



Order of Malta Federal Association

Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does. William James

Plates of cookies stacked high. Most of us have opinions about prison and prisoners. We have some notion of what daily life might be for a prisoner. Few of us have much firsthand experience with prison, or prisoners. Recently, I attended a graduation ceremony of prisoners who completed the *Bridges to Life* program. Spending an evening with the prisoners on their turf opened my eyes to many things.

Doing requires doers. I read that in a recent issue of *America* magazine. I thought it was an apt description of where we stand at this moment in our prison ministry. In late January, roughly 75 men will participate in a prison ACTS retreat. When they complete the retreat, many will be looking for someone to correspond with about the challenges of their spiritual journey. That is where we fit in.

We need some doers. We will be inviting our members, family members, and friends, to agree to monthly correspondence with a prisoner. A number of people have already shown an interest, but we will need more. There will be a training session required. For some reason, prisons have lots of rules. Also, we will have safeguards in place to protect the disclosure of your identity.

Plates of cookies stacked high. At the conclusion of the graduation ceremony, the prisoners were rewarded with punch and cookies. The prisoners stacked their paper plates as high as they could. It never occurred to me, but they don't get cookies in prison. Or snacks. Or daily hot showers. Or many of the thousands of comforts that we take for granted. However, more pervasive than the deprivation of comforts, was the deprivation of freedom. It reaches far beyond confinement. An essential part of our humanity is our free will. We have choices. Choose to make a difference.

Continue to pray for those in prison, their families, their victims, the families of their victims, and all those who minister to them.