



A CATHOLIC MINISTRY
TO PRISONERS

Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES



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Celebrate the Year of Faith

The Catholic Church is beginning a Year of Faith and you are invited to participate!

Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed the Year of Faith to encourage Catholics to grow in their faith. The purpose of this Year is to help us embrace the truth that *Jesus Christ himself is the basis of our Christian faith*. We are to “encounter Christ,” who gives us meaning and the reason for living.

While the Year of Faith is for Catholics, all people of good will can join us in growing to know Jesus more deeply in our lives. The Year began on October 11, 2012 and will run to November 24, 2013.

The light of Christ. The work of the Church is to “bring the light of Christ to all people, a light brightly visible” in the Church itself. The light of Christ should also shine through the lives of all her

members, including you. People serving time in jail or prison are not excluded from the Church. You bring the Church and Christ with you to your place of confinement at this time of your life.

You should recognize that this is a special time for you to come to know Christ more personally and deeply—and to share your faith with others. *Jesus uses us in all and every place to reflect his life and love to others.* Every day of our lives we are on a pilgrimage of faith and are challenged to grow in faith no matter where we find ourselves. Use this time you are serving well.

Encountering Christ. Encountering Christ is something we can all do, but we have to open our minds and heart and want to meet



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013

him. We have to invite Jesus into our lives and not try to hide from him. Practical ways to do this are given in the article “Spiritual Resolutions for the Year of Faith” which begins on this page of *Let's Talk!* Look over these spiritual resolutions and commit yourself to them.

Growing in faith challenges us to act, often in new ways. It challenges us to break old habits so that we can live the good life. (See the article on Page 4 of this issue, which is part of our series on living life well.) Commit yourself to these resolutions and implement them as best as you can. God will bless your efforts. The Year of Faith will truly be a blessing for you.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A new year is beginning. And it is a Year of Faith. This is a good time for you to focus on your own growth in faith. It is a time to come to know Jesus more deeply, to learn more of his love for you and to receive the new life he gives. Remember his promise: “I came to give you life, and life to the full” (John 10:10). Jesus has done this in countless lives across nearly 20 centuries!

No matter where we are—in prison or out—our lives are important and have meaning. Remember this and let your time in prison make a difference for the better. May the Year of Faith be a blessing for you.

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP
President
Paulist Evangelization Ministries

Practical ways to help you grow in faith

Spiritual Resolutions for the Year of Faith

This Year of Faith calls us to grow deeper in our faith. And the special grace of the year can give you an extra boost. But growing in faith doesn't happen automatically; we have to do our part.

Many spiritual directors recommend that if we want to grow spiritually, we need to develop our own “spiritual discipline.” At the heart of this is that we try to do what we can, not what we can't. By this they mean that if you don't have an hour a day of quiet for prayer, don't attempt to spend an hour a day in quiet prayer. It won't happen and you'll just end up frustrated. Thus, seek to build a realistic spiritual life that suits your present circumstances.

Everyone's circumstances differ, even in prison or jail. Your level of confinement and the number of others around you will affect the amount of distractions you face and the time you get for some quiet. But even your own personality will impact what you can and should try to do. Here are some suggestions for “Spiritual Resolutions” for this special year. (You can read more about them in the Paulist Prison Ministries pamphlet “Conversion and Commitment to Christ.” Your chaplain or volunteer may be able to get a copy for you.)

A good spiritual discipline consists of several parts. Here are some to consider: 1) Read the Word of God. 2) Worship and pray. 3) Be part of a community. 4) Care for and serve others. Let's take a look at them.

First, the Word of God. Read Scripture. Listen to Scripture being read. Since every Catholic Mass consists of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Mass

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CHURCH CALENDAR

JANUARY 2013

- 1 **Mary, Mother of God**
- 2 Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, bishops and doctors
- 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
- 5 St. John Neumann, bishop
- 6 **Epiphany of the Lord**
- 13 **Baptism of the Lord**
- 17 St. Anthony, abbot
- 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 20 **Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 21 St. Agnes, virgin and martyr
- 22 **Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 24 St. Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor
- 25 **Conversion of St. Paul**
- 26 Sts. Timothy and Titus, bishops
- 27 **Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 28 St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor
- 31 St. John Bosco, priest

FEBRUARY 2013

- 2 **Presentation of the Lord**
- 3 **Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 5 St. Agatha, virgin and martyr
- 6 St. Paul Miki and Companions, martyrs
- 10 **Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 13 **Ash Wednesday**
- 17 **First Sunday in Lent**
- 22 **Chair of Peter**
- 23 St. Polycarp, martyr
- 24 **Second Sunday in Lent**

MARCH 2013

- 3 **Third Sunday in Lent**
- 7 Sts. Perpetua and Felicity, martyrs
- 10 **Fourth Sunday of Lent**
- 17 **Fifth Sunday of Lent**
- 19 **St. Joseph, Husband of Mary**
- 24 **Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)**
- 24-30 **Holy Week**
- 28 **Holy Thursday**
- 29 **Good Friday**
- 30 **Easter Vigil**
- 31 **Easter Sunday**

Let's Talk!

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Thank you for your help.

PMLTH1301

Spiritual Resolutions for the Year of Faith

(continued from page 1)

provides a good time to hear the Word proclaimed. Listen to it and try to pick up something you can remember afterward to guide you.

It can sometimes be difficult to attend religious services while in prison or jail. Thus, it is also good to develop a daily habit of reading something from the Bible. You might want to follow the daily Mass readings. Or you might want to work your way through books of the Bible (starting with the New Testament), and perhaps the entire Bible itself.

It is important to remember that reading Scripture isn't a speed-reading contest. Read slowly and reflect on what you read. Perhaps write down in a notebook something that strikes you. Remember, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Second, worship and pray. Attend Sunday Mass if you can. If it isn't available on Sunday, attend when it is offered. The Eucharist is the great sacrament of life and love. Participate with an open heart and mind, with the desire of meeting Jesus and learning from him, growing in him, being healed by him.

The liturgy is at most once a week for an hour or less. Thus, in addition, have a time of personal prayer each day. Set aside a time and place when you can talk with God. A little such time is better than none. If possible, read Scripture during this time as well. If none of this is possible, take time during a quiet time of the day to turn your mind and heart to God and talk with him. This is an example of "Pray as you can, not as you can't."

Third, be part of a community. If there is a Catholic fellowship or church at your prison or jail, participate in it if you can. (If it is a general Christian fellowship, make sure that they aren't "Catholic bashers" out to tear you down.) When Jesus formed a body of followers known as his disciples, he was setting an example for us. It is important to be part of a community.

A community can provide fun and fellowship that encourages us, and that supports us in hard times. They can be good people to talk with and grow with, and provide positive relationships. A community of believers is a place where we live out our faith, so it doesn't remain something just in our heads. It has to be in our hearts too, and participation in a community with other Christians challenges us to live out our faith.

Fourth, care for and serve others. This follows closely on number three above. Our faith isn't just about ourselves. It is about caring for and serving others as well. So look for ways you can do that while in prison or jail. Of course, be prudent and don't get entangled with people who will abuse you. That is why community is so important. When two or three are gathered together Christ is with you and you can better know when to be involved with another and when not to.

A Personal Encounter with Christ. At the heart of these spiritual resolutions that you can make part of your spiritual discipline is a "personal encounter with Christ." All of these things help you to encounter Christ, and when that happens you will grow spiritually. And that's what the Year of Faith is all about.



Ron Reaves ©

Prisoner Saint

St. Josephine Bakhita (1869-1947) + Called the "African flower," Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan in Africa and kidnapped and entered into the imprisonment of slavery. The horror she faced caused her to forget her given name and she was called "Bakita," which means "fortunate." In Sudan, Bakita was purchased by the Italian Consul and treated with great kindness. Taken to Italy with her new family, she was given the name Josephine in 1890 when she was baptized a Christian. In 1896 she became a Catholic Sister and served God in faithfulness for 50 years. Beloved for her witness of love, she is known today in Italy as "our Black Mother."

Feast Day: February 8

**Pope Benedict XVI's
Prayer Requests**
for January/February/
March

JANUARY

General. *The Faith of Christians:* That in this Year of Faith Christians may deepen their knowledge of the mystery of Christ and witness joyfully to the gift of faith in him.

Missionary. *Middle Eastern Christians:* That the Christian communities of the Middle East, often discriminated against, may receive from the Holy Spirit the strength of fidelity and perseverance.

FEBRUARY

General. *Migrant Families:* That migrant families, especially the mothers, may be supported and accompanied in their difficulties.

Missionary. *Peace:* That the peoples at war and in conflict may lead the way in building a peaceful future.

MARCH

General. *Respect for Nature:* That respect for nature may grow with the awareness that all creation is God's work entrusted to human responsibility.

Missionary. *Clergy:* That bishops, priests, and deacons may be tireless messengers of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Pope Benedict XVI invites all people to join him in praying for these intentions.

Talking about Religion, Part 3

Father Confession

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

Peaches: OK. Karen has a new question.

Me: It's only a "new" question if you haven't heard it before! What is it?

Peaches: "Call no man 'father'" (Matthew 23:9ff).

Me: What does she call the man who gave her life?

Peaches: Well, she uses the word "father" for her dad. But she's referring to us calling our priests "Father."

Me: It also says in the same place to call no one "teacher." What do they call their Sunday School instructors at her church?

Peaches: Oh, I get it! This is just something to charge Catholics with!

Me: Why do you say that?

Peaches: Well, she didn't even mention teacher at all and they're doing the same thing!

Me: Is that an honest criticism?

Peaches: Not really. So it isn't Christian either, right?

Me: Does it sound like Jesus to you? Think he'd be proud of using "tactics" instead of a discussion where we look for the truth and give each other the benefit of the doubt for having good intentions? Half quotes?

Peaches: OK, but they don't call their ministers "Father," so why do we call our priests that?

Me: Well, because he is doing the job of a father in the spiritual realm. The priest gives us spiritual life by baptism. He educates, nourishes us in the Eucharist, corrects in confession, advises us in counseling, etc.

Peaches: OK, so what was Jesus getting at when he said this?

Me: We have little appreciation today for how strong the family was in its hold on individuals in Jesus time. It was absolute. Also, any leader, say of a teaching or school of thought was called "Father" or "Teacher" and that loyalty was exclusive. Jesus is reminding the people of his time, and us, that our ultimate loyalty is to God. No "Father" or "Teacher" can replace that. Not even the man who gave you life.

Peaches: Sounds OK to me, but Karen isn't going to buy it without a Bible quote.

Me: OK. Tell her to go through the New Testament and count the many times those words are used. That makes it obvious that her interpretation isn't shared by the inspired writers of scripture. Or just go to 1 Corinthians 4:15 where St. Paul refers to himself a "father" to the church in Corinth.

Peaches: She also wants to know where the Bible says a priest can forgive sins. She says she finds the idea that a man can forgive sins shocking.

Me: Well, the Pharisees were shocked too when Jesus forgave sins (Matthew 9:2-3). But that's an easy one for me to remember because it's one of my favorite scenes in the Gospel.

The first thing Jesus did when he met his apostles after the Resurrection in John 20:23 was to say: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them. Whose sins you hold bound they are held bound." And since he didn't give the apostles the power to read minds, you needed to tell them your sins to get them forgiven.

Besides, Jesus gave them full authority "as the Father sent me so I send you" (John 20:21). "I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19). And using that "full authority" of the keys to the kingdom, the apostles passed the power of forgiveness down to the next generation of leaders (Titus 1:5) and into our own time.

Peaches: Well he must've known that as long as there are people, we will need forgiveness. Even I've figured that much out! You know, you're a pretty smart guy to know all the answers, Deke!

Me: Yeah, well, I've heard them before. I told you there were only about 10 of these Bible questions that Fundamentalists ask about so I knew this was coming at some point.

Peaches: And here I thought you were so smart and now I know your secret!

Me: What "secret"?

Peaches: Re-runs!

Deacon Dennis Dolan is chaplain at York Correctional Institution, Niantic, Conn. and is a member of the Diaconal Mission Service Team of the Diocese of Norwich.

Prudence comes first

Just about everyone wants to live a good life, one where we are happy.

As we have already seen, most of the things that we think will make us happy leave us empty and wanting more. Popular culture puts it like this: eat, drink and be merry. Or, seek wine, women and song. Painful experience may have taught us that the pleasure we think we will get from these things is fleeting, leaving us empty and wanting still more. And having more isn't the answer either. In some cases seeking after these things can get us into serious trouble.

The time-honored way to the good life discovered across history and expressed in the Old Testament, by the Greek philosophers hundreds of years before Christ, and throughout time to our day remains the same. The good life is achieved through embracing the moral virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

Prudence—the “Queen” of the virtues. Prudence has fallen on hard times. So often today, when people think of a person who is prudent, they think of someone who is boring and doesn't know how to have fun. This is far from the truth. A prudent person is a person who sees what is right and good and does it. Thus, a prudent person seeks the best solution and puts it into practice. This is what leads to happiness.

Prudence is called the “queen of the virtues” because it rules over and lights the way for the other virtues. It shows us the right balance in our lives when we are

seeking to be just, to live courageously, and to be moderate in what we eat and drink. It seeks an appropriate middle ground and not too much or too little.

For example, knowing when an act is courageous, and not the extreme of too much (acting recklessly) or too little (acting cowardly) is prudence. Knowing when an act is just and not an extreme of too much (being severe) or too little (being indifferent) is justice. Avoiding the extremes of too much or too little is prudence in action.

What is prudent will vary from person to person. So how do we know if our action is prudent or not, if there is not one clear “rule” to follow?

Acting prudently. A Christian who wants to act prudently will naturally keep in mind the words of Scripture and the teaching of the Church. He or she will be seeking to live the Christian life and grow in fellowship with Jesus. The spiritual resolutions discussed in the article “Spiritual Resolutions for the Year of Faith” in this issue of *Let's Talk!* help you set your mind on higher things and act in a right way. Jesus teaches: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Matthew 6:33). This leads to prudence.

Hopefully we know prudent people: a wise priest, pastor or friend; an honest person whose life inspires us because the person cares for God and man. We should turn to these people for advice and not to people who have a history of living poorly

The Moral Virtues

- **Prudence** helps us decide in every situation which action is the best for us and to decide to do that. Sometimes it may mean “tough love” is necessary!
- **Justice** is the virtue which leads us to be honest and true to God and neighbor and to give what is due to them.
- **Fortitude** (also called courage) helps us to overcome fear or indifference and do what is called for in any situation.
- **Temperance** helps us to be moderate with bodily pleasures so that we don't drink or eat too much, or too little for that matter.

and whose lives are not a model for us. We can ask ourselves: Would I want this person advising my children, my spouse, my grandmother? If not, then don't seek the person's advice for yourself!

Some practical tips to follow. In light of this, here are some practical tips. First, take advice *carefully* from yourself and from others. Second, look at the situation at hand and *honestly seek* to judge and act correctly. Third, *act* on what you have decided. Fourth, *review your actions* to see if the outcome seems wise. In all of this, don't immobilize yourself into inaction, which is contrary to acting prudently.

For a Christian, prudence always takes into consideration God's will. A simple and popular way to say this is “What would Jesus do?” Or, “How would Jesus act?” We may not know for sure, but we can be pretty clear about it. One thing for sure, when we act prudently, we will be on our way to the good life and happiness.

~ Anthony Bosnick

The Nicene Creed - the Prayer for the Year of Faith

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day

in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

2013 Calendars

New 2013 calendars are available, also the booklet “Prayers for Addicted Persons and Their Loved Ones.” And a bookmark. In English and Spanish, all from the National Catholic Council on Addictions. To request this material, send your name and address to:

NCCA
1601 Joslyn Road
Lake Orion, MI 48360



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