

St. Dismas Guild  
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## St. Dismas Guild ~ Prison Ministry

*“Lord, when did I see you ...in prison, and not help you?” Matt. 25:44*

St. Dismas Guild is a nonprofit organization which provides Catholic Bibles and Bible Studies, free of charge, to inmates. Donations can be made on our website or by mail, (details at the bottom of this Newsletter). Please be a partner and sponsor an inmate each month.

**May 2020**

### TESTIMONY

When I was four years old my dad died. I was raised by my mom, well half of mom, she had brain damage from a gunshot. I never had someone to look up to, so I ran around doing whatever I wanted to do, stealing, robbing, lying. By 14 years old I hurt many innocent people, I raped three girls who I will never forget. I was lost in drugs and lust. I even stole the cross from the church to sell it for drugs.

I did not believe in God since He took my dad from me and I hated Him. By 19 I was married, had two boys, I had it all! Sex, money, drugs, a wife, and two boys. One day I had a black out on PCP, when I came to, I saw that I killed my wife. I was sent to prison for 15 years to life. I still ran from God. 30 years later, one-night God called out to me! Some may say I found Christ – but I say God found me! Now after 10 years, I am being blessed by God. I may never get out of prison, but heaven awaits me one day, amen. Sincerely A. S

*Dear A.S., you're right He did find you. Jesus is out there searching for His lost sheep at all times. It says in Luke 15:6-7, “Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep. I tell you, there will likewise be more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.”*

*“... declare your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may find healing.” (James 5:17)*

*If you can confess your sins to a priest and receive the absolution you will receive the grace of God that helps you not sin. There are many people we hurt and do not have an opportunity to say we are sorry. The priest stands in for Jesus. You truly are being blessed by God, and it sounds like you are looking forward to being with Jesus forever. Get to know Jesus personally through the Bible and Bible Study workbook, Basic Catechism, Prayer Pamphlets and Holy Cards we are sending you. God bless you...*

### DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Hello, my name is E.N., I just got out of prison. I thank you for your newsletters, bible study, and bible. I thank you for helping me stay grounded in my Faith. **I had life without the possibility of parole.** Then God decided to open the door for me. It began with the Governor reducing my sentence. Then going before the parole board and **Praise God now I'm free.**

Please keep me in prayer. I thank you again. God Bless you. In God's love, E.N.

*Dear E.N. Your freedom began when you turned to Jesus and repented of your sins. Now that you have been shown mercy by being released from prison you have the obligation to “put away the old self of your former way of life...and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.” Ephesians 4:22, 24. Pray every day for strength to continue the right path and try to make amends to those who were injured by your crime, pray for them every day. “Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in His mercy has done for you.” Mark 5:19. We will continue to pray for you, please pray for us.*

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Dear St. Dismas Guild, When I read your newsletter last month, I read a story about a person who had been sexually abused. Reading that story caused me to look at my own life. When I was three years old, I was raped by a 16-year-old neighbor and I never got over the shame and humiliation that I feel, even though it only happened once. I believe this is the root cause of my substance abuse issues that I have been battling for the last 33 years. Nevertheless, I have always been too ashamed to talk about this with anyone. Therefore, I hope that by writing this letter the truth will set me free. Thank you for your time in this matter. A.A.

*Dear A.A., I just read a book by an inmate who was sexually abused as a child and found the Lord Jesus later in life, and he is still holding onto what happened to him in the*

past. There comes a time in your life when you must accept the love and forgiveness of Jesus for you personally and stop blaming others for how you feel. Make the decision to forgive. **Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the heart to be healed.** God has forgiven you. He said from the Cross, **“Father, forgive them they do not know what they are doing. (Luke 23:34) The only way you can forgive is to accept the forgiving love of God. He loves you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3**

God loves you so much He sent His Son to die and take all your sins upon Himself on the cross. You probably have heard this before, but nothing has changed in your life. **Ask the Lord to give you the grace to accept His love and forgiveness for you and then forgive those that have hurt you in any way.**

Change comes when you read the bible and when you ask the Holy Spirit to teach you to forgive. Do the Bread of Life Bible Study each week with the understanding that the Holy Spirit is your teacher and **He will remind you of all Jesus said and did (John 14:26)** with His Apostles and Disciples. Develop your own personal relationship with God, Father, Son, and Spirit by doing the questions and talking to Him about what you are reading then read the commentary. Your life will slowly be transformed by your personal encounter with Him daily through the word of God. The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study is designed to help you develop a relationship with God through answering the questions so that one day you will be writing commentaries yourself.

### SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

**“How can I fight off Satan's temptations of lust?”**

*Temptation offers a person pleasure and satisfaction on the physical level of pleasure and the psychological satisfaction in the mind particularly with pornography. The rewards of sex are physical pleasure, possible psychological components of humiliation, an imagined or real union with the person of the act or fantasy, domination, attempt to share in the life or innocence of the object of fantasy and many others. Once acted upon, these memories are lodged in the mind. They come up at our bidding, or when some sensory or psychological stimulus brings them from the memory into our consciousness.*

*Once the baptized receives forgiveness from Jesus the penitent accepts it, the antidote to temptation remains in the person. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved, but we have to fight sometimes for a long time. Our Savior will immediately come to our aid as our guardian angel and the Holy Spirit are already doing, to fight against the pleasure and the temporary psychological fix offered.*

*The problem is that we are divided. We desire the sin and all it offers; yet we desire Jesus too. Continue to fight to make Jesus your choice. Resist the devil and he will take flight.*

*The fight against the strong stimuli — temptations — is aided by the holistic approach of individual therapy, group therapy, medication to help the spirit dominate the body. The Eucharist, Confession, Prayer especially asking St. Joseph and St. Michael to intercede, aid the soul, to control the fleshly desires.*

*The fight will go on, but with Jesus, you have an ally that is stronger than your opponent.*

**“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7**

### CONFESSION/CONTRITION

**What if we cannot get to Confession?** “People who cannot get to confession because of the coronavirus

lockdown or another serious reason can go to God directly, be specific about their sins, request pardon and experience God’s loving **forgiveness,**” Pope Francis says. And then get to Confession as soon as you are able.

**You must have True Contrition:** Contrition is sincere sorrow for having offended God, and hatred for the sins we have committed, with a firm purpose of sinning no more.

Say this **Act of Contrition** with true sorrow in your heart... *“My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my LOVE. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.”*

### SACRED TRADITION

**THE CHURCHES DEDICATION FOR MAY:** The month of May is dedicated to **The Blessed Virgin Mary.** The entire month falls within the liturgical season of **Easter**, which is represented by the liturgical color white — the color of light, a symbol of joy, purity and innocence (absolute or restored). [www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)

**Feast Days – May 1<sup>st</sup> – St. Joseph the Worker, May 13<sup>th</sup> – Our Lady of Fatima, May 21<sup>st</sup> – Ascension of the Lord, May 31<sup>st</sup> – Pentecost Sunday.**

### PRO-LIFE

**How Do We Change Our Culture of Death?**

Pope John Paul II noted that the structure of man’s sin is characterized or manifest on a universal scale in our Culture of Death. He pointed out that the powerful are easily able to manhandle the weak (e.g. abortion and euthanasia).

The culture of death is not the result of philosophy or decrepit ethics, or political theory. The culture of death is a result of sin committed freely by persons.

Thus, it is fundamentally a personal problem, not a political one. So, the battle will not be won solely by a political action or movement, because the battle is not against human beings or arid philosophies, but is a battle against sin: **“For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens” (Eph. 6:12).**

Therefore, first and foremost, we must first recognize God’s saving action and saving mission, and then participate in it. This has always been and will always be the Church’s role.

We must try to influence our culture with our words and deeds, realizing that the purpose of evangelization is always to introduce man to the Person of Christ, and the Person of Christ to man, that man might enter into His mystical body, the Church.

Thus, through grace attained by turning to Him, the culture of death can indeed be transformed, simply because the Gospel always has the power to transform the hearts of men...even when the culture seems most evil, hopeless and perverse. ~ *Pro-Life Articles*

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*Our apologies to those who did not receive our April Newsletter. We started a new format and address’ did not have the inmates #'s, so they were returned to us. You are welcome to request another one if you’d like. Stay strong in Body, Mind, and Spirit especially during this pandemic. Our prayers are with you...*

*Encouraging you to participate in our Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study workbook, currently in Cycle A. Easter Blessings, St. Dismas Guild*

