



Diocese of Austin

# Office of Restorative Justice Ministry Pastoral Care Policy Manual



*“For I was ... in prison and  
you visited me” (Mt 25:36)*



# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MINISTRY

## Pastoral Care Policy Manual

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# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MINISTRY

## Pastoral Care Policies and Guidelines

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines have been developed to assist priests, deacons, and lay volunteers to provide pastoral care and a ministry of presence to those affected by the criminal justice system, including incarcerated men, women and children; family members of the incarcerated; victims of crime; family members of victims; and those transitioning from prison and jail facilities back into the community.

### 2. CARE OF VICTIMS

The Diocese of Austin (Diocese) promotes the philosophy of restorative justice and healing of all people affected by crime, both offenders and victims, along with their families. It is important that those who serve in the Restorative Justice Ministry do not disproportionately attend to serving the needs of the offender and overlook the victim.

A victim of crime experiences psychological and spiritual as well as physical trauma. Pastors, parish communities, and the Church are called to walk intentionally, yet patiently with victims as they mourn their losses and seek a resurrected spirit. By doing so, the Church will succeed in accomplishing the call of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in its statement *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration*, “to encourage victims to redirect their anger from vengeance to true justice and real healing”.

All too often we hear the calls and demands for retribution in the form of punishment or perhaps even execution of an offender that is said to bring “closure” to the victim or to the victim’s family. In truth, it doesn’t. Retribution cannot restore the loss, nor will it serve to heal.

As a faith community, we are called to offer support to those victimized by crime through advocacy or direct ministry. It is in this way that the Church has an opportunity to be an agent of healing to all who are victims, and this includes the loved ones of those victimized by crime. Pastors and parish ministers can offer pastoral care to help reverse the alienation and neglect they often feel from the larger community. As such, victims and their families should find their parish community to be a safe environment in which to process and overcome their brokenness.

Under appropriate circumstances, priests, deacons, and lay volunteers should make themselves available to victims of crime who seek pastoral care, but should not volunteer their services to a victim who has not first sought such pastoral care.

The Office of the Restorative Justice Ministry of the Diocese is available to recommend pastoral resources for victims of crime as well as parishes and deaneries in the Diocese.

### 3. ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OF PRIESTS, DEACONS AND LAY MINISTERS

3.1. To serve in the Restorative Justice Ministry (RJM) in the name of or on behalf of the Catholic Church within correctional facilities in the Diocese, one must meet certain essential requirements appurtenant to the intended ministry function, have the required personal qualities and attributes, have no impediments or incapacities which may adversely affect one's ability to serve, and be willing to abide by norms promulgated by the Bishop of Austin (Bishop) as set forth in the diocesan [Pastoral Manual](#). Those requirements, qualities and attributes include:

3.1.1. Must be a Catholic who is registered and active in a parish or faith community in the Diocese as shown by participating actively in its liturgical life.

Catholic volunteers from other dioceses are subject to the jurisdiction of the Bishop and, therefore, need his permission to minister in the Diocese. That permission may be granted to allow such Catholics to serve in the RJM within the Diocese provided that they meet the other aforesaid and following requirements of this section. (See also 4.1.2 below.) Those wishing to do so should contact the Office of the RJM of the Diocese.

3.1.2. Must be baptized and confirmed or received into the Church prior to time of service in the RJM.

3.1.3. Must attend Mass regularly.

3.1.4. Program leaders or coordinators should complete a program of formation that includes the [Basic Teachings of the Catholic Church](#)<sup>1</sup> or one of comparable content.

3.1.5. Must be at least 21 years of age.

3.1.6. Must be able to communicate effectively in English. Bilingual skills in English and Spanish are a plus.

3.1.7. Must be knowledgeable about Roman Catholic teaching and practice, and speak and act in ways congruent with the Church's faith and its moral and social teachings.

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<sup>1</sup> The Basic Teachings of the Catholic Faith program offered by the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis of the Diocese provides a general introduction to the theological principles found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This program offers basic adult formation courses for all ministry groups. The coursework includes: Introduction to Scripture; Creed; Liturgy and Sacraments; Christian Morality; and Prayer and Spirituality. Each of the five segments offers 6 clock hours of instruction.

- 3.1.8. Must remain continually updated about policies and the best practices expected of ministers to the incarcerated and victims of crime.
  - 3.1.9. Must exhibit respect for all people by demonstrating sensitivity to the rich ethnic, racial, age-level, gender and cultural diversity of the Diocese.
  - 3.1.10. Must be able to celebrate the uniqueness of all people by exhibiting respect for their dignity, worth and full potential.
  - 3.1.11. Must be able to entertain alternative points of view.
  - 3.1.12. Must show the ability to take responsibility for one's self, make decisions, and deal with the consequences.
  - 3.1.13. Must be able to set goals, articulate personal values, and make decisions in light of those values without undue influence from others, and, at the same time, be able to follow goals set by those responsible for the common good and act according to established diocesan and correctional facility policies and procedures.
  - 3.1.14. Must have the ability to identify personal strengths and weaknesses, remain open to feedback from others and be able to change behaviors, attitudes and needs.
  - 3.1.15. Catholic volunteers from other dioceses must provide a letter of good standing (or a [Testimonial of Suitability](#) if religious or ordained clergy) from their diocese as a condition of serving in the RJM in the Diocese. The letter of good standing can be issued for up to a one-year term and must be renewed prior to expiration. Such volunteers must also present evidence of compliance with the requirements of section 4.1.2 below and acknowledge that they have read and will abide by the provisions of this policy manual.
- 3.2. In addition to the above qualifications, a priest or deacon serving in the RJM must be in good standing and must be someone whom the Bishop is willing to appoint to ecclesiastical office and to whom the faculties can be granted (*CIC*, c. 566, §1).
- 3.2.1. A priest or deacon whom the Bishop is unwilling to appoint to an ecclesiastical office is not permitted to accept from a criminal justice institution an appointment to the secular position of "chaplain" of a correctional facility.

## **4. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

- 4.1. Sexual and Other Misconduct Issues

4.1.1. All employees and volunteers serving in the RJM must follow diocesan policies on the prevention of sexual abuse, misconduct and harassment as well as all policies regarding professional ethics.

4.1.2. All volunteers serving in the RJM are required to be compliant with the Diocese of Austin [Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry](#) (EIM). To become compliant, one submits an EIM Application for Ministry (one time only) which permits an initial background check (as well as rechecks every three years), and attends an EIM Workshop every three years. EIM Application information can be found at the diocesan [EIM Application web site](#).

Catholics from other dioceses can alternatively provide a letter/document from their respective diocese stating that they are fully compliant with their diocese's safe environment requirements. The document should include the date of the last approved/cleared background check and the date of the last workshop attended, along with a statement of the duration of validity of each in that diocese (or the date when the compliance expires). Approval to serve in the Diocese would then be granted until the soonest expiring date of either.

No one will be allowed to serve in the RJM in the Diocese without successfully completing either process.

4.1.3. In addition, all employees and volunteers serving in the RJM are responsible for knowing and abiding by the policies of the correctional facility in which they minister and those of the agency responsible for managing the facility.

## 4.2. Confidentiality

4.2.1. Except for situations provided for by canon or civil law and correctional facilities policies, those serving in the RJM should keep their conversations with inmates, victims, inmates' families and victims' families confidential.

4.2.2. If an inmate, victim or family member discloses that someone could potentially be harmed (e.g., an inmate has disclosed to a volunteer that he/she is planning to commit suicide), the priest, deacon or lay volunteer is required to report it immediately to the appropriate program leader and the supervising institutional staff or the local police as appropriate. At no time may a priest share information disclosed during or related to a confession. All information disclosed during or related to a confession is confidential and privileged communication between a priest and an inmate or victim.

4.2.3. The priest, deacon, or lay volunteer should consult the appropriate institutional management agency, e.g., the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), for further information or contact the Office of the RJM of the Diocese regarding any question concerning what is confidential and what must be reported.

- 4.2.4. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers who need to share some information regarding an inmate, victim, or other person to whom they are ministering should conduct such conversations in an appropriate confidential setting. A restaurant, for example, is not usually a suitable environment in which to discuss matters of a confidential nature.

#### 4.3. Ministerial Boundaries

Because of the nature of Restorative Justice Ministry, the following apply to all diocesan employees and volunteers serving in the RJM in addition to all other applicable diocesan policies related to ministry:

- 4.3.1. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries for their own safety and the safety of those they serve.
- 4.3.2. Personal relationships with inmates are not allowed. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers must maintain pastoral and professional relationships with inmates, victims, and others.
- 4.3.3. If a priest, deacon, or lay volunteer becomes intimately involved with an inmate (whether emotionally, psychologically or physically), he or she will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, as well as subject to legal disciplinary actions that may be invoked by the managing agency of the correctional facility at which the inmate is incarcerated.
- 4.3.4. If a volunteer becomes intimately involved with an inmate, he or she will not be eligible to continue his or her ministry and may be subject to criminal prosecution.
- 4.3.5. Self-care and not exceeding excessive hours is essential in ministry. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers should maintain an appropriate balance in ministry.

## 5. CERTIFICATION

It is recommended (but not required) that priests, deacons, and lay volunteers receive certification through the American Catholic Correctional Chaplain's Association (ACCCA) or other recognized authority. If funds are available, the Diocese encourages the priests', deacons', and lay volunteers' source of salary or program funding to pay the cost for the certification process in full or in part.



## 6. MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND THEIR MANAGING AGENCIES IN CENTRAL TEXAS

- 6.1. The Office of the RJM of the Diocese works with the [Texas Catholic Correctional Ministers \(TCCM\)](#), the TDCJ, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) and other correctional facility management agencies to advocate for the needs of Catholic inmates. Some examples:
- Men and women incarcerated in TDCJ correctional facilities can declare their Catholic religious faith preference on their TDCJ Travel Card. Doing so may entitle them to attend certain programs and services conducted primarily for Catholic inmates.
  - Priests are allowed to bring in up to 4 ounces of wine for use in the consecration part of the liturgy.
  - Dietary regulations around fasting should be honored, especially during the Lenten Season.
  - Catholic inmates should be allowed to receive rosaries, scapulars, Catholic Bibles, Catechisms, etc.
  - Catholic inmates should be allowed to attend Mass, faith formation, Scripture study and other Catholic service programs conducted in the correctional facility in which they reside.
- 6.2. The Office of the RJM of the Diocese in conjunction with other Catholic social ministries can provide recommendations and resources for Family Assistance programs.
- 6.3. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers are expected to form and maintain positive working relationships with their correctional institution's administrative and correctional staff. If a situation arises at a correctional facility that causes concern for the priest, deacon, or lay volunteer, he or she should attempt to resolve the matter with the local supervisor and, failing that, should contact the Office of the RJM of the Diocese. The Office of the RJM of the Diocese, as delegated by the Bishop, will assist in determining the appropriate steps and level at which to address the situation.
- 6.4. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers are guests of the correctional facility and its managing agency, and must observe the rules and policies established by both in order to be allowed entry. Policy violation may result not only in the termination of an employee/volunteer's ministry but could jeopardize the continuance of Catholic ministry in the facility or in multiple facilities system-wide. Policies governing volunteers serving in TDCJ correctional facilities can be found at [http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/Volunteer\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/Volunteer_Handbook.pdf).

## **7. PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- 7.1. One of the primary responsibilities of the Office of the RJM of the Diocese is to assure the presence and involvement of the Catholic Church in as many correctional facilities located in the Diocese as practical, and that the pastoral needs of the Catholic inmates incarcerated within those facilities and their staff members are served. This is accomplished by having priests enter correctional units to celebrate Mass and hear confessions. In addition, deacons, religious and lay volunteer teams enter correctional facilities to conduct Communion services, RCIA, faith formation, Scripture study and other Catholic service programs. In so doing, it is important that the program content provided by those teams is consistent with Church doctrine and teachings.
- 7.2. In general and in accordance with paragraph 42 of the Supplementary Norms of the *Pastoral Manual* of the Diocese, ministering to those incarcerated in correctional facilities in the Diocese is the responsibility of the pastors and staff of the parishes in whose boundaries those facilities reside. In meeting this responsibility, pastors may call on their deaneries to pool their resources and engage volunteers to serve in those facilities on behalf of the pastors of the deanery. The office of the RJM of the Diocese is available to assist in these efforts.

## **8. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION**

- 8.1. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers that conduct Catholic service programs or retreats in correctional facilities in the Diocese do so under the authority of and subject to norms and policies promulgated by the Bishop.
- 8.2. The office of the RJM of the Secretariat for Life, Charity and Justice of the Diocese is responsible for the oversight of all Catholic programs conducted in such correctional facilities to assure their compliance with the norms and guidelines established by the Bishop. Accordingly, all Catholic service program coordinators should provide the Office of the RJM of the Diocese with information about their proposed ministerial activity that describes their programs, including program curriculum, frequency, duration, goals and objectives, prior to program implementation.
- 8.3. All Catholic service programs conducted in correctional facilities in the Diocese are periodically evaluated by the Office of the RJM of the Diocese. This evaluation is based on annual goals and objectives developed by the Office of the RJM in the context of assuring that the sacramental needs of the inmates in those correctional facilities are being met and to determine the need for diocesan guidance and support of those programs, if warranted.
  - 8.3.1. To assist in this evaluation, program coordinators are encouraged (or may be requested) to periodically submit a Ministry Review Form (see Appendix A) to the Office of the RJM of the Diocese.

- 8.3.2. This review form allows program coordinators to report their ministry activity and accomplishments at the correctional institution (e.g., volunteer information, how many inmates were served at the institution, sacraments administered, administrative changes at the institution, etc.). It will also provide the opportunity to identify any issues or needs that may arise in their ministry programs at the institution.

## **9. PROGRAM COSTS AND EXPENSES**

- 9.1. Priests and diocesan employees are compensated according to the schedules and policies established by the Diocese. Deacons and lay volunteers are typically not compensated for ministry services although parishes may elect to provide reimbursement of certain expenses incurred by them in connection with their ministry service.
- 9.2. In general, ministry for those incarcerated in a correctional facility in the Diocese is the responsibility of the pastor of the parish in which the facility resides, and the costs of ministry programs should be funded at the parish level. In certain limited circumstances, the Diocese may provide resources or other support in the form of Bibles, catechisms, and other religious books or articles for use in the RJM.

## **10. PASTORAL SERVICES**

### **10.1. Pastoral Visits**

- 10.1.1. When visiting an inmate, a priest, deacon, or lay volunteer is considered to be conducting a one-on-one visit. Within TDCJ correctional facilities, lay volunteers are not allowed to visit inmates on a one-on-one basis unless they are certified as mentors and the purpose of the visit is to mentor the inmate. Counseling is outside the scope of the duties of lay volunteers, unless they have been specially trained and are authorized by the State as a counselor or mentor and are officially acting in that capacity.
- 10.1.2. It is the responsibility of the inmate's pastor to visit the inmate at the correctional facility and celebrate those sacraments that are suitable to their condition at the proper time. This can in part (subject to the particular circumstances giving rise to the visit) be delegated to another priest or deacon.
- 10.1.3. Most correctional facilities allow priests from the local geographical parish to have access to the Catholic inmates at the correctional facility, especially for the celebration of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.

## 10.2. The Sacraments

As Catholic ministers in correctional facilities, our greatest impact is our presence as a witness of God's unconditional love for all, especially those considered "outcasts from society." Many of the people we meet in our ministry feel alienated from God, their families, the community, and the Church. For the first time, many of the people we meet can have a positive experience of Church. This positive experience leads to a desire to participate more fully in the sacramental life that the Church has to offer. It is not uncommon that requests come to the chaplain of a correctional facility for the celebration of the sacraments.

## 10.3. Celebration of Holy Mass in Correctional Facilities.

10.3.1. To inform themselves about the Church's teaching on the Eucharist, all criminal justice lay ministers, and volunteers should read [\*The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist\*](#) (USCCB, 2001), the [\*Guidelines for the Reception of Communion\*](#) (USCCB, 1996), and the sacramental policies set forth in the diocesan [\*Pastoral Manual\*](#).

10.3.2. Most correctional facilities in Texas allow eligible inmates to receive consecrated Eucharistic bread in Holy Communion. However, most if not all correctional facilities deny inmate access to wine. If a priest is presiding at a Mass in a TDCJ State correctional facility, the facility administration must allow the priest to bring in four (4) ounces of wine for consecration during Mass. However, the four ounces of consecrated wine may only be consumed by the priest who is presiding during the Mass; never by the inmates.

10.3.3. Before celebrating Mass, the priest should make time available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Sacrament of Reconciliation may be made available after Mass, depending upon scheduling restrictions of the correctional facility.

## 10.4. Distribution of Communion outside of Holy Mass (Communion Services).

10.4.1. As a general rule, Communion Services should be the exception and not the norm. To the extent possible, distribution of Holy Communion should be a part of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, i.e., the Mass. Unfortunately, the availability of priests to celebrate Mass in correctional facilities is limited at times. On those occasions, it is only through Communion Services that many Catholic inmates receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

10.4.2. In the absence of a priest, a deacon or lay volunteer, [with the Bishop's permission and proper preparation](#), may lead a prayer service and distribute Communion outside of Holy Mass. It is highly preferable that such services be conducted by a deacon in the absence of a priest.

- 10.4.3. The distribution of Holy Communion outside of Mass must follow proper liturgical rites and norms and be performed in accordance with diocesan sacramental policies and guidelines (cf. [Pastoral Manual, Policy on the Eucharist](#)).
  - 10.4.4. To preside at the service of Distribution of Communion outside of Holy Mass at a correctional facility, lay ministers must be commissioned to do so as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and properly formed.
  - 10.4.5. Deacons and lay ministers must make arrangements to receive the consecrated Hosts on the day of the service by pre-arrangement from a local parish.
  - 10.4.6. All communion Hosts must be consumed during the prayer service or, if the Hosts are numerous, they are to be transferred immediately to a nearby tabernacle. Consecrated Hosts must never be put in storage for use on another day, for transfer to a tabernacle at a later time, or left unattended.
- 10.5. Eucharist in an Ecumenical Setting.
- 10.5.1. It should be recognized that not all of inmates who attend Mass or Communion Services will be baptized Catholics who have made their First Communion. As such, effort should be made to assure that those who receive Holy Communion are properly formed and disposed to do so.
  - 10.5.2. Because sharing at the Eucharistic Table is a sign of unity in the Body of Christ, only those in communion with the Catholic Church should receive Holy Communion. To invite others present to receive Holy Communion implies a unity which does not exist. Therefore, all in attendance should be instructed on the guidelines for the reception of Holy Communion. This can be done in creative ways while still preserving the practice of full participation in the Eucharist to baptized Catholics.
    - Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers should assess the group before beginning either the celebration of the Mass or the distribution of Holy Communion outside of Mass.
    - If there are a large number of non-Catholics in the group, it may be more appropriate to have a simple prayer service or a Scripture study in place of a Mass or the distribution of the Eucharist outside of Mass.
    - It is important to share with the inmates the meaning of the Eucharist to Catholics and proper protocol concerning who can receive Holy Communion and who can receive a blessing in its place. If an incarcerated man or woman who is not Catholic continually attends

service and tries to receive Communion, it is important to connect with him or her after the service and provide proper catechesis.

10.5.3. The appropriate sacramental policies, liturgical norms, and guidelines of the Diocese should be consulted (cf. *Pastoral Manual*, Policy on the Eucharist).

#### 10.6. Reconciliation Services

The Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation) is one of the greatest gifts the Catholic Church has to offer. Because of the nature of and reasons for their circumstances, participation in the Sacrament of Penance can be a powerful experience for many inmates and its effects can extend well beyond themselves individually to their relationships with others. Most inmates have probably had little opportunity to make a sacramental confession while incarcerated and for many, the period of time since doing so may be measured in years, if not decades. Since the sacrament can only be administered by a priest, accessibility to it in a correctional facility may be limited due to the unavailability of priests, as in the case of the celebration of Mass.

#### 10.7. Scripture Study and Faith Sharing Programs.

10.7.1. Priests, deacons, or lay volunteers may lead a Scripture study or a faith-sharing group at their assigned facility. If most of the inmates who are attending a Communion service are of another faith, it may be more appropriate to lead a Scripture study or faith-sharing group rather than a Communion service. The priest, deacon, or lay volunteer should assess the group and may consult with the Office of the RJM to determine appropriate pastoral care.

10.7.2. The study of Sacred Scripture should be practical in that it provides lessons for living the Christian life within the correctional facility. The study should allow the inmates to leave the sessions with ideas and practices that they can immediately implement in lives, given their particular circumstances and environment.

10.7.3. When possible, the selection of biblical passages should emphasize the reconciling and healing of the Christian community, including references to not only the inmate but also the victims of crime, the society and community in which the crime took place and the value of making amends to heal all the wounds of criminal behavior.

10.7.4. Study guides should be selected that reflect issues and lessons for life. The outlines and guides should be at an appropriate reading level for the inmates. Volunteers should be mindful of and sensitive to those inmates who have difficulty reading or cannot read.

## 10.8. Faith Formation Programs.

- 10.8.1. There are a wide variety of faith formation programs available that are designed to introduce one to, expand one's understanding of, or strengthen one's faith in Christ and the Gospel. Depending on their content and scope, these programs may be offered in conjunction with an RCIA or Sacramental Preparation program, as part of a spiritual retreat, or to supplement liturgical services being conducted in a prison or jail unit.
- 10.8.2. Information and recommendations for such programs may be obtained from the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and the Office of the RJM of the Diocese or from the faith formation office of your parish. In all cases, care should be taken to assure that the contents, format, and objectives of the program to be undertaken are appropriate for use in a prison environment.

## 10.9. RCIA / Sacramental Preparation Programs.

- 10.9.1. Most sacramental preparation programs in a parish setting assume that the person going through them has had some regular church contact, enjoys a degree of harmony and stability in their life and home, and possesses necessary learning skills and abilities. Many of those in a correctional facility do not enjoy such backgrounds. Consequently, the formation programs designed for the parish setting are not necessarily appropriate or even possible for the inmate population served.
- 10.9.2. Prison initiation ministry is rarely easy and can at times pose serious logistical problems and challenges. Yet even though celebrated in a correctional institution and in meager surroundings, if the catechumen's intent is sincere, the celebration will move hearts.
- 10.9.3. According to Canon Law (C 843), as Christian faithful, we have a duty to see that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them through proper formation. The process for this formation follows the Rite of Christian Initiation and is supported by periods of instruction and liturgical rites. The topics to be included in the catechetical sessions should include instructions on the Creed, the Commandments, Sacred Tradition, the seven Sacraments, the moral teachings, and devotion to Mary and the saints.
- 10.9.4. In prison ministry our goal is to create intimacy between Christ and the inmate. It is no secret that Christ had a preferential love for those who are incarcerated. The sacraments are a very concrete way that we as Church can make Christ present to those with whom he clearly loves and identifies.

10.9.5. We are a faith-filled community of hope, and the primary purpose of our ministry is to create faith community with those to whom we minister. Community is at the heart of our ministry and thus makes the correctional setting an appropriate place to prepare for the celebration of the sacraments.

10.9.6. Additional Considerations. A decision to administer the Sacraments should take into consideration the following questions:

- Has the inmate been baptized before? One must be baptized in order to receive the other sacraments. If the person has been baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition or another recognized Christian tradition, then that person cannot be baptized again. If the person has been baptized Protestant, a Profession of Faith is necessary before celebration of the sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Does the inmate come from a Catholic background and tradition?
- Is the inmate's family Catholic? (Parents, spouse, etc.) How will this person's faith be nurtured upon release?
- How soon will the inmate be released? If the person will be released within a few months or weeks, serious consideration should be given to referring the inmate to a parish upon release.
- The ideal environment for celebrating the sacraments is the faith community of the local parish. If the person is anticipating a lengthy sentence, then that person's faith community in all practicality will be in the correctional environment. Every effort should be made to prepare one for the celebration of sacraments within the institution.
- What is the inmate's motivation to celebrate the sacraments now? If the inmate comes from a Catholic background, why has that person not celebrated the sacraments before? Getting the inmate to express his/her motivation for the celebration of the sacraments is vital to helping him/her discern their preparedness.
- Does the inmate express an understanding of the nature of the sacraments and the obligations that accompany them?
- Does the inmate show a desire to participate more fully in the life of the Church? Does the person participate in the programs offered by the chaplaincy? Does the inmate attend Mass or Communion services and participate in the liturgy?



- 10.9.7. Volunteer support for conducting RCIA or Sacramental Preparation programs in correctional units, including program guidelines and content, can be obtained from the office of the RJM of the Diocese.
  - 10.9.8. During the RCIA process, the priest, deacon, or lay volunteer should find a sponsor for the RCIA candidate.
  - 10.9.9. The priest, deacon, or lay volunteer must obtain written permission from the Bishop for an RCIA candidate to be confirmed. All requests for such permission must be directed through the Office of the RJM of the Diocese. The Bishop may choose to administer the Sacrament himself or he may delegate a local priest to do so in his place.
  - 10.9.10. If one or more of the Sacraments of Initiation are administered at a correctional facility, they must be recorded in the registers of the parish whose geographical boundaries includes the correctional facility. For baptized Catholics, notice of the sacraments they received must also be sent to the parish of their baptism.
  - 10.9.11. Every effort should be made to foster the faith development of God's people inside correctional facilities regardless of whether the sacraments are administered. Whether we decide to administer a particular sacrament for an inmate or not, we should keep in mind that our primary purpose through our presence is to communicate God's unconditional love and acceptance. The Gospel calls us to be present to Christ in prison, not necessarily to help him make his First Communion.
  - 10.9.12. If an inmate is transferred to another institution before the RCIA process is completed, the program leader should make efforts to connect the inmate with the chaplaincy department and the Catholic service team of the receiving facility.
- 10.10. Prayer, Rosary, and Other Programs.
- 10.10.1. One of the favorite devotional items of Catholic inmates is the rosary, although many are unfamiliar with the prayers of and the purpose for praying the rosary. RJM volunteers can be helpful in this regard by providing instructional literature or pamphlets that contain guidelines on the various mysteries of and instructions on how to pray the rosary. In addition, volunteers can assist by leading the prayers of the rosary as a part of a prayer service or preceding or following a liturgical event.
  - 10.10.2. RJM volunteers along with parish rosary ministries may also be of assistance by providing rosaries to the correctional facility's chaplaincy department for distribution to inmates. However, because there are strict guidelines

governing the composite materials from which rosaries are to be made and their possession by inmates, care should be exercised that the policies governing such are strictly adhered to by coordinating the provision of rosaries through the unit's appropriate governing agency and/or its chaplaincy department. Under no conditions, should volunteers provide rosaries or other religious articles directly to inmates without the prior knowledge and express approval of the correctional facility's chaplain.

10.10.3. Other forms of prayer services can be conducted at correctional facilities that have a positive effect on the inmates' spiritual lives. Advice concerning and support for such programs can be obtained from the Office of the RJM of the Diocese.

## **10. CONTINUING FORMATION AND EDUCATION FOR PRIESTS, DEACONS, AND LAY VOLUNTEERS.**

10.1. Priests, deacons, and lay volunteers should engage actively in an ongoing and holistic process of continuing formation, developing themselves humanly, intellectually, spiritually, and pastorally.

10.2. All RJM ministers are encouraged to attend periodic meetings or other gatherings and annual conferences sponsored by the Office of the RJM of the Diocese. This is an opportunity for those involved in the ministry to interact with one another, hear local speakers, and attend workshops to share and learn more about the RJM.

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APPENDIX A:

DIOCESE OF AUSTIN  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MINISTRY  
MINISTRY REVIEW FORM

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PREPARED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

MINISTRY PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUARTER: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PASTORAL SERVICES PROVIDED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

VOLUNTEERS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PRIESTS OR DEACONS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FACILITY UPDATES (If Applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT MINISTRY NEEDS OR CONCERNS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_