



SR. MARY MICHAEL SPENT
TWO DAYS IN PRISON

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July 2025



**Some People Live in the World and they are Not Free.
Some People Live in Prison and they *are* Free.**

Clements Unit – Sr. Mary Michael Huseman, OSF just spent two days in the High Security Men's Prison near Amarillo as a Kolbe Retreat volunteer. Here are her initial reflections:

First of all, we take so many things for granted and do not fully appreciate the many gifts that we have. For one meal, for example, we had hamburgers. One of the prisoners indicated that he did not remember the last time he tasted a hamburger. We all ate with delight enjoying and savoring every bite (and the chips too).

We need to remember what is really important and not to complain over things if they are not as we expected or wanted, like if your burger was cooked they way you wanted it. Be happy that you have a burger.

It struck me profoundly that in the world - we might be hurt by a friend or acquaintance because of this or that.

In prison, they are just hoping to get a visit or a letter from those they love.

The prisoners cannot even own a rosary or crucifix without changing their travel card to Catholic and having express permission to have it on their "property" list.

In the world, we might have all kinds of things that we do not use or need.

The prisoners cannot even go to Mass or confession unless the priest comes in to see them. Thankfully, most prisons have Catholic chaplains to come usually once a week for the sacraments and others who come in for bible studies and OCIA.

In the world, we might get irritated if we do not have the work we want or the way we want to work.

In the prison, they work where and when they are assigned. They might be assigned to work in the shoe factory, as a janitor, or in the boiler room. Their shift could be all hours of the day or night.



Their Hearts are the Same as Ours

There is every kind of person in prison - God is so creative in how He created humanity - face shapes, abilities, gifts, hair, beards, old and young, Mexican and White and Black and Asian. Their hearts are the same as ours. They hunger to love and to be loved. They have learned to accept and to appreciate what they have . . . at least most of them try.

Some people live in the world and they are mentally, emotionally and spiritually not free. Some people live in prison and have found freedom in Christ. They are at peace and have chosen to make lemonade out of lemons. They know who they are - beloved children of God. They are a true light in the world shining God's goodness to all those they encounter.

On One Level - the Most Basic Level - We are all the Same

We all have dreams, hopes, and regrets. We all ache for love, to be accepted, to have someone to love. We all need purpose.

I saw freedom on many of the men's faces. They are way more free than some people on the outside. They are at peace. Many of them have found a deep and amazing relationship with God.

I left there realizing we are all the same. We are all on a journey searching for truth and fulfillment. In God's Divine Providence, He has been loving us unconditionally since our conception. We are all on a pilgrimage to the Father, doing our best to grow, sometimes survive, and to learn what it means to surrender to God.

He has been walking with us whether we know it or not. He delights in us in our inmost being as His Beloved Child. He has been allowing trials in our lives inviting us and aiding us to grow and to find healing, purpose, and to grow in virtue . . . to have patience with the people we do not understand.

I Left There Realizing . . .

I left there realizing that so many things I thought were so important is not important. When you live in prison, what you consider really important changes. When you realize that you could lose everything you cherish as a freedom, it completely changes what is important to you.

I am so grateful for this experience. God is good. I will never forget all of the beautiful encounters I was blessed to have with these men.

One man told me that the prison system wants to dehumanize you. Maybe that's because of the woundedness of the people running the system(?). Maybe it's easier that way since its unnatural to be confined to a place like that, and those over them are tempted to treat them like they're not human to make it easier on their own conscience. I'm not sure.

What I do know is that the Kolbe Men's Retreat helps the men feel human again.

For more info about being a Kolbe Volunteer in the Amarillo area or to give a donation to this ministry: write: Kolbe Prison Ministries, PO Box 4125, Amarillo, TX 79116, or call Deacon Darryl Dixon at: 806-290-8842.