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PRESENTATION

Talitha Kum: 10 Years!

Sr. Gabriella Bottani, SMC

International Coordinator of Talitha Kum

This Bulletin is entirely dedicated to Talitha Kum, the worldwide network of consecrated life against trafficking in persons, that celebrated its 10th anniversary of international coordination in 2019, at the International Union of Superior Generals. Celebrating means giving thanks, first of all to God, for having faithfully accompanied us during all these years; thanking the women, girls, and young people who have escaped from trafficking and marked our lives and our work online; they are the ones who ask us to continue, with courage and determination, on the path we have taken; thanking every Superior General who has believed in, motivated, and supported Talitha Kum; and, finally, thanking all the sisters, lay people, and men religious who, with competence, passion, courage and perseverance, animate the 53 Talitha Kum Networks in the world and the international coordination.

In 2019, the celebration of the 10th anniversary was marked by the following events:

- The presentation of the new Talitha Kum logo, on 8 February 2019. The logo was designed in participatory form and expresses the identity of Talitha Kum: an orange hand with an internal spiral. The idea expresses the dynamics of the meeting of two hands: that of Jesus who took the girl's hand. From the meeting and the touch comes the energy of life. A movement coming from within that heals and gives strength, "Get up and walk" (Mk 5:41-42) The meeting creates a new synergy, which transforms and gives the strength to get up! The color chosen for the hand is orange, the symbolic color of the fight against violence against women, a sunny color of hope and life.
- The photographic exhibition "Nuns Healing Hearts", launched by pope Francis during the UISG Plenary Assembly on 10 May 2019. The photographic exhibition of Lisa Kristine, an internationally renowned humanitarian photographer, is a collection of pictures representing the commitment of

the sisters of Talitha Kum in Thailand, Italy, Mexico, Guatemala, and the Philippines. The exhibition was presented at the United Nations in New York, for the United Nations World Day against Trafficking (30 July), and, in November, in Tokyo (Japan), on the occasion of the Holy Father's visit. (<https://nunshealinghearts.org/>)

- The First General Assembly of Talitha Kum, held in Rome from 21 to 27 September 2019, brought together 86 delegate representatives from all Talitha Kum networks.
- The audience of the Holy Father, pope Francis, with the delegates of the Assembly, took place on 26 September 2019.
- The publication of "Talitha Kum 2009-2019" edited by Peter Lah, SJ, and published by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Pontifical Gregorian University. The book is the result of the work done by Talitha Kum for the creation and implementation of its database. The data collected and processed have highlighted the consolidation and the quantitative and qualitative growth relating to both the formation of the Talitha Kum networks and what is related with the services offered.

On 31 December 2019, Talitha Kum brought together 53 networks, present in more than 90 countries on all continents. This is a growing commitment that makes us the "avant-garde" of the missionary action of the Church against the scourge of human trafficking, as Pope Francis said, in his address to the delegates of Talitha Kum:

"I congratulate you on the important work you are doing amid very complex and tragic situations. Your work brings together the missions of different institutions and demands cooperation between them. You have chosen to be on the front line. Therefore, the numerous Congregations that have worked and continue to work as the 'avant-garde' of the Church's missionary activity against the scourge of human trafficking deserve gratitude. This is also a model of how to work together. It is an example for the whole Church, and also for us: men, priests, bishops ... You are giving a great example—keep at it!"

(Address of the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the first general assembly of "Talitha Kum", the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons. 26 September 2019—the full text is in the appendix)

Pope Francis' words are very beautiful, and at the same time they are a call to responsibility. They echo the word in the Gospel: "Talitha Kum", an invitation to go forward, to get up, to continue the journey to be credible witnesses of Christ, letting the Spirit of God weave our lives into inclusive and supportive networks. This is the missionary and prophetic intuition that led to the creation and growth of Talitha Kum!

The articles in this bulletin, weaving together several fundamental elements,

will tell the story of Talitha Kum. First of all, the story that began in the late 90s of the last century.

Next come comes the reflection of Marcella Corsi and Giulio Guarini, both university professors of political economy and members of “Minerva” – *Laboratory on Diversity and Gender Inequality*. Their article presents an in-depth study of the causes of human trafficking from the point of view of the economic sciences. Linking women and the environment, the article proposes a reflection for a new economy and concludes with a provocation regarding the ambiguity of the market portrayed by many economics theorists as a promise, but which—as in the case of trafficking in people—instead becomes a threat.

The two concluding articles bring us into the heart of Talitha Kum, leading us to the inspirational source. The first text on the Spirituality of Talitha Kum comes from the reflection of Jennifer Reyes Lay, director of the Talitha Kum network in the United States, and Sr. Colleen Jackson, RSC, of the Australian network of Talitha Kum (ACRATH) and member of Talitha Kum’s International Coordination Committee. The second and final text is by Elizabeth Green, pastor of the Baptist Church and theologian, who immerses us in the crowd narrated in chapter 5 of the Gospel of Mark, where, in verse 41, we find the Aramaic word: “Talitha Kum.”

The appendix of the Bulletin contains the opening speeches, the integral message addressed by pope Francis to the delegates of the General Assembly of Talitha Kum, and the final declaration of the delegates. These are the documents that have marked the 10th anniversary of Talitha Kum.



TALITHA KUM: HISTORY WRITTEN BY RELIGIOUS WOMEN

Sr. Gabriella Bottani and Stefano Volpicelli

Sr. Gabriella Bottani, smc (Comboni Missionary Sisters, since 2015 coordinates Talitha Kum internationally) and Stefano Volpicelli (Social Scientist expert in Migration and Trafficking in Persons, since 2004 collaborates with the UISG).

Original in English

“Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ.” (Pope Francis Address to Participants in the International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking, 10 April 2014.)

Human trafficking is a horrible crime involving millions of women, men, and children all over the world, who are seriously exploited and enslaved. This tragic phenomenon appeared almost simultaneously in every part of the world in the early 1990s. In Europe, East Asia, and the Pacific, it is mainly characterized by sexual exploitation (66%), while in Central Asia the majority of victims are destined for slave labour. The number of people involved, both adults and children of both sexes, is constantly increasing, as are the different types of exploitation. The purposes of trafficking in persons are: Sexual exploitation (prostitution, pornography, escort services, cybersex), forced labor (agro-pastoral, construction, catering, manufacturing, fish industry, service industry), domestic help, forced begging, petty crimes, organ harvesting; forced marriages; child soldiers / terrorist groups recruiting, illegal adoption, commercial surrogate pregnancies.

In recent years, trafficking has increasingly been intertwined with that of migration flows. Trafficking in persons is a very real and perverse expression of the process of globalization and the commercialization of everything and everyone. And it is one of the most profitable illegal businesses in the world, along with drug and arms trafficking. Women and girls together make up 72% of trafficked people. Talitha Kum enter into the violent narrative of exploitation and trafficking in persons sewing together gestures of welcoming, care, empowerment, inclusion and good.

The beginning of Talitha Kum is going back to the end of the 90s, when some Religious Sisters working with women victims of violence or in situations of

sexual exploitation, mainly in Europe came in touch with the painful and violent reality of trafficking in persons. They soon perceived the magnitude and the intricacy of what was happening, and begun to dialogue among themselves in order to mobilize more resources and most of all to make their congregations aware of what was taking place.

The International Union Superiors Generals (UISG) now fully aware of this emerging context, asked the UISG Justice and Peace Commission (JPIC) to organize some events to study this growing problem. One such gathering took place in Rome, in 1998 with the participation of Sr. Lea Ackermann, MSOLA, who had committed herself to work against human trafficking since 1985 in Kenya. The Anti-Trafficking Working Group (ATWG) of the JPIC Commission was the main outcome of the meeting with Sr. Lea.

In 2001, the ATWG presented the phenomenon of human trafficking to over 800 general superiors gathered in Rome for the UISG Plenary. In their final statement, the participants at the UISG Plenary declared:

“We, almost 800 women leaders of one million members of Catholic Religious Institutes throughout the world, publicly declare our determination to work in solidarity with one another within our own religious communities and in the countries in which we are located to address insistently at every level the abuse and sexual exploitation of women and children with particular attention to the trafficking of women which has become a lucrative multi-national business”. (Declaration of Women Religious Leaders: UISG Bulletin – Special Number 116)

The commitment publicly manifested in 2001 was confirmed once again by the Religious Superiors during the 2004 UISG Plenary, thus opening the pathway to stronger inter-congregational collaboration among religious congregations in the field of anti-trafficking.

Since its very beginnings, Talitha Kum has been born through processes of dialogue and discernment carried on by the Sisters committed on-the-ground together with the leaders of congregations of Women Religious.

The Milestones

Along the journey detailing the start of the Talitha Kum, we can find the following milestones:

- Year 2003: The publication “Trafficking in Women and Children: Information and Workshop Kit” developed by the JPIC Commission with the collaboration of Caritas Internationalis. This tool was translated into at least 7 languages and was distributed to religious sisters around the world.
- Year 2004: In Canada, the Conference of Women Major Superiors of Canada created the “Comité d’action contre la traite humaine interne et

internationale” (CATHII); in Australia a group of women congregations founded the “Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)”.

- Again in 2004, a collaborative partnership between UISG and IOM (International Organization of Migration) was launched. The importance of this project in shaping the identity of Talitha Kum, as it is today, requires a more detailed presentation.

Collaboration between the International Union Superiors General (UISG) and the International Organization of Migration (IOM): From the training sessions to the foundation of Talitha Kum.

The concept, which led IOM to realization of the project, became a concrete proposal, during the International Conference held in Rome, 15-16 May, 2002. Titled “21st Century Slavery: The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings.” The conference had been organized by Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, in conjunction with the Pontifical Gregorian University, the Pontifical Councils for Justice and Peace, and for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

During that event, the involvement of religious personnel – and especially of women religious – in carrying out preventative initiatives in relation to vulnerable people, as well as providing assistance to victims, was recognised and praised. Unfortunately, according to the panellists, this active commitment was often undermined by the lack of preparation and coordination among religious congregations, as well as among other local or international agencies.

One of the recommendations stemming from the Conference, which in turn became the purpose of this project, was related to the need to enhance the approach by religious personnel vis-à-vis the phenomenon of trafficking by developing and testing a training module for religious personnel. This module would address the following topics: social prevention approaches to trafficking, victim assistance techniques, development of context appropriate awareness raising material and the creation of an anti-trafficking trans-national network.

The US Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migrants (PRM) funded the project, with IOM appointed as the leading agency in charge of researching the issue of collaboration among religious institutions.

The objectives were stated as follows:

- to develop, test and carry out training modules for religious personnel of various denominations dealing/to deal with social prevention of trafficking and assistance to victims;
- to draft guidelines and awareness raising material;
- to create an anti-trafficking network among religious personnel.

The project activities as well as all the materials used during the project implementation were built in partnership with the following organizations¹:

- UISG: International Union of Superiors General (female religious)
- USMI: Union of Major Superiors of Italy (female religious)
- ICMC/Fondazione Migrantes (Rome)

The first step envisaged the design of a training session tailored to the needs of Sisters. For this task, both IOM and UISG/USMI appointed Stefano Volpicelli, Roberto Rossi, Sr. Bernadette Sangma, FMA and Sr. Eugenia Bonetti, MC as their respective professional trainers.

The training contents were organized sequentially, with seven steps (folders) presenting trafficking and counter-trafficking approaches.

The folders begin with an in-depth introduction to trafficking, which elucidate the “push-pull” factors, the victim profiles and health risks commonly associated with trafficking (folders 1-3).

Once the phenomenon is firmly grasped, then prevention activities intended for countries of origin and destination are considered.

An examination of the “helping relationship,” as a proven support technique, follows.

Once the technique is introduced, understood, and practiced, then its intended result (empowerment of the victim) is explored at length.

Likewise, the limitations of the helping relationship, often perceived as failure by the “helper”, are presented and discussed. This is a particularly important topic since disregarding natural limitations can lead to frustration and eventual burn out.

Bearing in mind that the training course intends to meet the diverse expectations of Religious Sisters both from countries of origin and of destination, it has been designed to include as many issues as possible related to trafficking.

The training was always carried out by two leading trainers (one from IOM and one from UISG) supported by a local facilitator.

At the beginning, the project aimed at training Sisters active in countries particularly affected by the phenomenon. The first two years were implemented having this objective in mind.

The strategy was modified in the third year. Following a joint assessment by UISG/IOM of the positive evaluation of the training (and related follow up session), it was decided to maximize the impact of the training, involving more representatives from different countries belonging to a particular geographical area.

From 2006 to 2010 this strategy was pursued, and it definitively boosted the involvement of Religious Sisters in counter-trafficking actions.

Another key point surfaced during 2008. Once again, UISG and IOM assessed the results of the previous years. The number of Sisters trained was consistent, and the two agencies decided to organize a meeting in order to discuss strategies and compare the operational activities carried out. It was during that congress that the idea of a worldwide network began to take shape.

The following year, 2009, another congress was organized, this time aimed at setting up a network. The outcome of that network was the foundation of Talitha Kum.

The project ended in 2010, when it was decided that Talitha Kum could and should walk with its own feet. IOM remained an external supporting partners, and UISG started collecting funds from various sources.

An international coordination in Rome: Talitha Kum

The main outcome of the 2009 Congress was an official request to the UISG Executive Board to establish an office in Rome with the aim of coordinating the existing networks at international level.

“Talitha Kum”, the inspirational name for the Networks came from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 5, when Jesus ordered the young girl, who was apparently dead, to rise up and continue on living.

During the same year, the UISG Executive Board approved the request, and in 2010 nominated Sr. Estrella Castalone, FMA as the first coordinator.

Sr. Castalone was a former member of Talitha Kum Philippines, and coordinated Talitha Kum from 2010 to 2014. She established the basis of Talitha Kum, which is a network of sisters-led-networks, who operate on-the-ground, are grass roots oriented and very committed to confront trafficking in persons.

Sr. Castalone oriented the activities of Talitha Kum, giving continuity to the trainings programs mainly in Latin America, South East Asia and Africa. She also initiated the official dialogue between Vatican Organizations and Talitha Kum in relation to human trafficking.

In May 2011, Talitha Kum / USIG called representatives from all the networks to Rome for the First International Coordination Committee of Talitha Kum. The aim of their gathering was to define the priorities for the Talitha Kum office in Rome. These were identified as: Formation, Networking and Communication. In that same period, other networks joined Talitha Kum, and after five years Talitha Kum had a growing number of strong decentralised networks.

In 2014 some Italian sisters led by Sr. Eugenia Bonetti, MC and Sr. Rita Giarretta, SOSC, requested to Pope Francis to promote on February 8 – Memorial of Saint Bakhita – the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against human trafficking (IDPAHT). The Vatican Secretary of State H.E. Card. Pietro Parolin, answering to this request entrusted to the International Union of Superiors General

(UISG) and the Union Superiors General (USG) to be in charge for promoting this day. The first IDPAHT, under the motto: “a light against human trafficking” was celebrated February 8th 2015. Since then, the Talitha Kum Coordinator has been responsible for the inter-institutional committee, which promote the IDPAHT each year. The members of the committee are the Section Migrants and Refugees, the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Caritas Internationalis, International Union of Catholic Women Association. (www.preghieracontrotratta.org)

Sr. Gabriella Bottani, SMC took over the coordination of Talitha Kum in January 2015. She is the second international coordinator. Until then, Sr. Bottani had been an active member of “Um Grito pela Vida”, the Brazilian network of Talitha Kum. At that time the international connection was felt to be weak. This was the main challenge faced by Sr. Bottani.

In February 2016, the Second International Coordination Committee of Talitha Kum was organized in Rome. The main priorities for the global network were confirmed as: Formation, Networking, Communication, while others were added: give visibility to human trafficking also through the work of the Sisters; more human and economic resources needed to support the anti-trafficking commitment; at geographical level to strengthen the collaboration against trafficking in persons in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Middle East.

Since then Talitha Kum has developed several pilot projects to implement the identified priorities. In the area of Networking and Communication Sr. Bottani introduced with the support of the UISG Communication Office a new website (www.talithakum.info), social media and a periodical newsletter to facilitate communication and interchange of information among the Talitha Kum networks. In 2017 started the process of data collection with the creation of an official database, in collaboration with the Gregorian Pontifical University.

In the area of the formation Talitha Kum / UISG since 2014 has organized, 35 training courses, and trained 1035 religious sisters and brothers. In 2017, in collaboration with the Pontifical University Antonianum, Talitha Kum designed a pilot course for leaders of Talitha Kum. The first course was implemented in 2018-2019 with the participation of 22 leaders, coming from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe.

Since the very beginning Talitha Kum has been working to expand its networking skills with other Church, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations. In 2017, Talitha Kum become an official partner of the Section Migrants and Refugees of the Dicastery for the Integral Human Development. In 2018 a significant group of Sisters participated in the preparation of the Catholic Social Teaching Document “Pastoral Orientation on Human Trafficking”, published by the Section Migrants and Refugees on February 2019.

Since 2018 greater efforts have been made in inter-religious context. The main outcome was the establishment, under the Union of Major Superior of

Lebanon, of the first inter-religious network of Talitha Kum in the Middle East: Wells of Hope, coordinated by Sr. Claude Naddaf, RGS.

The First Talitha Kum General Assembly held in Rome September 21 – 27, 2019 confirmed the priorities of Networking, Communication and Formation for the period 2020-2025 and added the following special areas of action: Prevention and Educational Programs, Advocacy and Services to Survivors and their active participation in the networks. At a geographical level, Africa and Asia were identified as a priority for Talitha Kum.

At the end of the year 2019, Talitha Kum totalled 53 Networks present in 93 countries. The most recent established network was Talitha Kum Mozambique in December 2019.

The story of Talitha Kum is much more than the above chronology and order of events, facts and works over time. Our mission to #end human trafficking is ongoing, the weaving of encounters among Religious Sisters and Brothers, along with many committed persons against human trafficking. In a very unique way, Talitha Kum encompasses the life histories of millions and millions of trafficked victims and survivors. They are the ones who reach out to us their hand, just as Jesus did with the young girl, inviting us to rise up, with courage and hope, so to continue on together our commitment against human trafficking.

¹ Fondazione Migrantes left the project in 2005, USMI one year later.



WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT: NOTES FOR A “DIFFERENT ECONOMY”

Prof. Marcella Corsi and Prof. Giulio Guarini

Marcella Corsi and Giulio Guarini are professors of Political economy, at the Università “La Sapienza” di Roma and the Università degli Studi della Tuscia (Viterbo) respectively.

Original in Italian

We need to rethink the economy and construct a new relationship with nature. We need to implement good practices that are “green” as regards the circular economy and the use of renewable energy, but these changes take place and become widespread when women are the protagonists, because women are the ones responsible for the family economy and the care of offspring. It is this last aspect that also makes them, if they are properly sensitized, the ones who teach the new generations about environmental sustainability.

Mobilising women in defense of the environment implies fighting gender inequality. Bina Agarwal, an Indian economist who is a recognised expert on the subject, underlines how gender inequality, especially in the countries of the Southern hemisphere, is rooted in the control and possession of natural resources. Talking about her experiences as a researcher,¹ Agarwal starts with an episode that gave rise to her gender study: in 1978 a group of poor women in India asked the village council: “*Please go and ask the government why, when it distributes land, we don’t get a title? Are we not peasants? If our husbands throw us out, what is our security?*”.

Male ownership of the land is the starting-point for a series of economic, social, cultural, and legal obstacles to female emancipation. For example, from a study conducted in India,² it emerges that the percentage of women who are victims of domestic violence is 49% of those women who do not possess anything, whereas it falls to 7% of those women who are property owners. Therefore, the public policies at all levels must always take into account the gender differences that are present in all the principle sites of life, such as the family, community, and work.

But the question of gender that is tied to sustainable development also has another aspect. Every community and every region has a potential productive capacity or an ability to produce not only private economic goods, but also “public goods”, ideas, projects, and collective interventions. This “productive potential” can be seriously under-used or “misused”, and the unsuccessful socio-economic ascent of women is a clear instance of this. Since women do not guide the development processes, these have above all a “quantitative” limitation. According to a FAO study,³ if women had the same access as men to the means of production in the countries of the Southern hemisphere, their productivity would increase by 20-30% and overall agricultural production would increase by as much as 4%.⁴ But there is also a “qualitative” limitation, because the system can go in directions that are not sustainable from the environmental and social perspective.

The “2030 Agenda” of the United Nations promotes a strategy of policies and cooperation for development through the identification and monitoring of a variety of statistical markers regarding “objectives of sustainable development”, according to a multi-dimensional concept of sustainability that encompasses the economy, environment, and society. The fifth objective concerns gender equality. **Recent studies show that that fight against gender discrimination is not only a specific area of action, but also a valid means for reaching many other objectives.**⁵ For this reason both the creation of gender markers regarding the environment and the promotion of environmental projects in which women are directly involved in the drafting and execution of “ecological changes” are highly desirable.

Women are the first victims of polluting sources of energy and polluted natural resources: in the countries of the Southern hemisphere, the mortality risk from household pollutants (owing to the use of fossil fuels with extremely inefficient methods) for women is 50% higher than that of men. **Moreover, it should not be forgotten that 80% of the gathering of water is performed by women.**⁶

The role of institutions

The **link** between environmental protection and the fight against global warming, on the one hand, and recognising the value of women in society, on the other, is **far from new at the level of international institutions**. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is the most important world leader on the subject, originally made no reference to the issue of gender inequality. However, thanks to the work of many pressure groups and women’s lobbies, which have worked on this unceasingly over the past 15 years, the situation has changed. In 2012, the link between gender and climate became an item on the agenda of Conference of the Parties (COP), the governing body for international negotiations on the climate. A working group dedicated to this topic was created within the secretariat of the UNFCCC, and governments were

asked to nominate *gender focal points*. These latter are individuals designated to act as the point of reference within their organisations and to report progress in gender equality and attention given to the impact of gender on the climate policy of their country.

European institutions have also **reflected on the link between climate change and gender equality**. Especially relevant is the resolution of the European parliament of 2018, in which the branch at Strasburg made specific requests of the Commission and the entire international community.⁷ Among these, the text proposes that the financial mechanisms in the context of the UNFCCC (the Green Climate Fund, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and the Adaptation Fund) release additional financing for a climate friendly investment policy that better responds to problems of gender. The document asks that developmental aid supplied by the European Union be subject to the inclusion of criteria based on human rights and invites the Commission to take the initiative in formulating an exhaustive report entitled “Gender equality and climate change – building resilience and promoting climate justice in mitigation and adaptation strategies”.

Also active on this front are **UN Women**⁸ and the **World Bank**, which had already published a report for the general public on this subject in 2011.⁹ Here too, moreover, were already outlined with clarity the three main points that would be repeated, and in some cases developed, by various international actors. First of all, **women are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and climate change** in those contexts in which their rights and socio-economic status are not on a par with those of men. Secondly, redressing this disparity and therefore **investing in the emancipation of women is a fundamental contribution to the construction of climate resilience**. Last of all, achieving the reduction of emissions can be much more effective and equitable if planning makes use of an approach that includes a gender perspective – which also means that **a larger number of women needs to be present in the national and global bodies that are empowered to make decisions on this subject**.

This economy kills

Re-thinking the relationship between women and the environment is part of a broader project to re-think the economy as social science. “*This economy kills*” is a provocative and prophetic affirmation made by Pope Francis in criticising the current economic system, which is governed by financial capital, by a technocratic paradigm, by the neoliberal ideology, and by an individualistic culture.¹⁰ **Women and nature can be viewed as two “victims” of this system**. They are victims of an economy experiencing a grave structural crisis that tends to be the prelude to a “culture of death”.¹¹

In the past century, the contradictions of capitalism involved conflict between capital and labour, whereas today the socio-economic tensions are no longer limited to the workplace, but have an effect on personal life as well as

society, culture, politics, and institutions. **The contradictions of today’s economy concern the relationship between capital and life.** There is no aspect of private and public life that has not been affected by the mechanisms of the neoliberal market, which are present even in the ways of acting and thinking. As a result, we need to ask ourselves about its sustainability as regards not only the environment, but also society. The Social Teaching of the Church was born dealing with the conflict between capitalists and workers “according to justice and equity” in Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.¹² In the encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis recently analysed the economic causes of the ecological crisis with the goal of “bring[ing] the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development”.¹³

In the second half of the 1700s, Adam Smith, one of the founding fathers of economics, thought of economic and technological progress in terms of social progress and perceived immense economic and social possibilities in early capitalism.¹⁴ At the same time, he was concerned to govern it and reform society so as to create the right antibodies that were capable of counteracting its darker aspects. For instance, he proposed obligatory scholastic education for workers so as to counteract their “barbarisation” by alienation (a concept subsequently used by Marx). **Today this “alienation” concerns the system itself, which transforms what ought to be “means” (financial resources, goods, and technology) into “ends”,** passing from a vision according to which “finance is at the service of an economy governed by politics” to one in which “politics is at the service of an economy governed by finance”.

This perversion is opposed by various approaches (unfortunately minority views), among which is that of late expressed by Amartya Sen.¹⁵ Sen envisions human development as an expansion of the substantial freedom of the individual and group by means of the transformation of economic resources in terms of “being and doing”: a bicycle not only transports people, but in a village in the Southern hemisphere can represent, for its owner, the “ability to be educated”, given the lack of public transportation and the limited territorial spread of schools. The economy, therefore, needs to be analysed with a view to human development, and goods and wealth evaluated as instruments and not as ends in and of themselves. On this reading, when essential services are denied to women, then that family income or that public expenditure on their behalf is insignificant or (worse) can contribute to a perpetuation of inequality. On the other hand, **nature when viewed as a factor in production can only be exploited as much as possible, whereas it ought to be protected and valued as a “resource” that in the process of human development can “translate” not only into health and quality of life, but also into the identity of a people and into the maintenance of cultural, social, and spiritual values.** As Pope Francis asserts in *Laudato Si*, explaining the concept of integral ecology, “everything is interlinked”: economy, society, and nature. Intergenerational justice ought not to replace intragenerational justice, because leaving to future generations an environment that is better than the

present ought to mean also leaving them a society that is more fair. Facing in serious and structural fashion the gender question and environmental sustainability implies a critique of the mechanisms and foundational basis of the current economic system. For example, today, when an obtuse concern with efficiency calls into question the social conquests made thanks to a reduction in the work week, the theme of work-family conciliation is a question that concerns not only women, for it places at the centre the problem of the individual and group relationship between work and quality of life: **does the person exist for work or work for the person?** Thus, as is clear from the little value given to “caretaker jobs” that are typically performed by women, it demonstrates how this economy does not know how to protect life when it is “fragile”, as in the case of children and the elderly. **On the other hand, a serious re-reading of the role of nature leads to a renewed awareness of the lack of “a sense of limit” in today’s economic mechanisms.** In fact, the dominant neoliberalism is so far from making the economy one of the instruments of human freedom that it actually promotes the “freedom of the market” from the so-called (with a note of disapprobation) “constraints” that instead indicate the legal, ethical, and natural limits. According to such a view, the only rational criterion for individual and collective choice that is recognised is that of convenience. If capitalism imposed itself in history as a system capable of resolving the problem of scarcity, today it is in difficulty because it produces an abundance that is increasingly more unjust (in that this is for the benefit of a few) and unsustainable (because of the environmental damage that it causes) at the same time that it shows itself incapable of producing that “abundance of life”¹⁶ for everyone that humanity urgently needs.

The market as promise and as threat

There also exists a further problem: **how much space can legitimately be assigned to the market when it is a matter of capital and life?**

The objects that can be possessed and freely exchanged on the market by means of buying and selling are merchandise. But what happens when the merchandise that is exchanged on the market is the body of human beings, whether in whole or in part? When, for the reasons of capitalism, patrimonies of humanity such as the forests with their accompanying history, culture, and life of indigenous populations are destroyed?

A critical reflection on today’s economy cannot avoid looking at the juridical institutions of property and contract and asking what ought to be the limits of these institutions. What makes a contract juridically binding? What sort of things cannot be considered private property? These questions inevitably lead us to inquire into the phenomenon of commodification and its limits.

Property is limited (among other things) by the widespread ethical and cultural conviction that some things ought not be reckoned as objects that can be owned.

The stipulation of a contract is limited (among other things) by the widespread ethical and cultural conviction that some things ought not to be the object of exchange in commercial transactions. The term “commodification” indicates that something is viewed as subject to property and contract, and its sale and purchase on the market as merchandise. The same term refers, moreover, to the process by which what is generally viewed as outside the evaluation of the market becomes merchandise subject to economic transaction.

Commodification has for some time now been the subject of reflection and cause for concern by those who deal with the relationship between economy and ethics, even if only in lay terms.

Commodification is often viewed as something that threatens the fundamental traits of human nature. Reservations on the commodification of what is considered an essential part of the individual, such as our body, are often based on an ethics that has at its core respect for the human person. If the fundamental aspects of human nature, which represent our most profound identity, are monetised, what remains of our humanity?

On the other hand, **the birth of a market is often viewed as an opportunity offering hope rather than as a threat.** In fact, some economists, in a dominant position at universities (not just in the United States), act as the mouthpieces for a genuine **rhetoric of the market**, or defence of the market, according to which **we can view from a market perspective (or in terms of monetary value and exchange) even those things that are not in effect subject to sale and purchase.**¹⁷

For instance, some economists of the School of Chicago are known for having extended the logic and terminology of the market to analysis of reproductive choices. In his book *A Treatise on the Family*, Gary Becker asserts that “(...) the question of babies depends upon their relative price ... An increase in the relative price of babies ... reduces the demand for them while it causes the demand for other goods to increase”.

In the rhetoric of the market, all values are considered “commensurable”, i.e. able to be reduced to a single measure of value (e.g. money) so as to allow for commercial exchange. If, on the contrary, we wish to defend the “incommensurable nature” of certain values, we cannot consider admissible exchanges that involve them.

The incommensurable nature of values is a complex philosophical topic, and philosophers have not yet come to agreement on it. Their thinking on the subject remains divided.

But can we say that the mere use of the terminology of commodification is harmful to humanity, even in the absence of an actual commercialisation? This is a complicated question, as is the question of whether the rhetoric of the market in effect leads to commodification. In the example of Becker mentioned above, will

valuing babies in economic terms end in giving rise to a market of newborns? This dilemma further complicates the ethical evaluation of commodification.

A further complication arises from the question of whether it is opportune or not to prohibit or regulate the market when the laws that do so are primarily symbolic. In this case, the law would only serve to affirm that we all ideally would like to uphold values that are different from the market and that we would like to keep these values out of the reach of the snares of market valuations, even when we know this is not possible in practice. The black market exists for prostitution, for trafficking in human organs, and for the adoption of children. Is it worth tolerating the corruption of the black market merely in order to be able to make a symbolic affirmation of our ideals?

Some juridical systems have legalised prostitution in order to protect sex workers from illness, rape, and wage theft. No juridical system, on the other hand, has legalised the sale of children or trafficking in women. Even if some jurisdictions have taken different stances on the donation of organs after death, none has legalised their commerce between people who are still alive.

This line of thought leads us, in closing, to analyse in lay terms **the ethical vision that informs the idea of respect for the human person**. The concept of the human person is tied to the idea of liberty, and it was established by Immanuel Kant in the late 1700s. According to the Kantian vision of the world, the universe is divided into two categories (persons and objects), and moral law imposes the maximalisation of personal freedom. **In a social context that involves numerous individuals, the freedom of each person is maximised by laws that allow the fullest freedom in the use of objects, but prohibit the use of other persons in any form whatsoever.**

This ought to hold good also for the use that one makes of one’s own body. As is underlined by another important philosopher and economist of the 1800s, John Stuart Mill, no one should be allowed the freedom to sell himself or herself as a slave. In his treatise *On Liberty*, Mill writes: “*Selling oneself as a slave, (a person) gives up their own freedom and renounces its future use beyond that single act. The principle of freedom cannot ask that a person be free not to be free. Being able to alienate one’s own freedom is not freedom.*”¹⁸

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

- 4 Ibid.
- 5 UN Women (2018), *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018#view>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 *Risoluzione del Parlamento europeo del 16 gennaio 2018 sulle donne, le pari opportunità e la giustizia climatica*, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0005_IT.html?redirect
- 8 <http://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/photo/climatechange/en/index.html>
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- 10 Galeazzi, G. and Torielli, A. (2015), *Papa Francesco. Questa economia uccide*, Edizioni Piemme.
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- 12 *Rerum Novarum*, 1.
- 13 *Laudato si'*, 13.
- 14 Smith, A.(1776),*The Wealth of Nations*,repr.1994, Modern Library.
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- 18 Mill, J. S. (1859), “On Liberty”. In *Essays on Politics and Society*. Part I, vol. 18 of *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, edited by J. M. Robson, pp. 213–310, University of Toronto Press, 1977.



THE SPIRITUALITY OF TALITHA KUM

Jennifer Reyes Lay and Colleen Jackson, RSC

Jennifer Reyes Lay is the Executive Director of US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT). Sr. Colleen Jackson, RSC, is member of the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH).

Original in English

Introduction

Talitha Kum is an international coalition of Networks of Consecrated Life working to end human trafficking around the world. It is the umbrella organization for all national and regional networks of consecrated life working to end human trafficking and is a project of the International Union of Superiors General. Our call to engage in this challenging and necessary work is rooted in the life and ministry of Jesus and inextricably linked to our Catholic faith. We recognize the loving and life-giving presence of God in all those working to eradicate this form of modern-day slavery, and welcome collaboration and dialogue with all people engaged in this work, regardless of differences of faith, politics or culture.

This reflection will focus on the Spirituality of Talitha Kum – the foundational spirit that calls us into the work to end human trafficking and provides us strength and nourishment to continue.

The Spirituality of Talitha Kum International is rooted in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus - the Christ, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14) so that all may have life and have it more abundantly (Jn 10:10). The words “Talitha Kum” come from the story in Mark 5:41 where Jesus raises a young girl, believed to be dead, back to life saying, “*Talitha Kum*” that is, “*young girl, I say to you, stand up*” and she stood up. We too, encounter girls and boys,

women and men, who are trapped in situations of death and despair, due to the evils of human trafficking. Our faith and spirituality remind us of the power of God to transform even the most hopeless situations and raise what seems to be dead to new life.

We are proud to continue in a long and rich tradition of Catholic women, inspired by the life-giving ministry of Christ, coming together and using our God-given gifts and talents to help realize a world where all are free to pursue their dreams and live life abundantly. Our work to end human trafficking and support survivors is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, Gospel values, prophetic hope, and a deep belief in the interconnectedness of all life. The Spirit of God which calls us together in the work to end human trafficking is the same Spirit that has been present since the beginning of time working to bring forth life and free God's people. It is the same dynamic life-giving Spirit that both challenges and sustains us in this work, impelling us to speak life where there is death, to speak hope where there is despair, and to speak love where there is hate. The fruits of this Spirit and spirituality can be seen in the work of Talitha Kum networks over the past 10 years: promoting human dignity, love, and respect for life; and inspiring collaboration, growth, and transformation.

The following sections will highlight in more depth the identifying characteristics of the Spirituality of Talitha Kum: incarnation and the interconnectedness of all life; the liberating spirit of God; prophetic hope; collaboration; and Catholic Social Teaching.

Incarnation and the Interconnectedness of All Life

The Spirituality of Talitha Kum honors the presence of God revealed in and through all of creation. We affirm the inalienable dignity of every human person, created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), regardless of sex, gender, race, age, ability, nationality, or any other category that human sin uses to try and discriminate and diminish the presence of God in God's beloved creation. In the eyes of God, there is no hierarchy of value or worth among all creation. Those systems of oppression which seek to divide and exploit various aspects of creation are counter to the spirit of our living God. Hence, the Final Declaration of Talitha Kum's 10th Anniversary Assembly 2019, specifically denounced sexism, unfettered capitalism and economic exploitation, and racism and xenophobia as priority areas to address in the work to end human trafficking.

Through the incredible gift of the incarnation, the Spirit of God took on flesh and in doing so joined all of creation into intimate, deep participation in the body of God. We believe that the mystery of the incarnation continues to be made manifest in the new life coming into the world each day. As St. Teresa of Avila said, "*Christ has no body now but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world.*" Because each person is now a precious part of the cosmic body of Christ, we can see the face of Christ in every person. This reality calls us to respond to the suffering of the body of Christ present in human

trafficking, and work to heal and prevent further violence to the collective and individual bodies of Christ.

All life on this planet is interconnected; we are part of a beautiful and diverse ecosystem. What harms one part of creation impacts all other parts. St. Paul reminds us, “If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it” (1 Cor 12:26). Pope Francis also reminded us in *Laudato Si*, “*The human environment and the natural environment degrade together*” (LS 48). *The exploitation of the body of the earth we see today is connected to the exploitation of the bodies of women, men, and children through human trafficking. Both reflect a “culture of commodification”* fueled by unfettered capitalism which we denounce in defense of the dignity of all life and the protection of all creation. The deep belief that life is sacred and all life is connected through the one body of Christ, inspires in us a spirituality that calls us to work to end modern day slavery.

The Liberating Spirit of God

The Spirituality of Talitha Kum is rooted in the understanding that God’s Spirit is constantly at work in the world, seeking to bring about liberation of all Creation. The Hebrew Scriptures powerfully tell of God’s liberating spirit working through Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets to free God’s people and creation from situations of slavery and oppression. The same spirit that led the Hebrew people out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the promised land, is the same spirit at work in the world today, calling us to help free God’s beloved children who are trapped in situations of exploitation and slavery around the world today. Just as Moses boldly proclaimed to Pharaoh “*Let my people go!*” so too, we members of Talitha Kum boldly proclaim to all traffickers: “Let our people go!”

We believe that, just as God heard the cries of the enslaved Hebrews, was moved with compassion, and responded to their call (Ex 3:7-8), so too does God hear the cries of trafficking victims today, cries that often go unheard or unnoticed by the rest of society. We are reminded that God does not remain neutral in the face of oppression and slavery, but rather sides with the poor and the enslaved, accompanying them in their suffering and working for their liberation. As followers of the God of liberation, we too are called to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering and enslaved in the world today, and do all we can to work for their liberation.

Prophetic Hope

The Spirituality of Talitha Kum is one rooted in prophetic hope. We draw on the wisdom and guidance of the many prophets who have gone before us, those named and unnamed in Scripture and those who have been part of the living Catholic tradition over the past two thousand years. We draw strength and inspiration from the prophetic hope of Isaiah who boldly proclaimed: “*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim*

liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners...” (Is 61:1). These words were echoed by Jesus at the start of his public ministry, declaring that this prophetic vision was today fulfilled in the presence of all who heard him (Lk 4:18-21). We can see from the reality of our world today that this vision has not been fully realized, that there are still those being oppressed and held captive. Thus, we now, today, are called to continue this prophetic work of proclaiming the good news of God’s love, comfort, and freedom in the hope that one day this new reality will prevail.

Even though the work to end human trafficking can seem daunting, our spirituality rooted in prophetic hope proclaims that *“through God all things are possible (Mk 10:27).”* In a prayer frequently attributed to the prophetic St. Oscar Romero we are reminded, *“We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.”* We take comfort in knowing that we are each doing our part to faithfully respond to the call to end human trafficking, and invite others to join us as co-workers in this prophetic ministry that continues to proclaim life and love in even the most difficult circumstances.

Prophetic hope is deeply grounded in the paschal mystery; the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus teach us that even in the darkest hour, even when it seems like death and evil have seemingly won, God can still birth new life and hope into the world. This resurrection hope is something that we are blessed to see in the lives of survivors we have accompanied out of situations of trafficking and through the healing process of reclaiming their lives and freedom. Prophetic hope is reinforced as we share stories with one another about God making a way out of no way, providing safety and shelter, or giving us the strength to continue. This is a lived hope that does not depend on numbers and results, but rather is a grace continually offered us through the spirit of the risen Christ.

Collaboration

The Spirituality of Talitha Kum echoes a strong commitment to the power of community and collaboration. We take as the primordial example of collaboration and community the Triune God: three persons in one, each with distinct roles but intimately united as one force, working together in love for the flourishing of life. This trinitarian model informs and inspires our own work as communities coming together in love to work towards a common vision: a world without trafficking. We respect and honor the differences among our networks - cultures, and congregations with distinct charisms - and appreciate how those various gifts are used in the service of promoting God’s liberating force in the world. We know that, despite our differences, we are united in one common faith as members of the body of Christ. We need each person to bring the unique gifts that God has given them to collaborate with the greater whole for the benefit of the larger body to which we all belong.

Catholic Social Teaching

The Spirituality of Talitha Kum is deeply rooted in Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Each of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching is related to our work and call to end human trafficking: 1) life and dignity of the human person, 2) call to family, community, and participation, 3) rights and responsibilities, 4) option for the poor and vulnerable, 5) the dignity of work and the rights of workers, 6) solidarity, and 7) care for God's creation.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person. The spirituality of Talitha Kum is deeply rooted in our belief in the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of all life, which calls us to speak out and act out against all systems and structures that deny a person's basic human dignity. Human trafficking treats human beings as commodities to be bought and sold, denying a person's right to life and their dignity.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation. All people have a right to fully participate in society, to form families if they so choose, and collaborate together for the common good. Human trafficking breaks down family systems and takes away an individual's freedom to participate in society and work towards the common good. Our faith calls us to help free those caught in this form of modern day slavery so that they can pursue these basic rights and freedoms.

Rights and Responsibilities. Every person has a fundamental right to life and has responsibilities to ensure these rights are protected for all people. Human trafficking erodes a person's life and freedom, and all of us have a responsibility to ensure that the inalienable dignity and human rights of every person are protected and nurtured.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable. This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, recognizes that the poor and vulnerable are particularly at risk of having their rights violated or suffering from injustice. Just as God has consistently made an option for the poor and vulnerable throughout history, we too continue to prioritize the needs of the poor and vulnerable. We know that traffickers particularly target those who are vulnerable and that poverty leads many people into situations of trafficking. We acknowledge a deep connection between poverty and human trafficking, and embrace the call to challenge unjust economic structures and protect all vulnerable populations as an important part of ending human trafficking.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. The basic rights of workers, including decent and fair wages, safe and healthy working conditions, and the right to organize and join unions, must be respected. Human trafficking is profitable for the traffickers because it relies on the exploitation of workers – workers are not paid fair wages if at all, they are often physically, sexually, and mentally abused, they work in dangerous conditions, and they are afforded no opportunity to organize with other exploited workers. Called to defend the dignity of work and the rights of workers, we come together to use our collective voice

and action to denounce all forms of modern-day slavery and promote the rights of all workers.

Solidarity. The principle of solidarity reminds us that because we are all connected, we are called to join with those who are suffering under systems of oppression to work together for peace and justice, and for our collective freedom. A spirituality of solidarity prevents us from turning a blind eye or a deaf ear to the cries of those who suffer from human trafficking. Instead we throw our lot in with them, accompanying those who have already been impacted by trafficking and working to prevent others from becoming victims. Solidarity reminds us that we're all in this together.

Care for God's Creation. All creation is connected through the Spirit of the living God. As part of the body of creation we are called to protect and defend all other parts of the body, whether human, animal, plant, or mineral. We know that the exploitation of the earth and its resources is having big impacts on the human family. The climate crisis is forcing people into unprecedented levels of displacement and migration, thus rendering them more vulnerable to traffickers. Caring for the victims of human trafficking and caring for the planet are integral to our care for God's creation and work to end the evils of human trafficking.

Conclusion

Our Catholic faith tradition informs and grounds the Spirituality of Talitha Kum. The seed that was planted 10 years ago at the founding of this international network of networks continues to grow, nourished by the Spirit of the living God, calling forth new life and proclaiming the good news of resurrection hope and freedom. We are humbled to see how this Spirit continues to inspire new networks and Congregations to join us in this call to end human trafficking. We have faith that as long as we stay rooted in this spirit which has spanned the centuries and overcome many challenges, we too will see its fruits through the liberation of God's creation. We are grateful to be united with one another in this work and in this faith. Our 2019 Assembly Final Declaration boldly declares, "*Together, we will create a future filled with prophetic hope by working together, forming a network of compassion and grace!*" This is the Spirituality of Talitha Kum.



*“I SAY TO YOU ARISE”
REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL OF MARC
5, 41*

Elisabeth Green

Elisabeth Green is Theologian and Pastor of the Christian Evangelical Baptist Union.

Original in English

The chapter 5 of the Gospel of Marc , it is a special chapter for us because it contains the words which inspire our work Talitha-kum, “Little girl, I say to you arise”.

Before we get there, however, I want to us to think about how this passage has been constructed so that actually we can’t talk about the little girl’s being raised up without talking about the woman being healed from her flow of blood. Mark wants us to consider them together. And what holds them together?

Well, it is nothing less than the crowd, seething and milling about Jesus: “a great crowd gathered about him”, “and a great crowd followed him and thronged about him” And when Jesus finally gets to Jairus’ house, there again is the crowd “they saw a tumult and people weeping and wailing loudly”.

Think of people milling in a market. Think of people pushing and shoving to see something on a feast day in your countries. Think of the noise, the heat, the colours and the smell. Think of the crowds that followed Jesus about, looking for something, hoping in something “When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”.

A crowd is a very physical reality. And you can’t be in a crowd without touching people and being touched by people. Think of being in a crowded train

or a tram or a bus, pushed right next to people, bumping into people. Being right up close. So the crowd not only joins the two episodes but puts touch, human contact firmly on the agenda. How many times does Mark tell us that the woman with the flow of blood touched Jesus? She thought about touching Jesus, she touched Jesus, Jesus asks who touched him and the disciples say “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say who touched me?” Jesus doesn’t just let it go, doesn’t just let the woman sink back into the anonymous crowd, he insists. The bodily contact along which the healing power has flowed is completed by a word: “daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease”.

By the time Jesus’ gets to Jairus’ house it’s as if he’s had enough of the crowd, their noise, their confusion, their inability to understand. So he puts them all outside and just goes in the house with the girl’s parents and his closest disciples. He may no longer be surrounded by bodies pressing and shoving but that doesn’t mean that touch is no longer important. So what does Jesus do? He reaches out and takes the little girl by the hand. In the first episode it is the woman that reaches out and touches Jesus. Now it is Jesus who reaches out to Jairus daughter and takes her by the hand. Once again the healing touch is accompanied by a word: “I say to you, arise”. Get back on your feet again, you can do it. Get up, take hold of your life, walk on. Whatever was ailing the little girl leaves her “and immediately the girl got up and walked; for she was twelve years old”. We can talk about resurrection if you like, but a resurrection that takes place in the middle of life, when things get difficult for us. A resurrection that lifts us up, puts us back on track, empowers us to take up where we left off.

The crowd with its noise, its smells, its pushing and shoving, its human closeness in which hope and desperation cling together holds these two episodes together. That crowd has the same claims on us today. Jesus doesn’t give up in despair, overcome by the hugeness of the task, the numbers of the people in need. Nor does he wear himself out devising huge and mega projects, upset because he’ll never be able to carry them out. He simply lets those who will touch him, and then stops to make sure that healing is complete, as he did with the woman with a flow of blood, reaching out to those like Jairus who seek his help for his sick child.

Can we see in our mind’s eye how these two healings are somehow parallel each other? In the first episode the woman reaches out and touches Jesus. Jesus perceived in himself, he felt that power had gone forth from him. In the second healing Jesus reaches out and takes the girl by the hand. Perhaps the girl too felt Jesus’ power entering her and strengthening her. We don’t know. Then, in the first healing the woman summoned by Jesus, falls down “But the woman knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him”. The little girl, however, was already lying down, dead or asleep and

she stands up. So, it seems to me that these two different movements, falling down and standing up somehow complement and complete each other. For isn't it that sometimes we ourselves are in need of healing reach out, touch and like the woman with the flow of blood, are healed? Othertimes we ourselves reach out, like Jesus, to touch another with God's resurrection power. Sometimes we, like Jairus' daughter, are touched by another and are ourselves healed yet othertimes we wait - like the disciples in the shadows - for the touch of Jesus to accompany his miracle.

There is a time to fall down in awe and amazement and hear a word from Jesus word which then sends us on our way in peace and a time to respond without hesitation to Jesus' summons, Talith-kum "Arise", "Rise up with power", and get on with our tasks with renewed vigour.

I'm sure it is your experience, as it is mine, that one never quite knows how God is at work. But as this chapter tells us, God is at work, in us and through us. God's compassion for the crowds is no less now than it was in Jesus' time. And in this hot and bustling multitude, in the colours and smells and noise that threaten to overpower us, God reaches out to women and men like ourselves knowing that as we touch and are touched so will we reach out to others, each and everyone with their own name, their own individual life story, their own hopes and fears and needs so that together we will rise up and walk, be healed and go in peace.



WELCOME ADDRESS OF THE UISG
PRESIDENT TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE
FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
“TALITHA KUM”

Sr. Jolanta Kafka, RMI

*Sr. Jolanta is the Superior General of the Religious of Mary Immaculate -
Claretian Missionaries and the President of the UISG.*

Original in Spanish

Dear Sisters, gathered here, and all the people who are accompanying us online... I warmly welcome you to this assembly: WELCOME! It is so good to be able to celebrate in this way Talitha Kum's 10 years of life! In communion, with thankfulness, and searching together... as delegates, on behalf of other women and men who have put their lives at the service of the same call: “Talitha Kum! ... get up!” I feel really privileged to welcome you on behalf of the UISG, and these are for us words of fulfillment. I consider it a gift from God to be able to look into your faces. You are beautiful!

Let's look at our faces for a moment: What diversity! What representativeness! How much of God's generosity in each one... Who can surely say with Saint Paul... those who are here are neither strong, nor wise, nor super-intelligent ... No, we are simply “full of grace”; we have all, somehow, been rescued by God, by people... We have all experienced redemption.

Talitha Kum! Yes, you are the first who have risen in response to the voice of Jesus who came into your life; you have answered: Yes... You have left something behind and set out on your path. Being here is, for each one, firstly a vocational fact. Since, on the path of this call, following Him, at a certain

moment, this new encounter has occurred, a special call to become a part of the Talitha Kum network. Let us thank God for the reception of this call! Surely, like for me, for each one, responding to it... has revolutionized our existence.

What happened in our context and within us to motivate this response to God? And kept us from to hurry pass before something that disturbs our conscience.

For some years, we have received data that denounces the persistent plague of trafficking in human beings. There is no country in the world that is not involved. The UN reports certify it, although behind the official statistics there are often hidden realities which never declared or told.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines that:

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs” (Art. 3, para. A) There are statistics, but behind each one there is indescribable suffering, a story of pain and, at the same time, of strength and surmounting.

“The Catholic Church intends to intervene in every phase of the trafficking of human beings; she wants to protect them from deception and solicitation; she wants to find them and free them when they are transported and reduced to slavery; she wants to assist them once they are freed,” say the *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking* prepared by the recent International Conference on Human Trafficking (04/11/2019). On that occasion Pope Francis said: “Trafficking, as I said, represents an unjustifiable violation of the freedom and dignity of its victims, of those constitutive dimensions of the human being as willed and created by God. For this reason, it is to be considered a crime against humanity. Of this, there can be no doubt. The same gravity, by analogy, must be attributed to all forms of contempt for the freedom and dignity of every human being, whether a compatriot or a foreigner.”

Talitha Kum puts the Church’s desire into practice by promoting activities, awareness, and concrete presences in each phase of human trafficking.... from prevention to integration.

Allow me to recall a bit of history. Since the 1990s, some religious, working with victims of sexual abuse, of violence or in situations of exploitation, came into contact with the painful and violent reality of human trafficking. They soon

perceived the magnitude and complexity of what was happening and began to dialogue with each other to mobilize more resources and, above all, to make their Congregations aware of what was going on. The Superiors General of the International Union (UISG), fully aware of this emerging context, asked the UISG Justice and Peace Commission (JPIC) to organize events to study this growing problem.

In 2001, the ATWG presented the phenomenon of trafficking in persons to over 800 Superiors General gathered in Rome for the UISG Plenary. In their final declaration, the participants of the Assembly declared: “We, nearly 800 women leaders of one million members of Catholic Religious Institutes worldwide, publicly declare our determination to work in solidarity with each other, in our own religious communities and in the countries where we are located, to address insistently, at all levels, the abuse and sexual exploitation of women and children, with special attention to trafficking in women, which has become a lucrative multinational business.” (*Bulletin UISG* - Special issue no. 116)

The public commitment expressed in 2001 was confirmed once again by the 2004 UISG assembly, thus opening the way to stronger intercongregational collaboration among religious Congregations in the field of the fight against trafficking. Since its beginning, that initiative, called Talitha Kum, was the fruit of processes of dialogue and discernment carried out by the Sisters engaged in the field with the Superiors of the female Congregations. We must thank the major Superiors for the support they have given to their sisters who are on the front line.

Let us recall this path marked by the commitment of some sisters who coordinated the first initiatives: Sr. Bernadette Sagma, FMA, coordinator of the UISG project, and Sr. Eugenia Bonetti, MC; Sr. Estrella Castalone, FMA, who held the position between 2010 and 2014. With the support of the UISG Presidents, especially in the two preceding periods: Sr. Carmen Sammut. And now, since 2015, the coordinator is Sr. Gabriella Bottani, SMC.

Today we will show our appreciation to some who have made a special contribution in the history of Talitha Kum...

All those who have believed in the prophetic value of each gesture, of being instruments of salvation, deserve a prize, and we already know what the first prize is: the joy of those who generously serve the lives of others, as Jesus assured us and the joy of seeing a person come back to life.

Let us, however, not lose sight of the fact that gestures are inscribed in processes... We do not make “random” gestures; we have not come to occupy the space of an “event” ... We are on a path, humbly taking steps and learning to follow. We will not stop... with God’s help.

Talitha Kum is defined as the NETWORK. The NETWORK speaks of interconnected threads or ropes, capable of covering and reaching a great deal.

It is a network that rescues, without binding, fishing, or hunting. It is a network of extended arms, where the impulse launched from a single point reaches to the opposite pole.

The character of the network determines a work style. No one acts alone, nor does anyone feel alone. No one has the impression of being a protagonist. We are part of a whole. The whole is always more than the part, as the Pope teaches us. This is very important in this delicate and even dangerous and daring form of mission.

We thank the sisters who, from Rome and in the workplace, in a special way support from training and legal assistance to logistics. It is a gift from God that, collaborating in this NETWORK, you have gone beyond cultural borders and congregational belonging. Incredible networks have been created that were unimaginable just a few years ago. Unfortunately, the evil spirit also wants to obstruct good... by creating suspicion, resistance for fear of the consequences that are often contrasted with the well-being of some or the silenced conscience of so many.

We have—as we said—a path to follow.

I know that you are going to work on various topics during this assembly.

Rereading the history, already walked through with gratitude and a critical spirit, will be the first task; you will surely ask yourselves how to reap what you have learned from practice and experience. What you learn from contact with people.

I encourage you to explore horizons with dreams and to set immediate goals:

- To continue the relationships of mutual support, information and training and collaboration from Talitha Kum in connection with the conferences of local Religious. The openness to lay people, to other religions, which is already happening.
- To cultivate relationships with other organizations with a spirit of discernment.
- I think that the option of being at the base, in direct contact with the victims, could be defined as a priority. Could we ask ourselves if now would not be the time to strengthen the commitment to the so-called “advocacy”? that is, to be a spokesperson for the realities before institutions especially legal and preventive entities?
- Coordination teams in different countries are completing their “mandate.” You will see how to renew, since Talitha Kum teams will be changed, just as UISG elects a new Council every three years. We thank all who have collaborated! Your wealth of experience will be treasure for the newcomers.

The theme of this Assembly is beautiful... “Together against human trafficking. Weaving a web in Love.” It goes with the nature of the NETWORK and the mission in LOVE. As delegates, you have the responsibility of working these days, sharing what each of you brings from the contexts that you represent, with willingness to listen and to discern. And then to take, on your return, and put into practice what was agreed upon. It is a dynamic of the heart: bringing and pressing to carry on. We women understand this well.

We have, as our broad horizon, one of the Sustainable Development Goals proposed for 2030: “the eradication of forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking”. We are contributing there, with the Gospel in our hearts and hands, walking with others to achieve this goal. From UISG, we will continue supporting and accompanying your steps.

I wish you a fruitful work, and a beautiful vocational experience!

WELCOME ADDRESS OF THE
COORDINATOR OF TALITHA KUM
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sr. Gabriella Bottani, SMC

Original in English

The feeling is one of deep gratitude to God, whom I have felt present in these years of service to the UISG, in the coordination of Talitha Kum. I have felt the presence of the divine in many moments:

- In embracing those who have experienced the violence of trafficking and who now have joined paths of rehabilitation and social reintegration. It is a reality that I accompany from distance, to serve those engaged at the base. Data, albeit partial, collected by Talitha Kum in collaboration with the Gregorian University here in Rome, reveal that in 2018 our networks accompanied fifteen thousand five hundred persons who survived trafficking, offering various services.

God was present in the teen-ager whom I met at the prayer vigil in preparation of the World Day of Prayer and Reflection against trafficking: She whispered to my ear: “thank you, I go home happy, now I know that someone cares about me!” That whisper is addressed to all of us!

- I contemplated the presence of God in the welcoming smiles and in the words of encouragement that we offer to each other, among us, sisters and brothers, committed to the grassroot engagement against trafficking, even when we have different opinions and ways of acting. I realize that our

network is much more than a space for coordination, we are a “group in which we support each other”, we nurture hope. I would like to express my special thanks to the sisters of the International Coordination Committee, who in their respective regions have supported the commitments made together since 2016. Sr. Adel (Asia), Sr. Patricia (Africa), Sr. Imelda (Europe), Sr. Ann and Sr. Claudette (North America), Sr. Carmela (Latin America) and Sr. Colleen (Oceania), who is not with us today for health reasons. To you a special hug from all of us!

This year the UISG executive will renew this committee.

- God calls us to collaborate, to weave together, through the requests and the support we receive from the UISG executive, first of all from Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM, executive secretary. Then I wish to mention Sr. Carmen Sammut, MSOLA who is among us today, president until few months ago, and Sr. Jolanta Kafka, RMI who continues offering this service to the UISG, who has just addressed words that encourage us to renew our efforts. Thanks to the leaders of many congregations who have motivated and supported us, encouraging sisters to join the Talitha Kum network. The Church as well confirms our call through the magisterium of Pope Francis, and accompanies us thanks to the partnership with the Migrants and Refugees Section.

“Together against human trafficking. Weaving a web in Love.”

The image chosen is that of a compass to orient ourselves in the dark and complex times in which we live.

Together: a word that includes, that sets in motion and invites us to rethink the boundaries, the walls and the seas that divide, to deconstruct concepts of division and death and to build spaces of encounter, welcome, and conversion.

Together: like a movement that engages more people in more countries, to reach out to everybody who need to be embraced by Love.

Together: different people who have experienced the trauma of trafficking, religious persons and committed laity of different charisms, who accept the challenge of collaborating. People from different cultures, countries, religious traditions, ideas, gifts, and worldviews. Together we learn freedom, respect and appreciation of diversity, protecting the inherent dignity of each person.

Together against human trafficking: Together, with the aim of promoting paths and processes of liberation and dignity, against all forms of human and environmental exploitation. Because, as Pope Francis reminds us well in his encyclical *Laudato Sii*: “The human environment and the natural environment degrade together” (LS 48). Indeed, we observe this mutual degradation in different contexts: in the mines of the region of the great lakes in Congo, in the mangrove forests in Bangladesh, and, I would like to recall in particular, in the Amazon

region, not only because it is particularly dear to me, but because human and environmental exploitation will be one of the themes addressed at the Synod that will open in few weeks.

Weaving a web in Love: Talitha Kum networks weave activities of prevention, social rehabilitation and reintegration of all those ones suffered the violence of trafficking, individuals, families and communities. Human trafficking not only impacts on the trafficked person: it involves families, villages, countries.

Weaving a web in love allows us to enter the shadowy drivers that foster the spreading of trafficking, the structural contributing factors. They are many, diverse, intertwined, but I would like to highlight two, which I have identified in listening to the networks' experiences:

First: The power differential between men and women - in all sectors: economic, social, familial, cultural and religious.

We know this, but we speak about it less and less. The main statistical sources confirm that the majority of trafficked persons, more than 70%, are women and girls. The forms of exploitation are different: forced marriages, domestic servitude, and begging, labor exploitation in agriculture, fishing, textiles, services and tourism. Women account for 90% of persons trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This is a cause of grave concern, a-shame!

We women are a resource for humanity, we have equal dignity. We have to recognize it, empowering each other, in an inclusive way that involves everyone. We would like this commitment to be reflected within the Church. We would like the Church to offer greater and qualified spaces of participation for women, we would like the Church to involve us more in decision-making processes, especially on issues that are relevant for us, that concern us.

Second: The dominant model of neo-Liberal development, often denounced by Pope Francis. This model already showed its limits. The maximization of profits at all costs has increased inequalities, while the dramatic drop in the provision of support services by States - social, health, education, work - exacerbates the situation of already fragile people and pushes at the margins more and more social groups. The progressive polarization of the political discourse on migration fosters divisions and discrimination. It opens opposition and hatred for those who are considered "different".

As a result, the problems that we experience, in the daily organization of our service, especially assistance, are:

- (first) The decrease in medium/long-term resources for health care, social services, and access to work supported by public authorities. Increasingly, the resources allocated by governments for programs of prevention, reception, and social/employment reintegration of trafficked persons are being reduced. In particular, those who need long paths of accompaniment, such as those

with mental distress, are penalized. We see reception houses closed or destined to other services, due to lack of funds, or we no longer find shelters available to receive a survivor, because no funds are allocated for the reception of individuals in difficult situations.

- (second) the normalization of exploitation, people no longer dream about better opportunities, they know only exploitation, and consider themselves goods, objects ... the justice systems make it increasingly difficult to achieve the compensation of exploited people. They often are sent back home with a little amount of money given to an NGO for their care.
- (third) We also note with concern the increase in vulnerability to trafficking among migrants, especially among those who are denied any possibility of mobility with regular documents. We note an increase in the difficulty of accessing, and identifying, trafficked persons.

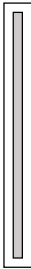
We are committed to promoting individual and collective transformation processes. (Rom. 12,2) Transformation/conversion that involves above all ourselves, our mentality, lifestyles and choices, cultural models. It is impossible to approach the pain of trafficking in a hurry. This is only possible if we move at the rhythm of "Love", letting reality dwell in us and us in reality. If we do not, we risk being like the traffickers who use people for power, prestige, money, and so on...

For us, Talitha Kum, opposing trafficking means to let God act in us and with us. There are simple gestures that allow beauty and freedom to shine in the darkness caused by dysfunctional relationships, of domination, of violence.

Like Mary, we experience that God's action scatters the proud and overthrows the powerful, confuses them, because it prefers those who are poor, excluded, marginalized, discarded, those who are considered having no value. (Lk. 1:51-52) God calls us to work together because he asks us to give the first step and heal our relationships wounded by competition, often imposed by cultural models of domination, which teach us to fight against each other.

Trafficking in people is one of the symptoms of the crisis of our time. In this context we are called to REMAIN in God's LOVE (Jo. 15:9), and keep hope alive by weaving together a network in love. St. Josephine Bakhita, our sister, accompanies us and supports us, she who has personally known the trauma of slavery, shows us the way to remain with confidence in Love.

May we, delegates to this Assembly, receive the grace to do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)



ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF “TALITHA KUM” THE
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF
CONSECRATED LIFE AGAINST HUMAN
TRAFFICKING

His Holiness Pope Francis

Hall of the Consistory

Thursday, 26 September 2019

Dear Sisters,

I am very pleased to receive you today on the occasion of your first General Assembly. I thank Sister Kafka and Sister Bottani for their introduction. Talitha Kum was born in 2001 from a missionary intuition of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). It flourishes today as a worldwide network that coordinates the efforts of Institutes of Consecrated Life against human trafficking. In just ten years it has come to coordinate 52 religious networks in more than 90 countries on all continents. The statistics of your service speak for themselves: 2000 workers, more than 15,000 victims of trafficking assisted and more than 200,000 people reached with prevention and awareness-raising activities.

I congratulate you on the important work you are doing amid very complex and tragic situations. Your work brings together the missions of different institutions and demands cooperation between them. You have chosen to be on the front line. Therefore the numerous Congregations that have worked and continue to work as the “avant-garde” of the Church’s missionary activity against the scourge of human trafficking deserve gratitude (see *Address to Participants in the International Conference on Human Trafficking*, 11 April 2019). This is also a model of how to work together. It is an example for the whole Church, and also for us: men, priests, bishops ... You are giving a great example – keep at it!

In this, your first assembly, your main objective is to evaluate progress made and to identify missionary priorities for the next five years. In the various working

sessions, you have chosen to discuss two main issues related to the phenomenon of trafficking. On the one hand, the great differences that still mark the condition of women in the world, which stem mainly from socio-cultural factors. On the other, the limits of the neoliberal development model, which risks undermining the state with its individualistic vision. These undoubtedly complex and urgent challenges require adequate and effective answers. I know that in your assembly you have committed yourself to identifying solutions and highlighting the resources necessary to carry them out. I appreciate this work of pastoral planning with a view to providing more competent and fruitful assistance to the local Churches.

While important, these are not the only challenges that face. *The Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development* recently published “*Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*”, a document that sets forth the complexity of today’s challenges and offers clear pointers for all pastoral workers committed to working in this area.

I renew my encouragement to all the women’s Institutes of Consecrated Life that have organized and supported the commitment of their sisters in the fight against trafficking and in helping victims. While I invite you to continue this commitment, I also appeal to other Religious Congregations, both female and male, to join this missionary work, devoting personal service and resources so that they can reach remote corners of the earth. I also hope that foundations and benefactors will multiply and ensure generous and disinterested support for your activities. With regard to this invitation, I realize the problems that many Congregations have; indeed some, both female and male, may tell you: “We have so many problems to solve internally, we cannot...”. Tell them that the Pope said that “internal” problems are resolved by going out on the road, so that fresh air can enter.

Considering the extent of the challenges posed by trafficking, it is necessary to promote cooperation and commitment on the part of various ecclesial institutions and organizations. While pastoral responsibility is essentially entrusted to the local Churches and Ordinaries, it is also desirable that the latter be able to involve female and male Religious Congregations and Catholic organizations present in their territory in pastoral planning and action, in order to make the work of the Church more timely and effective.

In the fight against trafficking, Religious Congregations are fulfilling in an exemplary way their charismatic role in the life of the local Churches. Your insights and pastoral initiatives have paved the way for an effective and much-needed ecclesial response. At the same time, I would reiterate that “the journey of consecrated life, both female and male, is a journey of ecclesial discernment.” (*Address to Participants in the XXI Plenary Assembly of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG)*, 10 May 2019). It is the path chosen by the Holy Spirit: he is the one who creates “disorder” in the Church through his many charisms, yet he is also the creator of harmony in the Church. A path of rich gifts.

This is what being in the Church is about, with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit: it is the freedom of the Spirit. And if any of you have doubts about this, pick up the Acts of the Apostles and see what creativity the Spirit shows when believers have the courage to leave the synagogue, to go outside. “Things do not work outside the Church – this Church – and parallel to the local Church” (*ibid.*). But this Church, rich in so many charisms, is the one that will give us strength.

Dear Sisters, I bless you and entrust your good intentions for the future to the Virgin Mary; and I assure you of a remembrance in my prayers. And I ask you too, not to forget to pray for me, because I need it. And allow me one final bit of advice. Never end the day without thinking about the gaze of one of the victims you have known: this will be a beautiful prayer. Thank you.



*FINAL DECLARATION
TALITHA KUM ASSEMBLY*

27 September 2019

We, 86 delegates from 48 countries, representatives of 52 Talitha Kum networks committed to work to end trafficking in persons on all continents, gathered in Rome at the International Union of Superiors General in thanksgiving and prayerful discernment from September 21 – 27, 2019 to

- celebrate the 10th anniversary of Talitha Kum;
- evaluate the work done together according to the priorities set in 2016; and
- define the priorities for Talitha Kum International to support anti-trafficking efforts for the period of 2020-2025.

Human trafficking throughout the world takes many forms. As members of an international network and followers of Jesus Christ, we hear the call to respond to the root causes of human trafficking which transcend national borders. In order to live our mission and vision, we have identified three priority areas of structural injustice to address in the fight to end human trafficking.

First priority: The power differential between men and women in all sectors: economic, social, familial, political, cultural and religious.

We denounce the objectification and denigration of women that contributes to a global culture of exploitation and violence against women, reflected in human trafficking. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 72% of people exploited through human trafficking are women and girls. There are many forms of human trafficking including sexual exploitation,, labor exploitation, and illegal organ removal. When it comes to sex trafficking, females make up an even higher percentage of victims.

We call on the Church, as the Body of Christ and an example to society, to witness to the value and dignity of women and girls by promoting their proper role in all sectors. May this commitment be reflected within the Church by involving women in decision-making processes, especially on topics that impact them. We call on Episcopal Conferences, Religious Brothers and Sisters, and Diocesan

Clergy and laity to collaborate with women as equals in order to transform the culture of domination and to support the networks of Talitha Kum in their diocese and local communities. We call on governments around the world to ensure that law and policy promotes and protects the dignity and rights of women and girls.

We commit ourselves to empower one another as leaders in the fight to end human trafficking; to strengthen our networks' inclusive model of working together; to stand in solidarity with all who are oppressed, especially women and girls; and to promote the dignity and equality of all people.

Second priority: The dominant model of neo-liberal development and unfettered capitalism creates situations of vulnerability that are exploited by recruiters, traffickers, employers and buyers.

We denounce this unjust economic model that prioritizes profit over human rights, creates a culture of violence and commodification, and decreases funding for necessary social services, putting people at greater risk of being trafficked. This also affects programs of prevention, protection, support, integration and reintegration of trafficked people. We denounce the widespread corruption that allows this evil to continue.

We call on the Church to continue to use Catholic Social Teaching to critique social structures and promote economic and social justice. We call on governments to adopt just alternatives to the neo-liberal model of development; to implement anti-trafficking laws; and allocate more funding for the support of long-term programs to prevent human trafficking and assist survivors in their process of healing to re/integrate into society. These programs should be created with input directly from survivors and those who work with survivors such as Talitha Kum networks.

We commit ourselves to just and sustainable economic practices within our networks. We also commit ourselves to create spaces of interdisciplinary reflection, collaboration, and advocacy within the various ecclesial, interfaith, government, and international organizations according to Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching.

Third Priority: Unjust and inadequate immigration law and policy coupled with forced migration and displacement puts people at greater risk of being trafficked.

We denounce the unjust immigration laws and policies rooted in a culture of racism and xenophobia which deny the basic human rights of people on the move. We denounce the dehumanizing political rhetoric which feeds hate, division, and violence. We denounce the harsh immigration policy that drives victims of human trafficking into the shadows, making the work of identification of victims and prosecution of perpetrators more difficult.

We call on all Catholics and people of good will to take prophetic action consistent with Pope Francis' call to pray for, welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of traffickers. We call on governments to implement migration policy and border controls that prevent human trafficking and protect the safety, dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms of all migrants regardless of their migratory status.

We commit ourselves to work across borders and boundaries through our networks in order to ensure safe migration and prevent recruitment of migrants by traffickers during their journey and accompany them on their return. We commit ourselves to use our collective voice and engage government officials to promote and enforce just immigration laws and policies.

We know that only by working in collaboration and solidarity, weaving a web in love, will we be able to confront the structural issues that cause and perpetuate human trafficking. As members of the global Catholic Church, we affirm the Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking and will incorporate its directions into our work. We invite everyone to join us in prayer for successful implementation of this important work to end human trafficking. Together, we will create a future filled with prophetic hope by working together, forming a network of compassion and grace!

TALITHA KUM INTERNAL PRIORITIES FOR 2020-2025

The Assembly also set internal priorities to grow and strengthen our Network and deepen our impact in ending human trafficking. Talitha Kum in 2020-2025 will focus on improving our networking, communication, and formation resources and opportunities. We will prioritize work in education and prevention, survivor services, advocacy, and growing the network with priority in Africa and Asia.

STAFF UISG

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Sr. Patricia Murray, ibvm	Executive Secretary	<i>segretaria.esecutiva@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.236
Rosalia Armillotta	Assistant to the Executive Secretary	<i>ufficio.segreteria@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.238
Aileen Montojo	Financial Administrator	<i>economato@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.212
Patrizia Balzerani	Assistant Financial Administrator	<i>assistente.economato@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.249
Sr. Florence de la Villeon, rscj	International Coordinator Migrants Project	<i>rete.migranti@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.231
Patrizia Morgante	Communication Officer	<i>comunicazione@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.234
Sr. Thérèse Raad, sdc	Communication Office (Volunteer)	<i>comunicazione@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.233
Antonietta Rauti	Coordinator UISG Bulletin	<i>bollettino@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.230
Svetlana Antonova	Technical Assistant General Services	<i>assis.tec@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.250
Sr. Gabriella Bottani, smc	Coordinator Talitha Kum	<i>coordinator@talithakum.info</i>	0668.400.235
Sr. Mayra Cuellar, mb	Talitha Kum Database		
Sr. M. Cynthia Reyes, sra	Coordinator UISG Formators Programme	<i>formators.programme@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.227
Claudia Giampietro	Coordinator Office for Care and Protection	<i>formation@uisg.org</i>	0668.400.225
Angelo Spadavecchia	Grants Manager	<i>gm@uisg.org</i>	
Sr. Mary Niluka Perera, sgs	Catholic Care for Children International	<i>cccinternationaluisg@gmail.com</i>	0668.400.225
Canon Law Council Solidarity South Sudan		<i>canoniste@uisg.org</i> <i>solidarityssudan@gmail.com</i>	0668.400.223