

Congratulations!



2024 Voice of Hope Award Recipient

Prison & Jail Ministry Volunteers



This photo shows volunteers at a monthly meeting. Featured from left to right: Deacon Larry Paski, Tom Rudnicki, Bill Barber, and Deacon Eric Ruehr.

On behalf of the Diocesan Prison and Jail Ministry Volunteers, Bill Barber will be accepting a 2024 Voice of Hope Award. Although Bill certainly is worthy of this award in his own right, he prefers to recognize the ministry as a whole, and all of the wonderful volunteers who visit our local prisons and jails within the Diocese of Youngstown to minister to the incarcerated men and women, fulfilling the corporal work of mercy to visit the children of God who are imprisoned.

Bill was born and raised in Ravenna, Ohio. For many years, Bill worked as a professional geologist for a major petrochemicals company and retired from that position in 2014. Even while working and raising his children, he served as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion and as a minister to the homebound at his home parish, Immaculate Conception in Ravenna. Bill later joined the Prison and Jail Ministry after receiving inspiration from Deacon Russ Brode, who was leading a retreat at Trumbull Correctional Institute, where Bill has now served for nearly a decade.

Furthermore, Bill served as the Coordinator for Prison and Jail Ministry from 2019-2022 and through his work, helped revitalize and formalize the ministry in cooperation with the many volunteers and contractors. Bill has served at Northeast Ohio Correctional Center, and led the charge in establishing the Kolbe Gathering – a meeting for the formerly incarcerated and their families to join in fellowship and mutual support, in parishes around the Diocese. Outside of the ministry, Bill enjoys handball, collecting various kinds of rocks, and spending time with his grandkids.

Bill made it clear that he could not accept this award without recognizing the entire ministry as a whole. “As a ministry, we are a loud and beautiful choir of Voices of Hope. Our ministry is all about bringing the message of God’s love and reconciliation through Jesus Christ, and giving the incarcerated a sense of hope and trust. We are rewarded by loving them, being loved by them, praying together, and experiencing our faith with each other. As we say at TCI, ‘God Loves you and I love you’.



*Award to be accepted by
Mr. William “Bill” Barber
on behalf of the Prison &
Jail Ministry Volunteers*

“
*I especially want to recognize our priests.
While deacons, religious and laity can offer
communion to the incarcerated, only the
priest can offer a Mass and sacraments.”*
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