

# THIS DAY

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A Newsletter  
Published by  
DISMAS MINISTRY  
*A National Catholic  
Outreach for Inmates,  
Victims, Their Families,  
Those Released from Prison  
and the Community.*

**Please Note:**  
If you receive a duplicate newsletter we  
would ask you to share it with someone  
who might be interested in our ministry.  
*Thank you!*

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registered as a nonprofit  
corporation in the State of  
Wisconsin, and listed in the  
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## From the U.S. Catholic Bishops

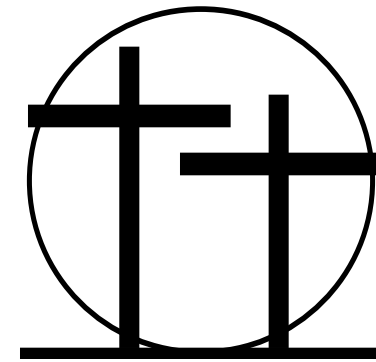
Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: **A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice**

Issued by US Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 15, 2000

### Scriptural Foundations

*The Old Testament provides us with a rich tradition that demonstrates both God's justice and mercy. The Lord offered to his people Ten Commandments, very basic rules for living from which the Israelites formed their own laws in a covenant relationship with God. Punishment was required, reparations were demanded, and relationships were restored. But the Lord never abandoned his people despite their sins. And in times of trouble, victims relied on God's love and mercy, and then on each other to find comfort and support (Is 57:18-21; Ps 94:19).??Just as God never abandons us, so too we must be in covenant with one another. We are all sinners, and our response to sin and failure should not be abandonment and despair, but rather justice, contrition, reparation, and return or reintegration of all into the community.*

*The New Testament builds on this tradition and extends it. Jesus demonstrated his disappointment with those who oppressed others (Mt 23) and those who defiled sacred spaces (John 2). At the same time, he rejected punishment for its own sake, noting that we are all sinners (John 8). Jesus also rejected revenge and retaliation and was ever hopeful that offenders would transform their lives and turn to be embraced by God's love.??Jesus, who himself was a prisoner, calls us to visit the imprisoned and to take care of the sick (including victims of crime), the homeless, and the hungry (Mt 25). His mission began with proclaiming good news to the poor and release to captives (Luke 4). In our day, we are called to find Christ in young children at risk, troubled youth, prisoners in our jails and on death row, and crime victims experiencing pain and loss.*



Remember me.  
Luke 23:42

### The Story of St. Dismas

One of the criminals hanging in crucifixion said: *"We are only paying the price for what we have done, but this man has done nothing wrong."*

He then said, *"Jesus, remember me when you enter upon your reign."*

And Jesus replied, *"I assure you: this day you will be with me in paradise."* Luke 23: 39-43



### The Seed of God's Word

"I am interested in your Catholic Bible study because today I became a part of the Catholic family here at the prison. I have this wonderful friend with me who is already doing your Bible study. He told me to write to you because he told me that it will teach me all about my new religion. I am happy to be a part of the Catholic family in the world."

- An Inmate

# This Day

Summer

2011

A Newsletter Published by Dismas Ministry

*A National Catholic Outreach for Inmates, Victims, their Families, and the Community.*

## New Leadership for the Ministry

On July 15, 2011 our board of directors elected new officers and approved a new member of the board. In keeping with the national scope of its mission to incarcerated Catholics, the board elected two members from Texas and California. The new president, **Fr. Ron Cloutier**, (right) brings many years of ministry experience as founder the *Texas Catholic Correctional Chaplains Association* and as the Director of *Correctional Ministry for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston*. Honorable **Diane Sykes** remained as vice president, while **Fr. James Connell**, Archdiocese of Milwaukee, will serve as the new board treasurer. Besides being a CPA, he is pastor of St. Clement Parish in Sheboygan (WI), and brings pastoral outreach to the inmates of Wisconsin's Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution. **Amalia Molina** was elected secretary. She serves in the *Office of Restorative Justice of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles*, is also founder and director of *Families of the Incarcerated*, which helps families keep in touch with their incarcerated loved ones. The board also welcomed as a new member **Deacon Al Stockert**, Director of Prison Ministry, Diocese of Biloxi (MS).



## Bishop Sklba Retires as Board President

Bishop Richard J. Sklba, shown with Deacon Dick Niggemann at Dismas Ministry's 10th anniversary Mass, retired as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at the end of 2010. He also has retired as Dismas Ministry's



board president after serving in that position for 10 years, since the founding of the ministry in 2000. His dedication to Catholic inmates was evidenced by his many visits among them in south eastern Wisconsin over the years. His biblical scholarship also served the ministry well as it prepared *"God with Us"* - a unique Catholic Bible study course created especially for inmates. Prayers and good wishes go with Bishop Sklba in his retirement.

## Letters from Chaplains and Ministries

Dear Dismas Ministry,

Here at the Burleigh County Jail, Bismarck, North Dakota, we have been giving out your book, "Pray in the Spirit." To begin this story, I gave one of these books to a female inmate who was Catholic. It wasn't long before four other women asked to have a copy also. Some of them were not Catholic, but didn't know how to pray. Together the women started praying the prayers together in the cell before they went to bed. Then they started asking to visit with me concerning their spiritual needs. One of the prayers they were praying was the Prayer for Contrition. When I would ask them if they knew that their sins were forgiven, they all started answering, yes - because they had prayed that prayer. They just had the simple faith that if they prayed the prayer God would forgive them.

This then has opened the door for me to take them to the next step of giving up their old ways of life and starting a new life - turning over a new leaf. They are all doing very well and have hope that they can change. This prayer meeting is still going. In the next week there will be two or three of them transitioning out to another prison. However, they do have a good start spiritually and I can refer them on to the chaplain who works the prison. It has been really great to see God move by his Spirit through your work. Thanks!!

Senior Chaplain, Burleigh County Jail, Bismarck, North Dakota

Dear Dismas Ministry,

As usual you reply promptly to my requests and are always willing to assist us in keeping God-centered material in the hands of our inmates. They are always delighted and blessed to receive these "treasures" and looking at the dog-eared copies of those who received them earlier, I can see that they are definitely well-used. Your ministry has blessed so many lives, thank you for helping the women get closer to their Catholic faith. You have been an instrument of bringing many who have gone astray back into the fold. Thank you from all of us! May God continue to shine His light on you and this beautiful and powerful ministry.

Catholic Volunteer, Arizona

## Letters from Inmates

Dear Dismas Ministry,

I completed all three parts of the Catholic Faith Study and have already received all three certificates. I am now working on Part 3 of the Catholic Bible Study. I am using all three books of the Faith Study to teach and share with those in my study group. Thank you.

Inmate, Maryland Correctional Institution-Hagerstown

Dear Dismas Ministry,

"You have helped me through some tough times...With the aid of the (Pray in the Spirit) prayer book I was able to remember some of the prayers I learned in my Catechism classes. There is another inmate (with whom) I've shared some scriptures, and I gave him my Pray in the Spirit book to help him pray at night. Can you please send me a Bible and another prayer book so I can continue my course study?...I gave (him) mine because he needed it more than I did...Thank you."

Inmate, Weber County Correctional Facility, Ogden, Utah

## Thank You for Your Prayers



Dear Friends,

As I write it is the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene. She is well known as the one from whom Jesus removed 7 demons, and also as "apostle to the apostles" since she announced the resurrection to Peter and the disciples after Jesus appeared to her in the garden. However, while working on "Prayer in the New Testament" (Part 2 of "Pray Always" a 3-part study course for inmates) I reflected on a short passage about Mary Magdalene. It speaks profoundly of how she faced the death and burial of her "Rabbouni" as she called him in Aramaic. The passage occurs in Matthew 27: 61 after the body of Jesus has been sealed in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea: "...but Mary Magdalene remained sitting there, facing the tomb." In the study this is called the Prayer of Facing the Tomb which is a wordless prayer, so deeply is the heart gripped by the reality of death. We too face many forms of death: chronic or terminal illness, the diminishment of old age, situations that leave us powerless or imprisoned by the attitudes or addictions of others, or actual imprisonment. This great apostle and follower of Jesus gives us a powerful example of prayer and discipleship. She faced Christ's burial head on, without understanding of why. To all appearances, it was the end of his ministry so full of hope. But her love kept her facing the tomb, vigilant and faithful. Parents watching a child's sick bed, a bread winner losing a job, a program losing its funding, the loss of a retirement fund—there are a few of the forms of daily dying and powerlessness that cause us to *face the tomb*. There are few or no words at all to this form of prayer, only quiet tears and a heart that is torn like the veil of the temple at the moment Jesus died. As Psalm 130: 6 expresses it: "My soul waits for the Lord, more than sentinels wait for the dawn."

With hope in the victory of Christ,

*Ron Zeilinger*

Ron Zeilinger, Executive Director

## *A Memorial Gift*

Honor the memory of a loved one or honor a special person with a gift in their name to our ministry.

Contact Dismas Ministry and request a *Memorial* folder. Then fill it out and give to whomever you wish. Send your gift to support the work of Dismas Ministry as you honor the person you name.

To request a *Memorial* folder write to:

**Dismas Ministry**  
**PO Box 070363**  
**Milwaukee, WI 53207**

or email:  
**dismas@dismasministry.org**



*"My soul waits for the Lord,  
more than sentinels  
wait for the dawn,"*

Psalm 130: 6