



St. Dismas Guild

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

www.stdismas.org March 2009

TESTIMONY

BY
Z.

Hello, I am a new Catholic, but I have been studying Christianity for a little over a year and a half now.

I have been incarcerated for 21 months as of January and as I am taking my case to trial, I do not have a definitive release date, or even a definitive trial date as of yet. Although this has been a long time taken out of my life, it did two wonderful things for me. 1. I was an atheist before I came to jail, and if I had not of come here, I fear I may have not ever found religion, or God. 2. As we can't smoke in county jail, I have been cigarette free for almost two years, and I used to have a 2 ½ - 3 pack a day habit, that is also a blessing in itself from God. I had been drug free for almost 9 years when I came to jail, so that was never a problem for me; Thank God!

I hope to get to go home this year, and I know that if I do, I will find a Church to go to, that is a priority #1 on my list. As I said earlier, I have been practicing and studying Christianity for several months before I found Catholicism.

We do get visits from a Priest, and a Deacon from a local Parish occasionally, and hopefully before February, I will be getting baptized and confirmed. At 34 years old, and having lived most my life as an atheist, this is a really big decision for me, but I am really ready to commit my life to God, and so, I am really looking forward to taking this step. I thought I would give you a little background of myself, I do hope that it tells you somewhat of the life and struggle I have lived religiously.

I am writing in hope that I can begin receiving your news letter, and also that if it is possible, I would like to receive your "Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study." My friend says it is really good, and that it is helping him learn a lot. He also told me that you sent him a "Catholic Catechism", which helps with a lot of questions. I do hope that it might be possible to receive those from you myself, as I do study by myself everyday, and besides my Bible, I don't have other type of Catholic Study Material. I will be grateful for whatever your organization can afford to help me with, and I look forward to hearing back from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration and I will pray that your organization remains able to keep reaching out to people in need.

Dear Z., Your letter reminds us of what Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." He has called you by name to witness as you have done in this letter. Yes, you once were an atheist but God's great love for you drew you to Himself and now as you live out your very short years here on this earth you can live them in the Kingdom, "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel" Mark 1:15. We live in the Kingdom when we give our life to God and make Him our personal Lord and Savior. Getting into the Catholic Faith and learning its doctrine, the truth of God, you find tremendous peace and joy, especially when you are able to share with other like minded Christians. Being Baptized and Confirmed gives you so much of God's grace to live out your faith in Him. God's seal is placed on you. We will be praying for you and have sent you the bible study, catechism, and pamphlets to help you on your journey to heaven.

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, I have just finished reading one of your St. Dismas Guild Newsletters (Feb. 09). I really love

this newsletter, especially the pro-life material and information that is included. I was adopted when I was six months old, but before I was born, my birth mother attempted an abortion on herself to have me killed. By the grace of God, she failed, and so here I am. This testimony has always served to remind me that God has a special plan for me, just as he does for all of us. Jeremiah 1:5 says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you." If this scripture doesn't prove that life begins at conception, there are plenty of others that do (e.g. Psalm 22:10, 11). Because of my unique circumstances, I have always taken a strong position against the evils of abortion. In fact, Holy Church's position on abortion is one of the things that led me to become Catholic.

You see, I used to be a very anti-Catholic fundamentalist Protestant. I was raised in this type of environment, so I always viewed the Catholic Church as the enemy of "true Christianity." The problem with these ideas were that the more I observed the Catholic Church, the more I realized that the fruit She bore didn't match up with my own understanding that I was leaning on. I have always had faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. My problem was that that faith was stuck in the mustard seed phase. When I found the Catholic Church, that mustard seed found good soil, took root, and has grown tremendously. I now know that God intended for me to be Catholic (as He does for all of us). I have now become a staunch defender of Our Faith. I feel like I have come home.

Your newsletter was handed to me by one of your readers and my Christian Brother. I was wondering if you could put me on your mailing list, as well as send me a Catechism of the Catholic Church, so that I may continue to feed my faith. D.H.

D.H., There are so many women and children suffering who have aborted, attempted abortion, or are survivors from abortion. It always amazes us to see how God heals one in this situation. You used the correct wording in describing your situation, "my mother attempted an abortion on herself to have me killed," and, yes, it is the grace of God, she failed. There is a scripture in Isaiah that says, "even if a mother should forget her baby, the infant in her womb, I will never forget you." (Isaiah 49:15) No, God will never forget you. He has carved you on the palm of His hand. Rejection is a painful thing to overcome but with the grace of God you can be healed. God certainly does have a plan for your life and that is spelled out in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! plans to give you a future full of hope. God's love is so great for you and he will fill your need for love. Daily spend time with him asking him to help you feel loved and special for that is what you are. Pray for all the Dads who have aborted. Even if your Dad forget you God never will. Thank you for sharing, especially for your pro-life message.

Dear Friends in Christ, Please find enclosed a donation to your wonderful ministry. I discovered "The Bread of Life" Catholic Bible Study almost three years ago. Within a few weeks, I will have been through the cycle once. I have thoroughly enjoyed it and found that it has helped me understand and deepen my faith in our Lord and His Church. I hope my small donation can be of good use to you. Peace in Christ, E. B.

Thank you so much for your donation. We know how difficult it is for you in prison to make this sacrifice for others. You have become an evangelist. That's why we are here, to walk

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

Board of Directors: Deacon Ken Finn, President; Marie Finn, Vice-President; Jean Michaels, Secretary; Robert Dibos, Accountant
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with our Lord Jesus Christ and bring others to Him. May God bless you abundantly.

Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, I would like to say thank you for sending me the Bread of Life, Cycle B Bible Study. I've only received it in January. I've been doing it for about a week and I'm thoroughly enjoying it. Especially when I get on my "pity pot" so to speak. I start out feeling depressed and not worthy. By the time I complete the days lesson & prayers. I feel like a whole new person. Looking up answers and being forced to think helps the message to sink in. Thank you, once again. I hope my contribution will help others in prison share in the "Bread of Life" experience. May the good Lord continue to bless you in all you do. God Bless. Sister M.M., Infant in Christ. P.S. Thank you, H.H. from the January 09 newsletter. Those of us new to the prison system didn't know we could make donations from our commissary account.

Thank you so much Sister M.M. for your generous donation. The Word always lifts us out of ourselves and helps us to focus on Jesus. Acts 20:35 says, "In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" You are a blessing to us here at St. Dismas Guild and God will repay you for your generosity. Generosity is a fruit of the Holy Spirit as Galatians 5:22-23 tells us. He is working through you to draw others to Himself. God bless you.

Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, God bless you for being there for me and the rest of the folks in prison who wouldn't receive mail each month. The words are of encouragement and the reminder that God is forgiving, and our lives can be full of God's grace. We just need to accept his grace and forgiveness and spread the good news to the others around the cell block.

This is my 4th time in prison on drug charges. I am blessed to have a Priest each Sunday for Mass. I've been to a lot of jails that didn't have services to strengthen our faith. I have been able to go to rosary service during the week at least once for the past 3 years. Sometimes we have a large gathering, other times I'm alone I know that God is with me all the time.

I got to this prison a year ago, and I have been going to AA meetings as well. I have been sober 3 ½ years, and sharing amongst the group gives me a great relief. The same kind of relief I get after going to confession.

I want to share to the others who read your newsletter, that they don't need to be fearful when they are released. If they keep going to church, and live according to God's law, especially being honest with yourself and others. You will find work and a better life through Christ Jesus. I was hoping you could send me the Cycle B Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study. I have been praying that FOCA does not get passed during our Rosary Session. God bless you, M.M.

Dear M.M., We do get relief when sharing with others and going to confession. It relieves us of the heavyness and feeling alone. Its not easy shaking the addiction of drugs. The flesh craves them but with the grace of God you can be healed. 1 Peter 4:1-2 says, "Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude (for whoever suffers in the flesh has broken with sin), so as not to spend what remains of one's life in the flesh on human desires, but on the will of God." The bible study is on the way. Keep up the prayers that congress will not pass this deadly evil bill called FOCA that is on the Presidents desk. God bless you.

UPDATE

BENEDICTUS

A MINISTRY TO CATHOLIC MEN
SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2009 FROM 7AM – MASS TO 10:30AM. GUEST SPEAKER – JOHN BORROS – COME AND HEAR THIS POWERFUL TESTIMONY OF HOW GOD TRANSFORMED JOHN FROM A VICTIM OF ABUSE TO A VICTOR THROUGH FORGIVENESS.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR
APRIL 25, 2009 – ST. TIMOTHY'S – ESCONDIDO
APRIL 25, 2009 – ST. FRANCIS – LA QUINTA

GROWTH IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR
FEBRUARY 28, 2009 – MORE POWER -ST. MARY'S – ESCONDIDO, MARCH 21, 2009 – MORE WISDOM -ST. MARY'S – ESCONDIDO, MARCH 21, 2009 – MORE WISDOM - ST. FRANCIS – LA QUINTA THESE SEMINARS ARE POWERFUL TEACHINGS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

ROSARY FOR LIFE

DURING LENT COME AND PRAY THE ROSARY FOR LIFE AT 120 S. CRAVEN ST, SAN MARCOS – MONDAY – SATURDAY FROM 10AM – 12PM TUESDAY'S FROM 9AM – 12PM – SIX DAYS A WEEK WE WILL PRAY FOR A STOP TO ABORTION AND CONVERSION OF ALL ABORTIONIST. ALSO PRAY AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD, MISSION AVENUE BETWEEN CENTER CITY PKWY AND ESCONDIDO BLVD IN ESCONDIDO ON THURSDAY'S FROM 10:30-11:30

CULTURE OF LIFE FAMILY SERVICES UPCOMING FUNDRAISER KEEP THE DATE OPEN – MAY 29, 2009

COLFS has two locations – 211 S. Grape Street in Escondido and 550 Washington St. #801 in San Diego **COLFS** has two medical doctors, Dr. George Delgado and Dr. Karen Siroki and two nurse practitioners, Monica Wurster and Svetlana Witaker and also offers NFP classes with Pat Poindexter, RN. They also offer from the Spiritual Department adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the Escondido location on Monday's from 12pm-2pm along with Spiritual Counseling with Deacon Mitch Rennix and his wife Lidia. Wednesday's from 12pm – 2pm Deacon Ken and Marie Finn and Deacon Ron Allen on the third Wednesday of the month offers Spiritual Counseling and Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina is also available on Thursday afternoons during St. Dismas Guild mailing of packages to prisons and those who request them. We send out approximately 50 packages a week with bible studies bibles, etc. What an opportunity we have to evangelize and do what Jesus called His disciples to do. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Thank you for all your physical, emotional, and spiritual support of our ministry. The volunteers are a blessing to us in keeping us on top of all the mail we receive. Also, your financial support has helped us to continue sending out the materials that are bringing many into a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Your brother and sister in Christ,

Deacon Ken & Marie