OPENING PRAYER
O God, Creator of the heavens and earth,
Help us to see one another through eyes
Enlightened by understanding and compassion.
Help us listen to the voices of all our sisters
with respect and attention.
Open our ears to the cries of
women who have been the victims of violence,
women who have been denied dignity, education, food,
health, even life itself, because they are female.
Empower us to be instruments of justice for all,
for in the wholeness of Christ, we are all one.

REFLECTION
When it comes to setting women free from every kind of
exploitation and domination, the Gospel contains an ever
relevant message which goes back to the attitude of Jesus
Christ Himself. Transcending the established norms of his
own culture, Jesus treated women with openness, respect,
acceptance and tenderness. In this way, He honored the
dignity which women have always possessed according to
God's plan and in His love.

As far as women's rights are concerned, there is an urgent
need to achieve real equality in every area: equal pay for equal
work, protection for working mothers, fairness in career
advancements, equality of spouses with regard to family
rights... and to rights and duties of citizens in a democratic
state. This is a matter of justice but also of necessity.

John Paul II, Letter to Women, 1995

Gaudium et Spes, (60)

CLOSING PRAYER
We believe in the goodness and value of women,
As Christ did throughout His life;
We rejoice in their strength and compassion.
We look forward to the future in faith and hope,
Praying and working for the day
When all God's children are truly respected
And free to develop and use all their gifts
And to share in all the benefits of human life and work.
We look forward to an age of peace
When violence in all its forms is ended
And men, women and children live in true peace.
Activities

1. Have your group read the “Headlines: Women in the News” sheets, then in small groups go over the letter from John Paul II and discuss the questions; relate the Headlines to the discussion.

And

2. Go over the Women’s Rights Timeline and the Fact Sheets on Women’s Rights. Have your group read the case studies related the Trafficking Women. Share the February 20, 2002 article about Human Trafficking On the Rise.

3. Read over the news brief below to see one example of what people of faith are doing to respond to violence and trafficking. Go to the pages on the Women’s Human Rights Treaty for more information on supporting it. Also, see the following websites of groups working to combat trafficking: www.irex.org; www.catwinternational.org.

Discuss:
Where you surprised about the numbers and facts involved? Why, why not?
Is this a problem the average American knows about? Why, why not?
What concerns in the Human Rights Fact Sheets are relevant to this particular problem?

Given the centrality of the dignity of the human person, what perspective does Catholic Social Teaching offer on this issue?

How do traditional expectations of women’s roles and men’s roles contribute to this problem?

What role does poverty and limited opportunities for human development play in this problem?

What role does the goal of profit play?

NEWS BRIEF: INDIAN STUDENTS MONITOR ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN (FROM AMERICA, FEB. 25, 2000)
St. Joseph’s Evening College in Bangalore, Southern India organized a conference (in collaboration with local women’s groups) which was attended by 180 students from 15 colleges on violence against women. Fr. Ambrose Pinto, SJ, said the gathering not only helped educate students about violence against women, but also encouraged them to assume responsibility to work on preventive measures. Students set up a “women watch” program that will monitor and respond to cases of violence against women in their region.
Headlines:

**WOMEN IN THE NEWS, 2000-2002**

**Governments Urged to Stop Violence Against Women**
New York, June 2, 2000: On the eve of a five-year review of the United Nations women's conference, Human Rights Watch today criticized many governments for tolerating widespread violence against women while spouting rhetoric in favor of women's rights. The group called on governments to implement specific measures to fight violence against women.

**Afghan Girls Forced To Sell Sex— Or Starve**
New York, April 2002, Marie-Claire: In the refugee no-man's-land of Pakistan, Afghan virgins as young as 13 are forced by male relatives or by older adults into prostitution; these girls are driven in a desperate attempt to feed their loved ones.

**Ethiopia: Government Attacks Women Lawyers**
October 17, 2001: Deep concern is expressed regarding the recent suspension from operation of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), a leading local nongovernmental women's rights organization because of their advocacy for full human rights for women.

**Thousands of Thai Women Trafficked to Japan**
New York, September 21, 2000: Thousands of Thai women are “trafficked” every year into Japan, where many of them endure slavery-like conditions in the Japanese sex industry.

**Morocco: Action Urged on Legal Code Reform**
Washington, March 20, 2001: King Mohammed VI stalls on appointing women's rights activists to a new royal commission on changing Morocco's “personal status” code and little progress is seen on eliminating sex discrimination from the country's laws.

**Women in Prison Abused In the U.S.**
the California State Legislature held hearings in January 2001 to address reports of continuing mental, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as medical neglect in the state's women's prisons. The hearings were prompted by the unnecessary deaths of nine women at the Central California Women's Facility within a two-month period at the end of 2000.

**Iran Blocks Overseas Education for Women**
New York, January 26, 2001: Iran's Guardian Council objects to Iranian women receiving equal access to higher education abroad. A bill to lift the 20-year limits on women studying abroad was scuttled last week by the Guardian Council, the conservative body that must vet all legislation for compliance with its view of Islamic precepts.

**Greece: Urgent Action Required on Trafficking**
New York, July 24, 2001: Trafficking of women into Greece for forced prostitution is a serious human rights problem the government has continually failed to address.

**South Africa: Sexual Violence Increases Among Younger and Younger Girls**
Johannesburg, March 27, 2001: Because of a widely-believed myth that sex with a young girl will cure AIDS, more and more—younger and younger—girls are being raped in what is being called an epidemic of violence. Even baby girls have been violated, and HIV and AIDS is now being transmitted to girl children in record numbers. [Bill Moyers' news program on PBS recently interviewed some of these young girls and the women who are trying to protect and provide healing for them.]

**Sudan Blasted on Women's Ban**
Washington, September 8, 2000: On September 3, 2000, the Governor of the State of Khartoum of the Sudan, Mr. M. M. al-Khalifa, imposed a ban that prevents women from working in public places where they come into direct contact with men. Stoning and amputation are still punishments for women in this country.

**Tanzania: Violence against Women Refugees**
New York, September 26, 2000: Burundian refugee women confront daily violence in Tanzanian refugee camps. Widespread sexual and domestic abuse have left many of these women physically battered, psychologically traumatized, and fearful for their lives.
WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Headlines: (continued)

WOMEN IN THE NEWS, 2000-2002

Human Rights in Saudi Arabia: A Deafening Silence

U.S. Domestic Workers Not Protected From Labor Abuses:
In the United States, live-in domestic workers remained explicitly excluded from protection under the National Labor Relations Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act . . . [this] has a disproportionate impact on women.

Peru Not Acting to Improve Domestic Violence Law
Washington DC, March 31, 2000: The Peruvian government was urged to turn its domestic violence legislation into an authentically effective instrument for the protection of abused women.

Uzbekistan Turns its Back on Battered Women
New York, July 10, 2001: Uzbek women battered by their husbands have little hope of protection from the government.

Serb Gang-Rapes in Kosovo Exposed
New York, March 21, 2000: Commanding officers bear criminal responsibility for a pattern of gang-rapes by Serbian and Yugoslav forces in Kosovo during the NATO bombing campaign.

Out Go the Taliban, but Will Afghan Women Be Excluded Again?
Editorial, November 16, 2001: International Herald Tribune. In recent history, Afghanistan has proved a particularly grim place for half the population. The Taliban regime succeeded in virtually erasing women from public life. Afghan women were denied rights to education, movement, dress, health care and association. What role will women take in the new regime?

Jordanian Parliament Supports Impunity For Honor Killings
Washington D.C., January 27, 2000: The Jordanian Lower House failed to end impunity for men who murder female family members in the name of preserving the “honor” of the family.

Guatemala: Women and Girls Face Job Discrimination
Guatemala City, February 12, 2002: Women in Guatemala’s largest female-dominated labor sectors face persistent sex discrimination and abuse. “In Guatemala, where domestic workers number tens of thousand and domestic labor is one of the principal forms of employment for poor, especially indigenous women, the adoption of specific legislation to protect domestic workers remained a low priority for the government.”

South Africa: Women Farmworkers In Peril
“In post-apartheid South Africa . . . women farmworkers were the lowest paid, had the fewest benefits, were often forced to become squatters, and were targets of harassment and violence by male farmers and male farmworkers alike.”

HEADLINES: SIGNS OF HOPE

Bosnia: Landmark Verdicts for Rape, Torture, and Sexual Enslavement
New York, February 22, 2001: Human Rights Watch today welcomed the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) decision to convict Dragoljub Kunarac, Radomir Kovac, and Zoran Vukovic for rape, torture, and enslavement. The decision was announced today in the Hague. The three received sentences of twenty-eight, twenty, and twelve years respectively.

Across the Globe - Progress on Some Fronts:
In 2001 . . . women’s rights activists made notable progress on several fronts—leading governments to condemn sexual violence against women in armed conflict, holding governments accountable for failing to protect women from domestic violence, and forcing governments to acknowledge and treat trafficking as a human rights crisis.
South Africa: U N Conference on Race Recognizes Gender Vulnerability. At the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), women's rights activists successfully worked to have the final document reflect how sex and race intersected to render women vulnerable to sexual violence in armed conflict and to trafficking, and reinforced women's right to transfer their nationality, on an equal basis with men, to their children.

Ethiopia: Ban Lifted on Women's Group In mid-O ctober 2001, activists rallied to press the Ethiopian government to lift a ban on the only women's rights organization in Ethiopia.

Afganistan: International Attention Paid to Women's Rights The war in Afghanistan mobilized international attention to women's human rights in that country, with the U. S. government and its allies giving women's rights a prominent place in the propaganda war against the Taliban.

Yugoslavia: Crimes Against Women are Crimes Against Humanity On February 22, 2001, the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia (ICTY) issued a landmark verdict for rape, torture, and sexual enslavement, holding that rape and enslavement rose to the level of crimes against humanity in the Bosnian town of Foca. Slobodan Milosevic... was also indicted in relation to sexual assaults inflicted by Serbian forces on Kosovo Albanian women, although initially the indictment failed to include these gender-specific crimes.

U. S. State Department Looks at Trafficking in Women: In July 2000, under the terms of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, the U. S. State Department released its first annual trafficking report.

Europeans Work To Prevent Violence Against Women: The European Commission allocated 20 million euros (U. S. $17.2 million) over three years through the Daphne Program for grants to N G O’s and public institutions working to prevent violence against women, children, and young people in Europe.

Much of the reported news above was gathered by Human Rights Watch, http://www.hrw.org/women/
Excerpts of the Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women on the Eve of the Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in Beijing in September 1995

Before all else, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the United Nations Organization for having sponsored this very significant event. The Church desires for her part to contribute to upholding the dignity, role and rights of women, not only by the specific work of the Holy See’s official Delegation to the Conference in Beijing, but also by speaking directly to the heart and mind of every woman.

In particular I wish to consider the essential issue of the dignity and rights of women, as seen in the light of the word of God.

Unfortunately, we are heirs to a history which has conditioned us to a remarkable extent. In every time and place, this conditioning has been an obstacle to the progress of women. Women’s dignity has often been unacknowledged and their prerogatives misrepresented; they have often been relegated to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude. This has prevented women from truly being themselves and it has resulted in a spiritual impoverishment of humanity. Certainly it is no easy task to assign the blame for this, considering the many kinds of cultural conditioning which down the centuries have shaped ways of thinking and acting. And if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed, on the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision. When it comes to setting women free from every kind of exploitation and domination, the Gospel contains an ever relevant message which goes back to the attitude of Jesus Christ himself. Transcending the established norms of his own culture, Jesus treated women with openness, respect, acceptance and tenderness. In this way he honoured the dignity which women have always possessed according to God’s plan and in his love. As we look to Christ at the end of this Second Millennium, it is natural to ask ourselves: how much of his message has been heard and acted upon?

As far as personal rights are concerned, there is an urgent need to achieve real equality in every area: equal pay for equal work, protection for working mothers, fairness in career advancements, equality of spouses with regard to family rights and the recognition of everything that is part of the rights and duties of citizens in a democratic State. This is a matter of justice but also of necessity. Women will increasingly play a part in the solution of the serious problems of the future: leisure time, the quality of life, migration, social services, euthanasia, drugs, health care, the ecology, etc. In all these areas a greater presence of women in society will prove most valuable, for it will help to manifest the contradictions present when society is organized solely according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity, and it will force systems to be redesigned in a way which favors the processes of humanization which mark the “civilization of love”.

Then too, when we look at one of the most sensitive aspects of the situation of women in the world, how can we not mention the long and degrading history, albeit often an “underground” history, of violence against women in the area of sexuality? At the threshold of the Third Millennium we cannot remain indifferent and resigned before this phenomenon. The time has come to condemn vigorously the types of sexual violence which frequently have women for their object and to pass laws which effectively defend them from such violence. Nor can we fail, in the name of the respect due to the human person, to condemn the widespread hedonistic and commercial culture which encourages the systematic exploitation of sexuality and corrupts even very young girls.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:
Respect for human dignity is the heart of Catholic Social Teaching. In the letter above, the Pope connects dignity and women’s rights.

A) Is the ability of women to exercise their human rights a precondition for developing their full human dignity? In Western culture and in other cultures, can you identify situations which overtly or subtly prevent women from developing their full human dignity? (See the Pope’s references to certain situations.)

B) Are women ever denied their human rights because others do not recognize their full human dignity? How is this related to the situation expressed in question A?

C) The Pope also discusses the progress of women toward full equality. What progress toward full equality do you see in this society? What mixed messages does our culture, media, movies and TV send out about women? How has this impeded the progress the Pope wishes to see?
Women’s Rights Timeline:
Women's Rights are Human Rights

1948: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims “the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.”

1975: The First United Nations Women's Conference in Mexico City launches the UN Decade for Women, which become a catalyst for the global women's movement.

1979: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls on nations to “modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women . . . which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes.”

1980: The Second United Nations Women's Conference in Copenhagen is a mid-decade evaluation of the UN Decade for Women, finding little progress was being made.

1985: The Third United Nations Women's Conference in Nairobi helps to catalyze the emergence of women's non-governmental, non-profit organizations (NGOs) world-wide. Violence against women was a central issue for the NGOs at this conference (for example, domestic violence as the most universal abuse of women's human rights; trafficking in women as a multi-billion dollar industry; state violence against women as a weapon of war; violence toward women in prison). However, governments were not yet ready to include the issue in the official document, Forward Looking Strategies. Government's willingness to discuss violence against women and their collusion in it would demand more political organizing by women's groups.

1990: Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch institute a specific focus on women's human rights. With the growing pressure of rising consciousness and information concerning the abuse of women throughout the world, as well as the lobbying efforts of many women human rights workers. Traditionally human rights organizations had concentrated on the countries' abuse of their citizens' political and civil rights. Unlawful arrests, torture, disappearances and the abuse of the rule of law, the so-called first generation of rights, were primary areas of research, documentation and protest. Within this range of issues, equal attention was given to women, men, and children. However, women's rights are more often abused in social, economic or cultural arenas of life, the so-called second generation of rights, so were often overlooked by the human rights approach.

1993: The Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women proclaims that “violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women.” Also, the United Nations Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, became the galvanizing event to unite the numerous local and regional efforts to secure women's human rights. The Vienna Declaration declares that “the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, and the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objective of the international community.” (#18) Success in including women's human rights in a UN Document does not automatically guarantee success in eliminating all violations of women's human rights. It does, however, give human rights advocates an effective tool for calling upon governments to fulfill the obligations they agreed to by signing the agreement.

1995: The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing calls for gender issues to be fully mainstreamed into government policies and actions—making women full and equal partners in society, and creating a strong platform for action and advocacy for women.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) defines political and civil rights within the UN human rights framework. As of 1994, 126 countries had ratified the ICCPR. The Covenant also has an Optional Protocol that creates an individual complaints procedure for persons whose civil and political rights have been violated. In order to utilize the Optional Protocol, the state being held accountable must have signed the protocol and all means of obtaining redress at the national level must be exhausted. The ICCPR also has a Second Optional Protocol aimed at the abolition of the Death Penalty. As of February 1997, 135 countries had ratified the ICCPR.

Key Concepts

Women’s ability to enjoy civil and political rights is shaped by economic, social and cultural circumstances, which often limit their autonomy and legal capacity. Traditionally, state-sponsored abuses of political and civil rights (freedom of expression and association, for example) have been seen as more urgent than denials of economic, social and cultural rights. However, the latter are frequently perpetrated by private non-state actors in the home or workplace or in the community, and particularly affect the status of women. Advancing women’s political and civil rights means including women in traditional definitions of these rights so that female human rights activists are protected from abuses by states. It also means making gender-specific violations by state actors more visible, for example, the use of rape and sexual abuse as forms of torture. Importantly, promoting women’s civil and political rights requires an understanding of how denials of economic, social and cultural rights for women obstruct their enjoyment of political and civil rights. The idea of holding non-state actors accountable for violations of human rights is also a key part of expanding the definition of civil and political rights from a gender-perspective.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) defines economic, social and cultural rights within the United Nations (UN) human rights framework. As of February 1997, it had been ratified by 135 countries. In addition to the ICESCR, there are many conventions protecting rights in a variety of areas. These conventions were created and are monitored by other international bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) who deal with workers’ rights, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Education, Culture, and Scientific Organization (UNESCO).

There is also the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, which addresses many contemporary economic and social issues. Economic and social rights are imperative to women’s day-to-day lives and survival. They include the right to work, right to an adequate standard of living, right to food and water, right to own, inherit and control land and housing, right to accessible and affordable public services in health and education.

Key Concepts

The consideration of economic, social and cultural rights is critical to women because of the many ways in which denials of economic and social rights are gender-based and directly impact on the capacity of women to enjoy civil and political rights.

In advocating that human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, women insist that economic and social rights—the second generation of rights—are equal to and essential for the enjoyment of civil and political rights, the first generation of rights. This agenda is critical because women often experience the denial or abridgment of their rights in the social and economic realm.
Women’s Human Rights: an Overview (continued)

Women’s Poverty and the Right to Development

It took the UN system almost 40 years to recognize the right to development and adopt the Declaration on the Right to Development (1986). The Declaration defines development as “A comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits there from.” The right to development was reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (1993). More recently, the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities commissioned a report on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty. The focus of this report is on steps to be taken by governments and development agencies throughout the world to alleviate and eradicate poverty. The Millennium Assembly of the UN looked at poverty as a key theme.

Key Concepts

Women have had a long history of struggling to secure the most fundamental of economic and social rights such as education and adequate medical treatment. Women continue to seek equal opportunity and freedom from sexual and physical harassment in the workplace. Pay equity, that is equal pay for work of equal value, remains an elusive goal for women everywhere.

At a systemic level, there is a growing gap between the rich and the poor, both within nations and between nation states. It is no accident that women and children bear the greatest burden of poverty in all parts of the world; women’s poverty is a direct result of social and economic discrimination. However, within the current framework of a market-driven economic belief system, any recognition of a core set of economic and social rights is opposed on the grounds that it obstructs or distorts the operation of the market. But, this belief should not be used as a continuing reason for denying women their human rights.

Women, Racism and Minority Rights

Combating racism and defending the rights of minorities have been principle areas of work within the United Nations human rights system since its inception. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which is constituted under the Commission on Human Rights, is an important and influential body with this dual mandate.

Key Concepts

Women’s human rights activism in this area encompasses solidarity with minority groups on the grounds of opposing all forms of discrimination. At the same time, it supports women members of minority communities who often experience double or multiple layers of discrimination, based on their membership in different groups as well as on their sex. Women who belong to minorities that are discriminated against, face a particularly difficult struggle to name the gender dimension of their oppression both within and outside their communities.
WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women’s Human Rights: an Overview (continued)

WOMEN AND TRAFFICKING

The concept of trafficking in women was first defined in human rights terms in the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Persons and the Exploitation and the Prostitution of Others (1949). Today, multiple social and economic crises in southern countries and in Eastern Europe are fuelling the flow of women and children, and sometimes men, across national borders where they are subjected to economic, sexual, and physical exploitation.

Key Concepts

The traditional understanding of the term trafficking was linked to forms of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution. In 1994, the UN General Assembly put forward an expanded definition that includes illicit and clandestine transport of persons for the purposes of exploiting their labor or sexuality, whether in the context of domestic work, sweat shops, “entertainment,” prostitution, false marriage or false adoption. The use of false promises, deceit and/or coercion is a hallmark of all trafficking activities. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities produced an important study on trafficking in conflict situations.
Human Trafficking on the Rise, Warns U.N.: 700,000 to 2 million a Year Enslaved

NEW YORK, FEB. 20, 2002 (Zenit.org) - The United Nations said the world faces an epidemic of human trafficking as a U.N. crime prevention agency launched the second stage of its television campaign against the illicit industry. The U.N. drug control and crime prevention agency (UNDCP) in Vienna, Austria, on Tuesday said human trafficking had become the fastest growing facet of organized crime, the Financial Times reported.

Human rights groups estimate 700,000 people are enslaved every year, the paper stated. In 2000 the U.S. government estimated the figure could be as high as 2 million. The business involves tricking or coercing mainly women and children, most of whom come from poor countries, and forcing them to toil in factories, work camps or as domestic servants, Europol says.

Criminal organizations are estimated to earn $7 billion a year from economic and sexual slavery, the Financial Times said. Asian prostitutes in the United States can now sell for $20,000, while Russian women working in the brothels of Belgium are reported to bring in as much as $7,500 a month, $7,000 of which goes to their overseer, the United Nation says.

The UNDCP 30-second and one-minute public service announcements, which are produced in nine languages, will run on local TV stations in countries where trafficking originates as well as in destination countries. The agency hopes to raise awareness as well as warn the millions of potential victims, many of whom come from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, of its dangers. In November 2000, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a protocol against human trafficking, which also addresses the protection of victims and international cooperation.

Factors Promoting Sex Trafficking

Many factors are implicated in the rise of sex trafficking worldwide, including in the United States. Among the more influential are:

- Gender-based social and economic inequality in all areas of the globe (United Nations, 1995), assuring a supply of women, especially from developing and new independent states (NIS) in Eastern Europe
- Male demand for the sex of prostitution and related sexual entertainment (Barry, 1995; Thanh-Dam Truong, 1990; Bishop and Robinson, 1998: 67)
- Expansion of transnational sex industries and increasingly sophisticated predatory recruitment techniques and networks (Kahila, 1991; Gutner and Corben, 1996; Vatikiotis, 1995)
- Macroeconomic policies, promoted by international lending organizations that mandate "structural adjustments" in many developing regions of the world, pushing certain countries (e.g. the Philippines) to export women for labor, making them vulnerable to trafficking; or to develop economies based on tourism (e.g. Thailand), including sex tourism (Daguno, 1998; Bishop and Robinson, 1998)
- Globalization of capital and information technology (Santos, 1999; Hughes, 1999)
- Armed conflict, military occupation and concentration of military and militia bases in various parts of the world (Sturdevant and Stoltzfus, 1992; Moon, 1997)

The sex trade has become a development strategy and source of income with profits in some countries amounting to 14 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Tunsawawut, 1996). Reportedly, profits from sex trafficking and sex industries rival and surpass those from international drug trafficking. However, the penalties for human trafficking are far less punitive in most countries than the penalties for drug trafficking (Budapest Group, 1999:10). The same crime groups that traffic in drugs and weapons are often the same gangs that traffic in human beings. Globalization of the world's economy and information means globalization of the sex industry.
Case Study: Trafficking of Women in the U.S.

In a letter to President Clinton in 1999, a group of over 200 concerned representatives from different faith traditions declared there were from "50,000 to 80,000 women and girls trafficked into the U.S. each year" for prostitution, illegal sweat shop labor and domestic service. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service discovered, in 1999, over 250 brothels with trafficked women in 26 different cities. In Atlanta, Georgia, for example, they discovered a prostitution ring with a group of 16 and 17 year old females who had all been brought in illegally from Asian countries, under duress, and were being held against their will in prison-like conditions. The brothel was only one of a nation-wide network that operated in 14 states. In this case, 13 people were indicted and 6 of those arrested.

A large number of Asian women are brought into the U.S. primarily for prostitution; they are moved from poor Asian countries to Honolulu to Vancouver to Seattle. Then, the women are moved into major urban areas in California, including areas around U.S. military bases, to the Midwest, New York and down the east coast to Miami. Traffickers sell Asian women to U.S. brothels for as much as $16,000 each. Women also are brought in from Latin and South America. A 1998 case that received media attention involved a family from Mexico who trafficked at least 20 women, one as young as 14, into the U.S. to work in trailers located near migrant camps in Florida and South Carolina. These young women were brutally treated, but after the U.S. Justice Department arrested some of the ringleaders, the women were helped by social service agencies in South Florida to find shelter and employment.

In a related scenario, there are "sex tour" operators in several U.S. cities who arrange for American men to travel to Thailand or other locations where the sex industry provides young women for these "tourists" to sample. The U.S. Department of State and the Department of Justice have begun special initiatives to deal with these problems, but they are far from solved.

A full and detailed report on Sex Trafficking in the U.S. is available at www.catwinternational.org/sex Traff_us.pdf, with recommendations on how to combat it in our nation.
Case Study:

MAYA K.

During criminal investigations against traffickers, Maya, a witness and victim of trafficking from Eastern Europe where she was faced with poverty and could not find a job, was one of the lucky victims who were eventually able to escape from the brothel she was kept in. After she went to the police, Maya stayed at a women’s shelter in Western Europe. Even though the shelter was in a secret location, the traffickers she had accused found her. She received anonymous postcards threatening to kill her two-year-old daughter (whom she had left at home with her grandmother) if Maya dared to pursue the case. Her mother also received threatening telephone calls.

When Maya’s mother went to her local police for protection, she was told that they would do nothing and that it was Maya’s own fault for leaving her home town. Without being able to rely on protection for herself and her family, Maya decided to withdraw her statement and not act as a witness.

However, with the support of a women’s NGO, she eventually convinced the authorities of the need for protection and to have her daughter join her in the women’s shelter.

She then felt safe enough to continue as a witness and as a result of her testimony three persons were convicted of trafficking. The man who trafficked Maya to a Western European country was sentenced to three years in prison.

Sometime after the trial, Maya’s life was threatened again, in nightly telephone calls and anonymous letters. Cars followed her and someone put a dead bird in her letterbox. The police told her that it could not be the trafficker because he had been jailed. However, after a year of non-stop harassment, Maya discovered that the information given to her had been incorrect. The trafficker had been released after his initial detention. When Maya realized the danger to which she had been exposed, she had a complete nervous breakdown and had to be hospitalized.
Alma is the third child of a family of five living in poverty in Peru. Her father is dead and her mother takes care of the children, does the housework and looks after a small vegetable garden from which she sells vegetables in the market to get by. Alma’s older sister is married and helps contribute to the family income working in the hacienda. Alma’s older brother is a seasonal farm worker but most of the time he spends time playing cards in the village café with other unemployed youths from the village. Alma has two younger brothers who are still in school.

Alma’s parents worked very hard to send her eldest brother to school so he would work in the Free-Trade Zone and become the breadwinner for the family. The daughters were given less education and attention, since they were to be married off soon. The eldest brother was not interested in education or in working in a dirty polluted factory in the Free Trade Zone. Alma herself had to quit school, just before her graduation exam, to help her mother out. This was difficult for Alma as she had her own ambitions and aspirations in life, but at the same time she felt responsible to bring the family out of their suffering.

One day, an agent from a nearby electronic factory came to recruit young women. Alma was then 18 and she signed up for the job. The salary was US$3.50 per day, which was not much after transport and lunch. The work itself was tedious, hard on the eyes and stressful and would not lead to any better prospects. The work quota was raised every other month, so Alma had to keep working faster to keep up with the never-ending demand of the supervisor. She got headaches constantly and her supervisor watched over her, making her feel nervous and incompetent.

One day, her boss told her that she could be promoted to do office work instead. Alma was really delighted. Later, the boss told Alma and two other women that such clever and beautiful women like them should not be working in a factory. He said that he had a friend married to a Dutch woman who would like to open a South American restaurant in the Netherlands and they needed South American waitresses.

The costs of visas, papers and transportation were paid for in advance. Once she started to earn the salary of US$500 per month, the loan would be paid off soon. Food and lodging would be provided. Upon arriving in the Netherlands, Alma was taken to a bar and her passport and air-ticket were confiscated. She was forced to work from 2pm to 2am every day in the bar, she got a small commission from every drink that her client brought and for every sexual act. She had to pay exorbitant amounts for food and lodging, and for her original travel. The debts mounted and Alma could save very little money.
Case Study:

PAYING WITH THEIR BODIES

Angela O. and Charity M., both university students, were activists, working for justice, human rights and respect for the dignity of women in their home country in West Africa. As the demonstrations they organized attracted more students, they realized they were being watched. One night, they received a warning to leave the country immediately, as rumors were circulating about their imminent arrest. Angela and Charity wasted no time. They headed for the harbor, hoping to get on a boat to a neighboring country. They explained their situation to some sailors and were eagerly taken aboard a ship about to leave the port. They had no traveling documents, and no money to pay their tickets, so the two young women were hidden among boxes and cases in the hull. Angela and Charity soon found out what payment was required from the sailors, traffickers they had unwittingly trusted. In their own words: “we had to pay with our bodies”. Although they begged to be let off the ship at the next stop, no matter where, their pleading went unheeded. So Angela and Charity ended up in Hamburg, Germany and were handed over to a brothel where, it was explained to them, they had to work to make good the expenses they had incurred on the ship, even though they had already paid in a terrible way. Over and over again, the women insisted on being put in touch with a governmental office where they could ask for political asylum. Eventually, they were brought by car to Berlin and given passports as British subjects. When Angela and Charity protested at being given false documents, the traffickers simply told them there were many black British subjects in Europe. On arrival in Berlin, they were passed on again, this time to a man who ran a prostitution ring. Early one morning, police and passport control officials appeared at the door of the apartment where they had been placed. Angela and Charity explained their case. Documents deceit was the answer of the police, and they spent four weeks in prison. It was in prison that they finally got an opportunity to apply for asylum. The women were given an appointment for an interview for refugee status, and finally a place in a hostel for asylum seekers. They are waiting to see if they qualify for asylum, or if they will be deported back home, where they face more danger.
Case Study: Statistics on Trafficking and Prostitution in Asia and the Pacific

SOME STATS FROM AROUND THE REGION

Thirty percent of the women in prostitution in Cambodia were below the age of 17, but the youngest was found to be twelve.

1995 estimates of the total revenue from prostitution in Thailand is approximately 59-60% of the Thai government’s budget for that year.

In 1991, 1992 and 1993 approximately 100 to 150 Bangladeshi women were brought into Pakistan and at least 2,000 are languishing in jails and shelters across the country.

The total number of prostitutes in India is 7,936,509. UNICEF estimates that there are at least a million child prostitutes in Asia alone with the greatest numbers in India, Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines.

A study reveals that trafficking in Europe most often involves Asian women.

Australia Federal Police estimate that prostitution grosses A$30 million annually.

International crime syndicates traffic both drugs and women; 10 smaller syndicates are known to traffic up to 300 Thai women yearly.

Russian women have also been recruited for tabletop dancing in clubs that often have links to brothels.

COUNTRY STATISTICS FOR THE REGION

BANGLADESH: 200,000 women and girls have been trafficked to Pakistan in the last 10 years, continuing at the rate of 200-400 women monthly. In 1997 alone, 2,000 women were prostituted in 6 major cities in India. In Dhaka, almost 2,000 of 5,000 prostitutes are children. Forms of trafficking: fake marriages, sale by parents to "uncles" offering jobs, auctions to brothel owners of farmers, abduction. In the last years, it is estimated that 200,000 women and girls have been trafficked from Bangladesh to Pakistan continuing at a monthly rate of 200-400 women.

BURMA: 20,000-30,000 prostituted women and girls in Thailand. Forms of trafficking: deceptive job placements that land women in brothels, abduction by agents for clients, sale of girls from hill tribes. As illegal immigrants in Thailand, prostitutes are arrested, detained and deported back to Burma, with 50-70% being infected with HIV.

CAMBODIA: 10,000-15,000 prostitutes, 35% of whom are minors. The figure had been about 6,000 in 1991, but after the arrival of the UN UNTAC troops, the numbers rose to 20,000 in 1995. 48% of the women and girls in brothels were abducted and sold there, and are often resold to other brothels or to traders who smuggle them out of the country, or example to Thailand and Vietnam.

CHINA: There is a resurgence of prostitution and trafficking in women and girls all over China, involving a high percentage of children and minors. In 1996, 15,000 cases involving the sale of women as wives or of prostitution were handled by the police. For the years 1993 and 1994, the figures released by the INFLS were of 24,751 women and 2,731 children rescued. In some regions of China, Vietnamese, Burmese and Tibetan women have also been trafficked.
Case Study: Statistics on Trafficking and Prostitution in Asia and the Pacific

COUNTRY STATISTICS FOR THE REGION

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Shanghuando Island off Guandong is a tourist spot offering drugs and sex casinos with 300 women in prostitution from all over China. There are now 70 million unmarried men in China as a consequence of the son preference of Chinese families. Many are desperately seeking wives from Vietnam though marriage arrangements are difficult. Through trickery, women are trafficked to become brides for many of these men.

HONG KONG: Fake contracts, often for domestic work, land women in brothels that employ “minders” to prevent runaways. An influx of East European women in high-priced clubs has been noted with a Russian mafia said to be bringing women to Macau. In 1997, a woman attempting to escape a sex establishment was murdered.

INDIA: A quarter of the total number of prostitutes are minors, in over 1,000 red-light districts all over India. Cage prostitutes are often minors, often from Nepal and Bangladesh. Forms of trafficking: economic incentives offered to parents to part with their children, fake jobs or marriage promises, abductions. The promotion of tourism in Goa and Madurai, two of India’s major beach holiday destinations, appears to be resulting in rising numbers of prostituted children. In India alone, there are an estimated 23 million in over 1,000 red-light districts all over India. Localized bordellos, 93 localized, 94 are managed under local government regulations. Estimated financial turnover of sex industry ranges from US$1.2 billion to US$3.6 billion. In Indonesia, estimates of 1998 are 500,000 prostituted though registered prostitutes are only 65,582.

JAPAN: Largest sex industry market for Asian women. Over 150,000 non-Japanese women in prostitution, mostly Thai and Filipina women. East European women have also been noted. Japanese men constitute the largest number of Asian sex tourists. The sex industry accounts for 10% of GNP and equals the country’s defense budget. One sex zone in Tokyo, only 0.34 sq. km., has 3,500 sex facilities: strip theaters, peep shows, porno shops, sex telephone clubs, karaoke bars, clubs, etc.

KOREA: Around the military bases, there are 18,000 registered and 9,000 unregistered prostitutes. Forms of prostitution: escort and call girls, street prostitution, and from cafes, clubs, cabarets, show cases, massage parlors and beauty shops. Women suspected of prostitution can be confined in rehabilitation centers without due process.

MALAYSIA: Estimates 142,000 women in prostitution, 5,000 women and girls are trafficked to India yearly. After India with 100,000 women, Hong Kong is the second biggest market. Brokers especially in rural areas and even family members sell girls; husbands sometimes sell their wives to brothels. According to the book Rape for Profit, about 50,000 Nepali girls are involved in the Indian sex trade. (Proceedings of the fact-finding meeting and the National Workshop on Trafficking in Women and Children, May 23-25, 1997, Dhaka, Bangladesh.)

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NEW ZEALAND: Majority of the 6,000-8,000 prostituted women are Asians. In Auckland, of 4,000 prostituted 800 are Thai, and 400 other Asian women. Channels: false employment offers, sponsorship by boyfriends or fiancés for residency, debt bondage is used to keep women in prostitution. New Zealand is also used by traffickers of Thai women as a departure point for Japan, Australia and Cyprus.
Case Study: Statistics on Trafficking and Prostitution in Asia and the Pacific

COUNTRY STATISTICS FOR THE REGION
(continued)

PHILIPPINES: 300,000 women in prostitution and 75,000 prostituted children. “Entertainment” is the main channel, but a range of establishments from dirt-floor beer houses to karaoke clubs to beach resorts to expensive health clubs provide prostitution for men of every class. Government policies favor the export of entertainers and domestic helpers that put women at risk of sexual exploitation. Further, government approval of “R and R” privileges for the US Navy sustains a system and infrastructure of military prostitution. Of the 200,000 or so street children in the Philippines, about 60,000 sell their bodies. (Asia week, February 7, 1997)

SRI LANKA: 15,000 prostitutes in the streets and in licensed and unlicensed massage parlors and brothels, and 30,000 prostituted children; 80% of labor migration in 1998 was of women workers. Job trainees in Korea and Japan have disappeared into underground labor markets, including prostitution.

TAIWAN: 40,000 to 60,000 prostituted children. 40% of young prostitutes in the main red light district are aboriginal girls. Girls under 13 have been made to undergo hormone injections by brothel owners to hasten their physical development. About 700% of 1,771 women from Thailand detained between 1992-95 for illegally staying in Taiwan, were in the “entertainment” sector.

THAILAND: estimates of women in prostitution range from 300,000 to 2.8 million, of which a third are minors and children. Thai women are also in prostitution in many counties in Asia, Australia, Europe and the U.S. Some 4.6 million Thai men regularly, and 500,000 foreign tourists annually, use prostituted women and girls. Some estimates put the number of under-age prostitutes in Thailand at 400,000 (Asia week, February 7, 1999).

VIETNAM: Between 60,000 and 200,000 women and girls in prostitution, with 6.3% under the age of 16. Trafficking happens through kidnapping for brothels, deceptive offers for jobs or tourist trips and marriage matchmaking with foreigners who sell and resell the women abroad. Organized tours of Taiwanese men come to buy brides for US$3,000.