

Prison Ministry India
National Convention 2022
Countdown 8

Popes to Prisoners



St Pope John XXIII Visits Rome's Regina Coeli Prison on 26 December 1958.

Pope St John XIII

“You could not leave to see me so I have come to see you. Now you need to rebuild your lives and you need to do one thing: eliminate the word ‘despair,’ and prepare yourselves to spend your lives doing good, because this is also the Father’s house and you are also sons of God”. Pope St John XIII told prisoners.



Pope Paul VI Visited Rome's Regina
Coeli Prison on 10 April, 1964.

Pope Paul VI

Pope Paul VI offered mass for its 1,200 prisoners. He broke down in tears while addressing them. He told prisoners: “You are worthy of being loved, helped and saved.” He urged them not to give up hope and warned; “You can commit only one sin here—yielding to despair.”

His voice shaking with emotion and using always “I” instead of the formal “We” that protocol demands, he assured the prisoners of his “esteem and sympathy.”



Pope St John Paul II Visited Rebibia Prison and forgave his Assassin Mehmet Ali Agca on 28 December 1983. Time Magazine commented on it as the greatest event of the 20th Century.

Pope John Paul II

Your situation must not lead you to despair. You carry deep in your hearts the suffering linked to the reasons for your current detention. The Church is close to you. She wants to witness to the hope Christ brings us. No act can deprive you of the dignity that is yours as a child of God.

Let Christ dwell in your hearts! Entrust your ordeal to him! He will help you bear it. Indeed, with your prayers, your sacrifices, your personal renewal, you share in the success of this great gathering and in your brothers' and sisters' conversion. Was it not by prayer alone that St Theresa of the Child Jesus made a prisoner's conversion possible, and without leaving her convent, did she not help the missionaries who struggled to proclaim the Gospel?

Message of Pope Message for Young Prisoners, Paris
on the Occasion of the 12th World Youth Day

21-24 August 1997

Pope Benedict XVI

CARE FOR PRISONERS

The Church's spiritual tradition, basing itself on Christ's own words (cf. *Mt 25:36*), has designated the visiting of prisoners as one of the corporal works of mercy. Prisoners have a particular need to be visited personally by the Lord in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Experiencing the closeness of the ecclesial community, sharing in the Eucharist and receiving holy communion at this difficult and painful time can surely contribute to the quality of a prisoner's faith journey and to full social rehabilitation. Taking up the recommendation of the Synod, I ask Dioceses to do whatever is possible to ensure that sufficient pastoral resources are invested in the spiritual care of prisoners. *Sacramentum Caritatis* 59.



Pope Benedict XVI Pardoned his Former Butler Paolo Gabriele who Stole Confidential Documents.

PRISONERS ARE BROTHERS AND SISTERS



Pope Francis washes the Foot of a Prisoner at Casal del Marmo, Italy on 28 March 2013.

Pope Francis

“With regard to prisoners, it would appear that in many cases practical measures are urgently needed to improve their living conditions, with particular concern for those detained while awaiting trial. It must be kept in mind that penal sanctions have the aim of rehabilitation, while national laws should consider the possibility of other establishing penalties than incarceration. In this context, I would like once more to appeal to governmental authorities to abolish the death penalty where it is still in force, and to consider the possibility of an amnesty.”

-- Message for World Day of Peace, Dec. 15, 2015

Prisoners are very close to the heart of Popes. Prisoners are very close to our Bishops. Let PMI National Convention 2022 bring prisoners worldwide very close to our hearts. Let's offer our prayers and sacrifices for their renewal and reformation. Let's join PMI's Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated and sanctify them.