
March 19, 2006 • Third Sunday of Lent

Pastor's Column

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"Get On The Bus"

Mother's Day is usually a joyful event spent with family, sharing food, and celebrating mom. But for the 1.5 million children in this country who have a parent in prison, Mother's Day can be very lonely.



"*Get On The Bus*", founded in 1999, is an annual event that reunites children and mothers in prison who otherwise may never have an opportunity to visit during the parent's incarceration. The children are unable to visit due to lack of transportation...the prisons are located in central California, which is an eight-hour trip one way from San Diego. Last year "*Get On The Bus*" participants left San Diego Friday at 4:00am and returned home Saturday at 1:00am. Often these children are being cared for by an elderly grandparent or are in foster care, making the trip impossible for them.

"*Get On The Bus*" not only provides transportation for the children and their caregivers to the prison, it also provides three meals for each child, caregiver, and volunteer. Children also receive a family photograph, a special teddy bear, a commemorative event t-shirt, and post-visit counseling. Additionally, volunteers assist each family with the mountain of paperwork it takes to get clearance for the visit. Each year the number of children taken from the San Diego area continues to grow.

"*Get On The Bus*" is in need of monetary donations to help offset the cost of this trip. It costs approximately \$4,000 to take a busload of children and caregivers on the trip. Three buses will come from the San Diego area.

"*Get On The Bus*" takes place annually the Friday before Mother's Day. This year on May 12, over 25 buses of children, guardians, and volunteers will travel from all over the state to visit four women's detention facilities.

If you are looking for some extra Lenten almsgiving opportunities, "*Get On The Bus*" may be what you need! You can help with food, activities, fund raising, and media. You can donate funds to help offset the costs of bus rental, food, etc. You can pray for the children and their mothers that their visit will be one of joy and reunification.

Deacon Ron and Rae Arnold of St. Francis Church in Vista are coordinating "*Get On The Bus*" in this area. If you would like more information, or if you would like to volunteer, please give Deacon Ron a call at 760-945-8028.

If you would like to make a donation, make your check payable to "*Get On The Bus*" and send it to: "*Get On The Bus*", 525 W. Vista Way, Vista, California 92083. You may also place a donation in the offertory collection or drop it off at the Parish Office. Please make sure that the envelope is marked: "*Get On The Bus*." We will make sure that your gifts get to Deacon Ray Arnold.

"Whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me." —Matthew 25:40

F. Mike