



We Are Called

The Campaign for Yale Divinity School

Prison Ministry

Our society's approach to crime and punishment is terribly broken. With more than two million people in custody, the United States confines more of its citizens and at a higher rate than any other nation. Beyond the sheer number of lives affected, gross racial inequalities exist within our state and federal prisons, juvenile correctional and immigration detention centers, and other sites of institutional confinement. While a loss of freedom is difficult for anyone, the conditions of detainment are especially dehumanizing for people of color and those marginalized along lines of gender, sexual orientation, and class.

How can Yale Divinity School make a difference? How can we prepare students for service in ministry, the academy, and nonprofit organizations that meaningfully address problems of human confinement and mass incarceration? How can we do so in ways that are anti-racist and that create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive world?

We address these challenges from a solid and promising base. Our community's imagination was sparked in 2013 when we devoted our All-School Read to *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander, who visited campus to discuss her work. Much good has been achieved since then, and the Task Force on Prison Justice Ministry (PJM) – consisting of faculty,



“It is time for YDS to step up and challenge the unjust and punitive system of mass incarceration. Our teaching must address the historical and theological roots of carceral practices. Through a vigorous program in prison justice ministries, we can help break down the walls of separation between insiders and outsiders, redress racist policies, restore hope, and reclaim our common humanity.”

—Mary Moschella, Roger J. Squire Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling

staff, students, and alumni/ae – recently identified four areas of key strength ready for greater progress and investment: teaching, research, ministry, and advocacy.

Some of our peers have established meaningful programs in prison justice and prison ministry, such as Duke, Harvard, and Princeton. We now find keen interest among YDS faculty and a plan to move forward. This vital work aligns with our historic commitments to theological education, the preparation of religious leaders, and social justice.



A performance of “Dante Behind Bars” in Marquand Chapel.

Our prison ministry efforts are led by Mary Clark Moschella, the Roger J. Squire Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling. She is the recipient of a Henry Luce III Fellowship and the author of the recent book *Caring for Joy: Narrative, Theology, and Practice*. She chaired our PJM task force and is a trained instructor in the exemplary Inside/Out Prison Exchange Program, which facilitates dialogue and education across the profound social differences of those incarcerated and those who are not.

Professor Moschella has led a successful class with YDS students and women at a federal prison in Connecticut and notes how important it is for religious leaders to recognize where their gifts and the needs of society intersect. “Though we will not necessarily fix all the great problems of the world,” she says, “we can be part of changing things we think are wrong.” In the face of bleak circumstances, her message of hope is rooted in her scholarly endeavors and her experience as a former pastor in United Church of Christ congregations.

With successful fundraising, Prison Ministry activities may include the following:

- Interdisciplinary course on Theology and Mass Incarceration, with attention to the necessary history and politics
- Contextual course on prison chaplaincy and re-entry ministries, both growing areas of professional and vocational interest among YDS students
- Support for faculty members who wish to teach classes to incarcerated students, including Inside/Out classes with YDS students and incarcerated students in prison classrooms
- Partnerships with the Yale Prison Educational Initiative (YPEI) and other existing resources, partners, and initiatives at Yale, as well as models for prison justice teaching and at other divinity schools and seminaries in the United States
- Establishment of a think tank that partners with Yale School of Law to sponsor research and gather transformative leaders: from professionals who work on anti-racist prison justice initiatives to denominational groups focused on prison work, from faith-based ministry programs to nongovernmental organizations



“A person is more than the worst thing they’ve ever done.”
—Bryan Stevenson, Founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, pictured in Marquand Chapel following his 2017 Parks-King Lecture

Yale Divinity School exists to address the most pressing issues facing humanity in the 21st century. As part of that commitment, we aim to be a beacon for the prophetic work to create a more just and equitable criminal justice system in our country and to serve current and former prisoners through ministry. With foundational philanthropic gifts, YDS will strive to become the preeminent center for prison justice theological education.

At YDS, endowments for key programs and initiatives provide sustainable and enduring support, supplying the necessary funds for leadership, teaching, and research activities year after year. With a goal to raise gifts totaling \$3 million, an endowment for Prison Justice Ministry will broaden courses offered in the discipline and fund the faculty and staff necessary to create a leading program. With your help, we know we can realize our ambitions and callings for humanity.

As YDS students develop greater appreciation for the humanity of incarcerated individuals, their theological reflection and vocational discernment will be broadened. As insiders work together with YDS students on collaborative discussions and learning projects, their vistas for the future will also expand.



To Learn More

For Humanity is Yale’s most ambitious fundraising campaign yet, guided by a mission to improve the world for future generations.

For more information about how you can support Prison Ministry at Yale Divinity School, please contact:

Rod A. Lowe

Senior Associate Director of Major Gifts

(203) 432-8127

rodwin.lowe@yale.edu



YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL
.....
for Humanity
THE YALE CAMPAIGN



Yale