

BE A LEADER For Life-Enhancing Change



According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, well over 2 million human beings are imprisoned in the United States. The total rises to over 7 million when we include those on parole or probation.

Justice Is Our Work!

The Aberdeen Presentation Sisters willingly go forth to any part of the world to work for justice, alleviate oppression and promote human dignity, especially among the poor. This is done in a spirit of love and joy.

One of the measures of a healthy society depends on how we treat those who have lost their way. We are all created in the image and likeness of God and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. "Hypocrisy leads us to overlook the possibility that people can change their lives; we put little trust in rehabilitation, in reinsertion into society," Pope Francis (homily at mass for jubilee for prisoners).

Retributive or restorative justice?

Our laws and prison systems are designed under the model of retributive justice. If you break the law, you will be punished. Depending on the crime, and if convicted, the punishment could take your life.

The model of justice that we are given in the Bible, taught through the prophets and Jesus, is restorative. This justice does not punish, but seeks to reestablish the dignity of the human person through love and healing.

One step at a time, we can work together to change a system which punishes offenders rather than rehabilitate them and restores the humanity of the human beings in our prison system. A program called Alternatives to Violence (AVP) is designed to help inmates see that through nonviolent means they can understand themselves and heal their relationships with others. The voluntary program invites inmates seeking change to attend. A series of exercises is set up to help face the violence in their lives and discover new avenues of nonviolence. Many inmates have discovered when

they come to understand their behavior and factors that led them into the prison system, it becomes a catalyst to begin to turn their lives around.

To have the opportunity to witness an honest review of one's life with the decision to go in a different, more life-giving direction is a miraculous encounter. When you restore a human being's dignity after they have received so many wounds in their life, they become a new person and can return into society with a positive foundation. Thanks to the loving compassion of dedicated volunteers, AVP is a healing source for many people inside the prison walls. This is a work of the Spirit; this is the work of the gospel.

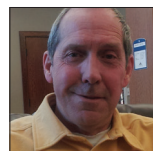
To discover more about AVP, please visit: www.avpusa.org



"We are all better than the worst thing we have ever done."

- Sister Helen Prejean, a leading advocate for the abolition of the death penalty

Challenge Question: What steps do you take to create a nonviolent environment in your life?



Deacon Denny Davis is the Director for South Dakotans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, works in the SD prison system with the Alternative for Violence Program and an advocate for all life.



Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

In Joyful Service

Through dialogue our voice becomes clearer. United we are stronger. Justice flourishes.

Please visit: www.presentationisters.org to learn how you can become a partner for justice.