

Balancing Justice with Mercy
Creating a Healing Community



A Presentation for the Council of State Governments

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Philadelphia Leadership Foundation

May 2010

Origins of the Healing Communities Model

- Impact of incarceration and reentry on children, families and impoverished communities
- Great programs can't be brought to scale
 - Too few resources
 - Too little political will
- BUT: Profound resources within communities of faith

Shaping the Healing Communities Model

- “A Justice That Heals”

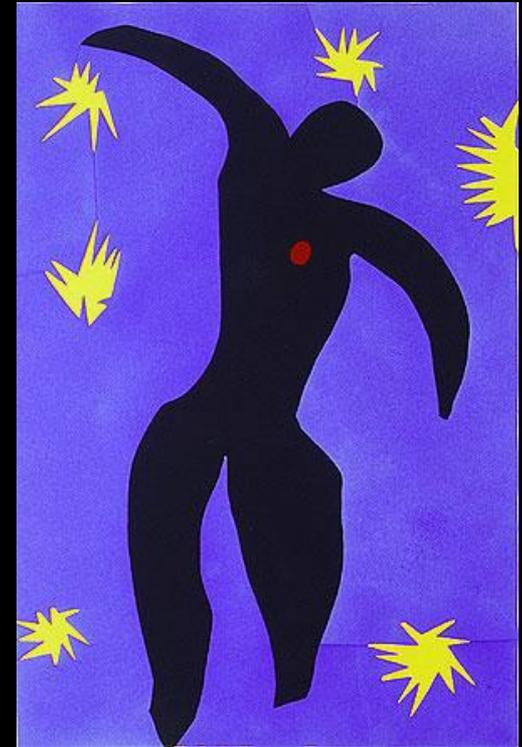
The story that shaped the
Healing Communities model and guide



A True Story of Faith and Forgiveness

"A Justice that Heals"

- Murder of a son
- The pastor's engagement
- Contrition of a killer
- Forgiveness by the parents
- "Adoption" of the killer
- Healing of the families
- Redemption and Reconciliation



The Healing Communities Vision

- Engaging congregations in healing and restoration
- Supporting *their own members* -- individuals and their families affected by crime, incarceration and prisoner reentry



Healing Communities Build on Faith Communities' Unique Strengths

Acceptance

Relationship Building

Love

Personal Accountability

Mercy

Forgiveness

Reconciliation

Redemption

Restoration



*"Healing Communities," "Stations of Hope,"
"Returning Citizens"*

- New language
- New thinking
- New paradigms



Healing Communities Goal:

Strengthening individuals, families and communities

Through:

- Creating a sense of welcome and inclusion
- Reducing stigma and shame
- Fostering the transformation of hearts, minds & communities
- Facilitating acceptance of responsibility for actions and behavior
- Building networks of support



Healing Communities offer a ministry of presence

- They walk with the person
- They help him connect with faith
- They open their hearts to her
- They embrace him
- They provide understanding



Reach out to:



- The accused
- The family of the defendant / prisoner
- The crime victim
- The family of the crime victim
- Returning Citizens and their families
- The community affected by crime

The Timing of Your Engagement

Whenever help is needed:

- At the time of arrest
- During the trial
- At sentencing
- While in prison
- Getting ready for reentry
- Throughout reintegration



*What Healing Communities do **NOT** require*

- Setting up a program
- Setting up a nonprofit
- Getting funding



A Healing Community is **more** than a reentry or a prison ministry program

Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice

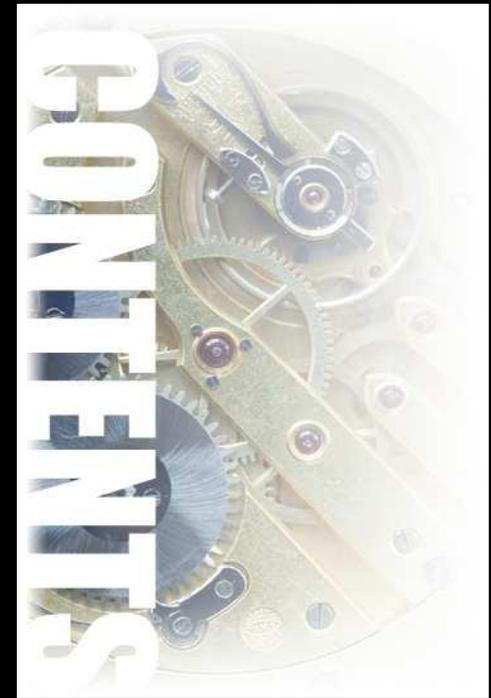
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

November 15, 2000



- Teach right from wrong, respect for life and the law, forgiveness and mercy.
- Stand with victims and their families.
- Reach out to offenders and their families, advocate for more treatment, and provide for the pastoral needs of all involved.
- Build community.
- Advocate policies that help reduce violence, protect the innocent, involve the victims, and offer real alternatives to crime.

Contents of the Guide



- Story of inspiration
- Background on mass incarceration
- Role of faith leaders
- Role of members of the congregation
- Advocacy
- Resources for users (Appendices)

Why do we care?

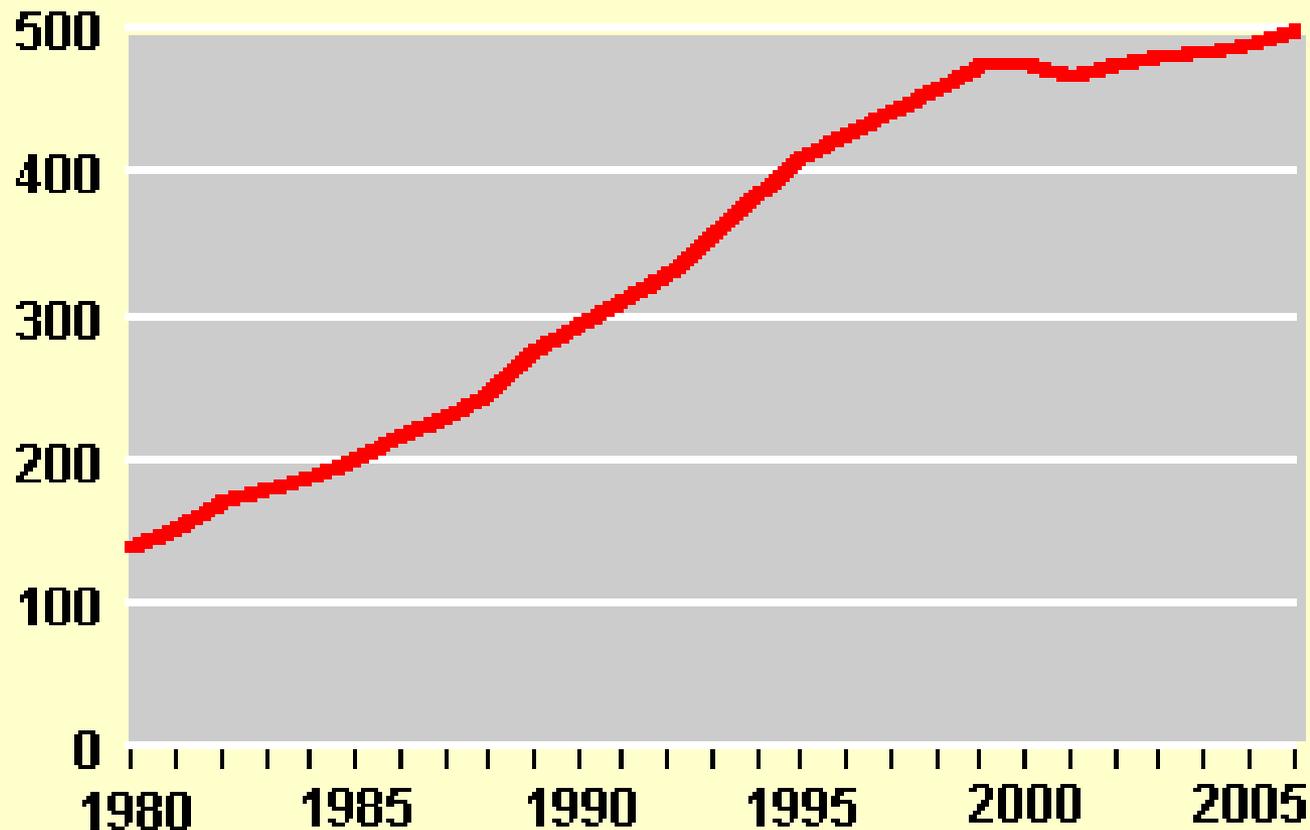
**OVERWHELMING IMPACT OF MASS
INCARCERATION**



NEARLY FOUR-FOLD INCREASE IN INCARCERATION RATE OVER 26 YEARS

Incarceration rate, 1980-2006

Number of offenders per 100,000 population





**1 IN 100
ADULTS IN
AMERICA ARE
BEHIND BARS**

AMERICAN MEN IN STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONS

	White Males	Hispanic Males	Black Males
Age 20-24	1 in 60	1 in 24	1 in 9
Age 25-29	1 in 59	1 in 26	1 in 9
Age 30-34	1 in 53	1 in 27	1 in 9



AND WOMEN IN PRISON?

The rate of growth for women is 1.5 times higher than for men.

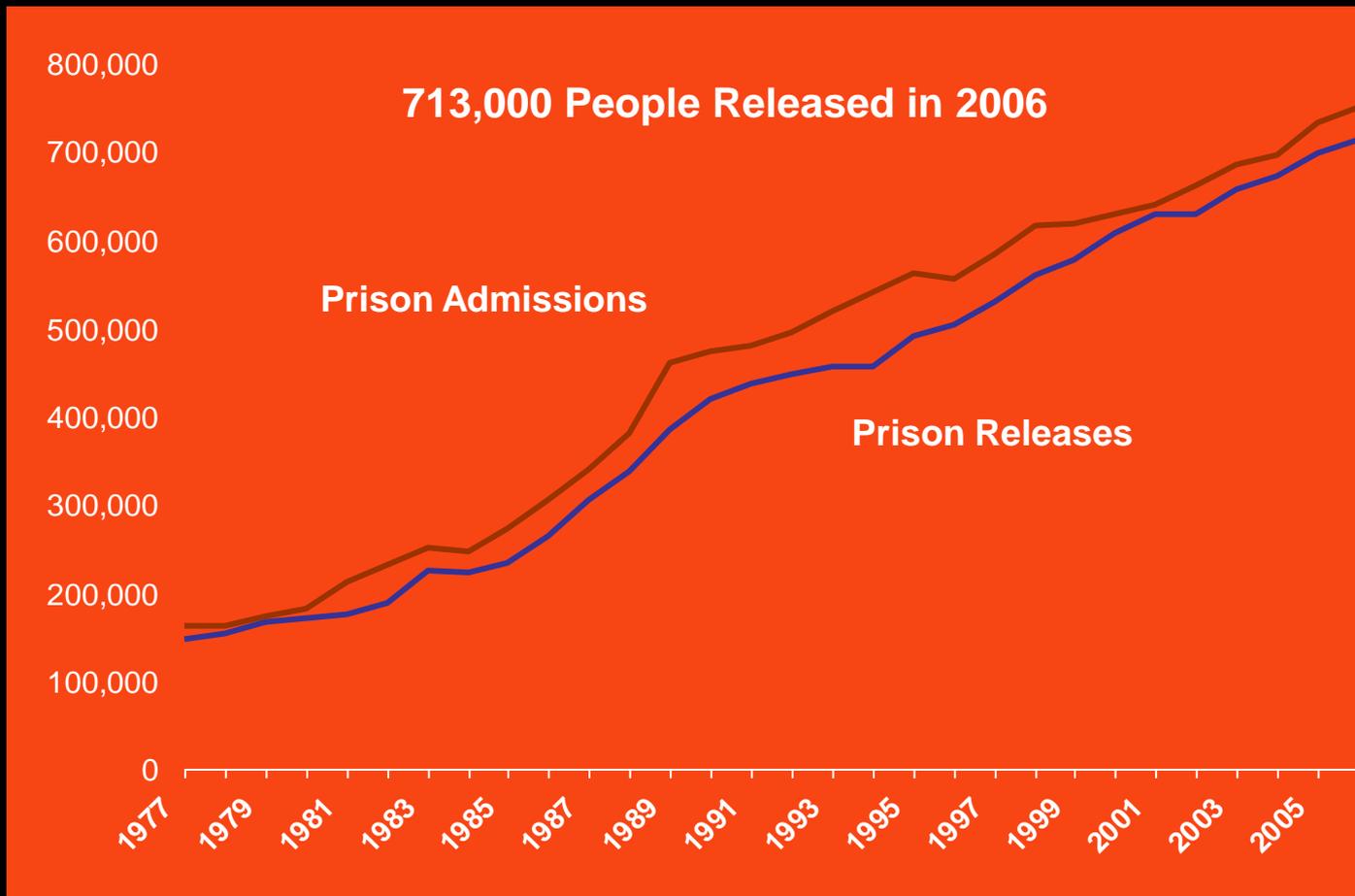
The population of female prisoners has grown by **839%** since 1977

- 12,279 women prisoners in 1977
- 115,308 in 2006



MORE PRISONERS...

More prisoners coming home to our communities



The Role of Faith Leaders

- Identify partner pastors
- Create a prayer circle
- Study the guide
- Learn about the issues
- Demonstrate leadership
- Set the tone of welcome and inclusion
- Identify who is in need
- Identify volunteers
- Study and preach the story



A photograph of a traditional red wooden door with intricate carvings and a central opening. The door is made of dark red wood and features a central panel with a decorative, arched opening. Above this panel is a window with a grid pattern and ornate carvings. The door is slightly ajar, revealing a glimpse of a white cloth or garment inside. The background shows a wall with horizontal siding and a vertical crack in the green-painted trim.

*Open your doors . . .
And open your hearts*

Role of Congregation

Create a Climate of Inclusion

- *Be present and listen.*
- *Visit families experiencing pain and shame.*
- *Welcome Returning Citizens.*



Things members can do

- Create formal and informal networks of support
- Learn about the criminal justice system and mass incarceration
- Identify partners, e.g., other churches, DOC, NFPs, *service providers*
- Identify resources, e.g., reentry, housing, job training



Support the families



- Mentor the family and children (Amachi model)
- Assist with transportation to the prison
- Help the children stay in touch with the parent in prison
- Identify material needs

Help crime victims and their families

- Understand the anger
- Understand the grief
- Help in healing
- Move toward reconciliation and restoration



Expand the healing to the community: Public Policy Advocacy

- Stemming prison growth
- Addressing conditions of confinement
- Stopping gun violence
- Improving rehabilitation in prisons
- Developing reentry strategies and solutions
- Mitigating lifetime consequences of a record



Next

Steps?



How do we get started?

Step one:



- Stand and commit to creating a Healing Community
- Create a Prayer Circle for study and reflection
- Study the Guide – chapter by chapter
- Use the study guide

Step Two:

*Introduce the Healing Communities
vision to your congregation*

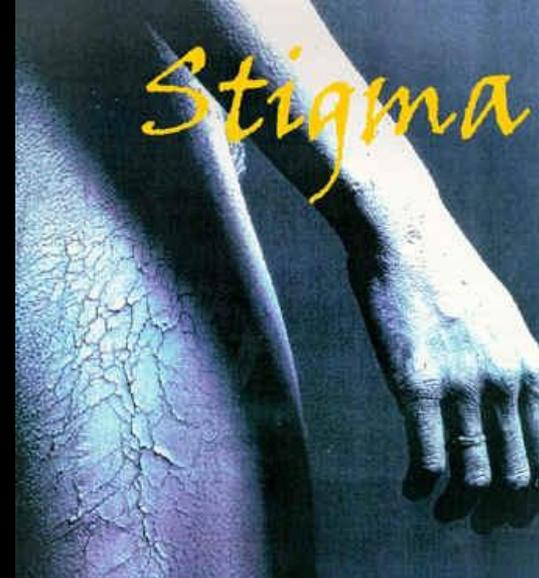


- **Preach and teach:**
 - The stories of forgiveness and reconciliation.
 - Impact of the criminal justice system on your community and the members of your congregation.

- **Create a climate of inclusion and support.**

- **Show by example:** If you have a family member or friend who has been arrested, incarcerated or is reintegrating, say so.

Step Three: Go Deeper



- Build a partnership for learning and sharing with other faith leaders.
- Examine and talk about attitudes that both hinder and foster the embrace of people affected by the criminal justice system.
- *Address stigma and shame.*
- Develop resources for study, preaching and prayer.

Step Four: Build the Ministry

- Identify Volunteers:

People in the congregation who want to lead and support this work.

- Identify individuals and families in need of this ministry. Identify their needs.



Step Five: Develop partnerships and identify resources

- Local service providers – jobs, housing, treatment, reentry, mentoring
- Local and state government
- Corrections
- Business leaders
- Other churches
- Community groups

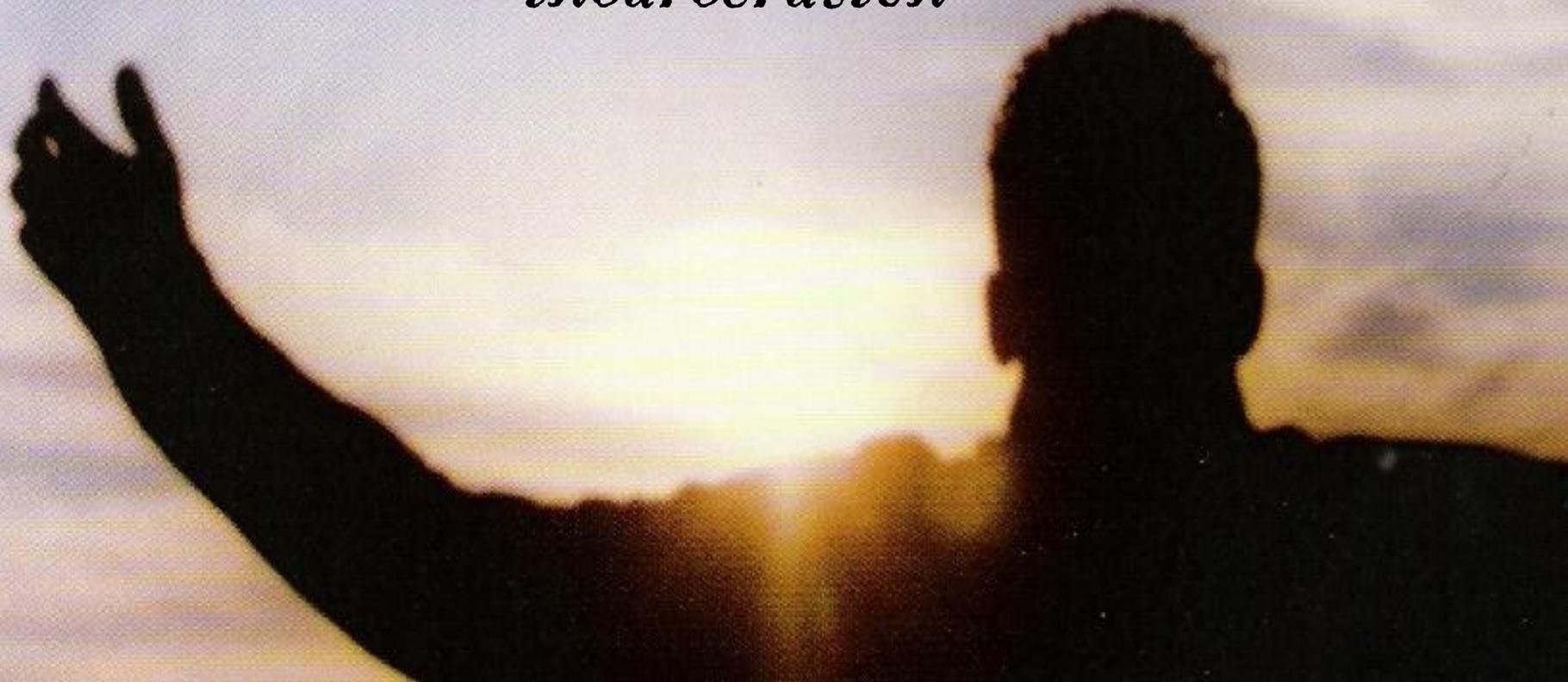


Step Six: Identify and address issues facing affected individuals and families

- Barriers to reentry? – Laws and policies
- Prison visitation problems?
- Probation / parole issues?
- Resource issues?
- Housing issues?



*Minister to members of your own
congregation affected by crime and
incarceration*



Thank you

- *Contact: Healing Communities, Philadelphia Leadership Foundation. Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr., via email at wgoode@ppv.org or, Dr. Harold Dean Trusear at 215-726-1247.*