

PRISON MINISTRY “DO’S AND DON’TS” FOR INMATES

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church’s Prison Correspondence Ministry was created to provide encouragement, prayers and scripture testimony to people who are incarcerated who wish to correspond with people outside of prison. The members of this ministry are expected to share their faith and offer hope as a reason for writing to you.. They may also express personal things God has done in their lives and how their beliefs have helped them.

Our Church has numerous ministries that also receive correspondence. Please use the official P.O. Box address and format as follows:

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church
Prison Ministry – c/o _____
P.O. Box 639
Helotes, TX 78023-0639

The rules for corresponding are as follows:

- 1) Do not expect the member to get involved with your case. The main function of this ministry is for correspondence.
- 2) Do not request financial help. Our members are compassionate and serving in this ministry by using their time and talent – which is a far greater gift.
- 3) Do notify us of any extreme injustices that are occurring with your incarceration. Particularly, if you are being treated unfairly and your basic needs are not being met.
- 4) Do not expect an immediate reply or make them feel guilty if you do not get a response as quickly as you would like. Life is also difficult in the outside world and life’s problems and challenges sometimes prevent members from answering as quickly as they and you would like. However, if you do not get a reply within 8 weeks from the date of your last letter, please notify Michelle Freyre or Sandra Archey for follow up. You will then be notified by the member of someone else to continue with the correspondence.
- 5) Do notify us if you are getting paroled so that we don’t spend money on postage when you will no longer be at prison. Do notify us if you have a change of address.
- 6) Do not ask members to research information for you or to search for individuals in or out of prison. The privacy laws have changed dramatically within the last few years and can cause difficulties for all concerned.
- 7) Do not ask for photos. The members are not allowed to send photos to inmates per their own “Do’s and Don’ts” list. However, you can send photos to them.
- 8) Do not send jokes or funny stories that might offend the members. By all means be lively and humorous, but use good moral judgment.

You may, and hopefully will:

- 1) Share personal things God has done in your life or things that you find inspirational. Many of our members have their own struggles (financial, health, career, family) and need encouragement also.

- 2) Participate with our Annual Art Fair, please ask your pen pal for more information. This fundraiser helps keep our ministry going.
- 3) Ask for a Bible, religious materials or other inspirational books. We have a limited fund and are approved to send these items. It may take up to 4 weeks for processing.
- 4) Be honest with your pen pal. Our pen pals are not to judge you, your actions or your religious beliefs. It is not a requirement to be Catholic or Christian to participate in this ministry.
- 5) Do share accomplishments and positive things that you have experienced in your life.
- 6) Do try to correspond with your pen pal on a regular basis. We realize that resources are limited.

Our members enjoy communicating with you and look forward to receiving your letters. We hope that everyone is able to follow the rules so that this ministry continues to be successful. If you have questions, please contact Michelle Freyre or Sandra Archey. Thank you.