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*Restorative Justice: A Channel for God's Grace and Peace*  
&  
*How We Can Encourage the Healing Process*

**IN THE WORDS OF REV. RICHARD BLACKBURN, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF THE LOMBARD MENNONITE PEACE CENTER,  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND FACILITATOR OF THE *APRIL 14<sup>TH</sup>* EVENT:**

“The criminal justice system is built upon a foundation of retributive justice, whereby crime is seen as an offense against the state. The process focuses on establishing guilt and punishing the offender. Such a focus neglects the victim-offender relationship. Thus, offenders are not encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and the needs of victims are ignored.

The restorative justice vision understands crime to be a violation of people and relationships. Rather than focusing on guilt and punishment, the restorative justice process seeks to identify needs and obligations in an effort to make things right. It empowers victims and offenders through a process of dialogue and mutual agreement, resulting in offenders assuming responsibility, the needs of victims being met, and healing for both being encouraged.

The plenary address will compare the retributive justice model, as it's typically practiced, with the vision for restorative justice. It will demonstrate how restorative justice is grounded in God's grace and mercy, evolving from the Old Testament vision of shalom to God's plan to bring that vision to fulfillment through Christ's proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Thus, the biblical call to practice forgiveness, reconciliation, and unlimited love are central to the restorative justice vision.”

The program will take place at the *Studio Theatre of the University of St. Francis*, 500 Wilcox St., in Joliet, Illinois (60435), from *9am until 2:30pm*. (Use the Fine Arts entrance located in the large parking lot by the gymnasium). There will be a breakout small and large group session following the major presentation. After the noon lunch three sessions of 20 minute workshops will be offered on *C.A.S.A., House of Bethesda, KAIROS, KOINIA Halfway House, Prison Visitation & Support, Companions Journeying Together, and Community Circles of Support*. The purpose of the day is to educate and equip people of faith in assisting victims, offenders, and families of both in a restorative justice manner. **Please register by April 1, 2007** so we will have adequate food, space, and resource materials. Thank you.

**DIOCESE OF JOLIET  
PEACE & SOCIAL  
JUSTICE MINISTRY**

402 S. Independence Blvd.  
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**Registration for Restorative Justice Seminar, April 14, 2007**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Needs: Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Cost for lunch: \$10 payable at time of registration. To register contact Jen Ruhaak at (815) 834-4028 or jenruh@dioceseofjoliet.org or mail to: Peace & Social Justice Ministry, St. Charles Pastoral Center, 402 S. Independence Blvd., Romeoville, IL 60446-2264.

## Workshop Summaries

**C.A.S.A., Court Appointed Special Advocate for Children**, is a non-profit organization that recruits, trains and supervises volunteer advocates for abused and neglected children in our community. In 2006 there were 3, 182 reports of abuse and neglect in Will County. The workshop will explain the program, required training, and work of its volunteers. [www.willcountyillinois.com/casa.htm](http://www.willcountyillinois.com/casa.htm)

**Community Circles of Support** will become operational in this area soon. Circles are groups of volunteers who meet regularly as support for ex-offenders. A circle could include family, church members, community members, professionals, etc. They provide advice, support, and in some cases, practical assistance to the ex-offender. It has been successful in Minnesota and in parts of Illinois.

**Companions Journeying Together** offers parishes many opportunities to "visit those in prison" which are safe and easy to do. We can offer opportunities for everyone. Come hear how you, your church group, or the entire parish can be involved.

The goal of the **House of Bethesda: Re-Entry Advocacy Center** is to provide a holistic program of assessment, development, motivation, and support for released prisoners who desire to conquer their obstacles in seeking, gaining, and maintaining employment, and self-sufficiency. It is designed to draw together the unique strengths of the community and faith-based organizations to which the released prisoner is returning. The center incorporates mentoring, job training, and other comprehensive transitional services for the formerly incarcerated individual. The presentation will include opportunities to help.

**Kairos Prison Ministry - Kairos Outside** is an ecumenical weekend experience to support and encourage women who have an incarcerated loved one. This is a Christian-based program that allows the women to be pampered, encouraged, empowered, and to feel safe, as they reconnect to Christ. **Kairos Inside** is a similar four-day program offered inside a prison for the inmates. [www.kairosprisonministry.org](http://www.kairosprisonministry.org)

**Koinonia House** describes its mission as equipping and assisting local Koinonia Houses, the local church, and organizations or individuals attached to the local church, as they enable Christian inmates to go from prison to the local church, the workplace, and society through biblical discipleship. Manny and Barbara Mill organized the first house in Wheaton in 1990. Come and see what they are about and how you might help. [www.koinoniahouse.org](http://www.koinoniahouse.org)

**P. V. S., Prisoner Visitation and Support: Visiting the Forgotten**, is a volunteer visitation program to Federal and Military prisoners. They offer friendship and a listening ear to help prisoners prepare to assume a useful place in society. Their primary focus is on those prisoners who do not ordinarily receive visits, or those who want or need supportive human contact, are in solitary confinement, or are serving long sentences. Attend the workshop and consider volunteering as a PVS visitor. [www.prisonervisitation.org](http://www.prisonervisitation.org)

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