

A CATHOLIC MINISTRY
TO PRISONERS

Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES



3031 FOURTH STREET, NE ♦ WASHINGTON, DC 20017

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Jesus is King

Jesus Christ is King. This is the truth pure and simple that the Church proclaims in a special way in these last months of the liturgical year. On the last Sunday of the church year—November 20—we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. In the weeks before that, we learn more about what it means to follow Jesus. And in the weeks of Advent in December, we focus our thoughts and inner preparation to meet the infant King on Christmas.

Is Jesus your King? We have to ask ourselves a question: Is Jesus my King? This means that we give our entire lives over to him and follow him as our Lord, Master, and King. This is not something vague and haphazard. Following Jesus as King requires us to make a clear decision each day and to live that decision as best we can.

This is not easy of course. But it is greatly rewarding because Jesus is Life and Love and gives meaning to our lives. He tells us

that he has come to give us life to the full (John 10:10). And so we make that daily, clear, and determined decision to follow him and give our lives to him as our King.

We are not perfect. Even though we desire to follow Jesus as King, we know that we are not perfect and still fall into sin. We all know that. We all have a long road to walk in our growth as disciples of Jesus. And we will still sin along the way. Despite that, we continue on day by day and follow him.

Over time—and that means a lifetime!—we will become more faithful in following Jesus as our King. When we follow some basic spiritual disciplines, our walk is easier. Try these to help you on your way: 1) Read the Word of God each day.



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2) Worship and pray. 3) Be part of a faith community. 4) Care for others and serve them.

Look ahead, reflect, and rejoice. During the last weeks of 2011, time passes quickly through the season of Advent and part of Christmas. Advent is a time to reflect and re-dedicate ourselves once again to follow Christ as

our King. Make that your goal during Advent (which we celebrate from November 27 to December 24). Then on Christmas Day and during the season of Christmas (which we celebrate until January 9!) rejoice in the birth of the infant king.

If Jesus is your King, rejoice. And let all know through your life and words that he is your choice!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You are not alone. Christ is with you, dwelling in your heart through the Holy Spirit. And this Christ who is with you wants to be the King of your life. So no matter if you feel that you can never be alone because of the surroundings of your prison or jail, or if you feel abandoned because of you are confined in isolation, know that the greatest friend you can ever have is with you in your heart. Welcome him and let him be King of your life.

May these days be filled with grace. May you know more deeply the joy of following Christ as his disciple.

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP
President, PEM

Reading Scripture for Spiritual Growth, Part 2

More Tips for Getting Started

The Church has some words of wisdom for us about the importance of reading Scripture. They come from St. Jerome (c. 342- 420) who said: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." Jerome translated the Bible from the original languages into Latin, the common language of his day. He did this so that people could hear the Bible in their own language. (Few people of his day could read for themselves.)

Part one of this series was printed in our last issue. In this article, we give more tips to help you read Scripture as part of your Christian walk. We hope to include both parts in a new pamphlet in our new Paulist Prison Ministries pamphlet series.

Read both the Old and New Testament

In the first part of this series, we wrote about developing a reading plan that is realistic for you. We focused on beginning with the New Testament and ways to do that.

We continue now with another tip that includes a way to read both the Old Testament and New Testament. A good way to do that is to read the Scripture reading that is used in Sunday and daily Mass. This will give you a selection from throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament. And the readings are short enough that you will not get bogged down in them. Because of the way that the readings for the liturgy are chosen, over a two year period of daily readings, you will have read selections from nearly the whole Bible. (The Sunday readings are on a three-year cycle.)

Make sure you have a Bible translation you like and understand. The New American Bible is a standard for Catholics that is used in the readings at Mass. An edition with some

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CHURCH CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2011

- 1 St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin, doctor
- 2 **Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi, religious
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary
- 9 **Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 15 St. Teresa of Avila, virgin, doctor
- 16 **Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 18 **St. Luke, Evangelist**
- 23 **Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 28 **Sts. Simon and Jude, Apostles**
- 30 **Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**

NOVEMBER 2011

- 1 **All Saints**
- 2 All Souls
- 4 St. Charles Borromeo, bishop
- 6 **Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 9 **Dedication of the Lateran Basilica**
- 10 St. Leo the Great, pope, doctor
- 11 St. Martin of Tours, bishop
- 12 St. Josaphat, doctor, martyr
- 13 **Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 17 St. Elizabeth of Hungary, religious
- 20 **Christ the King**
- 21 Presentation of Mary
- 22 St. Cecilia, virgin, martyr
- 24 Thanksgiving Day in U.S.
- 27 **First Sunday in Advent**
- 30 **St. Andrew, Apostle**

DECEMBER 2011

- 3 St. Francis Xavier, priest
- 4 **Second Sunday of Advent**
- 7 St. Ambrose, bishop, doctor
- 8 **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
- 11 **Third Sunday of Advent**
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 13 St. Lucy, virgin, martyr
- 14 St. John of the Cross, priest, doctor
- 18 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- 25 **Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**
- 26 St. Stephen, first martyr
- 27 **St. John, apostle, evangelist**
- 28 Holy Innocents, martyr
- 30 **Holy Family**

Let's Talk!

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Visit us at www.pemdc.org

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Thank you for your help.

PMLTH1104

More Tips for Getting Started

(continued from page 1)

study notes can be very helpful. The Good News Bible is also approved in a Catholic edition. It uses everyday, natural language that is easy to understand. Many people use it.

"Catholic" Bible? "Protestant" Bible?

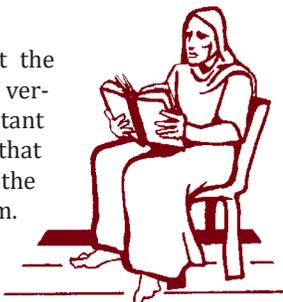
Many people wonder about the difference between Catholic versions of the Bible and Protestant versions. They may notice that different Bibles do not have the same number of books in them. The Catholic Bible is longer!

The difference in the number of books in the Bible reflects what different religious traditions—Jewish, Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—include in what Christians generally call the Old Testament (abbreviated OT). (The Christian churches all agree to the 27 books in the New Testament.)

Without becoming overly technical, the answer stems from the practice of most Protestant churches around the time of the Reformation (the sixteenth century) to accept as authentic only those OT books (or parts of OT books) that were believed to have been written in Hebrew. By most counts, there are 39 of these.

Catholics, however, had long accepted 46 books in the Old Testament. This is because they were included in the Greek Translation of the OT known as the Septuagint, which includes some books that were originally written in Greek. The 7 additional books of the Septuagint Catholics accept as authentic (or canonical) are Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Sirach (sometimes called Ecclesiasticus), and Baruch. In addition,

parts of Daniel, Esther, and other books fall into this category. At the time of Jesus and the apostles, these extra books were widely read by faithful Jews and, as a result, were accepted by the first Christian believers.



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In Catholic Bibles, these books are placed throughout the Old Testament, following the tradition of the Septuagint. After a time, Protestants tended not to include them at all. Thus, some "Protestant" Bibles are shorter. In more recent times, some Protestants include these 7 books and the various parts of others, in a separate section at the end of the Bible and call them "Apocrypha." Some newer translations,

however, include them between the Old and New Testaments. Here they are often still called the Apocrypha, but sometimes "The Deuterocanonical Books," the term Catholics use for these books.

Among most people, quarrels over the value of these books are now largely a thing of the past. The tendency in recent years among Protestants is to see these books as valuable for the spiritual life. Thus, more Protestants now read them than in the past. Catholics have always considered them part of the inspired word of God. Thus, like all Scripture, they are "useful for teaching—for reproof, correction, and training in holiness so that the man of God may be fully competent and equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16). As you read them, you too are most likely to find them most inspirational for your spiritual life.

Let's Talk! If you think it will be helpful to make this two-part series of articles on reading Scripture into a pamphlet for use in prisons, please send a note to the address below.

Prisoner Saint

St. John de Brebeuf (1593-1649) + John de Brebeuf was one of a hardy band of eight saints, all Jesuit priests, known as the North American Martyrs. They went to New France (Canada) in the mid-1600s to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. They had some success in converting both the Huron and Iroquois tribes to faith in Jesus, and thousands were baptized. During a long period of inter-tribal warfare, the Iroquois captured Brebeuf along with others. The Iroquois held Brebeuf for a short period of time before he was subjected to great torture by red-hot hatchet blades placed on his body and then set afire. Brebeuf died without resistance after spending twenty years of ministry in New France.

Feast Day: October 19

Pope Benedict XVI's Prayer Requests

for October/November/December

OCTOBER

General. *Terminally ill:* That in their sufferings they may be sustained by faith in God and by the love of others.

Missionary. *World Mission Sunday:* That the celebration of World Mission Sunday may increase in the People of God the passion for evangelization and the support of missionary activity through prayer and economic aid for the poorest Churches.

NOVEMBER

General. *The Eastern Churches:* That their venerable tradition may be known and appreciated as a spiritual treasure for the entire Church.

Missionary. *The African continent:* That the African continent may find in Christ the strength to fulfill the path of reconciliation and justice, indicated in the second Synod of Bishops for Africa.

DECEMBER

General. *Growth in Harmony and Peace:* That the nations of the earth, through knowledge and mutual respect, may grow in harmony and peace.

Missionary. *Children and Young People:* That children and young people may be messengers of the Gospel and that their dignity may always be respected and preserved from all violence and exploitation.

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

Fruit of the Holy Spirit, Part 3

Got Any Fruit, Old Man?

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

Peaches: OK, so the Holy Spirit gives us the seven gifts in baptism and these gifts are like seeds that the Holy Spirit waters with his grace and gives growth to them, right?

Me: Right. Unless I mess it up by not preparing the soil.

Peaches: That's us. We're the soil, right?

Me: Correct. Preparing soil by clearing the ground and turning up the dirt and breaking the clods so that you have soft dirt to receive the seed is kind of like repentance.

Peaches: And we also have to weed. That's where we have to cooperate with the work of the Spirit by keeping money, power, and possessions from choking off the spiritual growth.

Me: Yes. If we cooperate with the Holy Spirit by preparing the soil and weeding, the seeds will ripen into what we call the "fruit of the Holy Spirit."

Peaches: OK. So, what's the deal with the fruit? Why should we care or want it?

Me: Right to it, huh? I like it! Well, the fruit shows that the Spirit of God is living in a person.

Peaches: Like when Jesus said "By their fruits you will know them?" (Matthew 7:20).

Me: Exactly. The test is not talk or theory. We prepare our lives and live in such a way that the Spirit produces the fruit. We then experience God's presence in the spiritual happiness that comes to us through the fruit. Other folks experience the presence of God made visible through us in these good works or fruits.

Peaches: Spiritual happiness and the presence of God? Something for everybody! I like that!

Me: Yeah, that's the way the God of love rolls.

Peaches: What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

Me: "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Peaches: The fruit are not produced by following rules or laws?

Me: An important point, P. The Spirit living in a person will "bubble up" from the inside to the outside so to speak. The Spirit produces the fruit. Just as the "flesh" produces something quite different.

Peaches: The what?!

Me: The "flesh."

Peaches: Oh, sex. As in "sins of the flesh."

Me: No. This other list of St. Paul's is the list of the "sins of the flesh" and sexual sin does make that list but *most* of the list happens in your head!

Peaches: Well, St. Paul has a reputation of being hung up on sex.

Me: Yeah, he gives us a list of fifteen sins or "works of the flesh," of which two are sexual. And then we say, "St. Paul is hung up on sex!"

Peaches: Yeah, I get your point: who's hung up here?

Me: Just an observation, P. Anyway, by "flesh" St. Paul does not mean your body or sex. He means our fallen, sinful human *nature* that is weak and headed for death. It's our self-centered hostility towards God. In other places he calls it the "old man" (versus the "new man").

Peaches: This is the Adam and Eve deal again, huh?

Me: Yes. Original Sin. We humans are "bent" the wrong way because of it.

Peaches: Oh, I get it. Our nature not our bodies!

Me: Right! Check the works of the flesh and see for yourself: "immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like" (Galatians 5:19-21).

Peaches: Yup, most of it happens in our minds.

Me: These two lists come from the fact that St. Paul breaks human beings into two groups....

Peaches: Believers and Unbelievers!

Me: Nope. Flesh and Spirit. Every person is either living out of the Flesh or the Spirit. You can tell by the fruit they produce. Spirit produces the good fruit. Flesh produces the bad fruit.

Peaches: Wow! That totally explains my "cellie"! She's so "in the flesh" today!

Me: What have I started!?!

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.

The Fruit of the Spirit, Part 4

Goodness and Faithfulness: The Bed-Rock of a Good Life

Many of us have experienced the sorrow of broken relationships. Our closest friendships and family bonds often shatter because of a lack of goodwill on our part. Sometimes this is because we have acted in mean-spirited and untrustworthy ways. It probably doesn't take too much thought to recall examples of this in our own lives. When we think of those occasions, we know pretty clearly why these two fruit of the Spirit are so important to living our lives well. On the other hand, when we have acted with goodness and faithfulness, we know what a difference they make in building good and lasting relationships.

In the letter to the Galatians (5:22-23), St. Paul writes of the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity [also translated goodness], faithfulness, gentleness, self control." Since "goodness" is used in many translations, and also in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (para. 736), we will follow that reading here.

The sixth fruit: goodness. True goodness is a special gift from God, that's why Paul calls it a fruit of the Spirit. Barnabas, one of the builders of the early Church, is called "a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and faith" (Acts 11:24). When Barnabas saw the hand of God at work in the Church, "he rejoiced and encouraged all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart" (v. 23). The goodness of Barnabas follows upon his faithfulness and desire to see God's good be done.

Goodness is not about being a "goody goody" person who wants to smooth things over to make people happy, no matter how it is accomplished. It has more to do with wanting to see people live according to God's plan and having a generous heart that promotes and nurtures his way of life. Now we can see why "goodness" is sometimes called "generosity."

The seventh fruit: faithfulness. Faithfulness follows goodness in Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit. And for good reason. Faithfulness comes as we commit ourselves to someone or some thing. Most importantly, it is committing ourselves to God and his Word. And in our relationships, it is the faithfulness that we have to our spouse, our families and children, and to our friends. It is also giving ourselves to the common good of our churches and the communities in which we live—including our prison communities.

Being faithful means giving our personal resolve or decision to honor our commitments. We don't allow ourselves to stray from them because of boredom, indifference, living just for ourselves and our pleasures. Building good and faithful relationships takes time, effort, and commitment to the ties that bind us to others. Faithfulness is truly a work of God in us.

Both goodness and faithfulness are signs that God is alive and active in the world and his action takes place in and through us!

~ Anthony Bosnick

Keep in mind...

Help with addictions

While on their walk through life, many people struggle with addictions of different sorts. If that is your burden, the National Catholic Council on Alcoholism and Related Drug Problems (NCCA) offers you help. Their approach is spiritual, which you can add to support your personal efforts and any programs you may be attending.

Write to them for their booklet "Prayers for Addicted Persons and Their Loved Ones," their "Serenity Prayer Bookmarks," and their 2012 calendar. All material is available in English and Spanish. Their mailing address is: NCCA, 1601 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48360. You can also contact them by email at ncca@guesthouse.org or by toll free telephone at 800-626-6910, ext 200.

Take advantage of this free offer. You'll be glad you did.

Stories about Reading the Bible

We are looking for stories from prisoners about how reading the Bible helps you spiritually. We hope to use some of them in the pamphlet on reading the Bible we are planning for later this year.

Please focus your story on how reading the Bible helps you grow spiritually in prison. Keep it to 300 words or less.

To protect your privacy, we do not print your name or prison, but do give your location by state. We are not able to pay for your submissions. Your reward is knowing that your story may help and encourage others. We may not be able to use all the stories sent to us.

Please send your story to *Let's Talk!*; Reading Scripture, Paulist Evangelization Ministries; 3031 Fourth Street, NE; Washington, DC 20017.

Thank You.

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