



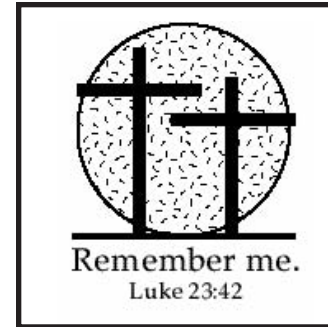
THIS DAY

DISMAS MINISTRY
P.O. BOX 070363
MILWAUKEE WI 53207

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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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

THIS DAY

Spring 2016

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

Please Pray for Our National Conference!

**"Concluding the Year of Mercy Behind Bars"
A National Catholic Prison Ministry Conference
November 10-11, 2016**

Presentations and Exhibits:

Death Row Ministry, Immigration-Detention Ministry, Juvenile Outreach,
Families of Victims and the Incarcerated, Re-entry, Restorative Justice, Pas-
toral Care for Prisoners.

Speakers: Sr. Helen Prejean (Dead Man Walking), Rev. Greg Boyle SJ

(Homeboy Industries-Los Angeles), Rev. Ron Cloutier (Lazarus House-Reentry Program), Rev.
George Williams, SJ (San Quentin-Death Row Ministry), Amalia Molina (Offender Family Outreach),
Jeanne Bishop ("Change of Heart") Family-Offender Restorative Justice; Elena Segura (Archdiocese of
Chicago) Immigrant Affairs and Immigration Education.

Co-Sponsors: Dismas Ministry; Prison Apostolate of
the Order of Malta-American Association; Correctional
Ministry, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston TX; Cen-
ter for Restorative Justice Works-Los Angeles CA;
Kolbe House Catholic Jail Ministry-Archdiocese of
Chicago IL; I Was In Prison Outreach Ministry-Talla-
hassee FL; and Pastoral Ministry & Peace Studies,
Lewis University-Romeoville, IL; Justice & Peace, and
Restorative Justice & Prison Ministries Diocese of Joliet
IL, Dominican Sisters-Sinsinawa WI; Archdiocese of
Milwaukee.

Location: Archbishop Cousins Pastoral Center, 3501
South Lake Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53207

For more information visit: www.dismasministry.org

**Please pray that this gathering of Catholics prison
ministry will be lead by the Spirit.**

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

As bishops, we offer a word of thanks and support to those who devote their
lives and talents to the tasks of protection and restoration: chaplains and prison
ministry volunteers, police and corrections officers, prosecutors and defense at-
torneys, and counselors. We call on others to join them in a new commitment to
prevent crime and to rebuild lives and communities. As ordained ministers committed to service, deacons
should be especially drawn to the challenge of Matthew 25: "I was in prison and you visited me." We also wish
to stand in solidarity with crime victims in their pain and loss, insisting that all our institutions reach out to
them with understanding, compassion, and healing.



Many Catholics help to prevent and control crime, especially among our youth. No one can take the place of
parents, but grandparents, pastors, coaches, teachers, mentors, as well as neighbors, parishioners, and commu-
nity leaders all help to guide, confront, and care for young people at risk. At the same time, we cannot ignore
the fact that some Catholics have been convicted of theft and drug dealing, spousal and child abuse, even rape
and murder. In fact, it is reported that more than thirty-seven thousand federal prisoners (30 percent of the fed-
eral inmate population)1 are baptized Catholic, many more Catholics are in local jails and state prisons, and
hundreds of thousands are on probation or parole. Catholics can also be found among white-collar criminals
whose illegal actions in businesses, financial markets, and government halls seriously damage our common
life and economic stability. ❖



From Christ's Body Behind Bars...

From Chaplains and Ministries

"Thank you so much for your quick reply and for answering our prayers for Bibles. God is so good to His children! Our services are bilingual, but our men are predominantly English speaking. We have worked in the Arizona prisons for 5 years now and continue to pray that God will send more workers into this vineyard. There are 14,000 men in the various state and private prisons here in our little town. Thank you especially for adding us and all those in prison here to your prayer list. We often hear "pray for me" as we cross the yards to our destination." A Catholic Ministry, Arizona

"I am happy to tell you that I have a recent inmate, who is very excited about becoming Catholic and recently completed the first 3 required booklets, God With Us. She now needs the next booklets, the Faith Study Course, Reason for Hope. I really appreciate any help you can give us in moving Tonya along her path. May God bless you always" A Catholic Chaplain, Indiana

"I pray that you and the folks at Dismas Ministry are doing well. I am happy to report to you that my first weeks in the new prison ministry have been a real blessing. As we've talked, there is such a need to minister those behind bars. I'm most impressed with the gratitude the men feel for those who volunteer and the hunger they have to hear the word from a friendly voice. I thank God for the blessing me with this opportunity. And I thank you for your prayers and the Dismas literature which I've put to good use.." A Catholic Volunteer, North Carolina

From Inmates

"I received the booklet "Pray in the Spirit" and enjoy it very much. I carry it with me everywhere in my pocket. I've learned how to better my prayer life and will always share with others what I've learned. May all the honor and glory be the Lords. Thank you!" An Inmate in Pennsylvania

"What you have sent me has already brought tears, joy and hope to the women around me and it's hardly been an hour since mail call. Receiving all of these materials is a testament to me that God answers prayers. This will not only help me, but everyone I meet because I believe knowledge should be shared not hoarded. I cannot thank you enough..." An Inmate in Idaho

"Thank you so much. I have been wanting a Catholic Bible so I really appreciate this. I love the prayer book especially the prayers for count and waiting in line. I will include Dismas ministry in my prayers. Thank you and God bless." An Inmate in Florida

"I thank you so much for the Liturgy of the Hours! May God bless you. What a true blessing this was, is. I assure you they will be put to great use. I hope I can receive a Bible Study Course too, and get started in growing further in our wonderful faith. I'm so grateful for your ministry! I received the Liturgy of the Hours and I don't even know how to begin to thank you for this. What an awesome gift & a great corporal work of mercy you do. I love you and thank you so very much!" An Inmate in Texas

Thank you for Your Prayers



Dear Prayer Partners,

It might seem strange, but I would like to reflect with you on Judas the apostle who betrayed Jesus with unfriendly kiss.

Consider the very different stories of Judas and our ministry's patron saint, Dismas the good thief. Judas spent the entire ministry with Jesus, witnessing the words and deeds of Jesus as "...one of the men who accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken" (Acts 1:21-22). Still, he rejected and betrayed him in the end.

On the other hand, Dismas spent his life fighting and stealing until his arrest and execution. Only at the last minute did he turn to Jesus with the words, "Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom." (Luke 23:42).

In Mark 6:7-13 Jesus sends the twelve to preach the good news, to anoint and to heal the people. Judas was among them as they did so, as Peter stated in Acts 1:17, "He was numbered among us and was allotted a share in this ministry." Maybe it was the Master's instructions to "take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no money in their belt" that Judas found impossible to accept. Maybe he felt betrayed by Jesus and his promise of a kingdom, thinking to himself: "This is crazy, I didn't join for this. Where's the kingdom he promised?"

When the full realization of what he had done hit home – the greatest crime ever committed on earth—he hung himself on the land he purchased with the thirty pieces of silver. Maybe Judas could see the cross from where he was hanging, and before dying his eyes met the eyes of Jesus across the valley. Wouldn't it be wonderful if, like the good thief hanging with Jesus, there was mercy and

forgiveness for Judas hanging on his tree?. We do know that "Judas, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, deeply regretted what he had done. He returned the thirty pieces of silver saying, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood'" (Matthew 27:3-10).

Who knows what went through the heart of Judas during the last seconds of his life. Maybe the stories of Judas and Dismas were not that different after all, for only God "knows the hearts of all" (Acts 1:24). Maybe Judas too managed to breathe his last with the words "Jesus, remember me..." I'd like to think so, "For man this is impossible, but for God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

This leads me to wonder, does anyone ever pray for Judas? I can think of no public prayer of the Church when this is done – not on All Souls Day or during Holy Week. The only reference to him indirectly is during the Liturgy of the Eucharist when the priest says just before the consecration, "on the night he was betrayed." Did Jesus pray for him? We have on that point the very words of Jesus, "Pray for your enemies...pray for those who persecute you." Surely Jesus "walked his talk" and prayed for Judas.

So, I pray for Judas, and all the enemies of Christ who betray or prey on his members. And the news of persecuted Christians in the Middle East and Africa gives us plenty of enemies to pray for! And let us pray for one another that we may be true followers of Jesus and never betray him by our own words and actions. But if we do, let's remember to turn immediately to God's merciful embrace, for as Pope Francis has reminded us, "God never tires of forgiveness; it's we who tire of asking for it."

Awash in God's mercy,
Ron
Ron Zeilinger
Director

