



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
**NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER**

*Rise Up AND Act for Justice*

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 8, 2023

## **Week of Saints and Football - Remembering Survivors and Victims of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence All Year Round**

(Silver Spring, MD) – This week an iconic sporting event and a patron saint remind us that 365 days a year there are men and women, boys and girls being trafficked and being abused. They are being sold for slave labor or for sex. They are being beaten or abused in their own homes.

“The Super Bowl sadly serves as a danger zone for sex trafficking, labor trafficking and domestic violence. Quite a trifecta. An unfortunate reality is that the Super Bowl is just one example. Sex trafficking can be found surrounding most large events and can be found any day of the year,” said Fran Eskin-Royer, Executive Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. “As hard as it is to believe, twenty-seven and a half million people around the world are being trafficked and an additional 22 million women and girls are living in forced ‘marriages.’ It is increasing; not decreasing.”

On February 8 the Catholic Church celebrates the feast day of Saint Josephine Bakhita, the Patron Saint of Human Trafficking Survivors who was trafficked as child. St. Bakhita was born in 1869 in the Darfur region of Sudan and kidnapped when she was a young child. She eventually was sold to an Italian diplomat and taken to Italy. Ultimately with the help of the Canossian Sisters in Venice, St. Bakhita won her freedom and became a Canossian sister.

The International Labour Organization notes that the most frequently documented forced labor industry sectors are agriculture / horticulture, construction, garments / textiles under sweatshop conditions, catering / restaurants, domestic work, entertainment / the sex industry. Human trafficking also affects food processing, health care, and contract cleaning.

“As Americans cheer, boo and gorge during the Super Bowl with friends and family, I hope they also take time to consider the forced labor that undoubtedly was involved in the production of their tortilla chips, chocolate or battered fish,” said Fran Eskin-Royer.

Economic profit and the devaluing of the human person are at the center of labor trafficking, particularly for non-white and other marginalized groups. The situation is compounded by forced migration and failed economic systems.

Women and children are especially vulnerable to being trafficked for sex. The root causes include power, money, and licentiousness. In addition, people of color and other marginalized communities are at greater risk while being offered less support before and after being trafficked.

Finally, the Super Bowl offers us an opportunity to remember those impacted by domestic violence often hidden behind closed doors. "Don't turn a blind eye to the dangers a friend, family member, co-worker, or neighbor is living in. Call 1-800-799-7233 or text 'Start' to 88788 to reach the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

"No, the Super Bowl itself is not at fault, but like Saint Bakhita's Feast Day, we remember the survivors and the victims of sex trafficking, labor trafficking and domestic violence. We cannot close our eyes the other days of the year. Our resolve to end these scourges deepens. Persons are not commodities or punching bags. Each one of us is precious beyond measure and deserving of respect and freedom," said Ms. Eskin-Royer.

*[The National Advocacy Center](#) educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations.*

*The National Advocacy Center reflects the spirituality, history and mission of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd (better known as the Sisters of the Good Shepherd). The sisters and their agencies work in solidarity with the disenfranchised – particularly families, women and children – who often are forgotten, left-behind or dismissed.*

*The Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in 1835 and are in 70 countries on 5 continents and have had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. With a presence in 22 states and 1 U. S. Territory, the Sisters and their Lay Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization.*