



2019 – 2021 Strategic Plan

Phase 1

7/6/2019

Participating Associations:

American, Canadian, Federal & Western

Mission Statement

Our mission is to encourage our members and others to engage and accompany those in prison, jail or detention, those recently released to their families and correctional officers in this work. We will seek to compassionately demonstrate the hope that comes from our Catholic Christian faith and from God's love for those persons.

Vision Statement

We share our faith in the Gospel and the mercy of Christ with the incarcerated. We support those who struggle to return to free society by helping them to become reconciled with the world, their families and their victims. We work for humane, effective and Christian treatment before, during and after incarceration. We support the prison chaplaincy staff and volunteers who vigorously attend to the spiritual needs of the incarcerated.

Background

Jesus Christ was a prisoner and sentenced to death. Christianity has been involved in prison ministry since then. The Order of Malta has reached out to prisoners since our beginning in Jerusalem. The United States alone has 25% of the world's prison population. There is a seismic shift underway to make the cultural, social, legislative and judicial changes which reapporitions our national resources to where they will be most effective.

- **Creation of the Apostolate and Grand Magistry Involvement**

Initially each of the participating Associations has launched its own Ministries with the first one beginning in 2007. There was no formal interaction regarding prison ministry among the Associations of the United States until 2013.

Early in 2013 the then Grand Master asked the three United States Associations to work together on prison ministry which led to semi-annual meetings and with a prison ministry conference in 2014. Soon thereafter the Canadian Association joined the effort. The combined work of the four Associations has resulted in a seamless operating structure now known as the North American Prison Ministry Apostolate. The Apostolate has kept

the Grand Master and Grand Hospitaller apprised of its work through the communication of its Annual Reports. The Grand Master's continuing personal interest was documented in a letter to our Co-chairs; the Grand Hospitaller's interest was documented in a letter which he wrote in March 2019.

The Apostolate is joining forces with other Catholic Prison Ministry interests which are following Pope Francis's pastoral example of regularly visiting the incarcerated.

There are a growing number of Order members who are participating in this ministry both "inside and outside the walls". Some examples are the Rosary Program and the Pen Pal Program. The Serving Brother publication is sent to the incarcerated and provides connection to these programs.

Strategic Plan Process

The current Plan was initiated in 2018 with a survey of one hundred (100) of our leaders who work in prison ministry. Currently there are seven (7) Sub-Committees that have produced actions in these areas:

1. Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Re-Entry
2. Recruitment of KMs, DMs, and Volunteers
3. Dioceses, Charities and Religious Orders and Organizations
4. Publications
5. Catholic Prison Ministry Coalition (CPMC)
6. Communications
7. Finance

Here are abbreviated and goals for each Sub-Committee:

1. **Reconciliation, Rehabilitation, and Re-Entry** – Reconciliation, Rehabilitation, and Re-Entry begins inside the walls. One goal we should have is to identify what we do best and then focus our work there. The Rosary and Pen Pal programs are considered low hanging fruit for reconciliation. The strongest form of reconciliation appears to be religious retreat weekends. Other inside the wall's programs include expansion of our prison library project and our Connecticut Books Behind Bars library program. Re-entry programs are very expensive as has been identified in the Dismas Home New Hampshire project, however, the results when using such models are outstanding. Identify re-entry programs that our Members of the Order and Volunteers are involved in. Assist in the ongoing Gatekeepers re- entry guide and Florida's Social Service Guide to Public Assistance Agencies plus their Employment Directory are valuable examples for other locations to emulate.
2. **Recruitment of KMs, DMs and Volunteers** – Beginning with Formation/Investiture we should educate our membership to the opportunities for service in prison ministry. Most people are not attracted to go inside the walls. Thus, this is a recognized given. Still those who do go in find that they can be quite comfortable and usually become regulars for the ministry. We plan to survey our current Knights and Dames to learn who is involved in prison ministry, what specific type of prison ministry; and how they became involved, how they were engaged or recruited. Testimonials about individual experiences will be beneficial. Prayers for the incarcerated should be a fixture in our Masses. Pen Pals and Holiday cards should be a springboard for deeper involvement in reconciliation and re-entry. Information about our ministry should be a part of formation for new candidates. Another needed action is to work with local Hospitallers, and build communities of participants to share stories. The Correction Officers pilot will help to enable greater participation by the Order.
3. **Dioceses, Charities and Religious Orders and Organizations** – Work with each

Association's Prison Ministry Committee Members and each Association's Hospitallers to identify prison ministry activities in their respective Diocese. Through those same contacts identify those Catholic Charities, Chaplains and Deacons involved in prison ministry. Determine how we can work with all of those mentioned to create joint efforts and/or supplement the prison ministry activities in the various Dioceses. Start with enlarging the Pen Pal program.

4. **Publications** – Provide views on the adequacy of our existing printed materials and distribution. Determine ways to expand our efforts. Use current publications such as *The Serving Brother* (TSB) to expand other Committee programs i.e. the Pen Pal program. Examine current Associations' budgets/contributions and create a plan to obtain more money for our publication efforts now and in the future. Consideration should be given to expanding the fledgling prison library program.

5. **Catholic Prison Ministry Coalition (CPMC)** has the highest potential to become a critical success factor as a website. Its purpose is to marshal the various prison ministry silos to make them accessible to us and others. Fr. George Williams is a member of their executive committee and a lead spokesperson for their webinar program which is averaging around five hundred (500) participants per month. We encourage everyone to go to their website catholicprisonministries.org. Like the Apostolate it is **not** a 501(c)(3) entity. We should work closely with CPMC to expand our prison ministry work. Fr. Williams will conduct a pilot to offer pastoral care for Correction Officers and their staffs. Presently no other source has undertaken this challenge.

6. **Communications** – Since consciousness about prison ministry is steadily rising, our skills to inform and engage in this field need to be increased. We need a centralized contact database which is then categorized for the various interests we serve. Another need is to share articles and particularly stories about the work of the Order's Prison Ministry. A tighter message is also an action target. Our cross connection to CPMC will be managed by one of our Communications Co-chairs. Direct engagement with our membership in this area should be very beneficial. An example is recruiting those to use prayer, going in both directions for those inside the walls and even asking them to pray for needs of persons outside the walls. Another would be to ask for Pen Pals who would commit to write at a minimum two letters a year.

7. **Finance** – Maintain a financial profile of current resources which currently are above \$250,000 for the Federal & American Associations alone. The Western and Canadian Associations carry this amount higher. It is important to establish and document the effectiveness of all current programs against measurable performance standards. Anticipating the expanding need, it will be important to raise funds from foundations as well as other related sources.

Additionally, the Western Association has identified a series of prospective steps that can be taken that would broaden several other opportunities to support the goals of the Prison Ministry Apostolate.

Most important to our adoption of this Plan is the formation of an Implementation Committee which will use measurable performance standards in executing its defined actionable goals. The logical leadership to do this are the Chairs and Co-chairs of our seven (7) Sub-committees, who will add special skilled persons as needed.

Resource links to achieve actionable items are listed on page 5.

The Apostolate Board, listed alphabetically leads our Plan:

- Steve Caron, KM-American
- Joe Feitelberg, KMOB-American
- Chair Emeritus, Bob Fredericks, GCMOB-American
- Craig Gibson, KM-American
- Marion Glennon, DM-American
- Rich Grimes, KM-Western
- **Cochair**, Mike McGarry, KMOB-Federal
- Patrick Portelli, KM-Canadian
- Doug Sandvig, KM-Federal
- John Santa, KM-American
- Andy Vissicchio, KMOB-American
- **Cochair**, Collins Whitfield, KMOB-Federal
- Fr. George Williams, SJ, ChM
- Nick Yanicelli, KM-America
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The Board has also been ably assisted by:

- Bob Gallagher, KM-Federal, Roger Hagman, KM, Ken Miller, KM-Western, and Thomas Di Mascio, KM-Western

Resource Links

- [Grand Master's Letter of July 12, 2018](#)
- [Grand Hospitaller's Letter of March 25, 2019](#)
- [Definition of the Order of Malta's Lay Prison Ministry Apostolate](#)
- [Catholic Prison Ministry Coalition Synopsis](#)
 - [Evening Rosary program](#)
 - [Pen Pal program](#)
- [Apostolate Study Prison Ministry leaders April 2018](#)
- [Apostolate 2016-2017 Strategic Plan](#)