



St. Dismas Guild

Sept. 2018

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

PO Box 2129 Escondido CA 92033 – www.stdismasguild.org



Last month we were able to send, free of charge, 151 packages at a cost ranging from \$15-25 per package, and 4,344 Newsletters at a cost of \$1,400. With your continued prayers and financial help, we hope to increase our mailing each month. We thank you and appreciate your generosity.

TESTIMONY

Dear St. Dismas Guild, I was very touched by this latest newsletter. Thanks again for sending it. I saw at the bottom “requests” about sharing our testimonies in 500 words or less, so I tried to squeeze mine in. I definitely am proof of “light in dark places”. I may have said this before, but I stand by it still (when the nights grow the darkest, the Light glows the brightest). Anyway, thanks for all you do. Praise the Lord for you! My Our Blessed Lady embrace you all always, as she has me! May the grace of Our Lord be with you all, always. Sincerely, B.S.

My Testimony... When I was conceived, it was the result of a date rape. My mother was only 16 and turned 17 when I was born. From what I have discovered, my father (whom I still have never met) drugged my mother and from their union mom got me. Everyone was telling her to abort me, but she wouldn’t, so my testimony is also one of the many reasons I am pro-life. She loved me and through her love I came to know Jesus. She taught me how to pray, etc.

Growing up was painful for me. My mom overdosed on drugs when I was 8 years old. I comforted her as she was dying, along with my little brother and sister who were hysterical as she fell through the glass coffee table. My memories are shady at best but after that I moved around a lot. I remember being abused and being homeless most of the time. However, I always had my faith in Jesus.

Living in rough neighborhoods I experienced a lot of bullies. I ended up fighting a lot. That tenacious sentiment stayed with me as I enlisted in the U.S. Army. After returning from overseas my grandmother was dying. She was like a mother to me, so I was deeply hurt. I tried to cope with my loss while on emergency leave but fell to using drugs. I was eventually court martialled, lost all my benefits and did a year in military prison (a very dark place.)

I hit rock bottom as a homeless addict, came to prison and have since learned about the Catholic Church, thanks to St. Dismas Guild. I now have been called to the religious life. Since being confirmed as Roman Catholic I have started my own company. We help inmates get copyrights for their artwork/music/books, etc. Any profits will go to ministries, such as St. Dismas, and charities, such as Wounded Warriors project, also St. Jude’s. I am even now as I write this enrolled in a new program which gives free college to inmates who qualify, and this continues after we are released. At the end of it we can obtain a BA degree and may even be eligible for a full pardon. With a clean record I hope to attend a seminary and use these experiences God allowed me to have to be a good priest someday.

I was full of despair when I felt Mary’s Immaculate Heart touch mine. Through Mary to Jesus does work. A little Hope goes very far, and only a spec of Faith really can move mountains. I’m living proof. God bless you all! B.J.S.

Dear B.J.S., You have had a tough background having no father figure, but through the grace of God He gave you a mother who wanted you and nurtured you for 8 years. Her love and then your grandmothers love led you into a realization of God’s Love for you. Paul wrote to Timothy saying in 2 Timothy 1:5, “I find myself thinking of your sincere faith—faith which first belonged to your grandmother Lois and to your mother Eunice...”. That loss of your mom must have been devastating. It’s amazing how the grace of God inspired you to help others as you are doing now. We will keep you in our prayers as you move on to a higher education and you are right, through Mary to Jesus does work. Your relationship with your Mom and Grandmother opened the door for you to the Blessed Virgin Mary, your true mother, leading you to Jesus and Jesus leading you to the Father, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” John 14:9

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Dear St. Dismas Guild, I have recently become housed with a brother who showed me your newsletter. I would like to sign up to start receiving it as well. I have only recently become a believer. I started as what I guess would be non-denominational Protestant. I did quite a few studies and read quite a few books from that perspective. A lot of them don’t speak very kindly of the Catholic Church, and I found that very unfortunate. It’s not speaking out of love in my opinion. The good thing is it did lead me to learn of the church myself which led me to embrace the Catholic faith. Honestly, I love everything about it, although I am a bit overwhelmed. It is a lot to learn and I’m impatient. I would greatly appreciate it if you would please enroll me in your Bible Study. I would also be grateful for any additional learning materials you could offer. Thank you and God Bless. B.S.

Dear B.S., You have a keen sense of discernment for a new believer. The Lord has put it on your heart to learn for yourself and not listen to negative remarks about a church or a person. Right now, the Church is going through a great cleansing with all the scandal going on. This is a perverse generation. “What an unbelieving and perverse lot you are!” Matthew 17:17 You cannot put your faith in man or even trust in him as Psalm 118:8 says, “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.” The Holy Spirit is guiding the Church as it continues over the centuries ever since Jesus established it with Peter as the first Pope and leader of the Roman Catholic Church. Peter was a man, a sinner saved by the grace of God. Getting to know Jesus and following in His footsteps will bring you great peace. The Bread of Life Bible Study will teach you what you need to know about Jesus and by following in His footsteps you will find who you are in Him. As you do the Bible Study we will pray Psalm 20:5 for you, “May

St. Dismas Guild: Catholic Evangelization through Scripture and ministry to the prisons.

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He grant you what is in your heart and fulfill your every plan." The Holy Spirit is drawing you to Himself. Jesus, when He ascended into heaven left us His Spirit who guides us to all truth. Stay off what other people say about the church and be transformed by the renewal of your mind through study and reflection on the Word of God. You will discover the peace that passes all understanding right there in prison. God bless you.

FAMILY MINISTRY

Pope Frances Prayer Intention: Universal – Young People in Africa: That young people in Africa may have access to education and work in their own countries.

The month of September is dedicated to **Our Lady of Sorrows**, whose memorial the Church celebrates on September 15. September falls during the liturgical season known as **Ordinary Time**, which is represented by the liturgical color green.



Remembering Mother Teresa: Now Saint Teresa of Calcutta. Her **Feast day: September 5, Patron of World Youth Day, Birth:1910, Death:1997, Beatified By: Pope John Paul II, Declared a Saint By: Pope Francis, September 4, 2016.**

“Dear Deacon Ken Finn, thank you for sending me a copy of the book you wrote on the **family**. The **family** is such a beautiful gift of God – the place where we first learned that we are made for greater things, to love and to be loved. Spread the message of **family** love and unity through **family** prayer. I pray that many **families** may come to love God and each other through your book. God bless you, Mother Theresa”

(In reference to the book "Secrets of a Happy **Family**" by Deacon Ken and Marie Finn. Find it on our list of books.)

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

By Fr. Richard Perozich

How long does it take to recover from an alcoholic father and promiscuous mother? I became like them and ended up in prison. I want to change.

The time for recovery, a peace in one's self where these memories no longer dominate thoughts and behaviors varies with each person.

*Each one of us must integrate the biological, psychological (how one handles life experiences), social, emotional, ethical (right and wrong value), moral (actions), and **spiritual** aspects of life. Develop of one or more affects the others.*

*What are the memories of the parents' behaviors? What triggers my memory, my behaviors, my reactions to them even though they are in the past? Have I brought the memories and my own behaviors to **Jesus Christ**? What does He say to me in the **bible** regarding these in my own life? How does He speak to me in **prayer**? Have I **forgiven** my parents for what they have done that might have affected me? Do I renew that forgiveness and **rebuke** the memories each time they come up? Have I been able to share with compassionate, loving people what I feel? Have I made amends to those whom I have hurt?*

The Bible, personal prayer, the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Penance, compassionate listeners, the 12 steps all help. With Jesus Christ, all things are

possible. Romans 7:14-25, "I do what I don't want to do and don't do what I will," Jesus can save me.

PRO-LIFE

Letter from an inmate...

I am replying to the question, “Why are you **Pro-Life**?” I am **Pro-Life** because I believe God made each of us and knows us from our mother’s womb (Jeremiah 1:5). I also firmly think that abortion is not just a terrible sin against God and His creation, but it also deprives the world of some of the greatest men and women and their minds of our time.

If you look at the lives of a lot of great people of the past, you will find that many had a rough start in life. Many were poor and lived in bad neighborhoods and had a lot of adversity in their lives. But due to the hardness of their lives, they were able to turn that adversity into opportunity and become great men and women. I feel this is lacking now days therefore depriving some great men and women in our lifetime.

However, I think the church in general (all churches) should do more to help the expectant mothers so abortion would not even be an option to them.

I do applaud the media using women's stories about past abortions and how the woman felt and more in to the loss of their precious child.

Thank you, brothers and sisters in Christ for letting me respond to this. Sincerely, D.P.

*Thank you, D.P. for taking the time to write to us about your position and understanding of being **Pro-Life**... Fortunately, many churches are pro-active in helping women who find themselves in unplanned pregnancies. They share information about local **Pro-Life** clinics and mobile units who help women with medical care, free ultrasounds, prenatal vitamins, diapers, formula, clothing, or resources for adoption agencies, just to name a few. Let's continue to pray for the end of abortion.*

SACRED TRADITION

THE BIBLE ALONE?

The Bible instructs Christians to hold fast to the *traditions* handed down to them and to shun those that do not act according to those traditions. (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15; 2 Thess 3:6.)

The Bible confirms that not everything Jesus said is in the Bible. (Jn 21:25; Acts 20:35.)

The Bible explains that faith also comes to us from what is *heard*, not just from what is written. (2 Tim 1:13; 2 Tim 2:2; 1 Pet 1:25; Rom 10:17; 1 Cor 15:1-2; Mk 16:15; Mt 23:2-3.)

The Bible encourages Christians to read it (2 Tim 3:16), but also cautions them against relying upon *private interpretations* of it. (2 Pet 1:20; 2 Pet 3:15-16.)

The Bible canon was established by the Catholic Church in 393 A.D. at the Synod of Hippo. It contained seven Old Testament books (Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and Baruch) that Jesus and the apostles knew and relied upon. These seven Biblical books that were in the sealed canon of scripture were inappropriately removed from Protestant Bibles in the 16th century by Reformation leaders who had no legitimate authority to do so.

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Seeking Testimonies... Please write to us and tell us your story, format your testimony in this way - 1/3 Child/teenage years, 1/3 How did Christ change your life? and 1/3 How is God working in your life now? Please limit it to 500 words. Thank you...

Be assured of our continued prayers from all our St. Dismas Guild volunteers and patrons.