

## **This Christmas, reach out to the prisoners in our midst!**

*"I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25:36)*

One of the seven Corporal Acts of Mercy is to visit or assist those in prison - whether they be shut-ins, the disabled, the hospitalized, or those actually serving time in jail. In Matthew 25, we find the story of the Judgement Day, when God separates the sheep from the goats. The sheep are those who showed love for God through their love for the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the homeless, the naked and the imprisoned. Regardless of the sinfulness that characterizes every human being, there is a dignity and goodness inside each one of us.

*"The king will reply; truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40).*

Every Christmas at the Okanagan Correctional Centre, the Chaplains ask the broader community to assist in creating a "Christmas Treat Bag" for every incarcerated person to acknowledge that by their very creation, there is truly a goodness in them. Since this prison opened 5 years ago; students from St. Joseph's Catholic school have colored the bags that the treats go in. Their teachers instruct the children of Christ's ministry to the marginalized and the importance of remembering that Jesus and many of the Apostles and Saints experienced the degradation and humiliation of being imprisoned themselves. The children draw colorful Christmas themed pictures and messages on these bags, and this is one of the best parts of the gift for the inmates. Christmas cards with messages of hope are sent to us from the Archdiocese of Vancouver where Catholic school children are asked to minister in this special way. It is very humbling to read the wisdom and care in these messages of hope.

The treat bags also include chocolate bars, granola bars, hot chocolate, tea, etc. that are donated by people such as yourselves. If you feel called to donate towards this act of mercy, please place your monetary donation in the box provided at the entrance of the church. Thank you very much for your generosity. And please remember to pray for our imprisoned brothers and sisters this Christmas.

**Donation deadline: December 12, 2021**