

Remembering St. Josephine Bakhita and all Victims of Human Trafficking

“Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity.

We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that’s become even more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals, but the foundational values of society, international security and laws, the economy, families and communities.” — Pope Francis

Each person forced into slavery has a personal story ... a story of struggles, hopes and dreams. Below is the story of St. Josephine Bakhita, a survivor of human trafficking.

St. Josephine Bakhita was born in southern Sudan in 1869. As a young girl, she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Sold and resold in the markets of El Obeid and Karthoum, she was treated brutally by her captors. She did not remember the name she was given by her parents. Bakhita, which means “fortunate one,” was the name given to her by her kidnappers.

In 1883, she was bought by an Italian diplomat who sent her to Italy to work as a maid for the daughter of a family friend studying with the Canossian Daughters of Charity. It was there that Bakhita came to know the God whom she had experienced in her heart without knowing. In 1890, she was baptized and received the name Josephine.

Later, the Italian family came to take their “property” back to Africa. Josephine expressed her desire to stay. When the family insisted she go, she remained firm, later writing: “I am sure the Lord gave me strength at that moment.” With the support of the superior of the Canossian Sisters and the Cardinal of Venice, she won her freedom and later entered the novitiate. For the next 50 years she lived a life of prayer and service as a Canossian Sister before her death in 1947.

St. Josephine was canonized in 2000. There is a grassroots movement to designate her as the patron saint of kidnapped and trafficked persons.



ACTIONS:

LEARN about human trafficking – globally and locally.

PRAY for victims of trafficking and for an end to this slavery.

PURCHASE slave-free products. Buy fair trade when possible.

ADVOCATE for state and federal legislation that protects victims.

Resource: US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking
([USCSAHT](#))

For detailed information about St. Josephine Bakhita: [CLICK HERE](#)