



Remember me.
Luke 23:42

Remember Me

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

An Unexpected Moment of Grace



Celebrants of the Mass for Deacon Mike Gutierrez on March 28, 2026

The Mass was concelebrated by seven clergy including Bishop James Misko and Bishop Gerald Kicanas of the Archdiocese of Tucson. In his homily, Bishop Misko spoke with a quiet strength about the heart of prison ministry, about seeing the person, not the past. He talked about meeting Christ in places many would rather avoid. His words seemed to settle deeply with those gathered, a reminder of why this work matters.

After Mass, nearly 150 people made their way to the Kicanas Center to continue the celebration. There was joy in the room, but also something deeper, a shared understanding that the work being honored is not easy, and often unseen.

Those who walk into prisons each day carry that reality with them. They show up without knowing what will come of it, trusting that something meaningful will happen. The St. Dismas Award exists, in part, to recognize these individuals, to care for those who spend their lives caring for others.

In many ways, what happened next became the clearest and most powerful example of why this work matters. After Deacon Mike accepted his award, something unplanned happened. A man stood up from the audience and asked if he could speak. There was a brief pause. This was not on the program. But we cautiously handed the microphone to him.

As he spoke, the room grew completely still, drawn into the weight of his story. His name was Fernando. He shared that he had spent 14 years incarcerated. At moments, his voice wavered. He paused, overcome with emotion as he struggled to hold back the tears welling in his eyes. ...Continued on page 3

The sun beat down intensely over Tucson, Arizona, on March 28, wrapping the day in an almost relentless heat. Inside St. Augustine Cathedral, though, there was a different kind of intensity, one marked not by temperature, but by reverence, humility, and grace. It was there that Deacon Mike Gutierrez was honored as the 2026 St. Dismas Award recipient.

The Mass was concelebrated by seven clergy including Bishop James Misko and Bishop Gerald Kicanas of the



Deacon Mike Gutierrez holding his St. Dismas Award.

Voices of Those We Serve

*My name is Patrick and I'm currently an inmate at LaPorte County Jail in Indiana, and have recently become a part of the Oblates of St. Benedict Abbey. They have given your address as a source of free literature about Catholicism. I would love a Catholic Bible, some sort of prayer book to help me better understand Catholic prayer, and hopefully some sort of correspondence courses about Catholicism. I'd be interested in any sorts of resources or information to help me learn and grow in my faith. I would be greatly appreciative of any help you could offer. I'm trying to further my education of the Lord and how to better serve him and have a Church to have fellowship with as well. I appreciate any sort of help you can offer and I look forward to both learning more and being closer to our Lord. Thank you for your time.
God bless, Patrick T.*

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

A Message from Our Executive Director



Dear Friends,

I am extremely excited to share this very special edition of our Spring Newsletter with you. The story on the cover is a powerful testament to the work we are called to do, and I truly hope it touches your heart. It is a moving reminder that hope, faith, and even the simplest acts of compassion have the power to restore dignity and humanity in the lives of our brothers and sisters who are incarcerated.

In many ways, Fernando's experience reflects the very heart of the season we now celebrate. The Easter Season is the most joyful and important time in the life of the Church. For fifty days, we celebrate the Resurrection as one continuous "great Sunday," rejoicing in the truth that Christ has conquered death and brought new life into the world. From the joy of Easter morning, through Divine Mercy Sunday, to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we are reminded that hope is not just a promise but a living reality.

This message of new life is at the very heart of Dismas Ministry. The Resurrection is not only something we celebrate, it is something we witness every day. When individuals who are incarcerated encounter Christ through Scripture, prayer, and faith study, lives begin to change. Like St. Dismas, who turned to Jesus with the simple plea, "Remember me," they discover that no life is beyond God's mercy and all who ask will be welcomed into the Light of Christ.

Because of your support, this message of hope reaches far beyond prison walls. You are helping to bring the light of the Resurrection to those who need it most, reminding our brothers and sisters behind bars that their story is not over. Thank you for being part of this mission and for sharing in the joy and promise of Easter.

With peace and gratitude,

Juliann Joerres

Executive Director

**"I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live."
– John 11:25**

New Resource – *I am Worthy* – A Call for Submissions

A resilience resource created by and for men in prison

Dismas Ministry is proud to share the launch of a new project created especially for the men we serve: *I Am Worthy: A resilience resource created by and for men in prison.*

Inspired by the powerful impact of our *I Am Beautiful* series for women in prison, this new book invites men who are incarcerated to share their voices through original writing,

poetry, reflections, and artwork. Rooted in dignity, healing, and faith, *I Am Worthy* is a trauma-informed resource designed to help men reflect on their experiences and rediscover their God-given worth. It is also an opportunity to build connection and encouragement among men walking similar paths.

We are currently accepting submissions and are seeking work that reflects themes of resilience, redemption, healing, faith, and personal growth. Selected contributors will be published in the book, and copies of the completed book will be sent to each person who contributed to this work of art.

We invite prison ministers, chaplains, and volunteers to share this opportunity within their facilities. By encouraging participation, you help create space for men to reclaim their stories, offer hope to others, and be reminded that their lives have meaning and purpose.

Thanks to support from the Raskob Foundation, *I Am Worthy* is underway, though more funding is still needed.

To learn more about how to become involved or donate, please visit dismasministry.org/IAMWorthy

The 2026 St. Dismas Award Recipient *continued*



Fernando speaking at the St. Dismas Award luncheon

He talked about his aunt, Sr. Esther a Catholic nun, who had ministered to him during his time inside. Through her, he found faith. Through her, he found hope.

But his story did not end there. Fernando spoke about his cellmate, a man who had just lost his mother and was carrying the weight of heartbreak and grief. In the darkness of that moment, Fernando did something simple. He invited his cellmate to join in his Catholic meeting time.

That was it. Just an invitation. His cellmate said yes. From there, something began to change. They continued to attend Catholic meetings with Sr. Esther, and they were both very touched by the welcoming and forgiving spirit of the Catholic faith.

As Fernando finished speaking, it became clear to everyone in the room what they had just witnessed. The ripple effect, made real. One person reached him. He reached another. And through those small, faithful acts, something larger began to unfold. Faith.

It was not planned. It was not scripted. But it was, without question, an extremely powerful moment.

We are deeply grateful for the work of Deacon Mike Gutierrez and for all those who quietly change lives each and every day. The day was a powerful reminder of what prison ministry truly is. It is not only about reaching individuals who are incarcerated, but about transforming hearts, strengthening communities, and creating connections that extend far beyond prison walls. Moments like these remind us that hearing, learning, and sharing this work is essential.

It is so important that we continue to tell these stories. We must share the challenges, the moments of grace, and the lives that are being changed. Because when we do, others begin to see what we see every day: the quiet, undeniable power of this calling.

To see pictures and read more about our event please visit

www.dismasministry.org/mike

**Fernando stood there,
fighting back tears,
reminding us that even
the smallest act of faith
can ripple far beyond
what we will ever see.**

Now Accepting Nominations for the 2027 St. Dismas Award



There are people quietly changing lives every single day... and most of us will never know their names. They walk into correctional facilities with compassion, faith, and a willingness to listen, reminding individuals who are incarcerated that they are not forgotten. It is sacred work. It is often unseen. And it deserves to be recognized.

Each year, Dismas Ministry presents this award to honor individuals who have shown outstanding service to those who are incarcerated. At its heart, this award is about caring for the caregiver. It is about shining a light on those who faithfully serve behind the scenes in a ministry that too often goes unnoticed.

We are currently accepting nominations for our 2027 St. Dismas Award.

Help us honor those who ensure our brothers and sisters behind bars are seen, known, and never forgotten. To learn more or submit your nomination, please visit

dismasministry.org/stdismasaward



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What our New Donors are Saying about Why they Donate to Dismas Ministry



I was inspired to donate because I have a desire to get God's Word to hurting people. I could think of no better way to help the prisoner than getting them their own Catholic Bible.
~ Donna K.



I want my donation to bring prisoners closer to Christ and help them understand they are beloved sons and daughters of the Father.
~David R.

Find our Resources On Tablets

We have created a dedicated page on our website where you can explore the materials that are being offered digitally through Edovo tablets. As more correctional facilities expand access to secure tablet technology, this page provides a simple way to see where our resources are currently available digitally and how they are being used to support individuals who are incarcerated.

On this new webpage, you will find a list of Dismas Ministry digital titles that are available on Edovo, along with a growing list of facilities that currently offer Edovo tablets. This tool is meant to help you quickly determine whether the facility where you serve has access to our digital content, making it easier to integrate these resources into your ministry, if desired.

We hope this new resource strengthens your ministry and expands access to faith-filled content for those you serve.

[dismasministry.org/edovo](https://www.dismasministry.org/edovo)