**Diocesan Restorative Justice Coordinator**

**Deacon Brad Taylor**

“I was in prison, and you visited me...” Mathew 25:36

My last post was in 2013. A lot has happened since then.

After a time away to address some underlying health concerns and to complete my Master of Theological Studies degree, by the Grace of God, I have been given the opportunity to return to serve at Saskatchewan Penitentiary as a Catholic Chaplain in October 2013 and to become a full time Site based Chaplain on April 1st, 2013. In 2014, Bishop Albert Thevenot appointed me the diocesan representative on the Parkland Restorative Justice Board of Directors.

On July 27, 2015, I was ordained as a Permanent Deacon. As of November 2024, I serve at Sask. Pen. as a quarter time (40hrs per month) Catholic Chaplain and ¾ (120 hrs) time per month as a Site Based Chaplain.

At our October 26 DPC, I was able to share with the diocesan community, “where do I find hope” in my prison ministry. I shared four images of hope that I work with:

* The famous picture of Jesus standing at the door knocking (no outside handle)
* Jesus walks through the locked doors in the upper room where the disciples are hiding in fear of being arrested by the Roman and Jewish authorities.
* The poem, “Footprints in the Sand”.
* The writing works of Swiss Catholic Theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar’s Theology of Holy Saturday, “Christ descent into Hell”.

Jesus stands alongside us, “visibly present with love” when we are imprisoned within ourselves, for various reasons, and are unable to get to him, to open the door to let him into our life. I then shared two experiences of hope:

1. being a Chaplain during Dec. 14, 2016, SK Pen. prison riot, how Christ has come into this broken human world to cast out all darkness!”
2. a powerful Gospel experience of reconciliation and forgiveness between a man who broke into an elder woman’s home and my friends Mom and their immediate family (read Prairie Messenger articles “The Journey of Feather”).

A simple definition of restorative justice is “learning to live together when bad things happen.” The prison is not the front line of Restorative Justice our families, parishes, schools, workplaces, and local communities are! I encourage everyone, with the “eyes to see and ears to hear” to engage in **restorative practices**, to build community wherever you are and to learn to resolve conflicts at the lowest level possible.

Crime is a pastoral issue that impacts us all! Jesus Christ, the Risen Prisoner, continues to call us to be engage in RJ ministry both in our communities and in the prison.

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