



Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry
An Agency of the Assembly of Bishops

Remember those in prison as though in prison with them; and those who are ill treated, since you also are in the body. Hebrews 13:3

May 25, 2014
The Sixth Sunday of Pascha

To all the Clergy and the Laity of the Holy Orthodox Churches in North and Central America
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

By the grace of God we have been blessed to observe the Sixth Sunday of Pascha, which this year falls on May 25, as Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday. We embrace the *diakonia* of prison ministry in keeping with the example of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ, Who preached His message of love and forgiveness to all sinners, and Who included visiting and ministering to people in prison as the basic expressions of faith and love; saying that when we visit people in prison, we are visiting Him (St. Matthew 25:36).

In keeping with our Lord's example, we are calling on all the faithful to learn about prison ministry, to pray for people in prison, to become involved in prison ministry, and to encourage their brothers and sisters in Christ, especially the Orthodox clergy who bring the Gospel of hope and salvation to the incarcerated.

Many Orthodox brothers and sisters in prison suffer from the burdens of their consciences, from their confinement, and from their fears of being unable to function in society. By reaching out to these members of the body, we encourage them onto the path of repentance leading to reconciliation and the fullness of life granted by Christ and we ourselves are reminded of our own need for repentance and forgiveness of sins.

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) is the official ministry of the Assembly of Bishops, providing Holy Bibles, prayer books, publications and Icons to all in prison. We call on all of our parishes to take a special offering to support OCPM financially and to remember to pray for all who carry out the work of the Church visiting Christ in prison.

With paternal blessings and love in the Risen Christ,

+ Mark, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania
Episcopal Liaison

Chaplain Patrick Tutella
Executive Director