



Jubilee of Prisoners

Resources for Teachers and Catechists

BACKGROUND

Since the Jubilee Year of Hope began with the opening of the Holy Doors last December, the Church has prayed for many groups of people including students, journalists, artists, workers, catechists, and those who are poor. The final jubilee celebrated will be the Jubilee of Prisoners on December 14, 2025.

In his Papal Bull *Spes Non Confundit*, Pope Francis asked that Catholics focus on the human dignity of prisoners during the Jubilee of Prisoners. Because of the dignity of each human person, we pray and work for the human rights of prisoners to be respected and for safe and dignified conditions in prisons, jails, and detention facilities. We also pray for the abolition of the death penalty around the world.

As catechists, teachers, and parents, the Jubilee of Prisoners may feel like a difficult topic to address with children. Our own families and students likely know someone who is or has been in prison or who has been a victim of crime. For example:

- Approximately 113 million Americans have a family member in prison or who has been to jail or prison. (The current U.S. population is around 340 million).
- Nearly two million people in the United States are imprisoned or impacted by the criminal justice system.

- 2.7 million children in America have a parent in prison.
- One in three Americans has been a victim of violent crime within the last 10 years.

The Jubilee of Prisoners offers an opportunity to put human faces behind these statistics. Catholic Social Teaching balances the need for society to be kept safe from violent crime with the dignity of offenders and the accused to be respected. We know that at times people are unjustly imprisoned and that even those who are justly imprisoned never lose their human dignity. Catholics are called to seek restorative and healing justice for the sake of both those who have committed crimes and victims.

With Saint Paul the Evangelist—who himself was a prisoner for the Gospel—we can recognize that everyone, prisoner or not, has sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Each of us needs forgiveness, hope, and the peace of Jesus as we seek to build a more just world.

During this Jubilee of Prisoners, we also can ask for the prayers of many saints who were imprisoned. (See the *Litany of Saints for Prisoners*.)

For the sake of all prisoners and with hope for mercy and justice for all in this season of Advent, we can pray together: "*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on us.*"

Pray for Those in Prison

A Rosary Cut-Out Chaplet

BACKGROUND

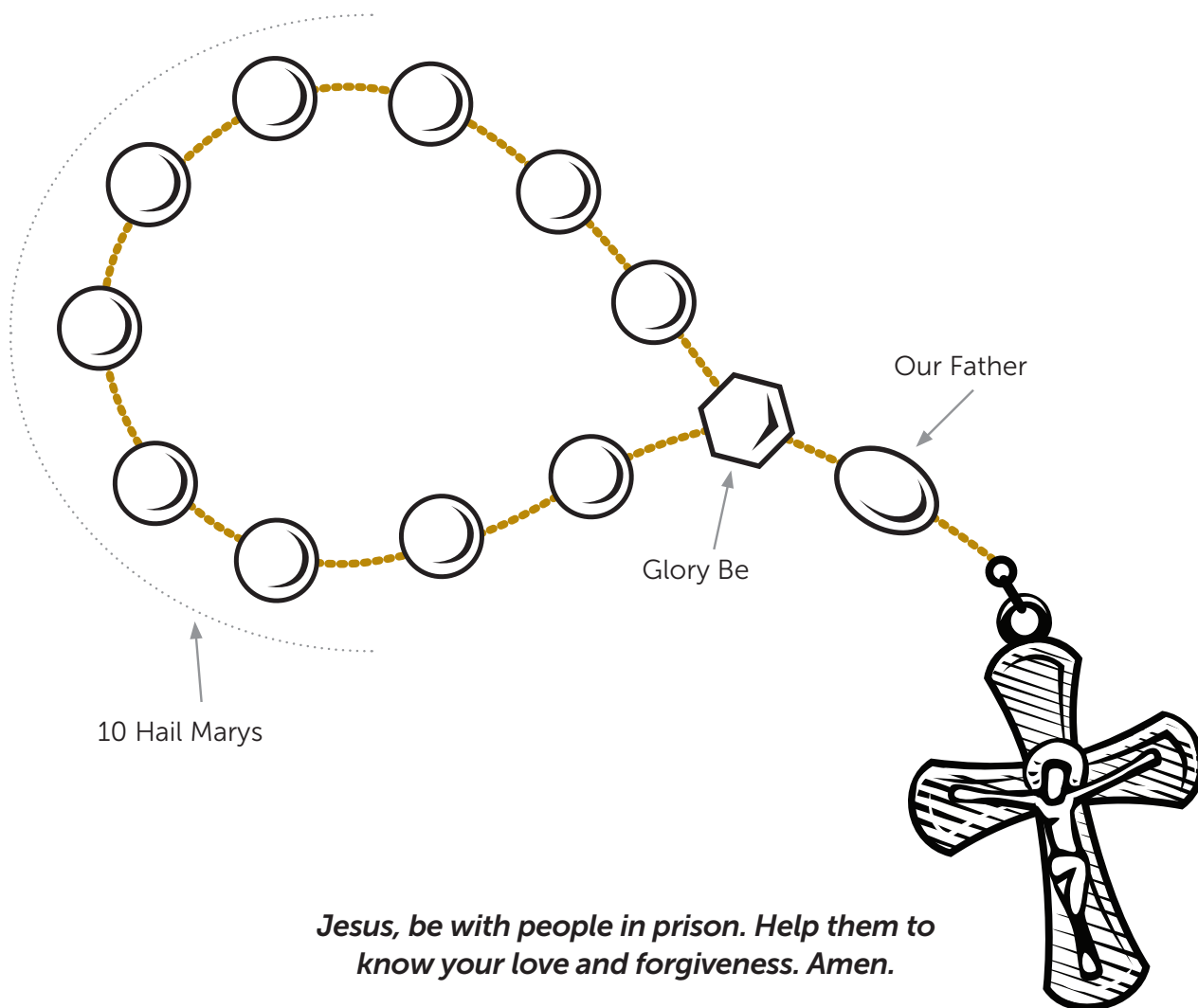
This month, the Church asks us to pray for people who are in prison. A prison or jail is where an adult spends time if they broke the law and committed a crime.

We pray for people in prison because they may feel lonely. God loves all people no matter what, even when people make mistakes or break the law. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us we must be kind to people who are in prison and says it is the same as being kind to him. We can pray for people who are prisoners to know that

God loves them. We can also pray for all people who have been hurt to be safe and get the help that they need.

DIRECTIONS

Get out crayons or colored pencils. Then pray a decade of the Rosary—one Our Father, ten Hail Marys, and a Glory Be—for people who are in prison. As you say each prayer, color in one bead.



Jesus, be with people in prison. Help them to know your love and forgiveness. Amen.

Pray for Those in Prison

Research a Saint Activity

BACKGROUND

This month the Church asks us to pray for those who are in prison. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us that whatever we do for our brothers and sisters in society—including those who are imprisoned—we do for him (Matthew 25).

Many saints throughout Church history spent time in prison. Some saints were in prison for harmful crimes they committed and repented. Other saints were arrested for unjust reasons but found ways to serve God and act with heroic love in incredibly difficult circumstances.

DIRECTIONS

On the next page you will find a litany of saints who were imprisoned. Choose one saint to research. After you complete the activity from your research, pray the litany. Ask these saints to pray for prisoners, for victims of crimes, and for peace in our world.

Saint name: _____

When did he or she live? _____

Where did he or she live? _____

What is he or she best known for? _____

Why was he or she imprisoned? _____

Why is this person a saint? _____

Pray for Those in Prison

Litany Prayer

A LITANY OF SAINTS FOR PRISONERS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit,

Leader: Saint Paul
the Apostle,

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Saint Peter
the Apostle,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Polycarp,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Nicholas of Myra,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Moses the Strong,

All: Pray for us.

Pope Saint Callixtus,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Joan of Arc,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Thomas More,

All: Pray for us.

Blessed Margaret Pole,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Raphael Kalinowski,

All: Pray for us.

Blessed Miguel Pro,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Maximillian Kolbe,

All: Pray for us.

Saint Edith Stein

All: Pray for us.

Blessed Franz Jägerstätter

All: Pray for us.

All holy men and women, saints of God,
Pray for us and for those who are in prison.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living
God,

All: Have mercy on us.

