

St. Dismas Guild
P.O. Box 2129
Escondido, CA 92033

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
San Diego, CA
Permit No. 2114

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.

44 years of Newsletters!

Deacon Ken Finn began writing the SDG Newsletter in May 1982!

May 2026



DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Dear St. Dismas Guild, I am writing in response to your newsletter and have a request for the book *Overcoming Compulsive Behavior* and a bible! My Testimony – **I was living a “good life” but being a bad Catholic.** After struggling with sobriety, I went on a spiritual retreat and found God through Christ and our Blessed Mother October 2024. It was a Step 4 (of AA) workshop, but through a non-secular group from the central Coast of California. I was blessed to be able to work this critical step and relinquish all my resentments and literally burn the pages of my “inventory” at the foot of the cross. After praying the St. Francis prayer and my own reciting of the rosary, I was reminded of the verse in John 5:14 when Jesus told the man he cured on the Sabbath, **“Look, you have been made whole, go and sin no more, lest something worse should happen.”**

It came out that I was under investigation for a crime that happened sometime prior, and that the consequence was that I serve my time for my crimes. **Am I mad, sad, or put out? No! God has promised me life behind bars. This is my time to grow closer. I found Him that October day, and I continue to live with Him every day while away in prison.** I am blessed every day and grow stronger as time goes on! In time I will be home where I pray God works through me, whilst I get my degree in drug and alcohol studies to eventually become a counselor!

With God’s grace and mercy, anything is possible, and you are never alone, no matter how alone one may feel! God bless D.Q.

Dear D.Q., I can’t help but write this from hearing your joy in finding Jesus in October, “They are happy, whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own. The Lord looks on those who revere Him, on those who hope in His love, to rescue their souls from death, to keep them alive in famine.” It is He who chose you to be His own and has given you a future full of hope. Your time in prison is fruitful because you have responded. Your mind is at rest staying

focused on God and His Word. Overcoming Compulsive Behavior will help you to keep that focus as you memorize the scripture’s and apply them to your life there in prison amongst the evil from those who have not chosen Jesus as their Lord. May God bless you and keep you. May He let His face shine on you and be gracious to you. May He look upon you kindly and give you peace.

TESTIMONY

Dear St. Dismas Guild, thank you for all the work you do ministering to those of us who are incarcerated. We appreciate you and truly see the hand of God on your ministry. **I want to share my testimony to express all the wondrous things that the Lord has done in my life, to encourage others and to give God praise for never giving up on me.**

I grew up in a religious household, and I thank God for that. I always knew the Lord, but wavered in and out of truly following, trusting, and obeying Him; especially as I entered my teen and young adult years. I fell in with the wrong crowd and started living a worldly lifestyle. Negative strongholds took place in my life at that time, like drug addiction, lust/promiscuity, depression, anxiety, rage, self-hatred, and insecurity. It led to me doing a lot of things that I’m not proud of, like witchcraft, prostitution, and having an abortion. I even renounced my religion and lived as an atheist for a while, hardened by the world and all of the lies I believed in myself and others. I longed to be free of the emptiness and pain I held deep inside, but I was too ignorant and lost to see that the things I idolized were only driving me into a darker place, and only the love of Jesus Christ would free me.

My life changed when I was sentenced to prison at the age of 22 (I am now 36). A few weeks before the car accident that landed me in prison, I prayed the most heartfelt, desperate prayer I had ever prayed in my life. I told God that I was tired and couldn’t live in constant agony anymore. **I begged Him to help me and to free me from the life of spiritual prison that I was in. I didn’t know that going to actual prison would be my key to true freedom.** My car accident resulted

in the death of a man from my local church, and it filled me with guilt, shame, dread, and deep remorse. This was the turning point in my life, and I believe God used this situation to reveal the deadly path I was on and the damage my lifestyle was causing to my community, my family, and myself. I renounced my immoral lifestyle and vowed to change. God spared me and I would live a life pleasing to Him. My entire purpose now is to bring forth goodness in all that I do to honor God and the lost life of a precious fellow believer.

This time spent in prison has allowed me to truly know God in a way I never have before. I joined the prison choir and led Bible Studies. I currently work in the religious services office here and plan to go into ministry when I'm released. When I honestly confessed my sins and saw myself for who I was – broken, lost sinner addicted to self-destruction – I could allow the Holy Spirit in to do its work within me. My heart overflows with joy each day and I no longer struggle with depression, anxiety, rage, or self-hatred. I am committed to my sobriety and growing in my love towards others each and everyday, filled with the patience and kindness that only comes from the Holy Spirit.

I am grateful to God for giving me a second chance and not forsaking me for all that I've done. I pray for all believers around the world and for the growth and permanence of ministries such as yours, that hearts may continue to be touched and transformed by the love of God. I end this with a sincere prayer request for my victim's family, that they continue to heal and receive the Lord's comfort; and find it in their hearts to forgive me – not for myself but for them. Thank you and God Bless, N.R.

*Dear N.R., Your story of brokenness and redemption is truly beautiful. It echoes the Prodigal Son in **Luke 15:24, 32** — “My son was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and has been found.”*

God allowed you to wander, choosing your own will over His, yet in His mercy He heard your prayers and saw your tears. He has healed you (2 Kings 20:5). As Sirach 5:16 reminds us, we choose between life and death — and you have chosen life.

The Lord knew your heart and plans long before you were born (Jeremiah 29:11-14). In prison, He opened your heart, and you began to bloom. He has created in you a pure heart and renewed your spirit (Psalm 51:10). Your wounds are healing, and you are becoming like a well-watered garden that never runs dry (Isaiah 58:8-9, 11).

Look at the fruit you are already bearing Bible study, choir, and your desire to serve and shine for Him after release. As Jesus said in John 15:1-2, 7 — the Father prunes every branch so it can bear even more fruit. You have been pruned, and now you remain in Him.

N.R., you are transformed by God's grace, love, and mercy. May the Lord bless your path, so that others see not you, but only Jesus shining through you. God bless your new journey!

DEACON KEN'S CORNER

The late Deacon Ken Finn's commentary for Ascension Thursday, from *The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study*, for Matthew 28:16-20

This feast is a time of joy, a time of consolation, and of course, a time of hope for anyone who is a true believer. We celebrate the feast day on the strength of His promise to always be with us and the power of His commission to evangelize. We know that earthly death awaits every one of us, but because of His promise, we also know that it is not

the end of us, but rather the beginning. Today's feast is the reminder of this consoling fact.

I invite you to picture the eleven disciples going to the mountain in Galilee as Jesus had directed them through the women at the tomb (Matthew 28:10). When they saw Him, many fell on their knees and worshiped Him, even those who had some doubts. His last words and appearance on earth still ring out with authority and power. He told them that all authority on heaven and earth had been given to Him. He gave them access to that power when He entrusted to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the leadership of His Church on earth (Matthew 16:16-19). This authority has been passed down from Peter to the succession of Popes in the Church.

Today, the Church teaches us with that same authority and power to go forth and make disciples of all nations. Jesus told them to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He closes by telling His disciples that He would be with them always. **He is telling us that same message today, we are to go out and make disciples of all nations and that He would be with us for all ages. Go forth now and do the right thing.**

SACRED TRADITION

THE CHURCH'S DEDICATION FOR MAY: is to

The Blessed Virgin Mary. "For this is the month during which Christians, in their churches and their homes, offer the Virgin Mother more fervent and loving acts of homage and veneration; and it is the month in which a greater abundance of God's merciful gifts comes down to us from our Mother's throne."

- Pope Saint Paul VI, *The Month of May*



A Few FEAST DAYS:

May 1st – **St. Joseph** the Worker

May 3rd – **Sts. Philip and James**, Apostles

May 13th – **Our Lady of Fatima**

May 14th – **St. Matthias**, Apostle

May 14th – **Ascension** Thursday

~ catholicculture.org

FROM THE DIRECTOR

To deepen your personal relationship with God and draw closer to His heart, we warmly invite you to request *The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study* workbook, written by our founders, Deacon Ken and Marie Finn.

This powerful resource follows the Church's Liturgical Calendar and will guide you in prayerfully preparing for the upcoming Sunday Mass readings, opening your heart to the living Word of God. We are currently in Cycle A.

Take this beautiful step on your faith journey today — request your Cycle A workbook and our list of books and experience the transforming power of Scripture in your life!

+++++

If you're contacting us after reading our newsletter on EDOVO, please let us know. This helps us update our records and gather feedback on how effectively the newsletter is reaching more people.

*May the peace of Christ be with you all,
St. Dismas Guild*

