



# St. Dismas Guild

September 2019

**“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105**

PO Box 2129 Escondido CA 92033 – [www.stdismasguild.org](http://www.stdismasguild.org)

**CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SERVICE!!!**

We send, Free of Charge, on average 120 Packages & 4,000 Newsletters each month to prison facilities (currently in over 700) across the United States.

Please consider making a monthly donation to sponsor a new inmate each month.



## TESTIMONY

Dear St. Dismas Guild, Hi! My name is J.L. and I'm 33 years old. I just want to thank you for the resources you provide and your monthly newsletter. I was raised Catholic, but in my teenage years I turned away from my faith, and for almost 20 years I turned to drugs and alcohol for comfort and happiness. I never found enough comfort and happiness no matter how much I used, and I realize now that I was just slowly killing myself trying to fill a void that only Our Heavenly Father can fill. When I first got to prison it was business as usual, and I got high or drunk as much as I could. I fell into a deep depression because of the guilt and shame I felt being separated from my family, and when drugs and alcohol could no longer dull the pain, I decided I was done living.

God had other plans. Instead of giving up and leaving my 8-year-old daughter fatherless I sought help from psychiatrists and medication, but it didn't work. Then God put a special person into my cell, and he shared the Word of God with me, got me reading the Bible and praying for help. Shortly after that someone gave me the Bread of Life Bible Study workbook and a copy of Rediscover Catholicism. I started attending church again and got signed up for NA and AA. Through petitioning God and fasting He cured me of addiction and depression.

Now I'm working on getting a degree in Drug and Alcohol Counseling and Christian Counseling. I'm taking up my cross to help other addicts and people suffering from depression while serving my sentence and will continue when I get out. I would LOVE to be a part of your spiritual mentoring program so I can learn from a mentor how I can help others more effectively.

**I can't thank you or God enough for providing the Bible and Bible Study workbook that helped save my Life.** Sincerely, J.L.

*Dear brother in Christ, J.L. The hardship of life is that God gave us a free will to pick and choose as we wish. See Sirach 15:15-17*

*Like most of us in our lives we seem to choose always what we want instead of God's will for us. But through it all God knows our hearts and loves us so much He allows us to make our choices. But He also has a great plan through it all. "That is why the Lord is so patient with us why He's so free with His Mercy. He looks at us and knows we are doomed to die, and that is why He is so willing to forgive us. We can show compassion to someone we know but the Lord shows compassion for all humanity. He corrects us, He disciplines us, He teaches us. Like a Shepherd tending a sheep He brings us back to Himself. He will have compassion on us if we accept His guidance and we are eager for Him to show us where we are wrong." Sirach 18:11-14*

*So, my dear brother in Christ, Our Lord has truly blessed you and has given you this opportunity to change your ways to His ways. May God's grace and guidance of His Spirit continue to light up your paths and show you His direction.*

*My prayer to you is to read from Ephesians 3:16-21, "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in LOVE, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the LOVE of Christ, and to know this LOVE that surpasses knowledge... to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen!" God bless, Yours Truly in Christ*

## DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Dear St. Dismas Guild, Thank you for your newsletters. I will likely be leaving soon and would like to stop the newsletter. It has been a blessing. Though I do not identify as a Roman Catholic, I have enjoyed the testimonies and Scriptures. I encourage you brothers and sisters in Messiah to continue your good work and to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Psalm 122:6 In Messiah, M.E.

*Thank you, M.E., for the update and congratulations on your upcoming release. We consider you to be a part of the SDG family and would like to encourage you to continue your relationship with the Lord. The best way to do this is to read His LOVE Letters (Holy Scripture/Bible/Bible Study) and pray every day. **If you would like to continue to receive our Monthly Newsletters, please send us your new address and we will update our database.** For those who are Catholic, we encourage you to go to your closest Catholic Church and go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) at least once a month and attend Mass every Sunday, become one with Jesus in Holy Communion. Associate with those who go to church and attend the sacraments and if your parish has a bible study go to it, if not, begin one in your parish. Blessings to you...*

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Dear St. Dismas Guild, Your July 2019 newsletter featured two letters from subscribers who each had **struggled with the loss of a young family member.** One reader failed to find any logic to justify how a loving God could allow a 14-year-old nephew to die. The other felt distanced from our creator after losing a full-term daughter at birth. Perhaps it may help them to turn to the Word of God to comprehend His wisdom.

In our eyes we perceive our own personal loss of LOVED ones as a tragedy, especially in dealing with the loss of a child. Could there be any greater pain in one's heart? As a natural response of this world we thus tend to react in contempt toward God. Yet, His ways are far above our own and, as Job discovered, in this lifetime we may never fully understand Him. God helps us, though, by speaking to us in His sacred word. It is there, in the gift we call the Holy Bible, that we can find an answer to how a loving God could allow this. **The Book of Wisdom speaks of dying at a young age as a blessing, not an affliction.** It's an act of divine providence that the lucky ones are lovingly "snatched

up” in their innocence of youth in order to protect them from the evils of this world:

**“The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if to others, indeed, they seem punished, yet is their hope full of immortality.” (Wisdom 3:1-4)**

**“But the righteous one, though he dies early, shall be at rest... The one who pleased God was LOVED, living among sinners, was transported—snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul...” (Wisdom 4:7, 10-11, 13-14, 17-18)**

Please share this message for all who grieve such loss and encourage your readers to study the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Sirach for more insight. God bless, B.H.

*Dear B.H., great advice and very thoughtful of you to share what you have learned. I'm sure that this has comforted you in the past. What a blessing it is to have a community of people to share their resources, talents and LOVE with all of the St. Dismas Guild family. Thank you and God bless...*

### **FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SDG**

#### **HOW CAN AN INMATE MAKE GOD SMILE? IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK!!!**

God is well aware of the fact that many people find themselves behind bars and don't feel very good about who they are and where they are currently living. Yet, this can be said for many people that are not behind metal bars but behind the crippling bars of everyday life. God LOVES each and every one of us, no matter what side of the bars we are on. Locked down physically, locked down emotionally or God-forbid, locked down spiritually.... it's all less than what God wants for our lives....and he is prepared every moment of every day to do something about it! **All we have to do is take a step toward Him by doing something that pleases Him.**

#### **WHAT REALLY PLEASES GOD?**

You and I really please God when we tell someone else about His LOVE for them. It takes a lot of courage to look someone in the eye and tell them that they are LOVED far more than they could ever imagine! It takes courage to help them request a Catholic Bible Study called the Bread of Life Bible Study and offer your time and effort to that person who is behind bars with you. When they open up the Bread of Life Bible Study or read our monthly newsletter the power and joy and peace of God is unleashed in a way that feeds their “empty spot”.

But it is not all about what “They” get when you go to the trouble to help them request a free Catholic bible study from your chaplain or directly from Saint Dismas Guild.... **It's about making God smile!** It may not seem like much to you, but when you help God reach someone.... **He is beyond generous to you!**

- **Why does God need you when the rest of your world may be telling you that they don't need you?**
- **God does not “force” Himself on anyone... He simply goes where He is invited.**
- **You are in a unique place to invite others into a relationship with God by helping them receive a Catholic bible study at no charge. You will be “furthering the Kingdom of God” ...and this PLEASES HIM VERY MUCH!**

TODAY is the day for YOU to take that action to help those around you to request the Bread of Life bible study from Saint Dismas Guild and offer it to as many people as you can find who want more peace, joy and understanding in this crazy world!

**If not TODAY... then When?**

**If not YOU... then Who?**

We only have TODAY...because yesterday is gone, and tomorrow is uncertain and may not even come.

We at Saint Dismas Guild are looking forward to your help in helping others request the Bread of Life Bible Study workbooks TODAY and EVERY DAY.

God Bless, and know that you are in our prayers,

Deacon Mitch

President of Saint Dismas Guild - Prison Ministries

### **SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard**

Due to my incarceration I'd like to know what are **mortal sins** that I could be committing without knowing? Someone told me that to relieve oneself (ejaculate) is a mortal sin. Is that true?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reveals in number;

1874 To choose deliberately - that is, both knowing it and willing it - something gravely contrary to the divine law and to the ultimate end of man is to commit a mortal sin. This destroys in us the charity without which eternal beatitude is impossible. Unrepented, it brings eternal death.

2396 Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices.

2352 By masturbation is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure...

Thus, masturbation is always grave matter which can cause the sin to be mortal, so it should be avoided as you grow in chastity.

### **SACRED TRADITION**

**THE CHURCH'S DEDICATION FOR SEPT. 2019:** The month of September is dedicated to **Our Lady of Sorrows**, whose memorial the Church celebrates on September 15. September falls during the liturgical season known as **Ordinary Time**, which is represented by the liturgical color green.



**THE HOLY FATHER'S INTENTIONS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPT. 2019:** **The Protection of the Oceans:** That politicians, scientists and economists work together to protect the world's seas and oceans.

### **PRO-LIFE**

**QUOTE FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, paragraph # 2270**

2270 Human Life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as a having the rights of a person among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to Life.

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*“Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and establish the work of our hands; yes, establish the work of our hands!” Psalm 90:17*

Thank you for ALL YOUR KIND LETTERS and TESTIMONIES. Blessings to you, from all of us here at St. Dismas Guild...

**St. Dismas Guild:** 501(c)(3) non-profit organization - Evangelization through Scripture and Ministry to prisons.

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