

Restorative Justice Week November 19th-25, 2018.

What is Restorative Justice? A simple definition of Restorative Justice is

"Learning how to live together when bad things happen".

Restorative justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior by asking the following questions...

- Who was harmed?
- What was the harm?
- How can the harm be healed?
- How can future harm be prevented?

Catholic Restorative Justice Ministry begins with the recognition of the life and dignity of all persons: those who are victims of crime, but also the offenders who have caused harm, too.

- God's unconditional love, mercy, forgiveness and unending desire to reconcile humanity through Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Diocese's Catholic Restorative Justice Ministries.

Practically speaking, many of us will not be able to visit Jesus in the prison. Yet, we can still encounter and experience Jesus in the victims of crime and their families, in the incarcerated men and women and their families in the community or by being pastorally supportive to staff and their families who work in the criminal justice field in our local communities.

The truth is that within our families, our parishes and in our local communities, lies **the front line of Restorative Justice and Restorative practices**, not in the Chaplains and the Chapel volunteers in the prison chapels!

Restorative practice is learning how to live in right relationships with each other, at all times, to respect each other's God given human dignity, to work out our conflicts and problems in a respectful and mature manner.

- ▶ **Restorative Justice** is by nature *reactionary*, repairing the harm and relationships when something has gone wrong.
- ▶ **Restorative Practice** is *proactive* by nature, how we do what we do, anything that builds connections, develop relationships and brings people together.

As we celebrate Christ the King this weekend, let us be ever open to the call to follow Jesus Christ the Prisoner, to encounter him in our building up of each other, in our acts of forgiveness and reconciliation with those we love, with those whom we have harmed, and with those who have harmed us. May we all experience the true joy and freedom that God promises when we love another as God first loved us!

If anyone is interested to learning more about restorative justice, restorative practices or how to be involved in a Diocesan Restorative Justice ministry in a prison or in the community,

Please contact Deacon Brad Taylor:

- Cell 306-960-3112,
- SKPEN Chaplain's Office 306-765-8178.

Alternatively, leave a message for me to contact you with the Diocesan Catholic Centre's Receptionist at 306-922-4747.

restorativejustice@padiocese.ca

Paradigms of Justice – OLD & NEW

Crime and Reaction

Retributive Justice

Crime is an act against the state, a violation of a law, or an abstract idea.

Punishment is effective

- a. The threat of punishment deters crime
- b. Punishment changes behavior

The criminal justice system controls crime.

Restorative Justice

Crime is an act against another person and the community.

Punishment alone is not effective in changing behavior and is disruptive to community relationships.

Crime control lies primarily in the community.

*Adapted from Zehr (1990)

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Jesus invites us all to visit him in prison: "I was in prison and you visited me"
(Mt 25: 36). "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me"
(Mt 25: 40).

St. Pope John Paul II writes, "Christ, the Son of God, became a prisoner; he let them tie his hands and then nail them to the cross precisely so that his Spirit could touch the heart of everyone."

Pope Francis writes, "Sometimes, a certain hypocrisy leads to people considering only others as wrongdoers, for whom prison is the sole answer. I say to them, every time I enter a prison, I ask, '**Why them and not me?**' We are all sinners and often, without being aware of it, we too are prisoners."