

*The Sum of Justice for Human Trafficking:
Prayer of Lament and Libation
By Waltrina N. Middleton
Minister for Youth Advocacy and Leadership Formation*

Isaiah 61: 8

*For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.*

Isaiah 62: 8

*The LORD has sworn by right hand and mighty arm:
I will not again give your grain
to be food for your enemies,
and foreigners shall not drink the wine
for which you have labored...*

Congregations may wish to use this as a meditation on human trafficking and our response to it. The different sections of the meditation may be accompanied by a ritual of pouring Libation. Such a ritual is based in African tradition; water is poured into the land as a way of honoring and committing to justice for the land and its people, including the ancestors and generations yet to come.

Can we hear with the ears of Justice?

Hear the clattering sounds beneath the pots and pans in kitchens
where more than hot meals are stewing for the greedy;
for those who prepare the feast are the victims of greed and extortion,
themselves hungry and starving for restitution
from overstuffed bellies who refuse to share their crumbs.

Can we escape the stench of injustice?

The smell of slavery, forced labor, debt bondage,
and slavery-like practices must fill our the nostrils
just as it chokes the life out of children, women and men
who are deprived of liberty, freedom and independence.

Can we be moved by Justice?

To clothe the factory worker with fair wages as she mends garments
for major brands that profit from her toil?
To liberate the hands of the young boy soldier
forced into militia movements that inflict genocide?
To straighten the backs the farmworkers bent over in long labor
to supply fast food chains?

Where is Love in Justice?

In the **courage** of those who use their freedom to set free
those who are coerced into involuntary servitude and debt bondage.
In the **persistence** of those who use their pens to author policy and legislation,
creating tough consequences for those who commit crimes against humanity.

In the **eloquence** of those who use their voices to expose the camouflage hiding
sex trafficking of young girls and uproot the foundation of gender-based violence.
In the **strength** of those who serve as bands of love
to foster human security around the world, including the United States.

Are we vessels of Justice?

Can we recognize the traces of blood
on our steel, cell phones, clothing and food supply?
Will we speak and become the front lines of activism?
Will we faithfully offer recompense and stand in covenant with the survivors
of the fields, factories, mines, restaurants, private homes,
militias, and globalized businesses?

Will Justice remember...?

...the sacrificial suffering of those who died and those who survive?
...those who look away from the abject reality of slavery?
...remember those who hold no one accountable for these crimes
—not even themselves?

We are the sum of Justice.

Let us gather ourselves
so the sums of our bodies, minds and spirits will speak!
Let us find justice within ourselves.

Ashe' Amen.