

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](http://www.StDismasGuild.org)  
or by mail, PO Box 2129, Escondido, CA, 92033.

JULY 2023

### TESTIMONY

Dear St. Dismas Guild, I wish to say thank you for all the help, support and prayer you have given me over the past two years. For the longest time I had been totally lost. My life was just aimlessly going by. I had allowed the devil to find a place in me. I thought I was at my lowest. I ended up in prison. But **I truly found that I was not alone. The Lord was with me.** When I was released, I was so sure I was full of the Spirit, that I would do great things. Feed the hungry and house the homeless.

Then one cold March day as I was returning to my apartment from the parole office I was all excited about the plans I had for a homeless shelter, when the Lord spoke to me, “You cannot help others until you first help yourself.” I had no job, I was on government assistance, and I was not attending Mass on a regular basis.

I heard the Lord, but I did not LISTEN to Him. I know the difference between the two. Hearing is but a mechanical function of the human body. Listening requires a commitment of the heart, a commitment to do the right thing. And, yet, I returned to my previous life. For twelve years my life kept going. I lived a lonely, isolated existence. I had no contact with my family. I became angry and cynical. I was blaming God for all my trouble. Then, one day there was a knock on my door. A team of heavily armed federal agents was there to arrest me.

Now two years later I sit in pretrial detention. During that time, **I had come to LISTEN to the Lord.** I was blessed to find many Catholic books such as the “Imitation of Christ” in the detention center library, and the Dismas Guild. You sent me a rosary, bible, bible study and prayer cards. I began to pray the Rosary on a daily basis.

I was unable to receive the sacraments due to Covid. And the facility chaplain with a bias against Catholic volunteers did not allow them. What was I to do? I was blessed that on Sunday mornings a local television station aired Catholic mass. I wrote for their worship aide and participated in making a spiritual communion.

With my court case now concluded, I go for sentencing in two days. I have been told that I have the toughest judge in

this district. I have been praying, not for a lenient sentence, just for a just one. I know it is now time to render unto Caesar that which is Caesars, and unto God that which is Gods. I may never leave prison. I am getting up there in age. I am okay with that. **For His will be done.** My body may be locked up behind high walls and barbed wire, **but my spirit will always be free. And the freedom of spirituality is more fruitful than any kind of earthly freedom.** After I am sentenced, I will be transferred to a federal prison. As such, I will not be able to take any of my property. No prayer books, bible, rosary. However, wherever I end up I know I will have access at least to a bible and a rosary. Yours in Christ, J.R.

*Dear J.R., God loves you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 Your attitude is that of Christ when you were unable to receive the Eucharist while in jail and went searching. It was the Holy Spirit who motivated you to search for a way to receive spiritual communion.*

*It is so easy to return to your previous life when you leave jail if you get into the same environment. When you leave behind the old self and put on the new self, made in the image of God and sealed with the grace of God at your Baptism, you follow God's lead and get into a Church and hang around with those who obey God's commandment to love Him and love others. Keep praying for a lenient sentence for God answers all your prayers in the way He sees fit. He sees your heart; we look at appearances. A heart that loves God will obey His commandments. Deuteronomy 7:9-10 says, “Understand, then, that the Lord, your God, is God indeed, the faithful God who keeps His merciful covenant down to the thousandth generation toward those who love him and keep his commandments, but who repays with destruction a person who hates him; He does not delay with such a one but makes them personally pay for it.”*

*Yes, J.R., keep praying for a just sentence because we have a just God who loves you and yearns for you to do things His way not your way. If you spend the rest of your life in prison the Spirit of God will comfort you and help you to love those who you encounter. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.” 2 Corinthians 1:3*

## DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Poem prayer by R.U.

I believe in a Father who I seek to obey,  
I see the example of His Son who shows me the way,  
I listen to the Holy Spirit each and every day,  
Thank you, Dear God, Your Will is my way. Amen

## DEACON KEN'S CORNER

**LETTERS FROM THE LATE Deacon Ken Finn dated, April 1985,** from Mission San Luis Rey Parish where he was assigned. *Italics are additions from Marie, 2023.*

She sang and told how Jesus Christ came into her life. The female inmates just hung onto every word. She told them that she had gone through the way of the world by using drugs while singing, of wild parties, abuse of alcohol, of the many men and the loneliness, too. Each woman could relate some part of her sharing with her own life. She stopped singing and became very quiet and put her guitar down and said, "I have come here today to tell you that Jesus is the only way to be free."

A young woman came up to me and said, "Chaplain, I would like to receive Christ into my life." I said to her then, "Listen to what our friend who is singing has to say." This young woman came up to me again and said, "I need to be obedient to Jesus' will." I shared with her that Jesus wants everything for us that is good. I urge you, If you have a special gift like this dedicated Christian woman, please use it in your community. Someone needs you to help in a jail, hospital or center nearby.

*Always remember what Jesus said to His disciples when you feel you are all alone. "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Matthew 28:20*

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

**I was told that Jesus Christ was only a man that could see God in all things. Is that correct?**

*People say many things that are not true, rather that are their own opinions coming from ignorance or from malice. They have no authority of truth, so it is important not to trust in their words.*

*God is the authority for truth and for belief. He has revealed Himself and His Truth in salvation history, recorded in the Holy Bible and the Tradition of the Holy Catholic Church.*

*These real authorities, which can be trusted, reveal that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God the Father. At the Father's appointed time, Jesus took flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary with two natures, divine and human.*

*He taught God's truth that man could be forgiven of his sins and have eternal life after death in a new and resurrected body.*

*That first forgiveness is given in baptism. After that through the sacrament of Penance, sins are forgiven.*

*People walk with God here on earth when they are free from sin and consider God above their earthly desires.*

*When Jesus comes again, those who are faithful to Jesus will walk with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit forever.*

*Go to confession, receive Holy Communion, and think of God, walking with Him as best you can by His grace in this life on the journey to eternal life.*

## MESSAGE FROM MARIE

**DOING YOUR TIME ALONE WITH JESUS** "Put your hand in His hand and walk all alone with Him." This was told by St. Mother Teresa's mom when she wanted to leave home and become a sister.

*It touched my heart as I love my time alone with my Lord and my God. I remember Deacon Ken saying many years ago that he would tell the inmates he talked to who were just coming into the prison to do your time alone, do what you are told and keep quiet. Doing the Bread of Life alone asking the Holy Spirit to teach me and remind me of all Jesus said and did has helped me to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.*

*When Deacon Ken was alive, he had his time, and I had my time and when we came together, we shared our time we had with Jesus. This is what made us one heart and one mind, for the Holy Spirit taught us the love of God. As we received the love of God, we were able to love more and more like Jesus by dying to ourselves for the love of the other; we would pick up our cross and follow Him. We had fifty-three years of learning how to become one body, soul, and mind, by doing our time alone with Jesus.*

## SACRED TRADITION

**THE CHURCHES DEDICATION FOR JULY:** ...is to

**The Precious Blood of Jesus.** This month falls within the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, which is represented by the liturgical color green. This symbol of HOPE is the color of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful the HOPE of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the HOPE of a glorious resurrection.



[www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)

### A few Feast Days:

**July 3rd – St. Thomas the Apostle,** patron saint of doubters and cynics, architects, and construction workers.

**July 6th – St. Maria Goretti,** patron saint of rape victims, loss of parents, and young people in general.

**July 22nd – St. Mary Magdalene,** patron saint of contemplative life, converts, and penitent sinners.

**July 31st – St. Ignatius of Loyola,** patron saint of Jesuits, retreats, and soldiers.

## MESSAGE FROM SDG DIRECTOR

*Prayers of Thanksgiving for all the donations received in the last few months, especially to all the inmates who donated. As you may have noticed, we are now back to Monthly Newsletters!!!*

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**HOW TO WRITE A TESTIMONIAL...** We welcome personal Testimonies and questions for our Spiritual Director for the Newsletter, though we cannot publish each one we receive. Please write and tell us your story.

**Format your testimony in this way –**

1/3 Where was God in your Life, Child/Teenage years?

1/3 How did Christ change your life?

1/3 How is God working in your life now?

**Please limit it to 500 words.**

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1st come 1st serve – 4 books – **"Rome Sweet Home"** by Dr. Scott Hahn, write to us and request your today.

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*"My dear child: Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ...as I remember you constantly in my prayers, night, and day." 2 Timothy 1:2*

Know that our prayer team keeps all your special intentions in our prayers.

*Peace of Christ,  
St. Dismas Guild*

