



St. Dismas Guild – Prison Ministry February 2020

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

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30 YEARS OF SERVICE!!!

St. Dismas Guild – Prison Ministry is a nonprofit organization which began in 1989 by Deacon Ken and Marie Finn. We provide Catholic books and materials, free of charge, to inmates and those who cannot afford them. We rely on donations and volunteer workers to make this Ministry possible but do not participate in fund-raising events. Donations can be made on-line at our Website.

Would you consider making a Monthly Donation to help Sponsor a New Inmate each month?



TESTIMONY

St. Dismas Guild, I have received your newsletters a good eight years, when Deacon Ken was alive. He was a good man. They say, behind every good man there is a good woman. That is Marie and I thank you for all you do for the incarcerated, the forgotten. I've now been in prison 20 years, 5 months, 7 days and I'm here because of my bad choices. I was overworking and drinking after work six days per week. You could say I was a working alcoholic. It took me many years to realize my addiction to prescription drugs and two or three beers daily. I was on the wrong path, doing things my way, how I wanted, when I wanted and was, I wrong.

Being in prison has been a wake-up call. I didn't find God for He was not lost. I was lost and God found me. The suffering of prison has changed my spiritual life. No, I'm not perfect. I've made many mistakes. I know God forgives and continues to forgive me. In return I must forgive others. We are all a work in progress. God is not finished with us yet. I now realize that God is the driver and I am the passenger. I am the student, not the teacher. I am the clay and not the potter.

Though life is difficult in prison, I try not to focus on the bad, the evil. I prefer to focus daily on a Good God. I am amazed at how a couple, during time of sexual activity 9 months later make a child with eyes, ears, nose, mouth, etc. It is God's doing. I cannot understand how that is possible. How everything alive in life, whether plants, trees, flowers, animals, mammals, they all give seed and reproduce after their own kind. WOW! "God is beyond what my small mind can comprehend." I remember holding my boy about 60 seconds after birth and I will never forget that experience.

I ask myself, did man make this huge rock planet we call Earth. Of Course Not! God is the designer and artist. There is nothing He cannot do, for by Him, "God" all things are made. Psalm 119:105, Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. I believe we must be humble, patient, kind, and loving. I don't like the word hate; I prefer good and we were made to do good works. God rewards those who diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6. There is only one who we are to worship – God. Not man, nor angels, no one except God Himself. I love Him, please pray for us, me, a life prisoner. Do good and not bad, love and not hate, help, give, and remember what we do for others in need is like doing it for Jesus. God bless and thank you. I.C.

Dear I.C., what a powerful testimony of how God is working in your life. Your right, God did find you. He goes out after His lost sheep because He wishes none to perish. You have received a lot of wisdom over the 20 years you have been in prison. His Word definitely is, "A Lamp to your feet and a light to your path." It also sounds like you have a personal relationship with Jesus through the Word of God. That 60 seconds holding your little boy was so special to you. **The 60 seconds we turn to Him and let Him hold us is priceless. The greatest need in every human being is to love and to be loved. Only God can fill the need in our hearts for love. It sounds like you are beginning to believe what Romans 8:38-39 says "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels**

nor principalities, neither the present nor the future nor powers, neither height nor depth nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus." We are sending a Basic Catechism, pamphlets, and a prayer book as you requested. *God bless you.*

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Hello, my name is L.H. and I am currently serving a long sentence for many reasons. I am angry, lonely, bitter, sad, depressed and in need of the Mercy of God. I have started to learn about the Catholic faith because it seems to be rooted and grounded in truth. I am a sinner and have thrown a lot of my life away, and I need divine help. So, **I am reaching out to God to please, please, heal my body, mind and soul.** To change my attitude and outlook on life, to do for me what I couldn't do for myself. To grant me peace, wisdom, serenity and to forgive me and make me the man He would have me be.

I have the support of my mother and a couple of friends and try to be grateful. I participate in the church bank and I don't engage in negative behavior. I pray and ask for the same blessings I want for me and my family and those I don't like which, at times, is everyone. I've heard that others like me better than I like me, and that's true. I feel beaten down and like a failure, but at the same time am convinced that I am potentially great and even arrogant if I don't watch out. It's a curious thing to feel like a loser who is still better than everyone.

I have a very obvious need for a friend, yet I don't trust or like hardly anyone. I would appreciate a friend and spiritual advisor and I ask God to please bless me with someone I can trust and talk to. I hope to hear from a mentor soon. I attend Mass here and have prayed the Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy. I cross myself and pray each morning and when a sinful thought comes to my mind, I say the "Hail Mary" until it passes. I don't take Communion because I am not confirmed, but I say the "Glory Be and other prayers and hope to join a good Catholic Church upon release and do God's will for my life. I would also like to know about the Rite of Confession or Reconciliation and how I can start to feel better about myself and life in general.

Thank you for being here for the lonely, sick, and imprisoned, like me. Thank you for your prayers and fellowship. I hope to hear from someone again soon. L.H.

Dear L.H., there are two things you can do to begin healing and have peace in your life; go to confession and practice love.

There is great healing power in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Ask the Priest who says Mass to hear your confession. Don't be afraid or embarrassed; there is nothing you can say that the Priest hasn't already heard.

You are lonely, angry, and sad – love is the cure. **Mother Teresa once said, "we can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair and hopelessness is love."** But first you must understand what love really is. Read **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (love is patient, love is kind...)**. Meditate on those words, and then put them into practice. You will

begin to see a positive change in your life. We've sent you the *Rediscovering Catholicism* book, a prayer book, *Overcoming Sexual Abuse* booklet, and an RCIA Info sheet in hopes that these items will help you on your journey of faith. Keeping you in our prayers.

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SDG

It is a well-known fact that most people "choose sides" on many different matters. "Choosing sides" is nothing new or unusual.... most of us do it quite regularly. How does it feel to "win"? It feels GREAT!" But consider how you feel when you realize you have chosen the side that did not "win" or "prevail".

When we choose anything or anyone in this earthly world and put our faith and hope in them.... we WILL BE DISAPPOINTED. No team....no Personno organization....no family.... wins every time. So, the big question is.... **Is it possible to be a "winner" while still living out your life on earth even though that life is not turning out the way you hoped it would?** Is it possible to experience loss of health, family, money, position, respect, and purpose and still know that you will "win in the end"?

Is it possible that you could have a peaceful and meaningful life even though you don't have a great education; you are not young and sleek, not strong of body or mind and maybe even have a criminal record?

The answer is a loud and powerful..." YES"! Yes, you can be a "WINNER!" starting right HERE right NOW.

Who determines if you are a "WINNER"? God does! NOBODY and NOT ANYTHING is bigger or more important than GOD. Who is GOD? We call Him JESUS where I come from. He can't be bought or sold, He can't be tricked or misled, He can't be fooled or foolish...He is the ultimate WINNER. He has never Lost at anything He was invited to be a part of. He has overpowered the opposition of every "evil team or individual" that ever challenged Him. He is the beginning and the strength of everything that is Good and Holy, and **He is looking at you as you read these words....and asking, "will you choose me above everything else?" Will you invite me into your heart and your mind?**

If you can simply and sincerely say the words, "**Jesus, come into my life and teach me how to be a winner in your eyes above all others**". It's done.... the journey has begun. From that point on read about Jesus every chance you get. Talk about Jesus every chance you get. Do to others what Jesus did to those around him during His life on earth...every chance you get. And then pray for the grace and blessing of Heaven given only by God at the hour of your death.... because that is one chance that doesn't happen twice. Amen? God bless, Deacon Mitch

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

If I have a son that has "come out" as gay, how do I stay in line with the Catholic Doctrine on homosexuality? I've already told him that even though I don't agree with his decision, based on my faith, I will always love and support him as his father.

You have done well so far, telling your son that you will always love him. Conflict, however, is inevitable when you do not support everything he chooses to do.

He is your son. He is a man, not a gay, even though that may be the only way he knows to describe himself based on sexual attractions. Treat him as a man. He will have friends with whom he may or may not engage in bodily activities. They are not partners, lovers, husbands, rather friends, with a friendship based on sexual desires. Treat them both as men, finding every good manly thing you can in them. and engaging them in manly talk.

You cannot correct the delayed psychosexual development on your own, but you can contribute to your

son seeing himself as a man when you emphasize the masculine in who he is and what he does.

If your son and any friend come to visit, tensions will arise if they talk about homosexuality and if they insist on sleeping together in your home. Your limits on this have to hold, just as you would with other children bringing an opposite sex friend into the home. They may storm out, but that is part of the psychosexual delay, acting like teens to get their way. Keep the door open, and no need to bring up the past bad behavior.

*Love him and any friend; pray for your son. Speak of manly things and of faith issues. **Draw him around you into your world with the Christian spirituality that you have.** Jesus will heal your son, putting stumbling blocks in his way until your son is able to see the light of Christ.*

The same sex attraction may remain, but your son can get control of his emotions and actions with loving support and prayer from you.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

PRO-LIFE

WHAT CAN I DO FOR THE MOVEMENT?

- Start a **Pro-Life group** to discuss Pro-Life news and updates, show educational video's if possible (LiveAction.org, LifeSiteNews.com, Choice42.)
- **Share Pro-Life information** with your friends/cell mates/family members in letters or emails.
- **Offer sacrifices** during the day specifically for the End of abortion.
- **Pray the Memorare** prayer specifically for the End of abortion.
- **Pray for the success of all Pro-Life Ministries**, Life Walks, Pregnancy Resource Centers, Advocates, Post-Abortive women and men, Women who are currently pregnant and contemplating abortion.
- If possible, **Support** Pro-life Lawyers, Organizations, Activist - (Live Action, Abby Johnson Pro-Life activist, LifeSiteNews.com, Jay Sekulow is the Chief Counsel for (ACLJ).

SACRED TRADITION

THE CHURCHES DEDICATION FOR FEBRUARY:

The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family. The special devotion which proposes the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the model of virtue of all Christian households began in the 17th century. It started almost simultaneously in Canada and France: The Association of the Holy Family was founded in Montreal in 1663, and by the Daughters of the Holy Family in Paris in 1674. This devotion soon spread and in 1893 Leo XIII expressed his approval of a feast under this title and himself composed part of the Office.



THE CHAIR OF ST. PETER: Celebrated on February 22nd. The **Chair** of St. Peter is actually a throne that Charles the Bald, the grandson of the Emperor Charlemagne, gave to Pope John VIII at the former's coronation as emperor on Christmas Day 875. For many years the **chair** was used at liturgical events by Pope John and his successors: it was ensconced in Bernini's Altar of the **Chair** in 1666...

"The LORD bless you and keep you, ...and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26.

Blessings, from all of us at St. Dismas Guild