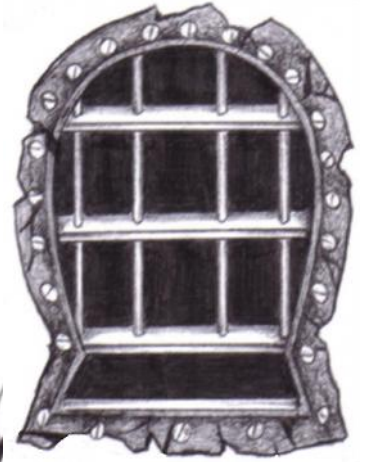

Making
CHOICES



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MAKING CHOICES

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Jail Ministry

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Making Choices

combines the voices of those who are incarcerated at Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, Cook County Jail and institutions throughout the state.

It is published as a means to give a voice to those who wish to speak out.

It is a project of Kolbe House, the Catholic Jail Ministry.



Christmas reminder

*By Zach Stivers
Pontiac, IL*

It's Christmas time once again,
A time you should be spending with family and friends,
A time for food, presents, and good cheers,
I hope I can be there to share it with you once I leave here,
It's a time to worship God and remember good times in your past,
remember that no matter how steep the road is it can never last.

Every mountain has an uphill and a down,
Once on the top you better stop and look around,
Look down and see how far you here come,
Then lock down the other side and see how far you have to go,
On the way down take it slow,
Cause one wrong step and your life tumbling out of control,
This Christmas I'm sitting in my cell,
I'm thinking about my future and how it's all uphill,
Sometimes it feels like your walking alone through hell,
I'm glad I have friends and family to turn to for help.

God is always beside us lighting the way,
Even in the darkest of dark, if you have faith,
Then everything will be ok,
Try to keep in good spirits and believe me when I say,
I'm wishing you a safe and happy holiday

Poetry from within the Walls

Christmas time

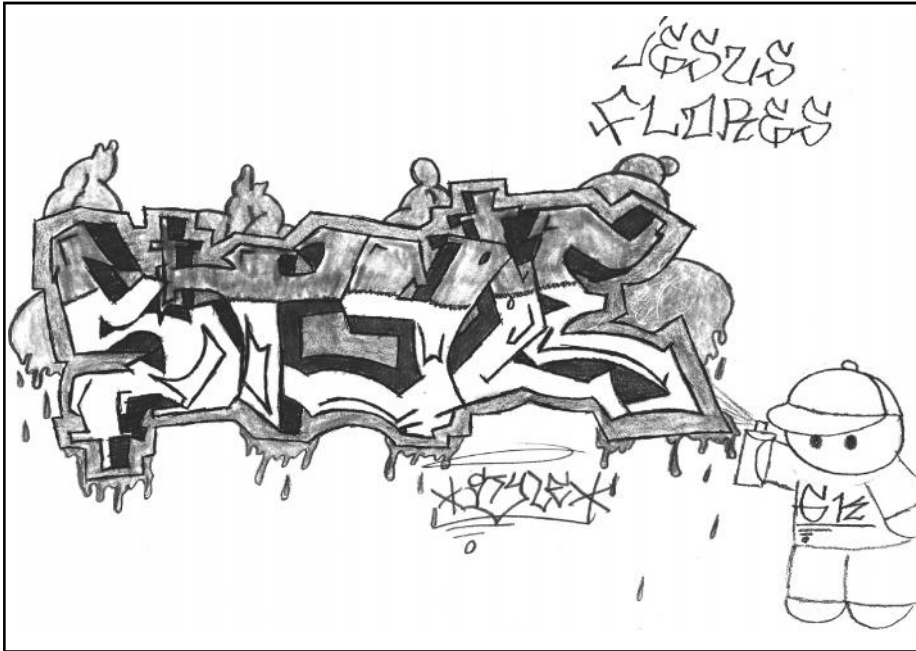
*By Ashley Houseworth
Decatur, IL*

When I think about the holidays
Christmas is the one that comes to
mind,
I think of all the kids who can't wait
for the big surprise,
I think of all the joy and love during
family gatherings,
I also think about all the joyful and
happy kids waiting for Christmas time.
I think of all the gifts with all the
wonderful stuff inside,
I also think of all the different kinds
of desserts that you can't wait to
divide,
I also think of the beautiful Christmas
trees that are so wonderfully put
together,
And can't wait to look at all the lights
and the gifts that it hides,
Then you look outside waiting for all
the snow to cover and hide all the
trees and beautiful man-kind.
I think of all the joy and precious
memories we enjoy during this
wonderful Christmas time.

Confected

*By Brain Dugan
Pontiac, IL*

He knows the differences,
Yet feels the same chocolate, brown
skin, blue eyes, head tipped in gold,
Mama says, "Angels made him from a
rainbow",
Maybe that's true but the kids in
school are cruel,
Power is in the mind of the beholder,
When he beheld himself he saw he was
good thinking,
I am he who is, was, and shall be this
exotic boy,
Heuristically confuting a foundling
world,
He embraces his otherness confronting
confrontations,
Keeping himself uncluttered alone on
his own indissoluble he moves toward,
What he has already become.



It took a long time for me
to find myself, but I'm
proud of what I see,
I could always use a few
bandages to cover the
scars inside of me,
But I'm protected by the
one whom I've come to love
very diligently,
He sat me down, he got my
attention,
But the choice is up to me,
Do I continue being
disobedient or do I obey
his commands accordingly?

Growing up

*By Kareem Cobbins
Menard C.C.*

Growing up my papa wasn't
always around,
But I never used it for an
excuse,
I took advantage of his
absence, viewed it as a
challenge,
And put my working tools to
use,
It didn't cause me to abuse
drugs, join a gang, or give in to
peer pressure just to kick it,
It motivated me! I kept a
positive frame of mind as I
entered adulthood,
Perseverance became my
ticket.

Growing up I must admit,
women were my escape,
I broke into their hearts and
told many of lies knowing it
wasn't safe,
I told them many things, things

I didn't mean,
Just to fulfill my appetite
for their cake.
I was becoming full of bull;
it was my pride I had to
pull,
At the same time I
developed a combination of
scars and scrapes,
Sin had set in big time and
turned me into something
God didn't create,
But I'm growing up, being
more honest, and learning
from my mistakes.

There are many things God
has revealed to me as I'm
maturing,
That has eventually come to
pass,
So many things I can't
explain, not that I'm
ashamed,
I'm just so astonished at how
his spirit of truth is built to
last.

How would you feel?

*By Anthony J.
CCJTDC, 5A*

How would you feel if you
were charged as adult and
your only 16?
How would you feel if you
didn't know when you were
going home?
How would you feel if the
judge gave you a 2 months
continuance?
How would you feel if
your public defender
never came to talk to you?
How would you feel if you
were in my BBC?

God Has Made Me Brave

*By Peter Papaled
CCJ Doc Div 10 3-B*

God has made me brave;
There were times when I felt
in the dark,
That my life had become
absolutely,
Like a match with no spark

God has made me brave;
Walking on broken feet, the
pain that I felt,
Left me inept, always feeling
so bad,
Lying awake at night, because
I never slept;

God has made me brave
Sometimes sorry is not enough
When your heart has been
broken,
I've never felt so feeble,

God has made me brave;
As I lay in bed in silence,
I ponder on what I must do,
I will never hurt you again,
Never forgetting what I put
you threw;

God has made me brave;
Changing who I was,
I love the man I am today
I always knew I could;

God has made me brave;
Now that my life was filled
with darkness,
I'll never be the same,
I should have loved you so
much more,

My heart is filled with
shame;

God has made me brave;
I made the Lord my Savior
My soul is surely saved,
I have to learn to walk the
path;
God has made me.

Sometimes I check my pulse

*by Morrell G.
CCJTDC, 5K*

Sometimes I check my pulse to
see if I'm in reality.

And I that someone I pray to
God I never wanna be?

I pinch even slap myself
to know it ain't no dream.

I just can't be alone and that's
when I realize there's no I in
team.

To me together
is an understatement for
unity.

Even doe there's no I in
Team,
what ever happens to you
and me.

I never knew alone
could cause lots of damage.

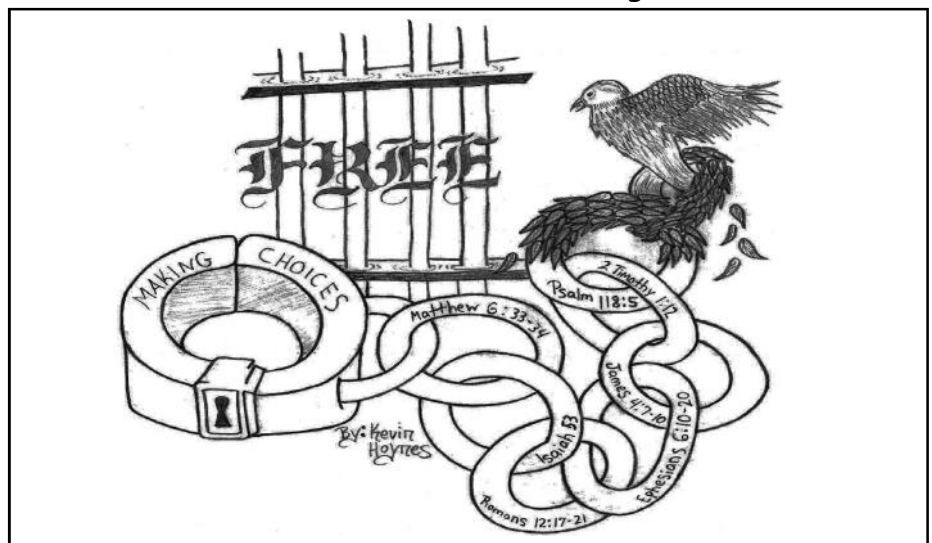
I am not a bad person and
for proof, my love is
evidence.

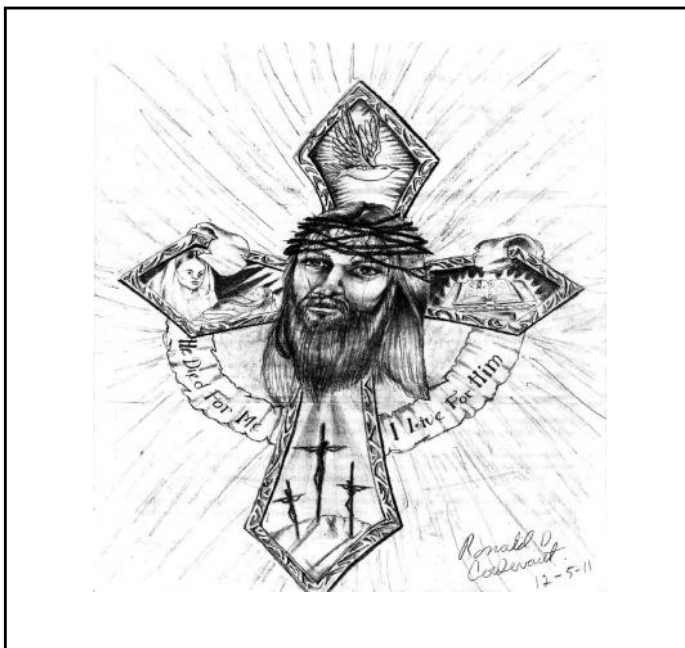
It takes a lot to be
yourself and to become a
man.

Dis world is not what it
seems and dats something I
don't understand.

But when I get out I do
have a plan,
and it's to do right
handle my business
family 1st
and stay on point.

Can I get an Amen?!!





I breathe...

*By Ray Winston
Lawrence C.C.*

Still I breathe this air of life,
Only to be a disappointment
of what this crazy world
wanted me to be,
Now that this system has
incarcerated me behind all
this concrete and steel,
I have wondered will I ever
be allowed to be free, still I
breathe,
I cry inside of myself,
because it hurts so much,
Through poetry and those at
"Making Choice's" this ink
must drop.
I write what I feel; this
man-made steel can hold my
body,
but yes my mind still flows
like the clouds, still I
breathe;
sometime I wake up inside
this place,
I question myself am I dead
or alive?

This is the darkest pit of
the earth for me,
Because I'm face with
reality, these steel doors
will only open up for me,
Inside my dreams, it's funny
all my life I have showed
love,
But in return all I've felt is
pain.

I breathe...

Mail call pt2

*By Joseph Garman
Pontiac Seg.*

Beat until I'm black and
blue,
Hurting on the inside,
From the s*** I've been
through.
When the mailman passes my
cell every night,
I can't wait until I lay down
on the bunk,
And cry myself to sleep,
Thinking that everything is

going to be alright.

Tears of hurt and tears of
anger,
Still doesn't got me nothing,
Especially gold words on
paper,
Family and friends I thought
I had,
Never sent me a letter,
Not even my dad.

To Miss Jennifer Hurd, I
understand what you're going
through,
I just wish there was
something this country boy
could do,
Once again here comes the
pain,
Just knowing that the mail
man,
Once again didn't call my
name.

Sadness

*By Sammy the Wolf Lupo
Menard C.C.*

Like a block of cement,
sadness has set in,
As tears fall freely, like
water off a waterfall,
Images of hurt flicker
throughout my mind,
And in such a horrid place, I
feel oh so small!

I've been pushed to my limit,
can't anyone see!?
The signs are there,
especially inside of me?
Anger comes and goes, like a
flash in the sky,

And when I explode, someone
will surely die!

I hate feeling this way, yet
it's normal to me,
To lash out, cause pain,
grief, it's what I do!
I didn't ask for this life,
this demented mind,
Life choose me, now I choose
you!

Darkness has begun to fall, I
eagerly await,
Your time is limited, must be
fate!?

All is quiet, yet a scream
blankets the night,
Sadness once again sets in,
as I awake to the morning
light...

Tired of living a lie

*By Corvell Hampton
Lawrence C.C.*

Once upon a time it was
all about me,
Rolling up smoking blunts
and doing my deeds,
but you were in my life
blinding me so I can't see and
I was busy,
Gang banging, stealing,
and running the streets and
didn't realize,
How much love that you
once had for me,
I thought we were young,
just doing our thang,
until the very first time
you told me baby I came,
it's like you took apart of
my mind and put a spell on
my brain,
now without you in my life
I'll never be the same,

it's like you put me to
sleep and I was in a deep
dream,
now I've giving up my
pride and thrown away my
self-esteem,
whomever read this poem
I hope you know what I mean
being lost in a lie,
yes it's all a dream.

Your sisters and your
brothers they just don't
know,
I have a pain in my heart
that I have to let go,
I live day by day and
every day I cry,
But I got to tell it all
because the day I die I've
overcome my fears,
And I'm no longer shy but
the truth in my heart telling
me I'm tired of living a lie.





"45 To Life"

By: Erick Ortiz
CCJ

45 to life, looking at my own
casket couldn't see,
Didn't even listen, lost my
only chances, forgive me
Lord,
I know it's too late now but
I still pray cuz it might be
my only way out.
Yeah, I know I'm the one to
blame for the life I chose,
But where was anybody
when I felt alone,
Been a while since I seen
hope,
I guess I was just another
kid with a broken soul.
45 to life you're looking at
me die slowly,
Put me to rest,
I see the grim reaper waiting
for me,
I took my last breathe but
before I leave I got a lot of

tears to shed.
They say there's no room in
heaven,
So I guess there's hell to
pay, only 18 and already
living on my last days.
45 to life that's what I
face,
Forgive me Lord I was only
5 when they took my life
away!

Get Saved

By: Corvel B.
CCJTDC, 5B, 4B

God loves you so if you want
to be saved please ask him
to save you.
And be a better person.
I know Jesus wants to see us
get along with each other
and not go around killing
people.

Jesus just wants to save
you.
So please try to get saved.
He is your heavenly father
and the only heavenly
father, so let him help you.

I just want to see you do it.
Jesus has been my dad for a
long time and I love him.
I never knew who he was so
now I know. Just give the
time to do it.
He died on the cross for
you.

Promises You Can't Keep

By: Steven J.
CCJTDC

You promise me your love
when I was feeling weak,
Don't ever make a promise, a
promise you can't keep.
I suffer every night I know
you can't tell,
Behind these prison walls
lonely in this cell.
I think about our past I
really thought you cared,
If you were in my shoes I'll
show you I'll be there.
I think about my future
only time will tell,
I only feel happy when I
receive your mail.
These words that I'm saying
are true and very tough,
I never left you girl, the
County broke us up.
I go to sleep thinking of the
promise the one you can
keep.

We had our ups and downs but
the love was always there,
And now you're walking out it
really isn't fair.
I never said I'm perfect I'm
bound to make mistakes,
I'm only human baby listen up
for goodness sake.
I know I'm not there and even
though we're still apart,
Listen to these words girl, and
listen to your heart.
So until the next time, next
time we meet,
Don't make a promise you can't
keep.

The Second Birth

*By: Kevin Hoynes
4H Representative
N.W.C.X, TN.*

It was cold and snowy the
day I was born, quite a
disturbance that December
11 morn.
I'm sure there was rejoicing
and lots of fun,
For mom and dad, a new life
had begun.
I've always enjoyed my
birthdays each year,
With gifts, cake, and lots of
good cheer.
But for all the gifts, cake,
and cheer,
My second birth is what I
hold dear.
For all have a birthday, born
of the flesh,
Out of the water, into a

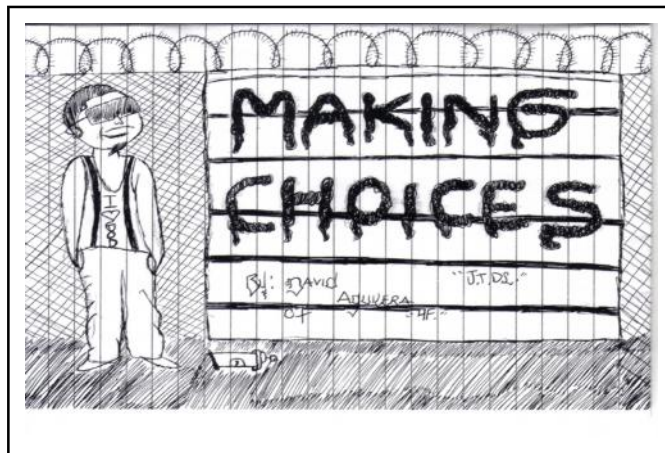
world that's a mess.
We wander around
thinking life's grand,
And don't even know we're
standing on sinking sand.
We're looking for
something, no matter the
cost,
We don't realize he came
to seek what was lost.
Few are for real, many are
posin,
Many are called, but few
are chosen.
The second birth is a must
for sure,
For this sinful soul, it's the
only cure.
The first birth is a wonder
for all who can see,
The second is a miracle
from heaven for me.

You so far apart

*By Luis Rubio
Galesburg C.C.*

For many days I have not
heard from you my sweet, a

single word,
Distressing thoughts go
through my head and fill my
yearning heart with dread,
Did all the miles at last
subdue the precious love
between me and you?
So with a note or call
convey if I've displeased
you in some way,
Your silence is too hard to
bear;
it raises doubts and brings
despair,
Have you forgotten I exist,
or did you break your
written wrist?
Can't you find the time to
write or are you busy every
night,
A love which I carried is
true, I wish I could renew,
My heart is racing as I am
facing another day without
your lips,
My mind tracing, my thought
are embracing the memories
of the one I miss,
Just you and me, one more
time two birds one heart,
same tree no leaves...
Te amo Nancy.



INSIDE

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God shall not
refuse or reject
whoever strives
to praise Him at
the beginning and
end of the day.

A Welsh poem

I am only one man

*By: Ray Jackson
Joilet, IL*

I am only one man but
There was a man who spent his life in
poverty
He was born to humble parents and never
travels further than two hundreds miles from
his home, yet he had an impact upon mankind
that has never been equaled.
His name is Jesus.

I am only one man but,
There was a man who took to heart the words
Of Abraham Lincoln that 'all men are created
equal' .his belief in civil disobedience and non
violence social change led an entire nation to
rebirth.
His name was martin Luther king Jr.

I am only one man, but
There was a man who spent nineteen years in
prison
Doing hard labor because he believed his
fellow county men
Deserved equal rights .his beliefs had him
branded' traitor' and yet ,despite torture

and deprivation, his faith was so strong that
after nineteen years of inhuman treatment
he became the president of a new free
republic.

His name is Nelson Mandela,
It is true that I'm only a man, but I can
make a difference.

Mail call answered

*by Sam Lupo
Menard CC*

Jennifer Hurd, you asked for a letter of love,
so it's Wolf to the rescue, answered from
above!

As I share in your pain, you must never give
up hope,
so fight the fear, and learn to cope.

You're not a forgotten soul, there are those
who care,
just open your heart, for the wolf is near!
I can't offer you riches, yet I'll send a hug,
as I provide my shoulder, oh so snug!

I hope those memories of joy will find you
soon,
for this Italian wishes you well, bada-bing,
bada-boom!

So next time you feel sad and lanely, and wish
to yell,
know that you have a friend thinking of you,
so you may think of me as well!

I'm deeply in love

*By Duraine Carr
Big Muddy River C.C.*

I'm deeply in love with a girl that I can't
even see
And I think she has no idea how much she
means to me
I'm down here in Big Muddy and she's up
there in Dwight
I think about her every day and every single
night
Even though we're separated by distance and
by time
Not a single day goes by that she's not on my
mind
And it doesn't mater how long or far she's
away
I'm going to be right there for her until her
very last day
I patiently anticipate the day we're finally
together
There's no doubt in mind that she the one for
whom I'll love forever
So hang in there Rebecca and let's keep
holding each other down
And know deep inside no matter what I'll
always be around
My heart is with you everyday and
everywhere you go
You're my wife officially or not I just
thought you should know
I'm deeply in love with a girl that I can't
even see
Hopefully one day she'll realize she means
the world to me.

Mistakes

*By Christian King
Wings 3D*

When we were kids
We tried to make our parent understand the
stuff we did
Looking up too the older cats on the block
Thinking that I can make it too, if a sold a rock
Now I'm stuck here in a cell with a price tag on
my freedom
One hundred thousand dollar, Cash
It's not a pleasant feeling when you're caught
for drugs, robbing or stealing
Now you're stuck with a stranger every night
And its not pleasant feeling now
You're all locked up and have to listen to people
tell you to piss in cup
Don't hate listening to those doors lock at night
You got to ball up in your sheets,
Not knowing what's going to bite
Now you just laying there
Can't sleep at all
Because of the night light
Now you're blaming everybody else for just
mistakes
Realizing this life you living is not fake
Not knowing God is only giving you a brake you
need to grow up
Before it's too late

A Note from Fr. Kelly...

On behalf of all of us here at the *Making Choices* newsletter, have a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year. Our prayer for you is not just for a day or two, but for the entire season and year that we enter.

It has been a year that has been filled with highs and lows - new life and life ending. It has been a blessing being a part of your lives and I want you to know that I am a better man because of all of you. Your words and your drawings have inspired and motivated me in this work.

As we celebrate Christmas and Hannukah and Kawanza, let us recognize that each is a

celebration of life and light.

May God bless each and every one of you - and may God bless your loved ones.

**Merry
Christmas!!**

and

**Happy New
Year!!!**

Peace,

Fr. Kelly

Write us your ideas:
If you want write an article for **MAKING CHOICES** we'd love to hear from you.

We want to hear what *you* have to say. This is your chance to say what you want. Let's talk about what it's like to be in the Audy Home, CCJ or in the Illinois State Correctional facilities. Also, if you go home, let us know. We want to hear about what is going on at home after being released.

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Be sure to include your name and section/institution— if you don't want your name printed just say so.

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