



Harvesting sweet corn in Cayuga County

Justice for Farmworkers

“There is no legitimate reason for treating farmworkers inequitably. They should be afforded the same rights, protections and benefits that other workers in New York State receive.

It is unacceptable for farmworkers to be denied the basic labor, safety and health protections other workers enjoy. Farmworkers make a significant contribution to the production of agricultural products in this great state and are deserving of being treated with dignity.”

-New York State Conference of Catholic Bishops

Make a difference during our upcoming Diocesan Public Policy Weekend:

Stand up for basic labor rights for the tens of thousands of people in New York who harvest fruits and vegetables, milk cows and tend farm animals.

For many years, faith organizations from around the state, including the NY State Catholic Conference of Bishops and the Catholic Diocese of Rochester, have stood in solidarity with farmworkers by supporting legislation called the **Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act**. This bill would give farmworkers the same rights afforded other workers—not special rights, but simply equal rights.

Those rights include:

- ◇ Overtime pay
- ◇ A day of rest per week if the worker chooses to take it
- ◇ Employer-provided disability insurance
- ◇ Public health protections including sanitation and housing standards
- ◇ Protections when bargaining collectively

Make sure that your parish participates in Public Policy Weekend any time during the month of February to advocate in favor of this bill. Then turn your petition signatures in to the Justice & Peace staff for your county by March 6.

You'll find a packet of information to educate your parish including the petition, pulpit announcements and prayers of the faithful on the [diocesan web site](#).

Want to collect **hundreds** of petition signatures to convince our state legislators to support farmworkers' rights? Use the **Power of the Clipboard!**

*Place the petition on clipboards with pens in every pew (or every other pew).

*Talk about the issue at all the Masses during the homily or right after

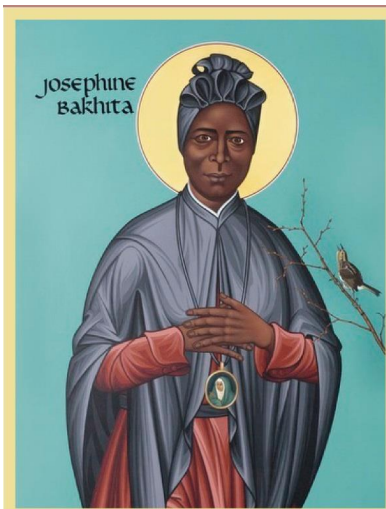
Communion and invite people to sign the petition right then in the pews.

This is much more effective than tabling with the petitions after Mass is over.



Friday February 8:

Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita and Annual Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking



St. Josephine (1869-1947, canonized 2000) was kidnapped as a child and lived in slavery in Sudan and Italy.

After being baptized into the Catholic Church, she took her case to court in Italy and was recognized as a free woman. She became a religious sister known for her gentleness and holiness. She is the patron of victims of human trafficking.

The variety of trafficking situations is horrifying. They include slavery, forced labor, sexual exploitation, and forced marriage. For example:

Farmworkers are sometimes trafficked— held in debt bondage to those who brought them into the US, their passports confiscated and wages stolen.

Runaways get lured into prostitution rings.

Young women from poor countries are tricked into domestic labor jobs they can't escape.

Children work as slaves in cacao harvesting in Africa.

YOU and your parish can help to stop this terrible sin against human dignity. Start by commemorating the Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking on February 8. You'll find prayers and more information at USCCB.org. Other action steps:

- ◇ Inquire if the hotels where you stay have signed the [Tourism Child-Protective Code of Conduct](#).
- ◇ Review your consumer choices and calculate how many slaves “work” for you at Slaveryfootprint.org then resolve to fast from overconsumption and to support Fair Trade products. See ethicaltrade.crs.org

Sad News from Albany

Despite the protest of thousands of us, the **abortion expansion bill** we've long opposed was passed and signed into law in late January. May the following statement from our NYS Bishops inspire us to redouble our efforts to provide women with the care and support they need to choose life.

We mourn the unborn infants who will lose their lives, and the many mothers and fathers who will suffer remorse and heartbreak as a result.

The so-called “Reproductive Health Act” will expand our state's already radically permissive law, by empowering more health practitioners to provide abortion and removing all state restrictions on late-term procedures. With an abortion rate that is already double the national average, New York law is moving in the wrong direction.

We renew our pledge to offer the resources and services of our charitable agencies and health services to any woman experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, to support her in bearing her infant, raising her family or placing her child for adoption. There are life-affirming choices available, and we aim to make them more widely known and accessible.



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