Happy Monday!

On this date, February 2, 1848, the first Chinese immigrants arrived in San Francisco aboard the American brig *Eagle*. This arrival marked the beginning of Chinese migration. By the late 1800s, estimates put the Chinese population of San Francisco at 45,000, almost all living within the confines of Chinatown.

The seaport nature of San Francisco enhanced activities related to the trade in slaves. Girls as young as eight were shipped from China – often under false pretenses – and then sold into slavery upon arrival in San Francisco. Their lives were short and brutal.

Now, nearly 200 years later, the trafficking of human persons continues to flourish.

January was dedicated to raising awareness on human trafficking, with National Human Trafficking Awareness Day landing on January 11th. Nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and other educational institutions use the raised awareness to promote efforts to educate the public and raise awareness on prevention, identification, and response.

Human trafficking thrives in conditions of vulnerability: poverty, migration, conflict, lack of labor protections, and social isolation… the very conditions that continue to make media headlines daily.

Human trafficking and major sporting events have become increasingly linked in public discourse. Around the world, large-scale sporting events have been associated with sex trafficking increases as well as documented cases of forced labor, fraudulent recruitment practices, and labor exploitation. High-profile awareness campaigns have drawn public attention to these concerns across events such as the Olympic Games, Formula 1, the Super Bowl, and the FIFA World Cup.

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* notes that the worldwide, "solemn proclamation of human rights is contradicted by a painful reality of violations, wars and violence of every kind, in the first place; genocides and mass deportations, the spreading on a virtual worldwide dimension of ever new forms of slavery such as trafficking in human beings, child soldiers, the exploitation of workers, illegal drug trafficking, prostitution." (158)

As the official arm of our diocese in matters of charity, justice and serving the needs of the poor and marginalized, Catholic Charities frequently encounters people who may be vulnerable to traffickers looking for an opportunity to strike, including immigrants, runaways, those working high risk jobs for minimal wages, and those suffering mental or emotional behavior challenges. We look for telltale signs of possible human trafficking such as extreme malnutrition, abuse signs, branding tattoos, excessive fear, submissiveness, scripted answers, or being controlled by someone else.

Super Bowl Sunday is this upcoming weekend, February 8. It coincides with the Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita- a powerful symbol of resilience, faith, and hope for survivors of human trafficking. https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-josephine-bakhita/

This year, we are blessed with a meaningful opportunity for collective action: uniting prayer, awareness, and education to affirm the dignity of every human person and to stand in solidarity with those affected by exploitation. His Excellency Oscar Cantú, Bishop of San Jose, California, leads an opening prayer and offers thoughts on the Church's role in combating human trafficking.

As we all prepare to enjoy the Super Bowl event, and the creative commercials during the breaks, I feel it is more than enlightening to take the time to watch a 90-minute webinar dedicated to exploring the intersection of human trafficking and major sporting events.

All are invited to watch the recording **here** – password: qh5@?h#E

God bless you all!

Deacon Mike

https://usccb.zoom.us/rec/play/3vsMwAdWm-dPGiDNvmSBPbDA2d8vZXz9RSl1Atypt6zjOJgaLGrA0WE2XqRNmai1a1FyDFb-5oDY3MVR.OdFKxw9Vsj3qQOvW?eagerLoadZvaPages=sidemenu.billing.plan_management&accessLevel=meeting&canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&continueMode=true&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fusccb.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2FvVPX4PlfST2EAsr3NuWsHRLwgHfMOgyvEx_jmeqRFQW0bgczmaEhCk4tZgVNPRQJ.6JeQAHWwjuWcEQJ5%3Ffrom%3Dhub