

PRESS RELEASE
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**CATHOLIC SISTERS LAUNCH BUS AD CAMPAIGN TO
RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, March 9, 2009 – Catholic Sisters unveiled their bus advertisement campaign today to raise awareness about the reality of human trafficking—modern day slavery—in the Pacific Northwest.

“The majority of the victims of human trafficking are women and children,” says Sister Judith Desmarais, SP, one of the coordinators of the campaign. The bus ads feature an eye-catching photograph of a woman being abducted. The ads will begin to appear on King County metro buses the week of March 8th, the United Nations Day for Women’s Rights. Pierce County buses will carry the ads later this Spring.

A website has been set up for the campaign, www.stopthedemand.org. “We invite people to visit the website and learn more about how they can stop the demand for human trafficking,” said Sister Susan Francois, CSJP of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center. The website includes links to organizations working to end modern day slavery. “Human trafficking is happening right here in Seattle,” said Francois.

"We realized many people don't even know about human trafficking," said Sister Charlene Hudon, SP, another campaign organizer. "We want to put the ads where people can see them. The bus ads seem a very effective way to do this."

Roman Catholic women religious have been key leaders in the national and international movement to stop human trafficking. The “Stop the Demand” bus awareness campaign was created by Catholic Sisters in the Northwest as a pilot project which they hope will be replicated in cities across the country. They began raising funds last November to develop the bus ads and launch the campaign. "So far, we've raised over \$11,000," said Sister Charlotte Van Dyke, SP, a member of the Providence Sisters Leadership Team. "This is enough for the first phase of the ad campaign." Donations for the next phase can be sent to the Providence Sisters, care of Sister Charlotte Van Dyke. (1801 Lind Ave. SW, #9016, Renton, WA 98057-9016).

Catholic Sisters also invite concerned members of the public to join them the first Sunday of every month at 1:30 pm at Westlake Park in downtown Seattle for a silent prayer vigil to raise awareness about human trafficking.

Sponsors include: Adrian Dominicans, Catholic Community Services, Franciscan Sisters, Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center, Providence Health & Services, Sinsinawa Dominicans, Sisters of Providence, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, Tacoma Dominicans, Tronie Foundation.

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