

HMP MANCHESTER; HMP FOREST BANK; HMP BUCKLEY HALL;
HMP & YOI STYAL; HMP YOI THORN CROSS & HMP HINDLEY

GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

PRISON PRAYER LETTER AUGUST 2019

And it is often that our power to heal is exercised much more through our weakness than our strength; it is as Paul says, "When I am weak, that I am strong." We are all wrong-doers, maybe not breakers of the law, but we are all sinners, we all hope that we will not get what we so richly deserve. Crime and sin are not the same thing. Crime cannot be forgiven, it can only be punished. Sin however is a word full of hope, because however monstrous, it is capable of being forgiven. The sinner can be rehabilitated and his past will not be held against him. He has a God who is "compassion and love". Therefore we must accept the wounded, the disgraced, the angry and the despairing as Jesus accepted the prodigal son, the widow of Nain and the woman taken in adultery. Then we are making the Gospel real as Jesus would have us do. And we must proclaim that Gospel by action rather than by words. Jesus would much rather us wash each others feet than push our own religious ideas unasked for onto others.



Above all, we must never lose sight of God's promises. We ourselves may sometimes flounder and lose hope, but He is always faithful. Forgiveness is at the very heart of His being. None of us can truly describe the liberating power of God's forgiveness, we can only witness it and wonder.

It is the same God who has entrusted to us in the chaplaincy the good news that we are reconciled, and the answer to that question "What's the use of it all?" has to be simply this: "We are ambassadors of Christ"; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is "Be reconciled to God".

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This article is a reproduction of one written by The Rev. Brendan Curley, previous Roman Catholic Chaplain at HMP Manchester and first published in the HMP Manchester Prayer Letter (the forerunner of this one) in May 1994. Thanks to Jack Proverbs, Prison Fellowship member, for giving us a copy of the original.

I was talking the other day to one of the lads in the hospital wing. He had no friends in the world except the community psychiatric nurse who used to visit him at home and now comes to visit him in the prison. He needs much more care than the prison can possibly give



him; he is a lonely, depressed and very broken person. Whilst I was talking to him he asked me with a pathos that seemed to sum up his whole life, "What's the use of it all?". That question, it seems to me, is perhaps the most important one for us in the Chaplaincy who wait upon those who are in distress . . . for often it is the emptiness, the depth of others' anguish and the extent of our own impotence to resolve it that it is the hardest to bear. Yet in some mysterious way it is precisely in this painful "accompaniment" that true healing occurs. Prisoners need our ability to share at least some of their anguish, their fury, their despair. They need us as chaplains to treat them in such a way that they feel safe to confront their dark, often sinful, side. They need us to give them hope and comfort not so much by telling them that they are loveable as by the way in which we treat them. We care for them spiritually by valuing their humanity, by taking their pain and problems seriously.

AUGUST 2019

- 1 Pray for the women currently doing our Self Esteem course that God does a work in their hearts and minds and helps them to see their true value.
- 2 Pray for 3 women approaching release who are in the process of being resettled back into the community, they need to make a complete break from their old lives and start to develop new positive relationships here at the MEC and in the church communities that we are linking them into.
- 3 For the newly appointed Governing Governor Danny Khan, that God helps him to iron out the many challenging issues he faces with resources, staffing and the prison regime so that the women in prison are given the best possible chances to turn their lives around.
- 4 Pray for Outreach events in Thorn Cross to engage those who are usually disengaged with chaplaincy
- 5 A holiday is being taken across the team so pray for rest and refreshing
- 6 Pray for the Awareness morning in Thorn Cross regarding domestic violence
- 7 The Message mission team are preaching at a service in Altcourse. Please pray that the passion they have to spread the gospel is met with positive responses.
- 8 Pray that sessions continue to grow despite changes due to reroll at Forest Bank
- 9 Pray for C whose granddad has died and keep his eyes fixed on the good
- 10 Pray for peace for N whose dad has died.
- 11 Pray for comfort for B and his family whose brother has died.
- 12 Pray for transformation for M who is very young and is locked in a pattern of destructive behaviour.
- 13 Pray for D whose mental health is deteriorating.
- 14 Pray for hope in every circumstance for L who is awaiting sentencing and is
- 15 Pray for peace and guidance for R who is having problems with his partner
- 16 Pray for C and V who are waiting for news from immigration about what will happen to them.

AUGUST 2019

- 17 Pray for peace and continued support for S who is out soon and very anxious not to come back.
- 18 Pray for P who was released last month, that he won't repeat the mistakes from the past and that he will find a support system.
- 19 For K far from home and navigating a foreign justice system. For the continued support of his faith community
- 20 Strength and wisdom for D struggling with uncertainty at home and feeling powerless to do much about it.
- 21 Comfort and community for M who is very lonely and seemingly friendless.
- 22 For P struggling with substance misuse and all who work in supporting those with similar issues.
- 23 For T who is vulnerable to manipulation and bullying. That he might build up resilience in the face of adversity.
- 24 Pray for M who feels he is pretending to be a Christian. He has been told that real hypocrites don't say things like that.
- 25 Pray for peace for P who is struggling with long term mental health issues
- 26 Pray for I who has just been released after coming to Faith in Prison that he may find a good church that will care for him
- 27 Pray for A who came to Faith in prison and will soon be released that he might be totally set free from drug addiction
- 28 For all the mentors who do an amazing job helping chaplains run various courses such as Sycamore Tree & Living with Loss etc.
- 29 Pray for P whose child was still born and is struggling to come to terms with it.
- 30 Pray for D who is suffering with lots of pain and is homeless, also pray for J' brother and mum who are both unwell.
- 31 Pray for S who is struggling to deal with things after some negative decisions with his benefits and also his father who is waiting for a diagnosis