



REMEMBER ME

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

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Advent-Christmas 2016

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 concludes the Jubilee Year of Mercy as he closes the holy doors.



The end of the Year of Mercy but not mercy's end...

Pope Francis concluded the Jubilee Year of Mercy on November 20 with an
urgent request that although this special year may be over that people
keep open "the doors of reconciliation and pardon" in order to give hope to
those who desperately need it.

Pope Francis closed the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica after saying a
prayer of thanks to God for the gift of the past year. He approached the
special several-story-high doors at the north entrance of the Basilica, and
slowly closed them.

The Pope said that God in his mercy always gives people a chance and
"does not record evil that has been done or keep score of injustices experienced."
He continued, "Let us also ask for the gift of this open and living memory.. Let
us ask for the grace of never closing the doors of reconciliation and pardon, but
rather of knowing how to go beyond evil and differences, opening every possible
pathway of hope. As God believes in us, infinitely beyond any merits we have, so
too we are called to instill hope and provide opportunities to others, because even if
the Holy Door closes, the true door of mercy which is the heart of Christ always
remains open wide for us."

Then during Mass in St. Peter's Square following the ceremony the pope

Pope Francis held a special Mass for prisoners: "We can all make mistakes"

Pope Francis held a special Jubilee Mass for prisoners in St. Peter's Basilica on November 6, telling
them that all people "have made mistakes," urging them to never give up hope in God's mercy. "Today
we celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy for you and with you, our brothers and sisters who are imprisoned,"
he told them. He said while breaking the law involves paying the price, "hope must never falter."

"Sometimes, a certain hypocrisy leads to people considering you
only as wrongdoers, for whom prison is the sole answer," Francis
said in his homily. "We don't think about the possibility that people
can change their lives. We put little trust in rehabilitation ... into
society. But in this way we forget that we are all sinners and often,
without being aware of it, we too are prisoners."

Francis has made it a mission of his papacy to encourage
greater compassion for the most vulnerable—the poor, the
sick, the elderly, migrants and prisoners. He has also urged
governments to consider granting amnesty to prisoners, to
find alternatives to incarceration and, at the very least, to
abolish the death penalty.



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

"Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We again are in need of 100 Catholic Bibles (English version) due to the growth in number of Catholic inmates at our facility. Our facility functions solely on donations only. Our population total is 1500 inmates with 500 of those inmates in maximum security. If your organization is able to continue to help, please send to them to my attention. The staff of the chapel and the men here at the unit want to thank you for any help you can provide for us. It is our prayer that the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ abound in your life, and the Peace of God Be with you."
Non-Catholic Chaplain, AR

"On behalf of the inmates, I want to thank you for the Bibles and donation of religious materials. It is wonderful to be able to give them Catholic prayer books and Bibles. May God bless your ministry and you are in our prayers. Blessings."
Catholic Chaplain, WA

"It's hard to put in words what your ministry means to me and the women of Perryville prison. You have blessed us so much with all the spiritual material you provide and you are always so quick to respond to my requests! I lift you and your helpers before the Lord daily and pray He will always meet your needs in every way."
Catholic Chaplain, AZ

From Inmates

"As we rejoice this advent to celebrate the birth of our savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. I want to use this opportunity to wish you and all in your ministry a Merry Christmas, and a happy, blessed new year. It is a time to thank God for the blessings bestowed on us. I am especially thankful for all the gifts of books you sent me and your prayers. It couldn't have come at a better time. I hope and pray that God will continue to be kind to all of you and give you his blessing and grace and strength to continue your ministry. I trust God will grant you your heart's desires and be good to you. May He protect you and keep you from harm. Again, Merry Christmas and happy new year. Your Brother in Christ."
An Inmate in VA

"My name is Larry. I am so pleased with your gracious offer of Catholic material. I have been attending Mass every Thursday from the time I have been here. As of yet I have not been able to obtain a Catholic bible or much other study material. I would be most grateful for the bible and any other materials you may send me."
An Inmate in NM

"Hello my name is Dan. I was just recently sentenced to 48 months and I saw your name and address in a Catholic bible. Is it possible to receive a bible for Catholics along with prayer books, bible study and faith study courses? I was raised Catholic as a child and then became rebellious. I would like to be closer to God and know him better. When I get out I would like to know where there is churches I can go to for help."
An Inmate in OR

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A Message from the Director



Dear Friend of Christ in prison,

On November 10-11, Dismas Ministry hosted a national Catholic prison ministry conference to focus on this unique work of mercy - visiting the imprisoned _ and to conclude the Year of Mercy. Over 200 Catholic lay people, sisters, deacons and priests attended from 31 states. One person even came from Kenya to attend! It was an event filled with God's grace as these wonderful, dedicated people met, some for the first time, shared their experiences and listened to speakers on a variety of topics that touched on all the aspects of "restorative justice" - an approach that includes everyone touched by criminal justice: *victims, families, offenders, the detained in federal facilities, those returning from prison, those on death row and in solitary confinement.* We had the stark reminder of what a solitary confinement cell looks and feels like with a life-size model erected as a display during the event. The Year of Mercy may be concluded, but mercy still flows like a river, whose source is the very heart of God, a fountain that overflows with infinite mercy. I shortened my letter to allow room for the eloquent words of Pope Francis. Thank you for your support during this past year. Please walk with us into the new year as we continue to serve Christ's "least ones" behind bars.

Wishing you all the blessings of this holy season,

Ron Zeilinger, Director.

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reflected in his homily on Luke's Gospel, in which Jesus is mocked by crowds while being crucified. Yet one of the men being crucified with Jesus, who is described as a criminal, rebukes those mocking and asks Jesus: "Remember me when you enter your kingdom."

Pope Francis said, "The three groups in this scene present Christ's followers with two temptations as well as an example to follow. The temptations are seen in the group watching the crucifixion from a distance and in those near-by who mock Jesus." The Pope said, "Those far away, warn us of the temptation to keep our distance from Jesus, to not accept completely the scandal of his humble love, which unsettles and disturbs us. Those nearby, tempt Jesus, telling him to give up reigning as God wills, and instead to reign according to the world's ways: to come down from the cross and destroy his enemies!"

"This temptation is a direct attack on love: 'save yourself; not others, but yourself,' said the Pope. "Claim triumph for yourself with your power, with your glory, with your victory. It is the most terrible temptation, the first and the last of the Gospel," he said. "When confronted with this attack on his very way of being, Jesus does not speak, he does not react, He does not defend himself, he does not try to convince them, he does not mount a defense of his kingship. He continues rather to love; he forgives, he lives this moment of trial according to the Father's will, certain that love will bear fruit. We are called to struggle against this temptation, called to fix our gaze on the Crucified One, to become ever more faithful to him," said Pope Francis.

He continued: "As soon as we give God the chance, he remembers us. He is ready to completely and forever cancel our sin, because his memory -- unlike our own -- does not record evil that has been done or keep score of injustices experienced. God has no memory of sin, but only of us, of each of us, we who are his beloved children, And he believes that it is always possible to start anew, to raise ourselves up."