



“A National Catholic Outreach supporting the spiritual lives and rehabilitation of prisoners.”

## Listen with Compassion

Dcn. Seigfried Presberry, director of the prison ministry program in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and Dismas Ministry board member, spoke at the Camden Diocesan Prison Ministry Conference held at Saint John Paul II Retreat Center in Vineland, NJ, on Sept. 21.

In his remarks, Dcn. Presberry said, “We as a church must break free of the stigma of incarceration. The incarcerated and their loved ones look to us for comfort, for trust. And through accompaniment and solidarity, we must be missionary disciples to those returning to the church. Prison Ministry is an under appreciated ministry, and the wounded need us — whether they are current inmates, former inmates, or loved ones. They are crying out, and we need to listen.”

The excerpt from this article is featured with permission from the Camden Diocese. Please see the complete article at [www.camdendiocese.org/ministry-to-inmates-former-inmates-and-family](http://www.camdendiocese.org/ministry-to-inmates-former-inmates-and-family).



To learn more, visit  
[www.dismasministry.org/mercycircle](http://www.dismasministry.org/mercycircle)

## Join our Monthly Giving Club

Join the new giving club – **Mercy Circle** – and commit to a monthly gift.

Your prayerful and generous support sustains Dismas Ministry’s mission of providing Catholic scripture, faith, and prayer resources to the imprisoned. Together, with your partnership, we help strengthen lives of faith for those seeking God’s love and mercy.

Mercy Circle members will receive these benefits:

- monthly updates from the Executive Director
- recognition in the *Remember Me* newsletter (with permission)
- all occasion cards (set of 5) featuring artwork of prisoners
- special prayer card

## 2019 Dismas Ministry Board of Directors

We are blessed to have a dedicated Board of Directors who share their time with Dismas Ministry. They represent states from around the nation, and share different skills and expertise in support of this ministry to the imprisoned. The Board of Directors meets quarterly and, as needed, throughout the year.

Pictured on the right: back row, left to right: Joshua Stancil, Sr. Lucy Nigh, SSND, Dcn. Richard Niggemann, Dcn. Pablo Perez, Fr. Richard Deshaies, SJ (secretary) and Patrick McDevitt (treasurer). Front row, left to right: Curtis Gibson (vice president), Dcn. Seigfried Presberry, Sr. Patricia Weidman, CSA (president), and Sr. Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND.



# From the Director

Dear Friends,

Each week, our team at Dismas Ministry receives letters from prisoners throughout the country. In addition to their requests for Catholic materials, they sometimes share personal stories of loss and pain or the actions that led to their incarceration.

While I cannot see the face of each person who writes a letter to Dismas Ministry, or hear the storytelling in their unique voice, I can see their name at the close of each letter. Letters from Michael, David, Tiffany, and Amanda...to name just a few...receive the same attention and care and customized response to their individual requests.

Quite often, these letters from prisoners include messages of gratitude, and – most importantly – renewed hope. Through your support of Dismas Ministry, you help to restore hope to those who are in despair. They are among our most vulnerable neighbors.

In some cases, they have to scrounge or save up to buy the supplies needed – a simple piece of paper, an envelope, and a postage stamp – to mail their letter to us. For some, they share these resources and include the names of cellmates and their neighbors in prison, who are also interested in receiving a Catholic bible, prayer book, rosary, or study course.

These are people who want to be better than they were yesterday. And, they seek a new or renewed life of faith.

Thank you for “seeing” those who go unseen in communities across the country. Their stories are real. And, they yearn to strengthen their relationship with God and the Church. Your prayers and financial support make this possible...for Michael, David, Tiffany, Amanda, and countless others.

With gratitude,

*Ms. Tyler Curtis*  
Executive Director



## St. Dismas Award Call for Nominations

Do you know someone who has gone above and beyond in their ministry to the incarcerated?  
We want to hear about it! We are currently accepting nominations for our St. Dismas Award.



The St. Dismas Award is given annually, by Dismas Ministry, to an individual in recognition of their outstanding service to the incarcerated.

Learn more about this award and the nomination process on our website at [www.dismasministry/award](http://www.dismasministry/award).

An individual who nominates someone for the St. Dismas Award will need to provide a brief testimonial on the nominee. In addition, they must collect 1 – 2 additional testimonials from others who endorse this nominee. (No more than three testimonials will be accepted or considered for each nominee). The nomination process will close at 11:59 pm (CST) on Wednesday, November 20, 2019.

*“What you have received freely, give freely”  
~Matthew 10:8*

**Tuesday, December 3, 2019** is

**#GIVINGTUESDAY™**

This year, Dismas Ministry is raising money to support our mission – providing bibles to the imprisoned.

Please consider a donation to Dismas Ministry.

**Our goal this #GivingTuesday is  
\$5,000 — that's 1,000 bibles.**



A donation of only \$5 will purchase one bible!  
Donate \$25 and you'll provide 5 bibles!

**Donate today at  
[www.DismasMinistry.org/gt](http://www.DismasMinistry.org/gt)**

Dismas Ministry provides materials free of charge to those who request it.



# Volunteer Spotlight - Friends in Faith By Karen Heuberger

How can prisoners learn more about scripture or prayer in the Catholic tradition? They can enroll in Dismas Ministry's correspondence courses on the subjects. *God With Us* is a Catholic bible study for prisoners and *Pray Always* is a Catholic study of prayer for prisoners.

Vincentian volunteers at St. William Parish in Waukesha, Wisconsin, coordinate these courses for prisoners around the country. Since 2006, volunteers have come together to correct answer sheets as well as organize and send course materials to prisoners. The parish provides space for them to work and keep their materials. While there have been many volunteers since the parish took on the project, the current volunteers are (pictured at right) Ruth Anne White, Anne Radomski, Linda Dudzek, and Jackie Meyer (pictured separately).

Linda, the newest volunteer, has been helping for six months. As she sat and corrected an answer sheet, she mentioned that oftentimes the prisoners will include a note asking for prayers. Linda also shared that she was thrilled that these resources are specifically for prisoners. These courses were written by the ministry with the prisoner in mind. They are written at a sixth grade reading level so they are easy to understand, and include themes to help prisoners rethink the direction of their lives. These themes include anger management, repentance/forgiveness, substance abuse, and other relevant topics.

Ruth Anne, who has been volunteering for over 10 years and is the coordinator of the group, added that when they correct the sheets, they use green ink instead of the typical red which indicates being wrong. Instead they want to encourage the prisoners and add to their knowledge, so if the answer is partly correct, they will add "and also..." with the complete answer. Ruth Anne said she knows that people are in prison because they made bad choices, but when she sees that someone is sentenced to life without parole, it hurts her. She feels that people in prison need help and support.

"We need to forgive them as God forgives us," said Ruth Anne, who added that she doesn't want anyone to lose hope. She is heartened by the fact that prisoners sometimes work on these courses in groups, because that gives them something in common besides being in prison, something life giving.

Anne, who takes care of the data entry and filing, has been volunteering for three years. She believes prisoners need help to be rehabilitated. She feels many who are mentally ill or have addictions are in the wrong system to get the kind of help they need. "I find this ministry fulfilling, because I'm able to reach out to people who don't have any other faith connection. It helps me be more forgiving to people who do wrong. I am reminded that they are human, too," said Anne.

While Jackie was unable to meet with us, she conveyed her thoughts in an email message: "I believe the Lord has jobs for each of us, and that they don't just come to us. I want to give back for all the blessings in my life. I like to think we

are helping the inmates find faith, and I pray that it will also help many of them try to change their lives upon release. We get lovely notes from some who make us feel like we are making a difference in their lives, and that is very humbling for me."

We are grateful to these dedicated volunteers, who share their time and faith as they "visit the prisoner" through their work!

In addition to the two study courses managed by this group of volunteers, Dismas Ministry also offers a faith study, *A Reason for Hope* and social justice study, *The Web of Life*.



**Dismas Ministry Inmate  
Study Courses**

**You can find all four study courses at our store at  
[www.dismasministry.org/shop](http://www.dismasministry.org/shop)**





**Dismas Ministry**

PO Box 070363

Milwaukee, WI 53207

[www.dismasministry.org](http://www.dismasministry.org)

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #5011  
MILWAUKEE, WI

A Newsletter published by Dismas Ministry  
A national Catholic outreach for inmates, victims, their families, those released from prison, and the community.

DISMAS MINISTRY is registered as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Wisconsin, and listed in the US Catholic Directory as a religious, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization. All gifts are tax deductible.

Follow us on social media!



[www.facebook.com/dismasministry](http://www.facebook.com/dismasministry)

[www.twitter.com/dismasministry](http://www.twitter.com/dismasministry)

[www.linkedin.com/company/dismas-ministry](http://www.linkedin.com/company/dismas-ministry)

[www.pinterest.com/dismasministry](http://www.pinterest.com/dismasministry)

[www.instagram.com/dismasministry](http://www.instagram.com/dismasministry)

[www.youtube.com/user/dismasministry](http://www.youtube.com/user/dismasministry)

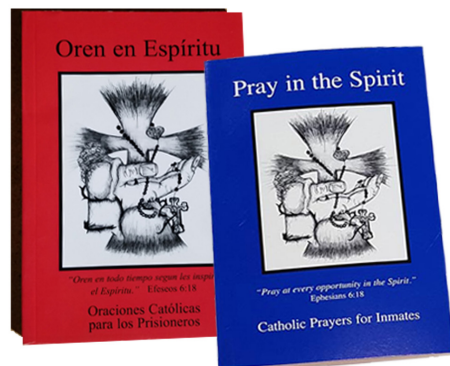
## From the Chaplains...

We use *Pray in the Spirit/Oren en Espiritu* in spiritual care visits with immigrants detained and awaiting their asylum hearings. Many of the asylum seekers have never been incarcerated before, so this is the first time they are receiving these books. Immigration detention is indefinite with no release date to look forward to. They are often detained in jails and centers that are too far for family to visit, separating spouses from each other and parents from their children for indefinite periods of time. In these very difficult days, many people renew their prayer life. *Pray in the Spirit* and *Oren en Espiritu* bring the men and women back to the traditional and comforting prayers of their faith.

These prayers help sustain their faith and hope in the darkest days of uncertainty. The size is perfect for them to keep in their jail cells or take with them when they're released. We make about 8,000 pastoral care visits each year, so these books have brought spiritual strength to thousands of people over the years. These two prayer books are the most popular.

Peace,

Pam Shearman, Program Director Jail Ministry — Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants



**You can find *Pray in the Spirit* and *Oren en Espiritu* at our store at  
[www.dismasministry.org/shop](http://www.dismasministry.org/shop)**