AIC QUESTIONS ITSELF ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING
AND
Joins the 20,000 hearts campaign against trafficking at global level

Paying attention, being concerned, supporting and giving warnings, are small actions that can save lives.
Reflection No. 1

BACKGROUND:

Mobilising ourselves in the face of two topical forms of poverty in the world: Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, means that every day we become Defenders of Life in our own contexts, sparking thought-provoking questions, being suspicious of misleading offers, bearing the Vincentian message, inspiring adults - those who are primarily responsible for protecting the lives of the newer generations, and most of all, promoting the pedagogy of love as a means of prevention.

Let’s join the fight against Human Trafficking on 30th July (World Day against Trafficking in Persons)

MAKING IT VISIBLE (SEEING)

Human Trafficking is a crime that robs human beings of their freedom and dignity. It is estimated that there are 40 million people living in conditions of slavery in the world.

Slavery “is a practice that has deep roots and continues to manifest itself today and in many different ways: trafficking of human beings, exploitation of work through debt, exploitation of children, sexual exploitation and forced domestic work are some of the many forms. Each one is as serious and inhuman as the others” (Pope Francis).

Human trafficking destroys families, distorts global markets, makes rules about national and international rights less effective and along with other transnational crimes, such as arms and drug trafficking, affects national security (US Department of State).

LIFE STORIES:

Life stories are a way of recognising the crime, as well as of empathizing.

This is the story of Martín García

“Martín García responded to a job offer for an international show, which had performances in different countries. After receiving her documents, she was contacted by the person in charge of the show, who informed her that she needed to complete some administrative procedures for the trip and that the organisers of the show would pay the costs: the ticket and the procedures for a one year contract.

She left Colombia and arrived in the destination country, where her passport was taken from her and she was informed of a change in conditions. She was told that she had a debt because of the costs of her administrative procedures and travel and that to cover the debt she needed to work for two years. The accommodation was inadequate and without a proper bathroom.
1. What is trafficking?

Reflection No. 1

For the show, they went to another country, the journey was by sea and they travelled illegally, meaning that they could not dock at the port and had to remain for several days in high seas without food or water. At this time they temporarily gave her passport back to her so that she could present it to the authorities and get off the boat. The show began, there was a tour within the country and at one of the performances, Martín had an accident and had to be taken to hospital. Those in charge of the show insisted it was not a work accident, because they did not pay any type of insurance to their employees. Because of this situation, they paid the medical expenses in full, but they obliged her to cut short her sick leave so that she paid the sum of the costs by working.

Her medical situation worsened, and she was in another region of the country when she had to go to the emergency services again, where they said she must take a complete rest. With this new instruction, those in charge of the show refused to pay her and obliged her to continue working.

She decided to quit, but they didn’t give her identity documents back to her. So she went to the offices of the Ministry of Work in that country, where she was told that her complaint could not be received as she did not have any identity documents and that given that the company had no formal headquarters in this country, there was no way of making the complaint.

QUESTIONS:

1) Can we still talk of “slavery” today? Why?
2) Can you identify any situations of slavery around you? What are they? What makes them possible?
3) At AIC, how can we make them visible and get people to question them?

UNDERSTANDING (ADJUDICATING)

Human trafficking is one of the biggest violations of human rights of our time. It consists of exercising total control over a person, over their time, their belongings, their decisions and their autonomy, turning them into a negotiable object for the benefit of others on a routine basis. Human trafficking ALWAYS implies EXPLOITATION and has many forms, such as: slave work, begging, illegal extraction of organs, slavish marriages, the forced recruitment of minors, the use of children and adolescents to commit crimes, sexual exploitation of minors in the context of travel and tourism, among others.

Guiding words for human trafficking:

Recruitment Welcome Transfer Transportation Reception
1. What is trafficking?

Reflection No. 1

REACTING (ACTING)

WE CAN ALL DEFEND LIVES AS VINCENTIAN VOLUNTEERS OF CHARITY: To remain silent is to encourage exploiters and traffickers.

We are invited to join the call being promoted by the Daughters of Charity across the world and many other organizations to put ourselves firmly on the side of the victims and demand that States prosecute the crime, arrest the traffickers and above all protect the victims. Human trafficking is a cruel, slavish and inhumane practice. Remaining silent is a form of complicity, it allows this crime to continue growing and ruining the lives of thousands of people, especially children, adolescents and young people.

The blue heart is the symbol of the fight against human trafficking, promoted by the United Nations. For us it is the colour of freedom, nature is covered in blue. God’s project is a world without slaves, a world of brothers and sisters, committed to breaking all the chains. Life is sacred, it is not negotiable, it comes first.

The Defenders of Life network has created the “20,000 hearts against human trafficking” campaign, and we want your heart to join this fight. We need to make ourselves visible as members of AIC and to do this, we suggest making a visual or audiovisual tool.

Invite your group members to:

- Divide themselves into three sub-groups. Each group should come up with the script for a photographic sequence or video, no longer than two minutes, to demonstrate through slogans or small actions, your rejection of human trafficking and your commitment to life.

- The videos and photographs, indicating the city and country from which they are sent, will be added to the “20,000 hearts” campaign. Send them to us through the website www.pequeñasacciones.com, or by e-mail: defensoresdevidas@gmail.com

A Vincentian heart CANNOT TOLERATE TRAFFICKING.

From Bogota we are counting on you.

LET’S MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER.
AIC CONFRONTS THE ISSUE OF MIGRANT TRAFFICKING
ORIENTATION

This is another September in which the eyes of the worldwide Vincentian Family are focused on the humble peasant from Landes who knew how to read the signs of the time in order to discover the faces of the suffering Christ in the person of the poor. That reality enables us to understand how the issues of immigration and people being driven from their homeland have been constants throughout the history of humankind.

The reality in XVII century France was no exception. The Thirty Years War and the Frande Wars devastated the regions of Lorraine and Picardy and led to a massive exodus of peasants, who migrated to Paris. This forced many people to become beggars. Nobles and members of the Court closed themselves up in their palaces and closed their eyes and their hearts to the plight of the peasants (this reality is graphically depicted in the film “Monsieur Vincent”).

VISUALIZE (See)

Beggars, abused women and abandoned children became victims of this situation. However, Vincent de Paul, together with Louise de Marillac, was able to respond by creating the Confraternities of Charity, the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission, who cared for the abandoned children, for the beggars of Macon and for the infirm in the Nom-du-Jésus, thus alleviating the misery of countless individuals. It could be said that the Vincentian charism arose as a result of the displacement and the marginalization of poor men and women.

More recently, the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations (2000) focused on the human rights of migrants, on their integrity and the dignity and on the need for governments to exchange information in order to put an end to these crimes against humanity.

REMEMBER:

- Migration can be voluntary or forced (a personal or collective decision that is influenced by natural disasters and/or social, political, religious conflicts that oblige an individual or a group of individuals to leave their homeland).

- Migrants, the object of illegal trafficking, are at risk: they can suffocate in the containers that are being used to smuggle them; they can die in the desert or the forest; they can drown in the ocean while they are being transported by individuals who become rich by treating migrants as another form of merchandise.

- It is difficult to uncover this crime because of its hidden and secret nature and that makes it difficult to determine when migration is facilitated by traffickers.
2. Migrant Trafficking

Reflection #2

UNDERSTAND (Judge)

Why is trafficking of migrants a problem?

- Nations defend their borders from the perspective of security and territorial integrity.
- The interest of the State conflicts with the interests of those who migrate.
- There are networks of traffickers who facilitate the crossing of borders.
- Routes and the cost for using those routes have been established.
- People interested in migrating are willing to pay the cost of using those established routes.

According to the statistics of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

- The illegal trafficking of migrants and related activities results in the death of many people and provides criminals with millions of dollars. It also encourages corruption through bribery of government officials and promotes organized crime in the countries of origin, countries of transit and the countries of final destination.
- The primary routes of illegal trafficking are eastern, northern and western Africa to Europe, and from South America to North America.
- Illegal trafficking takes on many forms: simple/complex, safe/dangerous, low cost/expensive. The degree of safety and the surety of arriving at one’s destiny depends on money (migrants, depending in their country of origin, pay between 2,000 and 10,000 dollars).

It is estimated that this crime generates 6,750 million dollars paid by those entering the United States.

Annually, about three million people enter the United States illegally; the majority enter in trucks in which they are hidden; some also cross the borders on foot, by railroad or by secret tunnels.

ABOUT 55,000 MIGRANTS ARE THE OBJECT OF ILLEGAL TRAFFIC FROM EASTERN, NORTHERN AND WESTERN AFRICA, CREATING AN INCOME OF 150 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE CRIMINALS.

Between 1996 and 2011 at least 1,691 people lost their lives while travelling through the desert and in 2008, at least 1,000 people died while crossing the ocean.
Reflection #2

Migrants, the object of illegal trafficking, are the victims of serious violations against their human rights. The effects of this are experienced in all the countries affected by the illegal trafficking of migrants.

In the countries of origin:
Families go into debt paying the cost established by the traffickers and yet have no guarantee that their “investment” will have a positive result. Even worse, they may never receive any news about their family members (are they safe, have they been imprisoned, are they dead…?).

In the countries of transit:
Migrants may find that they have been abandoned with limited resources to continue their journey (or they may discover that they have been deceived by the traffickers).

In the countries of destination:
Attempt to intercept and process these cases, but the costs are very high. The communities in these countries are affected and the criminal element attempts to take advantage of a new group of vulnerable people that can be exploited.

What can we do in light of this crime?

In our work we must demand respect for the human rights and the dignity of migrants.

As AIC members, let us reflect:

1. Let’s identify in our counties the organizations that assist migrants (thus creating a list of supporters).

2. In each group reflect on three ways of collaboration that:
   i. Support migrants.
   ii. Create a greater awareness of this issue in our social and family networks.

3. Let’s say: NO to the exploitation of migrants; NO to racism; NO to xenophobia. Make a sign and post it in a visible place in your office or home.

Translated: Charles Plock, CM - Eastern Province, USA
3. The New Faces of Poverty in the World

Defenders of Life Network

Reflection #3 October 2018

AIC questions itself as it confronts two new faces of poverty in the world:

TRAFFICKING OF MIGRANTS
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

NOT FOR SALE
ORIENTATION:

The joyful celebration of the **400th anniversary of the origin of our charism** mobilized the Worldwide Vincentian Family. That celebration empowered us to respond boldly and creatively to the new faces of poverty in the world. Let us begin today to formulate a plan that will enable us to identify the cries of people who are knocking on our doors.

VISUALIZE (SEE)

After the Second World War, the trafficking of migrants is the greatest human tragedy of our era (Pope Francis).

Each year some 40 million people become victims of the trafficking network; 76% of those people are women and young girls, 24% are men and young boys.

Armed conflicts, natural disasters and the precarious situations in which so many people find themselves impel entire families to abandon their homeland and begin a painful journey to save their lives... but so often they fall into the hands of international traffickers of human beings.

It is estimated that some 350,000 women in Spain are involved in prostitution: 80% of those women are from Brazil, Colombia, Nigeria, Romania, Russia and the Ukraine.

Young girls and boys migrate alone and are often caught up in networks of human traffickers and are subjected to every form of abuse.
QUESTIONS:

1. Are you aware of situations like those we have just described?
2. How do these situations occur in your country?
3. What organizations assist people who find themselves in such a situation? What do those organizations do?

UNDERSTAND (JUDGE)

Trafficking of migrants and human trafficking are two distinct crimes, but crimes that are intimately related to one another.

- The trafficking of migrants consists of facilitating the passage of an individual or a family from one country to another and doing so in an irregular manner, that is, without fulfilling the requirements established by the State.
- Said passage is facilitated by a trafficker or a “coyote” who makes an agreement with his victims for a specific sum of money.
- During the journey, the migrants are exposed to multiple dangers and abuses which place their lives and the lives of their families at risk.
- Human trafficking occurs when one individual exercises total control over another person - over their body, their belongings and their documents. That person is reduced to an object and is exploited in an on-going manner.

Comparative Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Trafficking</th>
<th>Trafficking of Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because of the various empires that rose to power, the people in the Bible are involved in an on-going process of departure and exile from their land.

- Israel knew what it meant to be a foreigner (a stranger and an immigrant) because it was a foreigner in Egypt.
- The experience of being deported, enslaved and exiled was transformed into Israel’s law and became a demand for justice and solidarity… solidarity with foreigners, orphans and widows (the faces of poverty at that time). See Deut. 26:12-13; Lv. 19:9ff; Rt. 2:2.

Vincent and Louise were deeply committed to the situation of 17th century France and witnessed the ravages that war, the plague and abandonment created for the people living in Lorraine and Picardy:

- Peasants were cruelly driven from their lands and fled to Paris where they sought assistance and where many of them resorted to begging in order to survive.
- Women were humiliated and violated by soldiers in their own homes.
- Mothers left their children on the street or in front of a church because they did not want to see their loved ones die of hunger.
- The arms and legs of orphans and infants were broken in order to receive more public charity.

IN LIGHT OF THE CRITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE:

Vincent and Louise established the Confraternities in order to mitigate people’s pain and suffering.

WE, VINCENTIAN VOLUNTEERS OF CHARITY, FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF VINCENT AND LOUISE, ASK:

♥ In light of these new faces of poverty, what are we called to do?
♥ In our local, regional, national and international groups, what are we doing to resolve these situations?

Translated:
Charles T. Plock, CM
Eastern Province, USA
4. Human Mobility: A Right that Involves Risk

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND TRAFFICKING OF MIGRANTS
TWO FACES OF POVERTY IN THE WORLD:
A NEW CHALLENGE FOR AIC
A group of five young people from El Salvador have to abandon their country because they fear being recruited by armed gangs. During their journey on foot:

- They beg for alms in some cities and sleep on the street.
- At another place they decide to seek employment in order to have some money to continue their journey.
- There, Raquel, a minor, is exploited sexually by one of her companions who forces her to become involved in prostitution.

One of the fundamental rights of every person is that of free movement, that is, the right to move freely within and outside of one’s country. This is a universal right that has always been part of human history, a right that is referred to as human mobility.

This movement can be either voluntary or involuntary and might last for a brief or a long period of time... a decision is always involved.

This movement can also involve risks that place other human rights in jeopardy.

This movement involves three moments, each of which involves certain risks.

What were the risks for these five young people from El Salvador?
What rights were violated?
Do you know of other cases... what happened?
At some time we have all had to move: why did we decide to leave our place of origin? What do we remember about that move? What did we learn?
Human mobility is a right, a complex process that can be motivated by various personal, family, financial, work related issues. There is also the right to remain in one’s place of origin.

Those two rights are intimately related to one another and in order to be freely exercised certain other conditions are necessary, conditions that are not always present. Therefore, we can affirm:

**EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO MOVE ABOUT IN DIGNIFIED CONDITIONS AND/OR TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMELAND IN DIGNIFIED CONDITIONS.**

In the last two centuries the phenomenon of human mobility has become problematic and has increased as a result of wars and conflicts and issues related to finance, religion, and culture... thus creating the massive waves of migration that presently define our world.

Internal and external migration involves real people and faces and means family and cultural uprooting... situations that AIC cannot ignore. This reality is happening very close to home, in our own country, in countries that share a common border.

**What is the relationship between human trafficking and trafficking of migrants?**

**IN A PERSON’S HOMELAND:**
The recruitment of trafficking victims usually occurs at the time at which a person, for one reason or another, expresses an interest in migrating. At that time employment offers, the promise of marriage or bettering one’s life are just some of the strategies that are utilized by traffickers in order to establish a relationship with their victims.

**DURING THE JOURNEY:**
As a person travels to another place, he or she can become trapped in situations of exploitation in order to arrive at his or her destination, e.g., forced labor, sexual exploitation, begging, sale of organs, etc.

**AT A PERSON’S DESTINATION:**
In the place of destination, a person can be exposed to other risks, especially if he or she is lacking legal documentation that enables him or her to gain access to healthcare, education and employment.
How can we protect people moving from one place to another?

↔ Inform them of their right to move from one place to another in a secure and dignified manner. Speak with them about the risks from traffickers.
↔ Assume an attitude of protecting the rights of migrants rather than revictimizing people as though they were criminals.

REACT (ACT)

What can AIC do?

When we hear of people who are traveling from one place to another, a situation that can lead to human trafficking, we must be sure that we are in a situation in which we as Vincentians can offer them our services: humanitarian assistance, clear and precise information, accompaniment and solidarity.

Suggested Exercise:

Create a poster with caricatures (a comic) and place it next to the poster that outlines the Vincentian services with regard to the right to migrate and the right to remain in one’s homeland:

- Chose a maximum of five characters and draw them.
- Show five different scenes.
- Create a dialogue between the characters that expresses:
  - The risks in the place of origin.
  - Reasons for leaving one’s homeland.
  - Risks during the journey.
  - Risks when arriving at one’s destination.
5. Inability to satisfy basic needs as a risk factor in human trafficking

AIC questions itself:

Poverty and the processes of impoverishment as risk factors in human trafficking and the trafficking of migrants
5. Inability to satisfy basic needs as a risk factor in human trafficking

Reflection #5

VISUALIZE: Agree or Disagree

We begin our reflection with an exercise that will reveal our attitude toward various realities:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Human trafficking only affects the poorest people in our society.
- Only people lacking basic needs are poor.
- Human trafficking occurs in the poorest countries.
- We are not affected by human trafficking because we are poor but because of the reality of social inequality.

Reflection

There is a myth that leads some people to believe that human trafficking is a problem that only affects the poorest people in our society. However, there are many educated people who have migrated in search of better living conditions and in doing so have fallen victim to human trafficking.

Poverty is not measured in terms of income or inability to satisfy basic needs. A person can lack all of those things and still feel satisfied while another person with greater resources might feel unsatisfied… there is a subjective element in this. How do I view myself: rich or poor? Why?

It is not in the poorest places that one finds greater risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking, but rather in more developed countries. It is not poverty, but inequality that can lead to human trafficking. Japan, for example, is a world power, and many victims of human trafficking are found there (domestic workers, prostitutes, etc.).
Reflection #5

UNDERSTAND (JUDGE)

Africa, Asia, America (Central and South) and the Caribbean are the continents with the highest percentage of poverty.

Furthermore, when speaking about poverty we are also speaking about inequality. The three countries with the greatest inequality are Haiti, Angola and Colombia.

Who are the poorest of the poor in your country?

Poverty is complex and has many causes, many faces: workers, farmers, university students, single mothers, orphans, children living in the street, etc...

Poverty is not a situation but a process that is caused by:

- The need to buy social services (health, education)
- Loss of job security
- Privatization of state owned services
- Globalization and new rules of international commerce (supply/demand)

These causes affect family, social and community relationships and create new forms of poverty and new poor people.

How do these processes of impoverishment become risk factors?

- People migrate in search of new opportunities.
- Developed countries have become ideal “destinations” for migrants.
- The present precarious labor situation leads people to make job offers that lead to enslavement.
- There are illegal economic systems that are outside the control of the state.
Defenders of Life Network

Reflection #5

What changes in your country have made people poorer?

People also become poor as a result of a loss of time spent caring for other family members, diminished quality of life with regard to rest and recreation and mental and spiritual limitations.

What other changes create poverty?

The victims of human trafficking are the new faces of poverty in our world.

Today people speak about being afraid of falling into a situation of poverty and of being afraid of encountering people who are poor. People even become hostile toward poor people and those who lack resources or who are in need.

Another important concept is that of exclusion, understood as a lack of participation in society by certain groups of people.

Finally, we see that some groups of people are included in participation in society but in an unequal manner (children, women, the LGBT population, certain ethnic groups, people who are challenged in some way). All of those people are more vulnerable to human trafficking.

React (ACT)

We want to propose the establishment of support networks, economic solidarity and strengthening our services as AIC members.

Suggested Exercise:

1. Explain to your companions the process of poverty or impoverishment that you have some first-hand experience of.
2. What have you done to confront that situation?
3. How can the volunteers become part of that support network?
4. What forms of exclusion can you identify in those at whom our various Vincentian services are directed?
5. How vulnerable are the people with whom you work… how vulnerable are they to human trafficking?

After you have responded to the above questions, it is important that you write out a commitment that you will make on behalf of those individuals whom you serve as an AIC member.

Discovering the new forms of poverty is key to our work as AIC members because it enables us to respond in a better manner to the needs of people who are poor or excluded.
6. Myths & Beliefs about Human Trafficking

Myths & Beliefs

WITH REGARD TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Today we invite you to learn about the investigation that the Defenders of Life did with regard to the indigenous people living on the Amazon Frontier... Visit: www.tratadepersonas.org

This research revolved around cultural practices with regard to human trafficking and was undertaken with the tikuna, yagua and cocama tribes on the Brazil-Colombia-Peru border.
Reflection #6

Orientation:

In our daily conversations, we reinforce ideas and beliefs that we view as normal and universal, but in reality they are not. We call these myths, imaginings or social representations. Below we list some of these myths. We invite you to discuss them with the members of your group and to decide what the underlying meanings of these phrases are.

- The poor are thieves and lazy.
- Women provoke the violence that is inflicted upon them.
- Women are prostitutes because they want to be so and they enjoy it.
- The poor are abusive and want to have everything given to them.
- Men do not cry.
- Indigenous and African women are more sensual.
- Children lie about sexual abuse and therefore not everything they say should be believed.

Myths or beliefs are biased or incomplete perceptions of reality, which are constructed and reproduced in a social context and in the collective unconscious and end up being prejudices or subjective representations of social phenomena.

VISUALIZE (See)

This theme of human trafficking, which we have discussed over the last few months, is interwoven with myths and beliefs that must be clarified in order to understand the full meaning of this crime.

Place in a bag the following myths and imaginings with regard to human trafficking. Each participant should be given a phrase, which is then analyzed and discussed in the group.

What is the true meaning of the phrase? Is it a myth or a reality?
Reflection #6

- Trafficking occurs when a person is taken away from his/her country.
- The only form of trafficking is sexual exploitation.
- Trafficking only affects the more vulnerable sectors of society.
- Only the victims of trafficking can denounce this crime.
- Trafficking is a phenomenon that only affects women.

- Trafficked persons do not escape because they do not want to.
- According to reported statistics, there are very few cases of trafficking.
- Women who are exploited know and accept that they will be prostitutes.
- Only white women are the victims of trafficking.

Attempt to respond to the following question:

**What is human trafficking?**

Understand (*JUDGE*)

Social beliefs express assumptions that are unquestioned, that we assume to be normal, that we repeat and consider universal and unchangeable. Beliefs, on the other hand, arise in a specific social context and even though they appear to be part of our common understanding, they are not so and can be transformed by more real and objective ideas.

In recent years, the phenomenon of trafficking has been clarified and refined, thus overcoming certain myths and false representations of this reality. The purpose of these reflections is to help our volunteers understand this reality so that they can speak to others about this human tragedy and in the services that they provide, minimize its impact, because:

ONE MORE HAND IS ONE LESS VICTIM

Trafficking is a crime that makes the human person an object over whom another human person (through deception or force) has total control. Trafficking has no ethnic, gender, age or social boundaries. It can occur both inside and outside one’s homeland and takes on many different forms (illegal organ extraction, begging, utilization of minors to commit crimes, slave work, forced marriage, etc.).
We now want to demonstrate the manner in which a belief can be clarified and transformed. We invite the group to engage in the same exercise with regard to the myths of human trafficking discussed in the previous step. For example:

**Indigenous and African women are more sensual**

Indigenous and African people have historically been exploited and enslaved, and therefore, women have been raped and mistreated. The belief that these women are more sensual is a colonial and masochist understanding.

With the material that has been developed, make a poster and place it in a visible place so that such myths and beliefs might be transformed.

**CONGRATULATIONS FOR CONCLUDING THIS FIRST PART OF THE FORMATION PROCESS**

We invite you to continue with your AIC companions to defend life and to eradicate from your local context all forms of human trafficking.