

November 13, 2009,

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

May the peace of the Lord be upon us as we come to the end of the harvesting season.

At the end of the Liturgical season, the readings remind us of the end of times. The passage, which seems to come to mind, is the passage in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 25: "When I was sick, hungry, thirsty, you satisfied me." I would like, however, to focus on Matthew 25, 39: "... *when I was in prison you came to see me.*"

The week of the 15 to the 22nd of November is dedicated to the ministry often referred to as Restorative Justice Ministry or Prison Ministry. It is an opportunity for us to, first of all, pray for those people who have been incarcerated for one reason or another. Often a troubled youth, a dysfunctional family life and a loss of hope has pushed them to follow ways which brought them to where they are today. Please find enclosed a prayer to help you carry them, their families and those who work at these institutions and their families in your prayers.

In the region of Prince Albert, we are aware of the fact that we do have many institutions pertaining to this ministry. The diocese has three persons ministering in three of these institutions: Fr Nick Ferreras and Brad Taylor work full time at Corrections Canada, while Roy Wilmhoff works at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre. They are working in our name.

There are also a group of volunteers who visit them and listen to their stories. They are few in number! Perhaps you could join them in this ministry. We would not ask you to go there without some preparation. We would have a formation program to help you prepare for this beautiful ministry. Please contact Brad Taylor at 765-8000 ext. 8444, if you feel called to this difficult but rewarding ministry. Just a few hours a week would help many of them to take courage and find hope.

Then there are those incarcerated people who return to society to continue their lives. On the one hand, they are carrying the pain of the sentence but on the other, they have fulfilled their penalty. Many would like to return to normal life, asking for a second chance. Programs are in place to help them reintegrate into society but our support and understanding would help them in this process.

Let us be touched by these words of Jesus: **“when I was in prison, you came to visit me”** and let us be a light of hope for them. Let us pray with them all.

Sincerely in Christ,
Your bishop

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Albert Thévenot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

+ Albert Thévenot, M. Afr.
Bishop of Prince Albert

AT/ja