

Dear Catholic school administrators and teachers,

As a Catholic-school parent, I would like to suggest a simple but important project for our children—a way of performing a Corporal Work of Mercy without leaving the classroom. **Simply by writing a postcard, your students can extend God’s mercy to the imprisoned by providing encouragement to a fellow Catholic undergoing persecution for his beliefs.**

Jimmy Lai, a 74-year-old Catholic convert and pro-democracy activist, is a prisoner of conscience in Hong Kong. Despite his age and poor health, he has been imprisoned for more than two years. His only “crimes”: standing for freedom and calling attention to the human-rights abuses committed by the Chinese Communist Party. Unbelievably, he has even been found guilty of lighting a candle at a prayer vigil memorializing those who were killed in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Our postcard project is simple. From his cell, Jimmy has taken up religious art, and drawn an extraordinary image of Christ crucified as a spiritual meditation. We have placed that image on the front of a pre-addressed, stamped postcard, which we hope to distribute to Catholic schools across the country. Imagine the joy and consolation he will receive as this beautiful image of our Lord returns to him, attached to the encouraging words and hopeful drawings of Catholic schoolchildren, his younger brothers and sisters in Christ. In fact, this summer we got word that Jimmy happily received some of these postcards through a pilot project carried out by sixth-grade students at our parish school, the Basilica School of Saint Mary in Alexandria, Virginia (Arlington diocese).

If your school or class would like to participate in this important project, please send an email to me at postcard@thecfhk.org; let us know how many postcards you would like to receive and your mailing address. Please place the completed postcards in the pre-addressed, pre-paid envelope and mail back to us soon as possible. We will add the correct postage to each card and mail them directly to Stanley Prison in Hong Kong. Note that it may take 8-12 weeks before they will be delivered to Jimmy.

I hope that you will encourage your students to participate in this Corporal Work of Mercy of visiting the Imprisoned through their messages of hope and support. If you would like to learn more about Jimmy, I suggest reading the column, “Jimmy Lai, a Man for All Seasons,” by William McGurn in the *Wall Street Journal*, or watching EWTN’s coverage of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, where Jimmy was given the Christifideles Laici Award in absentia last year. Both links are provided below.

In Christ,

April Ponnuru

“Jimmy Lai, a Man For All Seasons” by William McGurn

The Wall Street Journal

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/jimmy-lai-a-man-for-all-seasons-11597705349>

The 2021 National Catholic Prayer Breakfast (EWTN)

Christifideles Laici Award, Jimmy Lai

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZ-Kk3pib7s&t=283s>

*Note: postcards and postage are provided free of charge by [The Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong](#) Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to preserving the freedoms of all Hong Kongers.