

# Visiting the Imprisoned . . .

*(In our effort to look more deeply into the Year of Mercy's invitation to love as Jesus does, this issue of the newsletter will explore the ways we "visit the imprisoned.")*



***“Go and learn what I mean:  
I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”***

Jesus was a prisoner. He was put in jail, beaten, and executed. Paul wrote many of his epistles from prison. Being deprived of one's freedoms, isolated, and cut off from friends and family is exceedingly painful for both them and those who love them. We are asked to reach out and minister to them through the corporal work of mercy of visiting the imprisoned.

St. Leo's and its partners do this through a variety of ways. Some choose to visit or write to prisoners on a regular basis; others pray regularly for them. The parish makes sure they receive bulletins and newsletters to keep them in the loop and remind them that they are part of the parish family. There is a group that visits the jails monthly to pray and share scripture. When someone is released, we welcome them home and support them in getting employment and reengaging in parish life.

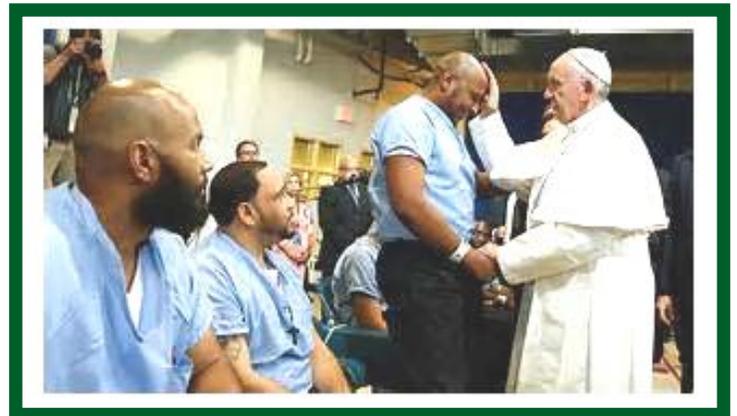
Gabbi Montavonm a Xavier University senior who leads our Children's Liturgy of the Word during Sunday Mass, wrote a prisoners' newsletter while she was an intern at the Archdiocesan social action office.

Lynn Hensler from our covenant partner parish Our Lady of Visitation has been involved in the Archdiocesan Social Action Office's work with returning citizens through the Dismas Journey and as a mentor through the HELP program housed at St. Francis De Sales church. The program founded by Marianist Brother

Mike Murphy, has as its goal to inspire hope in returning

citizens, who have been convicted of a felony, by providing a caring community of support and services that lead to employment and self-sufficiency and make contributing members of society. Their vision is meaningful employment, full lives, thriving families, and educated and prosperous communities. More information is available by calling 961-0027 or visiting the website [www.helpprogramcincinnati.net](http://www.helpprogramcincinnati.net).

Sue Preishoff, pastoral council president, has long been involved with the group "Ohioans to Stop the Death Penalty." She bases her involvement on Catholic Social Teaching which is opposed to the death penalty and reflected in an April 2015 letter from the Catholic Bishops of Ohio who wrote: "Murder rightly evokes moral outrage and a call for justice. It also calls for spiritual healing and caring support for all those impacted by such a tragedy. Just punishment—punishment that reflects the seriousness of the offense, seeks restoration for the offense and protects society—it is a foundational moral principle within our justice system."



***“A little bit of mercy  
makes the world  
less cold and more just.”***

—Pope Francis

"Just punishment can occur without resorting to the death penalty. As stated by Pope Francis: 'it is impossible to imagine that state today cannot make use of another means than capital punishment to defend peoples' lives from an unjust aggressor.' We Catholic Bishops of Ohio have consistently advocated for an end to the use of the death penalty. We seek mercy because we believe that spiritual conversion is possible and that all life, even that of the worst offender, has value and dignity."

