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Journeying with AGAPE, witness of treaty

By Sister Annah Theresa Nyadombo, HOLMC, Ph.D.



"These girls and women are learning skills in cake making, sewing, and computer learning. Some were able to carry on with formal education. Those who developed academically have since completed their High School Certificate learning while others have started new self-help projects to earn a living."

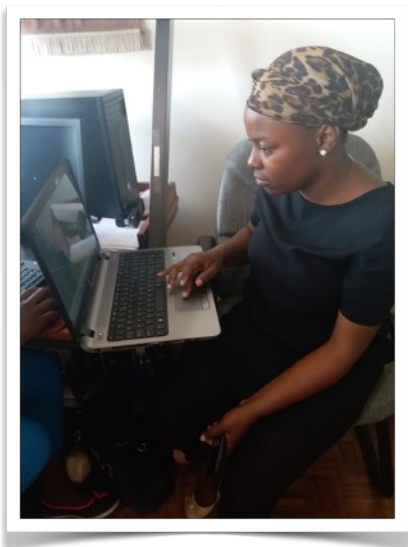
Aid Program

Agape Leona is dedicated to the restoration of human dignity of men, women and children who are vulnerable because of human trafficking, and those affected and/or infected with HIV/AIDS. AGAPE is an acronym for Acceptance, Generosity, Action, Prayer and Education. Leona is focused on alleviating pain to those suffering. AGAPE aims for

integral human development by empowering the victims with relevant knowledge to prevent and protect themselves from all forms of harm. It empowers women and girls who are victims of human trafficking with life-skills to restore their dignity through counselling and integrating them into families and community. There is an acute need to raise awareness of the dangers of trafficking of persons for cheap labour, sexual exploitation, smuggling of drugs, harvesting of organs, and to

network with other organisations that work to counter trafficking of persons. There is a need for organisations that support victims of trafficking so they can have a second chance for an education irrespective of gender.

In Zimbabwe, Agape Leona has been helping victims of trafficking in many different ways. It has helped girls and women to acquire life-skills that help them achieve a brighter future. These girls and women are learning skills in cake making, sewing, and computer learning. Some were able to carry on with formal education. Those who developed academically have since completed their High School Certificate learning while others have started new self-help projects to earn a living



Some programs of AGAPE include:

1. Advocacy - networking with interested organization to counter trafficking in persons.
2. Psychosocial support - counselling, training, and support services to victims of human trafficking, HIV/AIDS those affected and/or infected, sexually abused women, and other vulnerable individuals. This program is needed seriously when listening to stories of trafficking and exploitation.
3. Research through linking with Carmelite NGO - new information has been sourced and shared with different groups for new knowledge and capacity building. Some links have been shared that have allowed individual persons to understand the challenges of being trafficked.
4. Reading material - appreciation to the Carmelite NGO, a lot of material has been shared on the care for the environment. The information helped to understand the need to care for the environment.
5. Education - life skills training that promotes skills that lead to help self help jobs.
6. Health - there is a great need to support victims of COVID-19. In the country many unfortunate incidences were recorded, reported to the police of murder, disappearance of children and adults found dead. Due to COVID-19 there is an increase of patients in hospitals creating challenges in the provision of beds and resul-

ting in shortages of other required facilities for medical support.

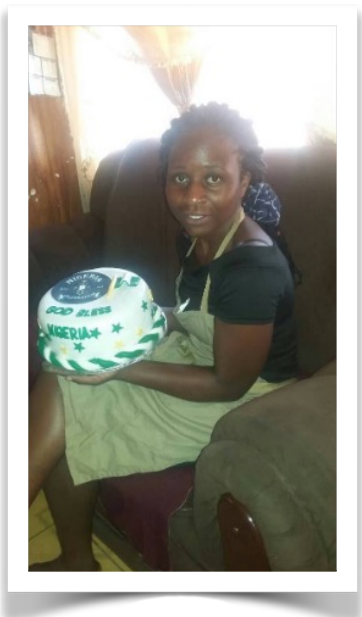
7. Food - Agape Leona has been supporting orphans, unfortunately this farming season some victims lost their crops due to drought. A lot of crops did not do well in some parts of the country. It leaves victims not having enough food for the coming months.

Agape Leona is currently working with 60 women to help them with life skills. They are also provided with counseling them to integrate back into their families and communities. Recent media reports have painted a dim picture of the situation and called upon the government and civil society to take an active role in curbing the scourge of trafficking in persons. Official police records in Zimbabwe suggest that human trafficking is rampant especially among women and the girls through abductions for sexual purposes, forced and early marriages, child labor, kidnapping, rape, and other related offences. Since there are no official statistics of trafficking, it is impossible to estimate with any accuracy the scale of human trafficking in Zimbabwe. However, measures to curb the practices are still a challenge due to lack of policies in place partly due to lack of legislative provisions supporting the ban on the practice. Currently there are laws that protect victims of human trafficking but the majority of people do not have access to this information. The worse is due to illegal crossing of borders of neighboring countries.



Zimbabwe is a source, transit and destination country for trafficked persons. Zimbabwe suddenly woke up to realize that the problem of human trafficking was rampant and orchestrated by well-organized syndicates that include recruitment agencies, embassy officials and drug dealers. Zimbabwe became the target country due to the deteriorating socio-economic situation of the country. It is estimated that nearly 70% of the adult population in Zimbabwe are unemployed. Consequently, these became the target for human trafficking. The Government has tried to repatriate some identified women but due to financial constraints, so far it has only managed to bring back just a quarter of the women stranded

in Kuwait. Upon arrival in Zimbabwe, these women narrated their ordeals that included sexual exploitation, not being allowed rest, physical abuse and many other inhuman treatments under the Kuwait government. Unfortunately, there are no organizations in Zimbabwe to deal with such cases. As a result, the only assistance that these women are getting is media publicity and some form of counselling. However, Agape Leona has identified several gaps in the assistance given to these victims that include; transport costs, communication, medical bills, costs of school fees and food shortages. Although the government efforts in rehabilitating these victims are on going, the problem remains there is no center to shelter victims and to help those that are in transit.



Scenario

The experiences I am going to share will help us understand the complexity of human behaviour when making choices. The experiences are also going to help us to know the realities of life. From experience one has learned that prevention is better than the cure. I am sharing the experiences of girls and women who had gone abroad to the Middle East to seek jobs. With joy, the women and girls freely received assistance from the Agents who had advertised the jobs and had promised free accommodations, pay for a passport and VISA, transport, pocket money, assigned to promised jobs. The girls were very happy and even invited other friends to register also to go. But some people questioned about the free package. This made some of them not share the next steps they were taking to go abroad. They linked only with the Agent whose role was to confuse, guide them and even warned them not to share what they were planning. They shared with very few people in order not to be discouraged to go.

Listening – Prevent Trafficking

The women and girls preferred to continue with the journey to search for greener pastures. But they needed

help to stop them from going. Awareness raising by providing information through education, creating spaces to discuss issues as they come by and to be able to understand situations. There is a need to build confidence and reality for unity to work together, and network with other organizations countering human trafficking, and sharing information and to promote active participation.

Partnership - to link and work together for the common good and develop strategies that enable participation.

Policies - to set clear policies that protect individuals or groups from harm or exploitation

Visibility - to be known as a network in the world, region, country working to support victims/survivors of trafficking, and to listen to God calling us in this unique responsibility to care for each other and to respect the dignity of the human person.

Publicity that can provide different activities that help people to have knowledge and understanding of the problems of trafficking in person.

Let's join Christians from all over the world to celebrate the Season of Creation: September 1 - Octubre 4



Pope Francis' **message for this Season** points out that **"it is an opportunity to cultivate our ecological conversion"** and asks that we **"return to pray in the great cathedral of creation, enjoying the 'grandiose cosmic choir' of countless creatures singing praises to God."**

Find out more at:

CarmeliteNGO.org/en/#info-home

The Church's initiatives on road to the COP27 (Climate Conference) and COP15 (Biodiversity Conference)

Pope Francis' message for the Season of Creation, delivered on July 16th in the Memory of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, was sounded in saying:

"Let me repeat: "In the name of God, I ask the great extractive industries – mining, oil, forestry, real estate, agribusiness – to stop destroying forests, wetlands, and mountains, to stop polluting rivers and seas, to stop poisoning food and people"."

In this sense, on one hand, **Francis** argued that "The **COP27 conference on climate change**, to be held in Egypt in November 2022 represents the next opportunity for all to join in promoting the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement". Likewise, he recalled that:

"The effort to achieve the Paris goal of limiting temperature increase to 1.5°C is quite demanding; it calls for responsible cooperation between all nations in presenting climate plans or more ambitious nationally determined contributions **in order to reduce to zero, as quickly as possible, net greenhouse gas emissions**. This means "converting" models of consumption and production, as well as lifestyles, in a way more respectful of creation and the integral human development of all peoples, present and future, a development grounded in responsibility, prudence/precaution, solidarity, concern for the poor and for future generations."

On the other hand, **Francis** reminded us that:

"The **COP15 summit on biodiversity**, to be held in Canada in December, will offer to the goodwill of governments a significant opportunity to adopt a new multilateral agreement to halt the destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of species. According to the ancient wisdom of the Jubilee, we need to "remember, return, rest and restore". In order to halt the further **collapse of biodiversity**, our God-given "network of life", let us pray and urge nations to reach agreement on four key principles:

1. to construct a clear ethical basis for the changes needed to save biodiversity;
2. to combat the loss of biodiversity, to support conservation and cooperation, and to satisfy people's needs in a sustainable way;
3. to promote global solidarity in light of the fact that biodiversity is a global common good demanding a shared commitment; and
4. to give priority to people in situations of vulnerability, including those most affected by the loss of biodiversity, such as indigenous peoples, the elderly and the young."

Based on Pope Francis' message, **Cardinal Michael Czerny**, Prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for the Promotion of Human Integral Development, pointed out that:

"Enough is enough. All new exploration and production of coal, oil, and gas must immediately end, and existing production of fossil fuels must be urgently pha-

sed out". In this sense, he added, "This must be a just transition for impacted workers into environmentally sound alternatives. The proposed **Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty** (FFNPT) holds great promise to complement and enhance the Paris Agreement".

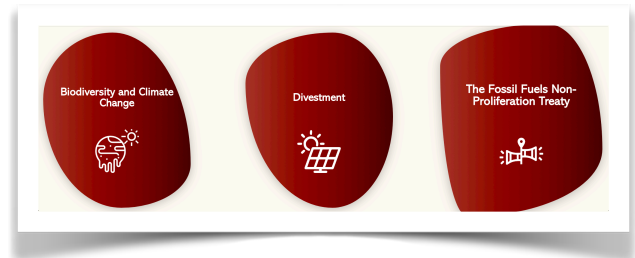
The above announcements frame the three initiatives carried out by the Church through the Dicastery and the Laudato Si' Movement (LSM), which are:

- [The Fossil Fuels Non-Proliferation Treaty](#)
- [Healthy Planet, Healthy People](#)
- [Fossil Fuels Divestment](#)

You individually are invited to support each of them by signing their corresponding petitorios within the LSM's website.

The importance and urgency of a **FFNPT**

It is a global initiative that strives for an international regime that complements the Paris Agreement in addressing the still growing supply of fossil fuels. In the current time it is urgent to support the FFNPT as soon as possible, given the heavy inertia of our governments to reach for solutions in the Climate Conferences. The Carmelite Family is proud to say that Carmelite Order, as well as the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Congregation together with a number of Carmelite Provinces (from Spain, Indonesia & United States) have already endorsed the call for a FFNPT. Likewise, the Carmelite Order committed itself to disinvest from Fossil Fuels in the last General Chapter 2019. Many Bishops from South America have already supported the Vatican's calls for a FFNPT. If your Carmelite Institution (province or congregation) is interested to endorse the call for a FFNPT, please, just email to eduardo@laudatosimovement.org to formalize it.



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