



# CHILDREN OF THE IMMACULATE HEART

Renewing All Things in Christ ~ Serving Survivors of Human Trafficking

Volume 2 Number 7 May/June 2018

## A Message from the President

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Happy Pentecost! It was beautiful to celebrate the birth of the Church yesterday with the descent of the Holy Spirit and to have a whole Octave to continue that celebration! It is my prayer that there will be a new effusion of the Spirit of Christ in our hearts and in our society to bring life where there is death, light where there is darkness, and hope where there is despair. We are looking forward to what the Holy Spirit has in store for Children of the Immaculate Heart over the course of the next year!

The latest big news for our apostolate is that we brought on 7 new clients and their 13 children back in April! There was a local organization that was unable to keep its doors open to their program for formerly trafficked women with children. After much prayer and discernment, the Board of Directors decided to bring their clients into our program and to hire the case manager, Kim Williams, from their program as well! Kim is a wonderful addition to our program with more experience working with trafficking survivors than all of our staff combined! She has been a real trailblazer in this field here in San Diego, educating juvenile court staff years ago about how to best help trafficked girls.

We had our first women's group last week for our new clients and it was a real joy to see them all together and experience how open and warm they were. I was touched by some of the things they said, demonstrating their spiritual maturity and willingness to be vulnerable. As we sat around the table sharing dinner and good conversation, writing down goals we all wanted to set, and things in our lives we wanted to work on, I could not help but think, "we made the right choice."

This expansion, of course, means expanded expenses too. Taking on these new clients will add about \$5,000/month to our budget, which is a small cost to be able to be a part of the lives of these women and



CIH Staff at our 2018 Gala and Silent Auction

help them find healing, hope in Christ, and economic and psychological stability. We are heading into the summer months when fundraising typically slows down. Would you consider making a donation today to help support these women? We now have 10 women and 20 children in St. Bakhita's Program and we are moving forward with licensing The Refuge, our residential therapeutic program for trafficked minor girls. We couldn't do this without you! Please be assured of our prayers for all of our benefactors and our profound gratitude!

Yours in Christ,

Grace Williams, CIH President & Executive Director

### Wish List

Our clients are in need of the following items.

Please contact us for drop off or pick up!

Car for client

Refrigerator

Diapers: Infant to 3 years old

Gift cards to grocery stores

Women's clothing sizes S-XXL

Girls clothing ages 3 to 8

Boys clothing 3 mos. to age 9

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## An Interview with Dawn Eden

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By Sarah Beveridge, Marketing Associate for CIH

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Dawn Eden, the keynote speaker at our Fifth Annual Gala this February, gave a particularly moving talk on the power of Christ's wounds in healing memories. I had the further opportunity to interview her about the issue of human trafficking and her personal message and life work as a theologian and author. We hope this interview is able to shed deeper light on the topic of healing and give hope for the restoration of many in Christ.

***How does the plight of the victims of human trafficking touch you, and why do you think the mission and work of Children of the Immaculate Heart is important?***

I am touched by the plight of trafficked victims because I was abused. As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, I have empathy for them. The work of Children of the Immaculate Heart is tremendously important because it not only takes women physically out of the world of human trafficking but also enables them to be healed in their mind and soul. Children of the Immaculate Heart operates from a place of Catholic faith and this makes a difference in treatment because the women are being treated with Christian love.

***For all those caught in a life of trafficking, what one message do you have for them?***

Tell them that they are deeply loved by God regardless of the evil they have suffered. God has a plan for them that is for their healing and wholeness. I would tell them to seek that healing and to make the sacrifices necessary to make that healing happen.

***What is one message, task, or call to action that you want everyone who attended the Fifth Annual Gala to hear?***

People need to be conscious that victims don't only need psychological help but spiritual as well. Not only priests can provide this, but every lay person can say or do something to encourage those who are suffering. It is very important for lay people to read up on the emotional, psychological, and spiritual wounds of trafficking and abuse and to learn how the Church addresses those wounds through her healing mission, because the truth is that everyone has either experienced trafficking or abuse or knows someone who has experienced them. I recommend my books *My Peace I Give You* and *Remembering God's Mercy* and the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen's books *Peace of Soul* and *Calvary and the Mass*. These give

concrete and practical advice that can help anyone in need of healing.

***How do you believe contraception and the sexual upheaval of the 1960's has fueled the rise in human trafficking?***

There is certainly a connection because contraception and abortion make it easier for people to manipulate women. If every act of sex had the potential of new life, then it would be more difficult for traffickers to exploit women because they would run the risk that the women they exploited would be out of commission for nine months. Thus, contraception and abortion help enable traffickers because they enable them to treat women as beasts of burden since they can be enslaved without the natural consequences of sex. All of this was predicted by Paul VI, who warned in *Humanae Vitae* that contraception would lead to the objectification of women.

***How has the Immaculate Heart of Mary led you to have spoken at Children of the Immaculate Heart's gala and how is she a part of your mission and message?***

The Immaculate Heart of Mary represents humanity's hope for healing in Christ. It represents the gift God gives us of uniting our suffering to His and finding meaning in it and being united with Him in the joy of the Resurrection. It is a great sign of hope and a testament to the dignity of every person in Christ. It is also a fitting inspiration for the work of Children of the Immaculate Heart.



Dawn Eden, author of *My Peace I Give You: Healing Sexual Wounds with the Help of the Saints*



Thank you all who attended the Wine and Beer Tasting in April! We raised \$14,000 that night! Thank you, Claire Reiss, for hosting the event! Read more about it in our next newsletter...

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## Beyond Survival: Learning a New Normal

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By a client of CIH

Growing up, I never envisioned my life to be this way or for me to have gone through a lot of the things that I've had to go through. Sometimes I sit and wonder *why me, why me. One thing after another, when am I gonna get a break?* But it made me stronger and able to get through. It has given me the power and understanding to be able to help other people through their dark times too. Growing up and having to deal with people doing to me what they wanted to made me think it was okay. I was a child. So I never had an idea in my head that it wasn't okay. I grew up thinking that it was normal.

Growing up, I was never given the affection that I needed. My family was never the affectionate type or never told each other they loved each other. I always sought that attention and love elsewhere. So, go figure, that I ended up running away at twelve and self-medicating with street drugs to numb the pain. At thirteen, I ended up meeting a boy who was nineteen, who had what I wanted (which was drugs). He showed me how to use my body to get what I wanted, and I ran with it because it was easy to me. I ended up getting pregnant at fourteen and having my first child at fifteen.

Throughout the years, I kept doing the only thing I knew how to do, using my body to survive. I kept seeking love in all the wrong places and letting myself get manipulated and taken advantage of and believing all the lies and promises. So, before I turned twenty-one, I ended up with four kids. I believed in my head that the physical and emotional abuse was normal because I just wanted to feel loved and wanted. He would tell me he hit me because he loved me and cared, and he didn't want no one else to want me.

After a while, I just became numb to the blows to the point where I had a broken jaw for two days and didn't even know because I was so used to the pain. Everyone always asked me how I did it for so long. After a while, when the drugs weren't working or the alcohol; I just started leaving my body while being with these men. I blocked all feeling and emotion which caused me to develop attachment issues, as well as detachment issues. It's weird how that works.

So, in what you have read so far, I've told you a little about the trauma I have endured throughout the years. Just to say that after leaving the life behind me, it still follows me and haunts me to the point where I involved myself in risky sexual behavior, lied to people, led them on, told them what I thought they wanted to hear, played with people's emotions. So many things that I regret. But

something I have to remember is *hurt people hurt others*.

It's crazy how, even after leaving the situation that caused them the trauma, a victim of sexual assault or sexual slavery will try to get out of a good situation. It is because of the many horrible things that follow them. After trying to get better for a long time, I tried to leave and always ended up going back to the abuse and drama. It was like I felt lost without it, like I didn't feel wanted or cared for because I never knew the definition of true love. I never knew the true meaning of someone wanting what's best for me or wanting to see me be happy and prosper in life.

For a long time, it was hard for me to allow new people into my life, especially men. Because I always thought they wanted something from me or they were just being nice to hold it over my head later or try to use me or manipulate the situation. I say all this to show that even after being out of the situation for months, years, however long, many therapy sessions, many mental breakdowns and anxiety attacks and panicking and flashbacks, after taking meds they said would help me.... I still suffer from all that I went through.

I have a good way of standing strong and acting like everything is okay because I had to do it for so long. Trauma is something that, even years and decades later, you still have moments when there's not enough talking about it and there's no magic pill you can take to make it go away.

I had to learn how to deal with my pain and manage it. Writing is one of my biggest stress relievers and being able to share my pain with others in

the hopes that maybe one person will understand that people who have been through serious trauma might lie, might act hard like they don't care, might be rude, might shut down and try to manipulate certain situations. But that's just the way our brains were programmed, to go into survival mode. It took me a while to leave that state of mind and use all these survival skills for the positive in my life.



Autumn Burriss, founder of survivors for solutions, speaks at the 2018 Human Trafficking Research Conference. Her slide reads, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not lead single-issue lives", a quote from Audre Lorde. It was a joy for us to see Autumn again, as she referred our first client to us back in 2014.



Christina Vasquez, the Certified Administrator for our license, works on the submission of our Program Statement, for which we recently received our County approval! Thanks be to God! Our application to open The Refuge, our home for trafficked minor girls, will now go to the state.

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## From Indifference to Making a Difference

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By Amy Vance, CIH Board Member

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San Diego District Attorney, Summer Stephan, in her human trafficking presentation, notes that despite her many years educating San Diegans on this horrific and pervasive problem, many people still seem to be indifferent to the epidemic. It is becoming socially acceptable for men to buy sex, or for men to organize other men to buy sex. People look the other

way when women and girls are used as objects. We wonder: how can this be? How is such apathy instilled in a culture where all shudder at the thought of encouraging or engaging in sex trafficking and the traumatic experiences women consequently have suffered?

This indifference is due to a lack of moral objectivity on the topic of prostitution. Society tolerates prostitution. When we look the other way when we see prostitution, sex trafficking is allowed to flourish and grow. Encouraging, or tolerating, prostitution is tolerating sex trafficking.

Here at CIH we talk to many people while we are educating the community on sex trafficking and more than once, we have run across caring people who, after they express outrage at the widespread sex trafficking, tell us that they think women should be able to do whatever they want with their bodies and so these people are “okay with it” if a woman wants to prostitute herself. They do not see how prostitution and sex trafficking are linked. It is a totally disconnected way of thinking, that we can tolerate the selling of a woman’s body when she consents, but we should not tolerate it when her body is sold by a third party without her consent.

This thinking is pervasive. Recently, a national radio host mentioned that he would be in favor of legalizing prostitution because, “Unless it harms society, a high class call girl should be able to make a living charging \$1000 a night.” He does not realize that there is no clear-cut line between a high class call girl and a woman who is trafficked. CIH has served both “high class” clients and women who worked on the streets and in hotels. Whether a third party is involved, or whether a woman consents, her body is being objectified and used as a commodity. There are many ways to rationalize prostitution but, in the end, regardless of consent, it is the objectification of a human person. Government exists to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. Legalizing the objectification of people does not contribute to human flourishing; it is not good for any human being.

Pope Francis speaks often about this connection. On February 9 and 12, 2018, during meetings with groups who had taken part in a reflection on human trafficking, the Holy Father said, “Few people have considered how communities and nations actually tolerate and encourage human trafficking, particularly as it relates to prostitution.” He told the groups, “If many young women victims of trafficking end up on the streets of our cities, it is because many men here -- young men, middle aged, older men -- ask for their services and are ready to pay.” The Pope is speaking of a disconnected way of thinking. We cannot abhor sex trafficking while at the same time accept prostitution.

How do we move from indifference to making a difference? Not one person should accept prostitution because it is not a victimless activity. We can promote the dignity of every human person with moral clarity and speak up when we hear of any activity, including prostitution, that uses the person as an object. You can make a difference the next time someone discusses the horrors of sex trafficking with you. Remind them that ending it begins with placing the outrage we have about sex trafficking directly next to our perception about prostitution; there will be no stopping sex trafficking until there is an end to the tolerance of prostitution.



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