

Sharing the Good News:

The Diocesan Ministry to the Incarcerated made a gift of \$200.00 each to the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center for the purchase of books, and the Medina County Jail for its GED program.

In a note of thanks, Nancy J. Peteya, the Superintendent of the Juvenile Center, said, "The money will allow us to buy several copies of each book and the books will make a wonderful contribution to our library. Thank you again for thinking of us."

Sue Jarvis, chaplain at the Medina County Jail, was overwhelmed by the success of the GED "incentive" program that was begun with the gift to the jail. Student enrollment grew from 29 to 104 in two weeks time, and 11 inmates took the official GED test at the end of July, 2006, the highest number in the last four years. Sue shared her exuberant gratitude,

"Your GENEROUS GIFT came and went in a BLAZE OF SUCCESS and with our gratitude. The inmates have been thrilled with this program... to say the least. So THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU to all who made this gift possible. It started something wonderful. Praise the LORD!"

Robin Casarjian, M.A., presented a workshop for seventy prison ministers entitled, "Forgiveness and Healing: a Bold Choice for a Peaceful Heart", on Saturday, October 7, 2006, at the Center for Pastoral Leadership in Wickliffe, Ohio. The day before the workshop, Robin met with officials, corrections officers and prisoners at the Cuyahoga County Jail and the Northeast Pre-Release Center to share a message of hope in the face of difficult and stressful circumstances. Her message was very well received in both places.

"Ms. Casarjian's work is dedicated to defining and teaching how to achieve the ultimate healing of self-forgiveness, based on spirituality that is translated to practical actions....Her book, "Houses of Healing: a Prisoner's Guide to Inner Power and Freedom" is recommended, as well as her book that shares the title of this all-day event. It was a moving experience to attend this valuable workshop and to share in the companionship of others who minister to those in prison."

C.D., *Friend-to-Friend*, volunteer

Two inmates at the North Royalton City Jail expressed heartfelt gratitude for the visits by Sr. Elaine T. Burrows, SIW, and also for the copies of Robin Casarjian's book, "Houses of Healing" that she shared with them.

“Thank you even more for “Houses of Healing”, which has been most beneficial and instrumental in helping me recognize, then address, old issues and unfinished business that I had to come to terms with before I could begin to build a spiritual foundation here in jail....A strange thing happened along the way – I began to feel God’s forgiveness. I found myself writing to those whom I had so deeply hurt – my Mom, my former wife, - and asking them if they could find it in their heart to forgive me.”

He refers to Scripture, “build up a fine spiritual foundation in order to get a firm hold on the real life.” (1 Tim 6:19), and then goes on to say,

“My life has been an illusion; a selfish pursuit of foolish things. But I have begun, with the help of this book, a lifelong endeavor... with gratitude and affection.”

D. K.

Another inmate writes,

“God has allowed my incarceration here at the North Royalton City Jail to be my House of Healing. Thanks to your ministry, Sr. Elaine, and the “Houses of Healing” book, my time here has been not so much punishment, but a process of divine healing.”

D. L.

Through the intervention of one of the Catholic chaplains at the Cuyahoga County Jail, an inmate’s family of three received emotional and physical support from the St. Vincent de Paul Society at a local parish. His words speak of deep gratitude,

“I had not been the man I should have been and would like to thank you for looking after my family. I would just like to say I expressed my worries about my family in my prayers, and it didn’t take long for them to be answered. I guess it shows you He does answer the prayers we truly need answered. Thank you to each and every person involved, especially the ladies who went to my house. God, without a doubt, lives through you. THANK YOU AGAIN!

J. M.