

Homily inspired a life in Prison Ministry

By Dick Miller
Diocesan Prison Ministry

At the 5 p.m. Mass one Saturday in July of 2004, Deacon Charlie Rasmussen talked about Jesus' words, taken from Matthew's Gospel: "For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; a stranger and you welcomed me; I was ill and you cared for me; in prison and you visited me."

On the way out of church, I asked Deacon Charlie who I should contact to get involved in Prison Ministry. Our Lord, working through the deacon, invited me to minis-

ter to his sons and daughters in our jails and prisons, and I answered, "Yes."

Since then, I have actively worked in this ministry. On Sunday evenings, my fellow volunteers and I are at "The Yard" in the Idaho State Correctional Institution. There is no place on this earth I would rather be on Sunday night than the Yard.

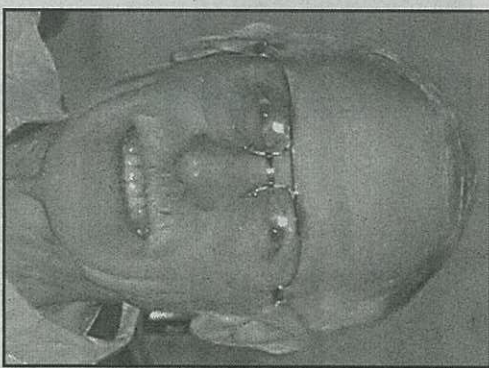
We provide catechesis and Bible study to the men. Because we have two priests active in our work, inmates have the opportunity to go to confession, attend Mass and receive our Lord in holy Communion. Our priests have baptized and

confirmed inmates.

Our message to the inmates is more than that we love them; it is that our Lord, our God loves them. We assure them that the gates of Heaven are open to them. God asks only that they sincerely repent of their sins, do penance and amend their lives.

We remind them about Dismas, the good thief on the cross, a convicted revolutionary. Jesus told him, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

These words of St. Augustine, commenting on the parable of the weeds among the



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wheat, sum up our message: "If, upon shaking up your conscience, you should find that you are among the weeds, you must not be afraid to change. The command to cut has not yet been given. It is not yet the harvest time. Don't bet today what you were yesterday, or at least, do not bet tomorrow what you are today. Whatever sort of person you are found to be when you depart from the body; that is the sort you will be when you come into the harvest."
Thank you.

CCI hires associate director

BOISE—Catholic Charities of Idaho has hired Ericka Medalen to fill its new Associate Director position.

Medalen will serve as program lead for the statewide agency. The position was created after reorganization within the agency and will be funded within the existing budget.

Medalen is a master's level graduate from the University of Idaho, specializing in family and consumer sciences. Her previous experience includes serving as community services director for Community Action

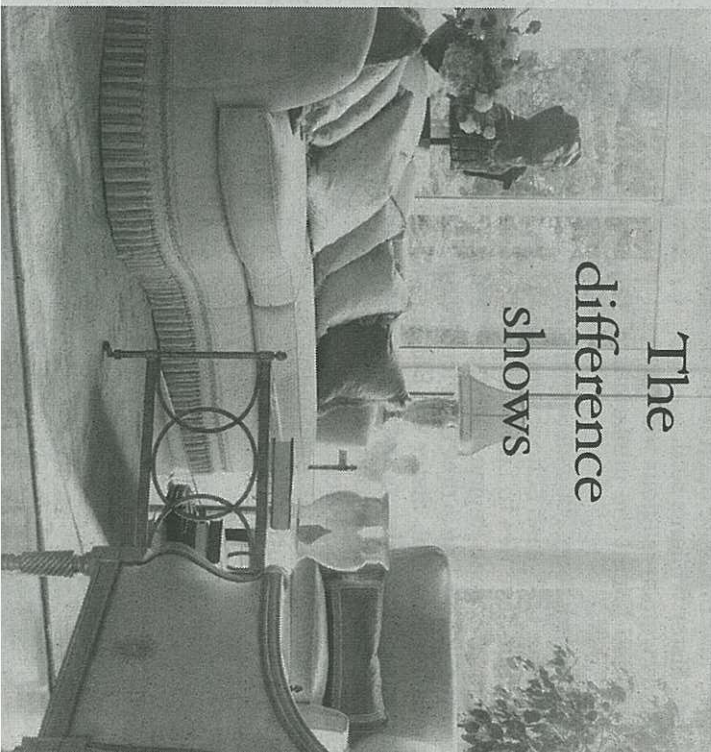


Ericka Medalen

Partnership in Lewiston, and as an early childhood educator for the Houston School District in Houston, Texas.

"Ericka's professional network and experience with low-income, at-risk populations in program planning and grant management are a wonderful addition to our growing needs," said CCI Executive Director Rosio Gonzalez, announcing the hiring May 14. "She will bring greater quality assurance in programs and services and lead us in the accreditation process for our agency."

The
difference
shows



Portland alums mark service day at St. Joe's