



# Remember Me

A national Catholic outreach supporting the spiritual lives and rehabilitation of prisoners.

## A Prosecutor with a Heart for Hope Behind Bars



Daniel J. Gabler,  
Dismas Ministry Board Member

Dismas Ministry is honored to welcome Daniel J. Gabler to our Board of Directors. With over 33 years of legal experience, including his current role as Assistant District Attorney in Washington County, Wisconsin, Daniel brings a deep understanding of the criminal justice system and a profound compassion for those impacted by it. In addition to his current work, he was formerly a criminal prosecutor in the Milwaukee County District Attorney's office for 17 years, the Chairman of the Wisconsin Parole Commission for two years and a Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge for two years. His varied roles in the criminal justice system drew him to prison ministry because he sees firsthand the sadness, the brokenness, and the need for

deep healing of those who are jailed.

Daniel understands the toll incarceration takes not only on the confined but also on families and communities. His close proximity to this reality fuels his passion for inspiring those in the criminal justice system to move beyond the literal and figurative prison bars, and he strongly believes that Dismas Ministry is part of the solution.

Having worked decades in criminal justice, Daniel recognizes incarceration and supervision has a limited impact in changing lives for the better. "The system wasn't set up to solve all of society's problems. Unfortunately many view it as a 'silver bullet' to solve messy lives. In reality it's like a rock tumbler. At times it is uncontrolled and erratic in an effort to smooth out the rough edges of a disordered person." After years of observations from a front row seat, he shared: "At the core of nearly all crime is the absence of and/or a destruction of the family."

In conjunction with the necessity of the family, Daniel knows that God has to be the foundation of all aspects of living. "Without an embrace of the Triune God, why do we even get up in the morning?" he says. "We must offer people hope through Christ because embracing Christ is really the only way out of the revolving door of recidivism." He notes that there are many times in a courtroom where a person is so steeped in sin, as manifested by their crimes, that all they have left in life is hope because all of their relationships with family and friends have been severed. "Hopelessness leads to despair, and despair leads to giving up. Hope in our loving God is the foundation of a life free of anti-social behavior." *Continued on Page 4.*

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## Voices of Prisoners

*"I've been locked up for over 15 years. I used to be angry at God, at life, at everything. But your Bible study courses changed my heart. You've given me a new way to live, even in HERE. Thank you for helping me start over with Christ. Can I please start your faith study course? God Bless."*

~ Donna, A Prisoner, Louisiana

## Voices of Donors

*"My brother spent time in prison, and I know how lonely and forgotten that experience can be. Supporting Dismas Ministry is my way of honoring his life and helping others find healing and purpose through faith."*

~ Carlos M., A Donor

## Voices of Prison Ministers

*"I have been looking for Catholic study courses for a while now and I finally found you. I am so grateful for the work that you do for our Catholic prisoners. I've been doing ministry for several years and I am so grateful for your direction and support in my ministry. Thank you!"*

~ Sue L., A Prison Minister

**"I was in prison and you visited me." ~ Matthew 25:36**

## A Message from Our Executive Director



Dear Friends,

As spring unfolds around us, bringing signs of renewal, hope, and new life, I am reminded of the deep meaning of resurrection that sits at the heart of our faith. It is a season that speaks to the promise that even after the longest winters, new beginnings are always possible. Here at Dismas Ministry, we have experienced our own moments of renewal in recent months, each one a powerful reminder of how grace moves in the most unexpected places.

This season, as we celebrate Easter, I remember the words often attributed to St. Teresa of Avila: "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours." These words speak powerfully to our mission at Dismas Ministry. Every time you give, volunteer, or pray for those we serve, your hands become the hands of Christ, reaching into prison cells with compassion, mercy, and hope.

Whether it was through your support of the 2025 St. Dismas Award Celebration in Baltimore, your presence at the *Expressions of the Soul* art event in Milwaukee, or your ongoing encouragement of our mission, you have made Christ's love visible. I especially want to thank the many volunteers who assist in our offices each week and faithfully offer feedback and encouragement to individuals enrolled in our correspondence Bible study courses. We truly could not do this work without you.

As spring invites us to embrace what is growing and to water what has been planted, I invite you to pray with us for those in prison, and to continue supporting the lifegiving work we are doing together. Through your prayers, your gifts, and your partnership, you are helping to bring newness and hope into the lives of so many.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juliann Joerres".

Juliann Joerres  
Executive Director

**"Christ has no body now but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours."  
~St. Teresa of Avila**

## Honoring Faith, Service, and Legacy: 2025 St. Dismas Award

On Saturday, March 22nd, over 200 guests gathered in Baltimore, Maryland to celebrate the 2025 St. Dismas Award recipient, Fr. Chuck Canterna, whose 40+ years of prison ministry have inspired hope and healing for countless individuals.

The celebration featured a powerful Mass concelebrated by seven priests, heartfelt tributes, and a beautiful meal provided by Fr. Leo's Plating Grace Catering. Stories shared by Fr. Chuck's brother, John, and nominator Charlie Ponticelli offered touching insights into his life and impact on others.

We extend special thanks to the volunteers from St. Vincent de Paul and their team for making the day seamless and meaningful.



The award was presented by Dismas board member Chris Patrick in honor of Fr. Chuck's lifelong dedication.

Thank you to all who made this celebration so memorable. Your presence, prayers, and generosity ensure that the legacy of compassion lives on through Dismas Ministry's work with our brothers and sisters behind bars. Together, we are carrying the light of Christ into even the darkest corners.

Visit our website to learn more about the St. Dismas Award and stay updated on when the nomination period opens for 2026.

**[dismasministry.org/stdismasaward](https://dismasministry.org/stdismasaward)**



# Expressions of the Soul: A Day to Remember

On Sunday, April 6, Dismas Ministry hosted *Expressions of the Soul*, a showcase of art created by men and women who are incarcerated. The event was held in cooperation with the Ignatian Volunteer Corps of Milwaukee, of which Dismas is a proud partner agency.

With well over 200 people in attendance, the room was filled with energy, light, and hope - it truly was an emotional event.

The day was about sharing the heart of our brothers and sisters behind bars. We called it *Expressions of the Soul* because their artwork offers a glimpse into their humanity, a side that most people never get to know. Art has a way of creating a space without judgment, a place where beauty and truth can shine through. On April 6, that strength and dignity were on full display.



The event showcased a collection of artwork that has been generously gifted by men and women in custody who have been served by Dismas Ministry over the course of its 25-year history. Each piece tells a story and invites viewers to see the extreme talent, profound resilience, and deep faith that exist even behind prison walls.

Beyond the amazing artwork and the *I Am Beautiful* books, which were very much in demand, the most moving part of the day was the personal encounters. Several guests shared deeply personal stories, many speaking of incarcerated family members. Some came to the event not knowing what to expect but left with resources, encouragement, and a connection to a supportive community. As one mother said, "God led me here today."

One conversation that stood out was with a woman whose son, Jacob, is currently on the run from the law. He has been incarcerated before, and she attended the event carrying a heavy heart. She was assured that Jacob would be kept in prayer, a reminder of how deeply needed the mission of Dismas Ministry is, and how powerful it can be to simply create a space filled with beauty, hope, and grace.



Juliann Joerres, Executive Director, David Bardon, IVC Volunteer, Steve McGuire and Dan Gabler, Dismas Ministry Board Members

This was the right time for an event like this. Now more than ever, we need spaces that remind us of our shared humanity, and that restoration and hope exist even in the hardest places. Art has the power to cross barriers and open hearts. When we share it and really see it, it changes how we see others and that is the beginning of real compassion and healing.

Those who felt moved by the stories and work shared are invited to make a donation today. Donations can be made in honor of the talented artists who made this event possible at [dismasministry.org/donate](https://dismasministry.org/donate).

For those who missed the event, you can still see our art as it graces the walls of our Dismas Ministry offices housed at Alverno College. Those interested are welcome to email us to set up a time for a personal tour and experience the authenticity and soul behind these remarkable works of art.

View our online gallery from the event at [dismasministry.org/artevent25](https://dismasministry.org/artevent25)

**Limited edition prints from the art event are still available. Visit our online store to order yours today! [dismasministry.org/shop](https://dismasministry.org/shop)**





# Dismas Ministry

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## Carrying Forward Paulist Prison Ministries



We are excited to announce that Dismas Ministry has been entrusted with continuing the legacy of the former Paulist Prison Ministries, an organization that served (for more than 30 years) individuals who are incarcerated. Founded by the late Paulist Fr. Thomas Comber, their ministry has touched tens of thousands

of lives through powerful spiritual resources.

As part of this transition, Dismas Ministry will now offer six of the Paulist materials, enhancing our support for chaplains, volunteers, and our brothers and sisters in custody.

We are also honored to welcome Paulist Fr. Frank DeSiano to our Board of Directors, bringing with him wisdom and dedication to this important work.

This exciting step forward strengthens our mission to bring hope and healing behind bars. Thank you for your continued support, which makes this growth possible.

### To learn more about the resources:

- Visit our website store: [www.dismasministry.org/shop](http://www.dismasministry.org/shop).
- Follow us on social media.
- Watch your inbox for news on available materials.

## Hope Behind Bars...*Cont'd from Page 1*

Prior to joining the Board, Daniel worked as a Knight of Columbus (KofC) to bring Christ to the imprisoned. He was inspired by an incarcerated friend who alerted Daniel to the lack of Catholic resources in county jails and state prisons; much of the material is outdated and not relatable. Daniel has since organized a Catholic book drive through KofC Council #4706 to get donated Catholic reading material behind prison walls.

Daniel believes the mission of Dismas Ministry can be a real agent of hope. He encourages supporters to keep their focus on God by helping those behind bars access quality Catholic resources made possible by Dismas Ministry.

We are grateful for Daniel's insights and his steadfast faith in the one Church founded by Christ Himself. We trust and believe it will help strengthen our outreach and bring hope to those who need it most.

*Daniel Gabler is a prosecutor in Washington County, Wisconsin. He and his wife of 30+ years are blessed with grandchildren through two married, adult children who also practice their Catholic faith with hope and trust in God.*