

BROTHERHOOD OF PENITENTS OF ST. DISMAS



MANUAL

I

INTRODUCTION TO THE
BROTHERHOOD

WHO WE ARE

Confraternities “are not mere mutual-assistance societies or philanthropic associations, but groups of brothers who, wishing to live the Gospel in the awareness of being a living part of the Church, aim to put into practice the commandment of love, which encourages people to give their hearts to others, especially to those in difficulty.”

-Pope Benedict XVI, Rome, November 10, 2007

THE Brotherhood of Penitents of St. Dismas is not a ministry or a movement, but a confraternity, a family of brothers committed to following Jesus Christ, who, as our Holy Father said, *aim to put into practice the commandment of love*. For our Lord taught that all commandments are summed up by love: Love of God above all else, and love of our neighbor as ourselves. Recognizing the great need for mutual support and encouragement among men in today’s Church, the first group of our brothers began meeting in 2005. From this modest beginning our brotherhood has continued to grow.

A BROTHERHOOD

Brotherhoods are not new in the Church; they have a long and important history. The early Church was a small and intimate group of believers who, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, “were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common” (4:32).

Over time, as the numbers of the Church’s members swelled, that original intimacy was weakened. One of the ways Christians sought to recover the unity and mutual support of the early Church was by forming brotherhoods, usually under the patronage of a Saint, in which penance and prayer were promoted. Many brotherhoods took on important responsibilities in society, such as establishing hospitals for the care of the poor and sick and burying the dead. As they grew more numerous, they became an integral part of the Church, so that throughout the Middle Ages and well into modern times, membership in a brotherhood was a normal part of religious life for the Catholic layman. To this day, in countries with a strong Catholic culture, brotherhoods continue to be a popular and vital element of the Church.

The earliest brotherhood we know of by name was the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded in Paris in the eleventh Century. Later, especially under the patronage of the Franciscan Friars, brotherhoods were founded in honor of the Passion of our Lord and were especially dedicated to penance. These brotherhoods became well-known for their penitential processions through the streets, especially during Holy week, as is still the custom throughout Spain and Latin America. The Dominican order founded the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament which promote the devotion to the Holy Eucharist by means of public prayers and Corpus Christi processions.



When the Catholic faith began to spread beyond Europe in the 16th century, missionaries brought the tradition of brotherhoods to the countries in which they preached. Historians acknowledge that the quick and enthusiastic spread of the faith in the missions of the Americas and in Asia, was due in large part to the establishment of brotherhoods through which the new Christians could participate in the work of evangelization themselves. For instance, in the Japanese missions of the seventeenth century, the number of priests was few. Yet, conversions to the faith were very numerous there because the missionaries, especially the Jesuits, founded brotherhoods which became great tools of evangelization. When Catholic priests were later banned completely from Japan, lay brotherhoods continued to work in secret to keep the Catholic faith alive for centuries.

Likewise, when the Catholic faith reached the Americas in the sixteenth century, brotherhoods were also a feature of the newly planted Church. In fact, the Indians of Mexico and South America became enthusiastic members of Catholic brotherhoods, because then, as now, membership in a brotherhood provided a means for them to make the faith their own. In the seventeenth century, the Spanish and Mexican settlers who came to what is now the Southwest of the United States likewise brought with them their beloved tradition of brotherhoods. When clergy became scarce in those regions, it was a brotherhood, the *Hermanidad de Nuestro Padre Jesus*, that took on the duty of maintaining the Catholic faith. This brotherhood, also known as the *Penitentes*, still plays an active part of Catholic life in New Mexico and Colorado. It is to this time-honored tradition that our brotherhood belongs.

BROTHERHOOD OF PENITENTS OF ST. DISMAS

We are a Brotherhood of Penitents, that is, men dedicated to the practice of Christian penance. We have already noted that penance has been an element in Catholic brotherhoods from their beginning. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches (cf. nn.1430-34), that penance is the outward expression of our interior conversion from sin. Scripture and Catholic tradition identify three main forms of penance: Prayer, Fasting, and Alms giving. Our brotherhood fosters the spirit of penance by teaching our brothers to pray to fast, and by organizing works of charity in which all are encouraged to participate.

OUR HOLY PATRON, ST. DISMAS

St. Dismas is the good thief mentioned in the gospel of St. Luke 23:32-43:

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left...One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

After living a life of crime, the good thief found himself dying on a cross next to Christ. As he faced death and judgment, he was overwhelmed with sorrow for his sins, and he turned in faith to Christ as his Savior. Our Lord accepted his repentance and promised to bring him to Heaven on that very day. St. Dismas is our patron because we who have come to this brotherhood are aware, as he was, of our need for forgiveness and for conversion from our many sins. The example of St Dismas heartfelt repentance and our Lord's compassion for him inspires us to turn away from sin, to trust in God's Marcy, and to hope for our salvation.

The name of this association of the Christian faithful shall be the Brotherhood of Penitents of St. Dismas. The pardon that our Lord, Jesus Christ, gave to St. Dismas, the good thief, in the last moments of his life, and the promise He made to bring him into His Kingdom are inspirations to us, the members of this brotherhood, who, recognizing that we are sinners, call upon St. Dismas, the good thief, as our patron and intercessor before God. We hope that by his prayers and the example of his repentance we may be moved to convert our lives and be found worthy of God's forgiveness and of eternal life.



SEAL OF THE BROTHERHOOD

The seal of the Brotherhood of Penitents of St. Dismas seal with a shield on which is depicted in gold the hill of Calvary with three crosses on a purple background, represents the scene of our Lord's sacred Passion, and reminding us of the pardon and redemption received there by our holy patron St. Dismas. The color purple symbolizes the penitential nature of the brotherhood, while the color gold represents the prayer and good works to which our members should dedicate themselves, and which are the true treasure we seek to store up in heaven.



OUR PURPOSE

As mentioned above, brotherhoods have historically played an important role in civic life. They have sponsored hospitals, schools, burials, and care for prisoners. Their most important function, of course, was always in the spiritual realm, where they assisted the clergy in fostering devotion to our Lord and the Saints, to the Blessed Sacrament, and in general, to conversion of life through penance.

To sum up our purpose in one word, the aim of our brotherhood is *evangelization*. To evangelize means to share with others the gospel of Christ. As our Popes and bishops have stressed, our society today is in need of hearing the gospel, and the laity are called to participate in the work of bringing into them. In our times of social and religious breakdown, when so many of our Catholic faithful are estranged from the Church, we offer our brotherhood as an instrument for re-evangelization by bringing our people again into the life of the Church.

In our neighborhoods we see the corrupting influence of drugs and gangs, the breakdown of the family structure, and the attacks of non-Catholic sects against the traditional faith of our people. In all these situations the light of Christ and his Church can bring healing and reconciliation. For this reason, our brotherhood is open to those who come from a background of struggle with addiction and gang involvement, as well as the incarcerated. In this way our brotherhood can make a unique contribution to the Church's work of evangelization.



THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BROTHERHOOD

THE Brotherhood of Penitents of St. Dismas consists of autonomously governed chapters established in parishes of the Roman Catholic Church. Chapters are united to each other by their obedience to the authority of The Council of the Brotherhood of Penitents of St. Dismas and by the observance of the same statutes, manual, and customs. Local chapters are governed by elected officers (The Board of Officers). Professed brothers of each chapter are required to meet each year in January for the Assembly (Ordinary) for such purposes as the election of officers, voting on matters of importance, and presentation of reports by the chapter officers.

Each chapter is overseen by a Warden, who is responsible for keeping order and conducting weekly meetings in his chapter.

MEMBERSHIP

BROTHERS

There are three kinds of members in our brotherhood: *professed brothers*, *honorary brothers*, and *associate members*. Brothers are full members of the brotherhood. To become a brother, one must be a baptized and a practicing Catholic man at least twenty-five years of age, although any Catholic man may attend meetings and begin the process of formation if he is over eighteen years old. After visiting a chapter of our brotherhood, a man interested in joining us may fill out an application and submit it to the Warden of a chapter providing the following information: first and last names, date of birth, address and contact information, and the sacraments he has received in the Catholic Church. When the application is received by the Warden, a candidate begins a period of two years of formation during which time he is known as a *novice*... During his formation the novice shall be under the supervision of the Novice Master, the novice is expected to fulfill the following requirements:

- Attend weekly meetings at least twice a month.
- Attend the monthly class of catechetical and spiritual formation by Novice Master.
- Attend the yearly Initiation Retreat.
- Practice the common prayers and penances of the Brotherhood.
- Participate in the activities and works of charity sponsored by the Brotherhood.

At its discretion, the Board of Officers may reduce the period of novitiate to one year when a novice demonstrates sufficient catechetical and spiritual formation and has proven capable of undertaking the obligations of membership.

If, for an urgent reason, such as danger of death, or an obligation that would remove him indefinitely from his chapter, a novice should be unable to complete the period of formation, the Council may, upon the petition of his Warden, grant a dispensation allowing him to be professed without further delay. Should the novice later be able to complete his formation, he shall be required to do so.

It shall be the responsibility of the Novice Master to see that the novices are properly instructed as to the purpose of this brotherhood, the rights and obligations of its members, and in basic Christian doctrine. The Novice Master shall inform the Warden of the chapter to which the novice belongs when a novice has completed the period of formation and is ready for profession.

The Warden shall make known to all professed brothers of his chapter that a candidate has been presented for profession and shall offer them sufficient opportunity to express their opinion concerning the suitability of the candidate. Having heard the opinions of the Novice Master and the professed brothers, the board shall vote to approve or deny the profession of the candidate.

At its discretion, the board may extend a candidate's novitiate for a period of no more than one year before reconsidering definitively his profession. A novice who has completed formation may choose to postpone his profession until such time as he is ready to undertake the corresponding obligations. When the profession of a novice is to be postponed for more than a year, he should be recognized for the meantime as an associate member.

To be admitted to profession in this brotherhood one must be a baptized, practicing Catholic man, in ecclesial communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The minimum age for profession shall be twenty-five years. However, by rare exception, and at the petition of a Warden, the Council may grant a dispensation admitting to profession a candidate as young as eighteen years of age if he exhibits sufficient maturity.

In accord with canon 316 of the Code of Canon Law, no one shall be accepted as member of this brotherhood who has publicly rejected the Catholic faith or abandoned ecclesiastical communion or has been excommunicated from the Church. Moreover, no one shall be accepted who gives public scandal through bad example or who is unable or unwilling to comply with the requisites of membership. A novice who is in an irregular marriage may not be admitted to profession until his marriage is regularized.

Professed brothers undertaken the following obligations:

- To fulfill all the obligations of the Christian life, i.e. daily prayer, Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation, regular confession (at least monthly), fasting, abstinence and marriage according to the commandments of the Church; prayer of St. Dismas, daily meditation and spiritual reading;
- Regular participation in the activities of this brotherhood, specifically: attendance at least at two fellowship meetings each month, unless excused for good reason; mandatory participation in chapter Assemblies; contribution to the charitable and apostolic works of the brotherhood;
- Payment of annual dues, unless excused for hardship, and to contribute to the support of the brotherhood according to their means;
- To assist at the funerals and novenas of the deceased brothers of their chapter, or, if they are impeded, to have a Mass offered for the repose of their souls;
- To accept the offices to which they may be elected, unless excused for good reason;
- To abide by these Statutes and the decisions of their chapter Assembly, board of officers, and the Council of the Brotherhood.

Professed brothers shall have the following rights:

- Voice and vote in the Assembly of their chapter;
- Active and passive voice in the election of officials;
- To receive spiritual formation in accord with the aims of this brotherhood;
- A Mass and novena attended by their brothers upon their death.

HONORARY BROTHERS

The board of officers of a chapter may honor an individual who has contributed in a substantial way to this brotherhood by extending to him honorary membership. On a suitable occasion, in the presence of the assembled brothers, the Warden shall invest the candidate with the scapular of the brotherhood, omitting the rite of profession.

Candidates for honorary membership must be Catholic men at least twenty- five years of age in ecclesial communion with the Roman Catholic Church. No one may be granted honorary membership who is notoriously opposed to the Catholic Church or its teachings, or who has been censured by ecclesiastical authorities, or has given notorious scandal.

Honorary brothers shall be admitted to all events of the brotherhood, except those strictly reserved for professed brothers. However, they shall enjoy none of the rights and shall be under none of the obligations corresponding to professed brothers.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Associate membership shall be extended to those who desire to be attached to the brotherhood but are unable to fulfill the obligations of professed brothers. Associate members shall be admitted to all events of the brotherhood, except those strictly reserved for professed brothers. However, they shall enjoy none of the rights and shall be under none of the obligations corresponding to professed brothers.

Any man over the age of eighteen years who wishes to become an associate member of this brotherhood shall complete the appropriate application form, providing his full name, address and contact information and turn it in to the Warden of his chapter. Once those brothers have been heard who may wish to express their opinion on the suitability of the candidate, the Warden shall bring the application before the vote of the chapter board. If the applicant is accepted, his name and surnames shall be recorded in the register of associate members. At the next convenient opportunity, he shall be recognized before the other members of the chapter as an associate by the presentation of a certificate of membership. Acceptance as an associate shall not impede one from pursuing full membership at a later time.

FORMATION

Lastly, encouragement must be given to the lay associations, movements, and groups, ... They will all accomplish their objectives better, and serve the Church better, if they give an important place in their internal organization and their method of action to the serious religious training of their members. In this way every association of the faithful in the Church has by definition the duty to educate in the faith.

-Catechesi tradendae, n. 70

Our mission is to evangelize, but before we can evangelize others, we must first be evangelized ourselves. For this reason, we consider it one of our main duties to provide spiritual and catechetical formation to our brothers. The Board of officers appoints a professed brother, known as the Novice Master, to carry out formation. He should have a firm grasp of the faith, and preferably have completed formal courses of study in Catholic theology. The Novice Master shall be responsible to carry out the formation in accordance with the present statutes and the Brotherhood manual.

Formation takes place over the course of two years of novitiate in classes that are held monthly during regular meetings of the Brotherhood. In the first-year formation focus on the spiritual formation of novices, explaining the nature and purpose of the Brotherhood of Penitents of St. Dismas, our rule of life, and especially the topic of prayer, penance, and our customs, in order that novices thoroughly understand the commitments which they are preparing to undertake as brothers.

The second year of formation is catechetical, to provide our brothers with the necessary understanding of the faith. This preparation should enable them, first to live out their faith fruitfully, and second, to be knowledgeable teachers themselves, so as to catechize others and defend the faith in the face of challenges. The contents of this instruction must always conform to the Church's teaching. Before novices are professed, they should be examined to see that they have learned by memory the prayers all brothers are expected to know, especially the Rosary, as well as the basic truths of the Catholic faith, the commandments, the seven sacraments, etc.

Formation, however, does not end with profession, but is a life-long task. Therefore, we provide continuing opportunities for growth in the faith by hosting speakers, offering days of recollection, and holding classes outside our regular meetings.

II

prayers

order of prayers at weekly meetings



M eetings of our brotherhood begin with the following prayers. The leader of the prayers says those parts in normal print. The parts in normal print. The parts in bold print are said by everyone. There should always be a crucifix with two lit candles and any other sacred images on an altar at one end of the room. Out of respect for the presence of Christ among us we bow to the crucifix on entering and leaving the meeting. When the prayers begin all kneel facing the crucifix:

V. Hail Mary most pure.

R. Conceived without original sin.

Forming a cross with our thumb and forefinger, we trace the sign of the cross on our forehead, lips, and chest, then a large cross from our forehead to our navel, to our left shoulder and then right shoulder, saying:

By the sign of the Holy Cross, Deliver us, Lord, our God, from our enemies. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE HOLY ROSARY

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. With the help of Thy grace, I resolve to confess my sins, do penance, and amend my life. Amen

Offering

Open our lips, Lord God, to praise and bless your most holy name, and that of your most pure Mother, Mary most holy. Cleanse also our hearts from all vain and wicked presumption. In flame our will and enlighten our mind, so that we may pray this devotion of the holy Rosary worthily, attentively, and devoutly, and that we may merit to be heard before your divine Majesty. Amen

The Apostles' Creed

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem, Creatorem caeli et terrae. Et in Iesum Christum, Filium eius unicum, Dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine, passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus, descendit ad infernos, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis, inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, vitam aeternam. Amen.

The Mysteries of the Rosary

The Joyful Mysteries (Monday and Thursday)

1. The Annunciation.
2. The Visitation.
3. The Nativity.
4. The Presentation.
5. The Finding in the Temple.

The Mysteries of Light (optional, Thursday)

1. The Baptism of Jesus.
2. The Wedding Feast of Cana.
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom, Call to Conversion.
4. The Transfiguration.
5. The Institution of the Eucharist.

The Sorrowful Mysteries (Thursday and Friday)

1. The Agony in the Garden.
2. The Scourging at the Pillar.
3. The Crowning with Thorns.
4. The Carrying of the Cross.
5. The Crucifixion.

The Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday)

1. The Resurrection.
2. The Ascension.
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles.
4. The Assumption.
5. The Coronation of Mary Queen of Heaven and Earth.

In each mystery we pray one Pater Noster; ten Ave Maria, one Gloria Patri, and the Fatima Prayer.

Pater Noster (Our Father)

PATER NOSTER, qui es in caelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in caelo et in terra. **Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem, sed libera nos a malo. Amen.**

Ave Maria (Hail Mary)

AVE MARIA, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus. **Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc, et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.**

Gloria Patri (Glory Be)

GLORIA PATRI, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. **Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.**

Fatima Prayer

Domine Iesus, **dimitte nobis debita nostra, salva nos ab igne inferiori, perduc in caelum omnes animas, praesertim eas quae misericordiae tuae maximae indigent.**

After each mystery we sing the following verse in honor of our holy patron
St. Dismas:

**Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.**

After the last mystery, the following traditional prayers are said.

Hail Mary most holy, Daughter of God the Father, Virgin most pure before childbirth, into your hands we place our faith that you may enlighten it, full of Grace! The lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. **Holy Mary...etc.**

Hail Mary most holy, Mother of God the Son, Virgin most pure during childbirth, into your hands we place our hope that you may inspire it, full of grace! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. **Holy Mary...etc.**

Hail Mary most holy, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Virgin most pure after childbirth, in your hands we place our charity that you may inflame it, full of grace! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. **Holy Mary...etc.**

Hail Mary most holy, Temple and Tabernacle of the Most Holy Trinity, Virgin conceived without stain of original sin:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, O most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed Fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Lord God, whose only begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech thee, that meditating on these mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Litany of the B.V.M

-Lord have mercy on us.

Repeat

-Christ have mercy on us.

Repeat

-Lord have mercy on us.

Repeat

-Christ, hear us. *Repeat*

-Christ, graciously hear us. *Repeat*

-God the Father of Heaven,

Have mercy on us.

-God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

Have mercy on us.

-God the Holy Ghost,

Have mercy on us.

-Holy Trinity, one God,

Have mercy on us.

-Holy Mary, **Pray for us.**

-Holy Mother of God, **Pray for us.**

-Holy Virgin of virgins, **Pray for us.**

-Mother of Christ, **Pray for us.**

-Mother of the Church, **Pray for us.**

-Mother of divine grace, **Pray for us.**

-Mother most pure, **Pray for us.**

-Mother most chaste, **Pray for us.**

-Mother inviolate, **Pray for us.**

-Mother undefiled, **Pray for us.**

-Mother immaculate, **Pray for us.**

- Mother most amiable, **Pray for us.**
- Mother most admirable, **Pray for us.**
- Mother of good counsel, **Pray for us.**
- Mother of our Creator, **Pray for us.**
- Mother of our Savior, **Pray for us.**
- Virgin most prudent, **Pray for us.**
- Virgin most venerable, **Pray for us.**
- Virgin most renowned, **Pray for us.**
- Virgin most powerful, **Pray for us.**
- Virgin most merciful, **Pray for us.**
- Virgin most faithful, **Pray for us.**
- Mirror of justice, **Pray for us.**
- Seat of wisdom, **Pray for us.**
- Cause of our Joy, **Pray for us.**
- Spiritual vessel, **Pray for us.**
- Vessel of honor, **Pray for us.**
- Singular vessel of devotion, **Pray for us.**
- Mystical rose, **Pray for us.**
- Tower of David, **Pray for us.**
- Tower of Ivory, **Pray for us.**
- House of gold, **Pray for us.**
- Ark of the Covenant, **Pray for us.**
- Gate of Heaven, **Pray for us.**
- Morning Star, **Pray for us.**
- Health of the Sick, **Pray for us.**
- Refuge of sinners, **Pray for us.**
- Comforter of the afflicted, **Pray for us.**
- Help of Christians, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of angels, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of patriarchs, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of prophets, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of apostles, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of martyrs, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of confessors, **Pray for us.**

- Queen of virgins, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of all saints, **Pray for us.**
- Queen conceived without Original Sin, **Pray for us.**
- Queen assumed into Heaven, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of the most holy Rosary, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of the Family, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of peace, **Pray for us.**
- Queen of our brotherhood, **Pray for us.**

-Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

-Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

-Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

-Jesus, Hear us. *Repeat.*

-Jesus most graciously, hear us. *Repeat.*

We fly to thy protection, **O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers O glorious and blessed Virgin.**

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Lord God, you give to your people the joy of continual health of mind and body. With the prayers of the Virgin Mary to help us, guide us through the sorrows of this life to eternal happiness in the life to come. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Blessed be your purity,
and may it be blessed forever,
for no less than God takes delight
in such exalted beauty.**

**To you, heavenly Princess,
Holy Virgin Mary,**

**I offer this day
my heart, life, and soul.**

Look upon me with compassion,

Do not leave me, my Mother.

Amen.

After the Rosary and Litany, the following prayers are
Said:

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Offering to our Holy Patron, St. Dismas

Holy Patron, St Dismas, I offer to God my prayers and penance of this day, in union with my brothers, for the good of our brotherhood, and for the intentions of each one of us. Pray that we who take refuge under your holy patronage may obtain the grace of conversion from sin, growth in virtue, and perseverance in grace and in this brotherhood until the end of our lives. Amen.

Let us pray for our Holy FATHER, N.

The Lord preserve him, and give him life, and make him blessed upon the Earth, and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies. Amen.

Let us pray for our deceased brothers and relatives, and for all the holy souls in Purgatory.

Prayer of the Holy Shroud

Lord God, who left us the signs of your Passion on the Holy Shroud in which your most holy body was wrapped when you were lowered from the cross by Joseph, grant us, most loving Lord, that by your holy death and burial and by the sorrows and sufferings of your holy Mother Mary, our Lady, that the souls in Purgatory may be brought to the glory of the resurrections where you live and reign with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen

**Repeat 3X*

V. O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine,

R. All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine

May the Heart of Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament be praised, adored, and loved with grateful affection at every moment in all the tabernacles of the world even to the end of time. Amen.

V. May the divine assistance remain with us always,
R. And with our absent brothers. Amen.

**We sing three time the verse:*
Santo Dios, Santo Fuerte, Santo Inmortal, libranos Señor de todo mal.

V. Holy Patron Saint Dismas
R. Pray for us.

V. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
R. Amen.

III

CUSTOMS

FORMAT OF WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

Our weekly fellowship meetings are essential to the mission of this brotherhood which is to foster the spiritual growth of our members. All brothers should make every effort to attend as often as possible, and to participate in whatever may be asked of him. The following outline is the customary format of our meetings. The leader should be the Warden or, in his absence, the senior brother. Meetings last around two hours. A crucifix with two lit candles and any other sacred images should be placed on an altar at one end of the room. Out of respect for the presence of Christ among us we bow to the crucifix on entering and leaving the meeting.

- **Prayer:** The meeting begins with the Order of Prayers including the Holy Rosary and Litany of Our Lady. The Warden or Prayer leader should begin the prayers on time even if all have not yet arrived. All should make every effort to be on time for common prayers, since it is a priority for us to pray together as Brothers. During the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent we observe the custom of praying the penitential Rosary, i.e. with arms extended in the form of a cross. Brothers should remember that a plenary indulgence is available to those who pray the Rosary in common.

- **Greeting:** When the prayers are concluded, the Warden or whoever is leading the fellowship invites everyone to take a moment to shake hands and welcome each other. This is the time to move around the room and make new acquaintances.

- **Opening Prayers:** After the greeting and with everyone still standing, the leader invites all to stand and to pray together the opening prayer:

“LORD, JESUS CHRIST, YOU PROMISED THAT WHEREVER TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED IN YOUR NAME YOU ARE PRESENT IN THEIR MIDST. WE GATHER IN YOUR NAME TO FULFILL THE AIMS TO WHICH WE HAVE DEDICATED OURSELVES, THE CONVERSION OF OUR HEARTS, THROUGH PENANCE AND PRAYER, SERVICE TO THE CHURCH AND TO OUR BROTHERS, AND THE SPREAD OF YOUR GOSPEL TO OUR FAMILIES AND OUR NEIGHBORS. SEND YOUR HOLY SPIRIT TO ENLIGHTEN OUR MINDS WITH YOUR WISDOM AND INSPIRE OUR HEARTS WITH YOUR LOVE, AND BLESS OUR WORK DONE IN YOUR NAME WITH SUCCESS. ALL: AMEN

- **Welcome New Visitors:** After the greeting and with everyone still standing, the leader invites all to sit down. He then welcomes new visitors and asks them to introduce themselves.

- **Examination on our rule of life:** This custom is essential to our meetings and should never be omitted. Through it we are continually reminded of our commitment to our common observances of prayer and penance. Reflection in silence on the past week, we ask ourselves the following questions:

- **Have I missed weekly meetings or failed to attend functions of the brotherhood?**
- **Have I fulfilled our common penances of weekly fasting and abstinence from meat?**
- **Have I failed to pray the Rosary and the offering to St. Dismas daily?**
- **Have I failed to do spiritual reading?
Spent time before the Blessed Sacrament?**
- **Have I neglected to evangelize others when I could have?**
- **Have I offended another brother or given a bad example?**

Each brother then asks pardon for his failings, saying:

Forgive me brothers for (he admits his faults), **and if I have offended you in any way.**

When everyone has spoken the leader says:

For all our failing we ask the forgiveness of God, of our brothers and of all those we may have offended.

All: Amen.

- **Readings:** After the examination of our rule of life, the readings for the coming Sunday are read. Each week one brother is responsible for preparing a reflection on the readings for the coming Sunday. He also prepares one or more questions relating to his reflection which will be discussed by the group.

- **Group Discussion:** After the reflection, the group discusses the readings and the question presented by the speaker.

- **Closing Items:** Before the meeting ends, the leader makes announcements and a final prayer. The leader should cover the following points:
 - **Announcements of coming events.**
 - **News from brothers.**
 - **Request for assistance.**

- **Final Prayer:** The meeting concludes with intercession for personal intentions of each brother done in silent. After the intentions are made silently the leader proceeds to end with the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we ask you to hear our prayers, to bless and protect us and our brothers who are absent, to increase our brotherhood, and to have mercy on the souls of the faithful departed. We ask this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our holy patron St. Dismas. Amen.

How to prepare a scripture reflection

The purpose of our weekly study of the Sunday readings is to help us understand the Word of God for our spiritual growth and to participate more easily at Mass. By preparing a reflection for our brothers, we ourselves will also grow in our knowledge of the Bible. The following are steps to preparing a good reflection.

1. READ THE READINGS

The first step is to familiarize yourself with the readings. Do this several days before you begin to work on your presentation. Read them over more than once, if necessary. Read slowly and make sure you understand every word you are reading. If there is anything you don't understand make a note so that you can look it up later.

2. RESEARCH

In order to understand the Scriptures we have to take into account the time and place they were written in, the author, and the circumstances. A good presentation will tell us about these topics. Try to answer these questions:

- Who wrote the book we are reading from?
- When did he write it, and why?
- What is the historical background, especially the details that we may need to know to understand the passage?

3. EXPLAIN THE READINGS

Explain what the readings are saying: put them into your own words and identify the message in each reading.

4. APPLY THEM TO DAILY LIFE

Apply the readings to your walk with Christ, the struggle with sin, the life of prayer, the main virtues and vices, etc. This is the place to be personal and to share your own experience.

5. DISCUSSION QUESTION

Prepare a question that will be the topic of discussion in our small groups. Try to think of something original yet general enough to apply to everyone's life.

6. FINALLY, ASK YOURSELF

- Do I provide the information people will need to understand the readings?
- Is my presentation easy to understand?
- Is it logical?
- Do I answer the questions that I would ask?

SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

It is important to make use of good sources in preparing your reflection. Look for books such as Catholic commentaries on Sacred Scripture and Bible dictionaries. There are also several Catholic websites that provide a wealth of information on the Sunday readings.

Suggested sources for study:

- Catholic scripture study website: www.scborromeo.org
- "The Bread of Life" Scripture study series

ALABADOS

ALABADAS SEAN LAS HORAS

**Alabadas sean las horas
Las que Cristo padeció
Por librarnos del pecado
Bendita sea su pasión.**

Jueves santo a media noche
madrugó la Virgen Santa
en busca de Jesucristo,
porque ya el dolor no aguanta.

El viernes por la mañana
sacaron a mi Jesús,
a padecer por las calles
con una pesada cruz.

Caminando al Calvario
con gran dolor preguntaba:
¿Quién pues, ha visto pasar
al Hijo de mis entrañas?

Por aquí pasó, Señora,
como un facineroso
cinco mil azotes lleva
en sus sagradas espaldas.

Una corona de espinas
sus sienas traspasaba;
Lloraban las Tres Marías
al ver a su Maestro amado.

Una era la magdalena
y santa María su hermana,
otra era la Virgen pura
la que más dolor llevaba.

Una enjuagaba sus pies.
una, el rostro le limpiaba,
otra recogía la sangre
la que Cristo derramaba.

Bendita la que del pecho
por ultimo resto sale
a fundar los sacramentos
para que todos se salven.

Alabemos y ensalcemos
al Santo Árbol de la Cruz
donde fue crucificado
nuestro Cordero Jesús.

Si mi culpa fue la causa
de que mi Dios y Señor
pasara tantos martirios
hasta que en la cruz murió.

Por los meritos sagrados
de tu bendita Pasión
que me cubran y me tapen
las cortinas de tu amor.

AYUDEMOS ALMAS

Ayudemos, almas,
de tanto penar
a la Virgen pura
de la Soledad.

Al pie de la cruz

la vemos que está
la Madre sin Hijo
porque ha muerto ya.
Se aumenta su pena
de ver a Jesús,
que no hay quien lo baje
de la Santa Cruz.

Crece su dolor,
pues no halla sudario
para revestir
el cuerpo sagrado.

Tanta es su pobreza,
pues no hay un sepulcro
para sepultar
a su Hijo difunto.

Tres necesidades
tuvo esta Señora,
pero Dios le envía
quien se las socorra.

José y Nicodemo
de Arimatea
bajan a Jesús
y a María lo entregan
En sus dulces brazos
tierno lo estrechaba
con amargo llanto
sus llagas besaba.

“¡Ay, Hijo de mi alma,
prenda de mi vida,
cómo está tu cuerpo
todo hecho una herida!”

“Por culpas ajenas

estas de esta suerte,
por librar al hombre
de la eterna muerte.”

Sepulcro a Jesús
dieron, a su Madre
de pena y dolor
el pecho se le abre.

Con San Juan se va
porque es el amado
a quien Jesucristo
la había encomendado.

Allí vio la calle
donde le prendieron
y donde de muerte
sentencia le dieron.

Triste y afligida,
entra a la ciudad,
llena de dolor,
llena de pesar.

Entra a su aposento,
se desata en llanto,
no hay quien la consuele
en tanto quebranto.

Hombre, fuiste causa
de esta soledad,
llora tu pecado,
llora tu maldad.

Herido tu pecho
con siete puñales
tus ojos en llanto,
Señora deshaces.

“¿Dónde está mi amado?”
decía adolorida.

“¿Dónde está mi bien?
¿Dónde está mi vida?”

¡Salve, dolorosa,
afligida Madre!
¡Salve tus dolores,
y a todos nos salves!

¡Adiós, Madre mía!
¡Adiós, mi consuelo!
¡Adiós, mi esperanza!
¡Adiós, mi remedio!

**¡OH, SANGRE DE MI JE-
SÚS!**

¡Oh, sangre de mi Jesús!
¡Oh, remedio universal!
Líbrame de todo mal
por ser vertida en la Cruz.

¡Oh, lágrimas de María!
por mis culpas derramadas
Con esa sangre mezclada
Ampáranos noche y día.

¡Oh, Santísimo Sacramento!
Hijo del eterno Padre,
Dame luz y entendimiento
para que mi alma se salve.

**LEVÁNTATE ALMA
CRISTIANA**

**Levántate, alma cristiana,
despierta si estas dormida,
que Dios te viene buscando
y a su gloria te convida.**

Este es el ultimo aviso,
no esperes hasta mañana,
hoy te dice Jesucristo:
Levántate, alma cristiana.

Procura mudar de vida,
yo soy tu Dios, tu Señor,
que te llamo con amor:
despierta si estas dormida.
¡Ay!, pecador, ¿hasta cuando
te acercas a mi presencia?
Vamos a hacer penitencia,
que Dios te viene buscando.

Ven aquí, alma entretenida
en ese pecado atroz,
que te llama el mismo Dios
y a su gloria te convida.

Deja la ilusión profana
donde te ves sumergida,
vente, vente arrepentida
levántate, alma cristiana.

¿Cuántas veces divertida
estarás en tus placeres?
Venid, venid, si me quieres,
despierta si estas dormida.

Es preciso que llorando
vengas a mí arrepentida,
pecador, vente conmigo,
que Dios te viene buscando.

Si vienes arrepentida
y sin tener resistencia,
Dios te llama a penitencia
y a su gloria te convida.

Oye sonar la campana
que te llama muy veloz,
venid, pecador, por Dios,
levántate, alma cristiana.

Para mi elegida
te llamo aquí, penitente,
que si vienes obediente,
despierta si estas dormida.

Vete, pues, examinando,
para que hagas confesión,
vente aquí sin dilación,
que Dios te viene buscando.

Donde están los escogidos
de aquella patria lucida,
Dios te llama arrepentido
y a su gloria te convida

MÁS LINDA QUE LAS FLORES

Más linda que las flores
que bordan los jardines,
Más linda que el efluvio
del alba matinal,
Más alta que los coros

de excelsos querubines
Nació de la sonrisa
del Padre celestial,

Con letras de diamantes,
el nombre de María
Trazó en le firmamento,
la mano del Señor.

Con letras de diamantes,
el nombre de María.
Trazó en le firmamento,
la mano del Señor.

**¿QUIÉN ES ESA
ESTRELLA?**

**¿Quién es esa estrella
que a los hombres guía?
La Reina del cielo,
La Virgen María.**

Por este camino
se ve una huella,
es nuestro destino
seguir esta estrella.

Caminen hermanos
por esta vereda,
nos vamos gustosos
siguiendo la estrella.

Qué alegría me causa
Señora este día,
viéndote llegar
a mi compañía.

Qué alegría me causa
Señora en mi alma,
viéndote llegar

con laurel y palma.

Vengan pecadores,
los consolaré,
y en las aflicciones
les ayudaré.

Angélicas tropas
salid al encuentro,
que a vernos hoy viene
la Madre del Verbo.

¡Qué concha tan pura!
!qué madre tan bella!
pues hoy le pregunto
¿quién es esta estrella?

SALGAN, SALGAN,
Salgan, salgan, salgan,
ánimas de penas,
que el Rosario santo
rompe las cadenas.

Miren, consideren,
que también vendrán
y estas tristes penas
las padecerán.

El no ver a Dios
Es un gran dolor
Y sentimos más
Por su grande amor.

Las que transitáis
Del mundo los cercos,
Mirad nuestras penas

Oíd nuestro lamentos.

Las llamas nos queman
por nuestros pecados,
dad, pues, el descanso,
hermanos amados.
Son tantas las penas
y tan largo el tiempo
Que aquí son mil años
Del mundo un momento

Con un Padre Nuestro
y un Ave María
tendremos descanso
de tanta agonía.

Hijo muy amado,
pariente o compadre,
padrecito o madre,
¿nos han olvidado?

Tenemos descanso
el día de finados,
pero en todo el año
somos olvidados.

Pidan, pues, a Cristo,
con semblante tierno,
conceda se acorte
el ardiente infierno.

Virgen, reina amada,
jardín de azucenas,
dadles un consuelo,
sacadles las penas.

Almas, pues, confiad
que a Dios pediremos

les dé buen descanso
por siglos eternos.

Salgan, salgan, salgan,
ánimas de penas,
que el Rosario santo
rompa las cadenas.

SALVE CRUZ BENDITA

Salve Cruz Bendita
Madero Sagrado
que cargó en sus hombros
mi Jesús amado.

Bajó de la Cruz
bajó a padecer
los primeros pasos
a Jerusalén.

Bajaste Tú al mundo
con crecido amor;
moriste en la Cruz
por el pecador.

En un arrabal
rodeado de penas
prisionero te hallas
con crueles cadenas.

Con crueles cadenas,
te van estirando
con crueles cordeles
te van azotando.

Con hiel y vinagre
lo fortalecieron,
con crueles espinas
a Jesús prendieron.

Miradle el cabello
Lo tiene mezclado
y por eso dicen
que esta agraviado.

Miradle las sienes
las tiene quebradas
con crueles espinas
las tiene posadas.

Miradle los ojos
los tiene empañados
lágrimas que vierte
por nuestros pecados.

Miradle la boca
seca y renegrada
te esta pidiendo agua
por darte la vida.

El agua que pide
que sea de abstinencia
agua saludable
de la penitencia.

Prisionero te hallas
en una columna
y los pies heridos
que eclipsó la luna.

Con la palabra santa
que el Señor habló
ábrase la gloria
que el preso llegó.

En el Jueves Santo
que el Señor oró
Su divina Madre

fue la que lloró.

En el Viernes Santo
que el Señor murió,
su divino cuerpo
se le sepultó.

Esta Salve Madre,
que estamos cantando
sean indulgencias
que al cielo han llegado.

Estas alabanzas
que aquí hemos cantado
sean indulgencias
que aquí hemos ganado.

TROPAS DE MARÍA
Tropas de María
Sigan la bandera
No desmaye nadie
Vamos a la guerra.

Nuestra capitana
Pues ya nos espera
Tomen ya sus armas
Vamos a la guerra

Con valor marchando
Con valor de veras
Y todos danzando
Sigan la bandera.
Salid frente a frente
Cabos y oficiales
Soldados valientes
No desmaye nadie.

Ya se oye el clarín

De órdenes tocando
La guerra por fin
Vamos comenzando.

Al arma soldados,
con mucha alegría
vayan bien armados
Siguiendo a María.

Sangrienta batalla
Pues ya nos espera,
Esta es la muralla
Sigan la bandera.

Ya nuestro contrario
Pues ya nos espera

Rezando el rosario
Vamos a la guerra.

Contrito lleguemos
Con resolución
Pues de munición
Lágrimas llevemos.

Triste el corazón
Lleva compungido
De haber ofendido
A tan gran Señor.

Nuestro capitán
Va en la cabecera
Toda la hermandad
Sigan la bandera.

Vamos ya marchando
A paso veloz
Todos entonados
Alabando a Dios.



Offering to our Holy Patron, St. Dismas

Holy Patron, St Dismas, I offer to God my prayers and penance of this day, in union with my brothers, for the good of our brotherhood, and for the intentions of each one of us. Pray that we who take refuge under your holy patronage may obtain the grace of conversion from sin, growth in virtue, and perseverance in grace and in this brotherhood until the end of our lives. Amen.

**BROTHERHOOD OF ST. DISMAS
HOLY INNOCENTS CATHOLIC CHURCH CHAPTER BYLAWS**

- i. ARRIVE 10 MINUTES BEFORE THE MEETING BEGINS**

- ii. DRESS CODE: JEANS OR SLACKED PANTS, NO OPEN TOE SHOES, FLIP FLOPS, OR SANDLES, AND ALL SHALL WEAR A BROTHERHOOD SHIRT. PROFFESSED BROTHERS SHALL WEAR THEIR SCAPULAR AND NOVICES SHALL WEAR A BROTHERHOOD ROSARY AROUND THEIR NECK.**

- iii. NO ALCOHOLIC DRINKS ARE PERMITTED. ANYONED THAT IS INTOXICATED SHALL BE ESCORTED OUT.**

- iv. PUT CELLPHONE IN SILENCE BEFORE THE MEETING BEGINS. IF ANYONE NEEDS TO ANSWER AN URGENT CALL, PLEASE TAKE IT OUTSIDE.**

- v. CODE OF CONDUCT: BE RESPECTFUL TO ALL AT ALL TIMES**