

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 Study workbooks, etc., free of charge, to inmates.

Donations can be made on our website www.StDismasGuild.org or by mail, PO Box 2129, Escondido, CA, 92033.

We have been Blessed over these years by many consistent Sponsors and Donors and we wish to extend our deepest appreciation to all of them.

March 2021

TESTIMONY

Dear St. Dismas Guild, Hello. My name is A., and I am currently housed in CA. I am writing this letter to request a copy of your Catholic study bible. Before I was arrested, I was living a life without God. I had many opportunities to get closer to God, but something always pushed me away. I was a lost soul searching for answers in all the wrong places. Unfortunately, some people need to experience great losses in order to search for God with an open heart.

When I totally lost hope for everything and feeling like I was dead to the outside world, I felt like I had only one option. If I was dead to the world, why not make it official! Jail does things to the human mind and if you are not mentally strong in here, the depression and sadness consumes you. You begin to have horrible thoughts that won't let you sleep. So, we fall into the world of insomnia. The days get longer and all you can think of is “when is the nightmare going to be over? When am I going to wake up?”

I met a man who offered me bible studies. I realized he must have felt the pain and suffering I had. This man's heart initiated my awakening, and I was ready to receive Jesus Christ into my heart. What happened in the next few months is almost unexplainable. As I gained knowledge and understood the word from the bible better, “I began to cry.” All the answers I was searching for were there and I ignored it for almost 20 years of my life. **The bible has given me divine Inspiration, Hope, Faith, and Strength.** I have a purpose and I know what it is. I strongly believe I was given another opportunity to reflect upon my life and realize how I got here. **The Lord has found me, and I found Him. God has given me a new heart full of Love and Patience.** Thank you for your time and God bless you, A.S.

Dear A.S., God has always and will continue to hold you in His care. He cares about every detail in your life...."God cares right down to the last detail." James 5:11

Sometimes things that get us in trouble, turn out to be the best for us in returning to the Lord. For the Lord disciplines those He loves. "He corrects us, He disciplines us, He

teaches us. Like a Shepherd tending his sheep, He brings us back to Himself." Sirach 18:13 -14.

How blessed are you that God placed the man who gave you the Bible study materials. That was Jesus holding you in His care and opened your heart to finally receive His love.

"To fear the Lord is the flower of Wisdom that blossoms with peace and good health. She (Wisdom) sends knowledge and understanding like the rain and increases the honor of those who receive her. To fear the Lord is the root of Wisdom, her branches are long life." Sirach 1:18-20

All of us will continue to have ordeals and trials in our lives but if we, “TRUST the Lord, He will help you walk straight in His ways...” Read Sirach 2:1-6. My prayer for you: Ephesians 1: 15-23. May the Holy Spirit continue to bloom within your heart and bless you with your new journey with Jesus. God bless you!

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Dear St Dismas Guild, I pray everyone there is well and in good spirits. I'm writing to give you a change of address. After having served 28 years at one facility I've been transferred in order to take a program that I'm praying might help when I am considered for parole later this year. I also want to thank you for sending me your Newsletter for the past 20 years or so. It is truly a blessing and I can't thank God enough for getting such a heart for the prisoners to Deacon Ken (May he Rest In Peace), Marie and all the staff at St Dismas Guild.

For nearly a year now the dangers associated with COVID-19 has kept all priests and Catholic lay volunteers from coming into prisons in this state (and probably most others as well), so ministries like St Dismas Guild are filling a tremendous void in the lives of incarcerated Catholics. I encourage everyone that has been blessed by St Dismas Guild, before and or during this pandemic, to never take this ministry for

granted and never forget to lift them up in prayer every day.

And it is my prayer for each of you there, that God may empower you to accomplish more than you alone are able, that you may give more than you possess, and that you may continue to make a difference in places you'll never walk. In Jesus name, Amen.
Love, In Christ, R.L.

Dear R. L., Thank you for your kind words and blessings. It is very encouraging to us to know how God is using this ministry to bring His light into the darkest of places. Your words, "...that you may continue to make a difference in places you'll never walk" were very poignant. Some walk in physical prisons, some walk in the seclusion of the prisons of their own making. Many are walking with the pain and loneliness of forced isolation due to the pandemic. In every situation, only Jesus can bring the healing and freedom that is longed for.

"Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: The kingdom of heaven is at hand, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. Matthew 10:6-8. This is the mission of St. Dismas Guild. Hopefully, we are making a difference with the materials that we are able to provide.

We are sending a list of available books to your new address. May God bless you with His peace and we pray that God's perfect Will be done in your life.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

Can you help me understand "Redemptive Suffering" and how suffering can have meaning in my life?

What kind of suffering can be "offered up" and who can it be offered for? Also, is it appropriate to offer up menial daily tasks such as cleaning, or working out, etc. like for the conversion of my wife or son, etc.? Any insights into this would be helpful. Thank you and may God Bless your ministry! C.E.

All types of prayer offered to God, including daily tasks that are given by Him and offered back to Him with Jesus are a response to His grace. There are two kinds of grace: sanctifying grace, that presence and power of Jesus that makes us holy, and actual grace, that power and presence of Jesus that prompts us and empowers us to respond to any situation through Him, with Him, and in Him. People should ask God for anything, and He will purify the prayer and answer it according to His will for our benefit. "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. 5:16-17

SACRED TRADITION

THE CHURCHES DEDICATION FOR MARCH:

The month of March is dedicated to **St. Joseph**. The entire month falls during the liturgical season of **Lent** which is represented by the liturgical color purple — a symbol of penance, mortification, and the sorrow of a contrite heart.

A Few FEAST DAYS:

March. 17th – St. Patrick - This is a day to honor and pray to St. Patrick. He was an influential saint who, 1,500 years ago, brought Christianity to the little country of Ireland. He was born about 385 in the British Isles, was carried off while still very young during a raid on Roman Britain by the Irish and sold as a slave. At the end of six years, he contrived to escape to Europe, became a monk and was ordained; he then returned to Ireland to preach the Gospel. St. Patrick died in 461.

March. 19th – St. Joseph - Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary – and the foster-father of Jesus, was probably born in Bethlehem and probably died in Nazareth. His important mission in God's plan of salvation was "to legally insert

Jesus Christ into the line of David from whom, according to the prophets, the Messiah would be born, and to act as his father and guardian". Most of our information about **St. Joseph** comes from the opening two chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. No words of his are recorded in the Gospels; he was the "silent" man. We find no devotion to **St. Joseph** in the early Church. It was the will of God that the Virgin Birth of Our Lord be first firmly impressed upon the minds of the faithful. He was later venerated by the great saints of the Middle Ages. Pius IX (1870) declared him patron and protector of the universal family of the Church.



March 25th – Annunciation of the Lord – A tradition, which has come down from the apostolic ages, tells us that the great mystery of the Incarnation was achieved on the twenty-fifth day of March. It was at the hour of midnight, when the most holy Virgin was alone and absorbed in prayer, that the Archangel Gabriel appeared before her, and asked her, in the name of the blessed Trinity, to consent to become the Mother of God. Let us assist, in spirit, at this wonderful interview between the angel and the Virgin: and, at the same time, let us think of that other interview which took place between Eve and the serpent. A holy bishop and martyr of the second century, Saint Irenaeus, who had received the tradition from the very disciples of the apostles, shows us that Nazareth is the counterpart of Eden.

March 25th – St. Dismas was the so-called "Good Thief" - who was crucified along with another thief and Jesus on the hill called Golgotha on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Writing centuries apart, two Church Fathers, Tertullian and Augustine, claimed that the three died on **March 25, the date that was designated as Dismas's Feast Day**. The Gospel of Luke relates Jesus' conversation with the two thieves... Jesus is taunted by one thief, who challenges Jesus, ***"Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us."*** (Luke 23:39) But the other thief, the **Good Thief**, takes the opposite view. **The Good Thief** recognizes that Jesus is innocent and has done nothing wrong He also acknowledges that Jesus is the Messiah, by saying to Him, ***"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*** (Luke 23:42) To which Jesus replies, ***"Amen, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise."*** (Luke 23:43)



DISMAS IS OUR PATRON SAINT and the Patron Saint of; condemned prisoners, dying people, funeral directors, penitent criminals, prison chaplains, prisons, reformed thieves, **AND THOSE CONDEMNED TO DEATH...**

March 28th – Palm Sunday - Today we commemorate Christ's entry into Jerusalem for the completion of the Paschal Mystery. Above dates info. from catholicculture.org

FROM THE DIRECTOR

To grow in a personal relationship with God we encourage you to check out Marie's PODCAST, it follows the GOSPEL reading and questions answered by Marie Finn and Commentary by, her last husband, Deacon Ken Finn, all from "The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study." You can find the link on our Website under the Bible Study tab.

Lenten Blessings, St. Dismas Guild

