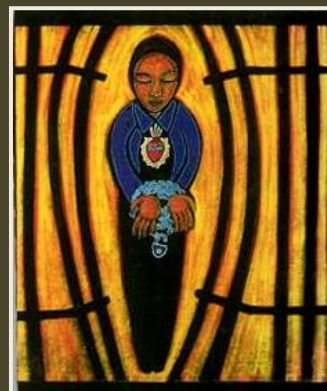


California Catholic Conference ▪ Bellarmine College Preparatory ▪ Brophy College Preparatory ▪ California Correctional Institute Catholic Chaplaincy ▪ California Province of the Society of Jesus ▪ California Province Office of Social Ministries ▪ Central Juvenile Hall at Eastlake ▪ Christian Life Community, Western Region ▪ Community Restorative Justice Commission ▪ Diocese of Monterey ▪ Diocese of San Jose ▪ Dolores Mission Church ▪ Faith Communities for Families and Children ▪ Fresno Pastoral Center ▪ Get on the Bus ▪ Holy Family, South Pasadena ▪ Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education at Santa Clara ▪ Ignatian Solidarity Network ▪ Ignatian Volunteer Corps, Los Angeles ▪ Ignatian Volunteer Corps, San Diego ▪ Ignatius House ▪ Jesuit High School ▪ Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative ▪ Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University ▪ Jesuit Volunteer Corps ▪ Jesuit Community at Loyola Marymount University ▪ Loyola High School ▪ Loyola Law School ▪ Loyola Marymount University ▪ Loyola Productions ▪ Most Holy Trinity Parish ▪ Murray Jesuit Residence ▪ Office of Ministries for the Diocese of Fresno ▪ Office of Restorative Justice for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles ▪ Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish ▪ Parents of Incarcerated Children Support Groups ▪ Paulist Press ▪ PIGD National Network ▪ Queen of Apostles Church ▪ Sacred Heart Jesuit Center ▪ St. Ignatius Parish, San Francisco ▪ San Quentin State Prison ▪ Santa Clara University ▪ Silicon Valley Faces: Victims of Crime Program ▪ St. Agnes, San Francisco ▪ St. Martin of Tours, San Jose ▪ University of San Francisco ▪ Community of Jesus the Risen Prisoner in Corcoran State Prison



INTRODUCTION

Juvenile Justice Week of Faith and Healing (*Faith and Healing*) is a week for our communities to **PRAY, EDUCATE** and **ADVOCATE** for the reform of the juvenile justice system. This prayer booklet is for your community – a parish, a high school, a university, or a social ministry – to pray *with* other restorative voices – parents of an incarcerated children, volunteers, juveniles, victims of crime, partners from different faith traditions, peacebuilders, and the inmate Community of Jesus the Risen Prisoner.

For each day of *Faith and Healing*, there is a testimony, a photograph, a scripture passage, a prayer, a few reflection questions and some suggestions for advocacy to reform the broken juvenile justice system. Each prayer was composed with the help of the youths at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall who participate in our meditation classes and receive our pastoral care. Through the suggested websites, we can get involved and educate ourselves and others about the injustices our youths experience in court daily. We invite you this week to see this with their hearts. Currently, **harsh sentencing practices**, such as the appalling usage of **Life without the Possibility of Parole**, leaves our youths with little hope. On their behalf, we can gather our voices to advocate for the fair sentencing of youths.

We are eternally indebted to the restorative voices whose testimonies are in this prayer booklet. We would also like to thank Loyola Productions (www.loyolaproductions.com) for their invaluable efforts in developing a documentary on restorative justice as an educational resource for *Faith and Healing* and beyond this week. Most especially, we thank you for your prayers and participation in *Faith and Healing*. If you would like to receive a resource for pastoral ministry like this prayer booklet, please contact us at jrjinitiative@gmail.com or visit our website www.JRJI.org.

Gratefully,

Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative

A LETTER FROM JUVENILE HALL

(Each youth we minister to at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall committed to pray for all the communities that participate in Faith and Healing. Pierre, one of the youths in our meditation classes, wrote this letter addressing on the importance of giving youths an opportunity for redemption not incarceration.)

It's a trip how life throws curve balls in the direction of us juveniles. I'm 17, about to be 18, but have lived through extremely difficult circumstances. Many people, including police officers, have told me I'll be dead by the age of 18. I can't help the fact that I grew up in a community where drugs and gangs run freely. Against all odds, I have attained my G.E.D., completed college courses, and am taking expressive writing classes.

Please don't blame our parents when they do everything they can to help us. My parents are law-abiding members of this society but still we get harassed. We breathe the same air, and eat the same foods. So, why are we treated so differently? Is it the color of my skin, the music I listen to, or the clothes I wear? We have dreams, ambitions, and desires of our own.

Why are we treated like animals? I know I've messed up, but ask yourself: would you give your children – your flesh and blood – a second chance? Of course you would! So, why take away our identities and turn us into numbers or statistics? People in power are so blind to what this country really needs. We must first build from the bottom up! Why does my country want me locked up and chained when some pets live better lives than us?

I am a person, not a wall. I hurt, cry, and bleed like you do. So, why treat my life like I'm nothing. All I ask is to open your eyes, stop making decisions without looking 5 years ahead. Why put us in a system that has no good outcome? This system only destroys lives, families, and spirits within us. So, please think about a better way to handle the future because that is what we are. Now, ask yourself: are we worth it? You give me an answer or explanation.

Sincerely,

Pierre

RACHEL'S TESTIMONY

I am the mother of an incarcerated son and my life has forever changed.

I am forever sad. There is a piece of my heart that is missing, a beat that is skipping. There is an empty seat at my table, an empty bedroom in my house. There is always a missing laughter in my ear, a missing kiss who wishes me goodnight. There is a pain and desperation that doesn't seem to leave.

I am forever worrying about all the little things that mothers worry about. Is he hungry? Is he cold or too hot? Is he healthy? Is he happy today or is he sad? Is he missing me as much as I miss him? Will they treat him as God's child or see him as a criminal?

I am forever praying. I pray every minute of the day for God to surround my son with his tender love and care, to give him strength and courage, to give him peace and tranquility, and to let my son feel God's presence particularly in times of loneliness.



All Photos by Eddy S. Martinez

SCRIPTURE

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciples there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." (John 19: 25-27)

A PRAYER FOR PARENTS OF INCARCERATED CHILDREN

god
you suffered
in the pain of your son jesus
you know what it is like
for parents to suffer

you felt the experience
of your son jesus
arrested as a criminal
imprisoned
tried in a trial

god i ask you
to help all parents
who are afraid
of what is going
to happen to their child

god you know so well
what it has been like
to raise a child
now what I am asking you
is to help other parents

help parents
when their children go to trial
god let parents feel
your presence
when they are in court
for their children
amen

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Who do I know that's been hurt by crime and violence?

How have I responded to someone who is hurting?

A MOTHER’S GRATITUDE FOR VOLUNTEERS

I am forever blessed. I feel blessed because there are so many blessings to be thankful for, even in times of despair. I feel blessed for all the angels who helped my son throughout this difficult journey. I found an angel in each and every volunteer who went to visit and give him a loving shoulder to lean on; a listening ear to talk to; a tender word for comfort; a caring hug for support. I am blessed for all those who without hesitation stepped up on behalf of my son. Their love makes my heart beat. I am blessed because God is present everywhere, even in prison.



SCRIPTURE

“For I was...in prison and you visited me... Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did it for me.” (Matthew 25: 35-40)

A PRAYER FOR VOLUNTEERS

jesus
i pray
for all the people
who believe in me
it's hard for me
to imagine a future
when i know that
in a few days i will
be moved from
juvenile hall to prison
i thank you
for blessing me with
people who believe
that i can grow
and still make something
out of my life
bless all volunteers who
accompany us locked up
amen

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How am I being called to be an instrument of healing to others?

How do I see the face of God in the people I meet when I give and share of myself (volunteer)?

CHECK OUT THE DIFFERENT WAYS YOU COULD GET INVOLVED BY VISITING THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

Homeboy Industries
www.homeboy-industries.org

Get on the Bus
www.getonthebus.us

The Action Committee for Women in Prison
www.acwip.net

PIERRE'S TESTIMONY

Finding my way in this tripped out world, I'm about to be 18. Now, I face the world with different eyes. I have to learn all I can because now I am a father. My life right now revolves around my daughter. She's the only thing that keeps me wanting to become a better person in and out.

I am facing 25 to life but still hope God's grace keeps me covered and protected. Only now I have to make the decision to change. I know what I have to do but it is extremely hard to do it. Like a good friend once told me, "You have to break the spell." It is now that I have a true meaning in my life and I am having the hardest time to change.

Changing my attitude is the best thing I can do for me and everybody around me. I have to turn my thoughts into actions. I have many regrets and many accomplishments. It seems I did more wrong than right, but hey nobody is perfect. We all deserve a second chance. Only time will tell what my life's purpose may be.



SCRIPTURE

"So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him." (Luke 15: 20)

PRAYER FOR JUVENILES BEFORE COURT

jesus i will be going to court soon	i am young i have made mistakes but i want to change help my family support them in their hurt
the first time i walked into court as a prisoner i asked myself what am i doing with my life? who am i becoming? how did i get to the point of being locked up?	jesus you carried a cross to the hill when you were murdered you were looked upon as a dangerous criminal but your abba god raised you from the dead
jesus help me when i go to court help me be clear within with light so the judge and lawyers will see in me someone who wants to do something with my life	jesus help me not to give up hope let me feel you close to me even when it seems so dark be with me when i go to court amen

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Where in my life do I desire forgiveness?

How hard is it for me to forgive myself and others?

CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JUVENILE JUSTICE:

Fair Sentencing for Youth
www.fairsentencingforyouth.org

Faith Communities for Families and Children
www.fcfla.org

Human Rights Watch
www.hrw.org

THE BLOOD OFFERING OF OUR CHILDREN

The story of the sacrifice recalls how God tested Abraham to offer his son as a burnt offering. In faith, Abraham follows God, builds an altar, and sets wood to bind his son. When Abraham seizes the knife to slay his son, God commands Abraham: "Do not lay your hand on the boy; do not harm him, for now I know that you fear God, and you have not held back from me your son."

The sacrifice of a son in the Abrahamic narrative is a story we share and honor about God's command to save our children from unnecessary sacrifice. Life sentences have become the instrument of death that slays our youth. Jews, Christians, and Muslims recognize the sacredness of this story where God commands that all our children, like Abraham's son, remain free of harm and regain an opportunity to grow. Sentencing youth to die in prison revokes our conviction in God's redemption.



SCRIPTURE

"For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than holocausts." (Hosea 6: 6)

A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

We pray for children who sneak popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,
who like ghost stories, who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead in,
who never go to the circus, who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for children who sleep with the dog and bury the goldfish,
who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.

And we pray for those who never get dessert,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,
who watch their parents watch them die,
who can't find any bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose monsters are real.

We pray for children who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed, and never rinse out the tub,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,
who squirm in church or temple and scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at and whose smiles can make us cry.

And we pray for those whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried... and for those who must,
for those we never give up on...and for those who don't get a second chance,
for those we smother...and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Who in my life has helped me grow by believing in me?

How do I imagine a juvenile justice system that heals broken relationships?

A FEW RANDOM THOUGHTS LEAVING COURT

Ten minutes of twelve, January 6, 2010 at the Superior Court in Downtown, Los Angeles, Luisa fainted onto the floor as she left the courtroom after her only son Steven was sentenced to 50 years to life. At fourteen years old, Steven was arrested and since then, he's learned to grow up in an institution.

In court, I addressed Steven with these words:

You are a child of God and no one can take this away from you. I pray that the God of life will one day bring you home with your family. Remember this moment. Steven you are not a number, you are a loved young man. May our God who freed the slaves from Egypt, who gave his life between two common criminals, rescue you one day from prison walls. I pray that God brings healing to everyone here in this courtroom, to the victim's family and to your family.

On one level it might seem like we lost today. But I do not think we did. All the suffering, all the struggles of so many who have been sacrificed in the struggle, will ultimately change the system that demands so much blood from our youth. The reason I know we did not lose today is because of Luisa's generosity that points to the way to faith and healing. During Christmas, Luisa went and bought supplies for the kids at the juvenile hall in Sylmar. She delivered Christmas gifts for the juveniles who have children too.



SCRIPTURE

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

A PRAYER FOR ENEMIES

jesus
in this unit
there are some enemies
sometimes
i feel like doing something
against them
but i know
if i hurt them
this will not help me
or my future

instead jesus
i pray for my enemies
help me
to see them
as your son
going through stress
just like i am
let these words stay with me
“love your enemies”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Where in my life have I witnessed violence?

How can I bring healing to those who are hurt by violence?

CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES TO FIND RESOURCES FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY AND PEACEBUILDING:

Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Restorative Justice
www.la-archdiocese.org

California Province of the Society of Jesus
www.calprov.org

Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative
www.JRJI.org

RIITA'S TESTIMONY

For me, forgiveness is linked to forgetting that someone whom I loved is gone forever. My brothers Robert and Gustavo and my cousin Cesar were killed by the type of violence that takes over our community and our youth: gang violence. How, in these circumstances, can one be liberated from the imprisonment of not being able to forgive?

For me, the answer comes from my mother, a very strong and beautiful woman who has always taught me to forgive and keep on with life, doing what Jesus wants me to do. When my brother Robert was killed, on November 19, 2000, I saw his wounds near his heart. (It is very hard for me to remember that day.)

As painful as this experience may have been for my entire family, my mother's faith in God and love for her children on that day has allowed me today to find faith and healing. I saw her pray in front of the casket of her other son seventeen years before. I remember her telling the priest at her church that she forgave the person that had killed her son, and that all she wanted was for her son to rest in peace. This is but one among many of the signs of healing.



SCRIPTURE

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father.”
(Matthew 5:43-45)

PRAYER FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME

jesus
i pray for anyone
i have hurt

getting beaten
i have come to see
what it is like
when someone hurts me

jesus
help the families
of those i have hurt
may they be healed
from the trauma
of being treated so badly

jesus
i ask
you to heal them
amen

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What pain have I survived?

What lessons about myself and God have I learned from it?

CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH AND ADVOCACY:

California Conference of Catholic Bishops
www.cacatholic.org

Restore Justice
www.restorejustice.com

JOHN'S TESTIMONY

John is a member of the Community of Jesus the Risen Prisoner at Corcoran State Prison. He contributes to the faith formation of youths at juvenile hall through his reflections.

The year was 1995...I was in L.A. County Jail. I was put into solitary confinement as a disciplinary action. I cried out to God...I said, "Okay God, if you are real and I know you are real, feed me...I'm starving here...I'm hungry."

Someone opened the door and said, "Here, you look hungry" and threw me a bag of lunch. I didn't even look up and started eating when this person said, "Hey, here's another one."

I leave everything up to Jesus...If I am forever stuck in prison and his will is for me to be a jailhouse preacher, then I have to say, "Let your will be done."



SCRIPTURE

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. (Luke 4:1-13)

Do not let the work of **Juvenile Justice Week of Faith and Healing** end here. Continue to **PRAY, EDUCATE** and **ADVOCATE** with faith for the fair sentencing of youths and the healing of all broken relationships.

A Meditation for Healing

i came early
to the hill to hear jesus
i had been traveling
for 2 days
the trip seemed
to last for many weeks
but now
i was in front of jesus
there were many sick
many just listening
to his words

i sat down near jesus
i had never met him
yet something within me
attracted me
to come to see
if he could help me
i looked at the skin disease
of those next to me
was grateful
i did not suffer like that
but my heart was sad
maybe i could say
my heart was broken
listening to jesus words

i wondered
if i will ever have
any relief
was desiring this
because it is too difficult
carrying around
such a weight
i know jesus
is not a magician
but just maybe
he can heal me
help me

i have looked
in so many places
the breeze felt good
against my face
the sun against my skin
did not want
to move from this space
finally jesus finished speaking
i watched far away
as the sick
were touched
healed
but i did not have
the strength to come closer
something was holding me back

the sun would soon be setting
i would return
just like i came
jesus finished healing
a blind boy
jesus began to move
slowly walking
from that spot
to where i was
he looked tired
thought he soon
would be down the hill
but his eyes caught mine
he came near
and sat down
next to me

i could not say anything
we just sat there
for a while
finally i was able
to say
jesus do you have anything
for a sad
wreath broken heart?

what medicine do you have?

jesus
took out from his tunic
a small bottle of oil
with simple words
written across the bottle
medicine for sad hearts

he took my hands
into his
calling me by my name
josue

i rub some
of this oil
into your hands
do not separate yourself
from them
you will not be healed
trying to bury your sorrow

i could feel
the heat from jesus' hands
feeling light flow down
into me
at that moment

jesus
i never knew
anyone could suffer
so much
i have been paralyzed
by my grief
it is like
there is a deep hole
in my heart
it is so deep
i cannot see the bottom
i am afraid
of what it can do to me
feeling i could be destroyed

at that moment
i could feel
jesus light
flow into this deep hole
where my heart had
been broken
in that moment
i knew
it could not destroy me
if i could keep
some of this healing presence
from this healer

jesus said
what was it like
to have your whole family
burned to death
in a fire?
he released
all this pain
i had been carrying around
that had weighed me down
my sorrow was so deep
so wide
that it flowed out
all over this hill

with my hands
in jesus'
jesus was taking
into himself
this pain
i could hardly breathe
letting my sadness
heart brokenness
flow out
from my heart

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What justice do I hunger for?

What gets in the way of my commitment/faithfulness to juvenile justice?