

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

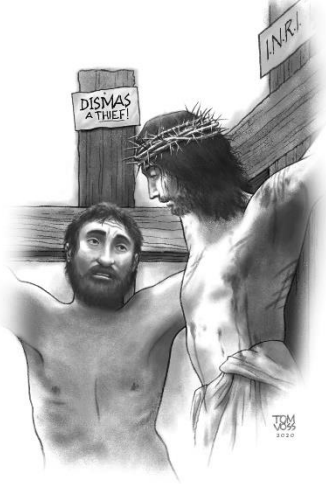
St. Dismas Guild is a nonprofit organization which provides Catholic Bibles and Bible Study workbooks, etc., free of charge, to inmates.

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

THE CHURCH'S DEDICATION FOR FEBRUARY:

is to the **Holy Family...**

February 2025



TESTIMONY

Dear St. Dismas Guild,

I just wanted to say thank you so very much for the reading material and the Bread of Life Bible study! I can't put into words what it's done for my understanding of the Mass. It prepares me all week long for the greatest gift I've ever received: being in the presence of our Lord.

My whole life, all I've ever wanted was to be accepted and truly belong (which is why I made some very bad choices). I grew up in a broken home and was passed from one family member to the next, so every time I turned around I was faced with new social and familial challenges. Trying to fit in, trying to stand out. Trying to be okay and comfortable in my own skin (which sadly, I wasn't and haven't been until recently). So here I am 8, 9, 10... years old thinking “if I were more like this person of this family or that person of that family, maybe I won't be passed around anymore.”

So, I started to adopt different characteristics from different people thinking that I would finally be accepted for who I was. All the while I did not realize that I can't be anyone but who God made me to be. I've sought acceptance from siblings, family on both my mother's and father's side, gangs, drug dealers/addicts, and women. Every person with whom I have had a relationship, never gave me the completion that I now feel by being a part of the most loving and accepting family (not to mention largest) that I've ever encountered. **By God's grace, I have finally found my home. Thank you for being part of my family and accepting me as part of yours. I can finally just be me!** And who knows, maybe now someone will aspire to be like me.

Lovingly written, R.C.

P.S. will you please send me the next Bread of Life Bible Study? Also feel free to use this in your newsletter- maybe it'll help someone else accept their place in life.

Many blessings to you R.C.! Thank you for sharing your journey in finding Christ in your life. Life can be very challenging when you don't feel loved or accepted. Especially like you, being brought up in a broken home where neither of your parents even knew how to love you.

The definition of acceptance is, "the act of embracing others as they are, offering love, forgiveness and grace." So like you, striving to find love in all the wrong places, you tried to fit in with people who accepted you for who you were, only to find out, in reality, they wanted you to be who they were, so as to fit in and to belong. In doing so, losing your own identity even more.

*All along the way. Jesus was right beside you like the poem "Footprints." It was Jesus who carried you through all those rough roads, trying to redirect your walks of life and challenging situations. **Isaiah 40:29-31 "He strengthens those who are weak and tired. Even those who are young grow weak. Young people can fall exhausted. But those who trust in the Lord for help, will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles, they will run and not get weary, they will walk and not grow weak."** Even though you have suffered the consequences because of your wrong choices, Jesus knows that, and He also knows your heart and what you're capable of. After all, He created you and all of us with a purpose.*

*You are now living that purpose. **"Accept one another, then for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you." Romans 15:7.** Jesus Christ has never stopped loving you. **"No trial has come to you, but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength, but with the trial, He will provide a way out so that you'll be able to bear it."** 1 Cor.10:13*

*You, R.C., have been blessed. **"This is the new being which God its creator is constantly renewing in His own image, in order to bring you to full knowledge of Himself (1Col.3:10)."** As you embrace this new life, **"keep your roots deep in the Lord and build your life on Him and become strong in your faith as you were taught and be filled with thanksgiving (Colossians 2:7)."** May the blessings of going to Mass bring you even closer as you also receive His body, blood, soul, and divinity in His True presence in the Eucharist. Where you become one in Him, with Him and through Him. May the Holy Spirit continue to enlighten you to find your journey. May God bless & protect you always.*

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

St. Dismas Guild, thank you for the monthly newsletters. I learn a lot from the testimonies of others. It's sad being locked up, **but even though prison life is full of difficulties, I praise and worship God daily.** He saved me, as I was drinking and driving, and I don't remember how I got home. I'm glad to say God has given me the strength to never drink again. I've been in prison for 24 years and six months and have not drunk alcohol in 24 years and eight months. I don't blame God for putting me here, as we have free will and I was making bad choices using beer, liquor, and prescription drugs, Vicodin. Though no one knows the future, I pray that I never ever drink again or use any kind of drug, prescription or not! **I love the Lord God and He knows best- He loves His creation and those that want to follow His ways and commandments. God is good. Worship God alone.** Thank you, God bless, I.C.

May God bless you Marie and late Deacon Ken

Dear I.C., Yours is a powerful testimony of God working in your life. God did not put you in prison, as you said, it was your choice to use alcohol and drugs that put you there. God loves everyone and forces no one to come to Him, even those who have turned their back on Him. You have had 24 years to turn back to Him and you are doing so when you praise and worship Him on a daily basis. You have experienced the saving love of Jesus. You said you never want to use drugs or alcohol again. If you keep the name of Jesus on your lips and in your mind and in your heart, He will help you conquer this addiction. Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" 2 Corinthians 12:9. Jesus says to you "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your heart be troubled or afraid" John 14:27. God bless you.

DEACON KEN'S CORNER

Letters from the late Deacon Ken Finn dated, May 1982.

"BE NOT AFRAID..."

Frank said, "Chaplain I know that the Lord wants to use me to spread HIS word, even here in jail and I'm not afraid." Frank then went out from his holding cell into the courtroom and heard the judge sentence him to 26 years to life for first-degree murder. That night Frank and I prayed that the Lord would indeed bless him and his response to God 's word. Frank again said to me, **"Chaplain I am not afraid because I have put my life into the Lord's hand, wherever HE leads me I will follow."**

I believe Frank. My prayers will be with him and his family wherever he is sent to pay for his crime.

SACRED TRADITION

The Church's Dedication for February: "...is dedicated to the **Holy Family**. The special devotion which proposes the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the model of virtue of all Christian households began in the 17th century. ... The feast was welcomed by succeeding Pontiffs as an efficacious means for bringing home to the Christian people the example of the Holy Family at Nazareth, and by the restoration of the true spirit of family life, stemming from, in some measure, the evils of



present-day society. ~ catholicculture.org

A Few FEAST DAYS:

Feb. 2nd – Presentation of the Lord – "occurs forty days after the birth of Jesus and is also known as Candlemas day, since the blessing and procession of candles is included in today's liturgy."

Feb. 8th – St. Josephine Bakhita – "Saint Josephine was a young Sudanese girl sold into slavery and brought to Italy. There she was baptized, and, having reached majority age, was granted her freedom by Italian law. She died after a long and painful illness, during which she would cry out to the Lord: "Please loosen the chains... they are so heavy!" Her dying words were "Our Lady! Our Lady!"

Feb. 11th – Our Lady of Lourdes – "Today marks the first apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1858 to fourteen-year-old Marie Bernadette (St. Bernadette) Soubirous. Between February 11 and July 16, 1858, the Blessed Virgin appeared eighteen times and showed herself to St. Bernadette in the hollow of the rock at Lourdes."

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION w/Fr. Richard

Examination of Conscience... Ask yourself these questions each evening before going to bed.

- #1. What people has Jesus brought into my life today?
- #2. What situations has Jesus allowed me to confront?
- #3. How did I allow Jesus to work through me?
- #4. How did I get in His way?

PRO-LIFE

"Mothers Rarely Make an 'Informed' Choice on Abortion - More than 93% of all induced abortions are done out of "choice" and not for medical reasons (such as the health of the mother).

Abortion clinics, such as Planned Parenthood, have a vested financial interest in the decision made by the mother. Those at these clinics who "counsel" women on their "options" often act as if abortion is the only alternative. As a result, mothers rarely make an informed choice,

In fact, it is no doubt true to say that no other medical procedure is performed with the same degree of patient ignorance than an abortion. This is plainly wrong. There is no good reason why any woman should go through surgery of any kind, particularly induced abortion, or even take powerful drugs to induce an abortion and not be informed about potentially serious side effects.

Expectant mothers rarely receive this and other important information before making a decision on abortion!" *Pro-LifeArticles.com*

MESSAGE FROM SDG DIRECTOR

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 Your life before Christ 1/3 How did Christ change your life? 1/3 How is God working in your life now? Please limit your testimony to 500 words.

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 C in Dec. 2024. Request yours today...**

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

