



April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

## Merced County Jail Ministry Newsletter

*“Near indeed is his salvation for those who fear him.”*

Psalm 85:10

### Message from the Board of Directors

Friends,

We would like to thank you for your support of prayer, finances, and volunteering as you join us in bringing The Good News of freedom in Jesus Christ to those currently behind the bars of the jails! We are in a time of applying with the Merced County Sheriff's Department and the Merced County Probation Department for the on-going privilege of serving juveniles, women, and men incarcerated in Merced County.

We are also planning to have a time of prayerfully working on our vision for the future as we look forward to major changes being made at the John Latorraca Jail Facility. We invited you to pray with us for significantly greater opportunities to serve inmates once that construction is finished. As a ministry board, we've scheduled for a meeting for prayerful discernment & visioning on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10-12. Would you please join us in praying that God will lead this to ministry forward?

Thanks so much for being part of this work with Jesus!

Al Schaap,  
MCJM Board Chair

### Men's Ministry

Blessed and Highly Favored is how I describe these last few months in the Men's Correctional Facilities. Breakthroughs are on a high because of the favor given to our ministry and we are so grateful to those interceding financially and spiritually. I've been doing studies on "New Creation Men" that we've been called to be. To see the transformation before my eyes is a blessing, from a broken to breakthroughs and from left to loved. I believe that this is just the beginning, for the love of Jesus Christ is always on the move.

God Bless,  
Chaplain David Martinez  
Revival Lifestyle

## Women's Ministry

During this new quarter of the year, we have had the privilege of presenting the Gospel to many women at Sandy Mush Jail & leading them in a prayer of repentance and surrender of their lives to Jesus Christ. Others have recommitted their lives to Christ. Many are reading their Bibles and growing in their knowledge of the Lord. One unusual encounter took place at the end of a Sunday visit as we walked the hall to the exit. A particularly unkempt young man looked at us through his cell window; broken and bereft. One of the Chaplains felt led to tell the young man that Jesus loved him. The man asked a question, "how would I know that"? Visitation time was over, but the Chaplain explained briefly that Jesus is God, and he came to earth to seek and save the lost, which is all of us. He died a bloody death on a cross, and His blood paid the price for all our sin; we are all sinners. We gave him a Bible, bookmarked to the Gospel of John. He promised to read it. The Chaplain went as a support person to his court hearing in Los Banos recently. He will be released from custody by the middle of March and will be placed in the Rescue Mission Hope for Men, where he will be disciplined in his new walk with Christ. God is abundantly faithful!

Thank You,  
Chaplain Gina Thomas

## Youth for Christ Juvenile Hall Ministry

We currently serve 8-15 incarcerated youth in wing C/D and 15-20 in wing G/H. We have had successful participation from the youth this year on a consistent weekly basis. On Ash Wednesday, (February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024), youth in C/D requested to receive ashes. I provided ashes for four youths and spoke about the meaning of Ash Wednesday, and some of the youths requested continued prayer. We hope to bring a new program into the facility, "project with", that will assist the youth personally as they prepare to transition back into their communities.

Blessings,  
Isaiah Herrera,  
Youth for Christ

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Please keep our Ministry in Prayer. Paperback Novels are needed for the Inmates in Lockdown. If you have any books you can donate to the Ministry, please contact me directly.  
209-626-7595.

Chaplain Thomas  
chaplainthomasmcjm@gmail.com

**Check out our new website!**

[Mercedcountyjailministry.org](http://Mercedcountyjailministry.org)



**MERCED COUNTY  
JAIL MINISTRY**

## MERCED COUNTY JAIL MINISTRY

Hello, my name is Monica Sanchez. Let me start by saying I thank Jesus for allowing me to be confident enough to write my testimony and tell my story. I was born in 1982, 6 years before I was born my mom was part of the 1976 Chowchilla kidnapping. She was one of the students on the bus that was hijacked. This was a severely traumatic experience for her, and she is still trying to cope with it today. Due to this experience in her life, she was emotionally unavailable while I was growing up. I was raised in a home where there were drugs & alcohol. I blamed myself for all the chaos in our home & felt alone. At the age of 15, I had so many mixed emotions and this started my downward spiral to using Methamphetamine which caused me to start getting into trouble with the law. I ended up in jail in 2022, this is where I heard about Jesus through the Merced County Jail Ministry. I was released to a program and upon completion received my commercial license, and a full-time position with the Merced County Rescue Mission Respite Care Program. I am grateful for all God has done in my life; without him I would not be where I am at today.

The scripture that helped me is Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

### WOMEN'S MINISTRY Testimony



### PSALM 34:18

The phrase: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted” is from the bible, Psalm 34:18. The verse means that God is with those who are distraught and saves those who fear Him and repent of their wrongs. He is with those who belong to Him and experience hardship and suffering, whose hearts are crushed by the tragedies and discords of life. The Lord sees, cares, & provides.