

MADE IN  
EXPLOITATIVE  
CONDITIONS  
BY UNDERPAID  
WORKERS

## The Issue

On April 24, 2013, 1133 people were killed and over 2500 were injured when the Rana Plaza factory complex collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

This tragedy exposed the wide range of abuses connected to the sourcing of clothing.

Amidst the destruction, the clothing and tags found in the rubble were those found in our own closets. We are connected as consumers to the people who create the clothes we buy.

This campaign weaves the thread of materialism back to our Catholic Social Teaching, raising awareness of the slave-like conditions to which none of God's children should ever be subjected.

**You could say it's our cross to wear.**

### ALLIED GROUPS

- Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota Coalition for Responsible Investing (WIM/CRI)
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Anti-Trafficking Program
- Justice and Peace desk of Conference of Major Superiors of Men
- Social Concerns desk, Leadership Conference of Women Religious
- Franciscan Action Network
- Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns
- Salvatorian Advocacy for Victims of Exploitation
- ICCR: Human Trafficking Leadership Group
- U.S. Catholic Mission Association
- Members of Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking
- Sisters of the Holy Cross
- Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother
- Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order
- Ignatian Solidarity Network
- CRS Fair Trade
- Worker Rights Consortium
- International Labor Rights Forum
- Solidarity Ignite
- Various faculty of DePaul, Notre Dame, Dayton, and St. Kate Universities
- Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Peace and Justice



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Check out our preliminary website:  
<http://kang4c.wix.com/the-human-thread>



*Catholics for Clothing  
with a Conscience*

"Things have a price and can be for sale. But people have a dignity that is priceless and worth far more than things."

-Pope Francis

# Clothing...

# ...at what cost?

It has been known for years that our lifestyle in the economically "developed" countries is highly dependent on corporate practices that sometimes exploit people and the planet.

thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime, all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us." (Evangelii Gaudium, 54).

**Mission:** Inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, the Human Thread seeks to foster Catholics' awareness that promotes solidarity between consumers of clothing and the people who produce them in order to create a more just economy and sustainable communities.

After hearing that the workers at the collapsed Rana Plaza in Bangladesh were making less than \$60 a month for 60-70 hour weeks, Pope Francis bemoaned, "This is called slave labor."

In addition to safety issues of many factories, insufficient attention is given to worker livelihood (wages, healthcare, housing, etc.).

As baptized members of the body of Christ, we are called to be "clothed with compassion" (Col. 3:12). The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium) exposes the globalization of indifference in a throw-away culture of mass consumerism. "Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are

Catholic Social Teaching began with Pope Leo XII's concern about the exploitation of workers in Europe (Rerum Novarum). Its concerns are still valid today. We are called to reclaim Catholic Social Teaching in a way that contributes to a revitalized Catholicism in the US.

The Human Thread is aimed to offer an alternative to the globalization of indifference that arises from our consumerism in ways that blot out compassion.

*"While blame quickly extended from the owners of the building and the factories it contained, to the government of Bangladesh, to the retailers who sold the clothing, the culpability extends all the way down the supply chain - to us."*

*-Professor Jerry Davis, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan (Letter, NYT 5.08.13)*



Photo Credit: Fashion Revolution

## What Can You Do

- Tweet, email or write the companies that sell your favorite clothing brands and ask them: "Who made your clothes?"
- Talk about this information with friends and family.
- Consider alternatives. Shop Fair Trade, local, and second-hand/thrift stores.
- When doing laundry, take a minute to pray for garment workers.
- Research your favorite companies and see how they rate in ethical, sustainable business practices on-line.
- Investigate the sourcing policies of your school or organization's apparel committees. Are they fairly sourced?
- Bring the campaign to your community, parish, or school!

Contact us for more information.