

# Maryland bishops join fight against human trafficking, announce training sessions

**By Catholic Review Staff**

The Catholic bishops in Maryland have announced their full support for efforts to combat human trafficking, which, according to State Department estimates, results in 14,500 to 17,500 people being trafficked into the U.S. each year.

"As people of faith, this grave injustice cries out for a response," Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori; Washington Archbishop Donald Wuerl; and Wilmington Bishop W. Francis Malooly said in a statement, "Proclaiming Liberty to Captives," released April 3.

The statement noted that Maryland – due to its Interstate 95 corridor connecting major cities, truck and rest stops along highways, and the Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport – is a prime location for trafficking, often referred to as modern-day slavery.

In 2014, 396 survivors received services from the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force's Victims Services Committee.

"Human trafficking preys upon the vulnerable," the statement said, "such as those seeking to escape poverty and violence, runaways, and those who are hindered by language barriers and ignorance of the law."

The bishops noted that multiple entities are working to serve victims, break down trafficking networks, hold perpetrators accountable and craft legislation to support victims and end trafficking.

"The Catholic bishops in Maryland pledge to devote the resources of the Church to support, unity, and expand these efforts wherever possible," the statement said. "As a first step, we call upon our parishes, schools, social service agencies, hospitals, universities, and other institutions to initiate a comprehensive awareness campaign about human trafficking."

To that end, several public training sessions have been sponsored by the Maryland Catholic Conference, the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, the Catholic Hospitals of Maryland and Catholic Charities. Participants will learn tools for combatting human trafficking on the local level from national, state and local experts.

"As individuals, we may feel that the enormity of this crime against humanity cannot

be eradicated by our own small efforts,” the bishops wrote, “yet even one life rescued due to our increased ability to recognize and assist a victim of trafficking is of utmost importance.”

The following sessions will be offered, in English and Spanish, in the Archdiocese of Baltimore:

**St. Joseph, Hagerstown**

*April 26, 6-8 p.m. (English)*

*April 27, 6-8 p.m. (Spanish)*

**Sacred Heart of Jesus-Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, Highlandtown**

*April 30, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (English)*

*April 30, 1:30-3 p.m. (Spanish)*

**St. Francis de Sales, Abingdon**

*May 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (English and Spanish)*

**St. John Neumann Mission Church, Annapolis**

*May 20 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. (English)*

*May 27 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. (Spanish)*

*Also see:*

Trafficking equates to modern slavery