

# THIS DAY

PO BOX 070363 • MILWAUKEE WI 53207

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #5011  
MILWAUKEE WI

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 received a duplicate newsletter  
please let us know your exact address.  
*Thank you!*

DISMAS MINISTRY is  
registered as a nonprofit  
corporation in the State of  
Wisconsin, and listed in the  
*US Catholic Directory* as a  
religious, tax exempt 501  
(c) (3) organization.  
All gifts are tax deductible.

## March 25 Is the Feast of St. Dismas

Every year on March 25, the feast of St. Dismas, all our Union of Prayer members, our donors, prison ministry collaborators across the country and especially those we serve – the inmates and their chaplains – are remembered in a special way during the Mass of the day.

We are deeply grateful for all the graces God has given us to do this work on behalf of the Body of Christ behind bars. They may be out of sight but inmates remain worthy of pastoral care by right of their baptism.

*May God bless you all abundantly and watch over you with tender care!*

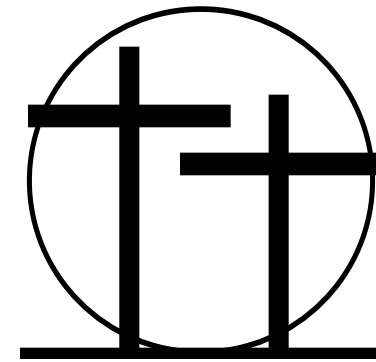
## New Archdiocesan Delegate Appointed

Dismas Ministry received the news from Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI toward the end of 2011 that our new archdiocesan delegate is Most Rev. Donald J. Hying, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Milwaukee. We welcome Bishop Hying and look forward to his presence and the endorsement he brings to Dismas Ministry as a recognized ministry in the Catholic Church.



## New Honorary Board Established

On January 21 Dismas Ministry's governing board approved the establishment of an honorary board. Members of this new board lend their names and give endorsement to our ministry. They are: Cardinal Daniel DiNardo (*Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston*), Rev. Greg Boyle, SJ (*Founder-Homeboys Industries, Los Angeles*), Pat Nolan (*Justice Fellowship and Author-When Prisoners Return*), Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ (*Author-Dead Man Walking*), Dale Recinella, JD, (*Florida Death Row Ministry and Author-The Biblical Truth About America's Death Penalty*). We are honored to be associated with these wonderful witnesses to the gospel and the works of mercy.



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

## A Dandelion in Winter



One day, while walking with some of the sisters, Sr. Lois suddenly said out of the blue: "and another thing about my funeral, I would like a dandelion at my funeral!" Although Sr. Lois died in December, the sisters noticed that several dandelions were blooming on the convent grounds. Sr. Florence said, *"It seemed that everywhere we looked, there was a dandelion blooming."* so they gathered a few for her funeral. It also seems Sr. Lois got more than her wish!

# This Day

Lent-Easter

2012

A Newsletter Published by Dismas Ministry

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

## In Memory Sister Lois Justen

On December 10, 2011, our dear friend and the ministry's *first volunteer*, Sister Lois Justen, OSF, went home to God unexpectedly. She was found in her room unconscious at 6:00 a.m. and taken immediately to St. Luke's Hospital. She died at 2:25 p.m. as several of her sisters kept vigil and prayed. She was 70 years old.

In the spirit of St. Francis, she permitted her body to be taken for medical purposes. Afterward her ashes were returned to St. Francis Convent for the Mass of Christian Burial on December 20.

Before the Mass sisters and friends had the opportunity to share their memories of Sister Lois. The picture emerged of a hard-working, dedicated, cheerful and sometimes mischievous person. She served many years as a school teacher, principal, parish administrator, and before retirement as director of Juniper and Canticle Courts—a senior living complex on the grounds of St. Francis Convent. Ill health required that she finally retire.

Even in retirement she was not one to "stay put." She found many ways to continue serving. She assisted the older retired sisters in Clare Hall, as well as answered phones at the nearby seminary and motherhouse, and since 2009 volunteered with Dismas Ministry in "pastoral response." This meant that she assisted the director with personal letter-writing to inmates, providing prayers, encouragement and answers for specific questions about the faith, or where to find help once they got out of prison. She would make every effort to find specific information for them. She would search the internet for contacts in their state for churches, agencies and halfway houses that could help them. She loved God's friends in and out of prison, and worked from her own small room where she set up a computer and printer alongside her bed. At her Jubilee she said: *"I am so humbled for being chosen by so great a God."* And we have been so blessed by her gracious spirit. *Welcome home, Sr. Lois!*



*Sister Lois Justen celebrating 50 years  
as a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi*

Born August 9, 1941 • Died December 10, 2011

# Hearing from Christ's Body behind bars...

## Chaplains and Ministries

I checked out your website and saw the Bible and faith study courses we could download and am totally amazed. God bless you for all your work for God's forgotten ones. I am very excited to start this program with the men and know that many of them, although Catholic, do not know too much about their faith. This will definitely help them. God's blessing and protection. -Ministry

The Bibles you sent us this past year have been such a gift. It is a treat to meet with women and men who are rediscovering the gift of God's Word. If you can spare two boxes of New American Bibles in English we would so appreciate it. Many blessings on your ministry. We pray for you with each group we gather with. Peace and all good. -Chaplain

Thank you for the shipment of 200 Spanish Bibles in paperback. As Father Clif shared with you, these will be used to replenish the supply of Spanish Bibles in our library. They are made available to the detainees for their unlimited usage during their stay here, but are returned to the library upon the departure of the detainee. Since it has been several years since the last supply was added to the library, attrition and wear of the older supply had reduced the supply to less than sufficient levels. Several times per week I would be asked by different men, "How can I get a Bible?" For the last long while, my response has had to be "Look in the Library and see if there are any Spanish Bibles there." Now, for the next while, I can be more confident that there will, indeed, be a Bible there for our men to use in personal and group devotion and Bible study. May God's blessings continue to rest upon you and your ministry as you serve "the least of these my brothers." -Chaplain



## Inmates

"Man's maker was made man that He, Ruler of the Milky Way, might nurse at His mother's breast. that the Bread might hunger, the Fountain thirst, the Light sleep, the Way be tired in journey, that Truth might be accused by false witness, the Teacher be beaten with whips, the Foundation be suspended on wood, that Strength might weaken, that the Healer might be wounded, that Life might die." These profound words were written by St. Augustine in a sermon (Number 191). I wanted to share them with you so that you may meditate upon them this season with me. May God bless Dismas Ministry for all the blessings you share with others. Your brother in Christ. -Inmate

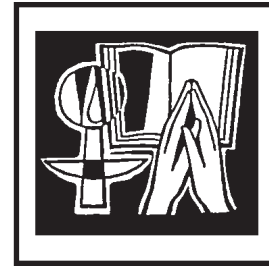
I was in prison for two years. During that time I became a Catholic. It was from your generous help that educated me. Upon my release I have remained sober and doing well with my probation. I have also been going to college I owe all my success to Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Much protection and guidance has been given to me. -Inmate

Thank you for the Bible study! I have learned a lot these past months that I didn't know before. I have about one year left to my sentence. After I'm out I'm going to show off all my certificates to everyone by hanging them in frames on my walls. My father will be very proud of me and so will my children. Thank you. -Inmate

I want to thank you for Sr. Lois's letter that has touched my heart so profoundly. I honestly do not know what to say. Through the work of Sr. Lois, a deacon was able to find me at this prison. We have talked a little about me being baptized. Thank you for sending Sr. Lois's letter and showing our care for someone in a place like this. -Inmate

Note: As with two other inmates, we sent the letters that were found sealed and ready to mail in Sr. Lois's room at the convent. She died before she could mail them so we sent them to the inmates later.

# Thank you for Your Prayers



Dear Friends,

Many times in the past I have traveled three hours west to the Trappist monastery in New Melleray, Iowa for spiritual *time off*. I recall seeing the monks' graves and the older tombstones with the words "Gone Home" carved on them. That's what came to mind when I heard that Sr. Lois had died. I truly believe she has gone home to be with the God she served so faithfully as a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi.

A lot of other words come to mind when I think of Sr. Lois. She was gentle and cheerful with a twinkle in her eye, yet a power house of energy and drive despite her small, frail appearance. One day it had snowed and the walk from Clare Hall where she lived to the main convent was covered with snow. Nevertheless, she set out with her walker determined to reach the convent office where she volunteered to answer the phones.

She also was a volunteer—our first—with Dismas Ministry. She provided a personal touch with inmates who wrote to us. One of these friends behind bars, Jessie, loved her and was deeply upset to learn that she had died. Sr. Lois and I had helped him prepare for baptism into the Catholic faith. In her letters she helped answer his many requests for information about his new faith. Another friend, Bob, now released, also was deeply touched by her spiritual support: "She always told me 'God loves you.'"

Although we no longer see her, we feel she is still looking after us. Right after she died I said to her: "Ok, just because you're in heaven doesn't mean you can rest. Now you have to find us your replacement!" And she did – three Sisters of St. Francis and three lay women came forward to volunteer with our ministry.

Sr. Lois and I would meet sometimes for lunch (on her tab at the convent) and we would talk about our dreams for Dismas Ministry, how it would one day fulfill its mission and become available to inmates in all 50 states. Not long ago

## *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**

she asked "why aren't we there yet?" and I told her that we would need an annual budget of \$500,000 to reach that goal. The most painful part of our ministry has been turning away inmates and chaplains when they ask for a Bible. It seems unimaginable that we must deny them the Word of God. But until we gain sufficient funding, the remaining 7 states who lock up great numbers of inmates (CA, FL, NY, OH, PA, TX) are not yet included in our area of service.

So Sr. Lois and I would dream great dreams for God and his friends in prison, and pray for the day when Dismas Ministry could finally serve every Catholic inmate in every state. Her frail body had a big heart that was patterned after Christ who loved the poor and the outcast. I am grateful to God for the gift we had in Sr. Lois and her prayers for us now in heaven.

*And I am deeply grateful to all of you who pray for us so faithfully - it is an apostolate that supports this ministry, the prisoners we serve, and each another. Your prayers are an invaluable part of this ministry!*

In Christ's death and resurrection,

*Ron Zeilinger*  
Ron Zeilinger, Director