



JPIC News January 2012

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

*Catherine Dunne*

***“In his days justice shall flourish  
and peace till the moon fails” Ps 71***

We cannot relent on this ‘dark’ travesty of our age however unpleasant it may be to address it. How do we even attempt to take in the facts? At an E.U conference recently we were told, the sex ‘industry’ has increased 250% in 2010, 85% in sexual exploitation. Poverty and gender attitudes are the prime driving factors.

Preparations for the London Olympics are well under way and ‘the dark side’ is also being catered for by the exploiters. Cheap hotels are expected to be built raising our suspicions. Guards and agencies are all on the alert and doing their utmost to protect the vulnerable. TRAC (Trafficking Awareness-Raising Campaigning) are taking students from schools and training them to go back and raise awareness of the risks of human trafficking in their areas during the Olympics. TRAC is based in Chigwell where the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary have a Justice and Peace Centre.

In Tallaght my focus is to speak to senior students in the schools. I am delighted with the response. There is a warm welcome and very encouraging interest shown by staff. Two of us went to the National Post- Primary Chaplains’ Conference. We made several contacts and many invitations were issued to us to visit them. Long last the free travel!

An exciting development in APT (Act to Prevent Trafficking) is that our plan to link with lay people is getting off the ground. Two lay volunteers have joined us. One will work on linking us to third level colleges which is underway this term. The other is setting up APT on Facebook. Facebook is the way, when carefully monitored, to reach young people and interact with them. We are all on ‘a learning curve’.

In Ireland an alliance group, “Turn off the Red Light”, is doing six months lobbying for legislation to ‘stop’ prostitution. Some may have read the article in ‘The Irish Examiner’

earlier responding to the furore against the gardai in Limerick who went undercover and detected 28 men out to solicit women in prostitution. It shows how complex the issue will be for legislation.

Raising awareness is one of the most effective ways to counter-act Human Trafficking according to the UN. I hope you all remember the power of ‘the snowflake’ (an earlier story in Exchange). Recently I pondered again on how to apply it.

Let’s get back to that snowflake! Could I ask you all to remember to speak to as many people as possible about human trafficking, or the empowerment of women at any opportunity during the weeks of January 18<sup>th</sup> –February 24<sup>th</sup>. It would help if we remind each other and I would love to hear back in some way if you can. I told the pharmacist here the other day so there are all sorts of ways to get round to it!! To save one case is doing a great mission.

“Lord, awaken us with the compassion to help others out of darkness into the ways of peace”.

## **TRAC**

*Dorothy Ward*

On 19<sup>th</sup> January I went to a meeting in Chigwell convent for TRAC. There is need to prepare the senior schools in the Stratford area about trafficking before the Olympic Games. A Schools Group planning day is organised for 17<sup>th</sup> March in order to offer material about trafficking to young people so that, in their turn, they will be able to return to school and have enough information to give to their peers. This day is to be called “Breaking the Chain – Forge the Link”.

The province will give a donation towards this day.