

The Prisoner Pen Pal Program is part of the Restorative Justice Ministry at the Catholic Diocese of Lansing, Michigan.

It is our hope that your participation in our pen pal program will be one small step in your discovery of God's awesome love. We invite you therefore to commit yourself to the following:

- Count your blessings daily, giving thanks to God.
- Pray daily for an increase of faith, hope and charity.
- Pray daily that your every thought, word and deed will give glory to God.
- Carry on your correspondence as God would have you act and as a friend.

We believe that the above practices will contribute to a correspondence that is pleasing to God and beneficial to the participants.

**Prisoner Pen Pal Program
Restorative Justice Ministry
228 North Walnut Street
Lansing, MI 48933**

Prisoner Pen Pal Program

Diocese of Lansing

GUIDELINES

**Spiritual encouragement
and support to prisoners
through letters.**

*The Prisoner Pen Pal Program
hopes that participants,
both inside and out,
will have a "closer relationship"
with God
as a result of their participation.*

HOW IT WORKS

We are a Catholic ministry. However, prisoners of all faith traditions are welcome, even those who are unchurched. We recognize that many prisoners are lonely and our pen pal program strives to provide Christian friendship based on Gospel values.

Prisoners hear about us through word of mouth inside the prisons and they write to us asking for a pen pal. In response, we send you our pen pal guidelines and an application form. We ask that you fill out the application and return it to us. The information on the application is kept confidential in our office.

The next step is to give you a pen pal friend. You will receive a letter from us with the name of your new pen pal. Your new friend will start the process by writing the first letter to you. We ask our pen pals to write at least once a month.

We are here to support you along the way as you communicate with your pen pal. Please let us know if you need advice on how to respond to a letter or have questions about the program. You are welcome to contact us at: Pen Pal Program, Restorative Justice Ministry, 228 North Walnut Street, Lansing, MI 48933.

MAILING ADDRESS

Both the pen pal and the prisoner are not allowed to exchange letters through a home address. Instead, our pen pals have their letters sent through the Restorative Justice Office where they are opened and read. Letters with unacceptable content will not be forwarded and the writer will be removed from the program.

While this may seem like an invasion of privacy, it is necessary to provide a margin of safety for our volunteers. In addition, it allows the manager of the pen pal program to make sure both the volunteer and the prisoner are following through on their commitment.

UPON YOUR RELEASE

The pen pal letter writing relationship will come to an end upon the release of the prisoner. This can be difficult, but it is necessary.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

ROMANCE

OUR PEN PAL MINISTRY IS NOT ABOUT ROMANCE. Please be respectful of your pen pal friend who reaches out to you in Christian friendship during your time in prison. You will be removed from the program if you encourage anything beyond friendship.

MONEY

DO NOT ask your pen pal for money, favors or material items. The pen pal ministry is not a means to obtain these items. If you persist, you will be removed from the program.

VISITS AND PHONE CALLS

We **DO NOT** allow visits or phone calls. Please do not mail your pen pal a visitor application or ask to put them on your phone list. The pen pal program is meant for support through letters **ONLY**.

LEGAL MATTERS

DO NOT ask your pen pal to become involved in the legal matters of your case. This includes writing letters to the parole board or attorneys, or donations of money to help in your legal cause.

PHOTOGRAPHS

DO NOT request a photo. No exchange of photographs is allowed.