

Your Eminences, your Graces, Rev. Fathers, Volunteers & Friends of our Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry of MN!

In Matthew 25:35-46 our Lord Jesus Christ said, "I was in Prison and you came to me." Come and be with Me! He did not ask us to go to prison to fix Him, change Him, lecture Him, preach to Him or to convert Him. He did not tell us who to visit and what to do with them. Again, He said, "you came to me." He knows and understands our imperfect human nature, and if He had not been as direct about the purpose of our visits to the prisons, even with humble and sincere good intentions, some of us would end up doing the opposite of what He wanted us to do once we are there. Jesus Christ does not say good bye to the inmate as he or she is about to enter the prison, and that He will re-enter their hearts & souls after they are released from prison. If we go to the prisons prayerfully prepared to be with Him by ministering to the "least of His brethren," the Holy Spirit will do the "fixing," "changing," "converting," "healing," and "loving!"

The year of 2008 was the best and most Blessed year in our Five Year Prison Ministry in MN!

108 inmates worshipped in the fourth quarter Orthodox Typica service of the year at Lino Lakes State Prison. We were assisted by our local Pan-Orthodox clergy and very talented Pan-Orthodox choir with many of our dedicated Prison Ministry volunteers!

Twelve inmates approached me at the end of the service and requested that I send them Orthodox books and literature! They told me that they liked what they saw in us, and would like to learn more about our faith and us. Thanks be to God!

On December 2008 Ancient Faith Radio interviewed three of our top leaders and put it on line on 12-26-08!

Please click on this link: [http://audio.ancientfaith.com/interviews/afp\\_2008-12-26.mp3](http://audio.ancientfaith.com/interviews/afp_2008-12-26.mp3)

or go to their website, click on by titles under podcasts and then click on Ancient Faith Presents.

It paints a good picture of all our ministries and new developments for expanding our Minnesota Prison Ministry!

On November 8, 2008, we held our second Annual Prison Ministry Volunteer's Retreat / Workshop, at St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church! We had over thirty in attendance!

Fr. Nick Solak, from East Stroudsburg, Pa. was our morning guest speaker and he spoke to us about "Substance Abuse & Prison Issues."

Fr. Nick's presentation was exceptional, and we could tell that he had a lot of prison ministry experience because he has done this kind of work for many years, but also that he talked "our language!"

**Evy Hatjistilianos, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, Willmar, MN. was our afternoon speaker, and she shared with us about "The Gift Of Presence-Listening & Confidentiality". Evy has been managing and supervising 225 volunteers in her 16 years of working with Hospice and she also talked our language because, as you have heard me say many times, I believe that Hospice has written the book on volunteerism!**

**The "7th Bi-monthly Reunion Evening of Former Inmates and Their Families" took place on December 17, 2008!**

**After our prayer service, a home cooked meal with dessert was served. Along with an evening message, we sang some songs, some fellowship sharing, testimonials and a beautiful selection of Christmas songs were sung for us by the gifted St. Mary's Greek Orthodox choir!**

**Our 2nd annual Angel Tree Christmas gift giving from inmates to their children ministry was held on December, 20, 2008.**

**Sixty children received 120 gifts from their incarcerated parents through our Prison Ministry!**

**Our ministry initiated our brand new **Book Distribution Ministry** to men and women inmates!**

**A former inmate whom I mentored in a medium security prison for some time, was married to a wonderful lady a few weeks ago!**

**My top assistant in the ministry, Sandra Anderson, my family, three of our local clergy and others who had to do a lot with our former inmate friend attended his wedding and reception and all of us were very proud of our friend and his new family.**

**This former inmate friend of ours, is also now a new Orthodox Christian! A first for our Minnesota Orthodox Prison Ministry!**

**He has a very good full time job and he is also going to school to better his trade skills! Our ministry is very proud of him and maybe God be with him and his family always!**

**As our ministry is growing, our financial needs are also growing.**

**We would appreciate any financial assistance you or your community can give us and mailed to the address below.**

**May our God direct you according to His Will!**

**Sincerely in Christ,  
Paul Hatjistilianos, M. Div.  
Lay Chaplain  
Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry of Minnesota**