

Volunteer Manual

(A Work in Progress)

For

Jail and Prison Ministers

Diocese of Sacramento

2017





A Detention Ministry Prayer

Jesus, united with the Father and the Holy Spirit, give us your compassion for those in prison. Mend in mercy the broken in mind and memory. Soften the hard of heart, the captives of anger. Free the innocent; parole the trustworthy. Awaken the repentance that restores hope. May prisoners' families persevere in their love.

Jesus, heal the victims of crime. They live with the scars. Lift to eternal peace those who die. Grant victims' families the forgiveness that heals. Give wisdom to lawmakers and to those who judge. Instill prudence and patience in those who guard. Make those in prison ministry bearers of your light, for all of us are in need of your mercy!

Amen.

*A Prayer for Justice and Mercy
The Archdiocese of San Francisco*

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Diocese of Sacramento

Detention Ministry

Detention Ministry is a diocesan-wide ministry that brings the Word of God and the Sacraments of the Catholic Church to men, women and juveniles incarcerated in state prisons, county jails and juvenile detention centers throughout the 20 counties within the Diocese of Sacramento. To accomplish its objectives, this ministry relies on Catholic Chaplains and volunteers - priests, deacons, and lay men and women - who willingly give their time to serve those members of Christ's Church and others who are imprisoned.

Volunteers will work in small teams that minister in specific institutions at various times of the week. Individual ministry volunteers visit institutions on a regular basis dependent on the need and the regulations of the particular facility. Our goal is to have a weekly presence of volunteers so that there is consistency in being available to meet the spiritual needs of inmates.

To participate in this ministry, those who know and practice the Catholic Faith according to Church teaching and a willingness to share their love of God with others, is a first and primary step to this important work. Participation in diocesan sponsored trainings and meetings as well as training required by each facility is mandatory for ministry volunteers.

Priests who participate in this ministry celebrate Mass, hear confessions, provide spiritual counseling, and administer the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Sacrament of the Sick to inmates.

Deacons assist at Mass bring the Eucharist to inmates, conduct liturgies and prayer services, facilitate bible-discussion and bible-study sessions, and provide spiritual counseling. Deacons may also administer the Sacrament of Baptism.

Religious Sisters and Brothers, and Lay Ministers facilitate bible discussions, bible studies and prayer meetings, and assist at Mass. Where appropriate, they conduct para-liturgies, bring the Eucharist to inmates, and provide spiritual counseling.

**Correctional Facilities and Juvenile Detention Centers
Within the Diocese of Sacramento**

Save for County facilities

Pope Francis Statement

Jesus' concern for the care of the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless and prisoners sought to express the core of the Father's mercy. This becomes a moral imperative for the whole of society that wishes to maintain the necessary conditions for a better common life. It is within a society's capacity to include the poor, infirm and imprisoned, that we see its ability to heal their wounds and make them builders of a peaceful coexistence. (2/17/16, Penitentiary)

The Mission

The mission of the detention ministry of the Diocese of Sacramento is to provide a Catholic presence and ministry to men, women and children incarcerated in county jails, state prisons, and youth detention facilities located within our Diocese.

The ministry will include individual visitation, Catholic communion services, Bible study, celebration of Mass and provision of Sacraments, prayer study groups, sacramental preparation, RCIA, and the sharing of Catholic educational material.

The Difference Between Jail, Prison and Juvenile Detention Facilities

Many people use the terms “jail” and “prison” interchangeably, but there is a clear distinction. A jail is a place of incarceration managed and operated by a county or city. Prisons are managed and operated by the respective state correctional organization. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is responsible for the operation of the California state prison and parole systems.

The main difference between a jail and a prison is the length of detention. Jails are designed for rapid turnover of inmates, whereas prisons are expected to house inmates for long periods of time, up to and including life in prison. Jails are facilities, usually run by the local county or city, which are typically designed to hold offenders on a temporary basis. Generally, those in jail have been arrested for an offense and have not yet reached a final disposition or outcome in their case. Inmates are often housed in a local jail due to an inability to post bail, or the facts of the crime with which they are charged are such that they have been denied the opportunity to post bail at all. Jails also hold other short-term detainees, such as those awaiting transfer to another detention facility like a state prison or those awaiting deportation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

While most jailed inmates are housed there for an indefinite period of time awaiting trial or transfer, some are detained for a specified period. In many jurisdictions, conviction of a misdemeanor or another minor offense for which the sentence imposed is two years’ incarceration or less. However, due to recent changes at the state level (realignment) inmates may serve longer terms in a county jail or detention center rather than being transferred to a state or federal prison facility.

Typically, there are fewer programs within a jail compared to what is available to inmates in a prison setting. Because inmates in jail are not expected to be housed for more than a year or two, inmates are only offered some limited healthcare clinics, exercise or recreational facilities and limited educational programs. Prisons tend to have more to offer in terms of vocational training, educational opportunities and rehabilitative programming. Prisons also tend to be equipped with better medical facilities that are able to handle ongoing care for long-term inmates.

The Juvenile Justice Process. Following the arrest of a juvenile offender, a law enforcement officer has the discretion to release the juvenile to his or her parents, or take the offender to juvenile hall. The county probation department, the agency responsible for the juvenile hall, has the discretion to accept and "book" the offender or not, in which case, the disposition of the juvenile is left to the police. Because most of the state's juvenile halls are overcrowded, mainly with juveniles being held for violent offenses, juvenile halls may accept only the most violent arrestees, turning away most other arrestees.

If the offender is placed in juvenile hall, the probation department and/or the district attorney can choose to file a "petition" with the juvenile court, which is similar to filing charges in adult court. Or, the district attorney may request that the juvenile be "remanded" to adult court because the juvenile is "unfit" to be adjudicated as a juvenile due to the nature of his or her offense. For a juvenile who is adjudicated and whose petition is sustained (tried and convicted) in juvenile court, the offender can be placed on probation in the community, placed in a foster care or group home, incarcerated in the county's juvenile ranch or camp, or sent to the Youth Authority as a ward of the state. For a juvenile tried and convicted in adult court, the offender can be sentenced to the Department of Corrections, but can be placed in the Youth Authority through age 24.

County probation departments supervise 97 percent of all juvenile offenders; the remaining 3 percent are committed to the Youth Authority and become a state responsibility. In contrast, about 18 percent of convicted adults are sent to state prison and become a state responsibility. County probation departments make recommendations to judges on placements and sentencing of juveniles, supervise these offenders in the community, provide rehabilitation and training services to probationers, and operate juvenile halls and county ranches and camps.

The Manual

This volunteer manual is written to provide information and guidelines to assist the men and women who work as volunteers in the detention facilities of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento. The manual can also be used to aid in the orientation of new volunteers or as a tool to recruit individuals who are considering volunteering their time and efforts to provide faith-based services.

It is hoped that this manual will also be helpful to experienced detention ministry volunteers as a source of information and continuing inspiration for the valuable service you provide to those who are incarcerated.

Inmates in the United States are guaranteed the right to practice a religion of their own choosing, a right that is protected by three Constitutional safeguards: the First Amendment's free exercise of religion, the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause, and the Eight Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.

The chaplains and volunteers who serve in detention facilities provide spiritual support and guidance to inmates and should obtain appropriate Church authorization to minister in this regard.

II. Detention Ministry and the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church

What does it mean to be a detention minister or volunteer? It means to share in the mission of the Catholic Church, to be a model of the Christian life and to carry the message of the Gospel to all those one encounters. Being a volunteer means participating in the mission of the Catholic Church, a mission that is a heritage and a call from Jesus Christ himself:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always..." (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person should permeate all of our outreach, remembering that we are following the example of Jesus Christ who sought to uplift those He encountered throughout His earthly ministry. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement on criminal justice: *"The fundamental starting point for all of Catholic social teaching is the defense of human life and dignity: every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has an inviolable dignity, value, and worth..."*

In their statement, the bishops give six principles from Catholic social teaching that serve to give direction and measures for our response to crime and criminal justice. (pp. 21-25)

Human Life and Dignity: The fundamental starting point for all of Catholic social teaching is the defense of human life and dignity: every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has an inviolable dignity, value, and worth, regardless of race, gender, class, or other

human characteristics. Therefore, both the most wounded victim and the most callous criminal retain their humanity. All are created in the image of God and possess a dignity, value, and worth that must be recognized, promoted, safeguarded, and defended. For this reason, any system of penal justice must provide those necessities that enable inmates to live in dignity: food, clothing, shelter, personal safety, timely medical care, education, and meaningful work adequate to the conditions of human dignity.³⁰

Human dignity is not something we earn by our good behavior; it is something we have as children of God. We believe that because we are all created by God, "none of us is the sum total of the worst act we have ever committed. As a people of faith, we believe that grace can transform even the most hardened and cruel human beings."³¹

Victims, too, must have the help of the faith community in recovering their dignity. To be excluded from the proceedings against their offenders, to be ignored by friends and family, or to be neglected by the community of faith because their deep pain is unsettling only serves to further isolate victims and denies their dignity. All of us are called to stand with victims in their hurt and in their search for healing and genuine justice. This includes, of course, the children of the incarcerated, who themselves are seriously harmed by their parents' misdeeds.

Human Rights and Responsibilities:

Our tradition insists that every person has both rights and responsibilities. We have the right to life and to those things that make life human: faith and family, food and shelter, housing and health care, education and safety. We also have responsibilities to ourselves, to our families, and to the broader community.

Crime and corrections are at the intersection of rights and responsibilities. Those who commit crimes violate the rights of others and disregard their responsibilities. But the test for the rest of us is whether we will exercise our responsibility to hold the offender accountable without violating his or her basic rights. Even offenders should be treated with respect for their rights.

Family, Community, and Participation: We believe the human person is social. Our dignity, rights, and responsibilities are lived out in relationship with others, and primary among these is the family. The disintegration of family life and community has been a major contributor to crime. Supporting and rebuilding family ties should be central to efforts to prevent and respond to crime. Placing prisons in remote areas diminishes contacts with close relatives and undermines the family connections that could aid in restoration, especially for young offenders.

Likewise, maintaining community and family connections can help offenders understand the harm they've done and prepare them for reintegration into society. Isolation may be necessary in some rare cases; but while cutting off family contact can make incarceration easier for those in charge, it can make reintegration harder for those in custody.

The principle of participation is especially important for victims of crime. Sometimes victims are "used" by the criminal justice system or political interests. As the prosecution builds a case, the

victim's hurt and loss can be seen as a tool to obtain convictions and tough sentences. But the victim's need to be heard and to be healed are not really addressed.

The Common Good: The social dimension of our teaching leads us to the common good and its relationship to punishment. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, punishment by civil authorities for criminal activity should serve three principal purposes: (1) the preservation and protection of the common good of society, (2) the restoration of public order, and (3) the restoration or conversion of the offender.³²

The concept of "redress," or repair of the harm done to the victims and to society by the criminal activity, is also important to restoring the common good. This often-neglected dimension of punishment allows victims to move from a place of pain and anger to one of healing and resolution. In our tradition, restoring the balance of rights through restitution is an important element of justice.

The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: This principle of Catholic social teaching recognizes that every public policy must be assessed by how it will affect the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society. Sometimes people who lack adequate resources from early in life (i.e., children—especially those who have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused—the mentally ill, and people who have suffered discrimination) turn to lives of crime in desperation or out of anger or confusion. Unaddressed needs—including proper nutrition, shelter, health care, and protection from abuse and neglect—can be steppingstones on a path towards crime. Our role as Church is to continually work to address these needs through pastoral care, charity, and advocacy.

Subsidiarity and Solidarity: These two related principles recognize that human dignity and human rights are fostered in community. Subsidiarity calls for problem-solving initially at the community level: family, neighborhood, city, and state. It is only when problems become too large or the common good is clearly threatened that larger institutions are required to help. This principle encourages communities to be more involved. Criminal activity is largely a local issue and, to the extent possible, should have local solutions. Neighborhood-watch groups, community-oriented policing, school liaison officers, neighborhood treatment centers, and local support for ex-offenders all can be part of confronting crime and fear of crime in local communities.

Solidarity recognizes that "we are all really responsible for all."³³ Not only are we responsible for the safety and well-being of our family and our next-door neighbor, but Christian solidarity demands that we work for justice beyond our boundaries. Christians are asked to see Jesus in the face of everyone, including both victims and offenders. Through the lens of solidarity, those who commit crimes and are hurt by crime are not issues or problems; they are sisters and brothers, members of one human family. Solidarity calls us to insist on responsibility and seek alternatives that do not simply punish, but rehabilitate, heal, and restore.

III. Becoming a Volunteer

The purpose of having volunteers is to assist the staff chaplains in reaching the goals of the ministry within each detention facility. A volunteer is an invited guest of the staff chaplain working in cooperation with the institutional staff. A volunteer serves as witness to the love of God in action. We are the hands and hearts of the Lord. We do not witness well by putting down other religions and beliefs. We are there to support, respect, and nurture the individual and not to cause them more confusion or distress.

IV. Qualifications for Volunteering

The volunteer applicant:

1. Must be at least 21 years old and have a valid California driver license or Identification. Age requirements might vary by facility.
2. Must pass a background check, including finger printing, conducted by the County or State facility. A past misdemeanor or felony conviction may disqualify the applicant for service. The applicant must advise the assigned facility chaplain or appropriate staff of any convictions.
3. Must be a Catholic in good standing.
4. Must demonstrate a commitment to his/her faith in the way he/she live their life.
5. Need to be able to express their faith to others; be able to discuss Scriptures with some level of ability.
6. Must be in good health; agile enough to move quickly in an emergency.
7. Must be able to be fully aware of surroundings with good vision and hearing.
8. Must have enough fluency in English to take directions from officers; communicate effectively with officers, staff and inmates.
9. Must keep facility staff updated with most current address, contact numbers, email address and emergency contact numbers.

V. How to Volunteer: The Process

Here are the steps toward becoming a Volunteer:

1. Meet with Team Captain or other official person to determine if your qualifications meet what is needed.
2. Pray about/consider your sense of call to this ministry.
3. Read this volunteer manual and commit to following the rules.
4. Contact the team captain of the facility where you would like to volunteer; set up a meeting for information on the on-boarding process and the specific training required by the facility.
5. Complete and submit a volunteer application and required security forms.
6. Submit county security forms for approval.
7. Participate in scheduled diocesan sponsored or facility sponsored trainings or workshops available.
8. Once cleared and approved to participate as a volunteer, work with the facility team captain to develop a schedule and plan for your participation.

Once you have completed the background investigation phase of the process and have had your training/orientation given by the facility where you will be participating, the next step is to align you with a team of experienced ministry members. Depending upon the specific activities at your assigned facility, things will vary. There is no cookie-cutter format for you to follow. You will follow the lead of the chaplain or the team captain.

This can be a lengthy and sometimes frustrating process. It mostly depends on the facility where you volunteer. One key to expediting the approval process is to work with the team captain who communicates directly with the chaplain and facility staff.

The Diocese will host regularly scheduled training opportunities.

As you go forward and become more familiar with your environment, you will want to formulate your own subject matter and interaction with the inmates. It could be that you want to recite the rosary with them or you might want to read the Bible with them or lead Bible study groups. You want to be sure that you use resources approved by the Church and approved by the facility as you and all Catholic volunteers represent the Church in all that we say and do in our capacity as detention ministry volunteers.

The following organizations have websites that might be helpful to you for supplies and for formulating talks and researching subjects you might be interested in:

Catholics United for Life

Dimas Ministries

Paulist Evangelical Ministries

American Rehabilitation Ministries

American Bible Society

International Bible Society
Order of Malta National Prison Ministry
Living Faith Foundation
Bible Alive
The Word Among us
World Missionary Press

The Vatican Website	www.vatican.va
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	www.usccb.org
Agape Bible Study	www.agabebiblestudy.com
Catholic Answers	www.catholic.com
Catholic City	www.catholicity.com
Catholic Encyclopedia	www.catholicencyclopedia.com
Eternal Word Television Network	www.ewtn.com
Knights of Columbus	www.kofc.org/cis
New Advent	www.newadvent.com
Salvation History	www.salvationhistory.com

VI. General Safety Guidelines/Rules for Volunteer Security

Security starts in the parking lot the moment you enter the facility grounds.

Expect the following:

- Your vehicle is always subject to search. Do not bring alcohol, illegal drugs, guns, or weapons onto the facility property.
- All volunteers must show a valid driver's license or picture ID and be cleared at the front desk or window before entering.
- Bring as little as possible into the facility. Most facilities allow volunteers to bring in a Bible, pen, pre-approved notes/handouts for the class or program you are leading, and pre-approved CDs or DVDs with music or lesson content.
- Cell phones, wallets, purses, brief cases, etc. are not allowed. Some facilities allow volunteers to carry their things in a clear plastic tote bag or zip-lock bag.

- Paper money is not allowed, but some facilities allow volunteers to bring in coins to buy a drink from the vending machine. It is best not to bring money unless absolutely necessary.
- Many facilities have audio/visual equipment that volunteers can use, but it should be requested in advance.
- Volunteers cannot bring computers, sound equipment, musical instruments, or any type of electronic devices without prior approval. Cell phones are never allowed under any circumstances.
- Never bring tobacco products, lighters, matches, or any type of medication into the facility.
- Never bring an unauthorized individual with you.
- Never give an inmate legal or therapeutic advice.
- Lockdowns occur often. Follow all directions issued by facility staff.

Searches

- All volunteers go through a security check when you enter the facility. In most cases, it is the same type of security check that you would see at an airport.
- When going through security, volunteers are often asked to remove all jewelry, eyewear, belts, headgear, jackets, outerwear, and shoes. Avoid problems by emptying your pockets, removing excess jewelry, and removing headgear before leaving your vehicle. Wear shoes that are easy to get off and on.
- Do not take anything into or out of the facility without permission. Every person is subject to search at any time while on the property.
- If a volunteer is found with contraband, he/she may be disallowed from entering the facility ever again. (Contraband is defined as any item not permitted into the facility or not on the clearance list.)

Dress Code

- Every facility has a dress code. Before you go to the facility be sure you are dressed appropriately; otherwise, you will not be allowed to enter.
- Prohibitive clothing/attire will be specifically listed in the facility's dress code. Call ahead to see what colors and styles you are allowed to wear. These are some typical dress code rules:

- Volunteers must not wear clothing similar in color or style to inmates' uniforms.
 - Tight or revealing clothing is not allowed. Don't wear sleeveless shirts/tops, bare midriffs, tank tops, short skirts or pants, low necklines, see-through fabrics, open-toed/open-heeled shoes, or flip flops.
 - Avoid metal in your attire as it will set off the metal detectors. A watch and/or wedding ring is allowed.
 - No clothing or attire with offensive slogans is ever allowed. Some facilities do not allow any clothing with any type of logo or slogan. Any attire that may be considered gang-related is not allowed.
 - Jackets or coats are allowed. Umbrellas are not. Dress appropriately if it is cold or raining because you may have to walk a long way.
- Avoid excessive makeup, heavy perfumes, or any type of clothing that draws undue attention.
- As volunteers, we are there to lift up Jesus Christ and we don't ever want to distract from that goal.

While You Are Inside

- Visitor restroom facilities are usually provided in the facility entry area. Ask a staff person about restrooms and water fountains that may be available near the area where you are going inside.
- Volunteers are usually given identification badges or hand stamps so it is clear that you are an authorized visitor.
- CLEAR ALL items you bring in our out through the chaplain or team captain. All printed handouts must be approved. This includes video and audio programs.
- Do not provide food, sharp objects, pens, pins, pencils, money or any other products to the inmates. NO staples or hardback books.
- Depending on the facility's security level, volunteers are normally escorted along corridors, through gates and buildings. Of course surveillance cameras and other highly-sophisticated technology monitor the grounds.
- Volunteers are allowed only in areas where your event or program is being held. Stay with your group and do not go anywhere else. Never run on facility grounds.
- You will be cleared for time/place/function. You may only be in the facility during your authorized time, in our authorized area and only conduct ministry that has been coordinated with the facility chaplain or team captain.

- Your facility clearance cannot be used to visit family members or friends. If you have a family member in custody, notify the facility chaplain or team captain.
- Do not give anything to an inmate except that which has already been pre-approved by the volunteer supervisor, facility chaplain or facility staff. The main thing you are asked for is pens or stamps.
- NEVER carry anything unauthorized in or out of the facility. Even the most innocent request to carry an item in or out for an inmate may involve you and our ministry in the commission of a crime.
- Do not give inmates your phone number or accept phone calls from them at your home.
- Do not leave any items that you are assigned to unattended. If you lay something down, it may disappear.
- Appropriate touch only, i.e., handshakes, the laying on of a hand to the head or shoulder if necessary while praying. No hugging or embracing.
- Remain security conscious at all times. Remember this is a correctional facility and security takes precedence over all programs. If an officer gives you an order you must comply immediately.

Attitude and Poise

- Be natural, be yourself. Take time to get to know the inmates by listening and asking good questions. Prayerfully listen for opportunities to demonstrate God's grace and hope. Your attitude of humility and your genuine desire to serve are highly important.
- Remember it is God's harvest. Learn to walk alongside inmates as you search for the truth in God's Word. Never push anyone to make a decision for Christ.
- Never condemn any other religion. Volunteers work in a multi-religious environment and are legally required to be respectful of all faiths.
- Treat inmates and staff with respect. Act as if you have just entered someone else's house. Remember that officers and staff spend a considerable amount of time at the facility, and inmates live there, so it is their residence.
- Even if you disagree with facility personnel, always submit to their authority. By doing this, you set a good example for inmates who are watching.
- Remember you are a guest at the facility and can be asked to leave at any time. For your safety, follow all the rules and do exactly as you are told. Be sure to thank officers and staff for their assistance.

VII. Profile of an Inmate

Inmates experience the same five stages of grief that a terminally ill patient will face:

Stage One: Denial

Denial begins when the crime is committed or when the inmate enters the prison system. Inmates focus their energy on filing appeals dreaming about the outside world, scheming of ways to beat the system and tend to blame their current situation on somebody else. Inmates work through this stage gradually.

Stage Two: Anger

When an inmate can no longer deny the situation, they become angry. Anger is directed at other inmates, the correctional staff, the outside world, the system, their loved ones, and even God. Inmates in this stage may begin joining subcultures of the prison systems.

Stage Three: Bargaining

They bargain with God, family, officers, and anyone else who will listen. Many become involved in religious activities. They hope for a reduction or reversal in their sentence. Other inmates contribute advice and rumors about options.

Stage Four: Depression

Depression creeps in and the inmate is usually not aware of it. Inactivity develops into routines. Inmates begin to face the consequences of their deeds and begin to grieve their loss. Inmates in the depression state seek a support system at any cost.

Stage Five: Acceptance

They begin to accept that they are in for the long haul, some become emotionally numb. A few go through a genuine soul-searching and begin to accept responsibility for their situation. They then begin to cooperate with the staff and set personal goals and plans for the future.

Useful Steps in Working with Inmates:

- Understand and accept the state they are in and be supportive to them in that stage.
- Don't try to solve problems, just be there for them. Learn to talk a little and listen much. Understand the difference between sympathy and empathy.
- When they are ready to move to another stage, gently guide them and share options for growth spiritually, emotionally and physically. Encourage the inmate to be a role model inside the prison system and with his family, help them realize that they can have a fulfilling and productive life behind the gates.
- Help the inmate look beyond their own circumstances and realize that they can still contribute to their family through visitation, letter writing, spiritual and emotional support.

- Help the inmate experience life as a journey not a destination and help them celebrate small victories of living.
- Encourage active participation in recreation, educational/vocational and chapel activities.

Prison Ministry Catholic Charities Diocese of Palm Beach Florida

VIII. Inmate Characteristics

Each inmate is unique. There is no “typical” inmate in God’s sight. Remember, every stumbling block be a stepping stone.

- Education: Often, the educational level of inmates is low and illiteracy is common.
- Home Environment: Inmates often come from foster or dysfunctional homes where there was physical or sexual abuse, divorce, separation, abandonment, mental illness, alcoholism, drug abuse, little supervision, and little to no discipline.
- Employment: Many inmates have little or no training. They may have been unsuccessful obtaining or maintaining employment or worked at low paying jobs. A police record is a serious impediment.
- Self-Image: Inmates often have low self-esteem because they have been rejected by society, friends or family.
- Emotional Profile: Many inmates suffer from guilt over what they have done or put their families through. Depression, hopelessness, loneliness, hostility and distrust toward society are common. Also, feelings of shame and basic worthlessness as a human being are prevalent.
- Social Responsibility: Inmates sometimes have a limited sense of social responsibility. They may feel no remorse for their crime or they got a “bad break” from the system by coming to prison.
- Minorities: Minority groups are often over-represented in jails and prisons.

Know that these characteristics are not true of all inmates. Some are very educated and held high paying jobs. Some came from supportive families. Some are sincere seekers, desiring to learn about God. These general characteristics are based on numerous studies of the majority of prison inmates.

Most important, remember to view each inmate not as they were, or even as they are. View them as children of God, deserving of our respect and love. We are not there to judge the guilt or innocence of an inmate. We are there to be a minister of God’s love to them. It is also very important to remember that, for various reasons, many heroes of the faith ended up with prison records and that there are great men and women of faith on both sides of prison walls.

IX. Games Inmates Play

Volunteers understandably want to approach their ministry in a positive and optimistic manner. However, volunteers must be aware that some offenders will attempt to manipulate you for their own benefit. The following may help you to recognize such behavior and avoid it:

- Realize that some offenders will take advantage of you if you let them.
- Do not do anything you would be ashamed to share with your peers, team lead or facility staff.
- Keep everything out in the open. If you have questions, ask your team lead or facility staff.
- Know the policies and procedures you are required to follow.
- Learn to be assertive and use the word “no” appropriately.
- Be aware of verbal and non-verbal messages you send out – particularly body language.
- Always document and confront any attempt at manipulation or game-playing.
- Verify information before you take action.
- Understand your strengths and weaknesses.
- Realize that offenders view themselves as the victim.

Additional Guidelines for Volunteers:

- **Mean What You Say:** Never make a promise unless you’ve thought it through first and are prepared to carry it out.
- **Don’t Probe:** Let the offender tell you in his own time about the offense committed, the family left behind, or any other deeply held guilt associated matters. You must respect the offender’s individuality and basic rights as a human being.
- **Do Not Betray Confidences:** Confidence should be broken only for security reasons and only to an appropriate staff member.
- **Be Patient:** Do not expect overnight miracles. When things have been going wrong for years and years with a person, they cannot be corrected in a few weeks or months. The positive effects of your relationship may not be evident until long after you have stopped working with that person.
- **Respect:** Respect is the keystone. The inmates will not be open with you until you respect them. The inmates will never respect you until it is clear that you cannot be conned or manipulated. Do not take sides; respect the authority of the correctional staff.
- **Don’t Over Identify:** You cannot take the burden of the other persons’ problems on yourself. They are the offenders’ problems not yours. Maintain a professional relationship with all inmates equally. Do not choose favorites.

Prison Ministry Catholic Charities Diocese of Palm Beach Florida

X. Religious Services

The Detention Ministry offers a ministry of love to adults and juveniles in our county correctional facilities. While each facility includes religious services, our goal is to eventually offer Mass at each location along with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion to every Catholic. The chaplain or team captain of each facility will arrange for and manage the type of services provided which might include Bible study, Scripture reflection, RICA, prayer service, communion service, reciting the rosary, one-on-one visits, counseling, small group facilitation, restorative justice and reconciliation, music ministry, etc. Visits are arranged consistent with facility rules and regulations.

Society of St. Vincent DePaul, Prison Apostolate, Jail Ministry Handbook

XI. A Ministry of Presence

What does it mean to practice The Ministry of Presence? The following article by Thomas Lawlor, Director of Prison Ministry for Catholic Charities, Palm Beach Florida, provides a helpful definition:

The most frequently asked question by prospective prison ministry volunteers and other inquiring minds is, "What exactly do you do?" The answer to this question varies depending on such factors as time allotted, space considerations, the availability of priests and deacons who are part of the volunteer cadre, and the makeup of the inmate population being ministered to.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, preceded by the Sacrament of Reconciliation, is the greatest gift the ministry brings to inmates, superseded only by the administering of the Sacrament of Baptism. Mass and Reconciliation are offered on a regular basis in some institutions, less frequently in others, depending on some of the factors mentioned above. Baptisms are conducted as required. When priests are unavailable, deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion conduct Eucharistic Services. Bible studies, bible discussions and prayer sessions are generally conducted by deacons and lay volunteers, as are preparation classes for inmates desiring the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

It is difficult to conduct organized, ongoing bible study classes in a county jail or juvenile detention center because the inmate populations in these institutions are constantly in a state of flux. The majority of inmates in jail are awaiting trial. After trial, they may be remanded back to jail for a limited period of time, are released, or sent off to state prison to serve longer sentences. Basically, they move on pretty quickly. Such is the case with juveniles who, on average, serve even shorter sentences than do adults in jail. So, bible-discussion sessions work best for these inmate populations. With such, the volunteers go in prepared to discuss a given bible passage or set of passages on a related topic, and present the material to the inmates for

contemplation and discussion. What scripture tells us about forgiveness, prayer, salvation, faith, the Apostles' faith journey, etc., are subjects that are generally well received.

Bible study programs are more appropriate for inmates in state prisons, those serving sentences anywhere from a year to life. While the Florida Department of Corrections does transfer inmates periodically from one institution to another, their length of stay at any given facility is generally several years. This enables volunteers to utilize longer term bible study programs and go into the word of God in more detail. It is not uncommon for volunteers to hear from inmates that the sessions are the highlight of their week, something they look forward to very much. It is also not uncommon for interested inmates to get together themselves in groups to study the word of God further during their free time.

Matching the interests, abilities, previous pastoral experiences, knowledge of the faith and times of availability of volunteers, with the needs of various inmate populations, is a bit of a challenge. It is, however, a prerequisite to setting the stage for an effective ministry experience for all concerned. At the outset, each new volunteer in the Diocese of Palm Beach is given a Prison Ministry Volunteer Manual designed, among other things, to help them settle into the ministry with greater ease. A significant portion of the manual is devoted to providing prepared "talks" on the subjects mentioned above and more.

Upon reflection, perhaps the best answer to the question, "What exactly do you do?", is "We show up!" It generally takes volunteers a while before they come to understand that often it is not the agenda they planned, or the bible passage(s) selected, that will impact the inmates on any given day. It will be nothing more than their presence. It is through consistent, faithful presence on the part of volunteers that inmates come to see true followers of Christ committed to living the gospel, and bringing His message of love, mercy and forgiveness to others they do not even know at some sacrifice to themselves. For many inmates, that kind of presence doesn't go unnoticed and is often overpowering. The presence of volunteers is just one of the many ways the Holy Spirit reaches out and touches the hearts of those who are confined behind prison walls, far out of sight of the general population. But the Holy Spirit is always working, there and everywhere.

Conclusion

Detention Ministry is not easy. The rewards are not immediate and the disappointments are many. There is no value that can be placed on the soul of a man, woman, or young person. There will be some who do not receive your message. There will be some who will return to their old ways. Do not be discouraged. Do not measure the worth of detention ministry by what you might perceive as failures. Measure its worth by your successes. If you feel overwhelmed, feel free to ask for help. There are many challenges to detention ministry, but there are also tremendous rewards.

Thank you for your interest. We hope this manual will assist you in your discernment of your calling to serve these special children of God. You have a uniqueness that is particularly yours. If you hear the call to the tough and challenging ministry inside jail and prison walls, please join us. Your time and talents can be used to reach troubled, hurting and broken people with the loving life changing and liberating message of God.