



4 July 2019

**RELEASE OF NEW PRISON CHAPLAINCY VIDEO PROVIDES AN INSIGHTFUL LOOK
INTO CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS WORKING IN OUR PRISONS**

This week, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference released a video on Catholic Prison Chaplaincy in New Zealand, to raise awareness around the work of the Church in our prisons.

On the video's release, Senior Catholic Prison Chaplain, Sr Veronica Casey pbvm, says, "This video goes some way to give a sense of what it's like going behind the bars and meeting with those in our prison system. A Prison Chaplain's role is to journey with inmates, as they encounter the challenges of incarceration and separation from loved ones and Whanau and come to terms with the harm they have done. The Chaplains do this through being the face of Christ in the prison.

The interviews with four Catholic prison chaplains provide some very real insights into their experiences working with communities within our prisons. As well as the day-to-day chaplaincy role of providing pastoral care, providing access to the Sacraments, communion services and other church services, Prison Chaplains also ensure that the prisoners have access to bibles and other religious references, materials and spiritual literature.

Parishes and community groups are encouraged to help in prison ministry in a variety of ways, which can be anything from being part of a support group for the chaplains, visiting the prison, assisting with the leading of Sunday services, Companioning the *Seasons for Growth* programme or through prayer, individual or as a group. We encourage Parishioners to welcome those released from prison into their church and community and support them through their integration.

"In doing so, parishes and communities can actively support those in and recently out of prison, together with their families."

Since 1987, the number of people in New Zealand prisons has tripled, including around a third of inmates awaiting trials. The rate of imprisonment in NZ is still far above all other OECD countries apart from USA. The video for Prison Chaplaincy can be found at:

<https://youtu.be/3k2TG4MPxU0>.

For more information on becoming a prison chaplain or volunteer or providing support through your parish or community group please contact Sister Veronica Casey on 027 523 3983 or vcasey@nzcbc.org.nz.