

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Casina Pio IV

2 December 2014

[Link](#)

I thank all the religious leaders gathered here for their commitment in favour of the survivors of human trafficking, and all those present for their intense participation in this act of brotherhood, especially toward the most suffering of our brothers and sisters. Inspired by our confessions of faith, today we are gathered for an historic initiative and concrete action: to declare that we will work together to eradicate the terrible scourge of modern slavery in all its forms. [...]

[...] That is why we declare in the name of all people and of everyone of our own Creed that modern slavery — in the form of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution or the trafficking of organs — is a crime “against humanity”. The victims of this are from every walk of life, but most are found among the poorest and the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.[...]

[...] Despite the great efforts of many, modern slavery continues to be an atrocious scourge that is present throughout the world on a broad scale, even as tourism. This crime of “lèse-humanity” masquerades behind seemingly acceptable customs, but in reality claims its victims through prostitution, human trafficking, forced labour, slave labour, mutilation, the sale of organs, the consumption of drugs and child labour. It hides behind closed doors, in particular places, in the streets, automobiles, factories, the countryside, in fishing boats and many other places. And this happens both in towns and villages, in the reception centres of the wealthiest nations as well as in those of the poorest. And the worst thing is that this situation, unfortunately, grows more serious every day. [...]

[...] I ask the Lord to grant us today the grace to convert ourselves in the proximity of every person, without exception, offering active and constant help to those we encounter on our path — whether it be an elderly person who has been abandoned by everyone, a worker unjustly enslaved or unappreciated, a refugee caught in the snares of the underworld, a young man or woman who walks the streets of the world, as a victim of the sex trade, a man or a woman driven to prostitution by the deception of people who have no fear of God, a boy or a girl mutilated for their organs — and who call to our conscience, echoing the voice of the Lord: I say to you whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me. [...]