

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY DIOCESE OF BEAUMONT



August 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 6: Prayer Vigil 1pm

August 11: Alpha Zoom 6pm

August 14: Alpha Zoom 2pm

When Can We Go Back For Retreats?

With the state of affairs as it is now, it's still a waiting game. TDCJ along with the CDC continues to monitor the situation. At this time, TDCJ will only return to a pre-Covid level of operation only when the individual unit reaches **70% of inmate and employee vaccination combined**.

Many of you have asked when we can do retreats again....it all depends on when the units reach 70% vaccination! Now with this Delta variant, it all depends on what TDJC mandates for the

future. Until then, we are still under limited protocols. None of our units in the diocese of Beaumont are at 70% at this time. **NOTE:** As of July 23rd, TDCJ has also reinstated rapid Covid testing with ALL volunteers prior to entering units.

Mass and Communion services are happening again in 8 of our 10 units. Other programs are limited and depend on the available space and officers at each unit. We continue to be patient and pray for our brothers and sisters in white.

ALPHA PROGRAM IN THE PRISONS

A program I want to encourage you to consider helping with is the Alpha course for prisons. The Houston director, Gregg Bergerson, comes to Stiles, Henley, and Hightower to offer these Christian-based sessions. He is looking for new volunteers to help facilitate the sessions as well as possibly bringing it to other units.



Alpha is the beginning of a relationship with Jesus. It is a worldwide ministry run in 168 countries. It consists of a series of sessions exploring the basics of the Christian faith. The Alpha Course is for everyone, wherever they are in their faith walk. It is a tool for the new evangelization and addresses Pope Francis' art of accompaniment as it focuses on **loving, listening, and laughing** with everyone in search for meaning in life. Typically run over eleven weeks, each session looks at a different question that people can have about faith and is designed to create conversation. It's just an open, informal, and honest space to explore and discuss life's big questions together. It is relational, concentrating on "heart knowledge" of the gospel.

There will be 2 information sessions by Zoom in August to join if you'd be interested and curious to know more. Gregg will be the one to eventually facilitate and train the volunteers, and I support this effort. I think it's a great pre-RCIA or pre-Kolbe retreat foundation. Please join us! **A Zoom link will be sent closer to the date of the session.**

Wednesday, August 11th at 6pm

Saturday, August 14th at 2pm

For more information see:

The Alpha Course for Prisons

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w70Qv_W3-V4&t=103s

FIRST FRIDAY PRAYER VIGILS

On the First Friday of each month, Catholic Mobilizing Network holds a Virtual Prayer Vigil to lament upcoming executions and bear witness to the inviolable dignity of all human life.

These virtual spaces offer a place to pray together as a faith community in response to the injustice of the death penalty. They include time for guided prayer, petitions, Scripture reflections, and contemplative silence. The vigils feature the voices of Catholic bishops, Church leaders, and allies across the death penalty abolition movement.

The next First Friday Prayer Vigil is scheduled for Friday, August 6th at 2 p.m. EDT / 1 p.m. CST. Please RSVP [here](#) to attend.

VOLUNTEER STATUS FOR TDCJ PRISONS

During the Covid restrictions, you can renew online. If you have not completed a training online before, you'll need to choose "Register" to create a profile here https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/php/prod/volunteer_training/

If you have questions, call me or the TDCJ Volunteer Services at (936) 437-3035. When you renew, please send me your renewal date.

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FEDERAL UNIT

Questions? Comments?

Want to share anything in the upcoming newsletters?

Contact:

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The Federal Correction Complex here in Beaumont is opening up for ministry once again. This year we will rely on volunteers rather than having a contract approach where only a few people could go in. If you're interested, the unit will have a volunteer training that you'll need to take in order to minister. The next scheduled training will be in September. Please email me if you're interested, and I'll be sure to share the date and time once I know it. Volunteers/priests/deacons can facilitate Bible studies, RCIA, Rosary, Divine Mercy, offer Mass or communion service. Please take this to prayer. If you'd like to talk more about this opportunity, contact the criminal justice office and we can set up a meeting.

****Be sure to look on page 30 of the newest ETC when you receive it. The article is from a Stiles inmate.**

