
Netherlands: a year spent commemorating the abolition of slavery. The Bishops: “inconsistent with the message of the Gospel”

For one year, starting on July 1st, the Netherlands will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the country. “We want to address the past of slavery. And we realise that the part of the world we live in, and therefore economic development, has been made possible by slavery and colonialism”. This has been written by the Dutch Bishops in a statement in which they acknowledge that even Catholics enslaved other humans, took part in the slave trade or were enslaved themselves. “This goes against the Christian message” that “all humans are equal in dignity”. The statement also mentions modern slavery, in the new forms of “exploitation, child labour, forced labour, prostitution and forced marriage”. According to surveys of the International Organisations for Labour and Migration, there seem to be nearly fifty million enslaved people. Accepting the structures of modern slavery that deny human dignity “is inconsistent with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ”, the Bishops say.

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