

October 2, 2023 – Life Behind Prison Walls and the Need for Reform



Bethany House Ministries is rooted in the Gospel and the spirit of Blessed Jean Joseph Lataste OP who recognized in his work with prisoners that God's love has the power to heal, transform, and renew those who may have seemed hopeless to many. Bethany House Ministries fosters a compassionate and just world by being a community that stands in solidarity with those who are marginalized.

Their ministries include House of Hope which is a transitional sober living community for four men or women coming out of prison, the Hope Chest which is a boutique thrift store that provides jobs for reentering citizens, a fun and friendly shopping experience, and funding for their community, and a wide variety of ministries working with and for the men behind the walls. Three members of the community will address the realities of life in prison, re-entry issues upon leaving prison, and the tremendous need to reform our prison system.

Ruth Raichle



Ruth Raichle is President and Co-Founder of Bethany House Ministries. She was a Catholic Chaplain for 30 years with the Massachusetts Department of Corrections. She is the recipient of the Peace Abbey Foundation Courage of Conscience Award as well as The Prisoners' Legal Services Paul McDevitt Humanitarian of the Year Award in 2017. Ruth is a former member of the Dominican Sisters of Bethany and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. While working at Norfolk State Prison, Ruth founded a

chapter of Our Lady of Mercy Lay Dominicans and she continues as a member, volunteering with this and other ministries for incarcerated individuals.

Dr. Kathleen Dennehy

Dr. Kathleen Dennehy was the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Correction from 2004-2007. She was the first woman to be appointed to that position. Over her 32-year career in the DOC, she worked at Walpole, Concord, Old Colony Correctional Center, and Central Office. At one time she was the

Superintendent of MCI-Framingham, and later became the Deputy Commissioner. Since leaving state service, Kathy's work has involved reform advocacy and consulting, including serving as a federal court monitor overseeing a Dept. of Justice Consent Decree at a woman's prison in Alabama. She also functions as an expert witness on behalf of men and women who have been sexually abused while behind bars. She was born and raised in Dedham.

Paul Robinson

Paul Robinson is a member of the Bethany House Community. He is also an active participant in the Exoneree Network, an organization that supports individuals returning to their communities after excessive periods of confinement. After 53 years of incarceration, Paul was released in July, 2022. His case was reviewed by the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office Integrity Review Bureau after which the Supreme Judicial Court stayed his sentence, enabling him to leave prison. D.A. Hayden, speaking about Paul's case stated, "...it is vital that we correct past wrongs and ensure that they are never repeated. We must always seek to do what is right." Paul advocates for prison reform and the rights of all incarcerated individuals.