



National Association of the Holy Name Society Prison Apostolate Pen Pal Ministry

“Without mistakes, there is no forgiving.
Without forgiving, there is no love.”
Mother Teresa

Guidelines for Safe, Effective Pen Pal Ministry

- YOU MUST BE 18 YEARS OLD! No Exceptions!
- Write short letters (all mail will be opened by the Institution and checked for contraband see details below).
- Please pray for your Pen Pal and all those who are incarcerated.
- **NEVER** offer personal information regarding you or your family; never provide your full last name, address or telephone numbers. The name of your spouse or friends or children should **NEVER** be provided! Do **NOT** provide the name or address or telephone number of where you work. Do not use your full name – Use a code name – (an abbreviated First Name or Nick Name).
- Through your letters show compassion, caring and understanding and help improve the Inmates self esteem.
- Some suggestions to write about: hobbies, movies, sports, music, books, gardening, poetry and nature, your own personal spiritual journey.
- Encourage Inmates to use their time of incarceration to grow spiritually and to educate themselves, help them improve his/her writing skills.
- Do not let an Inmate play on your sympathy, good intentions or sense of guilt.
- Do not ask why an Inmate is incarcerated.
- Do not send money, stamps, or gifts.
- Do not **UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES** make contact with an Inmate’s family, friends, Attorney, or Parole Officer.

- Meeting with an Inmate after they are released is beyond the scope of the Pen Pal Program and is discouraged.
- If you think your Pen Pal is misunderstanding your intentions STOP writing.
- When in doubt about a correspondence contact Mary Mother of the Captives at:

Pen Pal Ministry
P. O. Box 52416
Philadelphia, PA 19115
Phone: 215.698.2585
e-mail: mmocsprtgp@aol.com

- DO NOT BE MANIPULATED!

Things to Avoid:

An Inmates' mail is always checked for contraband, (if the Institution thinks it is contraband it will be returned to you and the cost will be incurred by the Inmate).

Some items considered contraband are: Cookies, Money, Stamps, Crosses, Prayer Cards/Bookmarks sealed in plastic, Post Cards not written on and Sexually Explicit Material, etc.

Books, Newspapers, Newsletters and Magazines must be mailed directly from the publisher (it is not a good idea to send anything other than a Pen Pal letter).

Any problems or questions please contact us directly at:

Pen Pal Ministry
P. O. Box 52416
Philadelphia, PA 19115
Phone: 215.698.2585
E-mail: mmocsprtgp@aol.com

How to Address your Pen Pal:

Always use the following Return Address:

P. O. Box 52416
Philadelphia, PA 19115

(All mail will be forwarded to you UNOPENED)

Sometimes an Inmate maybe moved to another Institution or released without our knowledge, if you do not hear from your Pen Pal in 4-6 weeks, please call and we will give you another Pen Pal.

If you want to continue to correspond with your Pen Pal after his/her release through our P.O. Box 52416 (the same arrangements as when he/she was in prison), we can assist you.

Example of how to address an envelope:

_____ PO Box 52416 Philadelphia, PA 19115	STAMP
_____ _____ _____ _____	

Please Note: Address Labels, Labels and Stickers are Not Permitted on Envelopes or Letters to Inmates. Type or handwrite all address and return address information on the envelope.