



A CATHOLIC MINISTRY
TO PRISONERS

Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES

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Walk and talk with Jesus

One of the great stories we hear every Easter season is the account of Jesus meeting two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), a small town about seven miles from Jerusalem. On the way, they were talking about the news of the day, the things that had happened in Jerusalem the past few days. Jesus joined them, but they didn't recognize him at first (v. 16).

How could this be? Well, in the various resurrection stories, we see that Jesus was changed so much that the disciples didn't at first recognize him (see Luke 24:37; Mk 16:12; John 20:14; 21:4). We might ask ourselves if we too miss Jesus when he is with us.

Don't miss times to be with Jesus. We often fail to recognize Jesus because we are too distracted. On the natural level,

the things of the day get in the way of our recognizing him. Often our thoughts are like this: "I don't like this person." "That situation isn't fair." "This food stinks." "People don't appreciate me." You can add your own reasons here. The point is that we often are thinking so much about ourselves with complaining hearts that we miss the opportunities when we could walk and talk with Jesus during the day.

And on the spiritual level, we can miss Jesus because we are so distracted. At Mass we may be thinking about other things. We can "phase out" when praying or reading Scripture. The Rosary takes too long. We may think at these times, "Let's get this over with." This is not a good way to walk and talk with Jesus at times when this should be most possible!

In the breaking of the bread. When King David was facing death, he said to his son Solomon: "Take courage and be a man" (1 Kings 2:1-4). This applies to women too! Take courage. Be what you are made to be. God is with us. His grace is all we need. Jesus says to us as he said to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).



The two disciples recognized Jesus "in the breaking of the bread," the Eucharist (Luke 24:35). Let's take this as our starting point for that's where we too meet Jesus. And as we encounter Jesus in the sacrament of the Eucharist, we continue to meet him in reading Scripture, in prayer, in our time and fellowship with believers.

Walk and talk with Jesus daily. We have many opportunities to walk and talk with Jesus throughout each day. Here he meets us, and our lives will be different—even changed—especially in our suffering in prison or jail. Expect this to happen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Easter is not just a day or a one-time celebration, but 50 days of grace to reflect on the new life offered to us. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus has won the victory for us. We enter into his victory through baptism and faith. Now we embrace it and live it so that the Easter victory is ours as well.

We are called to choose the way of life! May the articles in this issue inspire you and help you live the new life won for you. Your time in prison or jail can be a time of renewal and change. Make the most of this Easter Season and expect a surprise of the Spirit in your life.

May this 50-day journey be a time of growing closer to Jesus and encountering his love for you. Pope Francis has said, "Let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of throwing open the doors of his heart and repeats that he loves us and wants to share his love with us" (*The Face of Mercy*, n. 25).

Let us pray for one another!

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP
President
Paulist Evangelization Ministries

Q&A

Easter: Celebrate for 50 days!

Q. Why do we celebrate Easter for so long?

A. Easter is such an important event that the Church from earliest times kept the feast from Easter Sunday until Pentecost—50 days. Easter is not just one day or one celebration. Simply put, the Church understands the 50-day Easter season as a time of special grace. It should be a time of joy and thanksgiving. It calls us to look at our lives to see how we embrace this life-giving grace in them.

Just as for those on the outside, those in prison or jail are challenged to let the grace of Easter change their lives. After all, Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, who conquered sin, Satan and death. It should have a great impact in our lives. On the outside, Easter is sometimes a day for new dresses and hats for women and girls, an ironed shirt for men and boys and maybe a suit and tie. And Easter baskets. Easter eggs. All those things.

Those in prison can be thankful not to be distracted by these secondary things that Easter has become for many people. They are fun and nice, but not at the heart of what Easter is.

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CHURCH CALENDAR

APRIL 2018

- 1 **Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord**
- 8 **Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy)**
- 9 **Annunciation**
- 11 St. Stanislaus, bishop and martyr
- 15 **Third Sunday of Easter**
- 22 **Fourth Sunday of Easter**
- 25 **St. Mark, evangelist**
- 29 **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

MAY 2018

- 1 St. Joseph the Worker
- 2 St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor
- 3 **Sts. Philip and James, apostles**
- 6 **Sixth Sunday of Easter**
- 10 **Ascension**
(in many places celebrated May 13)
- 13 **Ascension** (if not celebrated May 10)
- 14 **St. Matthias, apostle**
- 20 **Pentecost**
- 26 St. Philip Neri, priest
- 27 **Most Holy Trinity**
- 31 **Visitation of Mary**

JUNE 2018

- 1 St. Justin, martyr
- 3 **Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)**
- 5 St. Boniface, bishop and martyr
- 8 **Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**
- 9 Immaculate Heart of Mary
- 10 **Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 11 **St. Barnabas, apostle**
- 13 St. Anthony of Padua, priest and doctor
- 17 **Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 21 St. Aloysius Gonzaga, priest
- 24 **Birth of John the Baptist**
- 28 St. Irenaeus, bishop and martyr
- 29 **Sts. Peter and Paul, apostles**

Let's Talk!

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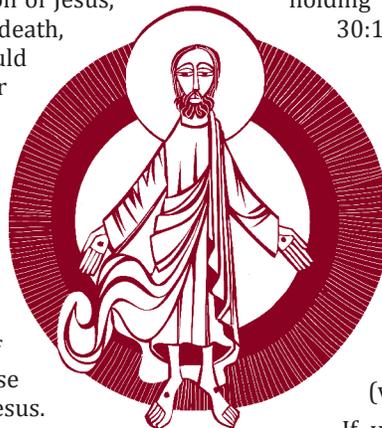
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Q&A **Easter: Celebrate for 50 days!**

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A season of grace. A time of joy. Easter is grace, joy and new life. After all, the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus, overcoming sin, Satan and death, is something that should have a great impact in our lives. In rising from the dead, Jesus conquered sin and death by his resurrection. He robbed Satan of the prize of destroying God's own Son. Jesus invites us to enter into his new life. This makes the possibility of new life a reality for all those who choose to walk with Jesus.



Citing 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it well (para. 655): "The risen Christ lives in the hearts of his faithful while they await that fulfillment [of the fullness of life]. In Christ, Christians 'have tasted . . . the powers of the age to come.'" The victory is complete for Jesus; he invites us into that victory. It should become more and more complete for us until the day we meet Jesus face to face in heaven.

So in this 50-day season of grace we look and listen to what the Church teaches about walking with Jesus and embracing the new life. At Mass, this teaching is expressed in the Scripture readings. Listen carefully to the readings at Mass in these 50 days to the voice of the Church teaching us.

Q. So Jesus conquered sin, Satan and death. Why do I struggle so much in my life?

A. A good question! Remember, Jesus has conquered the powers of darkness. *We are baptized into his new life, but we are free to live our lives in the way we choose.* We can choose the way of life or the way of death. Scripture makes this clear: "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you

and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

We could load you down with numerous scripture verses, but let's focus on this: "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). And take that a step further: "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (v. 13).

If you want more, take some time to read and pray about the teaching in John 15. At the heart of this is to receive life from Jesus.

Signs of the times. We only need to look around us and read the signs of the times. There is a battle between good and evil. Our divided hearts often choose the evil over the good. Look in your own life to see examples of that. The more we remain isolated and separated from God *and from others*, especially those who believe but also struggle along like us, the more we will continue to struggle.

This should give us plenty to think and pray about during these 50 days of Easter. If we make some progress here as we journey with Jesus on our pilgrimage, we will rejoice as we see the face of God more clearly in our lives.

Q. You wrote awhile back about encountering Jesus and committing our lives to him. You recommended a booklet. What was that again?

A. We recommended "Conversion and Commitment to Christ." This short booklet tells you more about encountering Jesus

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Prisoner Saints

Sts. Peter and Paul (d. c. 67) + The two great apostles Peter and Paul were arrested during a time of persecution in the early years of the church. They fearlessly proclaimed their faith in Jesus Christ as they built up the church through word and deed. They were arrested and held in the notorious Mamertine prison, which was reserved for high profile prisoners. Peter was crucified upside down on a cross. Paul was slain by the sword. In many parts of the world such as Africa, Asia and the Middle East, Christians still give their lives for their faith in Christ. Let us pray for their safety and that they might worship in peace and live free of fear.

Feast Day: June 29

Pope Francis' Prayer Requests for April/May/June 2018

Each month the Pope entrusts prayer intentions to his Worldwide Prayer Network, the Apostleship of Prayer. His monthly prayer intention (one month is universal and the next month is for evangelization) is a global call to transform our prayer into "concrete gestures" of service. It is a monthly action plan mobilizing us to join together to build a more human and caring world. In addition to the request below, the Holy Father at the beginning of the month offers a second prayer intention for his immediate concerns, a "last minute" intention to get us out of the "globalization of indifference." Your chaplain or volunteer may be able to get this request for you.

APRIL

Universal: *For Those who have Responsibility in Economic Matters.* That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.

MAY

Evangelization: *The Mission of the Laity.* That the lay faithful may fulfill their specific mission, by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world today.

JUNE

Universal: *Social Networks.* That social networks may work towards that inclusiveness which respects others for their differences.

Pope Francis invites you to join him in praying for these intentions. Your prayer is needed and can help change the world.

The Church's Mission, Part 2

"Thy will be done."

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

Peaches: OK, I get that we take our eye off the ball when we focus on the Church and forget the Mission for the Kingdom. What I don't get is what exactly is the Kingdom? Is it heaven?

Me: What does the Our Father say about kingdom?

Peaches: "Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Me: So "heaven" is all set. You can take it off your "TO DO" list! They are already doing God's will in heaven. That's why it's heaven!

Peaches: So?

Me: So, where is the work that we need to do?

Peaches: On earth! But I'm confused. Isn't it also called the Kingdom of Heaven?

Me: Yes, but in Matthew's Gospel only. Matthew is the Gospel written for Jewish Christians so he followed the practice of Jews and never said "God." Kingdom of Heaven is a way of not saying Kingdom of God while pointing to the same thing.

Peaches: So Kingdom of God is the mission of Jesus . . .

Me: . . . and of us, his followers—the Church!

Peaches: Yes. Focused on earth.

Me: And isn't it interesting that Jesus gave us only one prayer and in the middle of it is his main goal—the kingdom of God?

Peaches: And we all say it all the time and have no idea of what it means!

Me: That's why we all need study and spiritual reading to unpack what Jesus gave us.

Peaches: So, the main idea of Jesus was the Kingdom of God on earth. But what is it?

Me: Go back to the Our Father. What else does it say about the Kingdom besides it's earthly focus?

Peaches: "Your will be done"!

Me: Yup. The simplest explanation is that the Kingdom is it's wherever God's will is being done.

Peaches: Makes sense. If you're a king, you give orders and they get done. The orders are the

King's will made clear so, yeah, wherever God's will is done. But what's God's will?

Me: That's all the other stuff Jesus taught.

Peaches: Right! "Love one another," Mercy, Prayer, Feed the Hungry, . . . all those things.

Then that's an advantage of being a Christian. You have the test questions and answers ahead of time! And a lifetime to prepare for that test!

Me: So, God's Kingdom is wherever on earth God's will is being done. Anyone who lives that way is in God's Kingdom now and will be eternally in heaven. Capisci?

Peaches: Capisci! And his will is what Jesus laid out in all his other teachings on love. So the main idea of Kingdom of God that Jesus taught is kind of like a basket that holds all his other teachings!

Me: Yup. Big picture!

Peaches: No wonder everything goes sideways without understanding the Kingdom! Everything goes sideways about anything if you lose the big picture!

Me: The Church is a means to an end. It is a way to get something done. It is not the goal. The Kingdom is the goal.

Peaches: So, a lot of folks are putting the cart before the horse!

Me: Jesus did not come to start a new club. He came to save the world. He came to replace our selfish system with God's family of love, which everyone belongs to unless they walk away themselves. We are called to follow Jesus in helping God to build his dream for our lives in this real world right here and now.

Peaches: Boy, I'm going to appreciate "Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven" a whole lot more when I say that prayer!

Me: Amen!

Deacon Dennis Dolan is a retired chaplain from York Correctional Institution in Connecticut. He continues his ministry with and for prisoners through his writing.

A Psalm for your 50-day journey through the Easter Season PSALM 1

I *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in company with scoffers. Rather, the law of the LORD is his joy; and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted near streams of water; that yields its fruit in season; Its leaves never wither; whatever he does prospers.*

II *But not so are the wicked, not so! They are like chaff driven by the wind Therefore the wicked will not arise at the judgment, nor will sinners in the assembly of the just. Because the LORD knows the way of the just, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.*

Pray and reflect on Psalm 1 during the 50 days of the Easter Season. Note how it presents two ways: In Part I, the way of the just, those who seek the good; in Part II, the way of sinners, those who embrace evil. The way of the just brings life and the way of the sinner brings emptiness and death.

The Examen, Part 4

Man. What a day!

The “examen” is a form of prayer “discovered” and then developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) about 500 years ago. So it has been around a long time and has proven to be helpful to people as they seek to follow Jesus more faithfully. In earlier times the *examen* was used mostly by priests, sisters and brothers who had made a deeper commitment to follow Jesus. Now it is used by anyone seeking to follow Jesus more faithfully, including lay people like you.

You have taken the first two steps of the examen and are now ready to take the third: **Review your day.** This is not just about the bad things that happened in your day, but the good as well. We want to see how we followed the good impulses from God and how we fell to the bad as well. You may remember the movie, “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” starring Clint Eastwood. The title of this popular movie gives us an image that may help us look at our days.

We now ready to ask the Holy Spirit to help us review our day to understand how God is working in our lives. We are looking for both *the short-term things* and *the long-term things* of each day.

The Good. The examen is to help us follow the Lord more faithfully in a conscious way each day. So let’s start by looking for the good—those things and times where we followed God’s way and allowed his life and love to nurture us. We keep looking each day and await a surprise of the Holy Spirit.

Look for the good, those times when you were helpful to those around us, especially the weak and needy. How about those times when you said positive things to people and didn’t tear them down through your words or attitudes? Did you sense God leading you in some way and you responded? Think of other things which reflect seeking and following the good.

St. Paul guides us with some examples of the good: Do we see examples of being “temperate, serious-minded, self-controlled; sound in the faith, loving, steadfast, kind; avoiding drinking to excess and gossiping, are we pure and chaste? These good things are truly signs of the victory of grace in us on our daily walk with the Lord. In your examen, when you see them in your life, rejoice and thank God for them!”: See also Matthew 5:3-9; 25:35-36.

The Bad. Each day, we all fail, often many times. These failures reflect the bad. While such things “offend and wound,” the bad do not necessarily *destroy* God’s life in us, although they can dull us to recognizing God and following him. They can prevent us from loving God and neighbor more deeply. The Catholic tradition calls these failures “venial sin.”

Five Steps of the Examen

1. **Place yourself in God’s presence.** Give thanks for God’s great love for you.
2. **Pray for the grace to understand** how God is acting in your life.
3. **Review your day** — recall specific moments and your feelings at the time.
4. **Reflect on what you did, said, or thought** in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?
5. **Look toward tomorrow** — think of how you might collaborate more effectively with God’s plan. Be specific, and conclude with the “Our Father.”

Source – <https://goo.gl/5SKCrQ>

St. Paul is always good at helping us see what he calls “cravings of the flesh.” He tells us: “Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, actions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like” (Galatians 5:19-20).

As you review your day, ask the Holy Spirit to shed light on your life and actions to help you see when these sins are “bad” and when they are “ugly.”

The Ugly. Some of the things we may do are truly ugly. They are so hurtful that they are called “mortal sin,” that is, actions destructive and deadly to the life of God in us. “Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God’s law; it turns man away from God . . .” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para 1855). They are a rejection of the Ten Commandments.

The conditions of this serious sin is that it is a very serious matter; such as murder (or other seriously destructive behavior to ourselves and others such as taking and selling drugs), intentionally destroying another person’s reputation, consciously denying and rejecting God and his laws. Other conditions are that we do it with “full knowledge” and “deliberate consent” (CCC, para 1857).

These truly ugly sins necessitate “a new initiative of God’s mercy” and a “conversion of heart” within a sacramental confession for the life of grace to come alive in us once again (CCC, para. 1856). You can look at your own life and see if you have sought this rejection of sin and conversion of heart through reconciliation for mortal sins.

Man. What a day! The examen done in this way as we review our day can lead us to gratitude for the good we see. It should give us the desire to reject the bad and ugly and turn from it. In all these ways, we will experience a new freedom on our walk with the Lord.

~ Anthony Bosnick

Easter: Celebrate for 50 days!

in your life. Briefly, the booklet suggests encountering Jesus through 1) reading the Word of God; 2) worship and prayer; 3) being part of a community of faith; 4) caring for and serving others.

This booklet is perfect for you to read during these 50 days of Easter. Your chaplain can get a copy for you from Paulist Prison Ministries.

Let’s Talk! responds to prisoners questions. Write to us with your questions at the address on page 2 of this newsletter. We like hearing from our readers.

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