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CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Diocese of Palm Beach, Inc.

PRISON MINISTRY

providing help • creating hope

Office (561) 360-3326

October 1, 2019

Dear Prison Ministers,

I pray that you are all still enjoying our ministry for the Lord. I have always been of the opinion, that the most difficult part for me, as the director, has been to overcome the objections of "juvy", jail and prison administrators who call the Precious Blood contraband! In the last quarter we had to overcome this ridiculousness of indifference to Jesus, with people who call themselves "Chaplain" and have never been certified by a nationally known program. A person outside the Catholic Faith must complete four units of Clinical Pastoral Education in order to qualify for certification as a chaplain. To date, I have not met a Florida Department of Corrections Chaplain who has dedicated the time and effort to qualify. The link explains the process.

https://www.acpe.edu/ACPE/Accreditation/ACPE/Accreditation/Accred_Home.aspx?hkey=abd85243-06bc-4191-9b6c-ffdd51986213.

For canon law abiding Catholics, please consider the following:

Can. 564 A chaplain is a priest to whom is entrusted in a stable manner the pastoral care, at least in part, of some community or special group of Christ's faithful, to be exercised in accordance with universal and particular law.

While I have completed four units to qualify as a chaplain, I would discourage anyone from calling me as such. The real value in 1,600 hours of education and visiting patients in a hospital between 2012 and 2014 was in learning about the other religions and respecting their beliefs. Something the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office is only now realizing by hiring someone who is certified, Rabbi Lieberman as their Senior Chaplain. He cooperates with the Office of Prison Ministry for Catholic Charities. Still, there are officers and administrators at the PBSO that will always, well what was it that Venerable Bishop Fulton Sheen said about us? "There are not just hundreds of people that hate the Catholic Church, but millions!"

The only way to overcome prejudice is with love. That is why the Office of Prison Ministry is partnering with the Order of Malta Pen Pal Program. Not only will I be participating, but I would like you to consider participation as well. Indeed, if you or perhaps someone you know, would like to be in a program that safeguards the interests of both pen pals, then respond to our assistant Vinessa Morgan VMorgan@ccdpcb.org and she will send you attachments in an email for you to get started. The minimum is one letter per month and cannot be from an inmate in a correctional facility that you are visiting.

Regarding the ministry to the 140 girls who are being detained in a facility in Lake Worth, the clearing procedure is a first go-around for the United States Committee on Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). Fingerprinting, drug tests and all immunization records have had to be supplied. It is as onerous as it gets. I am convinced that God made us to persist. How else can we be defined when our cause is a righteous one?

On Friday October 25th the Bishop is celebrating Mass and honoring us with a meal at St. Ignatius. Many of you have said that you can be there at 11:00, but I would love to hear from many more of you. Please RSVP as soon as you can to Vinessa. And for those of you who cannot attend, you remain in my prayers every day. Thank you for participating in prison ministry.



Yours in Christ,
Rev. Greg

www.catholiccharitiesdpb.org

