

PENTECOST NOVENA



DOMESTIC SERVITUDE IN THE UNITED STATES --MODERN DAY SLAVERY

The second highest number of human trafficking victims in the United States is domestic servants.

They are the slaves “next door” or the ones we see at the park watching children or standing beside us in the grocery line. She may be a weeping woman sitting on a front step! She is a prisoner, cheaply acquired and maintained, kept hidden, abused and at the mercy of her keepers.



The story of Ruth from the book, *The Slave Next Door* by Kevin Bales



Ruth is from West Africa and arrived in Washington, DC at the age of 52. She was promised a car and home in return for serving as a housekeeper and nanny for a man who worked for the World Bank. She was happy to be able to send money home to her family.

The reality was that she was enslaved by this family, paid nothing, beaten and terrorized. Her day consisted of rising before dawn to clean, make breakfast, prepare lunch for the children, clean more and prepare dinner. If the family went out she had to stay in the hallway of the apartment until they returned.

When neighbors heard her screaming they called the police, but the slave owners convinced the police that she was crazy. They got a security guard to watch her so she wouldn't hurt the children.

Finally neighbors who could still hear her cry helped her to escape. She was too traumatized to take part in the prosecution of her abusers and returned to West Africa penniless.

MORE INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

<http://www.freetheslaves.net/Page.aspx?pid=349>

[http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/
for_child_domestic_servants_work_is_life](http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/for_child_domestic_servants_work_is_life)

<http://nomoreslaveryct.com/tag/domestic-servitude/>

<http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=109082>

<http://www.theabolition.org/solution.html>

<http://www.ipjc.org/journal/fall03/HumanTraffickingContinuumofAction.pdf>

PRAYER

Good and Provident God, you are the compassionate and loving Creator of all. With trust, we claim your justice, mercy, compassion, and comfort for the millions affected by human trafficking in our world today. God of all goodness, give freedom to those who are bound by the chains of modern-day slavery. Comfort those who are trapped and exploited, heal their hurts, give them courage and hope. Awaken in the hearts of those who are buying, selling, and holding other human beings enslaved, a sense of righteousness and justice. Unsettle those whose apathy allows human trafficking to go unchallenged. Give wisdom and insight to all lawmakers. Give valor and integrity to those who enforce the laws. Holy Spirit, show each of us how to live as a hope-filled presence in our world until all God's children are set free.

AMEN

Peggy Cummins SND de Namur