**Prayers for Human Trafficking Awareness Day**

*January 11*

**Prayer**

May we be blessed with the discomfort with easy answers,

half-truths and superficial relationships,

so that our lives have depth and vision.

May we be blessed with courage to confront injustice

and exploitation of people,

so that we work for justice and peace.

May we be blessed with tears to shed for those who suffer,

so that we reach out to comfort them.

to turn their pain into joy.

May we be blessed with enough faith and “foolishness”

to believe that we can make a difference in this world,

and do what others claim cannot be done.

*-based on a Franciscan prayer*

**Readings** Lamentations 5:1, 11, 13, 15

Oh God, remember what has happened to us;

consider and see our degradation.

The women in Zion have been raped,

the young girls in the town of Judah.

Youths have been put to the mill,

boys stagger under loads of wood.

Joy has vanished from our hearts;

Our dancing has turned to mourning.

Matthew 19:13-14

Then the little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.”

 Mark 9:36-37

Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

**Reflection**

 *What in my/our style of life contributes to the reality of child slavery and forced*

 *labor?*

*What can I/we do to change the unjust structures that cause suffering from child slavery, forced labor and human trafficking?*

**Intercessions**

 **Let us pray for open hearts.**

We pray for open hearts to see the consequences of politics and economics that cause poverty.

**Compassionate God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for open hearts to see how desperate people are vulnerable to exploitation.

**Compassionate God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for open hearts to hear the cries for help from exploited men, women, and children.

**Compassionate God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for open hearts to support those who reach out to help the victims of child labor.

**Compassionate God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for open hearts so that our eyes see, our ears hear, our minds engage and our wills shape action.

**Compassionate God, hear our prayer.**

**Closing Prayer**

**God of compassion and justice, open our hearts to pray “Your kingdom come” with such passion that our lives become part of the answer to our prayer…so that you will is done on Earth as in heaven. Amen.**

*from the Sisters of the Holy Cross*

*Intercession and Closing Prayer from World Vision prayers for Abolitionist Sunday*