

## Session 2

### Opening Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady, Comforter of the Afflicted, pray for us

St Josephine Bakhita, pray for us.

Intercessions, followed by: **Our Father....Hail Mary...Glory be....**

### **Scripture: Philemon 9-10,12,15-16**

I, Paul, an ambassador and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus, appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment...I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart...Perhaps this is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, as a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

### **Formation: from the 2015 Message for the World Day of Peace** (Pope Francis)

The Apostle asks Philemon to welcome Onesimus, formerly Philemon's slave, now a Christian and, therefore, according to Paul, worthy of being considered a brother. Conversion to Christ constitutes a new birth, which generates fraternity as the fundamental bond of family life and the basis of life in society....

Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person which allows him or her to be treated as an object. Whenever sin corrupts the human heart and distances us from our Creator and our neighbours, the latter are no longer regarded as beings of equal dignity, as brothers or sisters sharing a common humanity, but rather as objects. Whether by coercion or deception, or by physical or psychological duress, human persons created in the image and likeness of God are deprived of their freedom, sold and reduced to being the property of others. They are treated as means to an end...

I invite everyone, in accordance with his or her specific role and responsibilities, to practice acts of fraternity towards those kept in a state of enslavement. Let us ask

ourselves, as individuals and as communities, whether we feel challenged when, in our daily lives, we meet or deal with persons who could be victims of human trafficking, or when we are tempted to select items which may well have been produced by exploiting others...

I urgently appeal to all men and women of good will... not to become accomplices to this evil, not to turn away from the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, our fellow human beings, who are deprived of their freedom and dignity. Instead, may we have the courage to touch the suffering flesh of Christ, revealed in the faces of those countless persons whom he calls "the least of these my brethren" (Mt 25:40,45). We know that God will ask each of us: What did you do for your brother? (cf. Gen 4:9-10). The globalisation of indifference, which today burdens the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters, requires all of us to forge a new worldwide solidarity and fraternity capable of giving them new hope and helping them to advance with courage amid the problems of our time and the new horizons which they disclose and which God places in our hands.