

ADDRESSING THE SCOURGE
OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING:
INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC SOLUTIONS

*A Working Symposium for Scholars, Governmental and
Non-Governmental Experts and Students*

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THE DEAN'S WELCOME ADDRESS

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Thank you for being here. We are honored indeed to be hosting this extraordinary event. It concerns an issue that many people, you of course, knew was out there. In fact, you know this is one of the most important issues facing us, probably in our lifetimes. Never before has human trafficking been such a large issue. We heard a couple of months ago, during our first conference on this issue, entitled *Invisible Chains: Breaking the Ties of Trafficking in Humans*, that within organized crime, human trafficking was the third-largest source of profits and that it was for a good reason that every country has made human trafficking illegal. We were so proud to co-host that event, at which our President, Reverend Monsignor Casale, first spoke about this pressing issue.

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This event was co-hosted with WFOR Channel 4 and their chief investigative reporter, Michele Gillen, the National Italian American Foundation, and the Miami Herald. Based upon the conference and through the intervention of one of our participants, Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, Michele Gillen was later able to address The United States Council of Mayors. After her address, the mayors decided to make human trafficking one of their key issues.

Those of us in this room today will add, we hope, to the elaboration of a consensus *Declaration of Principles on Human Trafficking*, so entities such as the Conference of Mayors, and other governmental and non-governmental entities can have a base upon which to build their policies. Building effective counter-trafficking policies is the agenda. We must, therefore, keep addressing this particular issue. We must address it in symposiums like this one, but just as importantly, if not more importantly, we must address it within the context of public opinion in order to let the public know what we know.

There is probably no greater violation of human rights in this world than human trafficking. Therefore, this symposium today can be very important. Each of you can be very important in what you are doing. Please do not underestimate what happens here.

It takes a raindrop, upon a raindrop, upon a raindrop, and you eventually have a lake. When you have a lake, you eventually have fish. When you have fish, you eventually have fishermen. Then you have people eating the fish and being nourished. We don't have the lake or the pond yet. We don't have the fish. We are building upon a raindrop, and this is going to be a big raindrop. What is established as a plan for the future, based upon what you do here today, will develop this lake.

We thank you for being here, and we thank you for realizing with us that this is one of the major issues of our time, and we are pledged to be a part of the solution. Thank you.