



MODULE 3

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF PRISONS

TOPICS COVERED

- History of prisons
- Realities of incarceration and detention
- Systemic racism
- Unity of the human family
- Guard culture
- Empathic listening

PREPARATION FOR COHORT MEETING

 Click on the titles below to access linked materials



Watch [Module 3 Video](#)



Read [Messengers of Hope - A Catholic Correctional Training Resource](#) from Dismas Ministry (pgs. 10-14).



Spend time answering the reflection questions

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one thing you learned about the histories of prisons and jails?
2. What messages have you received about discipline and punishment from your childhood and society?
3. How do you understand the relationship between racism, unity, and reconciliation?
4. Across the American population who is statistically more likely to be incarcerated? Why might this be true?
5. As ministers, how do we build unity? Why is it important for us to do so?
6. Discuss with a mentor or sponsor: In your own story or journey, have you had any bias you may need to address?
7. True or False: We must approach the correction officers and the staff out of a place of compassion. They are not the enemy. Explain your answer.
8. How do you define the difference between empathy and sympathy?
9. True or False: As a chaplain or volunteer, you will be informed about what's going on in the jail. Explain your answer.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Click on the title to access linked resources.

Books

- *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* by Henri De Lubac
- *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson
- *Texas Tough: The Rise of America's Prison Empire* by Robert Perkinson

Church Resources

“Open Wide Our Hearts.” USCCB, 2018, Pastoral Letter Against Racism.

CPMC Resources

- [*Addressing Racism*](#). Presented by Dr. Chris Pramuk. 13 Jan 2021, CPMC Webinar.
- [*Basics of Empathic Listening*](#). Presented by Dr Ted Smith & Dr. Kathryn Getek Soltis. 3 Mar 2019, CPMC Webinar.
- [*Intercultural Competence & Prison Ministry*](#). Presented by Sr. Susan Van Baalen, OP, PhD & Imam Abu Ishaq Abdul Hafiz. 11 Nov 2020, CPMC Webinar
- [*Psychological & Spiritual Needs of Correctional Officers*](#). Presented by Dr. Caterina Spinaris & Daria Mayotte. 5 May 2023, CPMC Webinar.
- [*The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice*](#). Presented by Dr. Patrick Saint-Jean, SJ. 9 Nov 2022, CPMC Webinar.

Organizations

- [Desert Waters: Correctional Outreach](#)
- [Equal Justice Initiative](#)

Prayers

Dickerson, Genie. “The Good Listener’s Daily Prayer.”

Videos

[*Lend Me Your Ears and I’ll Sing You a Song*](#). Presented by Robert G. Mundle. 1 Jun 2019, NACC Conference.

MODULE 3 COMPETENCIES

Listed below are the National Catholic Prison Ministries Pastoral Care Competencies for this module.

- .1. Appreciate and affirm the dignity of the human person and the positive values of diverse cultures, races, and socioeconomic groups within their respective self-understandings
 - 1.1.3 Understand and embrace the inviolable human dignity and hope
 - 1.1.4 Face own biases related to the culture of offenders
 - 1.1.5 Cultivate genuine humility vs. "better than thou."
- 1.6 Manifest "psychological health, marked by integrity, appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and the ability to honor and safeguard the trust that people place in the as Church ministers" (CoWorkers, p. 36).
 - 1.6.2 Demonstrate the ability to attend to others' feelings, needs, and concerns
 - 1.6.3 Demonstrate accountability and responsibility to the Church, the minister's employer, the minister's manager, and the profession of pastoral care ministry
 - 1.6.4 Understand the unique relationship-building in the prison setting
 - 1.6.5 Understand personal/ professional boundary issues, given the importance of rapport- building
- 2.9 Model the spirit of Jesus in one's life and identify with and promote the universal Church and its global mission so that all prayer and ministerial activity flow from that mission.
 - 2.9.1 Having self-awareness of the ministerial situations to which I am called and knowing those in which I am challenged.
- 3.10 Social sciences and humanities. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a foundational understanding of the social sciences and humanities
 - 3.10.1 Knows the social sciences, and particularly the fundamental human dynamics in the most vulnerable of times that ground pastoral care activity, especially issues related to loss of all kinds, suffering, grief, aging, and death
- 4.1 Exercise sound practices of compassionate pastoral care.
 - 4.1.1 Compare theories of human development, as focused by adult and family life-cycle theories of the social sciences and theories of faith development as sources for pastoral practices
 - 4.1.2 Develop a holistic approach to the human person using empathic skills, which include effective listening

* For the full list of National Catholic Prison Ministries Pastoral Care Competencies, click [here for English](#) and [here for Spanish](#).