



CATHOLIC CORRECTIONAL CHAPLAINCY PRINCIPLES

Guidelines of Catholic Correctional Chaplaincy

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Introduction

Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all people, Catholic Correctional Chaplains perceive prison ministry to be our Gospel call to call to be present and serve those affected by the criminal justice system, system, whether inmate, victim, their families, correctional employees and employees and the larger Catholic community.

The responsibility for ministry to those who are incarcerated comes from Christ's admonition to each of us "whatever you do to the least...you've done to me" (Matthew 25). As with other social and pastoral ministries, this responsibility rests with the total people of God. We must respond to God's call to service by being involved in a communal way. The Catholic Faith Community must be present in prisons, jails in meaningful ways. The Catholic Chaplain takes the initiative and facilitates the full participation of volunteers in the pastoral care of prisoners.

Catholic Prison Ministry recognizes both the level of personal responsibility and the impact of social structure. We support the concept of ministry, which integrates the components of direct service, public education, and advocacy for systemic change.

ELEMENTS OF DETENTION MINISTRY

Sacramental and Religious Services

Catholic Correctional Chaplains support and value the following principles:

Inmates have the right to attend and participate in sacramental and religious services, including liturgy, pastoral counseling, and faith-sharing groups. Ministers have the right of access to all areas of the facility, which permits them to carry out their ministry with integrity and support.

- We work toward providing regular Eucharistic liturgies for all inmates in our care. Smaller services are provided in institutions where inmates are restricted from mixing with the general population. In the absence of a priest, a communion service is provided by the Chaplain or designated volunteer. Communion is made available to those inmates who are not allowed to attend any group services. Video taped service is **not** acceptable and should not replace Eucharistic liturgies.
- We initiate and welcome volunteer attendance and participation in Catholic services. We invite parish music groups to participate, when possible.
- We initiate, welcome and facilitate requests by inmates for spiritual and pastoral counseling. We make every effort to discuss with administration how we can facilitate easy access to inmates without excessive wasted time. We work with the administration to creatively facilitate religious programming which meets the need for both pastoral service and security.
- We make every effort to facilitate the availability of the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. We invite local parish priests to assist us when necessary.
- We are sensitive to the multilingual and multicultural experience and expression of the inmates we serve. Subsequently, we reflect the richness of this diversity in our liturgies through our language in prayer, symbols, and multilingual songs and rituals, especially on holy days.
- We are attentive to the reality that many non-Catholics attend Catholic services. We understand our people are searching for a faith community; many are unchurched and in need of support. We welcome the full participation of any one at services and invite non-Catholics to come forward for a blessing at the reception of Eucharist.

- We create a sacred environment for worship, especially if the room provided by the institution is not a chapel.
- We discuss with the administration any disrespectful behaviors or obstructions to the sacredness of worship. This includes, but is not limited to, institutional interruptions or staff behaviors, which are inappropriate during Eucharist.
- We are well versed in the religious freedom guidelines and laws related to the criminal justice system in which we minister. When religious freedom is violated, Catholic Chaplains notify administrators or supervisors.
- We make every attempt to include inmate participation at Catholic services (i.e., entrance procession, readers, carrying gifts, and choir). However, inmates are never invited to distribute communion.
- Special prayer petitions are written which are appropriate to the prisoner's experience and needs.

Recruitment and Training of Volunteers

The concept of team ministry, involve Chaplains, ordained religious, and lay persons, is affirmed. It is necessary for volunteers to network, share, and support one another in order to provide an effective and high quality ministerial presence.

- We recruit volunteers and welcome local parish involvement.
- We recognize that we must intentionally work to form community with volunteers prior to facilitating community among those with whom we minister and serve.
- We participate and provide training for new volunteers. We also look for and provide opportunities for ongoing training of advanced volunteers. We network with the Director of detention ministry in the local diocese.
- We attend to the development of the personal and pastoral needs of volunteers. Debriefing sessions for volunteers are the norm.
- We work toward identifying leadership qualities among volunteers and share responsibilities with them whenever possible.
- We resist using volunteers to fulfill their primary duties and responsibilities.

- We provide formal and informal supervision of all volunteers. Particular attention is given to non-English speaking volunteers. We facilitate the creation of a viable community so that volunteers feel appreciated and supported as full partners in ministry.
- We maintain records of volunteers and take responsibility to monitor that they are meeting requirements for training.

Crisis Intervention and Pastoral Care

Catholic Correctional Chaplaincy is a specialized ministry and demands expertise in crisis intervention and pastoral care.

- We prioritize pastoral needs. We ensure that the notification of the death of a prisoner's loved one is delivered in a timely and pastoral manner. We are sensitive to the pastoral needs of the prisoner at that time. We attend to the grieving process and give priority to visits with the person in the days and weeks immediately following the loss.
- We provide grief counseling and plan memorial services, which involve the prisoner. We invite the inmate community to join in prayer and emotional support.
- We are encouraged to maintain contact, support and pastoral visitation when inmates are hospitalized in other medical correctional facilities.
- We are particularly attentive to the signs of mental illness, suicide and stress. We work with other institution experts in providing quality care.
- We maintain contact, support and are a source of encouragement to paroled inmates who contact us.

Religious Programming

Catholic Correctional Chaplains ensure a variety of effective religious programming.

- We establish and maintain a chapel library, which includes books, magazines, Catholic newspapers, cassette tapes and videos.
- We welcome well-respected programs, such as Kairos and M2, and assist community leaders in securing the success of these programs.
- We sponsor special inmate groups, such as support groups, contemplative prayer groups and Bible study.
- We celebrate major Holy Days within our Catholic Tradition, with special emphasis on Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter. We provide assistance to other traditions in securing effective celebrations in their traditions.

Inclusiveness of Pastoral Care

Inclusiveness in pastoral care, calls us to work against all that divides or discriminates on the basis of gender, religion, race or culture.

- We actively recruit persons of diverse races and cultures.
- We use inclusive language in Catholic rituals.
- We respect all spiritualities and faith groups and minister collaboratively with other Chaplains serving in the institution.
- We work to ensure full participation (i.e., Chaplains, volunteers, and inmates), in all events and celebrations.
- We confront all forms of racial and cultural discrimination.
- We confront religious prejudice and never allow proselytizing.
- We are sensitive to language barriers and facilitate pastoral care for persons who do not speak, read, or write English.
- We are aware of the racial tensions which exist in correctional facilities and make every effort to foster peace and reconciliation. We do not limit pastoral visits to persons of one race or culture.

Applying Human Dignity to All

As a Eucharistic community, the Chaplaincy program nurtures all who hunger and thirst for human dignity.

- We use first names and always avoid treating a prisoner as a number.
- We confront any and all behavior which is disrespectful and demeaning.
- We use a tone of voice that is healing and compassionate.
- We do not stereotype prisoners or guards, nor do we side with one against another.
- We do not show favoritism to particular individuals.

Human Isolation of inmates

Human isolation which confines, separates, or demoralizes inmates is of special concern for pastoral ministers, who are called to reconcile and heal.

- We identify where the isolation units are located and visit inmates in these sections regularly.
- We make every effort to personally initiate visits to administrative segregation units, Security Housing Units, and the hospital on a regular basis.
- The Sacramental life of inmates in solitary confinement is assured. Communion and reconciliation are available, when possible.
- Excessive force and denial of the rights of prisoners in isolation are reported to the appropriate officer in the chain of command and documented in writing.

Opportunities for Visits and Counseling

The gospel of liberation challenges us to commit to the message of Christ through our lives. It further challenges us to be a voice against any form of power or oppression that instills fear, limits access to ministry, or undermines Christian hospitality.

- We extend a loving welcome to all inmates during worship, and we provide opportunities for visits and counseling.
- We are always ready to receive the sacred reality of each person's journey. We help inmates who are non-Catholic to see their Chaplains.

The Sacredness of Life

All people are created in the image and likeness of God. The sacredness of life compels us to stand with all persons without distinction.

- With Christ, we stand on the side of the poor without judgment or discrimination.
- In the light of Gospel values, we evaluate the effectiveness of institutional policies in the light of Gospel values and on their impact upon the incarcerated.
- We believe the death penalty needs to be abolished. Chaplains educate their volunteers on the U.S. Catholic Bishops' stand regarding respect for life.
- At the time of a schedule execution, Chaplains will invite their faith communities to pray for the person being executed, their victims, and their families. We attend local vigils with volunteers whenever possible.
- We resist all public policy pertaining to the adultification of youth, restrictions of family visits, and longer sentences.
- We write letters on behalf of inmates when appropriate.
- We support alternatives to incarceration that are consistent with Gospel values.
- We assist prisoners with resettlement issues and support them in discernment for successful parole.

Strengthening Family Relations

Catholic Correctional Chaplains realize the critical importance of strengthening family relationships.

- We attend to the pastoral needs of family members, when appropriate.
- We make ourselves available to family members who call upon us in our role as Catholic Chaplains and reach out to families, acknowledging their pain and offering care and compassion.
- We make ourselves available during visiting when possible.

Prison Ministry in today's society

Catholic Correctional Chaplains realize we are pastoring Catholic faith communities who are outcasts in society. Chaplains are their voice and make every efforts to raise up their needs at all levels of Church structure.

- We recognize the need for greater missionary efforts by parish communities. We use various opportunities to address parishes, pastors and diocesan leaders and invite them to come inside and participate with the incarcerated faith community.
- We immerse ourselves in the mainstream Church whenever possible for the purpose of bringing our people into the whole faith community. We participate in Diocesan Detention Ministry programs and collaborates with California Directors of Detention Ministry and interfaith Chaplains groups.
- We make every effort not to succumb to the isolation of the prison institution.

Advocating restorative justice principles

Catholic social teaching offers direction as well as measures for the Catholic Community's response to crime and criminal justice.

- We participate with the California Catholic Conference, diocesan offices and parish legislative advocacy networks in supporting public policies that reflect restorative justice, within the Criminal Justice System.

- We collaborate with the local Bishop and diocesan leaders to address issues and policies that destroy the dignity and hope of prisoners.
- We share the USCC statement Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration with volunteers and criminal justice administrators.
- We act as the moral conscience of the institution measuring every policy and practice by how they affect the poor in prison. We address issues and policies that dehumanize, demoralize and depersonalize prisoners.
- We facilitate delegations of local Catholic leaders and "Come and See" events for parishioners to listen and learn how the local Catholic parish can address pastoral concerns while making recommendations to local administrators when necessary.