

Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland Prison Ministry:  
Transitioning to Our Parishes

Entering back into the community can be very difficult for an ex-inmate and spiritual support is an essential component to successful re-integration. This ministry strives to provide a spiritual resource for ex-inmates in Maine by having Catholic parishioners accompany them at Mass or parish events at their local parish.

While ministering at correctional facilities, Prison/Jail Ministry volunteers will let inmates know that upon their release they can contact Catholic Charities Maine Parish Social Ministry Program (207-781-8550 or [psm@ccmaine.org](mailto:psm@ccmaine.org)) to see about partnering up with a parish volunteer to attend Mass and/or parish events with them in their area. PSM will contact parishes geographically close by to determine if a parishioner is interested in partaking in this ministry. Those parishioners engaging in the ministry will read, agree to and sign this form. Parish Social Ministry (PSM) will research to determine if interested person is a registered sex offender for minors. If so, then the Diocesan sex offender form will need to be reviewed and signed, and the volunteer will be made aware of the record prior to meeting with him or her. All signed forms will be kept at the local parish.

Each volunteer will meet with the interested person at the parish, preferably the narthex area, and walk into the church to attend Mass with them to help them feel comfortable and welcomed. The ministry can also be expanded to accompanying him/her to other parish functions to help the person assimilate into the faith community.

Guidelines for Partaking in This Ministry Include:

- For parish volunteers to be mindful of confidentiality and boundaries:
  - Not to share personal information, such as where you live, phone number, etc.
  - Interactions with matched people will take place on parish grounds with the possibility of additional services should you feel comfortable and capable. If the person you are meeting with asks for more than you can offer, then please contact Parish Social Ministry to assist him or her.
  - Males will be matched with males and females will be matched with females.
- You will respect the dignity of the person you are meeting by:
  - Not introducing them to other parishioners as an ex-inmate. You can offer a statement such as, “I am here today with \_\_\_\_\_ who is interested in our parish.” Or “\_\_\_\_\_ is a new friend of mine that I made in town that is interested in our parish.”
  - Should you see the person in the community ensure your conversations do not convey to those nearby that s/he is an ex-inmate.
- There is no required length of time to continue attending Mass with your matched person, but a verbal communication should be provided to him or her upon the intent to discontinue as well as informing PSM and the local parish.
- Should an issue arise while with your matched person:
  - If it requires immediate attention, then seek the assistance of available parish staff or clergy or contact the police as necessary.
  - If it does not need immediate attention, then provide details to PSM.

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_