

L.E.A.F.

Listening, Encouraging & Assisting Families

Of the Incarcerated

Creating a

“Community of Compassion, Caring & Support”



Mission...

- The overarching Mission of the LEAF ministry is to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ in the form of comfort, support, assistance and community to all family and loved ones of the incarcerated in NE Ohio, irrespective of individual faith affiliation.
- In full collaboration with the Diocese, our faith community will reach out in a boundless spirit of invitation and welcoming, and gather those in need around a table of faith, love, trust, compassion and support.
- We will develop additional outreach and assistance components as we grow in experience and understanding of the needs of our guests.

June 3, 2014



Beginnings...

- At the Diocesan Prison Ministry level, 1997
- At a more personal level, 2012
 - “What do you have for me?”
- At the Parish level, 2014 Holy Angels Parish
 - Matt’s Story – Fr. Dan – Bernie, Spring, 2013
 - Holy Angels – Bainbridge, First meeting with Sr. Rita Mary 10/17/13 - First event: Aug 2014, Holy Angels
 - St Lad’s/Sacred Heart – Lorain, First Event: Oct 2014



Growth...

Cuyahoga County:

Communion of Saints

2175 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

216 321 0024

Meets 7 PM on the first Thursday of the month

Mary, Queen of Peace

4423 Pearl Road, Cleveland, OH 44109

216 749 2323

Meets at 7PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month

St. Ladislav

2345 Bassett Road, Westlake, Oh 44145

Meets at 7 PM on the second Wednesday of the month



Growth...

Geauga County:

Holy Angels

18205 Chillicothe Road, Bainbridge, OH 44023

440 708 0000

Meets at 7 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month

Lake County:

St. Noel Parish

35200 Chardon Road, Willoughby, OH 44094

440 946 0887

Meets at 7 PM on the third Monday of the month

Lorain County:

Sacred Heart Chapel (Spanish) presently meeting with St. Ladislav

4301 Pearl Road, Lorain, OH 44055

440 277 7231

Meets at 7 PM with St. Ladislav on the second Wednesday of the month

Meets at 7 PM on the fourth Monday of the month



Growth...

Medina County:

Medina Parishes Meeting:

Medina County Jail

555 Independence Dr.

Medina, OH 44356

7:00 PM, Fourth Monday of the month



Format...

- **A Time to Gather** – Taking time for coffee, cookies, conversation and community
- **A Time to Reflect & Pray** – Circling in reverent silence, then opening prayer, in a safe place where all are welcome, no one is judged and ALL are Blessed
- **A Time to Share** – “Checking in” with personal introductions, welcoming first-timers, updates, triumphs and tragedies, laughter and tears – totally voluntary



Format, cont'd...

- **A Time to Receive** – Presentations from invited guests, or sharings of helpful tips from our group members
- **Closing thoughts** – Before moving to closing prayer and adjournment, I have always found it useful to ask, **“Is there anything else that wants/needs to be heard?”** This often gives permission to that one person who has been afraid to speak all night, to let it all out, because they realize their chance to speak will soon be over.



Format, cont'd...

- **A Time to Appreciate, Pray, & Adjourn –**
Expressions of love and support are abundantly offered and graciously received, both to God and to each other. Closing prayer is offered for those who wish to participate.



Format, cont'd...

- **Bilingual, if needed**– Those who speak only Spanish are welcome. Designated ministers translate, or if appropriate, facilitate Spanish-speaking circles. This maximizes their comfort to share and to be present to each other.
- **Children are welcome (optional)**
Children of all ages need support and encouragement. Youth ministers have joined our team to attend to children while adults meet. We strongly recommend children not sit in with the adult sessions.



“Housekeeping” Items...

- Sign-in sheet – completely voluntary
- Name tags – First name only
- Hand-outs and Literature available for taking
- Confidentiality!
- LOTS OF KLEENEX



“Resources”

- Start-up Assistance
 - Sister Rita Mary Harwood, Cleveland Diocese
 - Bernie Nagle, 614-325-4443, blues1619@aol.com
- “Spreading the Word”
 - Posters
 - Flyers
 - Website: www.leafministry.org
 - Diocesan and Parish Bulletins
 - Newsletters and articles
 - Word of mouth



“Resources”

- “Resources available to Participants”
 - Prayer Cards
 - Books
 - “Keeping Hope”
 - “An imprisoned Heart
 - Handbook for Families – Northeast Ohio Regional ODRC
 - “Going Home to Stay” – by County
 - Pamphlets: “Family Information Guide”
 - Catholic Charities



Sample Hand-out, with upcoming events...



L.E.A.F.

**Listening, Encouraging, and Assisting Families
Support for Families and Loved Ones of Incarcerated**

All are welcome, irrespective of faith affiliation

Where: Church of the Holy Angels – Lower Level

18205 Chillicothe Rd, Chagrin Falls, OH 44023

Upcoming Dates: Thurs. Dec 18, 2015: Jan 15, Feb 19, Mar 19

Time: 7:00 PM

Child care provided- just let us know ahead please, if you can

If you have a loved one or family member who is incarcerated and are looking for a safe, welcoming community where you can feel comfortable that you will be accepted without judgment, please plan to join us on the dates listed above at 7:00 p.m. Although we are a ministry with limited funds and are unable to offer financial help, we will offer an opportunity for you to listen and share community, network and learn from others who understand your situation, challenges, fears and emotions

IN COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY

This is a non-denominational gathering of fellow travelers who share your burden.

For more information call: **(440) 708-0000**

No pre-registration necessary



Website... www.leafministry.org

LEAF Ministry Listening, Encouraging and Assisting Families of the Incarcerated



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Welcome!

Welcome to the Leaf Ministry website. We are an outreach ministry to families and friends of the incarcerated. Our ministry was born from listening. We heard the cry of inmates as they worried about their families on the outside. We heard the pleas for assistance from those on the outside as they became separated from their loved ones and struggled with loneliness, shame and confusion in learning the corrections system. Many of us on the ministry team know first had the pain of having a loved one in prison; so there is no reason to walk alone.

The LEAF Ministry (Listening, Encouraging and Assisting Families of the incarcerated) is a resource and referral ministry. Our meetings are a safe place where people gather to share their joys, their trials and their daily little victories with others on the same journey. Although we are a ministry with limited resources and unable to offer substantial financial help, we will offer those who contact us an attentive ear, genuine concern and thoughtful suggestions for dealing with an incarcerated family member.

Through our website and through our meetings families will find non-judgmental fellowship, answers and resources to address their current difficulties. We look forward to meeting you!

Search for:

[Search](#)

Recent Posts

[Prison in Lockdown After Food Protest](#)

[Federal Judge Extends Moratorium on Ohio Executions](#)

[Mansfield Leads State with Inmate Grievances](#)

[Jobs not prison](#)

[Prison Donates Water](#)



Getting a Group Started

- Build Awareness in the Diocese
 - Seek out Interested Parishes/Pastors
 - Find Champions who have loved ones in the system, or have experience ministering to the incarcerated
 - Build Parish Teams to lead
 - Train the Team & Facilitators
 - “Spread the Word”



Sustaining a Group - Facilitation



“To be human is
to become visible,
while carrying
what is hidden, as
a gift to others”

-David Whyte, Poet

Sustaining a Group - Facilitation

Essential Elements

- **CONFIDENTIALITY & SAFETY**
- **Respect:** Honor their pain, anger, fear, doubt, frustration, loneliness, grief, reluctance to share
- Realize that the people who come to these sessions are in very different places, emotionally & culturally - **Do not assume** anything about anyone
- Judgement and criticism **must** be discouraged
- Remember – It is not your job to solve every problem, rather to create a space for peer-to-peer healing to emerge

Sustaining a Group - Facilitation

Essential Elements

- Do not hesitate to use SILENCE. Allow the Spirit to wash over the group. Bathe in the authenticity of the moment.
- Listen – Be Present for them
- Compassion, Empathy, Understanding
- Realize that having a loved one in prison often feels the same grieving as a death in the family
- Allow any/all emotions to emerge.
Acknowledge, be still, allow the Spirit to work

Sustaining a Group - Facilitation

Essential Elements

- Understand this: **Profanity happens!** It's OK; let it pass; don't cause embarrassment
- No pressure to share - Allow attendees to open up at their own pace
- Welcoming first-timers - Allow them to get oriented...start from scratch with introductions, groundrules & expectations – Stress Confidentiality and Safety. Understand that they are hesitant, unsure, suspicious and afraid!

Sustaining a Group - Facilitation

Essential Elements

- Never forget - this is a **PEER TO PEER** ministry – Healing comes from the group, and the Holy Spirit

“Sometimes,
with the bones of the
black sticks left when the
fire has gone out,
Someone has written
something new in the
ashes of your life.”



- David Whyte, Poet

Sustaining a Group

Injecting Energy

- Stay Focused on the Mission
- Remain Responsive to the needs of the Group
- Encourage new ideas and Content
 - Xmas Cards, Picnics, Employment, Parole Officers, Prison Chaplains
 - Bereavement Ministry, Gatherings outside the Group...Retreats
- Build on the relationship with ODRC
- Continue to Spread the word

Hopes for the future...

Continue to Grow – New Guests and new Locations

Continue to find ways to Add Value for our Guests

Reach new Hearts & Minds:

- Recently released
- Additional Family Members
- ODRC Staff
- Service Providers for Families



Your Questions...

