



SJTI - Cedara

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**“Modern day SLAVERY: Human-trafficking – our
(Church) Response to this Social Evil” - Fr. Michel Meunier, M.Afr**

CHURCH'S VIEW ON SLAVERY THROUGH THE AGES



“if anyone, on the pretext of religion, teaches another man's slave to despise his master and to withdraw from his service and not to serve his master with good will and all respect, let him be anathema” – Council of Gangra, c. 340, Decretum, 1140

“it is most fitting that by a grant of manumission, masters should restore those whom nature had set free into the world, but who had been condemned to the yoke of slavery by the *jus gentium*, to the freedom in which they were born” – Gregory I, 595

“All men are equal by nature but... a hidden dispensation of providence has arranged a hierarchy of merit and rulership in that the difference between classes of men have seen as a result of sin and are ordained by divine justice” – Gregory I, 600.

“Children of clerics were to be enslaved” – Ninth Council of Toledo, 655.

“We remove from every sacred order those who from the subdiaconate wish to have leisure for wives, and we decree that they be without office and benefice of the church. But if warned by the bishop, they fail to correct themselves, we give permission to rulers that they subject their women to servitude.” – Urban II, 1089



“Everyone has the same God in heaven who created all men to be equal and not slaves by nature” – Alexander III, 1174

The Lateran councils permitted enslavement of Christians who helped Saracens during the Crusades.



And no less do We order and command all and each of the faithful of each sex, within the space of fifteen days of the publication of these letters in the place where they live, that they restore to their earlier liberty all and each person of either sex who were

once residents of said Canary Islands, and made captives since the time of their capture, and who have been made subject to slavery. These people are to be totally and perpetually free, and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of money. If this is not done when the fifteen days have passed, they incur the sentence of excommunication by the act itself..." - Eugene IV, January 13, 1435



"We grant to you [Kings of Spain and Portugal] by these present documents, with our Apostolic Authority, full and free permission to invade, search out, capture, and subjugate the Saracens and pagans and any other unbelievers and enemies of Christ wherever they may be, as well as their kingdoms duchies countries, principalities and other property... and to reduce their persons into perpetual slavery" – Nicholas V, Dum Diversas, 1452/54

"Although Indians were non-Christians, they had not been deprived of their freedom or of ownership of possessions; they should not be reduced to slavery" – Paul III, 1537



"Each and every person of either sex, whether Roman or non-Roman whether secular or clerical...may freely and lawfully buy and sell publicly any slaves whatsoever or either sex...and publicly hold them as slaves and make use of their work..." – Paul III, 1548.

"We do...admonish and adjure in the Lord all believers in Christ, of whatsoever condition, that no one hereafter may dare unjustly to molest Indians, Negroes, or other men of this sort; or to spoil them of their goods; or to reduce them to slavery..." – Gregory XVI – 1839

"Whatsoever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torture inflicted on body or mind attempts to coerce the will itself, whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution and selling of women and children... all these things and other like them are infamous...human institutions...should be bulwarks against any kind of political or social slavery and guardians of basic rights under any kind of governments." – Vatican II, 1965.

(The above quotes are collected from the book "Rome has Spoken" by Maureen Fiedler and Linda Rabben)

**Stop
Human
Trafficking
Now**