



# LEARN PRAY ACT

Sponsored by Sisters of Charity of NY and Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth NJ

February 2025

## LISTENING TO THE WHISPERS OF SUFFERING HUMANITY



**LEARN:** In his Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis speaks to us about joy and peace. “To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfillment. Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things; to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us; to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to the sadness for what we lack”.

**St. Josephine Bakhita (1869-1947) exemplified this message with her life as a Canossian Daughter of Charity.**

Before the age of 10, Josephine was kidnapped from her village in Sudan and sold repeatedly to masters who treated her very brutally. Her Arabic masters named her “Bakhita” meaning “Lucky” in Arabic. She was resold finally in 1883 to Callisto Legnani, Italian consul in Khartoum, Sudan. Two years later, he took her to Italy and gave her to his friend Augusto Michieli. She worked as his family nursemaid. She accompanied her charge to a school run by the Canossian Daughters of Charity and there learned about the Gospel. Later she was baptized and confirmed taking the name Josephine.

When her family was preparing to return to Sudan, Josephine learned that slavery in Italy had been outlawed earlier, and she had been free all along. About this time, she was hearing a voice encouraging her to give herself to God. In 1893, Josephine was accepted into the novitiate of the Canossian Daughters of Charity. As a sister, she mostly engaged in the simple tasks of sewing, cooking and welcoming visitors at the door. News spread of her quiet, simple faith and people came to hear her stories. They were attracted to her because of her peace even though she had suffered greatly earlier in her life. She barely knew how to read and could not write. She was poor, but her poverty was freely chosen. After her death, the only items found in one drawer of her small room

were a crucifix, a rosary and a small prayer book. She patched her clothes so many times that they were held together solely by darning thread.

“Seeing the sun, the moon, and the stars, I said to myself: “Who could be the Master of these beautiful things? And I felt a great desire to see him, to know him, and to pay him homage.”  
-St. Josephine Bakhit

She is now recognized as the patron saint of victims of human trafficking.

#### **PRAY:**

- For Church Officials, all people of faith, and all people of the world that we become more aware of human trafficking and seek ways to stop it in our own cities and globally.
- For all people that they may have the courage to act when suspicious for the safety of another person.
- For all humans held against their will, that they may find freedom and safety.

#### **ACT:**

- Learn about and advocate that the *Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023* be reintroduced in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. It seeks ways to combat trafficking in persons in the United States and addresses programs to support victims and persons vulnerable to human trafficking. Click [HERE](#) to read.
- Learn the risk factors of human trafficking and expand this awareness to your community. A good resource is the monthly Stop Trafficking Newsletter. Click [HERE](#) for links to current Newsletter and Archives.
- Discuss online safety with family and friends.
- Educate family about healthy boundaries and safe relationships.