



# St. Dismas Guild

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

[www.stdismas.org](http://www.stdismas.org) August 2011

## TESTIMONY

By  
WB

Dear Deacon Ken and Marie, It was a delight and blessing to receive the newsletter recently. I look forward to the continued blessing and encouragement from the St. Dismas Guild. I hope this finds you doing well.

I have been in prison for nine years and I have nine years remaining. The Lord has comforted me, inspired me, challenged me, chastised me and loved me through that time and I know He will be with me through the remaining years and beyond.

I am now 63 years old. This has not been an easy time but not a time of cruelty or violence that many suffer in prison. On the outside I was a Christian, active in my church, but my heart wasn't with the Lord as it should. I was living a double life – like so many of us who find ourselves in prison cells.

To my wife, my family and friends, my community, my church, I was a “good man”, hard working dependable, trustworthy and so on. But the other side of life was an out of control sexual addiction that bound me to homosexual activity in porno theaters and parks; a life that for many years was hidden. My church activity was a show, a cover-up to protect me from discovery. I ended up in prison when my hidden life crossed the line to inappropriate touching of children.

Even though I had rejected God, He did not reject me and after my arrest, He gently and persistently kept calling me to come back. I set a new course for my life; or should I say He set a new course for my life. He placed all the right people before me who He used to stay the course. I met and worked with psychologists who helped me see the truth of what I had done and how my disgraceful actions affected the lives of my victims and the families as well as my own loved ones. The Lord and I cleaned house. His light shined in every dark, hidden corner. I learned about the early seeds that were planted that eventually through my own choices, led to prison. There were many tears of sorrow over what I did and tears of joy that all of the truth was revealed. Now, at last, after dozens of years of depravity, there was nothing else to hide. That space in my heart and mind and spirit began to fill with His grace and love. What I had lost - honesty, integrity, moral values, trust and love began to rebuild.

During this long process, there was still a strong sense of the Lord's calling. I kept “bumping into” things - deeply inspiring books by Catholic writers, friend who gave me a Catholic devotional magazine and an opportunity to take a class in facing the consequences of our actions led by the Catholic Chaplain. Finally, out of curiosity, I went to a Catholic communion service. I felt at home there. I knew Christ was there with me. One thing led to another and I, at long last, responded to His call and I converted to the Catholic Church. Several months later, after much study and prayer, I was confirmed and received my First communion. I could go on for many pages telling how my life has changed as a Catholic and the miracles of His loving care fill my life daily. My journey with Christ has not been easy. He never promised it would be, but the difficulties, challenges, successes, failures, ups and downs teach me to stay on the course He set for me; to love my neighbor even when I am not sure I can, to know that right choices when faced with temptations can be made when I keep the Holy Trinity at the center of my life. Receiving the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ at every service and Mass sustains me and

keeps me strong. I pray often for those in prison, especially those with charges like mine, in hopes they too will come home to Jesus Christ for the release of all that binds them. God bless you Deacon Ken and Marie. In His love and peace

*Dear WB, Thank you for your letter. Sad to say there are many walking around in the free worlds that have made the same destructive choice as you did. They too are in prison, only it is the prison of their minds which is filled with darkness and fear. Many are white collar workers and good church goers. Pornography is destroying our children. And there are many who have not been caught. What is the answer? The only answer to any destructive choice is Jesus Christ as you have found. He is the healer. He is the one who forgives the repentant sinner. We are so blessed in the Catholic Church because we have the sacrament of reconciliation that gives us not only the forgiveness of Christ but the grace to not continue in the sin. Being a victim of one who was inappropriately touched by a man can only be healed by God Himself. Healing is a process and in my case the Lord is in the process of healing me and teaching me. I still have some of the residue and this happened over 60 years ago. Forgiveness is the key to healing and I have forgiven the perpetrator. I would say forgiveness is the key to healing for the perpetrator. Receiving the forgiveness of Jesus Christ through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and forgiving yourself may take you a long time but you certainly have found the path in receiving the Body & Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Himself. Jesus tells us, “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you” (Matthew 6:14). It is amazing how what is hidden will one day come out. “Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known” (Matthew 10:26). WB, it sounds like you are making tremendous progress with the help of the Lord. Thank you for your testimony.*

## DOING TIME WITH JESUS

St. Dismas Guild

Hello and how are you this fine evening? Allow me to extend you salutations to whoever might be on the receiving end of this letter. Well, let me start by saying I've been a life long sinner and culpable for some pretty serious gang crimes. I'm serving a life sentence for a crime I committed when I was 16 years old and a 20 year sentence for another crime I committed when I was 19 years old. (Both being homicides) I've now been incarcerated for 10 years since 2001 and I've come to the realization that the only thing I've got to look forward to is death. And while I don't fear death, I fear where I'm going after death because I've heard they have just a place for people like me.

I'm not a stranger to Jesus Christ. I come from a Pentecostal Christian Family but their method of worship within the Pentecostal Church just struck me the wrong way. Something about the pastor pushing somebody to the ground and them shaking and screaming while the Pastor receives the glory didn't sit right with me, so I strayed from the Church. But as a kid growing up, I've long been infatuated by the great Roman Catholic Church and all its traditions and history. Every time anything about the Roman Catholic Church came on TV, I couldn't take my eyes off it and that continues to this day. About a month ago, I had an epiphany. While watching a special on the Catholic Church, I said to myself, “Man, I wish I could be part of a Church so rich in history and tradition, a church who really understands how to honor the Lord, instead of ones self” It struck me “Well, why

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can't I be part of this Church?" so I went out and bought a Holy Bible and a bottle of Holy Water, said the sinners prayer, meant it, made peace with old enemies and started treating people how I'd want Jesus to treat me. But I'm still lost and naïve. I want to be a true Roman Catholic. I want to learn about my Church and how to participate in its traditions, how to pray with a rosary, how to use the holy water and how to fast. Most of all, I want to honor the Lord in doing these things. So I ask if you could be of some assistance with any type of materials to help me grow in this church. A scapular would be nice if possible. Well, I do come with total sincerity in my request. I thank you for your time. God bless you, A.

*A..., people like you who have repented and turned to God to do His will, not theirs, will all be together with all the Saints and Angels one day in heaven. Death becomes a blessing to the repentant sinner. Yes, there is a hell. Deuteronomy 30:19 tells us that He has set before us life and death. Choose life! Yes, we can choose if we want to live with Him forever or die and go straight to hell. Where we go when this body goes into the ground to decay is up to each one of us. When Jesus comes again we will receive that glorified body in which there will be no more sickness or pain or shame. Death has no hold on us. Jesus defeated the enemy from the cross. Do you really believe that? If so then why are you afraid? Fear is useless what is needed is trust. God is perfect love and perfect love drives out fear. 1John 4:18 Fear has to do with punishment. You who are afraid are not yet perfect in love and do not know the God who loves you. As you learn about the Catholic Faith you will come to know this God who is love. Study the Catechism of the Catholic Church and your bible and you will have the fullness of truth. God bless you.*

Dear Ken and Marie, Greetings and bright blessings to you! I hope this letter finds you all well. As for myself, I am doing way better than I was last time I wrote to you. As you know, the last time I wrote I was in the "hole" and really stressed out and I want to thank you for the Bible and the books that you sent me. They were a God-send – so I am now out of the hole and I know first hand now that God does take care of those who put trust in and have faith in Him! Because one night in utter despair, I got down on my knees and emptied my heart and soul to Jesus Christ and I didn't know that a grown man could cry that many tears and I put everything in God's hands. Almost immediately, I started to see things starting to change. At this point, I had been in the hole for 55 days with no charges, just under investigation. 8 days later, on day 63, I was not only released from the hole – but I was sent outside the main institution and placed in the Minimum Security Work Camp. And that was all God's doing, and I was never charged with anything.

Well, with that I am going to close this for today so I can get it in the mail to you. And once again, thank you so much for the Bible and the other books. I'll be looking forward to hearing from you in the near future.

*My beloved brother in Christ, I refer you to Romans 8:28 which states "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." That scripture sounds like what God has done for you. He was with you in the hole. Take the time given to you and make the effort daily to repent, forgive and do not worry, because worry is useless what is needed is trust. . I would suggest that you praise and thank God daily for His presence in your life, and follow the next scripture which is, "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God." Worry about nothing; instead, pray about everything. Tell God your needs and don't forget to thank him for his answers. (Philippians 4:6). God bless you*

Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, I'm writing you this because I quit on God. I can't say that I quit believing because I still

believe – at least I think I do. I'm hurting so badly spiritually, I feel so alone, afraid and stressful. I have turned my back on God by turning to Wicca, Islam and even Satanism – just trying to be loved like somebody actually cares about me, about what I'm going through and loves me no matter what I do. You know, I have actually thought of killing myself just so I can get rid of this guilt, hatred and ugliness that I find in me. I have no more hope. I can't put my feelings on this page but as I write this, I'm crying because of the hurt that I feel. I'm so afraid that God has turned His back on me for what I've done in my life. I had turned to the Catholic Church because of a dream that I have had of Mary, the Mother of Christ. It was the Madonna statue. She had her arms outstretched, she was all white with black outline and in the dream, I knew she was calling to me and I knew in that weird way of dreams, that she was calling me to her and to the Church and Holy Orders as a Priest (thus the black and white.) But it scared me because I knew that it was real and I ran and ever since I have felt empty, lonely and hurt. I have been stressing real bad to the point that I almost had a nervous breakdown. But now I feel and fear that I have gone too far by calling on false gods even though I knew who and what they were. I did it in truth to hurt God because I was hurting. I am very sorry and regret doing this and I am truly in repentance for it but will He or can He forgive me and allow me into His arms as well as Mary's? I truly wish to fulfill that to which God has called me to, but I find it truly hard to give up the world to be His Priest. But I am ready. I just hope that God will forgive me, you see I get out of prison next year and I want to give Him my sacrifice, myself but how do I go about becoming a Priest. I do believe in the Catholic Church as the Church Christ has preserved for Himself. I have been reading the Catechism of the Catholic Church and I go to Mass on Sunday when my job permits it but I'm not confirmed so I know that I'm going to have to do that but how do I become a Priest? Just writing this letter, my spirit is lifted. I really am going to do this. Wow, please, if you can, help me. I would be grateful. Mary is my Saint, God sent her to me because He knew I would need her. Thank you and may God bless and watch over you and yours! Yours in Christ, B

*Hello B, We are called to be priestly people. These are people who not only learn about him through the bible, but live out the bible as James 1:22 says, "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves." Those baptized are commissioned to be priest, prophet and king. A Priest makes sacrifice, for us it means to sacrifice our life, to die to self and live for God. A Prophet is one who is inspired by God to speak His word. And a King is one who rules, we rule over the demons who try to destroy us. We take captive every thought by putting on the mind of Christ. 1Corinthians 2:16 says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to counsel him? But we have the mind of Christ" and 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 says, "...for the weapons of our battle are not of flesh but are enormously powerful, capable of destroying fortresses. We destroy arguments and every pretension raising itself against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive in obedience to Christ. Mary came to you in your dream as an answer to your pleading and prayers, not necessarily to be a Priest but to go to a Priest for Confession and forgiveness. That will ease the fear, hatred, guilt and ugliness you may feel inside. This all comes from the devil and Mary came to you to lead you to her Son who has defeated the devil and his demons who try to convince you that God doesn't love you and won't forgive you. He loves you with an everlasting love (Jer.31:3).*

**For those who are requesting financial help and personal items, even though we understand and sympathize with you, we can only offer religious materials and spiritual help, we are not able to provide financial support.**

Your brother and sister in Christ,  
Deacon Ken & Marie