



JOURNEYS

A new resource for Lent to inspire you
in the fight against modern slavery.

 **WE SEE YOU.**
THE CLEWER INITIATIVE



FOREWORD BY THE RT REVD AND RT HON DAME SARAH MULLALLY, BISHOP OF LONDON

During Lent, the Christian community recalls Jesus' time in the wilderness, when his life was stripped back to essentials and he wrestled with his calling. In that spirit of searching, we reflect on what really matters in our world now and how our lives might reflect the priorities of God's Kingdom of love, compassion, justice and hope. The Clewer Initiative's new resource Journeys will help us in that process.

The five victim stories are profoundly compelling and show us the different ways in which modern slavery manifests itself in the UK. Hearing from volunteers and church leaders on the frontline who have all had different modern slavery journeys provides clear examples to follow.

Journeys seeks to explore some of the complexities surrounding modern slavery and makes clear there are no simple solutions. Modern slavery is a global crime with sophisticated criminal organisations at its heart. However, there is hope. As the resource suggests, when people move from being bystanders to taking action, we can build resilient communities where modern slavery is noticed and prevented from getting a foothold.

Please watch the films, read the supporting material, and tell a friend – everyone has a part to play in making modern slavery a thing of the past.



INTRODUCTION BY BISHOP ALASTAIR REDFERN, CHAIR OF THE CLEWER INITIATIVE

Every modern slavery journey is different.

Some people are targeted in their bedrooms in suburbia, others on a busy street in Vietnam or an internet cafe in Albania. Many British victims are approached when they are already struggling with other vulnerabilities such as homelessness or school exclusion. Through coercion, deception and sometimes force, victims are taken from their homes and exploited against their will. Many people are trapped in slavery for years, not knowing who to turn to or trust. Others successfully escape their captors, only to be retargeted and exploited by another criminal gang. Even when someone finds freedom from exploitation, there is significant trauma which means their modern slavery journey never really ends.

Similarly, every volunteer and campaigner has a different story. For some, it is deeply personal. For others, it starts in a professional capacity and moves into the personal. It usually begins with the shocking realisation that slavery is not a thing of the past. Knowledge and awareness leads to action and mobilisation.

In our Lent 2023 course, we try to tell these stories - the stories of victims and volunteers - and we reflect upon how the journey of Jesus to the cross can inspire and inform our action. As we “journey” towards Easter in this devotional resource, our hope is that everyone will take the next step on their modern slavery journey.

HOW THE RESOURCE WORKS

Our five week Lent course will draw inspiration from the Stations of the Cross. Each week, we will look at a cluster of three stations and explore some of the central themes that arise from Jesus’ experience. We will also watch a mini film, finding out about a particular victim’s journey as well as the modern slavery journeys of churches and volunteers. We will have time for reflection and prayer - as individuals, groups or congregations. The devotional will include the Gospel reading for each Sunday in Lent.

This is an invitation and an opportunity to journey with victims and volunteers in a way that is honest about the challenges, possibilities and limitations of our endeavours, and yet calls us to trust the power of God’s grace to bring hope, healing and a greater sense of wholeness.

CARING FOR YOURSELF



This resource is about a subject which is emotive and upsetting. Before you start, think about how you will care for yourself and others. If you are distressed by the subject matter or it has triggered painful memories, we would urge you to share your feelings with others who might understand.



Modern slavery in the UK

Modern slavery is a term that includes any form of human trafficking, slavery, servitude or forced labour, as set out in the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This could be sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude and exploitation in criminal activity, such as county lines drug supply, shoplifting and cannabis cultivation. Potential victims of modern slavery in the UK are referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

NRM data doesn't tell the full story however because most victims in the UK never enter the NRM. They are either too scared to come forward, unaware of the process or fearful of deportation and authorities. The Global Slavery Index estimates there are around 136,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK.

How victims get enslaved

There are many different ways in which people get drawn into modern slavery. Common to most is vulnerability. Victims may come from difficult family backgrounds, poverty or areas where there is little work. Criminal gangs prey on this vulnerability, offering victims work, a chance to get off the streets or build a new life for themselves and make money. In the case of children drawn into gangs and county lines, they are often attracted by a sense of belonging and identity.

Those who offer these opportunities may organise travel to a different country, controlling every aspect of their trip, but the job offered turns out to be a lie and victims are forced to work in difficult and degrading conditions, with little or no pay. The threat of violence, to themselves or their families, hangs over them and traps them in their situation. Even if their trafficker does not physically control them, a mistrust of authority may stop them from going to the police.

Exploiters may be part of a large criminal organisation, a smaller operation or lone offenders. Usually they are highly organised and adept at disguising their activities



WEEK 1 THE JOURNEY BEGINS

We start our Lent pilgrimage thinking about Pilate's sentencing of Jesus. Nobody speaks up for Jesus. Nobody defends him. He is unjustly condemned to die.

CONSIDER... THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



1. Jesus is condemned – “Crucify him”
2. Jesus takes up his cross
3. Jesus falls for the first time

Jesus is mocked, spat upon and struck. The soldiers make him carry a cross to the place of the Skull. The cross is heavy and Jesus becomes weak, almost ready to faint. No one helps Jesus. He faces the agony of crucifixion alone.

As we recall the horror of Jesus' final day, we also reflect on the journey that many victims of modern slavery face today. We consider their isolation, mental anguish and physical pain, and the verbal abuse, injustice and abandonment. As we digest the true nature of the crime, we contemplate our own response and modern slavery journey.



WATCH
THE JOURNEY BEGINS





Film questions

- How did Mihail's journey begin? How was he condemned to slavery?
- What did the people around Mihail notice when he fell under the burden of his cross? How did they help him change the direction of his journey?
- Read Matthew 4:1-11 (the Gospel reading for next Sunday)
 - What temptations might you need to confront to get your modern slavery journey more aligned to God's call? (for example, the temptation to look for quick fixes, dramatic victories, or an easy path)
- What small steps could you take in response to what you've seen and discussed?



CONSIDER... THE CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS



- What do these contemporary stations communicate about how it feels to be a victim of modern slavery?
- How does slavery often begin?
- What sort of people do criminal gangs usually target?



PRAYER



Spend some time in silence recalling the film.

Gracious God, as we open our eyes to the cruel judgements and burdens which entrap so many of our sisters and brothers, give us the courage to look deeply and notice the cries for help, and to commit ourselves to respond with love and practical support. Through him, who came to lighten every burden, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

NEXT STEPS ON YOUR JOURNEY

Three ways to deepen your understanding of modern slavery and raise awareness in your community:



1. Sign up for one of The Clewer Initiative's one-off seminars. We have a selection of free online courses which focus on different aspects of modern slavery, or are designed for different audiences. For example, we have County Lines seminars for teachers, foster parents and grandparents, or seminars about identifying modern slavery for people involved in social action projects.
<https://theclewerinitiative.org/training-and-events>
2. Spread the word! Put up posters about spotting the signs of modern slavery in shared spaces such as your local library, swimming pool and church hall.
<https://theclewerinitiative.org/resources/awareness-downloads>
3. Organise a seminar or film night for people in your workplace school or church to find out more about modern slavery. Use the five Journeys mini films to prompt discussion or invite a local charity to share information about exploitation in your area.
<https://theclewerinitiative.org/resources/journeys>



We all have a part to play. We're not all going to be investigators, looking into the crimes, but we can all be the eyes and ears on the ground.

*Becca Faal,
Diocese of Gloucester
Safeguarding Officer*

FURTHER READING FOR NEXT WEEK



An introduction to Labour Exploitation

By Frank Hanson, Head of Prevention and Partnerships
at the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)

Labour exploitation is the most common form of modern slavery in the UK. Victims are forced to work for little or no pay, often under the threat of punishment. Thousands of people in the UK are potential victims of labour exploitation and are controlled by force, threats, coercion, abduction, fraud and deception.

Labour exploitation can take place in any sector. It is commonly found in a range of industries, including agriculture, food processing, construction, hand car washes, beauty, care, manufacturing and catering.

Someone may be a victim of labour exploitation if they:

- Show signs of psychological or physical abuse – they may appear frightened, withdrawn or confused
- Have their movements restricted and are always accompanied
- Are transported to and from work
- Lack protective equipment, suitable clothing, or training
- Work unusually long hours
- Do not have access to their passport or other identity documents
- Are forced to stay in accommodation provided by their employer
- Do not have a contract
- Are paid less than the National Minimum Wage
- Are afraid to accept money or payment

This is not an exhaustive list. Not all of the indicators will apply in every case, and some may not be immediately apparent.

Victims may be reluctant to tell their story through fear of reprisal or not being believed, or a feeling of shame about letting themselves be treated in this way, or because they do not know their rights and the treatment they are entitled to receive.

VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY REFERRED INTO THE NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM IN 2021

12,727

potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office in 2021, a

20%

increase compared to 2020 and the highest since the NRM began in 2009

58%

of potential victims claimed exploitation had occurred in the UK only (as opposed to overseas)

LABOUR EXPLOITATION

was the most common form of exploitation for adult potential victims.



SION'S JOURNEY

In 2017, Sion Hall, a senior detective with the Lancashire Police, was asked by the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office to use his imminent retirement to establish an Anti-Slavery Partnership. Having worked in policing for 30 years and set up the Human Trafficking Team for the county, Sion felt it was a perfect way to put his skills and experience to good use and work on something he was passionate about.

“For probably the first time in my life, my faith and work were coming together.”

Sion became the chair of the newly formed Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership (PLASP) and quickly began drawing in other statutory agencies, NGOs, charities and faith groups to work together. As a committed Catholic, he felt strongly about the importance of the church being closely involved with the Partnership.

PLASP meets monthly and focuses on raising awareness amongst frontline agencies, churches and community groups and the wider public, providing training and encouraging victim identification and support.

<https://twitter.com/PLASPsupport>



If you see something that doesn't feel right, it probably isn't right and you should report it.

Sion Hall, Retired Deputy Chief Inspector and Chair of the Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership (PLASP)



If you work in a social action project such as a homeless shelter or a food bank, it's really important that you know how to spot the signs of both victims and perpetrators.

Becca Faal, Diocese of Gloucester Safeguarding Officer