



Presbytery of Southern New England – PC(USA) - VISIT OUR BLOG: www.presbim.com

NEWSLETTER

September/October, 2016



Communion in Prison - In the past I was authorized to celebrate Holy Communion with the prisoners at one prison. As I cannot bring anything from outside of the prison, I had to rely on the people in the chaplain's office of that prison. But often they forgot to provide what we

needed. So I stopped doing communion at that prison, discouraged because I didn't want to create false expectations for the inmates. However, at their last meeting, the PIM Steering Committee challenged me find creative ways to try again. The first idea that occurred to me was to share this challenge with the prisoners at the prison in Dartmouth, MA. To my surprise, they came up with a possible solution. They said: "You do not need to bring bread. We have it right here because we can buy it from the canteen. We cannot provide grape juice or wine, but if it is fine with you, we can provide cranberry juice." Immediately we held an "administrative meeting." Some people volunteered to get everything ready for the next week, while I was in charge of getting permission from the prison officers. Unfortunately, by the following week I had not succeeded in getting the authorization. I tried, but the first person I talked to asked me to talk

with another person. This person didn't answer my calls for some days. When I arrived at the prison the next Monday, the prisoners were excited, with everything ready. They had brought bread, cranberry juice (powdered, to be mixed with water), the small cups that they use to take medicine, and also a new white bedsheet to use as a tablecloth. When I told them that I didn't have the authorization yet, they became frustrated. But we decided do not give up.

Finally, a few days later, I received the authorization. Then, on Monday, October 14th, we had our Holy Communion together in one of the ICE units at the prison in Dartmouth. This coming Monday we will celebrate Communion in the other unit where I also do bible study, in the same prison facility.

I'll never forget their reaction as they were taking the bread and the "wine." Many were emotional. There were a few who didn't participate because they "were not prepared," as they said. But it was their decision. One of them came to me asking me to pray for him, because he wanted to take a decision for Christ.

We are going to celebrate Holy Communion once a month in Dartmouth, and I'm waiting for authorization to do it also in Plymouth and Boston.

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Advisory Committee: Rev. Dana Lindsley, Rev. Dr. José Pezini, Rev. Wayne Parish, Rev. Dr. Mário Silva, Rev. Jefferson Ritchie, Rev. David Watermulder, Rev. Cláudio Carvalhaes.

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A Safe Place – The community of inmates is a reflection of our community outside of the prison. There are individuals from different religious, cultural, and social backgrounds. Usually I don't ask particular questions of them, even though I'm always open to talking to them and listening to their stories. For several months there was at one of the prisons a young Brazilian man who attended all the bible studies. He left the prison at the beginning of September, and I have talked with him and visited him at the restaurant where he works as a chef. I learned that he is homosexual, and because of this he has suffered prejudice on many occasions, including false accusations that twice brought him to solitary confinement. The only people who stood up for him were the Christians who are part of the Bible studies. "They never judged me, and among them I found a safe place for myself," he said. I know that many of the prisoners who are Christians cannot understand the complexity of

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human sexuality. But even without understanding it, they decided to live in justice, expressing the God's love.

Set/Oct Attendance

Day	Prison (all units)	Attendance
09/01	Boston	29
09/05	Bristol	31
09/06	Plymouth	55
09/08	Boston	32
09/12	Bristol	24
09/13	Plymouth	58
09/15	Boston	35
09/19	Bristol	-
09/20	Plymouth	60
09/22	Boston	43
09/26	Bristol	24
09/27	Plymouth	57
09/29	Boston	33
10/03	Bristol	29
10/04	Plymouth	57
10/06	Boston	-
10/10	Bristol	31
10/11	Plymouth	53
10/13	Boston	33
10/17	Bristol	29
10/18	Plymouth	51
10/20	Boston	-
10/24	Bristol	-
10/25	Plymouth	47
10/27	Boston	30
10/31	Plymouth	49

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