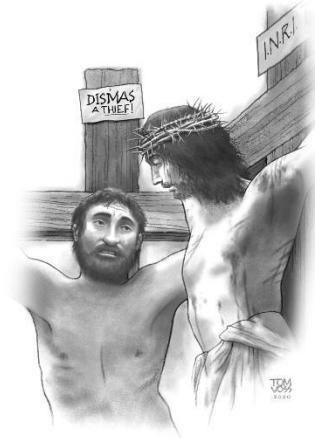


St. Dismas Guild
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St. Dismas Guild ~ Prison Ministry

“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 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 JANUARY:
is to the Most Holy Name of Jesus...

January 2025

TESTIMONY

Dear St. Dismas Guild,

My name is I. M. I've known of God the Father and Jesus my whole life, being baptized as a child. However, life broke my family apart and I was kidnapped at 3.5 years old by my own father, then smuggled into California. I wouldn't see my mother until I was 17 years old.

While living with my father, I was abused by my stepmother, sexually abused, and suffered neglect and abandonment due to my father's addiction. I grew up going to Catholic Mass as well as a protestant church. I would eventually walk away from God altogether and commit myself to gangs. I lived in this destructive life for many years. I experienced many hardships and committed very calloused acts towards people. I used all drugs to help me get through all of this. While my life seems very dark, there was a light in my life God made sure of that. While in prison, I always found myself speaking to Priests or Deacons. They always encouraged me to do better. Fr. M.K., S.J. would eventually be there for me and his love and encouragement was the way I would eventually see how much God loved me.

Today, I no longer use drugs or am a gang member. I attend Mass regularly and was recently confirmed into the Catholic Church. My witness was a gift from God—it was a prominent politician from California. I also put together a hygiene drive in prison. We collected soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and laundry detergent, and donated all of it to the Homeless Day Center. God's love and the encouragement of all those God sent to my life has been a blessing. **Since answering God's call, my life has not been the same.**

Thank you, I.M.

Dear I.M., Those first seven years of your life determine a lot about your character; especially if you have not heard the words “I love you” from your parents or grandparents. It sounds like you had a rough beginning. God can restore what the locust has eaten (Joel 2:25). God can restore those

*lost childhood years. As you come to know your real Father, you begin to see how loveable you are and how much you are loved by Him. It takes forgiveness of your biological dad or anyone else that has hurt you. Forgiveness is a decision, and as you decide to forgive by saying the words, you allow God's love to come in. God loves His children so much He laid down His life for them. The Priest or Deacons who came into your life were encouragers for you. Attending Mass regularly and receiving the Body of Christ will strengthen you to stop looking behind and to what is ahead. Jesus is leading you and holding onto your right hand. Keep your eyes on Him and listen to what He says and observe how He acts then you will be healed of the scars of your past. Get to know Jesus through the bible study we sent you and have the same attitude as His. **Philippians 2:5 says, “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus.”** You are doing a great job I.M. serving others. That's what Jesus did. Keep up the good work. God bless you and Happy New Year.*

DEACON KEN'S CORNER

LETTER FROM THE LATE DEACON KEN FINN, dated January 1983. “Chaplin don't worry about your daughter; the Lord will heal her.” I started to say thank you and then this man who was waiting to leave our facility and go to another prison to serve a life term said, “Don't worry about anything and pray about everything.” Then he took my little vile of holy oil and began to give me a blessing. He called upon the Lord to give me the gift of patience, courage, and joy. I share this with you, because this man has been called a “monster” because of his crime and yet, here he was even after being sentenced, giving praise and glory to the Lord. His eyes glistened, and he had trouble keeping back the tears as we talked about his eight-year-old boy and his four-and six-year-old girls. He was a man getting ready to serve for 20 years to life sentence, and his faith in Jesus Christ was giving him the strength he needed at this time to even minister to me.

MARIE'S REFLECTIONS

Good morning, Lord, I have come to know you through your all-powerful Word. Paul is telling me that we who worship through the Spirit of God, who boast in Christ Jesus and do not put our confidence in flesh, although he himself had grounds for confidence even in the flesh. In zeal he persecuted the Church, in righteousness (based on the law) he was blameless. He considers everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord. I know you from what you tell me in your words. Lord, everything you say comes from your gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I have come to know you through the gospels and the writings of others in the bible. It has every answer for me. Thank you for your all-powerful words. The simple message is to come to know you through the Word, to love you with all my heart, all my mind, all my soul, all my strength and love others the way you love me. You love me unconditionally.

You have taught me that through your Word. I can't understand it but through the grace you give me to know, love, and serve you. My heart rejoices searching for you and when I find you, I praise you and absorb your love for me. I rejoice in seeking you and I look to you in your strength; I seek to serve you constantly. I recall the wondrous deeds that you have wrought. I am your chosen one. You are my God. You tell me to come to you, all you who labor and are burdened, and you will give me rest, says the Lord. Sometimes I cannot find my sin. Am I righteous or a Pharisee, or a Scribe. What am I Lord? You tell me to come to you. Here I am Lord. I feel you here with me even though I am crying. I cry a lot for you and when I do I feel your love for me, your unconditional love. Why am I crying and not joyful Lord? You tell me there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents. You are telling me my tears are over those who have not turned to you. *"Be silent no more, confess your sins to one another and you will be healed (James 5:16)."* I get grace from the sacrament of reconciliation.

SACRED TRADITION

The Churches Dedication For JANUARY:

"...is to the **Most Holy Name of Jesus**, which is celebrated on January 3. The first twelve days of January fall during the liturgical season known as **Christmas** which is represented by the liturgical color white — the color of light, a symbol of Joy, Purity, and Innocence (absolute or restored). The remaining days of January are the beginning 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. It is used in the Offices and Masses of Ordinary Time. (catholicculture.org)

Σ ALPHA & OMEGA
 Ω
 Christ teacher
 THE WORD MASTER
 the almighty SON
 LORD OF SAVIOR OF MAN
 HEALER OF LORDS mediator
 ADVOCATE rock
 messiah Jesus
 ONLY BEGOTTEN SON
 comforter

A Few FEAST DAYS:

Jan. 1st – Mary, Mother of God

Jan. 6th – The Epiphany of the Lord

Jan. 8th – Baptism of the Lord

Jan. 22nd – Day of Prayer for the Unborn

Jan. 25th – Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle - (65 A.D.) Patron Saint of: Missions; Theologians; Gentile Christians.

Jan. 26th – Saints Timothy and Titus, Bishops - (97 A.D. & 96 A.D.) Timothy was baptized and later ordained to the priesthood by St. Paul. Titus a convert from paganism, was a fellow laborer of St. Paul on many apostolic missions.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

Jesus left his glory in heaven to be born into this world, to suffer, to die, and then to rise, to ascend to heaven, and to send the Holy Spirit upon us believers to make us his brothers and sisters and to share in eternal life. He left EVERYTHING in heaven, total detachment from His glory, power, and majesty. Our detachment from power, possessions, prestige and focus on pleasure is an offering to Him of our lives, albeit nothing equal to what His detachment was. For Jesus, nothing was more important than doing His Father's will to save us. For us, nothing is more important than to focus on Jesus rather than the things of this world.

Philippians 2: 5-11: *Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

MESSAGE FROM SDG DIRECTOR

In the news: San Francisco Archdiocese provides Thanksgiving meals to 1,200 incarcerated persons (McKenna Snow November 25, 2024). Volunteers with the Archdiocese helped deliver meals and handwritten cards on Nov. 21st at local county jails. Two chaplains also came and offered prayers of Thanksgiving. Julio Escobar, the Archdiocese's restorative justice coordinator, has spearheaded the now- annual initiative of bringing Thanksgiving meals and providing cards to incarcerated persons during the holidays.

"Bringing this special meal... makes a difference and [lets] them know that they are loved by God, and that they have dignity as human beings, despite the mistakes that they have done," Escobar told CatholicVote in a Nov. 22 interview.

In other news, on December 26, 2024, Pope Francis will open The Holy Door in the Rebibbia Prison of Rome (which symbolizes not just this penitentiary, but all prisons worldwide) for the 2025 jubilee year.

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To grow in a personal relationship with God: we encourage you to request the **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 C on the 1st Sunday of Advent, Dec. 1st. this year.**

If you are interested, Creative Options, Academy of Human Development is a non-profit organization offering Christian based correspondence courses in Anger Management, Parenting, 12-step AA/NA, etc. for incarcerated individuals. For more information, you may write directly to Creative Options at P.O. Box 181409, Coronado, CA 92118-9998.

New Year's Blessing from all of us here at St. Dismas Guild.

