

INMATES SECURE RIGHTS

When we learned that Catholic prisoners at a Massachusetts correctional facility were being denied their religious rights, we moved quickly to have them restored. They were.

In January, Bill Donohue wrote to the superintendent of a prison in Bridgewater, Massachusetts inquiring why Christmas Mass was held on December 28. He also wanted to know why several Friends and Family Masses had been cancelled, and why prison ministry volunteers were not given permission to attend these Masses.

There was also the issue of a Catholic deacon being denied the right to distribute rosaries to indigent inmates. Instead, those who wanted rosaries were told to purchase them in prison canteens, at an inflated price.

"While all of this is disturbing enough," Donohue wrote, "we also are given to understand that there has been disparate treatment regarding those of different religious faiths. Specifically, Muslim inmates do not suffer similar restrictions or obstacles to their prayer and worship activities."

The superintendent wrote to Donohue saying that the irregularities were due to staffing problems. Donohue wrote back asking for assurances that during Lent, and in particular Holy Week leading up to Easter, Catholic inmates would be able to avail themselves of all required services.

The good news is that the prisoners were able to secure all of their religious rights during the Easter season. We're so happy we could help and set things straight.