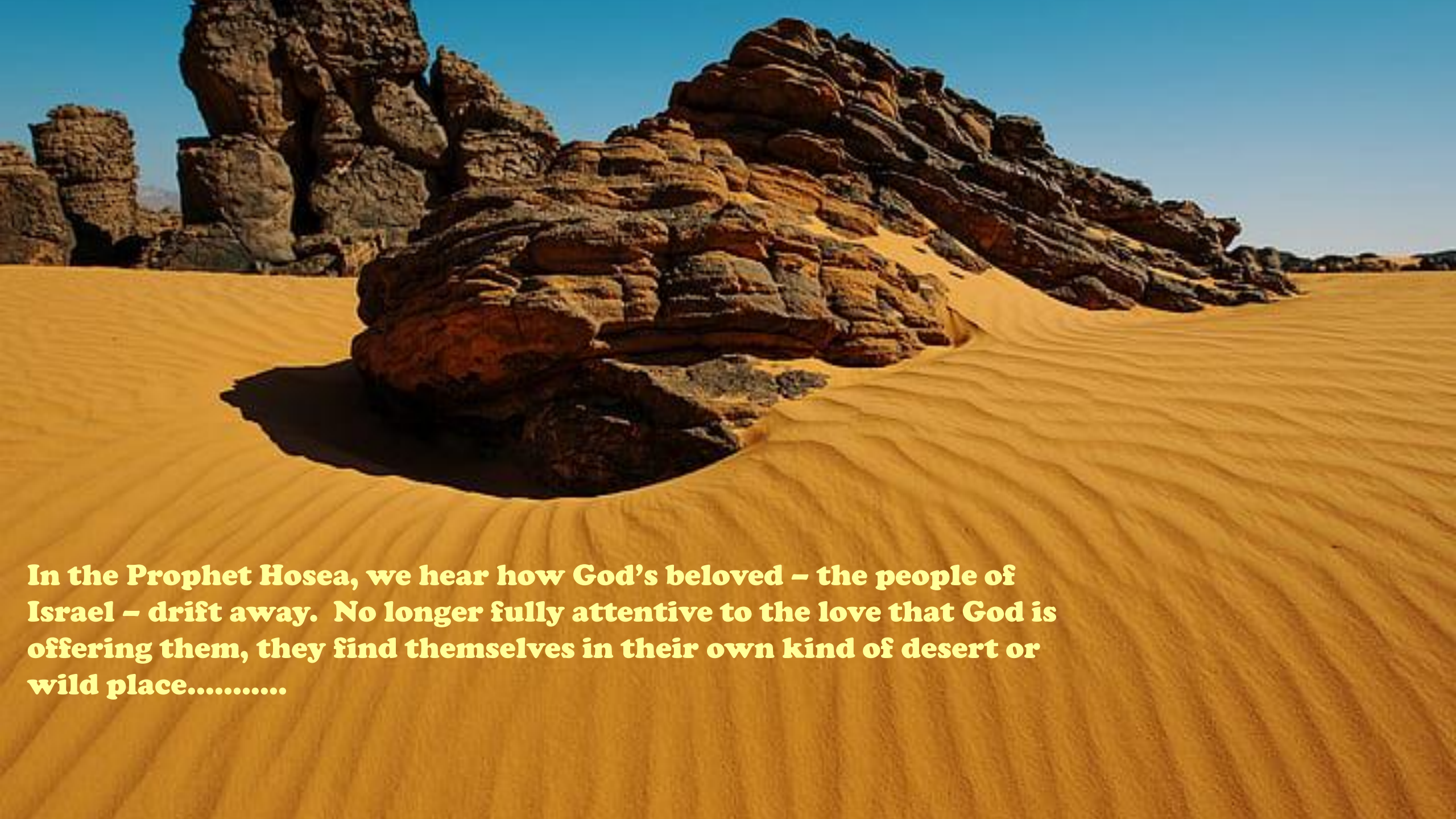




(Click on sound icon
to play music)

**The silence, unrelenting heat, and the bare rock and sand
make the desert a wild and unforgiving place,
a place where guides are necessary .
Without them, one would most certainly go astray.**



In the Prophet Hosea, we hear how God's beloved – the people of Israel – drift away. No longer fully attentive to the love that God is offering them, they find themselves in their own kind of desert or wild place.....

Yet, all is not lost because God – like a guide - is there before them and, in the silence, speaks tenderly heart to heart.....



A man wearing a white turban and a long, light-colored robe is walking across a vast, sandy desert landscape. The background shows rolling sand dunes under a clear sky. The man is looking down as he walks.

**“I will allure her.....
I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart.”**

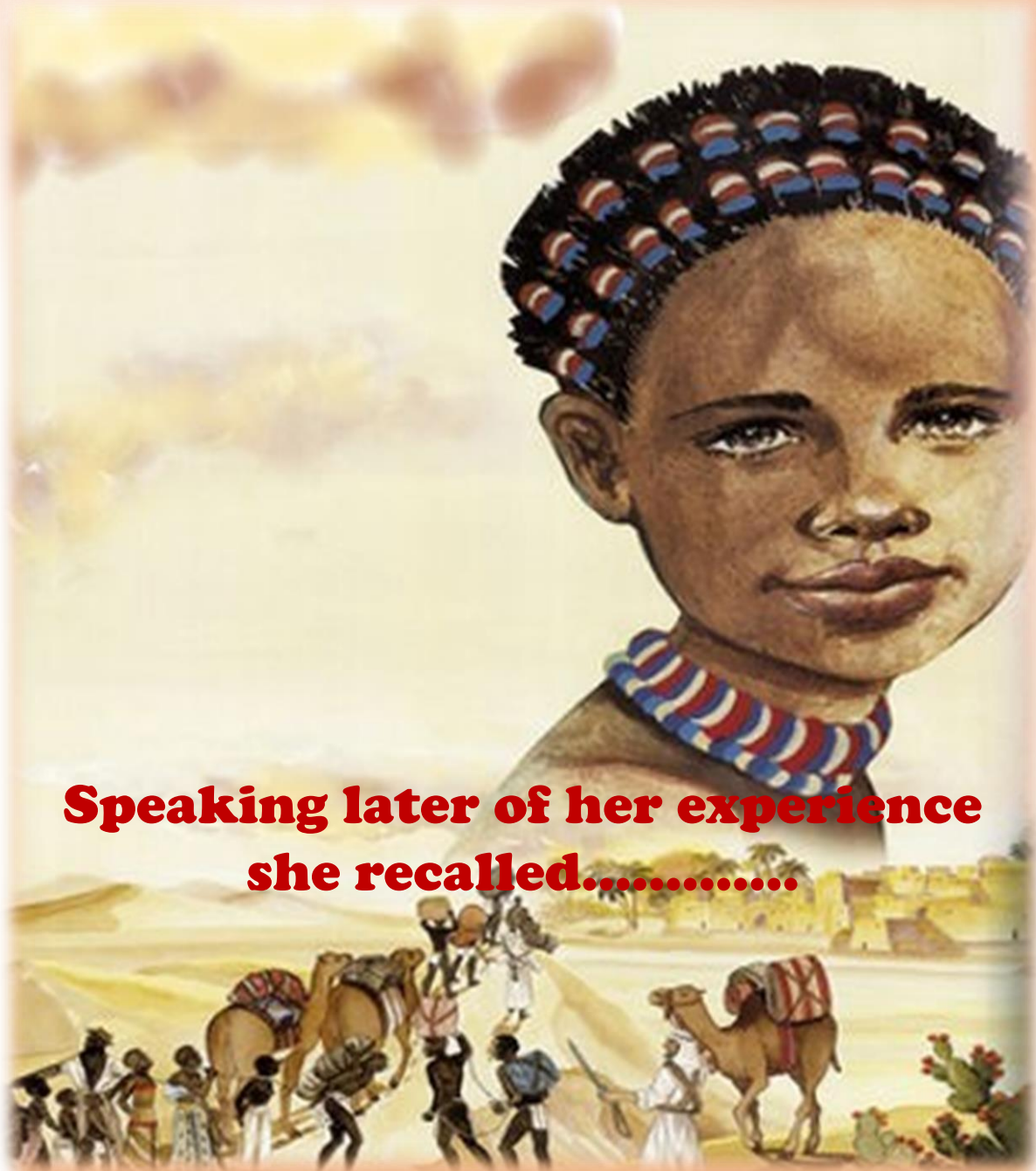
**God who is integrity and justice helps
Israel to live again with integrity and
justice.**



**Today we remember
St. Bakhita who
experienced her own
'desert wilderness'.**

**Born in 1869 near Darfur
in Sudan, she enjoyed a
happy childhood.**





Speaking later of her experience she recalled.....

I was surrounded by a loving family and lived a very happy and carefree life without knowing what suffering was.

One day desert slave-traders came to our village and I was captured. Separated from my family, I was bought and sold many times over. Then, I knew suffering.

After many years and some very difficult experiences, Bakhita found herself in domestic service, first to an Arab, then to a Turk, and finally to the Michieli family who brought her to Italy, and to their home in Mirano, near Venice, where she became nanny to their daughter Alice.



**In the gospel, all who were in need of healing
were brought to Jesus.**

**They found they were not alone in their suffering and his
presence made them whole.**

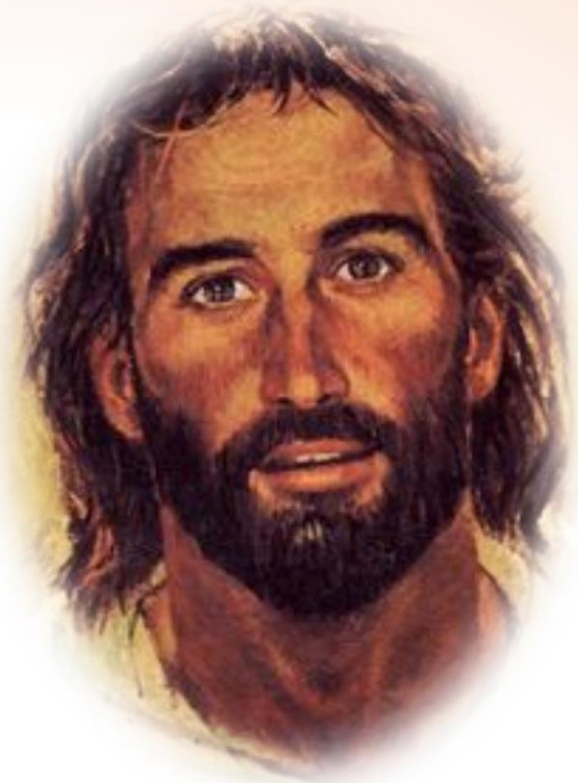
This same healing was Bakhita's too.

**By walking young Alice to school each day she met the
Cannossian Sisters and her contact with them filled her life
with new hope.**

**She discovered God, "who from childhood" she had felt in her
heart "without knowing who he was."**

**Gradually she was drawn to commit her life
to the Canossian Sisters.**

**Her life as a Sister became one of 'service freely given' and all
who came into *her* presence were touched by Jesus alive in
her.**



**She is venerated as an African saint
and is patron of victims and
survivors of the modern slavery
which is Human Trafficking.**





Sexual exploitation



Forced labour



Debt bondage



Domestic servitude

MODERN SLAVERY in the 21st Century



Organ removal



Forced begging



Child soldiers



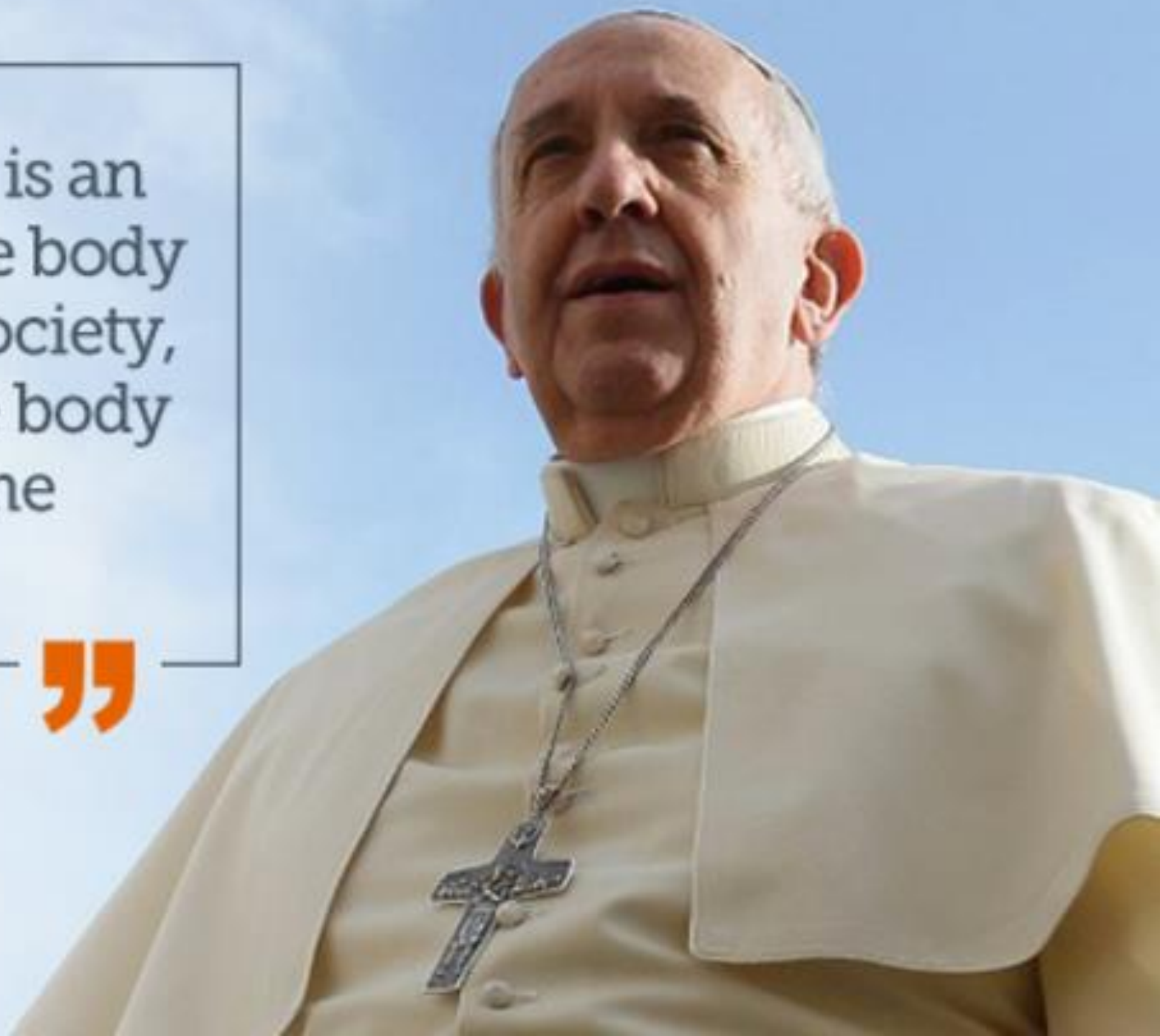
Forced marriage

“

Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity.

”

POPE FRANCIS



The trafficked people of today are not alone.

As God was with Bakhita, so, through the voices raised in protest and the action of many different groups and organizations, God is with those trafficked today.

**Pray and work for an
end to this slavery.**

**Let God use you to call out this
injustice, to speak words of
compassion, healing and new life.**

Raise *your* voice! Act today!

Together we can.....



STOP IT NOW!



APT

ACT TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING

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