



# Human Trafficking Lecture Series

*Press Release*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Local religious sponsor program to combat modern-day slavery

Pittsburgh, PA — Sept. 9, 2005 — A mother sells her daughter into servitude for \$25. An 8-year-old child is shackled and forced to make clay bricks in the hot sun. A teenage boy is snatched off the street and bartered for money and drugs.

If you think these things can't happen in 2005, you should attend a speakers series designed to shed light on this very real problem, known as human trafficking. The first lecture in the series—"Human Trafficking in the United States"—will be held on Thursday, September 22 at 7 p.m. in the Kearns Spirituality Center at La Roche College in Pittsburgh. The series is sponsored by PATH — Pennsylvanians Against Trafficking in Humans — a subcommittee of the Tri-Diocesan Sisters Leadership Conference, and is free and open to the public.

PATH hopes to educate the local community about the tragedy of this global problem, which robs its victims of their dignity and freedom as human beings.

Victims of trafficking often are promised the opportunity for a steady job or a better life, then are held against their will in subhuman conditions. Once enslaved, they may be raped, beaten, forced to work for no wages, or drafted into armed rebel groups to fight against their own countrymen.

"Trafficking is a global problem of huge proportions and demands the attention of the worldwide community," says Sister M. Christopher Moore, CSSF. Sr. Christopher and women religious from communities throughout the Pittsburgh, Greensburg and Altoona/Johnstown areas, are PATH members.

While it is impossible to accurately track the number of people who are caught up in this form of modern-day slavery, the U.S. State Department estimates that as many as 800,000 people are trafficked from country to country each year and more than 17,000 are brought into the United States.

— more —

Slavery, add two

Our government has been monitoring the problem since the year 2000 and has enacted legislation designed to punish the countries considered the worst offenders.

Sr. Christopher believes the cause is a good fit for the all the religious communities involved in PATH, and she hopes the speaker series will bring a local voice to the issue.

“Our silence is complicity,” she insists.

Subsequent programs in the three lecture series, which will discuss global trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women and children, will be held in October and November on local college campuses.

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For additional information about PATH or the speakers series, please contact Sr. Jean Murin RSM, at 412-578-6304 or e-mail PATH at [pghpath@hotmail.com](mailto:pghpath@hotmail.com).