



January 22, 2021

Dear Foundation Members:

In write in support of Partakers' application for funding from your foundation. As the Chaplain and Director of Religious and Spiritual Life at Harvard Divinity School (HDS) for the past two decades, I have witnessed first-hand the profound, life-transforming work of Partakers not only with the incarcerated but also with our divinity students who, through the HDS Prison Education Project (HPEP) , have served as mentors and tutors to those who live in prisons in our Commonwealth.

For decades, Partakers has ensured that our incarcerated siblings are supported and encouraged in their college studies by providing them mentors who review their work, provide basic academic coaching, and develop genuine interest in and friendships with them. These relationships help immeasurably to improve their academic achievement and to uplift their spirits in their ongoing, uphill work to repair their lives within a system designed not only to obscure those lives but also to oppress them further. This is undeniably life-saving work. Partakers works tirelessly to ensure that those who are deliberately hidden and removed from society are *seen*, respected, and championed. As a result, many have not only completed their courses but also have earned their college degrees. Within the carceral system, this is nothing short of intellectual and moral insurrection. This is nothing short of a miracle.

And it is a miracle that for decades, HDS students have had the privilege of accompanying men behind bars in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in connection with Partakers. They have witnessed these men move from death to life as they liberate their minds and souls through the discipline of study. I have witnessed the great deepening of those students' commitment to social justice through their personal relationships with their incarcerated mentees, men who have often become their most cherished, influential *teachers* during their years of graduate study at HDS—often even beyond their favorite Harvard professors. Through those connections, our students have come to understand in their bones the consequences of living in a carceral state and its ethical demands on them as ministers, rabbis, priests, scholars, and activists.

I whole-heartedly endorse the mission and work of Partakers, particularly under the devoted and soulful direction of Arthur Bembury. His esteem for those he serves is an inspiration, not least to the students of Harvard Divinity School who have been fortunate enough to work with him. I hope you will approve this application and join in the critically important work of Partakers by supporting their mission.

Yours sincerely,
Kerry A. Maloney

Kerry A. Maloney
Chaplain
Director of Religious and Spiritual Life