

Restorative Justice Ministry Certificatation



October 19-24, 2025

CHICAGO

Executive Summary

Overview:

This opportunity is available to dioceses and parishes who are seeking to train a restorative justice leader at a new site for their current prison ministry or to begin a new jail ministry program. This scholarship opportunity is open to dioceses and parishes who are interested in expanding their prison ministry and/or expanding the use of restorative justice tools by:

1. training new restorative justice leaders;
2. providing an educational opportunity to current leaders so that they may deepen and enhance their knowledge of restorative justice ministry;
3. working with leaders interested in preventative approaches to prison ministry—providing support for recognizing at-risk individuals and offering, thoughtful interventions to interrupt the cycle of offense, incarceration, and recidivism.

This scholarship program offers an enriching educational opportunity for pastoral workers in rural communities who are involved in ministries where they directly encounter the mental, physical, and spiritual health needs of the incarcerated or those in detention centers awaiting deportation and those who care for them. This hands-on educational opportunity will allow participants to meet incarcerated men and women; learn about health issues that exist in incarcerated populations and their families, including trauma; explore innovative legal remedies that address the deficiencies in the criminal justice system; and ultimately provide strategies for expanding parish-based restorative justice ministries to address the burgeoning need of this community. Local judges, attorneys, theologians, ministers, county officials, and prison reform advocates will guide and facilitate the week.

The program is designed for those who have significant pastoral experience, but may have some or little formal training around prison ministries, restorative justice, and related health issues. This scholarship is open to any priest, religious, deacon, or lay person in rural communities and is primarily (but not exclusively) intended for parish-based workers who serve impoverished populations in rural areas. Special consideration will be given to parish-based workers who serve minority populations.

Timeline:

Catholic Extension Society and Loyola University Chicago have agreed to provide one week of intensive study as well as additional faculty support that will be available to each student when they return to their homes to continue their ministry. The 2025 courses will occur October 19-24, at the Chicago Water Tower campus.

Purpose:

The Restorative Justice Ministry Certificate offers participants the opportunity to directly encounter the real-world situations of incarcerated and detained persons, as well as the legal and pastoral minds who are working to bring about personal and societal transformation. The approach is holistic, working with mind, body, and spirit. Located downtown at the Water Tower Campus of Loyola University Chicago, this week-long residential intensive provides theology and practical strategies for creating diocesan and parish-based Restorative Justice prison ministries in your area.

Our Contribution:

Catholic Extension Society's partnership with the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago will offer educational courses on restorative justice related ministry for up to **18 students**.

Participating dioceses will receive funding to cover the following:

- 100% of tuition, any textbooks, online faculty support.
- 100% Room and Board
- Travel stipend for the trip to Chicago.

Total value of this Initiative for the Diocese per student: \$7,150

Sample Course overview (full curriculum will be forwarded once a participant has registered)

2025
<p>1-week Intensive – topics may include:</p> <p><i>Restorative Justice in Chicago & the United States</i> <i>Individual and Community Trauma & Mental Health</i> <i>Restorative Justice Practice, Ministry & Peace Circles</i> <i>Nonviolence, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, & Spiritual Health</i></p> <p>Additional faculty coaching and support available after courses conclude</p>

Catholic Extension Society is pleased to partner with the Institute of Pastoral Studies (IPS) at Loyola University Chicago on this exciting academic initiative. The IPS specializes in providing education to pastoral workers in different ministries and offers a diverse and international faculty, rich with multicultural ideas and viewpoints. The Institute of Pastoral Studies offers an experience-based adult model of education valuing students' personal and professional backgrounds as an essential dimension of the curriculum. The faculty of the IPS at Loyola University Chicago, have custom-built this curriculum specifically for participants from mission dioceses. The faculty intends to draw upon the rich real-life experiences of the participants to enhance the program.

Classes will be taught in English. However, Spanish-language groupwork will be offered for any participant that is interested. Upon completion of the one-week intensive, participants will receive a Certificate in IPS Restorative Justice Ministry. Students will be invited to two webinars per year during three years upon completing the course with the goal of mutual support and further learning.

Educational support financial overview for one participant

Organization	Commitment/per student	2025 Cohort
Catholic Extension & Partners	Travel Subsidy to Chicago	Up to \$500
	Transportation from airport to campus at Loyola University Chicago	Up to \$50
	Tuition (including room and board)	\$5,000
Loyola University Chicago	Contribution towards tuition	-\$1,600
TOTAL		\$7,150

Expected Outcomes

- Give pastoral ministers greater competence and confidence in responding to their community's various mental, physical and spiritual health needs within the criminal justice system.
- Allow pastoral workers to network with peers from around the country and create a community of learning.
- Provide parish workers with the ability to practically apply what they have learned in class to their ministry.

What steps should you take for your diocese to participate?

- Please review the full program details, and the required expectations of the local diocese, both financial and administrative.
- Your diocese and bishop can apply for selection into this program by completing the online application and submitting the necessary document requested in the application.
- Your diocese may contact Erika Cedrone, Assistant Vice President of Mission at Catholic Extension Society, (ecedrone@catholicextension.org, 617-817-2907) if there are any questions.
Deadline for applications is listed on our website