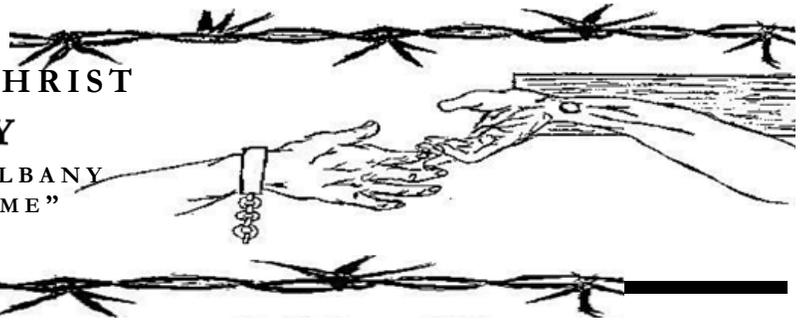


# RESIDENTS ENCOUNTER CHRIST PRISON MINISTRY

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALBANY  
“...IN PRISON AND YOU VISITED ME”  
MT 25:36



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Volume 1, Issue 5

April 10, 2018



*Christ is counting on you.  
And I'm counting on Him.*

## CITY MISSION FACT SHEET

WINTER 2018

### 2017 QUICK RECAP

225,565  
MEALS SERVED



34,937  
NIGHTS OF SHELTER

### WHAT WE DO

#### FEED The Hungry

We serve over 600 meals everyday and special community meals on holidays. We also have bagged lunches available 24/7 at our Men's Shelter. In the 2017-18 school year, our Weekend Backpack program will provide food for 1,100 children and families each weekend of the school year.

#### Provide SHELTER

We provide emergency and long term shelter for nearly 100 men, women and children each night. Our Men's Shelter has 76 beds and the Family Life Center (our Women and Children's shelter) has 35 beds. We also have 24 Transitional Housing apartments for men and women who have graduated from our Bridges to Freedom program and are transitioning to life on their own.

#### Provide CLOTHING

Our Clothing Room offers free clothing to residents and members of the community. Our Thrift Store in Glenville sells clothing, household items, etc. at a discounted price. Red Donation Boxes are located conveniently throughout the community for easy clothing donation drop-offs. Our Distribution Center is used for sorting and organizing clothing donations.

#### Empower EMPLOYMENT

Schenectady Works is our job training, retention and career advancement program. It provides basic computer classes, job search assistance, resume help and job interview training. Success EMPOWER Coaches meet with

employees of nearly 40 local businesses to help:

- them brainstorm solutions to problems affecting job performance (ex. childcare issues). The businesses have seen a 92% retention rate, which means more people are succeeding on the job!

#### TRANSFORMING LIVES

City Mission  
425 Hamilton St Schenectady  
NY 12305  
P: (518) 346-2275  
[www.citymission.com](http://www.citymission.com)

THANK YOU TO MIKE SACCOGIO, GARY SPADARO AND  
DEACON GARY RIGGI OF CITY MISSION OF SCHENECTADY!

**THANK YOU!!!** REC needed heated storage for our retreat supplies as our old facility could no longer accommodate us. A discussion with Deacon Gary Riggi lead immediately to, "why not the

Schenectady City Mission"? Gary discussed our need with Executive Director Mike Saccocio who approved the space requirement. We met with Gary Spadaro, Director of

Social Enterprise and he helped us move into the space. I can't tell you how much this storage space means to our ministry.



**2018 DAY OF REFLECTION**  
~ FR.  
**O'CONNOR,**  
**SPIRITUAL DIR.**

Fr. Frank has offered to speak and is asking for a volunteer to lead and form a planning committee

**REC WEBSITE ~**  
**CHUCK FININ**

Seeking a volunteer to form and lead a committee to develop a new site.

**RETREAT COMPANION GUIDE ~**  
**CHUCK FININ**

Retreat Companion Guide: Final edits have been made and the printing has been ordered. Expected delivery the week of April 16th.

**COXSACKIE CF ~ RUTH SMITH**

Barb DiTommaso has been meeting with Marggie and me to gather names for all aspects for the REC on May 4, 5 and 6. We have our team, Hoot and priests lined up and we will begin our team meetings on April 8 at Christ the King Church.

Bible study continues on Thursday nights. We are trying to get the men to take over the offering of prayers of petition. Some have volunteered. Our inmate Vic has emerged as a natural leader of the men who attend bible study.

Visits continue to the RMU every Monday and Communion services, offered by volunteers, take place on Saturday mornings.

**Note: Coxsackie Weekend Retreat dates have been changed to: June 22-24**

**GREAT MEADOW CF ~ LUKE NALLY**

I know its been a while since some of you have heard from me but here I am finally. I will be heading the weekend as Director by default as we had no director for the weekend. I sadly won't be able to be there Friday though so someone will have to be Director for that one day.

Bob Ottaviano has been helping me prepare some things as to date.

That being said I wanted to let you know that we will be having our REC Meetings starting Wednesday April 4th at Immaculate Conception in Glenville at 7:00 in Rm 1.

Additionally Bill Mullins has tentatively reserved 7 rooms for 2 rights at the Ramada Inn at I-87 exit 19. It's 3.8 miles farther from the prison than the Clarion, but \$30 cheaper.

**GREENE CF ~ EDIE MESICK**

We've held all our planning meetings and all the outside team appears to be ready and eager to share God's grace at our upcoming REC retreat (April 13-15, 2018).

The Hoot group size has diminished for various reasons - I hope to have approval for at least 12, maybe 15. Still awaiting final approval from DOCCS on the paperwork for two of the four priests.

Your prayers for the success of the REC are gratefully appreciated.

Thursday evening Catholic Faith Sharing has been ongoing. Still sparsely attended by the residents, and two of the faithful attendees are on their way home soon (one left this week!). We pray for their commitment to God and church in their lives on the outside too.



**HALE CREEK CF ~ CHARLIE BURRE**

The attendance at Friday Mass has decreased to around 10. Several of the regulars have moved on and we seem to be in a transition period right now. We hope and pray that our faithful will be able to bring new residents into the community. The Bible Study for March was canceled due to snow.

The volunteer names and retreat information for our May 4-6 REC was submitted on March 5. Since the position of Supervisor of Volunteer Services in the Oneida Hub has not been filled since Kathy Doran was promoted, a new volunteer that wanted to join our team is in limbo.

Nellie Hoyt accepted our invitation to give the Peace Talk at our REC. Since she and her fiancé are cleared volunteers in the Great Meadows Hub, I did not think they would be considered “new volunteers”. However, the word I got this morning was that she would be allowed only if she was currently in compliance with all requirements. Anne Marsolais is to forward the SVS file to Kathy Doran tomorrow. I had made this request at the same time that I submitted the volunteer names, but only got a response this morning.

Most disturbing is that the prison has told us that the total number of volunteers, including Hoot and priests is limited to 20. This a reduction from our previous limits (fall 2016: 20 not counting priests; spring and fall 2017: 25 not counting priests). I was only told of this on Friday and, after stating what our previous limits were, was told this morning that the limit is 20 including priests. Since we have 16 or 17 on team (depending on Bob Benoit’s status) we have some decisions to make about the number of priests and Hoot people.



**DAY ONE ~  
“Dying to Self”**

- Word of God
- Dying & Changing Ideals & Christian Maturity
- Death & Resurrection
- Prodigal Son
- Metanoia
- Forgiveness
- Palanca

**DAY TWO ~  
“Rise again with the Lord”**

- Rise Again with the Lord
- The Risen Christ
- People of God as a Community of Love
- Christian Life
- Signs

**DAY THREE ~  
“Go forth with the Lord”**

- Confidence in Christ
- God in our Relationships
- Christian Action
- Beyond REC
- Method for Growth

**HUDSON CF ~ CHUCK FININ**

Actively seeking a liaison



**SARATOGA COUNTY JAIL ~ WALT FORNEY**

Attendees average 7 women, 4 men A-1 Pod, 16 men B - Pod.

Gave out Give Us This Day for November.

Give out Rosaries.

Held Ash Service on Ash Wednesday.

Still working on Priest for confession.

Jane Waring now on approved list of volunteers.

Communion Service attendance about the same with same inconsistency as before.

Still looking for additional volunteers with one orientation complete but not given permission to enter. Contact for SCJ not responding to emails.



## REC Interest Session ~ Chuck Finin

### WELCOME

On January 15th we had our second New Member Interest Meeting and welcomed:

**Mike Gardner** ~ interested in Washington CF and Great Meadow CF

**Jim Trainor** ~ interested in Washington CF, Great Meadow CF and weekly bible study at either of these facilities

**Rebecca Figueroa and her son** ~ interested in Palanca and attending Hoots

**Judy Houck** ~ interested in Washington CF and Great Meadow CF

**Mark Rodney** ~ interested in Greene CF, Coxsackie CF and Hudson CF.

**Thank you to Fr. Pat Butler** for announcing the Interest Session Meeting from the altar as five of the six attendees were from St. Edwards in Clifton Park.

Our next *New Member Interest Meeting* is scheduled for **6pm on Monday, June 18, 2018** at the Shrine Church of our Lady of the Americas at 273 Central Avenue, Albany.



**Volunteer Needed** to help support our new members through the process, If Interested: [info@recrda.org](mailto:info@recrda.org)

## CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER ~ Walt Forney

On a previous council meeting, Fr. O'Connor passed out a copy of two articles from *Contemplative Outreach News* Vol 34, number 2, June 2017, The title *Where the Spirit Speaks: Centering Prayer in Prisons and jails* and from Vol 35 Number 1 Dec.2017, *Allowing God to Heal Our Shame*.

Following that meeting, I had lunch with Fr. O'Connor and we discussed these articles and what if anything we should do about it. He was interested in more information. So I emailed or phoned them and they sent me an envelope with many items some of which Fr. O'Connor has given us.

I was sent a letter and some items for our discernment. First I found out that *Contemplative Outreach* was different from where the article came from. The articles written by Ray Leonardini are from *Prison Contemplative Fellowship*. In the letter he sent me, he stated that they were willing to support us with any and all supplies they have for prisoners use. They accept donation for the supplies. I think if we order any or all for non-inmates, they would expect payment.

Their information is: *Prison Contemplative Fellowship*, P>O> Box 1086, Folsom, Ca 95763-1086 – [office@uspcf.org](mailto:office@uspcf.org) – [uspcf.org](http://uspcf.org)

I have made copies of each of the articles, please email me if you are interested in receiving one.

*Contemplative Outreach News* has Thomas Keating who was or still may be a Trappist Monk. It has many good articles. They sponsor *Centering Prayer*. Their information is: *Contemplative Outreach Ltd*, 10 Park Place, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Suite B Butler, NJ 07405 973-838-3384 – email: [office@coutreach.org](mailto:office@coutreach.org) website – [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org).

Fr. O'Connor is interested in use of *Centering Prayer* in our programs.

The following are materials received from *Prison Contemplative Fellowship*:

### Books:

- *Finding God Within, Contemplative Prayer for Prisoners*
- *Going inside Learning to Teach Contemplative Prayer to the Imprisoned*
- *El encuentro con el Dios interior*
- *Oneing – Evolutionary Thinking What no Bars can Hold*

(all by Ray Leonardini)

### Prayer Card

- The Welcoming Prayer (handed out by Fr. O')
- The Lost Son
- 

### Tri-folds

- *Prison Contemplative Fellowship*
- *La Confraternidad Contemplative en La Prision*
- *Starting a Prison Centering Prayer Circle*

## PALANCA ~ STILL NEEDED FOR UPCOMING REC RETREATS

I am writing to you to request your prayers for us and for all the participants and to also to request Palanca letters/cards for the Residents.

Let me first explain what Palanca is: Palanca can be expressed in several ways.

Prayers: A Gift of Spiritual Support

Sacrifices: Giving up or doing something you wouldn't normally do (fasting, doing that extra little thing).

Works of Mercy: Supporting someone in their time of need. Reaching out to a

Brother or Sister in Christ. \*This is expressed best in Matthew 25:40 when He said "The King will reply "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me."

We are expecting between 40-60 Residents to participate at upcoming Retreats at Coxsackie, Great Meadow, Greene, Hale Creek, Washington and Watertown Correctional Facilities. Thus we will need as many Palanca letters, prayers of encouragement and love from each of you to distribute. We understand that writing so many

individual notes can be burdensome. Feel free to print them and make copies, but it is important that each one have an original signature. Please do not put a date on the letters.

The following are suggested guidelines for REC Palanca:

1. Address your Palanca to "Dear Brother in Christ";
2. Share your feelings and concern for your brother;
3. Include your prayer intention and /or sacrifices you will be doing for the residents;
4. Close the letter or card by signing your First name only

There is more information regarding Prison Ministry on the following website:  
[www.recrda.org](http://www.recrda.org)

For several of the inmates, English is a second language, they are fluent in Spanish. If it is possible for you to prepare about one third of your letters in Spanish and two thirds in English, that would be fantastic.

Thank you for your support.

Residents Encounter Christ  
PO Box 1448  
Clifton Park, NY 12065  
Phone: (518) 417 1625

E-mail: [info@reocrda.org](mailto:info@reocrda.org)

### Sample Palanca Letter

*Dear Brother in Christ:*

*I am writing to give you spiritual support for your participation in the REC program. Your presence at the retreat means your heart is open to the Lord's working changes in you. Our brother Jesus is extending his hand to you. Take it in confidence and faith! Don't miss the chance to know and grow in his love. Only in Jesus and with Jesus will you find true freedom. The time you are serving now is temporary; the freedom Jesus gives is forever.*

*I am very happy that you are participating in this weekend, and I want to encourage you to make the most of it. As a pledge of my support for you I will: **(list prayers and sacrifices you will offer)**. God bless you always.*

*Your Brother/Sister in Christ,  
(First name only.)*

### Testimony from a Resident

*"I made a mess of my life and ended up in prison. My family abandoned me and society had written me off. I was worthless, and I felt that way. Life had lost all meaning to me — I was like a balloon with nothing inside. But these REC ministers fed me with the Word of God, and now I hunger after Him. I will be forever grateful to them for showing me that the way to freedom is through the cross of Christ."*

.....Anonymous REC Inmate

Residents Encounter Christ  
PO Box 1448  
Clifton Park, NY 12065

Phone: (518) 417 1625  
E-mail: [info@recrcda.org](mailto:info@recrcda.org)

[www.recrcda.org](http://www.recrcda.org)

Chair: Chuck Finin  
Vice Chair: Erika Choi  
Secretary: Anne Wasielewski  
Recorder: Mary Rothaupt  
Treasurer: Don Wilson

Spiritual Dir: Fr. O'Connor  
Recruitment: Erika Choi  
Supplies Coord: Chuck Finin  
Webmaster: Peter Vance

Trustee: Rich Polsinello  
Trustee: Tom O'Connor  
Trustee: Don Smith

#### Facility Liaisons

Coxsackie: Ruth Smith  
Great Meadow: Luke Nally  
Greene: Edie Mesick  
Hale Creek: Charles Burre  
Hudson: Vacant  
Washington: Jutta Adams

#### Members at Large

Bob Benoit, Walt Forney,  
Bill Kaehler, Ed Falterman,  
Bill Mullins, Tom Morrison,

#### Honorary Life Members:

Fr. Leo O'Brien, Dom Alonzo, Don Butner, Mike Tidd, Rich Winslow, Paul Heckman, Jack Ablett, Connie Ottaviano, Bob Ottaviano, Joaquin Bermudez, Peter Vance, Paul Curry, Jamie Pino-Cabrera, Lois Cabrera

#### Communication Coordinator

Mary Rothaupt

## From the CHAIR ~ Chuck Finin

I'll be frank, we need more help. REC is currently operating in six facilities with a leadership council of 22 people and about 150 total active members offering three-day retreats, bible study, confirmation classes and communion services. Perhaps you've noticed throughout this newsletter that we're looking for volunteers for various activities? Someone, or a small group to assist in planning a Spiritual Day of Reflection, assistance with

updating our web site, a liaison for Hudson, assistance for new volunteers, and more. Perhaps you're active on a team but feel you can do some more to help, or maybe you know someone who isn't able to make the commitment to going into prison, but would be willing to help with one of the many needs we have outside the prison? Besides the needs mentioned above we can always use help with palanca, we need help with the supplies, this work doesn't

require approval by DOCC's or going into a facility. The work is only active for a couple of weeks during the spring and fall retreat season and would provide a great contribution to our ministry. Please talk to your friends, neighbors, and the people you sit near in church. Let them know how much you get out of the work you do and let them know there are opportunities to help without "going inside". It's part of the works of mercy and can really change lives. Thank you.

# 2018

## REC PRISON MINISTRY CALENDAR OF EVENTS ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALBANY

### 7pm Council Meetings

April 16, 2018  
May 21, 2018  
June 18, 2018  
August 20, 2018  
September 17, 2018  
October 15, 2018  
November 19, 2018  
December 17, 2018

### 6pm REC Interest Session

June 18, 2018  
September 17, 2018  
November 19, 2018

### Day of Reflection

To be determined

### Catholic Family Day

Greene CF: August 11, 2018

### Spring 2018 REC Retreats

Auburn:  
Coxsackie; June 22,23,24  
Great Meadow: May 11,12,13  
Greene: April 13,14,15  
Hale Creek: May 4,5,6  
Hudson:  
Washington: April 13,14,15  
Watertown: May 4,5,6

### Fall 2018 REC Retreats

Auburn:  
Coxsackie:  
Great Meadow: Oct. 26,27,28  
Greene:  
Hale Creek: Oct 26,27,28  
Hudson:  
Washington: Oct. 12,13,14  
Watertown: