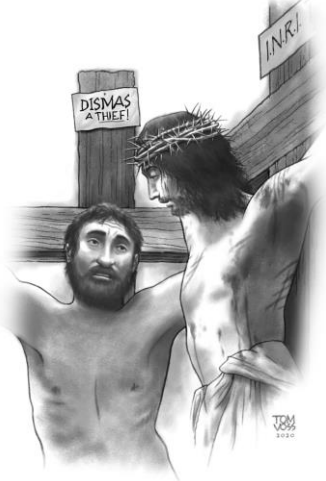


St. Dismas Guild
P.O. Box 2129
Escondido, CA 92033

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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 www.StDismasGuild.org
or by mail, PO Box 2129, Escondido, CA, 92033.

Please be a partner and sponsor an inmate each month.

September 2020

TESTIMONY

Dear St Dismas Guild, in August I will be released from prison after many years. Those were not wasted years. In that time, by the grace and mercy of God and the help of many people, I faced the reality of my crimes and understood the lives I wounded through my immature and thoughtless actions. There has been a huge amount of healing and change in my life. Now in my 70's I am ready to return to the outside world knowing I am not a threat or danger to anyone.

I believe that what contributed most to my transformation in prison was my conversion to the Catholic Church and my confirmation 12 years ago. Returning to Christ, after wandering away for many years, set me on a new journey that rescued me from an old way that was headed towards certain self-destruction.

When I first felt drawn to the Catholic Church, I picked up a St Dismas Guild newsletter in the chapel. There I found out I could get a catechism, a Bible, and the Bread of Life Bible Study. The catechism especially caught my attention. I was sure this big thick book would answer many of my questions, which it did. Thanks to those gifts from St Dismas Guild I began the process of becoming a Catholic, where I truly felt I was being led to by Jesus Christ.

I look forward to finding a parish in the community I will be released to. Hopefully by then I will be able to return to the Sacraments and begin meeting people and making new friends.

I want to thank you for the newsletter. Over these many years it has encouraged and inspired me. The testimonies from other inmates reinforced my belief that through Christ and the church there is hope no matter the circumstances. God bless all of you, W.B

Dear W.B., Thank you for sharing your testimony. Your cooperation with God's grace has led you to the Catholic faith. Knowing that St. Dismas Guild played a small part in your conversion is very encouraging to us.

God's mercy is so great that no matter how long we are in the prison of sin, He will not abandon us. “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love He had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ, by grace you have been saved” Ephesians 2:4-5

In His great goodness, God is giving you a second chance. Continue to cooperate with His grace and avoid those situations that in the past have resulted in sin and prison. Read Colossians 1:21-23

In your new life, “... put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.” Ephesians 4:24. When you find your new parish community, make frequent use of the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist. These will be your armor, your protection and strength. And finally, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” Matthew 3:8.

If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter or any additional materials, please write to us with your new address. God bless you.

“The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My Mercy.” Jesus, from St. Faustina's Diary 723

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

To Whom It May Concern, I am alive, thanks to God, He has spared me many times. My family is from Italy and I was raised Roman Catholic. First and foremost, I know divorce is not acceptable, but I am going through my second one. I am a Domestic Violence Victim, and I am in prison. I know God has forgiven me, and yet, I'm still struggling.

I would love to have a Catholic Bible and Bible Study. I am so ashamed of myself. The guilt and shame have consumed me. I feel ashamed of the things I have done. But I am a Broken Woman. I have four children and six grandchildren, and I do not want to go through this. I am praying every day, and sometimes I find myself on my knees a lot these days. I was reading your pamphlet about a book I would love to have, but due to the fact my husband used me

and has committed adultery and I have no money to buy it. I have only God to carry me, and that is enough. Can you tell me how I could get the address of Agnew Kovacs as I would love to have her book, "A prayer book for Catholic Women" My Mother and Father have gone to be with God. I know they are looking down on me. But I'm alone and it is scary to be alone. So, I have stood still, to hear God talking to me. May God be with you. L.A.

Dear L.A., Remember that you are never alone and each new day that you are alive is a precious gift God has blessed you with, that can be filled with Hopeful things.

"God cares about every detail in your life, right down to the last detail." James 5:11 Jesus loves you!! He knows all you are going through, and He will make sure not one detail is overlooked in your life! He is giving you this special time right now to surrender and ask for forgiveness and direction in your life to transform you.

We all make mistakes and God allows us to. He gave us a free will. Read **Sirach 15:11-17**. Remember this: **"the Lord will allow those who repent to return to Him, He always gives encouragement to those who are losing hope" Sirach 17:24**

"Come to the Lord and leave your sin behind. Pray sincerely that He will help you live a better life..." Sirach 17:25-29. That's you! He has been calling you and like you wrote, "I have stood still to hear God talking to me." Now your heart is open, like in **Jeremiah 29: 11-14**. Yes, God has plans for you, like all of us from the beginning He meant for us to have. We are His created work of art, **Ephesians 2:4-10**. He wants you to be happy and to live a good life.... but He also wants us to LOVE Him and to do His will, not ours. Once we let Him into our hearts completely, He transforms our ways to His, and life begins to have meaning. He is so loving and patient.... **Sirach 18:11-14**.

So be happy my dear sister in Christ, there is Hope for a brighter tomorrow. Take this precious time in beginning to have a friendship with Him. He will lift you up, for NOTHING is impossible with God. Have an open heart and take this time to know Him through scripture and prayer. Also include and pray to our/His Mother Mary, she knows the pains you carry for your family... My prayer for you is through reading **Ephesians chapter 1, 2, and 3**, May He come alive in your heart today and everyday, on your new journey.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

...I pray this virus would die instead of people. My father and brother died recently without the sacraments, and therefore their souls did not go to heaven. The Holy Bible teaches about a place called Purgatory, is this where they are?

Upon our death, the soul goes immediately to God for the particular judgment. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches;

"1022 Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven-through a purification or immediately, -- or immediate and everlasting damnation."

"1532 The special grace of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects: - the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church; - the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; - the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance; - the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul; - the preparation for passing over to eternal life."

1020 The Christian who unites his own death to that of Jesus views it as a step towards him and an entrance into

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everlasting life. When the Church for the last time speaks Christ's words of pardon and absolution over the dying Christian, seals him for the last time with a strengthening anointing, and gives him Christ in viaticum as nourishment for the journey, she speaks with gentle assurance:

The sacraments assist a dying person with forgiveness and assurance of God's love, but are not absolutely necessary to gain eternal life, rather they are very important helps. As 1022 says, the retribution refers to the individual's life with Jesus while in this world. The sacraments of Penance, Anointing, and Eucharist are helps at the end of life. Purgatory is not explicitly mentioned but is inferred from the practice even in the Old Testament of prayers for the dead.

SACRED TRADITION

THE CHURCHES DEDICATION FOR SEPTEMBER:

... is to the **Seven Sorrows of Mary** – "The purpose of the

Devotion of the Seven Sorrows is to promote union with the sufferings of Christ through union with the special suffering that Our Lady endured because she was the Mother of God. By uniting ourselves with both the Passion of Christ and His holy Mother, we enter into Jesus' Heart and honor Him greatly; He is more honored because we have so honored His Mother. The Seven Sorrows are taken from Scripture events..." <http://www.catholictradition.org/Mary/7sorrows.htm>



1. The prophecy of Simeon (*Luke 2:25-35*).
2. The flight into Egypt (*Matthew 2:13-15*).
3. Loss of the Child Jesus for three days (*Luke 2:41-50*)
4. Mary meets Jesus on His way to Calvary (*Luke 23:27-31; John 19:17*).
5. Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (*John 19:25-30*).
6. The body of Jesus being taken from the Cross (*Psalms 130; Luke 23:50-54; John 19:31-37*).
7. The burial of Jesus (*Isaiah 53:8; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42; Mark 15:40-47*).

A Few FEAST DAYS: **Sept. 5th - St. Teresa of Calcutta** - the tiny woman recognized throughout the world for her work among the poorest of the poor, she was also instrumental in feedback during the writing of the **Bread of Life Bible Study workbook**, and she was beatified October 19, 2003., **Sept. 23rd - St. Padre Pio** - was said to have had the gift of reading souls, the ability to bilocate, among other supernatural phenomena. He was said to communicate with angels and worked favors and healings before they were requested of him.

MESSAGE FROM SDG DIRECTOR

We celebrated our 31st Anniversary, August 18th, and we ask for your continued partnership. Thank you...

2020 St. Dismas Guild Statistics:

- 4,804 Receive our monthly Newsletter.
- 836 **Prison Facilities** being served. (39 new facilities added this year.)
- 943 **Packages mailed** already this year to inmates. (Catholic Bibles, Bible Study workbooks, Prayer Books, Holy Cards, etc.) We avg. 157 packages each month.
- 73 Avg. **New Inmates** requesting info. each month.
- We now have **PayPal and Credit Card** recurring donation options available on our Website.

Encouraging you to participate in our Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study workbook, currently in Cycle A.

Let the Peace of Christ be with you always, St. Dismas Guild

