

St. Dismas Guild
P.O. Box 2129
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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.

The Churches Dedication For DECEMBER:
is to the **Immaculate Conception of Mary...**

December 2022



TESTIMONY

St. Dismas Guild, Prayer is an amazing thing and getting the packet you guys sent answered mine. I have many fond and happy memories of childhood long ago. Also, are the bitter memories of an abusive, alcoholic stepfather. Being beaten was almost a normal thing to expect upon another drunken arrival when he got home in the evenings. On several occasions, I was beaten so badly I couldn't attend school for weeks at a time in order to let the marks and scabs go away. At 12 years old, my mother caught my stepdad with another woman, and they divorced. At some point my mom became a drug addict. Without any parental guidance, I began running the streets and ended up a convicted felon at 16 years old and sent to prison for the first time. This was normal for me for several years. In 2005, at the age of 23; I was released from prison on Thanksgiving Day, my third time in.

I had turned a new leaf and was attending church services weekly, holding a steady job and had my own place to stay. I met a woman, got married, and had two beautiful babies. For some reason, I got back into dealing dope and guns. For three years, the longest I'd been out since I was 16, things were going good considering my illegal activities. Then, on the night of January 11, 2009, I killed someone for wrongs they had committed against me. The next day, I was located by the police and ended up having a shootout in which I was shot several times. Only by the grace of God am I still here today. I've been here for 14 years and have regained my life with God. I've been able to forget the past of my childhood and forgive my now sober stepfather. The saddest moment of my incarceration was when my mother died in February 2018. But through all I've done and been through, in here I know God is always with me. The love of Christ is the most beautiful thing anyone has and it's this love I try to live in myself daily. Once a hate filled and angry person, now I can look at someone and smile with sincerity. Living with a heart full of love instead of hate and anger is really helping me live through my sentence of life without the possibility of parole. Without the love of Christ, who knows where I'd be.

Thank you, guys, for what you have done and all you do and for allowing me to share my story. Respectfully, C.H.

Dear C.H, "...forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us..."

Thank you for sharing your very moving testimony. Whenever we read of child abuse, it's not uncommon to wonder, where was God? Why did He allow this to happen to a child? There is no easy answer. God gives human beings free will, the choice to do good or to do evil. You were the victim of evil at the hands of your stepfather and later in life you chose to commit the evil of murder. Again, we ask, where was God? God was with you through all the events of your life, and He never stopped loving you. Through His mercy, you have been forgiven and are able to forgive your stepfather.

But forgiveness is a two-way street. You also must ask for forgiveness from those people whom you have caused so much pain especially the family and friends of the murder victim. You may not be able to do that personally, but you can and should pray from your heart for their wellbeing and that they will be given the grace to forgive you. And pray especially for the soul of the victim of your crime. Have the same love in your heart toward them that God has for you. They all deserve to find peace just as you have through the mercy and the love of Jesus. "...the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness...forgiving wickedness and crime and sin." (Exodus 34:6-7a)

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

News for the Soul, Children of God. Brothers and Sisters, it is now time to grow stronger in faith because the mind governed by flesh is death to your spirit, like, a parasite living in your life reproducing contagious things. I noticed most of the young men and women now days don't care about hearing what God has to say; so, by not listening to the Word of God, they are keeping their spirits in prison from growing in faith.

Children of God, stop treating yourselves like you belong in a trash can and your life holds no value. I

remember, as a young child, we didn't have enough food in our house to eat, but my mother got enough to feed me and my two brothers, but not herself. But later that night I heard my mother crying and praying to God. Right then she could have easily given up and walked away. But her faith in God was so strong she waited for God to make the next move, and he did. And right to this day we still may be poor but very rich in spirit. Hebrews 4:16.

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. M.S.

Dear M.S., Thank you for your wise and inspiring words. Without God, life has no meaning. We were created to Know, Love, and Serve God. First, we must Know Him, then to Love and Serve Him will easily follow. How can we Know Him? By spending time with Him, by learning and listening to Him through scripture, by talking to Him in prayer. When He becomes the center of your life, life will have meaning and value. He will provide for all your needs, maybe not in the way you want or expect. He does all things perfectly, put your trust in Him.

"Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they?"
Matthew 6:26

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

Question about Saint Names, Feast Days, and Fasting?

A Patron Saint is a human being who lived on earth, died, and whose soul now sees God, awaiting the resurrection of that soul's body when Jesus comes at the end of time. They take joy in praising God and asking God's help for us still here on earth.

It is customary for Christian parents to choose a name of one of these saints for the child at baptism with the hope that the child will imitate the virtues of that saint and have that saint intercede for God's graces for the one on earth who now bears the saint's name.

In Confirmation the person can choose a saint who the confirmand wishes to imitate here on earth in the path toward eternal life. (Options: choose a Saint who's feast day is on your Birthday or Baptism Day or has a talent or special charism that you also have.)

Feast days are memorials of special events of God, particularly Jesus, and sometimes the Holy Spirit. They also are memorials of special events of Mary and other saints because the holy ones (meaning of the word saint is "holy") who followed Jesus by Jesus' grace.

The Pillars of Piety are integral and all three are required to reap the benefits of the graces that come by practicing them. They are Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving.

Fasts are times designated by the church to prepare the soul for special graces and memorials, times in which the Christian denies himself certain pleasures, particularly food and drink. The most common one is the Eucharistic fast, that a person does not consume food for 1 hour before receiving Holy Communion. Fridays are days of fasting and penance in memory of the death of Jesus. It is customary to fast before a major feast such as the Resurrection, Christmas.

Ember days are memorials of God's mercy near the time of the changing of the seasons, where a person fasts on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday. The next ember days will be around December 13, 2022, the feast of St. Lucy, patroness for those suffering difficulties with their eyes. In 2022 the ember days are Dec 14, 16, 17

PRO-LIFE

"Even if abortion were made easy or painless for everyone, it wouldn't change the bottom-line problem that abortion kills children."

"When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society. So, when a woman destroys the Life of her unborn child, it is evidence that either by education or circumstances she has been greatly wronged."

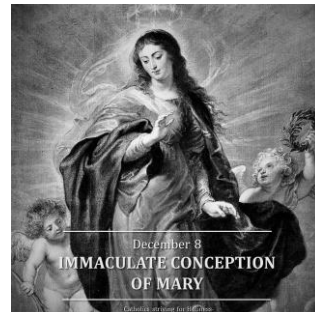
"I believe that Life is a sacred gift of God and should be treated as such." *U.S. Representative*

Pro-LifeArticles.org

SACRED TRADITION

The Churches Dedication For DECEMBER:

"...is to the **Immaculate Conception of Mary**, which is celebrated on December 8. The first 24 days of December fall during the liturgical season known as **Advent** and are represented by the liturgical color purple — a symbol of penance, mortification, and the sorrow of a contrite heart. The remaining days of December mark the beginning of the **Christmas** season. The liturgical color changes to white or gold — a symbol of joy, purity and innocence." (catholicculture.org)



A Few FEAST DAYS:

Dec. 8th – Immaculate Conception of Mary

Dec. 9th – Juan Diego

Dec. 12th – Our Lady of Guadalupe

Dec. 25th – Christmas – Nativity of the Lord

Dec. 28th – Holy Innocents

Dec. 30th – Feast of the Holy Family

MESSAGE FROM SDG DIRECTOR

A Christmas Blessing; "May the Joy of the angels, the Eagerness of the shepherds, the Perseverance of the wise men, the Obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the Peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas; and the Blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen."



To grow in a personal relationship with God, we encourage you to participate in ***The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study*** workbook, written by our Founders Deacon Ken and Marie Finn. This workbook follows the *Liturgical Calendar of the Church* and helps prepare you for the upcoming Sunday Mass readings. ***We began Cycle A at the end of November. Request yours today...***

Christmas Blessings,
St. Dismas Guild

