



# Prison Ministry Report

April 2005

Catholic Conference of Ohio

## General Issues of Concern

- Treatment of ministers
- Scheduling issues
- Hispanic Ministry
- ID of Catholic inmates
- Just financial compensation for ministers
- Outreach-coordination
- Bishops' support
- Equal treatment with other faith ministers
  - Often feel like 2<sup>nd</sup> class ministers
- Passes
  - C.O. honoring passes
- Opposition to providing Sacraments
- Discrimination
  - Religious
  - Institution
- Facility use
- Funding
- Grief work
- Re-entry

## Positive Aspects of Prison Ministry

- Lives turned around
- Recidivism rates lower
- Appreciated by inmates
- Volunteerism growing
  - Parish based
- Attendance increasing within many institutions
- Grace moments
- Brought/Bring Jesus
  - Conversions
  - Salvations

## Issues of Concern

1. Religious Bias
2. Budget for contracts and ministry
3. Hispanic Ministry
4. Passes
5. Re-entry
6. Communication issues

### 1. Religious Bias

- ~ Education of corrections staff regarding Catholic issues
- ~ Committee on diocesan level such document issues
- ~ Seek to be a more active part of the budget processes both at state and institution levels
- ~ Identify key contact person(s) in each institution for resolution (e.g. Deputy Warden)
- ~ Each minister should keep better documentation of bias
- ~ Seek further clarifications regarding full time chaplain's roles and their relationships with contract chaplains.
- ~ Investigate possible legal responses- diocesan, state

### 2. Contracts

- ~ Better understand how contracts are determined.
- ~ Are our religious services adequately defined and equitably funded?
- ~ Contracts should cover Holy Day Services and Counseling
- ~ Concerns that some dual facilities only have one service

### 3. Hispanic Ministry

- Consult with diocesan Hispanic directors for access to Hispanic resources
- ~ Need to recruit more Spanish speaking ministers
- ~ Consider using video resources
- ~ American Bible Society is a good resource for religious materials  
Check into version Latino Americano
- ~ Diocesan Resources helpful,  
Sr. Teresa Ann Wolf, Youngstown diocese has developed prison related resources
- ~ Pursue increased training/ Formation on cultural awareness of our prison volunteers and leaders

### 4. Passes of prisoners making it to Catholic Services

- ~ Passes are often not given to attend services
- ~ Keep "kiting" CO's regarding concerns
- ~ Push for better Religious census of Catholic Inmates
- ~ Ask about access to religious information (Catholics)
- ~ Push for more adequate information about our services
- ~ Our services are open to other faiths. This should be better recognized.
- ~ Pass requirements vary by institution. More information/uniformity would be helpful.

## **5. Re-entry Issues**

- ~ Raise profile of need for such ministry through education, preaching, and newsletters
- ~ Pursue further research
  - What structures are available/needed?
  - Can services/programs be coordinated with others?
  - How can we secure funding (Faith based funding may be available)?
- ~ Support existing re-entry housing
- ~ Establish diocesan committees to explore possibilities
- ~ Pursue linkages with Catholic Charities and job creation programs
- ~ Network with others
  - John Gibboney is a valuable resource
  - St. Vincent DePaul Society- open interested
- ~ Explore the possibility of "Citizen Circles" –Sr. Rita Mary Harwood, diocese of Cleveland can provide more information

## **5. Communication**

- ~ Promote better communication between Institutions and Catholic ministers
  - Pursue more Catholic involvement in Citizen advisory committees
- ~ Promote better communication among Institutions and various parishes/ dioceses
  - Can we do better coordination and collaboration?
  - Better coordinate volunteers within diocesan structures
  - Have dioceses develop better relationships with institutions and Dept. corrections