



St. Dismas Guild

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

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TESTIMONY

BY

A Repentant Sinner

I need to tell you my story - I don't want to - I Have To! - I want to prevent you from doing what I did. Because - I Care about you - your future - your life! I am a Woman who has had an abortion - Not one but + + +.

My 1st abortion I was engaged to be married at 17 yrs. of age. I really had NO clue what was going on - the Mother of my "boyfriend" first took me to this back alley "witch dr." & he gave me an injection of Something? And sent me "home" (they call it the Morning After Pill now?). My "boyfriend" took me to his friends house whose parents were not home and I became Very Sick - I spent several hours cold and alone in that bathroom hugging the Toilet and throwing up - finally sleeping on the floor. A few days later I took a pregnancy test and found that I was still pregnant. My future Mother-in-law, on her own, scheduled me for an abortion. My mom knew nothing about any of this. They took me to some clinic and the abortion was performed - No problems - No complications - Easy as Pie - A little recovery time - Snap - I was Good to Go - or was I?

(slam down a crucifix) - Jesus Falls the First Time

Okay - that was easy; I can just start over again now! 1st thing to go? - the "boyfriend"! 2nd thing - time for Birth Control Pills. Which of course lead to another boyfriend - this time a long relationship, very painful, lots of drugs, alcohol, premarital sex, living together = all the things I shouldn't be doing, but I had to hide the shame, had to numb the pain. Six yrs. Later, I could tell he was ready to move on - although, one night we had taken some acid - it was a Very Bad Trip - I saw myself in the mirror later that night (Not a pretty picture). I Woke Up! What am I doing? I'm done with this lifestyle! I Need some Help! I got some counseling and slowly stopped the drugs. Stopped the birth control pills, somehow graduated from college, started working in the world. I started feeling somewhat sane again.

Hey - "where's the love in my life?" I need someone to love me, care about me, show me I'm somebody, be proud of me - I'm being someone in the world now. Who am I anyway? I'm a natural girl - I love hiking, camping, & swimming - I'm a down to earth kind of person. So I heard about the Rhythm Method (my NEW Natural birth control method). After the menstrual cycle, wait 2 weeks - then you have a safe period - then two weeks later the period comes again. But once again - I was wrong - Okay Stupid! I didn't have my facts straight! It's actually the opposite - for most women - 2 weeks after the menses is the Ovulation period - NOT the safe period. I didn't find this out for a number of years though until I became Catholic and was taught the Natural Family Planning method. But that would be jumping way ahead.

Long story short - I had my weak moments, at 23 yrs. of age, out dancing, drinking, still smoking a little marijuana, trying to be attractive, trying to find "The One"! I fell again - I knew the guy, we were friends, & yes, one night I gave in. A few weeks later I realized I was pregnant. I never told him. "Oh well, I know what to do - I've done it before - it's easy - I'll just go get an abortion". Took myself - no one needed to know, no one will find out, It's legal right? This is what I'm supposed to do - right?

Unfortunately for me - No Pro Life people there - No counselors - Nobody to tell me otherwise! It didn't feel right - but okay I'll just do it. Did it! Done! Move on!

(slam down a crucifix) - Jesus Falls the Second Time

Only six months later I had another "boyfriend". Not the man that I wanted to marry but someone who cared about Me, listened to Me, Loved Me, was attracted to Me. This time I thought maybe the Condoms will be safer than the Rhythm Method. Guess what? Not Safe - I found myself pregnant again! I messed up AGAIN! (I shouldn't have been having premarital sex in the First Place!) Again, my "Boyfriend" wanted me to have an Abortion. He paid for it. "Oh well, I know what to do. I've done it before - I can do it again. It's legal right?" Only it was much harder to get myself there this time - my conscience had been awakened even more. But once again - No Pro Life people there - No counselors - No Mommy - No Friends - guys were my friends, and we know what most of them want. My heart was hardened.

This time though it was really hard to get up on that little table. To lay there and let them SUCK MY BABY OUT OF ME - AGAIN! This is a human being - A Life! What Right do I have to do this? (God creates life you know - but God wasn't allowed in my life at this time).

While I'm laying there I'm thinking - How can these nurses do this, these doctors? Don't they realize this is a baby they are taking out of me? (Obviously I was placing the blame all on them and not on myself where it should have been. I had the choice not to get an Abortion!) We are killing a baby! (I didn't think of that word killing at this time though - not until many years later). I said to the nurse - "This doesn't seem right - how can you do this?" She just said to "focus on something in the room, or somewhere on the ceiling - it will be over soon - don't worry it won't hurt."

Yeah Right - Maybe not physically (although it did hurt) but Psychologically, Emotionally, Spiritually, - Hurt! - Damaged! Yes! I'm Damaged Goods Now!

And so, I just laid there and focused on the ceiling and found the crisscross where two metal beams met in the ceiling tiles. (I didn't connect it at the time but later I remembered feeling the power of the Holy Spirit working on me even though I was doing what I was doing. It was The Cross +) It was Jesus calling me - telling me not to do it again. But I didn't listen - God wasn't allowed in my life at this time! "Just do it!" I told myself. I did it! Done! "Now try and Move on!"

(slam down a crucifix) - Jesus Falls the Third Time

Needless to say many years of therapy later, several retreats, rope challenge courses, and by journaling I finally began to feel a little bit better. Not healed but able to socialize again. 3 yrs. After my last abortion I finally met my husband to be. **Can you imagine how hard it was to tell him that I had had 3 abortions?** Again full of grief and shame I had to tell him and risk the chance of losing him. Fortunately for me - he was Catholic and was somewhat strong in his faith. Everything he told me about the Catholic faith intrigued me and I wanted to learn more. We began to go to Mass near the University where I had gone to school. I joined the RCIA classes and he came with me (rekindling his faith at the same time). During this time I discovered I had never been baptized. Do you know what this means? I didn't fully understand it until a few years later.

The next year at Easter I was Baptized, Confirmed, and received my First Holy Communion. Little did I know the Magnitude of Baptism - **All my Horrible Sins had been completely washed Away!** Can you believe that? I never even had to go to Confession. A few years later I actually did go to Confession specifically for Those Sins of Abortion

St. Dismas Guild: Catholic Evangelization through Scripture and ministry to the prisons.

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because even though I Knew that God had forgiven All my sins – I still carried the Guilt/Shame of those sins in my heart, in my conscience. I'm sure I always will. So – as you can hear - I have been forgiven MUCH! And like Mary Magdalene – I know how much I've been forgiven – How much Jesus loves me – How Much Sin Jesus took for Just Me up on the cross. How Much Love I now need to give back to him!

I've been a Catholic for 20 yrs. now & every year I learn more & more about Jesus, His church, & my faith. Every year I Love Jesus more & my love for him is very strong. God is so good to Me! He has given me a wonderful husband & 3 precious children (and how many abortions did I have?) God didn't make it easy on me though. When we had decided we were ready to try to have children God made us wait for more than a year. Then I almost lost my first 2 children in the hospital – they were both taken away from me and sent to Intensive care for 3 days. My 1st baby almost died in my womb. The Dr. had to cut her out & then I almost bled to death. My husband thought he was going to lose both of us. My Uterus had failed, No amniotic fluid for the baby to survive in. (Abortions can cause a lot of damage physically, internally. I was lucky to even have gotten pregnant.) My 2nd child burst his lung sack when he first breathed in and cried – so he had to heal in an incubation chamber. My 3rd child - God had mercy on me – and I finally had the All natural, completely beautiful delivery that I had always wanted.

So please, let ME be the example of what you don't want to go through. Hear my story & remember my pain and suffering – even to this day, it is very hard for me to forgive myself for what I have done. Most especially in offending God. I know God has forgiven me & love's me & continues to call me everyday. I am trying hard to stay on the right path – keep my loving eyes only on him – He is my focus point now, my strength, & my hope. And that's why I wake up everyday & thank God for another day to live, to learn, & to love – more like him. I pray that some day I will get to see my 3 lost babies that I so easily gave away to Abortion. I am Not a Holy person but I am trying to be Holy and show him how much I appreciate his Love & Forgiveness to me. I encourage you to do the same.

So please - Don't mess around with Premarital Sex. Wait for you Husband. Give him the pure woman that God wants you to give. And receive the beautiful gift of Love that God wants you to have in marriage!

Thank you so much for sharing your testimony. It is amazing how much God forgives and heals us. Premarital sex is going at an epidemic rate right now. The cross is our saving grace. Accepting what it says in Psalms 32 and 51 will help you see that God does take away the guilt and shame of our sins. If he forgives you then forgiving yourself is a further acceptance of his forgiveness. Your testimony is truly an Easter Message of the Resurrection of New Life in Christ. Thank you again for pouring out your heart to bring a message of hope to others. Judas despaired, Peter repented. He also denied Christ 3 times and went on to become our first Pope and leader of our church.

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

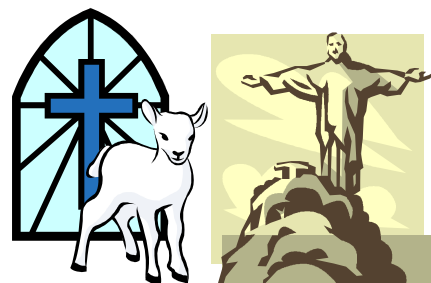
Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, I've been receiving the St. Dismas Guild Newsletter for a while now. Reading the experiences of other prisoners with Christ brings me so much joy. Before coming to know God, I was a hopeless drug addict. I served drugs like they were my god. I became suicidal and finally ended up in prison. Being bored one day a guy on my block invited me to Mass. I went for something to do. I was very anti-Christian. My family was into witchcraft and paganism. In that Chapel the grace of God fell on me. I became aware of how much trouble my soul was in, I became aware of how wretched and sinful I was. I cried my eyes out in front of 100 other inmates. I didn't care. I finally

realized how much I need God and how lost I was without Him. I thank our Heavenly Father. We had a wonderful priest. He guided me through the Sacraments, and instilled a love for God that I never thought was possible. I was baptized and confirmed. That was the greatest day of my life. With a wonderful guide, I have been able to live more like Christ. I am now a server at Mass. People come to me and ask for help. I am actually respected by people! I've seen the shame of my sins. Through the sacrament of Confession I receive the most peace. I come before God with my sins and I am washed clean. My family has seen such a change in me. My mother actually wants to go to Mass with me when I get out. I am a sinner. I fall short of the Glory of God. But when I fall, Jesus is there to pick me up and never leaves me. I pray for all of us that are locked up. I know the pain and loneliness it brings. But we must hold on. We must lift each other up and move toward the light. Your newsletter brings me that connection I need. I know now what it's like to love something. My prayers and love go out to you all. If we keep both eyes on the Lord, nothing, not even Satan himself, can make us fall. I thank you Deacon Ken & Marie for your time in putting this newsletter together. I would like to receive the "Bread of Life Study for year B if I could. I pray your ministry continues and is a blessing to others as it is to me. Your brother in Christ, M.R.

M.R., the grace of God is the only thing that sets us free. No matter what the addiction, premarital sex, homosexuality, drugs, alcohol, pornography it is only through the grace of God that we are set free. We just have to admit we are sinners and stop blameing others for what we do, and turn to God to receive His pardon and love as you have. Only in Him can we face tomorrow. Thank you for sharing your powerful conversion experience. You have been touched by the hand of God.

Dear Ken & Marie, I have been getting your Newsletter for two years now. I even was moved to a different unit and by the Grace of God you guys found me. God bless you two beautiful people... I have a great testimony. I am in administrative Segregation housed with ___ Death Row. I have been telling a few guys on Death Row that it ain't to late. It reminded me of when Jesus was on the cross and the guy next to Him fixing to die and he repented of his sins and the Lord Jesus said, "See you in Paradise." Amen! Its beautiful to see a grown man on his knees saying I love you Jesus, crying. I am asking, could you please send me a Bread of Life Bible Study again please, because in my move it was lost. We are also praying on the abortion issue every day. It's a sad issue but the Holy Spirit will find a way. I love you and pray that I bring more Death Row Inmates to the Father and please send me the Bread of Life. God Bless, J.S.

That guy next to Jesus is who we call St. Dismas.. We have had letters requesting to know who St. Dismas is. Read Luke 23:39-43 in your bible. He is the repentant sinner. His feast day is March 25th. St. Dismas is the Patron Saint of those in prison, especially those on Death Row. Each day we are to thank God for the opportunity to know, love and serve him as you have J.S. in sharing the Good News with those on Death Row. Thank you for reaching out.



Have a **Blessed Easter**. In Jesus' love,
Deacon Ken & Marie