficking movement totaled nothing less than **152 billion dollars**. For one year, clear profit was 91 billion dollars. Brasil is the major exporter of Latin American women destined to be sold for sex. There are prices set for the bodies of women, depending on age, race, culture, beauty. In this commerce, called trafficking, the person is deprived of human rights.

One's very life is in danger; one loses dignity, security, and the right to travel freely. The victims are mostly poor and deceived by false promises. Some are forced by torture, humiliation, use of drugs, or rape. The objective is to create victims who are both submissive and attractive for the consumers of sexual slavery. How does it happen that nearly 4 million people are bought and sold in the world commerce of sexual exploitation each year?



**Meet Gabriela, a 22 year old young woman who always dreamed of living abroad.** One day when she was walking in the shopping center, a woman called her over to talk with her. She told Gabriela that she was attractive and offered her a job as a model in a cosmetic corporation in Madrid, Spain. Gabriela was thrilled! She saw this as an opportunity to get a job to help her poor family, to be famous, and to make her dream of living abroad come true!

After much reflection and conversation with her mother, Gabriela decided to approach the agency which the woman had suggested. There she met the woman who had made the proposal and was welcomed by a team of employees of the firm. They talked and when they found out that Gabriela had accepted the proposal, they took care of the details for her travel: passport, employer statement, contract, money. In addition to this, the woman said that when Gabriela arrived at the airport in Madrid, there would be a person waiting to bring her to the Modeling Agency which had contracted her.

When she arrived in Madrid, she was received by a woman who took her passport, and brought her to what she thought was to be the modeling agency, but it appeared more like a place for entertainment performances.

In fact, it was a house of prostitution where there were many other women. Gabriela could not believe that this was happening to her and even tried to explain that she did not do this type of service. The nice woman who had met her at the airport would not listen to anything that Gabriela said. It was then that Gabriela perceived that she had been deceived. This was indeed not a Modeling Agency, but rather a well organized house of prostitution.

How does it happen? Oh, so subtly. All over Brasil, there are Gabrielas whose dreams rapidly turn to nightmares and they who thought they were choosing life, find themselves trapped into a system where they are dying a little each day.

**What are we doing about this?**

## What are we doing about this?

The National Conference of Religious (CRB) has small groups all over the country which make up a national network called **Grito Pela Vida. (A cry for life)**. These groups try to work together to build an international network of response to the challenge of trafficking. Educational material has been prepared to communicate the extent of trafficking. There is a booklet of bible reflections about trafficking which is shared with the communities in both the urban and rural areas. Groups visit schools to share with young women and men the consequences of trafficking. Some sisters work to have safe places for those who try to break out of the system. Others work together to provide legal assistance. Some are prepared to give psychological assistance to those suffering from trauma. There is need to document the extent of trafficking because data is so difficult to get, and so necessary to have. Radio time also makes possible far reaching communication about trafficking.

## So, this Pentecost we pray:

“Spirit who helps us in our weakness,” inspire and strengthen us to respond with confidence, to listen to the cries of the poor. Let our awareness lead us to new and courageous forms of proclaiming the goodness of God in trafficked places. We ask this in your Name. Amen

*Betsy Flynn - SND de Namur*