



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 RN

First off let me say God bless all of you at St. Dismas Guild and hope all of you had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I would like to thank you for all the books you've sent me. They have helped me through my struggle. I am 36 years old and a father of five. I recently got divorced before I came to prison. It was a bad divorce led me back to drug use then back in this cage. I was married for 13 years. I did 5 and a half years my first term and stayed out for 7 years. I was doing good had a good job and a good wife. But I was missing something, did not know what it was until I came back to prison.

I started to read more about the Catholic faith, I was raised Catholic but stayed away. Now I realize the main thing I was missing in my marriage was not the lack of love for each other but the lack of love we had for God. I was reading in your book you sent, "Secrets of a Happy Family, me being a man of the house I should have had stronger faith and led my family to God. But I failed! But I'm learning a lot more now so I can teach my kids about the Catholic faith. I made my Holy Communion and my confirmation in here. I also do go to church here and I read a lot more than I ever did. I just want to say thank you for taking the time out of your day to send me the books that you sent to me.

If there is any more books or more newsletters then it would be most appreciated. Also, speaking of newsletters I received your January 2012 issue and I read a letter someone wrote. It was very upsetting and disrespectful. I understand what he said about being in prison because I am. I've been through a lot and those type of people he talks about, and not forgiving them. But God forgives everybody, if you ask for it. In my point of view for him to write that wasn't right. I'm trying to change my life not only for me but for my kids as well. I hope God forgives me. I have been in that stage of mind before so I will be praying for people like that, that don't have faith because I'm still learning. But I will never stop so with that said I would like to say, you Ken and Marie and everybody at St. Dismas Guild are very appreciated. Thank you for being there for me when I needed someone's help. You were there and sent me the right help I needed. Thank you so very much and God bless you all.

RN, We just got through watching the movie "Courageous" and its about the man being the spiritual leader of the house. The damage of a failed marriage or in raising your kids can be restored when the man takes his rightful spiritual role. That role is stated in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 11:3, "I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ; the head of a woman is her husband; and the head of Christ is the Father." Even Christ was under headship of His Father. When the man stays under the headship of Christ everything comes into right order in the home. Scripture says, "and I will repay you for the years which the locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25). When we turn to God and humble ourselves before him and pray, and seek his presence... he will make right all the failures in our life (2 Chronicles 7:14). He came to bring life, life to the full. RN, the Lord is very pleased when we realize that we can not make it without Him. He never leaves us and when we finally come to the truth He is right there to heal and save us. I pray that whatever we write will always make clear that God wants no man to go to hell, and He lovingly opens His arms to the small and great big sinners. So when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against (Mark 11:25). Your prayers are powerful indeed for those who say they cannot forgive. Sometimes the hurt is so bad in someone it takes time to forgive, but God will give you the strength to do it. Forgiveness is a decision just like love being a decision but in some circumstances to make that decision you must cling to God and ask Him to give you the strength to forgive.

The message of the cross, receiving the forgiveness of Christ in your heart is the only way we can forgive those who have hurt us so deeply. God sees the heart we look at appearances. God bless you and stay close to the Lord.

DOING TIME WITH JESUS

Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, Happy New Year! I hope 2012 is as good for you as it's going to be for me (I get out in a few months). I'm writing to let you know how much I have been enriched by reading "Secrets of a Happy Family." Being a male from a single parent household, I have always had mixed feelings as to what a father should be and embraced role reversal as "the new way". And I thought that's what women wanted or deserved anyway. Reading Marie say that that's not what a woman really wants has started some serious conversion within my conscience. Once I get out I plan on having a sacramental marriage and a good Christian family. Your book is making that dream more clear and will serve as a foundation block. Thank you.

P.S. – Could I receive "The Basic Catechism of Catholic Doctrine" so that it will be easier to evangelize to others within here? Thanks QJ

QJ, Your right, this year is a good year for you. We speak our future. Believing and speaking in what God tells us in Jeremiah 29:11 does come to pass and will happen to you. Men do not know what women need until they know who they are and are obedient to the Word of God under the headship of Christ. Ephesians 5:25-26 says, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her to make her holy, purifying her in the bath of water by the power of the word..." How did Christ give himself up for us, His Bride? He died on the cross taking all our sins purifying us and making us acceptable to our Father. Men are called to do the same. That is what love is all about, dying to our self needs and wants for the good of another. Christ officially elevated marriage to a supernatural sacrament when he officiated at the marriage of Cana. Fr. John Hardon tells us that in the Catholic Church marriage is more than a natural institution; it was elevated by Christ Himself, in His participation in the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), to be one of the seven sacraments. God bless you.

Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, I'm writing this in thanks for a few of the books you've sent me. My unit is currently on it's annual lockdown and they are helping me pass my time. About half a year ago I felt like I had a spiritual re-awakening while attending a St. Dismas revival/retreat thing and it brought me back to the church. I have in a frenzy had an appetite for anything that had to do with God, Christ, & Catholicism. I got back into the bible & praying daily. This past month has been hard on me and unfortunately I started to slide back from the Lord slowly. It was little things at first like reading a chapter/verse less in my bible or skipping a prayer until I stopped reading & praying all together. I'm currently trying to get back on track. I'm reading & praying again but without the enthusiasm I used to have. I know I'm not alone in this; everyone goes through a little phase like this. I have been praying on my faith. I guess each of us got their own battles & demons to face within. I also write this to ask if I can receive one of your Bread of Life Bible Studies? I am unsure of what cycle you guys are on. I would also like to make a request for the book, "You visited me". If it wouldn't be to much trouble. Thank you and keep up the newsletters they are also a big help. Keep me in your prayers. Your brother in Christ, GH

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

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Saint Catherine of Siena states, "...For once Satan has brought us to sadness, and discouragement, we become frustrated with ourselves and abandon our spiritual practices, thinking God must not be pleased or satisfied with what we have been doing, since we are experiencing so much darkness and cold-heartedness. We seem to have lost the warmth of charity, and so we think it better to let go of these practices than to keep them up. Then the devil is happy because he sees we are ready to be led into despair – and this is the one way he can get us." You have been given the grace by God to turn back and keep on trying even though you don't have the enthusiasm you first had. That is what we call perseverance. Remember, He is right there with you, keep remembering that. He will not leave you or abandon you in your effort. We pray that you will continue your spiritual reading and sharing with the Lord what is going on in your life. This is the time to get real with Jesus and He will reveal to you His truth. His truth will set you free. Keep in touch with us. We sent you the Bread of Life. Hope you received it.

Dear Deacon Ken, Hello, God bless you'll for what you do, I'll keep you in my prayers! I want to tell you the Books & Bible you sent me will be cherished. I have been wanting nothing but to read God's Word, and do all my correspondence Bible-courses. Thanks to people like you. You help us that are locked-up to still see the love of Jesus, and give us hope after our messed up lives that we brought on our self. It took me a lot of years to finally realize I can't do anything without the Lord. I have had a very messed up life for over 47 years, so now I realize I have to let God take over and help me to learn **His Way!!** God bless you all, John 3:16.
DP

PS Would you by chance have any bible dictionaries? And does Lawrence R. Michaels have any books on the Prophets?

DP, thank you for the encouragement and showing us again how the power of God's Word can transform lives. Learning His Way is the only way to a life full of peace and joy. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life; no one comes to the Father but through me." John 14:6 says. You find your way by following his blue print for life, the bible and by being obedient to the Church teaching. We have a limited amount of books we can offer and a bible dictionary is not one of them. We are sorry to say our good friend Deacon Lawrence Michaels recently passed away and did not write on the Prophets. He wrote two books that we do offer, one on Revelations and the other on the Gospels. God bless you.

Dear Deacon Ken & Marie, Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. I want to thank both of you for the newsletter you send to me, and especially for the booklet, "Overcoming Sexual abuse – Wounds that Heal", that you took the time to send to me. It was a great help to me, and gave me much insight into how I need to deal with the long-term molestation in my childhood. I have an exceedingly huge quantity of wounds that need to be healed. And they will not be healed all at once. It will take some time as they have dug-in deeply. I have to begin by separating them from the few (very few) good memories I acquired in life. Then compartmentalize them behind some very solid walls of forgetfulness.

I, too, have a deep-seated anger toward my stepfather, even though he is dead. In fact, all the family members who did not believe me, and allowed it to continue, are now dead. My stepfather molested me for seven years. He not only stole my innocence, but my childhood as well. He even let another family member borrow me on occasion.

Anyhow...I have a long ways to go, but I am working on things the best that I can. Baby steps. There are a lot of unresolved issues I need to deal with, on top of helping the wounds to heal. I have, "manic depression" problems that can, at times, leave me so confused I cannot do much of anything. Even reading is often impossible. I get to dwelling on the past, so bad, that my thoughts begin to race, and I

cannot concentrate on anything. My anxiety levels go through the roof. But I continue to strive forward through the quicksand my mind is mired in. I have no intention of giving up. No quit here. God bless & keep you strong! In God's love, JP Words of Wisdom – "Prayer is the best wireless service."

JP, thank you for your honesty and sharing your struggle with us. We love your Words of Wisdom. Yes, prayer is certainly the way to go. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:13-14, "Brothers, I do not think of myself as having reached the finish line. I give no thought to what lies behind but push on to what is ahead. My entire attention is on the finish line as I run toward the prize to which God calls me-life on high in Christ Jesus." Keep your eyes on Jesus and try to bring yourself into His presence when your mind starts to think on all the bad things. Remember what 2 Cor. 10:5 says, "...we likewise bring every thought into captivity to make it obedient to Christ." Jesus tells us in scripture to not let the sun set on your anger. Make the decision to forgive by saying the words - I forgive so and so - and even though you do not feel any different towards the person God will heal the pain. Your hurt is deep and God will heal you over time. Stay real close to Him. He loves you with an everlasting love. He has a plan for your life; you just have to stay close to him.

Hello and God bless you! Just received your newsletter and thought I'd write and express my appreciation to you and what you brothers and sisters do. It's very inspiring to see such selfless servants of God who are living out the faith they hold dear. I've seen early on that the people society labels the 'Good Guys' were anything but, and decided real early on that if that was the 'Good Guys' then count me out, I would rather be the Bad guy, but with integrity at least. Who would've ever known about all the children of God out there doing their own thing, unbeknownst to the world? I never knew growing up about all these Holy orders, men and women who dedicate their lives selflessly to feeding the poor, healing the sick, educating the ignorant, ministering to prisoners, etc, and take vows of Poverty and such to cement the deal.

I've written you in the past. Sometimes I mean something really good, but probably doesn't come out that way, cause I'm just not used to expressing gratitude properly. Sin has definitely darkened my soul immensely, and above and beyond distorting the image I was created in and the way I view the world and others, It's probably twisted my ability to adequately convey what I'm trying to say a lot of times as well. But, just letting you know that you are seen, and appreciated, and are inspiring those of us whose faith is still developing and hope to one day be able to give as selflessly as you are. I'm seriously considering becoming a brother one day...been considering for over a year now though with still no concrete decision, so we'll see how that goes...

Ha! Just rereading the column about the anti-pedophiles. Can't say that I haven't felt the same way he has before. I'm no sex offender either, just your average run of the mill murderer, armed robber, weapons possessing home invading gang member...yeah, rapists don't deserve forgiveness, I guess none of us really deserve it...I guess that's the beauty of the gift though. Anyways, thought it was pretty cool that dude gave a couple stamps a few months back. Been meaning to send some as well, it's just real rare I get any money, been a few months, but someone sent \$20 yesterday, so I'm sending you 5 stamps. I know its nothing but we all got to start somewhere. I guess if we can't change the culture of the country at least we can create and expand visible sub-cultures to keep something holy alive. God bless you people.... CH

Thank you for your letter CH and for the stamps. Generosity is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Scripture also tells us that "all men are now undeservedly justified by the gift of God, through the redemption wrought in Christ Jesus. Through His blood, God made him the means of expiation for all who believe." What an awesome God we have. His love and forgiveness is far greater than ours. As it tells us in Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord,." He knows what is best and does everything in our lives for our good. God bless you.



In Jesus' love,
Deacon Ken & Marie