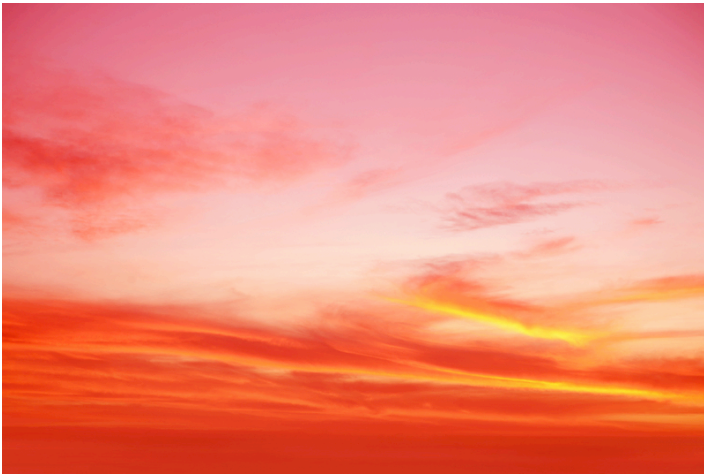




PENTECOST NOVENA

**To Stop Human
Trafficking**

**Walking with Those Who Mourn in
Uganda**



Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Many are longing for the freedom you offer.

Fill the hearts of your faithful men and women
with wisdom, courage and knowledge,

so that they may be liberators of their brothers and sisters
who are trafficked.

Enkindle in lawmakers everywhere the desire for just laws
which protect children, women and men from exploitation.

Send forth your spirit so that the hearts of those who traffick others
may be created anew with a sense of compassion and respect.

Renew the face of the earth allowing it to be a worthy setting
for all God's children.

O God, who instructs the hearts of your people,

by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us by this same Holy Spirit,
a love and desire for what is right and just and a constant

enjoyment of your peace for ourselves and our brothers and sisters.

Walk With...

Meet **Jennifer Achoro** who was twelve years old and on her way to school when she was kidnapped. "I had just put on my school uniform and was about to eat breakfast, when some men from the rebel army came and asked my mother whether we had a radio. When she said 'No,' they forced their way into our hut and forced me along with them." (Jennifer is among more than 30,000 children who have been abducted in the north of Uganda to act as child soldiers, laborers, and sex slaves for the Lord's Resistance Army. The LRA is one of the most brutal rebel armies in the world.)

Come, Holy Spirit, Come.

Walk With...

Meet **Godfrey Kajubi**. He was charged with killing of 12 year old boy in 2008. According to the initial allegation, he hired a Tanzanian couple to assist with cutting off the 12 year old boy's head and genitals, which were handed back to Kajubi. The couple later testified Kajubi accompanied them in his car to chop off the boy's head. The couple also said that Kajubi helped the man collect the boy's blood in a plastic basin.

(As atrocious as it sounds, child trafficking for human sacrifice purposes is not uncommon in Uganda. Children are more likely to be targeted as objects of human sacrifice in Uganda than adults because their spirits are considered as pure and virgin. One witch doctor stated that his clients regularly brought 3 human hearts and blood every week. His clients believe that they can obtain wealth by sacrificing children's body parts. In November 2008 alone, 100 children were reportedly missing in Uganda, and 80% of them were reported in Kampala city, the country's capital city and the most modernized place. Further, more than 25 ritual murders involving children were reported in 2006 while 260 cases of child abduction were reported in the same year. In 2009, 18 cases of child sacrifice were reported, but only 15 of them were investigated.)

Come, Holy Spirit, Come.

Walk With...

Meet **Atugonza Maria** who is 9 years old. Atugonza's father sold her for \$130 to men who brought her to Kenya. "They promised me that I would go to a good school in Kenya and help a woman to clean her house. When I got there, I was beat very hard. They locked me in a room and they bring men in who do hurtful things to me. If I try to refuse, I get many beatings and no food. If I am nice to the men who visit me, then I get food. I cry every night because I want to see my mother."

(**Ruth Visick Evans, Director, Oasis Uganda**, an NGO, says, "The problem of human trafficking is rampant in eastern and central regions where many children are taken to the border and smuggled easily into neighboring Kenya for forced labor and prostitution." **Victoria Nafula**, a senior immigration officer in Kampala agrees and reveals that at least 300 children are shipped out everyday for as little as \$130 per child.)

Come, Holy Spirit, Come.

Read Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4 – The Gift of the Spirit

Reflection:

- What thoughts, feelings, or responses do I notice within me as I read the stories above?
- The Holy Spirit filled the apostles and enabled them to proclaim. How might the Holy Spirit be calling you begin to address these injustices?
- How do my attitudes and practices need to change?
- Do I need more information about trafficking of human persons? Are there books, articles, websites I can read?
- Is it possible for me to network with others so together a positive contribution can be made to eradicate human trafficking?

Intercessions: Send forth your Spirit of Compassion, O God, so that child soldiers, laborers, and sex slaves may be released by their captors and be given the love and help they need to rebuild their lives with trust in others. We pray...

Concluding Prayer: Good and Provident God, compassionate and loving Creator of all, we come to you on behalf of 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 the trapped and exploited. Heal their pain, and give them courage, hope and a sense of their own worth. Awaken a sense of justice, respect, and compassion in any persons whose actions contribute to the enslavement of their fellow human beings. Unsettle any of us whose apathy allows human trafficking to go unchallenged. Give wisdom and insight to lawmakers. Give strength, conviction, and integrity to those who enforce the laws. Activate in us all a sense of responsibility for our enslaved brothers and sisters. Show us how to be instruments of your love, justice, and peace, so that all God's children are set free. Amen.

(Sisters of Notre Dame. Covington, Kentucky)

Resources:

Uganda: Google -- human trafficking
Uganda

Film *War Dance*

Video clip: Lord's Children/PBS
(video.yahoo.com)

www.invisiblechildren.com

Other: www.acff.hhs.gov/trafficking/
www.usccb.org/mrs/traffick
www.state.gov/g/tip/
www.ungift.org

Colette Theobald, SND Coesfeld Uganda

Uganda

Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall, and sizable mineral deposits of copper, cobalt, gold, and other minerals. Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing over 80% of the work force. Coffee accounts for the bulk of export revenues. Since 1986, the government - with the support of foreign countries and international agencies - has acted to rehabilitate and stabilize the economy by undertaking currency reform, raising producer prices on export crops, increasing prices of petroleum products, and improving civil service wages. [*The World Factbook*, U.S.C.I.A. 2009]

