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Dear Friends,

Imagine being in the mind of a person in prison. Not only are you separated from everyone and everything you know. You've also been thrown into a dehumanizing, hostile environment that is as foreign and terrifying as waking up on Mars. Not knowing who to trust, you feel alone. Worse, you're navigating through all this with the guilt of knowing that you're there due to your own actions.

Now imagine going through that during Christmas. **Remembering those at home on Christmas day, while you're in line for the sack lunch** passed out by the skeleton crew working the holiday in a dimly lit Chow Hall. I know. I spent three challenging Christmases in prison.

These individuals crave the ability to transform their existence from empty and meaningless to constructive and meaningful. Otherwise, the sense of having wasted the only life they get is too painful to bear. **They crave the kind of meaning that only a devotion to Christ can give.**

This is where Kolbe House comes in. Our 70+ volunteers spend 300+ hours per week:

- Putting new clothes on the backs of 500 recent jail releasees annually, some who arrive at our front door in a prison jumpsuit.
- Taking 50 kids to visit their moms in a downstate prison every month or 75 kids to see their incarcerated dads on Father's Day weekend.
- Giving people behind bars a break from the weight of their circumstances with a silent Centering Prayer that lets them feel God's presence in the quiet of their hearts.
- Healing incarcerated women's trauma by letting it pour out onto a canvass through our Painting from the Heart program.
- Providing the incarcerated with a chance to laugh for the first time in months, as they pray and receive the Eucharist.
- Walking onto cellblocks and announcing that we're there to listen if anyone needs to talk.

For many, the road to knowing Christ in and after prison goes through us. We cannot do that without your help. Three-quarters of our budget comes from donors like you. Numerous unforeseen expenses have left our budget strained. To be blunt, we've reached the point where, without your help, some of these programs will likely be suspended. **We've reached a point where we need your help more than ever.**

Please use the enclosed envelope to donate by mail. You can also donate online by either scanning the QR code below or going to kolbehouseministry.org and clicking on the red **“Donate to Kolbe House”** button. If you’d rather supply clothes for our clients, please visit our **Amazon wish list** at <https://a.co/9stzULC> —and be sure to put your name on the receipt so we can thank you.

If you’re in our neighborhood, please stop into Kolbe House and ask for me so that I can thank you in person. In the meantime, know that you’re in our prayers, as much as we hope that Kolbe House and the people we serve are in yours.

With gratitude and prayers that you enjoy the merriest of Christmases, I remain,

Very Truly Yours,



Mark McCombs
Executive Director



P.S. Let the incarcerated know that they’re not alone during this Advent. Each night at 9:00 p.m. CST until New Years Day, please join the Kolbe House community and individuals in custody throughout Illinois, as we link together **by saying the following prayer:**

“Jesus, thank You for this day and for the love shared by friends gathered here in prayer. Please let the glow of that love be like our own Christmas star that leads us to You and reminds us that You are with us always. Amen.”

Thanks.