



REMEMBER ME

DISMAS MINISTRY
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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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Wisconsin, and listed in the
US Catholic Directory as a
religious, tax-exempt,
501 (c) (3) organization.
All gifts are tax deductible.

(Message from the Director continued from page 3)

And you are a part of this wonderful development! You have supported us faithfully with your prayers and your donations, making this ministry possible as *partners in our mission*. Together with you we are giving glory to God by extending a helping hand through bars to our sisters and brothers in prison. As Pope Francis has said each time he visits prisoners during his global trips: "I too am a sinner and need your prayers." Yes, we all are sinners who need one another's prayers. Please pray for our ministry, and we promise to pray for you, especially when we share that ancient prayer with its roots in the Passover—the Eucharist.

May God bless us all—whether we are behind bars or free—as we commend ourselves to the enduring love and infinite mercy of Christ.

With Christ in prison,
Ron Zeilinger
Director.

Pope Francis embraces a prisoner at Curran-Fromhold Prison during his visit in Philadelphia in October, 2015.



REMEMBER ME

Advent-Christmas 2015

A NEWS LETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF DISMAS MINISTRY
A National Catholic Outreach for Inmates, Victims, their Families & the Community.

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



Pope Francis at Curran-Fromhold Prison during his visit in Philadelphia in October. Our friend and chaplain, Fr. Matthew Palkoski, OFM Cap, is present (with the beard).

An Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy

On December 8, 2015, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis opened the Extraordinary Jubilee year of Mercy, inviting the entire Catholic and global community to reflect on the meaning of God's mercy and how to carry this message of mercy to our fellow human beings.

For Dismas Ministry, this is a special time to work even harder to carry out its mission—the work of mercy of visiting the imprisoned. In one sense our ministry will carry on as it has been, providing comfort and support to the members of Christ's body in prison. On the other hand, it is an invitation to intensify those efforts and to work more closely with fellow Catholics to bring the message of God's infinite, all-embracing mercy into the harsh and often hopeless life behind bars.

In the words of Pope Francis: "The call of Jesus pushes each of us never to stop at the surface of things, especially when we are dealing with a person. We are called to look beyond, to focus on the heart to see how much generosity everyone is capable. No one can be excluded from the mercy of God; everyone knows the way to access it and the Church is the house that welcomes all and refuses no one. Its doors remain wide open, so that those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness. The greater the sin, so much the greater must be the love that the Church expresses toward those who convert."

A Memorial Gift

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

Contact us to request a *Memorial* folder. When you receive it, fill it out and present it to whomever you wish. Then send your gift to support the work of Dismas Ministry in honor of the person named.

To request a *Memorial* folder write to:

Dismas Ministry
PO Box 070363
Milwaukee, WI 53207

or email:
dismas@dismasministry.org

From Christ's Body Behind Bars

From Chaplains and Ministries

"Your ministry has been generous with San Carlos Correctional Facility in the past, and I am once again respectfully asking for your assistance. I have several inmates at my facility who are requesting large-print Catholic Bibles because their sight is very poor. Would you be able to donate large-print Catholic Bibles?" A Catholic Prison Chaplain

"Season's Greetings! We wanted to thank you for your donations of material. You have helped to brighten the lives of the women here at Pueblo Minimum Center. We have been able to celebrate with the ladies as 50 of them rededicated their lives to the Lord. We encourage all of the women here to grow in their own faith. The ladies have expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the books that we are able to offer them. This would not have been possible without the generous donations of books from ministries such as yours over the last year." A Prison Chaplain

"We received 50 Spanish Bibles from your ministry. Your donation is greatly appreciated. We ask you to continue to think of us in your prayers as we minister to the more than 1600 men incarcerated here at Varner. If in the future you are able to give to this ministry, please do so. We need good, solid Bible-based material, and your ministry is one we know we can count on. It is our prayer that the grace of Jesus Christ abound in your life and the peace of God be with you." A Prison Chaplain

From Inmates

"I just wanted to say I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the materials you've sent to help me strengthen my Catholic faith and stay on the right track. I've made a lot of mistakes throughout my life and its time for me to get it right." An Inmate in OK

"I greatly appreciate the bible and look forward to beginning the study course. You are doing a great thing for Catholic inmates. Thank you." An Inmate in WI

"Your Catholic Ministry means the world to me since we Catholic prisoners do not have many resources, support, and studies like Protestants do. Thank you! God Bless You all!" An Inmate in OH

"I just want to tell you how much I love the Bible you sent. It has inspired me to join a Bible study and pray group. Thank you so much!" An Inmate in PA

"Thank you for the materials they help me keep a positive frame of mind while here and help me feel a connection to the greater Catholic community beyond these walls and wire." An Inmate in NJ

"Your gift gives purpose to my life and shares my self worth. I have a great passion to pay it forward and give blessings to those in need as it was given to me." An Inmate in IL

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A Message from the Director

"I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus..." Ephesians 3:1 (A prisoner saint)



The Liturgy of the Hours...Behind Bars

Dear Friend of Christ in prison,

When Dismas Ministry wrote the inmate study course **Pray Always** on the Catholic Tradition of Prayer we did it because it was clear from prisoners' letters that had no idea of the vast treasury of prayer in the Catholic Church. Nor did they realize that many Catholic forms of prayer actually had their roots in the ancient Jewish traditions. After all, Jesus, Mary and the first disciples were Jews who went regularly to the temple to attend the various feasts and other requirements: "...the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required" (Luke 2: 27).

Our Catholic Eucharist has its roots in the Passover meal shared by Jesus with his disciples at the last supper: "He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22: 15). Likewise, the Liturgy of the Hours, sung by countless monks and nuns, and now shared by lay persons the world over, originated in the temple worship where song and prayer were offered to God day and night: "Seven times a day I praise You" (Psalm 119: 164).

Before we published this study course on prayer, we didn't realize the effect it would have on some prisoners. Gradually, a number of them began to write to us asking if they could participate in the universal prayer of the church – *the Liturgy of the Hours*. We now have several inmates who are doing just that—using the 4-volume sets we have sent to them, to pray as the monks and nuns do daily in their round of prayer in their monasteries and convents. Now prison cells have become places of prayer too.

One of the out-growths of this special aspect of our ministry has been a partnership with a Catholic blog-site called *Canticles and Coffee*, the work of Daria Sockey, where she promotes the *Liturgy of the Hours*. When she heard our interview on Radio Maria, thow prisoners want to pray in this way too, she invited her followers to lend their support. They have been sending us the 4-volume sets and also donating the approximately \$140 it costs to purchase a set. Yes, it is expensive, but it would be even more costly for the world-wide Church if it did not have the prayers of its incarcerated members. How unfortunate it would be if prisoners did not have this opportunity to join their fellow Catholics—monks, nuns and lay people—in this hourly work of praise to God. For that is what the Greek root of *liturgy* means—*work*—the official work of the Church.

Dismas Ministry has been serving Catholics in prison for 15 years, since the Jubilee Year 2000. And now we are very excited about the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis beginning December 8, 2015 and lasting until the Feast of Christ Universal King, November 20, 2016. This is the first year in our history, however, that a special project of our outreach has born such fruit.

(Continued on page 4)