



THIS DAY

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

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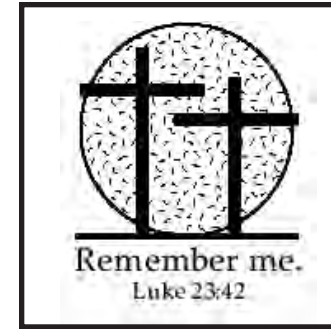
Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration:

A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice
A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of the United States, November 15, 2000

Crime and the Catholic Community

Many of our parishes dramatically reflect the human and other costs of so much crime. The church doors are locked; the microphones hidden. Parishes spend more on bars for their windows than on flowers for their altars. More tragically, they bury young people caught in gang violence, the drug trade, or the hopelessness that leads children to take their own lives. These parishes reach out to prisoners and their families, offering help and hope to those caught up in crime and the criminal justice system. They also struggle to respond to the needs of crime victims: the parents who lose a child, the elderly woman who is mugged, the shopkeeper who is robbed, the child whose parent is in jail.

As bishops, teachers, and pastors, we seek to offer a perspective inspired by our Catholic tradition to the national discussion on crime. For us, crime and the destruction it brings raise fundamental questions about the nature of personal responsibility, community, sin, and redemption. A distinctively Catholic approach to these questions can offer society another way to understand and respond to crime, its victims, and its perpetrators. We approach this topic, however, with caution and modesty. The causes of crime are complex. The ways to overcome violence are not simple. The chances of being misunderstood are many.



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 Prayer Study for You?

We created *Pray Always: A Catholic Prayer Study* so that inmates could learn about the rich treasury of Catholic prayer. It includes stories of models of prayer - the women and men of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the early church to our modern era.

We can't afford to send you the 3-set books for free but we can offer them to you for the cost of printing and postage. If you'd like to receive *Pray Always: A Catholic Prayer Study* send us the form on this page.

THIS DAY

EASTER 2015

A NEWS LETTER PUBLISHED BY DISMAS MINISTRY
A National Catholic Outreach for Inmates, Victims, their Families and the Community.

"He is risen, he is not here!"

When Jesus broke out of the prison of his tomb on Easter morning, he freed all of us from the deathly effects of our sins and gave us the promise of new life with him, beginning now and lasting into eternal life.



Every victory in the life an inmate that overcomes past habits, and ways of harming themselves and others, is a victory of life over death. What a grace it would be to hear an angel announcing to a guard looking for an inmate, "he is not here, he has risen."

We don't mean that he or she escaped justice, but that the prisoner was freed in mind, heart and soul to become the person God meant them to be from the beginning of creation in their mother's womb.

As an inmate wrote recently after receiving a free Catholic Bible and the Bible study course, "Thank you for the material that you sent me. I am using it to better understand what God's plan is for me as I study the Word of God."

Prayer Study Request Form

Please send me one set of *Pray Always: A Catholic Prayer Study*. Enclosed is \$10.00 payable to *Dismas Ministry*.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST/Zip: _____

Hearing from Christ's Body behind bars... *From Chaplains and Ministries*

"I just wanted to send you a message for once, that did not ask for anything. I want you to know that I appreciate all that you have helped me with, and all the things you and your ministry has provided. In the busy-ness of our lives many people forget to stop and be thankful. Well, I'm stopping. I have always in the past expressed my gratitude to those who have reached out when they didn't have to. Thanks for being a friend," A Chaplain in Wisconsin

"I wish to express my deepest appreciation for the donation. The Correctional Facility community is excited about the books, it adds to their faith and experiential knowledge. The community sends their thanks along with their love and blessings for the continuous labor of love." A Chaplain in North Carolina

"You have been so generous in your donations to our prison ministry. Thank you! Your *Pray in the Spirit* Catholic prayer book are a much sought after item. Several of the women here have expressed an interest in the Catholic faith. Unfortunately, we have limited Catholic resources, and we were forced to operate under a very limited budget. This book program depends on book donations. Thank you for helping to meet the spiritual needs of this prison. A Fellow Servant in Christ." A Chaplain in New Mexico

"Your donation come at a timely need. Your gift of Catholic Bibles and material has enhanced our library and offered our residents much needed relief for the Catholic population." A Chaplain in Arkansas

From Inmates

"Thank you so much for the Bible you so kindly sent me. It's comforting to know that no matter where we are, or who we are, God speaks and consoles us through ministries like yours. I just can hardly wait for the Faith Study." An Inmate in California

"I absolutely love everything you have sent me! Please keep mein your prayers and mailing list. God bless you." An Inmate in Mississippi

"Thank you so much for the Bible, I will read it constantly. Also, I have taped the Dismas prayer on the door of my locker where I see it all the time and helps to brighten my day." An Inmate in Colorado

"We are very happy that you can now help us in Texas facilities. I use the study Bible every day and added the prayer book onto my other daily prayer. Thank you. I am looking forward to doing the study books and to receive the certificate" An Inmate in Texas

"Through your ministry the Lord has supplied me with His Word and teaching to study so I may become a better Catholic. Praise Jesus. Thank you so very much!" An Inmate in Florida

"Your ministry and materials are a tremendous help as I am new to the faith and studying for RCIA. Thank you and God bless you!" An Inmate in Oklahoma

Thank you for Your Prayers



Dear Prayer Partner,

We love to hear a good story whether we are in church, at a meeting, or sitting around the table with our family and friends. And, isn't true? - we can hear the same story at different times in our lives and there is something new in it each time. Jesus was a master storyteller. This time when I heard his story of the prodigal son (Luke 5: 11-32) I realized that *the father never speaks to his son*. The son spends all his money, and when he can no longer rely on himself or on things or people, he comes to his senses, and decides to return home.

When the son returns, he blurts out his prepared confession – the words he rehearsed beforehand along the way. "I will say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." No doubt the son wondered if his father would even speak to him. As the story goes, the father did not speak a word to him in reply. However, he did show his love in his actions, by going out to meet him before he even reached home, and throwing his arms around him. And while he is doing that he is also giving orders to his servants to get a fine robe, a ring for his finger, sandals for his tired and worn feet, and then to prepare a banquet – in other words – a party to celebrate the homecoming of his son who was lost but now is found.

It is clear that the father never stopped loving his son with all his heart. It is a story with a deeper meaning still – pointing to the journey we make with so many inmates, as they connect with us on their way home to God. God has already been watching and waiting for them to return to his love, and even comes out to meet them through

A Memorial Gift

Honor the memory of a loved one with a gift in their name to Dismas Ministry.

Contact Dismas Ministry and request a *Memorial* folder. When you receive it, just fill it out and present it to whomever you wish. Send your gift to support 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

this ministry that you pray for.

May blessings abound for each of you – "good measure, shaken down, overflowing" as Jesus says in Luke 6: 38. Thank you always for the support of your prayers. Believe me when I say it is such a comfort and strength to know that you are praying for our work. What we accomplish, is not done without the support of your prayers and God's grace and fatherly love.

I want to close with a prayer that I hope you will pray with me as you read this:

May God be with you to guide, comfort and strengthen you in all ways, with the good news that is Jesus, and through all the gifts that the Holy Spirit may bestow upon you!

One in prayer,
Ron Zeilinger
Director.

