Corporal Works of Mercy Week #2
Visit the Imprisoned

February 28, 2016 – March 5, 2016, 3rd Sunday of Lent
Scripture Readings: Ex3: 1-8a. 13-15/ Ps 103: 1-2. 3-4. 6-7. 8. 11 (8a)/ 1 Cor 10: 1-6. 10-12/ Lk 13: 1-9
Thought Starter: Moses, who was banished to the desert as a criminal, finds strength in God's call, and sets out to free the enslaved and imprisoned in Egypt.

Perspective

In their pastoral letter, A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, the U.S. bishops observed that "the current trend of more prisons and more executions, with too little education and drug treatment, does not truly reflect Christian values and will not really leave our communities safer."

The bishops said a Catholic approach to criminal justice "begins with the recognition that the dignity of the human person applies to both victim and offender." It calls us "to protect public safety, promote the common good, and restore community."

"We believe a Catholic ethic of responsibility, rehabilitation, and restoration can become the foundation for the necessary reform of our broken criminal justice system," the bishops wrote.

Even if we can't actually visit prisoners, we can begin by reexamining our assumptions about crime, criminals and criminal justice. We can start paying attention to why people end up in prison, what happens to them when they are there, and how they are treated when they are released.

Learn more about restorative justice in the Archdiocese: https://goo.gl/P0mje1

If anyone is interested in getting involved in jail and prison ministry; Circles, or other avenues for working with people who are either in or have been released from prison/jail contact Mark Schmidt as the staff liason for social justice. Our social justice committee has stated as a goal to recruit people to assist with Circles and other restorative programs.

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Plan for "Making Habits" focused on Visiting the Imprisoned

- Open our personal "prison doors":
  - I hold others prisoner by past hurts/situation – Is this the time to set them free and "myself?"
  - I feel "imprisoned" by others through past hurts/situations – is now the time to forgive and "let go?"
  - Some I know are imprisoned by fears, situations, addictions, etc. – can I reach out and help.
  - I am imprisoned by fears, situations, addictions, etc. – pray and seek help from God.
  - I hold myself prisoner by hanging onto feelings of anger/hatred/revenge or by refusing to forgive
- Help us to collect /assemble a "Starter Kit" to be distributed to those who are just beginning their life outside of prison. Items can be placed in boxes in the church entries next weekend.

Starter Kit Listing…

- Paper towels
- Bathroom tissue
- Bathroom cleaner
- Dish Soap
- Cleaning cloths or sponges
- Furniture polish
- Toilet Bowl Cleaner
- Glass cleaner
- Laundry detergent
- Dryer sheets
- Disinfectant spray
- General purpose cleaners (Lysol, Pinesol, Spic and Span, etc.)
- Floor cleaner
- Laundry basket
- Cleaning Bucket
- Mop and/or broom

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A Daily Prayer for Justice and Mercy

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.