

Praised be Jesus Christ, dear brother,

I would like to uncover the imaginary veil from prisons in the Slovak Republic and write you a few lines about how Jesus Christ acts behind the walls of prisons. I would like to provide you with a letter which we have wanted to publish for a long time and which purpose is to acquaint you with our community DISMAS - what we do, what projects we have and what the goal of our community is; therefore, we hope that you will find answers to possible questions that you may not be asking yourself, but those around you, such as your family. This letter is also aimed at evangelism, so you can forward it to others, for example to another convict who may have doubts or who still does not believe that our Father exists.

The origin and background of DISMAS

Our story began in January 2015 when I met Braňo Letko during prayers for healing in Beckov. In our conversation, I asked him if he would come to the prison, because I wanted the convicts to have the opportunity to hear the prayer of praise as well as their testimonies. He looked at me, said nothing, turned to the tabernacle and praised God. Then he replied: 'Sure, when?' I said on May 14, 2015 because I had been considering this idea for a long time to find out in advance what I would need to ensure their entrance to the prison.

On May 14, 2015 it was for the first time the Christian band Lámačské Chvály organised a prayer of praise in Leopoldov – in the most guarded prison in Slovakia. The three-hour process of strict rules at the entrance to the prison could not be accelerated and we could not avoid it. In the 'castle' (the prison) where the event took place, there are people serving their sentences who you would never want to meet in the street in the evening. There are mostly murderers, men convicted of rape, extortion, drug dealers and other criminals. These men were invited to the event and came, although some did not even know why they came; however, I knew the reason since it is written in the Scriptures, 'You didn't choose me. I chose you.' (John 15:16, NLT)

When the prayers of praise and testimonies glorifying God began, I noticed a change in the faces of the tough guys after about half an hour. After another half hour, I noticed a convict sitting in a forward bend, holding his head with his both hands and crying. The guy who started crying was convicted of shooting people. Hearts of others began to slowly melt too. Jesus touched them and showed them the state of their own souls and the things to be renounced in their lives and handed over to His hands.

I realised that Jesus does not change only people outside, but calls also those behind the prison walls. This penetrating touch of the Lord Jesus touched my heart too and it was a sign for me to start a new course in the prison. In short, as a teacher, I had two courses – a breeding and an artistic course – and since I can neither draw nor breed animals, I knew I had to start something I know for sure. My life priority is to read the Scriptures daily, to attend a mass every day and to lead my family in faith in Christ. That is why I have decided to pass on this testimony of my life to the convicted and also because I know that Christ loves everyone unconditionally.



Photo: Biblical school in the Chapel of the Conversion of St. Paul in the Leopold Prison from the film Zlaté píšťaly (Golden pipes) by TV LUX

This was the reason why I asked for a permission to create a new course called Biblical school. The supervisors agreed and we started our meetings. In the beginning, there were only three of us. The first one was playing Christian

songs on the guitar, another one was reading the God's word, and the third one was praying. In this way we met every week, and in a few months, over 20 convicted joined us. During one such meeting, they asked me if our group could have a name. I asked, 'What name?', They said, 'We already are a community, so we would like to have a name.' I said, 'Okay, let's try.' The first one said, 'Freedom fighters'. The second one, 'Imprisoned'. The third one, 'God's mercy'. Simply, everyone said something different. I stepped in and finally we agreed to pray for it. After some time, as we praised the Lord, our guitarist suddenly stopped playing, put down his guitar and said, 'Our name will be DISMAS!' I asked, 'What is it?' He told us that it was the name of a repentant criminal, and continued, 'Do you know how many crosses were on Golgotha when they crucified Christ? Yes, three. In the middle, there was the innocent – the only righteous one who did not deserve to be sentenced to death. But there were real criminals on his right and left.'

'One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!" But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."' (Luke 23: 39-43, NLT)

The repentant criminal was called Dismas (from the Greek *dysme*, meaning dying). He was the criminal who was justified by God, Lord Jesus Christ, and finally brought to Paradise on the same day. I do not want to go ahead, but this is actually the basis of our regular visits to prisons. We acquaint the convicts with this part of the Scripture so that they may know that there is no sin that God would not forgive us when we repent. For we know that God *'wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.'* (1Tim 2: 4, NLT) All we need to say is 'amen' to His word.



Here I give the access to the content of the article and the photograph, which were officially published: 'On August 16, 2015, a concert of the worship band Lámačské Chvály with the participation of convicts placed in a medium security prison, high security prison and accused placed in alleviated conditions took place in the Leopoldov Prison and Detention. During the concert, the convicted and accused were listening to testimonies of the band members and praises glorifying Jesus Christ and God's word.'

<https://www.zvjs.sk/sk/koncert-worshipovej-kapely-v-leopoldovskom-ustave-kapely-v-leopoldovskom-ustave>

Activities of the DISMAS community

Within a year, we agreed on what our main focus and the goal of our community would be. It was definitely a prayer. Imagine that the convicts have their hands and feet tied metaphorically. This represents their imprisonment. The more tied their hands and feet are, the more developed their voice is. Yes, their voice calling to God. It is similar as in case of a blind man whose touch is more developed. In addition, some have even more time than we have.

I sometimes remind them how life is lived in some religious orders. A man enters the order, sells everything he has, distributes it to the poor, rings the bell in front of the monastery walls, hands over even the clothes in which he came, and without any property, he indulges in God's will in a strict enclosure. When I tell them this, some understand

that they live similar lives. That's exactly how it is. They have only two paths to choose – either fight the system, write complaints, appeal for release, or accept their cross and begin to live as true children of God.

I dare to say that they are in 'Jesus' Army'. At present, the Slovak-Czech prison community DISMAS (hereinafter referred to as 'Dismas') is not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic. We have already visited 10 prisons there and the convicts have joined our prayers in each of the prisons. The intentions of our prayers are for people in specific prisons to whom the Lord Jesus Christ sends us, for their families and for others as well.

Angelic Prayers: This is the most important goal of our community, which is based on these prayers: we pray a short five-minute prayer every day at 8:00 p.m.; every Friday from 8:00 to Saturday midnight we pray nonstop for 40 hours (each prayer should last at least 1 hour at any time during the day; for example, a convict chooses to pray from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on both days); and we also pray for Slovakia every Friday at 12 o'clock. One group prays the rosary (sorrowful, joyful, glorious, luminous), another group prays 500 times Our father, others read the Psalms, hold fasts of different kinds, some play an instrument and sing praises to the Lord – everything in absolute freedom.

Almost every week, the Dismas regularly organises Christian events, theatres, concerts, prayers of praise and meetings where we serve as a support group for the prison chaplain. In addition, we serve released members with various needs within the charity (we provide them with clothes for them, their children and the rest of their family). I would also like to mention the 'Angelic Present' project. This project is organised at Christmas time. In case of interest, we send Christmas presents to children or grandchildren of members of the Dismas who are in prison.



Photo: My wife Mirka with a member of the Dismas, Lucia, wrapping presents for children until midnight so that they can receive them on time. This idea came to our mind in December 2018, and it was a bit more complicated than it seemed at first sight.

I will try to describe this service for the convicts from the community in a little more detail. Most convicts have children who are alone at Christmas, far from their daddies who are serving their sentences. However, also these children have a desire to receive a present from their daddies. Some do not understand why their daddy is in jail or they do not even know it. We all agree that these children are not to blame when their parents or grandparents are in prison.

The convict will receive a letter stating: 'If you want to make your child happy, the only thing we need is the name of your child, preferably his or her age (so we can choose a suitable present); for example: Anička, 6 years old, and the address where to send the present.' Last year we sent presents to more than 10 children. I believe that this number will increase every year. Many convicts thanked us when I visited them in prison, but of course, we also received thanks in the form of a letter. Here I choose a letter which arrived on January 3, 2019.

Photo: A part of a letter from Jozef, who has been serving his sentence for many years. I briefly describe the content of the letter and then give an explanation from the chaplain.

When we decided to run this service, we wrote to some chaplains who were interested. Chaplain Ľuboš Kaščák came to a prison cell and said that the Dismas offers the opportunity to make children of the convicts happy. This is stated in the beginning of the copy of a letter, in which Jozef writes that he saw an advertisement on TV, where children were unwrapping Christmas presents. After seeing it, he looked at the picture of his children, and as he prayed, he said to his children (in the picture), 'The Lord will send you a present through the people.' At that moment, the cell door opened and the priest (chaplain) came with this service - 'Angelic Present'. He writes in the letter: 'My brother, I was watching TV and there were presents in the advertisement that they were giving away at Christmas. I was looking at the picture of my children, which is on the wall, and I said, "My children, I don't know what shall I give you, but the Lord will send his people to you and they

BHAŤ MO POŽE HÁL SŤM TELKŮ
A REKLA MA BOL DĀH ČEKŮ
HOŽDĀ VALI NA JANOCE POŽ
HEL SŤM NA DĚŤI MĀMICH
NA STĚNE A POKEDĀL SŤM MOJ
DĚŤI COVĀM DĀM ALE PĀN BOH
VĀM POSLE SVĀJ LŮDĪA BUDĚTE
MĀT DĀHČEK A PĚSNE PĀISEL
PĀN FĀHĀH VĪPĪTĀT ADRESU
HĀVĪL SŤM BOŽE MOJ ČOTĪHO
BIŠ SŤDCE MI PUKNE TAK VELMI
PEKNE ŤI DĀKUDĚM BHAŤMOJĀ
TVOJE ŽENE ŽE PĀNĀ MILĪDETE
A POČŮ VĀTE LEBO PĀN DEŤĀM
MOŽE PĀNCOVĀT DĚ PĀMĀDU
TAK ŤI DĀKUDĚM AD TVOJE ŽENE
A J BĀNTOVI BOH SAM ODĀENĪ
DĚŤI TANCOVALI HĀDOVALI
A VEĤĪDA ŽE PĀN DĚŤIS
IM POSLĀL NA ČO ŤI POKEDĀL
BHAŤ MOJ PLĀCE MI SŤDCE

will give you presents.” At that moment, the priest came to ask for the children's address. *Have I said, my Lord, what are you doing? My heart is breaking, I thank you and your wife so much for loving the Lord and listening to Him because the Lord can work where they are open to receive. I thank you, your wife and Braňo. God will reward you. My children were dancing, rejoicing and they believed that the Lord Jesus Christ sent the presents to them. What else I can tell you, my brother, my heart is crying.*

We also added a few words to the present:

‘Merry Christmas Alenka,

a beautiful Angel from the Heaven came to me and gave me this beautiful present for you. It's only yours. I miss you very much and I pray for you. I'm sure that's why Jesus sent me this Angel so that I could send you this surprise and let you know that I love you very much. Your father.

And these are the words your children will receive with the presents this year as well.

Currently there are about 1000 convicts and accused in the Dismas community in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. There are 191 released convicts and accused and we have the information that only two of them are back in prison. Statistically, about 70% of the released prisoners should end up in prison again, which is 133 people. Well, in our case the number of two people represents 1%. Even if 9 people would end up in prison again, it is still 10%. This unbelievable difference lies in honest return to God's path. Perhaps you ask why the superiors don't see it? Maybe they don't want to see it because what the world doesn't know or if it's not a latest trend, psychological or psychiatric activity, this world is afraid of it because it doesn't have an answer, an excuse and it's not even a coincidence, so it would have to admit it's a miracle. We also visit the released members of the Dismas. We help them find a community in the area where they live and help them integrate into the Christian life there. In case of interest, we try to provide consultations on arranging accommodation as well as finding a job. I also mention projects like *Angelic Holy Mass, Angelic Congratulations, Angelic Letter, Angelic Present, Angelic Mobile Phone, Angelic Magazine (Newsletter), Angelic Weapon, Angelic Picture and Angelic Quiz.*

I would like to briefly describe our projects for which our Daddy called us. That is why I say ‘called’ because all our projects and the whole service are, in fact, focused on the encouragement and visit of Jesus hidden in our brothers and sisters in prison. I tell you that almost every day when a priest transforms the living Christ during Communion, I pray to Him to be able to see these convicts as He sees them. Down here I describe the mentioned projects:

Angelic Holy Mass: This service is focused on serving a specific holy mass for one member of the Dismas community.

Angelic Congratulations: Every member of the Dismas community receives on his name day and birthday a greeting which contains the word of God and a copy of a drawing, which was drawn and given to us by our members from prisons.

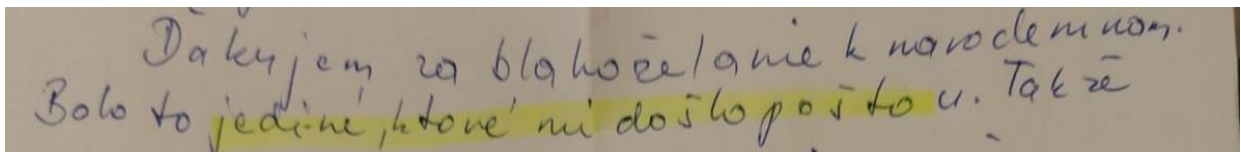


Photo: A part of a letter from Janko from Leopoldov, who writes: ‘Thank you for congratulations on my birthday. It was the only one I received.’ This is how he reacted to the correspondence from the Dismas community (Angelic Congratulations).

Angelic Letter: This project is realised during the most critical time, for example, on Christmas Day, when one remembers his loved ones and needs to have someone he loves close to him. To imagine, most of the convicts in prisons lose contact with their families (they do not communicate with them at all). For this reason, children of families from the Dismas community receive names of the convicts and pray for them. Every child is given at least one name and prays intensively for the convict for 40 days before Christmas. The child also writes a Christmas wish to the convict and draws a picture. This project has touched the hearts of the convicts the most and, as we learned from their subsequent correspondence, they have been really affected by it.

Angelic Magazine: Our so-called ‘Newsletter’ is sent to 330 convicted men and women every three weeks. The magazine is composed of 6 to 14 pages describing the life of the whole Dismas community outside or inside prisons. I mention also another service which is crucial for sending such correspondence. We sometimes receive about 125 letters from the convicts in a month and we read each of these letters and respond to every one of them. When it

comes to contents of the letters, there are usually various requests such as sending a package, sports clothes, the Bible, Christian literature as well as requests for prayers, encouragement, a Bible quiz and responses to missions that we regularly give them in this magazine. It also includes testimonies, stories about different life situations that are not always joyful, but Jesus Christ heals them all since He is the best doctor.

The photo of this newsletter can be found on page 16.

Angelic Present: This service has already been described in this chapter.

Angel Mobile Phone: This is a project aimed at helping a member of the Dismas community who was in prison for a long time and can't use a cell phone with a touch screen. At the same time, we are aware of the fact that these days communication is mostly based on mobile phones. For this reason, we buy them these devices, install applications such as the rosary (for listening), Bible, our webpage, save phone numbers of some members and our e-mail addresses. We upload even MP3s of the New Testament and a few sermons about God's word, a spiritual retreat after release from prison to help them stay with Christ after leaving prison.

I would like to mention enclosures added to every letter – various instructions, a guide for confession, Eucharistic miracles, various spiritual retreats and information on charities and a guide for released convicts. Our regular enclosures include the Yeshua Course, spiritual exercises, quotes of the Pope Francis and Church Fathers. To imagine, a newsletter is made up of 20 pages, while the total number of printed pages is usually 4000 (about 80% is printed in colour).

Angelic Quiz: It is a Biblical quiz - a course (questions based on the Scripture), which is completed by its evaluation and a certificate of completion. Each member has the opportunity to participate in the quiz, which is sent immediately after our first contact since it is very important that everyone reads God's word.

Angelic Picture: It is a bigger project where members from the exile draw - paint mostly biblical motives. The drawings are given as gifts to children from orphanages and even to Pope Francis. The aim of this project is to use talents of members of the community for the Church since they have the talents to serve and bring joy where it is sadness or at least to make someone smile. The drawings serve us as gifts or means to express thanks for service.

Angel Weapon: It is a renewed tradition of making rosaries, which were produced mostly by life-sentenced convicts 25 years ago. For a long time, I have been considering this project and I'm grateful how perfectly it was timed and made possible thanks to our Mother Mary. Currently, rosaries are being produced in Slovak and Czech prisons. It was in Slovak prisons where we have addressed mainly our ordinariate priests and asked them to cooperate. 13 prisons are producing this weapon against 'the Monkey' (the Devil).



Photo: Handmade rosary at life sentences in Banská Bystrica.

The picture under the rosaries was made by a life-sentenced convict for a boy Matúško who cooperated on the project Angelic Letter and sent a letter to this convict on the Christmas Eve.

Collaboration with subjects, organisations and music bands



In 2015, Lámačské Chvály honoured us twice with their visit and also a band ESPÉ in Advent.

Photo: The Leopoldov Prison and Detention, prayers of praise with the band ESPÉ on December 7, 2015 in the cinema hall of the prison with the participation of about 120 convicts and 23 accused.
<https://www.zvjs.sk/sk/koncert-kapely-espe-v-ustave-leopoldov>

At the end of the year, we agreed to rehearse Christian songs more often, so that in the future, the convicts would surprise the invited guests with some songs from their repertoire, which they regularly play during holy masses, and also their compositions, which they composed. However, we didn't have a good guitar (only those that had had their good years long time ago). That is why we approached Guitar AID that donated a beautiful mahogany guitar to the community. The community's efforts culminated in the invitation of Braňo Letko to the Biblical school to improve and fine-tune their guitar playing and even more.

Here I give the access to the content of the article and the photograph, which were officially published: 'A meeting with the singer, guitarist and Catholic evangelist Mgr. Branislav Letko took place in the Leopoldov Prison and Detention on April 7, 2016. The convicted from the Biblical school attended the lectures and an interactive discussion on 'praise' songs. During the meeting, they were introduced to the origin, characteristics and purpose of Christian songs in an engaging way. Convicts were interested in the practice and interpretation of the songs. On this occasion, they also played the instrument given to them by Guitar AID from England.'



<https://www.zvjs.sk/sk/stretnutie-s-katolickym-evanjelizatorom-v-ustave-leopoldov>

However, Braňo did not know that on his next visit, the members of the Dismas would surprise him and share with him what they had been practicing for a long time. I remember it as it was today, when Lámačské Chvály came to Leopoldov for the third time and one of the convicts asked for a guitar from Braňo because he wanted to play something. At that time, Braňo just said, 'Give as freely as you have received' and smiled. Matúš Uriga, nicknamed Chrobáčik (Little bug), just said in a low voice, 'So let's listen to the discussion'. But what followed none of them expected. At hearing our 'anthem' - 'Jesus you have the most beautiful name', the boys from Lámačské Chvály sprung



to attention and tears began to roll down. Braňo Letko once said after a prayer of praise: 'Michal, when we come to the prison, God's presence comes right away, sometimes when we play outside, we have to praise for a long time to experience it, but here it is right away.'

In this way, they have started to welcome every guest, as well as a rare visit, which I would like to present with a text and a photo from the official website: 'On May 21, 2016, a concert of a singer Dominika Gurbal'ová and a musician Maroš Vataščin from the Maják community in Košice took place in the Leopoldov Prison and Detention. These young music enthusiasts often host Christian music festivals and perform in the Catholic media. Between the songs, the accused and the convicted were addressed by

ThDr. Vladimír Šosták, PhD., an episcopal vicar for catechesis, pastoral care of families and apostolate of the laity of the Košice archdiocese. Many thanks to all involved for the indescribable experience.'

<https://www.zvjs.sk/sk/hudobne-vystupenie-s-hodnotnou-prednaskou-v-ustave-leopoldov>

I must point out that in addition to prayers and beautiful songs, they also talked and asked questions about the Scripture. They knew that Vladko Šosták is the episcopal vicar for catechesis and has lectures at the 'Yeshua' courses, about which I regularly informed them. Their discussion, which was very fruitful, ended with a blessing. After the visit, with Vladko's permission, I read the convicts an e-mail, which Vladko sent me the day after his visit. And as I was reading it, several convicts were affected by the letter and thanked me for passing it on, because it contained a great encouragement and it was a confirmation that what they do has a meaning. I also want to provide you with a part of this e-mail, so I asked Vladko Šosták for a permission to publish it and he agreed. 'Yesterday still resonates in me ... it was a very strong ... strong touch of God for us. I don't even know if those prisoners needed us or if we needed the prisoners. Probably "B" is correct. And you were God's director. We just peeked into a place that is not very attractive to a man, but God's wisdom, sovereignty and omnipotence often work there and in those in whom we would hardly expect it. I thank God very much for you and for your mission. I send my very best wishes to your Bible students... With endless blessings, brother Vlado.'

In the prison we also work with charities. For example, on May 18, 2017, we organised a charitable Catholic cultural event on the occasion of the feast of St. Pope and martyr John I, accompanied by the gospel band Lámačské Chvály in cooperation with the chaplain Mgr. Ľuboš Kaščák and with the Ordinariate of the Armed Forces and Armed Corps of the Slovak Republic.

I would like to mention that not only men but also women are placed in the execution of imprisonment. We have visited them in the Prison and Detention Nitra, in the Prison for juveniles Sučany, in the Prison Levoča and in the Prison Nitra Chrenová. Convicted women in the prison in Sučany surprised us and played songs that they rehearsed with the chaplain of the prison parish Mgr. Juraj Malý, SDB. I have noticed that the convicted women were best understood by female singers who share their personal testimonies and experience which can relate to the convicted women.



Photo: Prison and Detention Levoča, gospel band F6 on the left and Dominika Marušinová – Gurbal'ová on the right.
<http://www.zvjs.sk/sk/hudobne-popoludnie-v-ustave-levoca> <https://www.zvjs.sk/sk/node/720164>

Recently, a rapper Michal Straka alias EGO has been visiting prisons almost every month. Do you know what some people ask me very often? 'Michal, is EGO converted?' or, 'Why are you taking him to the prisons with you?' I reply them only in short that I feel he is on his way and I don't tell anyone where he is on his path to God. The important thing is that he is walking and proves what he says by his actions. In his case, it is a charitable activity, which means that he goes to any prison in Slovakia, including prisons in the east. He neither asks for money for his performance nor he asks for money for his expenses. What's more, he even pays the expenses such as gas for the sound engineer who takes the equipment in another car. EGO very often devotes all his day to serving and he sacrifices his comfort and money to visit the convicts, as it is written in the Gospel: 'I was in prison, and you visited me.' (Matthew 25: 36, NLT)

Now I will answer the second question why I take EGO with me. I will try to explain it with an example. We have rented the Lord's vineyard and we invite various guests (workers) who cultivate, water, prune and hoe the vineyard. I perceive EGO as a suitable man for another service in the Lord's vineyard. His service is to destroy the great chaff and cut off the bushes. EGO always attracts the most convicts or accused to his concert and usually those who attend his concert have to be chosen because everyone wants to go there (not only believers, of course). EGO shows those convicts who would never come to any Christian activity that even a celebrity can walk in his own way



with Christ and that one does not exclude the other. I will describe you how such a concert in prison really looks like. Michal (EGO) starts his concert with a question. Before playing a song called 'The best friend', he asks: 'Do you know who my best friend is?' Everyone usually says that another musician called Rytmus. He replies, 'No, it's Jesus Christ.' After playing other songs, he asks again: 'Do you have a family, a wife and children at home? Can we pray for them a prayer Our Father?' They say okay, and then Michal kneels with us and we pray with the convicts. What is even more beautiful about the prayer is that the last time I was with EGO,

I dare say that these guys were so moved that at least 5 convicts from the high security prison really cried and thanked from the bottom of their hearts.

Imagine that these statements are also officially confirmed on the website: ‘We live only once and it is necessary to come back home like another person’, which is the motto in the spirit of the concert of the Slovak rapper EGO, who performed in the prison in Ružomberok on July 3. The concert was organized by the Christian community Dismas, which also wants to contribute to the progress in lives of convicts in this way. EGO pleased them not only with his most famous hits, but also with new ones, and in the end, he willingly answered various questions, for which the convicts rewarded him with a storm of applause. During the performance, the rapper and the convicts knelt and together prayed Our Father for their wives and children.

<https://www.zvjs.sk/sk/aktuality/ego-koncertoval-za-murmi-ustavu-ruzomberok>

I add another photo of Michal S. from the prison in Banská Bystrica-Kráľová made during Christmas holidays on December 20, 2019.

Photo: Right after the prayer for families of the convicts, which was suggested by Michal S. (note the humbleness), when at the name of Jesus every knee bowed as it is written ‘that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’ (Philippians 2:10-11, NLT)



<https://www.zvjs.sk/sk/aktuality/predvianocny-koncert-%E2%80%9Eega%E2%80%9C>

During the existence of the community Dismas, a priest who was authorised by a bishop to perform exorcism was a guest in prisons several times.

Here I give access to the content of the article and the photograph, which were officially published: ‘On March 2, 2019, Matúš Marcin (Greek Catholic priest of the Košice Eparchy) and Michal Libant (from the Prison and Detention in Leopoldov) accepted an invitation to the premises of the open department of the Prison and Detention in Prešov. The primary lecture was on the topic “Love your neighbour as you love yourself and do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you” dedicated to the relaxation group Dismas, which meets regularly in the chapel of the department in the evening for about 20 minutes for a community prayer of the holy rosary. As the convicts were very interested in attending the lecture, it took place in the common areas of the department. In the

lecture with a discussion, Matúš Marcin was able to explain in an engaging and comprehensive way without moralisation, where the dissipated way of life is going, pointing out many negative attitudes of a man towards another man and explained the importance of the holy rosary prayer. Since Matúš is approved by the bishop to perform exorcism in the Košice Eparchy, he explained the cases in which the church uses exorcism prayers and the difference between mental illness and suffering caused by the Evil One. Despite the fact that the convicts and the staff of the department would be willing to listen to this humble man till morning, the four-and-a-half-hour lecture had to end but because of advanced time and other scheduled meetings of the lecturer. The lecture ended with a big round of applause and a short closing prayer. Thank God for people like Matúš Marcin and Michal Libant, who despite their busy schedules, took the time to come and encourage the convicts who are serving their sentences.’



<http://www.zvjs.sk/sk/prednaska-pre-odsudenych>

In 2018, we also visited our brothers in the Czech Republic for the first time. So far, we have already visited 9 prisons there and have been invited to the Czech Parliament. In May 2019, we filmed an official documentary about these activities in prisons.



Photo: A precious man, director of the prison Rýnovice Col. Mgr. Vlastimil Kříž speaking at the microphone.
<https://www.vscr.cz/veznice-rynovice/novinky/koncert-gospelove-kapely-lamacske-chvaly/>

Out of respect, I would like to mention other guests who I have not mentioned yet and who also have an open heart and came to serve to this Lord's vineyard. I mention a gospel band Godknows; boys from Čenakolo, who came to testify and play theatre; Dominik Pecho, who played the main character Jacques Fesch (a convict who converted in prison) in a theatre performance at the Andrej Bagar Theatre in Nitra; a Roma Christian band Opral; Simona Martausová; Miťo Bodnár; Matej Valuch, who has survived imprisonment in Iran; Makovica folklore ensemble; Christian rappers Dávid Janoček and Martin Dvornický; a priest Miloš Viktorín, who has consecrated the convicts to Our Lady of the Scapular, since he is a barefoot Carmelite; and last but not least, a parochial band Bétel from Hlohovce, which I must point out, has visited the prisons several times.



Photo: Parochial band Bétel from Hlohovec in the Prison in Želiezovce.
<http://www.zvjs.sk/sk/hudobne-vystupenie-skupiny-bethel-v-ustave-zeliezovce>

Some ask what our role in prisons is since there are Catholic priests as well as the **Ecumenical** Pastoral Service in the prisons. We come to the prisons to visit and encourage prisoners with Christian songs, lectures, theatre and various guests, taking into account that not only convicts who are Christians take part in these activities. The number of convicts can be even 150 and just after the activity, several of them visit the priest or they look for a way to get back on the narrow path, the path of life. Experience in this service and subsequent feedback, either from the priest or from correspondence, which is addressed to the Dismas community, show us that our service makes sense. I will try to describe an example of how it went in one of the prisons. As we disassembled the equipment, the convicts began to walk and sit down in places that were prepared for them. A big guy who looked like a 'world champion' was sitting in the front row (I might call him a 'dude on the meadow'). The expression on his face was saying, 'What is this going

to be? What is it about? I hope it will not be boring.’ He came there only because he had nothing to do in his cell and he wanted to get a bit of fresh air. He came simply out of curiosity to experience a bit of culture, as they say, as well as to have something to criticise. The prayer of praise and testimonies began, and then something unbelievable happened. As I was speaking the testimony of a convict from Leopoldov sentenced to life imprisonment, this gangster-looking guy began to cry out loud and could not stop sobbing. It often happens that people change during praises and testimonies, because it affects them deeply. Some men cry, other though men pretend to look at the ceiling, so that no tear comes from their eyes. After the prayers, we thanked the Lord for touching the guy, for this is a great grace. At the end, he also came and shook our hands. He thanked us, just like many others from all the prisons. Seeing the transformation of their hearts is a great reward for us from the Lord.

The fruit

A lot of people out there do not believe in these things. I often come across questions such as, ‘How do you know they are really converted?’ or ‘Don't they do it on purpose?’ I will use real examples to explain it – a convict has 22 disciplinary punishments imposed because of inadaptability behaviour such as physical assault, self-harm, prohibited activities, violations of the constitutional order and many others. Currently, the convict has no disciplinary punishments imposed, but on the contrary, he has two disciplinary rewards. This results in a positive radical change in his behaviour, which fulfils the requirements of the treatment program and the consequent possibility of a change of the differential subgroup. This is how people and staff in the prison see it, but I know the convict did only one thing – he has given Jesus Christ the first place in his life and from that moment everything has been arranged as it should be. After all, when you belong to Christ, you do not rob, you do not fight, you do not take drugs, you do not kill, you do not cheat, but on the contrary, you do good things. So, the convict is on his way to become problem-free and his attitude has a positive effect on other convicts and we can use him as a good example. I will describe another situation that happened to me. An officer who was on duty called me when I was in the office and informed me that he had noticed unusual behaviour in one cell in the department with problematic convicts. He said that during an irregular check during bed time he had noticed 9 convicts kneeling in front of the cross. I explained to him that the convicts pray on Saturday at least one hour continuously for 40 hours.



Photo: The Dismas community in the chapel of the open department of the Prison and Detention in Prešov. This is how convicts meet every day for prayers and especially for the Saturday 40-hour prayer chain.
<http://www.zvjs.sk/sk/koncert-skupiny-f6>

Another teacher informed me that there are also two cells in the department for problematic convicts, including convicts from the Dismas community, whose behaviour changed. The number of their disciplinary punishments and physical attacks was decreased to a minimum.

I will tell you another testimony from the other side since we pray also for prison staff. Once I served in Sabinov with boys from a Roma gospel band F6. A convict came to me and told me that he had been with me once, two years ago in another prison at the concert of Lámačské Chvály. This convict came to me to tell me that while I was speaking

a testimony, he noticed a face of a staff member. In his opinion, the staff member was the worst, respectively the most insidious of the prison staff. The convict believes that the change of the staff member happened during testimonies. According to the convict's words, his behaviour was completely changed – he became a new nice man touched by the Holy Spirit.

Another testimony which I would like to share with you is about a convict who was transferred to a low security prison because of good behaviour. He was automatically transferred to another prison, and as it was found later, the number of DISMAS convicts, which consists of twelve zealously praying convicts, increased in that prison. After a short time, this convict wrote us if we could come to visit the prison and encourage them like we do to other brothers in prison. After arranging all the entry formalities, relevant regulations, documents, information and with the consent of the priest, the visit became possible. At the end of the prayers of praise, I wanted to say another word, asking the convicts if any of them felt they wanted to join us in prayers for the DISMAS community. Those who really feel they want to join us should raise their hands. The act of raising of the hand is not just an ordinary gesture, but a public confession of faith in Christ Jesus as well as a commitment given to God. In many cases, this may cause that the convict will be considered by others as a weakling and they will exclude him from their team of ‘hard guys’; however, I know that the so-called weaklings are, in truth, warriors in the ‘Jesus’ Army’ and they know who they believe in. After my question, more than half of the convicts, about 50 prisoners, raised their hands. I tell you that the place was prepared for such a blessing thanks to prayers of the very group of twelve convicts who prayed for it. It took ‘a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough.’ Praise the Lord.

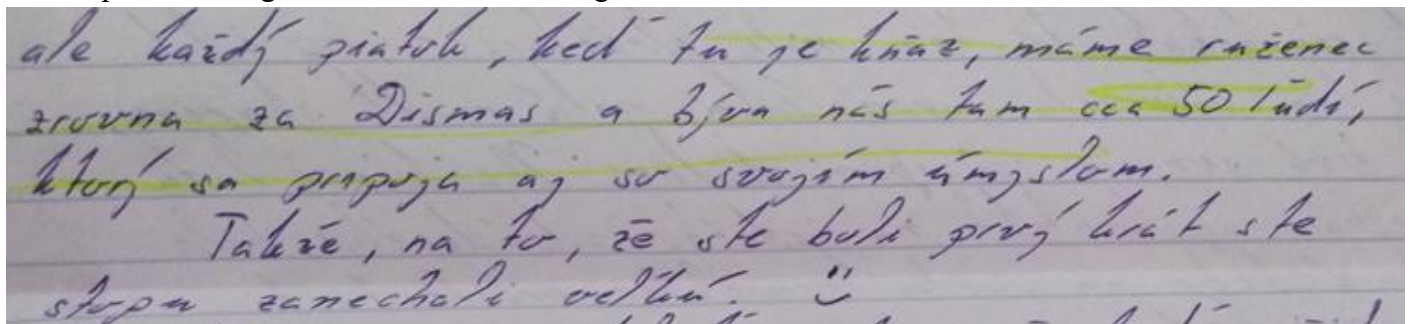


Photo: A part of a letter from Erik, after the visit of the gospel band F6, who provided us with his feedback. He writes in his letter: ‘Every Friday, when there is also a priest, we pray the rosary for the Dismas and there are about 50 people who join us with their intention. So, despite the fact that you were here for the first time, you have left a big footprint.’

I would go back to the initial question, ‘How do you know they are really converted?’ One brother in Christ served his approximately 18-years long sentence in prison and he was forgiven 5 years out of the total sentence of 23 years on parole. He started to lead a religious life in prison according to the Carthusian Order. It is a Catholic order with strict religious rules. I will try to briefly describe you the brother and how he coped with this difficult struggle and where it got him. Four years later, I visited him in a Christian charity house in Bratislava, where he helps the homeless. I wanted to visit him mainly because I wanted to see his community, his friends and to see after four years the fruits of his life born behind the prison walls, and I just wanted to spend a regular day with him. When I came to Bratislava in the morning, we first went to celebrate mass and then moved to the Pentagon (a local part in Bratislava full of maladjusted people, homeless people, alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes...). He was taking care of the addicts there, those who this world would call - the scum of Slovakia. If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I probably wouldn't have believed it. In front of my eyes, the addicts were literally injecting drugs into the groin and all other parts of their bodies. Some didn't succeed right away, so they tried more for half an hour. I didn't understand why they did it, but they explained that it was because ‘they couldn't hit a vein’. While we were there, a woman called him and begged him to go see her partner. That day he was once again refused a treatment and was thrown out of hospital. He couldn't walk, he didn't move his bowels for 30 days and similar diagnosis. For this reason, we moved from the Pentagon to another part of Bratislava. My friend non-professionally examined him there and called him an ambulance, which eventually treated him. Then we went back to the house, where free lunches for about 120 homeless people are prepared. Homeless can take a shower, change clothes, eat, etc. at this house. If our brother in Christ does not happen to be in the field, he always cooks lunch to avoid additional costs. Afterwards he shared with me the testimonies of what he does: at 3 p.m. he takes a backpack and goes to literally collect seriously needy homeless people who were released from hospital in the last stage of cancer or they are to die and no one wants them. Therefore, I asked him,

‘And what do you do with them?’ He took me to the top floor of the building, where we had lunch, and as he opened the door, I saw there were several rooms. I don’t know, maybe ten rooms. As I walked through them, I cried. People without legs, in the final stage of cancer...and all the brother gives them is bringing them here from the street, washing them, feeding them, taking care of them and calling them a priest, and finally burying them. And he does all this with LOVE IN THE HEART – WITH CHRIST. This is a man I have spent one whole day with and thank God for him. On the way home, I was wondering, who would be able to do this. Do you know such a person from the real world, have you ever talked to such a person? I have, he is a former convict full of zeal for the Lord. He is a man on whom others spitted, condemned him, but he has come to know Christ, he loves and follows him, carrying out the words that Christ spoke and really going beyond with great zeal.



Photo: Christian band Lámačské Chvály during a mass in prison in Dubnica nad Váhom.

<http://www.zvjs.sk/sk/lamacske-chvaly-v-ustave-dubnica-nad-vahom>

Once we went with Lámačské Chvály to Dubnica nad Váhom and as we entered the prison, Braňo Letko asked me if the convicted Marek, who was already free at that time, did not attend the Biblical school. I was thinking for a while, because I couldn’t remember any convicted Marek, who had already been released from prison. I would remember that. It must have been a mistake. To refresh my memory, Braňo told me a story of a lady coming to him when they were performing in the east of Slovakia. The lady was asking about this convicted. She met him on a train on the way to the east of Slovakia. In Leopoldov, a Romany joined them in the compartment. He said he was former convicted and had just been released from prison. At that time, everyone in the compartment grabbed their bags and was slightly frightened. And it was this Marek who was all the way to Poprad talking to them about Jesus Christ and the prison community Dismas. As Braňo finished the story, I still didn’t know who he was talking about and as he was supposed to be a Romany, it didn’t ring any bell at all. We moved on to the prison, and during the prayers of praise I remembered after all that he might be Marek V. who, once in a while, maybe once every two months, came to Biblical school, sat down and listened. This wouldn’t be unusual, except: firstly, I didn’t invite him, he came of his own accord, and secondly, he was a convict who often fought with co-convicts, harmed himself and in various speculative ways violated the constitutional order. A person who is maladapted and doesn’t fully comply with the treatment program is basically a man who you wouldn’t want to meet during your evening walk. And yet it was him who came a few times and I was always amazed. I asked myself, ‘Why?’ Until I once asked him why he was doing this – whether he wanted to discredit us in this way or intended to do some sort of sabotage. He said he didn’t, he just felt he had to go to Biblical school today. Then I asked him if he had anyone outside the prison who could pray for him, and he immediately replied, ‘Yes, my sister is in a religious order. She wrote to me that she prays for me on her knees every day.’ After hearing this I told him, ‘Well, Marek, that’s the answer where so much grace you get comes from – through her prayers for you to change.’ Since then, he has promised to try to change. I once held the Biblical school and felt that convicted should invite their relatives, children, parents, friends for a 40-hour nonstop prayer and thus create unity. For God unites, but the devil divides. One member of the community Dismas, a former addict, said: ‘I called my mummy because I wanted her to join me in prayer on Saturday. Do you know how she reacted? She cried on the phone and said, “Son, I’ve been praying for this my whole life. I’ve prayed all my life for you to tell me this. I’m going to hospital, but I’ll pray with you at that hour.”’ A letter came from a nurse the next week. I read in it that his mother had died, so I called him and told him, ‘Your mother has passed away ...’ He started to cry and tears welled

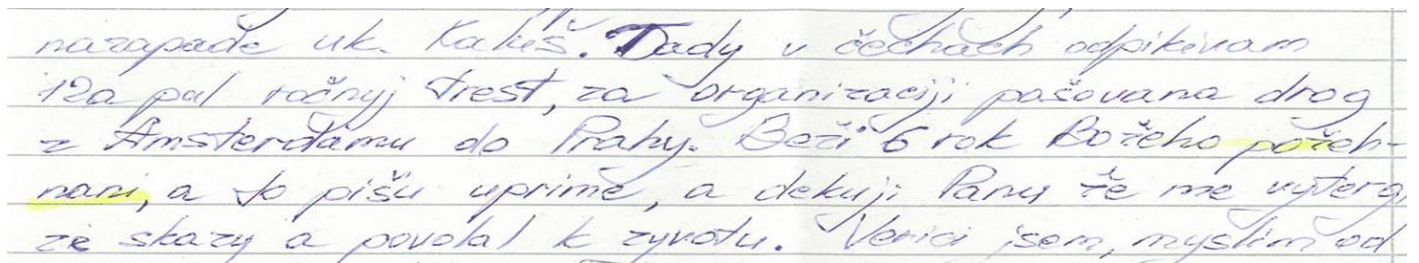
up in my eyes, too. He told me, 'Teacher, I thank God that my mother has prayed for me, that I was able to turn to God, that her prayers were not empty prayers, that God has heard her and that she died satisfied.'

'We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will.' (John 9:31, NLT).

Then we had a Biblical school meeting and one by one the convicts started saying to me, 'I'm glad I'm in jail.' I didn't understand. I asked them, 'What are you guys saying? How can you be glad that you are in prison when you were given a sentence until 2034? It doesn't make sense!' And another one stood up and said in a raised voice, 'Do you know why we're glad we're in jail? If we were not in prison, we wouldn't get to know Jesus Christ! We didn't have time for him outside, we did bad things outside, some of us beat their children, we took drugs, we robbed our family... we weren't good people. But we thank God that we are here now, that we have been able to know Jesus Christ, that He has given us this grace here in prison.'

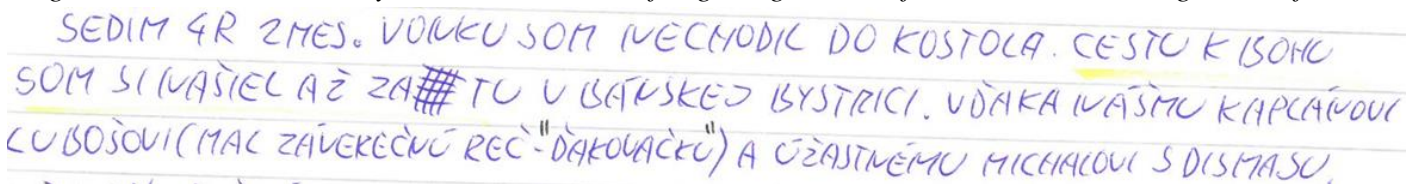
I can tell you that other convicts now regularly tell me this. I testify this story to other convicts, and they come and say, 'We have it here too, and we thank God. I don't know why we are here in prison, but if it was supposed to be for this, I am glad that God will turn everything negative, everything bad, even the worst evil in our favour. He is a good Dad, He loves us and we want to do everything we do for God's glory.'

I would like to present three letters below about the fact that convicts are happy to be in prison. But let us not be mistaken, not because they want to stay there, but because they have accepted their punishment and been given the grace to believe in Christ Jesus!



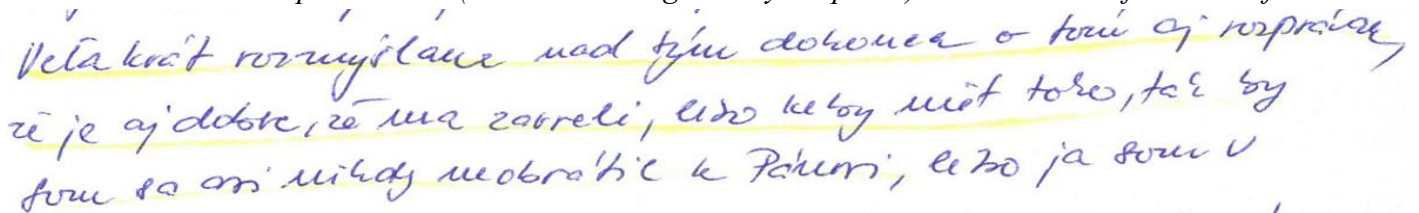
naropade uk. kakuš. Tady v českách odpovídám
12 a pol ročníj trest, za organizacii pašování drog
z Amsterdamu do Prahy. Běží 6 rok Božeho přeb-
nání, a to píšu upřímně, a děkuji Pánu že me vytrg
ze stázy a povolal k životu. Věřím jsem, myslím od

Photo: A part of a letter from a convicted from Plzeň who writes, 'Here in the Czech Republic I am serving my 12-and-a-half-year sentence for organising drug smuggling from Amsterdam to Prague. It is now the 6th year of God's blessing and I write this sincerely and thank the Lord for getting me out of the doom and calling me to life.'



SEDIM 4R 2MES. VOJKU SOM VECHODIK DO KOSTOLA. CESTU K ISOHU
SOM SI NAŠIEL AŽ ZA#TU V BANSKEJ BYSTRICI. VĎAKA NAŠMU KAPLANOVI
LUBOŠOVI (MAC ZAVREČNŮ REC-"ĎAKOVACEŮ") A ČĎASTNĚMU MICHALOVI S DISMASU.

Photo: A part of a letter from a convicted from Banská Bystrica in which he writes that, 'I have served my sentence for four years and two months. When outside, I didn't use to go to church. I only found my way to God here in Banská Bystrica thanks to our chaplain Euboš (he had a closing thank you speech) and the wonderful Michal from Dismas.'



Veľa krát rozmýšľam nad tým dohovor o tom aj napriek
že je aj dobré, že ma zavrli, lebo keby niet toho, tak by
som sa asi nikdy neobrátil k Pánu, lebo ja som v

Photo: A part of a letter from Braňo, who also claims, that, 'Many times I think about it, I even say it's good I was imprisoned, because if it wasn't for this, I would probably never turn to the Lord, ...'

After a year of running the Biblical school, I was given a green light to open this club for the life-sentenced as well, as this club is fully institutional. Right at the first meeting, I heard a testimony which I would like to share with you. The convict agreed to its publication. As I mentioned before, I've been working at life sentences, and anyone who find himself here has usually committed several murders. I didn't know them personally and three lifetime-sentenced came to the first meeting. After a short conversation, one of them told me his testimony. He told me, 'Teacher, can I tell my testimony to you? You know, I've been serving my sentence for a long time and I'm very sorry for what I did and I sincerely asked God to forgive me. I believe He has already forgiven me, but by my actions I have hurt others and I feel the need to reconcile and ask for forgiveness. That's why I wrote to my mother-in-law asking her to forgive me what I had done to her. I killed her daughter and three grandchildren. And do you know what she



wrote me? That she has forgiven me and that she has been praying for me. She eventually came to visit me and now we are in touch.'

I must add to this testimony that he has been embroidering a large picture of the Last Supper for several years now, which he wants to give to his mother-in-law for her incredible heart – a heart that only God was able to change.

I would like to mention a few more former convicts who have been released. At least eight of them have already been released and so far, they are all employed and lead a proper life. This is statistically 100% success until now, for which we can only thank the Lord, Jesus Christ. I can't say it's always easy. I also meet with Jaroslav Jaráb. He is about 3 years out after spending 22 years behind bars.

Photo: A visit of Jaroslav J. at his permanent address when giving him clothes.

I called Jaro and he told me that he would need some clothes for children he cared for, so we visited him and gave them a few bags full of clothes. He has been working in one company for three years, where he

initially started working through an agency and has been working as a regular employee for more than a year. He doesn't make much money, but the modesty and work associated with the love for Christ means more than what the world has to offer.

Another former convict, Jozef Štrbavý, who left the premises of the Leopoldov Prison in August 2018, got employed as a driver for Amazon. He gets up every morning at 3:00 a.m. to pray and at 6:30 p.m., he attends a holy mass and receives Jesus Christ through the Holy Communion and then goes to work. I remember the first time he told me he was doing it. I realised that I still had a room to improve. I do wake up early in the morning and pray the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary and then I attend a holy mass where I serve as an acolyte; but this early? Praise the Lord! I bless him so that he can keep up the good work. It made me very happy. *'Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.'* (Psalms 5:4, NLT)

Photo: A photo of Jožko Štrbavý with Marián Kuffa during their conversation about community Dismas

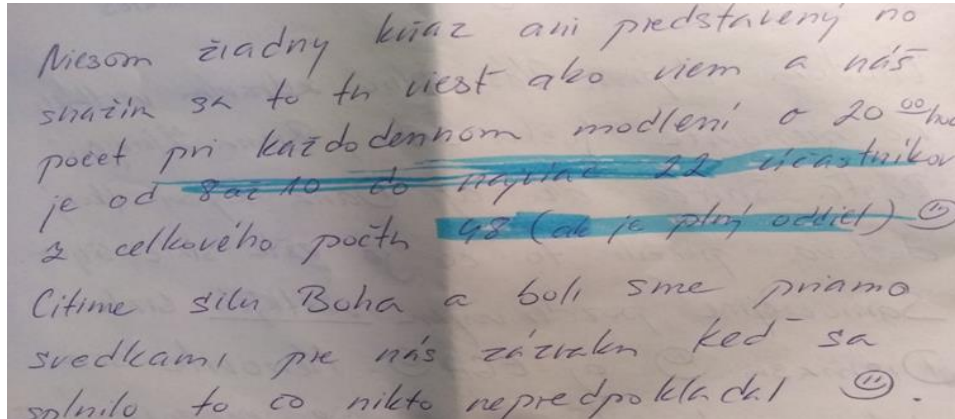
When I started the Biblical school in the Leopoldov Prison, we needed another good guitarist to play Christian songs. They recommended me a 'world champion' who was a very poorly practicing Christian, so to speak. He thought himself a big 'gangster', acted as if he was everywhere, saw everything. Nevertheless, I addressed him and since he had no problem with meeting to listen to God's word and playing psalms, we began to regularly invite him to our meetings. As time went by, after half a year of regular meetings, I asked him how his relationship with God was and how it had progressed. And he just told me he didn't really care about it and that he only came to the meetings because it was a possibility to get out of the unit and play the guitar, what he really enjoys to do. As it was this way, I didn't ask him more about these things. Two weeks before going back to a civilian life, he came to tell me something that surprised me a lot. He told me with a humble face that he was homeless, a drug addict, and when outside, he was stealing, he had hepatitis type 'C' and during serving of his sentence he didn't even have the money to go to hospital in Trenčín. In one breath, he said that he only had money for a ticket to Bratislava and that he had nowhere to return, so... I knew what he wanted to say, but he said one last thing, in context: may your God help me now.



Responsibility came over me and we immediately started to pray for him and passed it on to Jesus to let Him solve it. The day of release came and instead of going to Bratislava, he used the last money to travel to Vienna. Speaking German, he wanted to find a job there. However, he did not find any work after the whole day of searching. You know, when you see an emaciated drug addict with tattooed body, just released from prison, his chances of getting a job are very poor, which he realised very well. At the moment he remembered Braňo Letko, who told them during a visit to the prison that if someone went back to a civilian life, they shall feel free to call him, or send him a message

on Facebook and he will try his best to help. Luckily, he remembered this and sent him a message. Then he called Braňo and they prayed together. Braňo blessed him and finally told him to call again and he would ask him about work. In great frustration and at his wits' end, he dialled a number, and as he began to speak. At the end, a voice spoke that he could freely speak Slovak, because mostly Slovaks work there. Since then he has had a job there. After some time, by miracle, thanks to the Lord, he was given his own place to live, he was unexpectedly offered a house. The last time I talked to him he mentioned he works in Incheba in Bratislava and tries to live and walk in purity the path of Christ.

I would also mention a former accused who was held in custody in the Palace of Justice in Bratislava and founded Dismas community there, since even after more than four years of operation, it was impossible to get there. I will not describe why, but it is important that the Lord made his way there through this man of God and they began to pray in Bratislava, as well.



Nie som žiadny kňaz ani predstaviteľ no
staviť sa to tu viest ako viem a náš
pocet pri každodennom modlení o 20⁰⁰ hod
je od ~~8 do 10~~ do maximum 22 účastníkov
& celkového počtu 48 (ak je plný oddiel) ☺
Citíme silu Boha a boli sme priamo
svedkami pre náš zázrak keď sa
splnilo to čo nikto nepredpokladal ☺.

Photo: A part of a letter from an accused from prison in Bratislava, member of the community Dismas, who took over the leadership after Jožko Šiška had been released. He writes in the letter that together with other 22 members, he prays for the community Dismas at 8 p.m. 'I am neither a priest nor a superior, but I try to lead this community and there are between 8-10 to maximum 22 members, out of the total amount of 48 (if the unit is full), at our daily prayers at 8 p.m. We feel the power of God and we have been witnesses of what we consider miracles, when things no one would expect, happened.'

I would like to talk about some interesting reactions behind the prison walls. We met regularly at Biblical school in the chapel in the Leopoldov Prison at the designated time – mostly in the afternoon, as most convicts work until 3 p.m. At this time, convicts have mostly time to go for a walk and sometimes time to play the extremely popular football on the pitch. Well, at that time, I also held Biblical school. Since all the groups are voluntary, they could decide which group to attend, whether play the football, for which some of them have been waiting almost for a month, or be part of the community that meets every week. To my great surprise, they chose our group. Personally, I do find this quite important and impressive, because they received 'no benefits' from the group – I mean a secular benefit, such as disciplinary reward, and similarly...What they came for was a community of Christians, reading the Holy Bible, singing the prayer of praise, praying holy rosary and listening the God's word. Once I went with the convicts to the group through the walking yards (see the photo below) and one of the convicts who were locked in one of the yards started shouting, 'Where do you lead them to?' Even though he knew the answer, he only wanted to provocatively show off in front of others, so I came to him and told him: 'Imagine me coming to your cell and telling you that I have good news for you. What do you think, what do I mean?' 'Well, it would mean that I should pack and go home.' 'Then imagine that we're going to talk about the Gospel, which means good news in translation. It doesn't mean that they're going home but that they can have an eternal life in Christ and not only them, but also me, you and others – if you believe it.'



'God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.' (Romans 5:20, NLT)

Correspondence of the convicted – testimonies

More than two years ago, I asked the Lord how to achieve that the convicts could be visited, encouraged, and united in prayer. I don't mean that the priests in prisons don't do this. On the contrary, they do. Many thanks to them, may the Lord bless them. I write this as a support for their service, support for building the Kingdom of God, even among convicts. To bring them to the living Christ, who is the Eucharist. When I attended a meeting on March 3, 2015 at the Synod of the Ordinariate of the Armed Forces and Armed Corps of the Slovak Republic, many things were said about how the laity should contribute to the building of the Kingdom of God. Additionally, when reading these documents (documents of the Synod of the Ordinariate of the Armed Forces and Armed Corps of the Slovak Republic) they inspired me, especially these sections:

§118: 'Members of the Ordinariate carry out specific apostolate in individual departments, which have their differences; therefore it is required of the members to seek new, often unique ways and possibilities for carrying out the apostolate.'

§ 125: 'The missionary vocation which Jesus Christ entrusted to the Church is aimed at all people and at the whole world. The laity of the Ordinariate also strives in various ways to assist the missionary role of the Church according to their abilities and their vocation.'

§133: 'Members of the Ordinariate focus their efforts on the daily conduct of acts of physical and spiritual mercy. Firstly, they do so in their family, in places of service, in military missions, in the treatment of imprisoned, secured and detained persons, victims of crime, as well as in rescue operations. In the exercise of their vocation, the members of the Ordinariate always remember the dignity of the human being.'

Personal correspondence with convicts was one of the answers on how to unite God's children beyond the prison walls, because whether someone likes it or not, there are God's children in prison, too. This chapter focuses on the correspondence sent by the convicts who were, or who actually are behind the bars and belong to the community Dismas. Correspondence with convicts does not only have a form of personal letters, but also a form of a newsletter, which is sent twice a month.

PBJK (Pochválen buď Ježíš Kristus) drahý brat v Kristovi ,

veľmi sa teším, že aspoň takýmto spôsobom sa s tebou môžem podeliť o veci, ktoré Pán koná v spol. DISMAS. Dňa 22.7. som bol na audiencii u Pána biskupa, ktorá trvala cca 2 hodiny a cieľom stretnutia bolo spol. Dismas. Nakoľko zlý chce prekaziť túto službu, ale po návšteve som bol veľmi milo prekvapený a utvrdení v tom, že biskup súhlasí s touto službou. Veľmi sa teší jej ovociu, nakoľko som mu ukazoval aj listy, ktoré mi prichádzajú, hovoril som svedectvá Dismasu, rozvoj a horlivosť členov. Na záver mi poďakoval za službu a požehnal mňa, ako aj moju rodinku. Zbral si aj NL a povedal, že ich ukáže ministromi Spravodlivosti. Chvála ti Pane, že nás tak miluješ! Vieme, že sme v duchovnom boji. Za tie 4 roky som toho zažil v službe Dismasu ozaj dosť, ale tvojimi modlitbami rúcame hradby šampióna, aj jeho vojska. Len jedno slovo pre tých, ktorí v tvojom okolí možno pochybovali Sk5,39.



Foto: Mariánka sídlo Pána biskupa, keď som mu odovzdával naše tričko Foto: Eurovea BA Marius Dismas a Robo
V Bratislave som bol navštíviť brata Máriusa Dismasa po operácii. Stretli sme sa v nákupnom centre Eurovea na obede a ako tam sedíme, bol tam kuchár, ktorý sa na mňa uprene stále pozeral a potom prišiel ku mne a pýta sa: „Či nepoznáš Jožka Šišku s VV BA?“ ja že: „Áno.“ A on že: „Ja som tam bol s ním vo väzbe a spolu sme sa modlievali za Dismas každý deň.“ Je toto možné? Neskutočné! Kristus je najlepší manager! Robo ťa necháva pozdravovať a odkazuje, že sa stále modlí s Dismasom aj v sobotu a našiel si prácu. V rámci Dismasu sme viacerí išli pozrieť deti na Oázu, ktorá sa koná každý rok a trvá 17 dní, pričom každý deň sa rozoberá jedno tajomstvo ruženca- teda 15 dní. Boli sme spoločne



na sv. omši , kde hrali chvály. Bolo tam cca 50 dievčat a chlapcov vo veku od 13-22 rokov. Povieť len toľko, že keď začali hovoriť títo teenageri svedectvá, tak mi padla sánka dolu. Ozajstné obrátenia za tak krátky čas! To sú vymodlené milosti. Ak máte niekoho z rodiny, alebo známych a majú deti v takomto rozmedzí a nejakú vybavíte, že tam v lete pôjdu, tak hovorím ti, zažijú reálny Boží dotyk! Je to niečo ako duchovný tábor. *Foto v ľavo: Oáza - Lazy pod Makytou, pri obnovení mojich krstných sľubov. kňazom Mirekom V. (drží mi ruku na hlavu). Otec Mirek vedie Oázu už vyše 20 rokov. Boh mu dal dary, ako pritiahnúť mladých k Bohu a zároveň talent na usporiadanie a vedenie Oázy. Tieto dary využíva v maximálnej miere. Lk 6,44 Sám Pán mi dal milosť a poslať mi ľudí, ktorí sú ovocím tejto Oázy. Viacerí absolvovali túto Oázu, menovite: Damián, Jožko Šiška, Lucka, Rút... . Myslím si, že keby som ju absolvoval ja v tom veku, tak sa obratím už vtedy! Foto v pravo: Ešte by som rád podotkol, že Bohu známi darcovia nám darovali sv. písmo starý aj nový zákon, knihy: od Amortha (najznámejšieho exorcistu), od Patra Pia, Filotea - sv. F. Saleského, K. Emerichovej nasledovanie Krista od T.Kempinského. Ozaj všetko samé skvosty duchovného čítania. Pán Boh zaplať.*

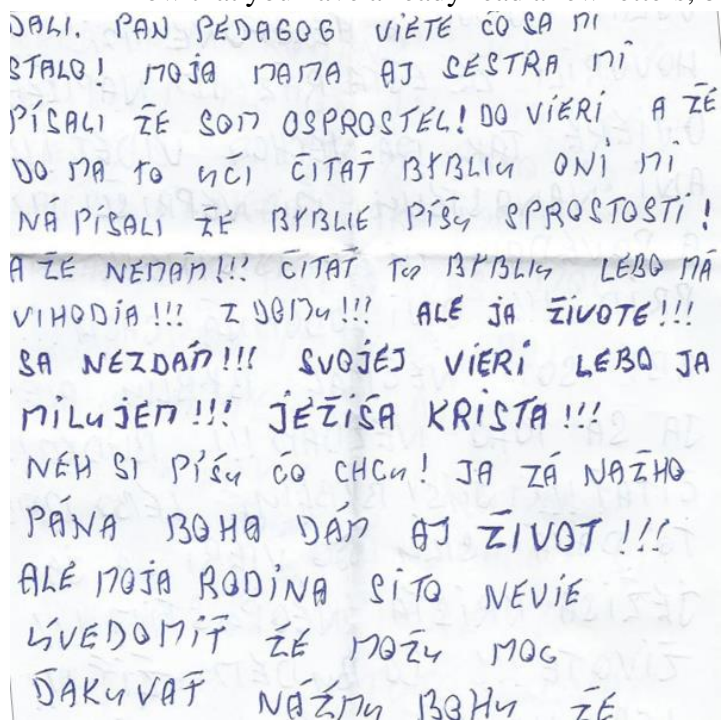


Foto: Campfest 2019, ako hrali Lámačské Chvály Braňo nás vyzval, aby sme išli na pódium. Povedal som o vašich modlitbách, vašej horlivosti, svedectvo a povieť ti, že sa v tú chvíľu zmenila atmosféra, ľudia zdvihli ruky a začali žehnať teba a všetkým odsúdeným v DISMASE v SR a ČR! Tú atmosféru nedokážem

Photo: Introductory page of a newsletter no. 18

These newsletters involve news about events where the Dismas members were serving, such as visits to prisons, festivals, meetings with church leaders, charities, visits to the radio and television etc. It also includes information on holy masses, which were and will be celebrated on behalf of the community Dismas, testimonies of members of the community Dismas, observations, interesting facts, a few selected letters of encouragement for other members and finally short teachings of church scholars, saints, as well as the current Holy Father, Pope Francis.

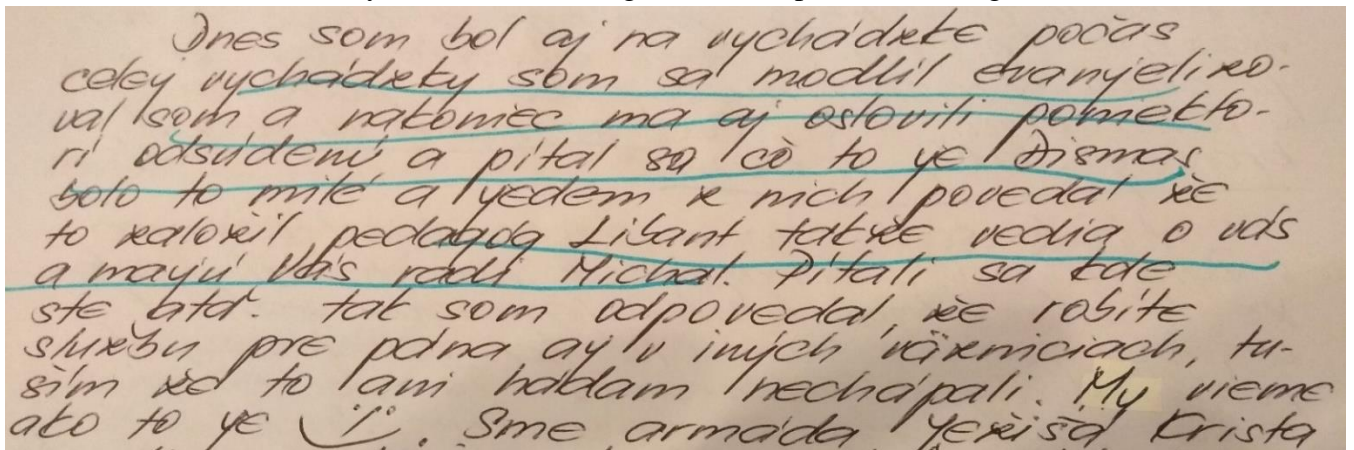
I know that you have already read a few letters, but I would like to share with you some other parts of the letters of convicts that were sent to the Dismas community, which is about 100 letters per month. We respond to each letter separately. I would start with one of the first letters that the Dismas community received.



DALI. PAN PEDAGOG VIETE CO SA MI STALO! MOJA MATKA AJ SESTRA MI PISALI ZE SOM OSPROSTEL! DO VIERI A ZE DO MA TO NCI CITAT BYBLIU ONI MI NA PISALI ZE BYBLIE PISEY SPRPOSTOSTI! A ZE NEMAM!!! CITAT TO BYBLIU LEBO MA VIHODIA!!! Z DEDY!!! ALE JA ZIVOTE!!! SA NEZDAJ!!! SVOJEJ VIERI LEBO JA MILUJEM!!! JEZISA KRISTA!!! NEH SI PISEY CO CHCU! JA ZA NAZHO PANA BOHA DAM AJ ZIVOT!!! ALE MOJA RODINA SITO NEVIE LIVEDOMIT ZE MOZU MOC DAKYVAT NAZHM BOHY ZE

Photo: A part of a letter of the convicted from Leopoldov who got to know our Lord, Jesus Christ, at Biblical school and subsequently sent a letter home. The letter reads: 'Teacher, you know what happened to me! Both my mother and my sister wrote to me that I got crazy! Because of faith, and asked who teaches me to read the Bible. They wrote there are stupidities written in the Bible! And that I shouldn't!! read the Bible, because they will kick me!!! out of the house!!! But in my life, I will never give up!!! my faith, because I love!!! Jesus Christ!!! Let them write what they want to! I would give my life for our Lord, God!!! But my family don't understand they should thank our God for everything!'

Sometimes we receive letters in which the convicted describe their free time. The convicted from the community Dismas even evangelise fellow prisoners during a walk.



Dnes som bol aj na vychadekte pocas celej vychadety som sa modlit evanjelizo- val som a nakoniec ma aj ostoviti pometto- ri odsudeni a pital sa co to je Dismas bolo to mile a vedem x mich povedat ze to kazovit pedagoga Libant tatere vedia o uds a mayu! Vds radi Michal. Pitati sa kde ste tat. tat som odpovedal ze robite sluzbu pre pdna ayu inych vaxniciach, tu sim ze to lam hodam nechapali. My vieme ato to je :) Sme armada Jezuša Krista

Photo: A part of a letter from Robo, who evangelised his fellow prisoners during a walk. As I was reading this letter, I saw a picture of a situation in my head, that I was looking through a window at the walking yards and the convict who was a member of the community Dismas was walking in a circle with a convict who is an unbeliever, as to speak so, and kept talking to him about Christ. I can only confirm this.

'Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favourable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.' (2 Timothy 4:2, NLT)

The letter reads: 'I went for a walk today, too. Throughout the entire walk I prayed, evangelised and eventually some of convicts asked me what the Dismas was. It was nice and one of them told me that it was founded by teacher Libant, so they have already heard about you and they like you, Michal. They asked where you were etc., so I answered you serve the Lord in other prisons, too. I think they don't completely understand. We know how it is. We are the army of Jesus Christ.'

I would like to show you a moment from a marathon, which a convict, having a problem with one leg that he couldn't fit in the trainers and wearing a white DISMAS T-shirt, ran during a sports day.

ČO SA STALO: PAĽO NASTŔPIL S ODMACHOM NA NOHE PAĽEJŠ, JE NEĽAVŔAN
 ZOBRAJNE ANI ZOTASEN. - Hovoril mu, "PAĽO JEZIS ZA DISMAS" A VŔS
 PO KAĽDOM KOLE SOM HO SO ZDŔANŔTOM PRŔECH OPRŔAVIAC A ROPŔI SA.
 PRI PRŔIVŔON KOLE Hovoril "PANE JA NI NEHŔIEN BOĽ TO AĽE TŔ JEJ ZA
 MNŔA". - KTO VŔNŔAL? - NO ON A PAĽO SNIŔ. - ZNOVA CHVŔLA PRŔVA

Photo: A part of a letter from Štefan. Pa'lo says during the fourth round: 'Lord, I can't anymore, it hurts, but You, run instead of me!! Guess who won. Well, Pa'lo with Him.'

That must have been a marathon. I wish I had been there. And when you happen to be thinking hard about who 'He' was, he meant the Lord.

The letter reads: What happened: Pa'lo started with such swelling on his leg that he couldn't even tie his trainers properly. I tell him, 'Pa'lo, Jesus for the Dismas.' And after each and every round, I waved and prayed with my hand up. In the fourth round, he says, 'Lord, I can't anymore, it hurts, but You, run instead of me!' Guess who won. Well, Pa'lo with Him. Again, praise the Lord!

I would also like to give space to a letter from Rýnovice in the Czech Republic, which we received after evangelisation in the prison in which he was detained.

SRDEČNĚ ZDRAVIM NA SLOVENSKO A DĚKUJI TI, ŽE SI SI NA MĚ VZPOMNĚL
 A POSLAL MI NEWSLETTERY O VAŠI ČINNOSTI, CO VŠE PODNIKÁTE, I VAŠ ČASOPIS
 NAHLAS. MUSÍM SE PŘIZNAT, ŽE JSEM BYL VELMI PŘEKVAPEN, JAK ROZSAHLÉ
 JSOU TVE KŘESŤANSKÉ AKTIVITY A KLOBOUK DOLŮ ZA TO, CO VŠE DĚLÁŠ, PRO SVĚ
 BRATRY VĚŘÍCÍ, MUSÍM OBDIVOVAT I TVOU OBĚŤAVOST A NÁSAZENÍ NECHÁPŮ, KDE NA
 TO BERĚŠ ČAS A ENERGIU. CHTĚL BYCH TAKÉ DODATEČNĚ POPRÁT SPOL. DISMAS
 K VÝROČÍ, AŤ SE DĚŘÍ NA VŠECH FRONTÁCH PŘECE JEN, VE VĚZNICÍCH JE, TO TROCHU
 BOJ, TAK DO BUDOUCNA HODNĚ VÍTEZSTVÍ V BITVÁCH S LĚSKÝMI SLABOSTMI, KTERE
 MOHOU ZA TO, ŽE SE LĚDE DOSTAVAJÍ DO VĚZENÍ.
 DĚKUJI TI TAKÉ, ZA MODLITBU, KTEROU JSI ZAMĚ ODRÍKAL NA MINULĚM
 KONCERTU SKUPINY CHVĚLY, VE VĚZNICI RÝNOVICE, BYL TO PRO MĚ ZASÍMANÝ
 A HLAVNĚ NOVÝ ZÁŽITEK. PŘEJI VĚM, AŤ SE VĚM VĚDĚŘÍ OBĚ AVIZOVANĚ
 MŔE VENKŮ, ZA SPOLEČENSTVÍ DISMAS A JEŠŤE JEDNOU DĚKY ZA PŔVZBUZENÍ
 , TOHO NENÍ NIKDY DOŠŤ.
 DRŽ SE A AŤ SE STĚLE DĚŘÍ
 SYMPATIZANT S BRATRY KŘESŤANY

Photo: A part of a letter from the Rýnovice Prison from a convict who was sentenced to life imprisonment by the court. In the letter, he thanks us for sending him our NL magazine, as well as for all the Christian activities we do for convicts. He sent his blessings on the anniversary of the founding of the Dismas and thanked us for our prayers. The text of the letter: 'I cordially send my greetings to Slovakia and thank you for remembering me and sending me a Newsletter with your activities, with things you do and your "Nahlas" magazine. I must admit that I was very surprised at how extensive your Christian activities are and hats off to you for what you do for your believing brothers. I also admire your dedication and commitment. I don't understand where you get your energy from. I would also like to wish all the best to the anniversary of Dismas. Good luck on all fronts, after all, in prisons it's a slightly different fight. Wishing for the future many victories in battles with human weaknesses, which may be responsible for people going to prison. Thank you also for the prayer you said for me at the last concert of the band Lámačské Chvály in the prison in Rýnovice. It was an interesting and mainly new experience for me. I wish both announced holy masses for the community Dismas will go well. And thank you again for the encouragement, because there is never enough of it. Hold on and keep going. A sympathiser with the Christian brothers.'

I would stop for a while and describe one situation in which we happened to be on May 1, 2019 with Lámačské Chvály in the Rýnovice Prison, where a documentary on evangelisation in prisons with LCH and DIMSAS was to be

filmed, while a unique audio recording was to be made on CD as well. I will try to describe it progressively one after another. On May 1, 2018 we (LCH and the community Dismas) received an invitation to replay a concert from the director of the Rýnovice Prison, Col. Mgr. Vlastimil Kříž, (we do not actually play concerts, it's a prayer of praise) on a day set exactly in one year, on May 1, 2019. We preliminarily approved it and at the beginning of 2019, after an agreement with the director and a lot of prayers, something that did not happen to us even after 4 years of service happened. The director told us that I could bring my own cameras and equipment. We were all excited and we went to the Czech Republic with three cars, full of professional equipment for filming the documentary. In the morning, on the day of the concert, we began to dismantle the equipment in faith, since according to meteorologists and weather applications in our smartphones, it was supposed to rain that day. You know, we were near Liberec near Krkonoše mountains but we didn't care. As the cameramen spread their cameras and the boys unpacked their tools for the prayer of praise, the sky was fairly cloudy. That's when I took Ferko Hunka and we went to pray together. As we were praying, it began to rain. The boys from LCH and the cameramen had already unloaded everything and only a few minutes of sounding and convicts could be brought there. We walked around the pitch and prayed. After 10 minutes of a constant prayer, it was raining even harder. At that time, the brothers were already covering tools and cameras for protection, but they were not packing them back. We were filled with faith and we didn't stop praying; we even intensified our prayer. Braňo was blowing the shofar, beating the drums and declaring that the storm must recede in the name of Jesus Christ, because we didn't travel 3,500 km with three cars to have it ruined by the devil. And after 5 minutes, when it was raining heavily all around us, the sun began to shine over us.

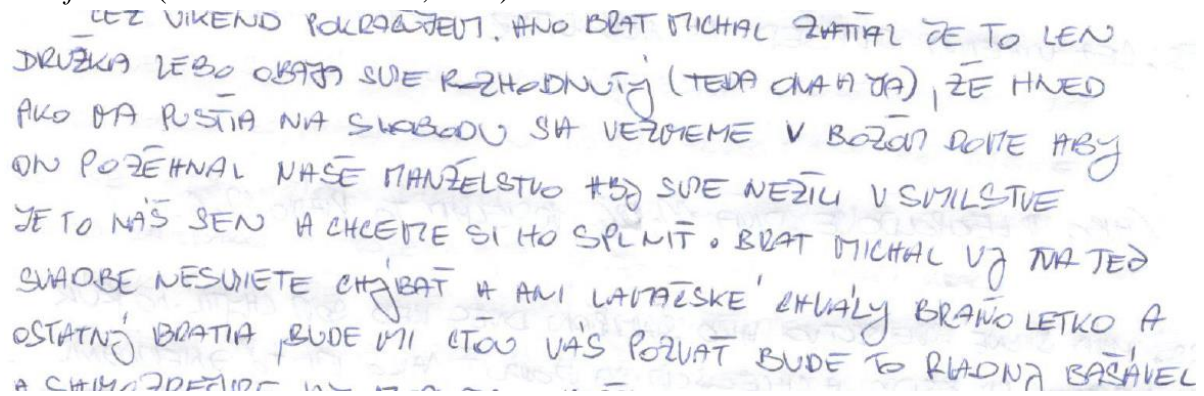


Photo: From the Rýnovice Prison, walking yard after the rain, where the prayer of praise took place. Look at the shadow. That's where the clouds parted and sun began to shine! The photo was taken during a rosary prayer. František Hunka is on the left.

I still remember when I was about to give a second testimony during the prayer of praise, I was stopped by a prison worker and was told that men in prisons think Christians are 'naive'. And as I was about to testify about things Jesus Christ does in prisons, I remembered something that an exorcist had told me and this had something to do with the statement that Christians are naive, so I told the men what had happened during exorcism. Once, as the exorcist was casting out a demon, he found out that he had already cast the demon out of the very same person a few months ago. He asked the demon how it was possible that he had returned. And the demon told him: 'Because they are naive and foolish!' And the men understood who was naive and foolish. You know, I have a T-shirt with the words 'We are crazy for Christ' written on the front (1 Cor 4:10). When two men walked by me, one of them said to the other, 'Did you see the writing on his T-shirt?' The other turned but could only see the back part of the T-shirt with the words: 'Who are YOU crazy for?' And everyone should answer for themselves to this question. I ask the convicts, 'How did

you answer? Did that convict you?’ This is exactly what the convicts face – it is expressed in several parts of the Holy Scripture. When Christ is in the first place in your life, even if they call you crazy, don't argue.

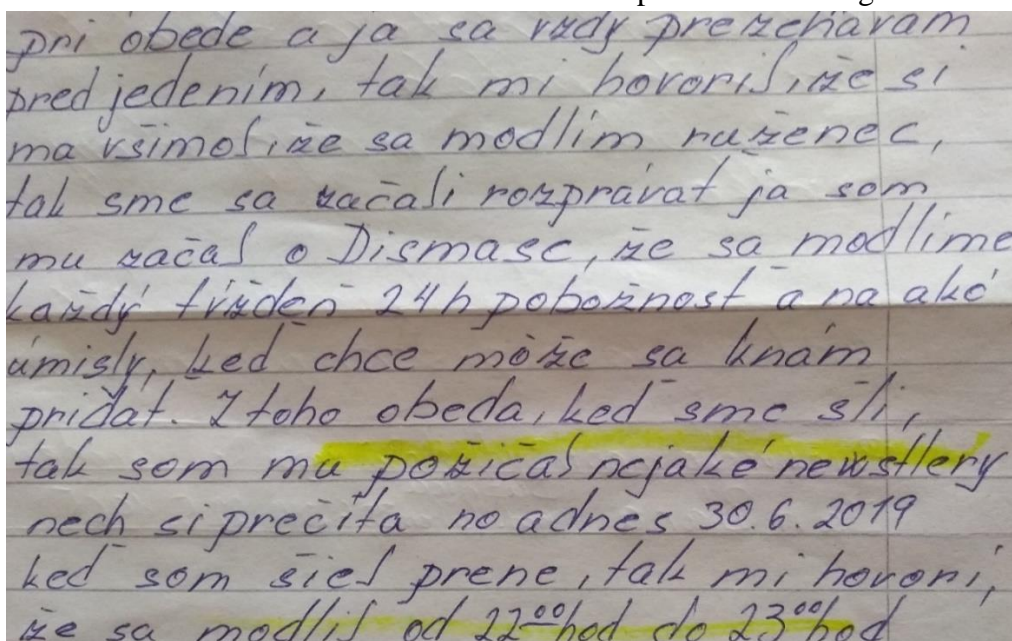
The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18, NLT)



CEZ VIKEND POKRAČAJEM, AHO BRAT MIHAL ZVATIAJ ZE TO LEN
DRUZKA ZEBO OBATA SUE RZHADNUTY (TEDA OMAH JA), ZE HVED
AKO DA RUSTIA NIA SVAODOU SA VEZOME V BOZAN DOITE HBY
ON POZEHNAL NASE MANZELSTVO HBY SUE NEZILU V SIMILSTVE
JE TO NAS SEN A CHCETE SI HO SPLNIT. BRAT MIHAL VJ TAT ED
SVAOBE NESUMETE CHYBAT A ANI LAMAČSKE' CHVALY BRAŇO LETKO A
OSTATNÝ BRATIA BUDE MI ČTOU VAS PORVAT BUDE TO RADA NA BARAVEL
A CHYBAJEDAJEM

Photo: A part of a letter from Gabo, whom we asked about his relationship with the mother of his kids. His answer has quite surprised me. As you may have already read it and as I have also published it in the newsletter, we received an answer from the convict from Hrnčiarovce who said he wanted to live a life with the blessing from our Daddy. He writes that he together with his partner decided to tie the knot in the church after his release from prison. The letter reads: ‘I'll thank him at the weekend. Yes, brother Michal, she is only my partner for now, but we both have decided (meaning me and her) that as soon as I am released, we will get married in the house of God, so that He would bless our marriage, so that we no longer live in fornication. This is our dream and we want to fulfil it. Brother Michal, neither you nor Lámačské Chvály and Braňo Letko and other brothers can't be excluded from the wedding. It will be honour to invite you all. It will be a big party.’

Sometimes we also receive letters from convicts who describe examples of their evangelisation in prison.



pri obede a ja sa vady prezechavam
pred jedenim, tak mi horori, ze si
ma vsimol, ze sa modlim ruzenec,
tak sme sa vacali rozpravat ja som
mu vacal o Dismasc, ze sa modlime
kandy' triden 24h poboznost a na ako
umistly, ked chce moze sa knam
pridat. Z toho obeda, ked sme sli,
tak som mu pozical nejake newslettery
nech si precita no adnes 30.6.2019
ked som siel prene, tak mi horori,
ze sa modlis od 22⁰⁰ hod do 23⁰⁰ hod

Photo: A part of a letter from a convict from Dubnica nad Váhom in which he writes how he crossed himself at lunch and didn't have much time to talk more to a co-convict, so he lent him a few pieces of the newsletter. And then when they met again after some time, the co-convict told him he began to pray.

The letter reads: ‘At lunch, a fellow convict told me that he noticed me always crossing myself before a meal and that he saw me praying the rosary, so we immediately started a conversation. I started talking to him about the community Dismas, I told him that we pray every week a 40-hour worship and what are the intentions, and that if he wants, he can join us. When we were leaving from lunch, I lent him a few pieces of newsletter to read. And today, June 30, 2019, when I went to get them back, he told me that he had been praying since 10.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.’

There are also various incentives for public social events in which they want to participate, even if they can't come there in person. So I wrote and also said in person that the Dismas community was praying and some convicts were also fasting for this beautiful life-saving event.

* ZAROVEN CHCEM VA (VÁŠI) POŽIADATĽI. ORGANIZÁTORI TOHTO POCHOBU INFORMOVAŤ
 SE ZAČIAL SA NA „NETE“ PRIHLÁSILO S MODLITBAMI A POČTOM ZA TOHO
 PODUJATIE OKO 200 ĽUDÍ, A PROSIA, ABY SA PRIHLÁDILI ĎALŠÍ.
~~PREBERTE INICIATÍVA A PRIHLÁDTE NÁS, VEĽ S MODLITBAMI SA PRÍPOJTE~~
~~VEĽCI A VERIAŤ JE AJ POČTOM NÁS BAŽE NAC.~~
 TENTO POCHOD V ZOKNI 2018 PODPORIL A OSOBNĚ POZBRÁVOVAL AJ
 PÁPEŽ FRANTIŠEK.

Photo: A part of a letter from Štefan, who through the newsletter calls other convicts or more precisely all members to pray and fast for the March for Life, which took place on September 22, 2019.

The wording of the letter: ‘I also want to ask you (you all) to inform the organisers of this march that so far about 200 people have supported them and the whole march with prayers and fasting. And they ask others to join. Be active and join, because we all join in prayer and I believe that more of us will fast. Pope Francis also supported and personally blessed and greeted this march.’

I included this in prayers of the Dismas community and I believe that the prayers and fast will bear its fruit.



Photo: A live video on a Facebook page of TV LUX broadcasting testimony about the Dismas at the March for Life in Bratislava on September 22, 2019. In this testimony I also mentioned that the convicts prayed and fasted every day for this event and I also said the testimony about a mother. Up to 50,000 people took part in the March for Life that year.

Testimony of a convict sentenced to life imprisonment: Purity of the body

Let it not be to my praise, but to the praise of the Lord, what he does for me and in me. You know, about my purity! With Jesus, I was able to maintain the purity of my body, and I also asked Anka Kolesárová to intercede for me in this. In past, as a child, I was very much looking for the beauty of women, collecting pictures of nudes, women, girls in underwear. As a kid, I used to tease girls to undress and show what I didn't have, I was a speculator and resourceful, I always made them undress. I'm ashamed of it now, and I'm disgusted. Also, when I grew up, I watched and bought erotic magazines as well as porn tapes, watched them and acted against my body (I did and performed various practices myself, on my own body). Now I know it was the ugliest thing I did. Now I have quit seeking those temporary pleasures and instead, I seek pleasures in the Holy Scripture, in the Savior, God, Father. I have quit seeking the delight of body and world and instead, I seek the Kingdom of Heaven, peace of mind. My own

body was my god (idol) before. Now my heart is wrought with feelings of guilt and betrayal. Even while serving my sentence, I was masturbating, sexually arousing myself by looking at pornographic magazines and going to such perverted sexual appetite in my thoughts. I am ashamed of it because I have offended my Savior, Jesus, who was crucified for these sins of mine fornication, masturbation and sins against the purity of the body was crucified. I have crucified my Saviour which I regret very much now. I'm very sorry and I'm so sorry. I ask him for forgiveness, mercy and thank him for everything, especially for love and for the grace that, despite these sins with which I have offended him, he loves me. Why? Because he loves me so much that he gave his own life for me, he was crucified for me, for a sinner so that I could have an eternal life. Thank you for that as well as for graces which protect me from the sins of the uncleanness of the body. My dear brothers and all those who will read or hear this testimony, also for those who have the same problems that I had, for those who call me whatever at this moment, I want to write only one thing: 'Keeping your body clean is hard, but it's beautiful.' I know this today, but conquering the Kingdom of Heaven is also difficult, and the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the strong, who want to conquer it and be in the communion of the strong - the Saints in eternity. Thank you blessed Anka Kolesárová, because when I turned to her for help, I realised that the purity of my body was already restored and cleansed and I have stopped masturbating. Before, I did it 5-10 times a day. Masturbation became disgusting to me. I started looking at women as sisters and friends, not as an object of masturbation and pleasures. In past, it was impossible for me, because I looked at every woman as a sexual object and immediately undressed her in my mind, and imagined various sexual perversions, and not only with women...! What can I say, dear brothers – friends, sisters and comrades, that Jesus himself speaks of keeping the body clean. Who cannot refrain, let him marry, let her marry, but let him or her be faithful, whoever is called to this calling, let him or her act according to it! And let every man remember the words of Jesus in the Gospel, saying, 'You have heard the commandment that says, "You must not commit adultery. But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."' (Matthew 5: 27-28, NLT)

So, dear brother, admit how many times you have looked at a woman lustfully? And you, sister, what do you say? How many times have you been like this, looking at a guy this way? Confess! You don't have to go public. Just have courage and go to confession, confess, confess it and sin no more. Of course, it's not easy, but those who strive will achieve victory!!! I know what I'm talking about. Even if I must say at the same time what is written in the Scripture,

'If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall.' (1 Corinthians 10:12, NLT)

'God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.' (Romans 5:20, NLT).

At the same time, ask the Lord Jesus for mercy to keep on the path of salvation. I would also like to mention something from the book Leviticus - The Call to Morality (Forbidden Sexual Practices): *'Do not defile yourself by having sexual intercourse with your neighbour's wife.'* (Leviticus 18:20, NLT), and also for today's time, *'Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin.'* (Leviticus 18:22, NLT)

Why am I writing this? I don't know, but I feel I have to write and publish it as a testimony. I was in the sin of impurity of the body. Now I refrain from anything that could tarnish the purity of my body. It is possible with grace and with the help of the Lord Jesus. I asked him to heal my sexuality and I threw all the sins of impurity at the foot of his cross. I asked Blessed Anka Kolesárová for help to intercede for me so that I could keep my body clean. And I'm happy that I no longer want to masturbate and I don't even practice it anymore. Jesus gives me strength and I am grateful for that. I'm not given credit for it. These are the merits of my Savior, Jesus. I just asked him, and he protects me from this abominable sin by his grace.

'Lord, thank you for the purity of body and at the same time I ask You for perseverance to maintain the purity of body, which I want to sacrifice to You. I offer it to you for healing of those who struggle with the sin of impurity. Lord Jesus, I love you! Amen.'

I am also a member of the Dismas, I was almost at its birth, when it began to form in the Leopold Prison. Thanks also to Michal Libant, who invited me to this community and showed me what it's like to be happy even though I'm in prison serving a life sentence. That happiness lies in Love, God is love, Jesus is love and with Jesus, you will overcome everything – you can even maintain the purity of body, which is so beautiful. Let everyone think about it. I say this to you too, dear Christian... And think about what you would like to offer to your Saviour, Jesus. This time start with the purity of body and do not masturbate, do not commit adultery, do not fornicate and do not commit any sin of impurity. I ask you, a prisoner sentenced to life imprisonment, please keep your body clean and give it to Jesus!

Writing this testimony took me a very long time. I wanted to write it before but I was ashamed. It was maybe because of my pride, the devil, or even the fact that my letters are being read. But now this testimony is here, and I wish it will spread further so that everyone can read it. I wish the letter will be read by everyone who is supposed to read it. I leave it all in the hands of God, for this is the praise and glory of Heavenly Father and his resurrected son, Jesus Christ, in union with the Holy Spirit. Testimony of a prisoner sentenced to life imprisonment. 'Penitent Júda from behind bars'. God bless you Róbert Čačko.

Here I publish one contribution in response to this testimony.

A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper. The text is written in cursive and matches the transcription provided in the caption. The paper has horizontal lines and some green highlighting.

Photo: In this letter, the convict responded to the testimony of another member of the Dismas, Róbert from the NL, The testimony of purity of the body. He admits that most of them struggle with it and that he is a great role model for him. He also prophesied that God would open his cell and make him free.

The wording of the letter: 'The life-sentenced convict and the testimony he gave...we all struggle with it. He's a great hero for me and a true Christian, a true Israelite in whom there is no deception! Greet him Miško and tell him that God will also open his cell and make him free!'

To the testimony of purity, I would add just enough that in 2016, the convict took me aside to tell me something in secret: 'Teacher, I want to tell you that I haven't been masturbating for a half a year. Thanks God.' And I will just add that this testimony will either be of encouragement to you if do not struggle with it, or conviction to repent. As it is written in **2 Timothy 3: 16-17**, 'All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.' Amen, brothers and sisters. Amen.

We know that the power of prayer is strong when we pray sincerely and out of love.

A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper. The text is written in cursive and matches the transcription provided in the caption. The paper has horizontal lines and some green highlighting.

Photo: A letter from convicted Tomáš, who, despite being ridiculed, did not stop praying for his fellow prisoners, who after some time received grace and opened themselves up to the Kingdom of God. It was enough to believe that God is greater than their problems. Then they themselves came to him and begged him to teach them to pray and Tomáš lend them the Scripture.

The wording of the letter: 'I am also pleased that the guys who laughed at me for praying for them came after 2-3 months and humbly begged me to teach them to pray or to let them read the Bible or books with religious topics. WAU... Praise the Lord.'

There are also letters that answer the voice of John the Baptist. **Mark 1:15**, He said, 'The time promised by God has come at last!' he announced. 'The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!'

I would still like to stay on the topic of the power of prayer and its impact on our daily lives.

záčína dno som väknom, väknom pre Ježiša kri-
sta. Bol som chorý a prosil som ho o uzdravenie,
o milosť, o odpustenie a zmilovanie, za to čo
som zlého voči iným ľuďom urobil a spôsobil aj
jemu hriechmi, za celý svoj život.

Hlavne som mu povedal svoje "ÁNO";
"Pane ty som, rob so mnou to, čo ukneš za uho-
dne". Vplne som sa mu odovzdal a dôverujem
mu vo všetkom lebo "On" je svetlo a moja spä-
sa. Viem komu som uveril!

Photo: A part of a letter from a convict sentenced to life imprisonment. No comment.

The wording of the letter: 'It begins... yes, I am a prisoner, a prisoner for Jesus Christ. I was sick and begged him for healing, for mercy, for forgiveness and mercy for my sins and the wrong things I have done to other people and to him in my whole life. I mainly said my "YES" to him. Lord, here I am, do with me as you wish. I have completely surrendered to Him and I trust Him in everything, for He is the light and my salvation. I know whom I have believed!'

I would still like to stay on the topic of the power of prayer and its impact on our daily lives.

sa k tomu dôbritejšiemu, s maminou mojou som sa dohodol
, že pôjde do Čiech za mojím synčekom, lebo už to chcela
urobiť viackrát ale vždy sa volalo tá moja bývala teda
matka môjho syna, zatajila alebo, mala nejakú výhovorku
aby tam moja mama nešla. No ale teraz zase nedúchala telefón,
tak sme sa s mojou maminou dohodli, že tam pôjde bez ohlasenia
Tak si objednala hotel už mesiac vopred a teraz 27,28,29 a 30.7.
tam bola v Čiechach, no a v nedeľu 28.07. som jej volal a
dozvedel som sa, že s mojím synom nebola, že jej nechceli ani
otvoriť dvere. Tak som bol stoho naoxaj na nervy (na dne).
Tak som sa celú noc s nedeľou na pondelok aj celé doobedie
počas práce modlil a prosil Pána aby zasiahol svojou
BOŽOU MOCOU a doprial mojej mamine a synčekomu požehnanie
čas ktorý budú tráviť spolu v plnosti lásky a milosti.
No a tak som pondelok 29.7. vyčerpaný a na dne s nervami
išiel zavolať mamine do čiech. A keď mi zdvihla tak mi
hneď oznámila, že už bola s Davidkom mojím synom a, že
si ju hneď obiaľ a vstískal. A že strávili spolu naoxaj

Photo: A part of a letter from Janko, who has a son in the Czech Republic and hasn't seen him for a very long time and has basically no information about him. Probably the only thing he knows about his son is that he is alive and doing well. That's why he wanted his mum to meet his son in person at least once. Well, the champion (the Evil one) always prevented her from doing so; however, they didn't want to leave it to chance, so she travelled without any notice and stayed close to their place. When she knocked on their door, they didn't open. She (the mum of the convict) and Janko (the convict) were calling and Janko was completely broken, helpless, but he began to pray even more. And you already know the result. They met the next day. Praise the Lord! This is our Dad!

The wording of the letter: 'I agreed with my mother that she would go to the Czech Republic to see my son, because she wanted to do it several times, but my ex, my son's mother, always hid or had an excuse for my mom not to go there. Well, she wasn't answering the phone, so my mum and I agreed that she would go there without any notice. So she booked a hotel a month in advance and on July 27, 28, 29 and 30 she stayed in the Czech Republic. On Sunday, July 28, I called her and I learned that she wasn't with my son, that they didn't want to open the door for her. I was really annoyed by it – broken. I was praying all night from Sunday to Monday, all morning during the worktime and begged the Lord to intervene with his God's power and to give my mother and son blessed time together in the fullness of love and grace. On Monday, July 29, exhausted and nervous, I went to call my mother who was in the Czech Republic. When she answered the phone, she immediately informed me that she was already with David – my son and that he immediately hugged her and squeezed her, and that they spent a really beautiful time together.'

Correspondence between members of the community Dismas is sometimes sent to our mailbox and that's where we see how the convicts encourage, thank and ask each other for help. It was also the case for the letter from Štefan.

Štefan bratče môj, idáta sa modlit-
by, (za modlitby za mamku za yey dusu aj
za dcétku Klaudia) idáta aj spoločensťu
Dismas za modlitby všetkých, ktorí sa modli-
li za úmysly. Pán Boh zaplatí.

Photo: A part of a letter for Štefan from another convict. In the first part of the letter, which I didn't publish here because of its size, he writes that his mother had recently died, his brother is in prison and he has no one to arrange a funeral. Threatened that they bury her as a homeless woman – that's why he asked Štefan and the Dismas for a prayer in resolving this problem. Finally, you can read that the Lord arranged the return of his daughter Klaudia and the mother was buried where she chose it herself. All it took was to pray and trust God and his goodness. The wording of the letter: 'Štefan, my brother, thanks for the prayers (for the prayer for my mother, for her soul and for my daughter Klaudia), thanks also to the Dismas community for the prayers of all those who prayed for these intentions. May God repay you.'

I would also like to point out the help of a member Jožko Šiška he provided to other accused and convicted and his big heart to help in the delivery of charity to my wife all over Slovakia. He is the man who serves by taking care of those who are just released and need to find work, accommodation, but also the community. Here is a letter that was sent to the Dismas community.

Uvedomujem si to a aj tak stále verím že
to dokážem seba a hlavne tým ktorý už
teraz POCHYBUJÚ ☺. Toto som ja. Kresťanská
rodina ma naučila. Čo poviem plati. Tak
ako Jožko Šiška keď odchádzal povedal čokoľvek
potrešješ ušavim a pomôzem. Do botky to
cini a stava sa pre mňa vzorom Ježišovo
služobníka a vlastne aj ja tuším byť pre
niekoho, neakého kresťana vzorom. Muslim, že
správi o Jožkovi Šiškovi ☺! Ten človek mi
tak moc pomohol či už tu ako mentálne
tak aj materialne, tak aj mojej maminke doma
a aj sestricke. Bohom tomuto človeku ak si ja

Photo: A part of a letter from Peter. In his letter, he mentions the former accused Jožko Šiška how he showed him the way to the Lord and not only that, but as he left, he told him the thing you must have heard as well as everyone convicted from their so-called friends: 'I will help you with anything you need', but as he mentions below, he did all he promised and even more, he took care of his family, mum and sister. He is a man who has already been in prison and he not only preaches the Gospel, but even more, he lives it in his daily life.

The wording of the letter: 'I am aware of it and I still believe that I can prove it, especially to those who doubt. This is me; the Christian family has taught me that what I say goes. Just like Jožko Šiška, as he left, he said whatever I would need, he would help me with it. What he promised, he performed to perfection and has become a model of Jesus' servant for me. Even I would like to become a role model for a Christian. I think ... about Jožko Šiška! The man has helped me so much, both mentally and materially, he has helped my mum at home and my sister, too. I bless this man!'

As you can see, convicts not only write letters to us, but they also draw and, in this way, they express their perception of faith.

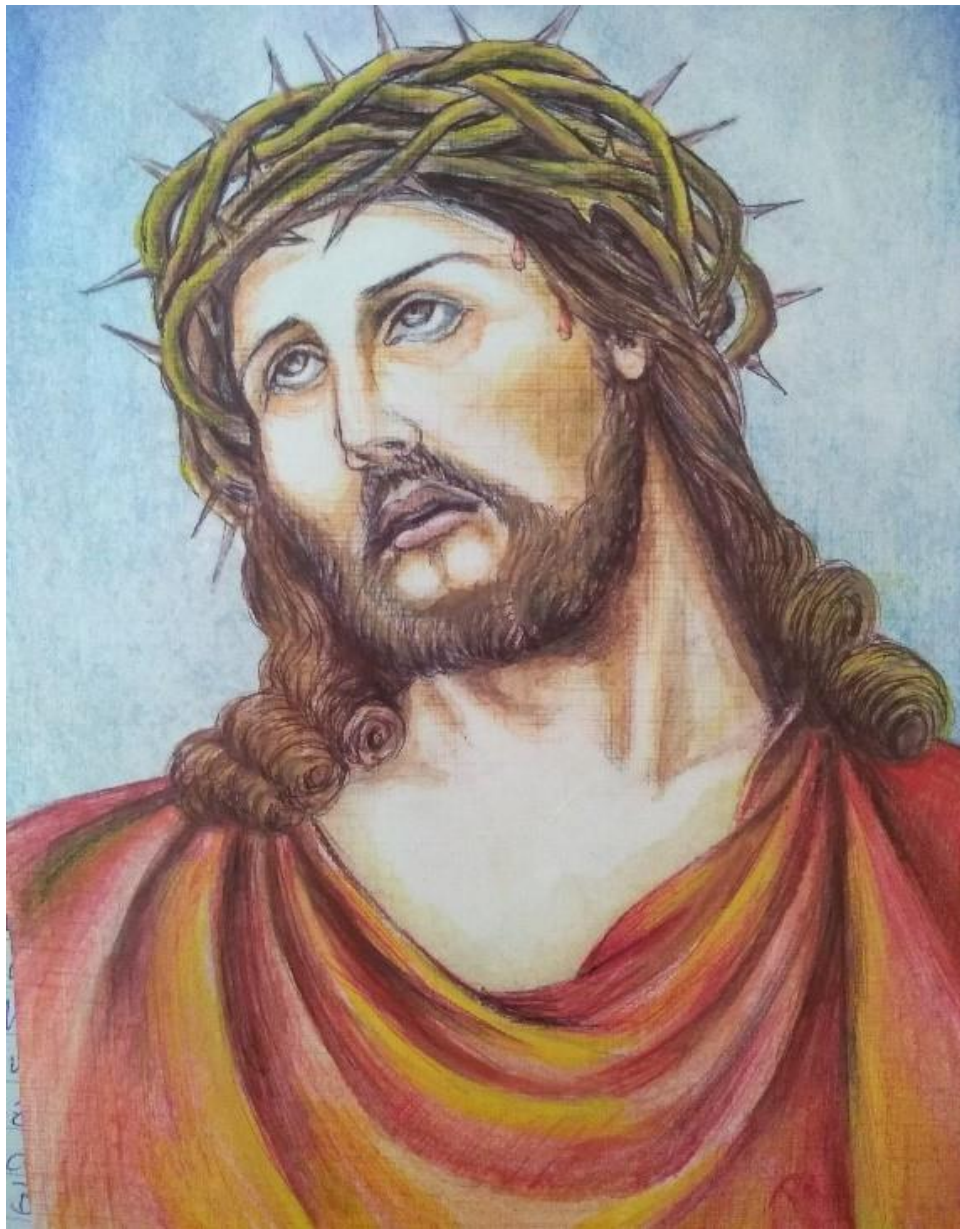


Photo: A drawing from BB-Kráľová, which is painted on paper. Many times, I talk or write to them that Daddy gave them talents which they should use for God's glory and not for the Evil one. I mean, if someone is smart and skilful, instead of using the talents to steal cars, he can use it to do good things to others, for example to help open someone's apartment if the door is jammed. Just doing everything with Christ. As he says: 'Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.' (John 15:5, NLT)

I would like to show you two letters that came to us. We were nicely surprised by the letters, because the convicts write they have found a new family.

vo zbytku rodiny som nami v kontakte, čo som do určitej
 bol, lebo „šampión“ to tam „postrašenie“ a dospel som k
 ktorej, že moja rodina je DISMAS 😊, za čo ďakujem mojemu
 Pánovi 😊.

Photo: A part of a letter from Braňo, who writes at the end of his letter that my family is the Dismas.
 Full text of the letter: 'I'm not in touch with the rest of my family any more, because "the Champion" has "made a huge mess" and I conclude that my family is the Dismas, and I thank our Lord for it.'

JEDNA Z VEĽÍKTORÁMA DRŔÍ... JE AJ TÁ ŽE MÁM SKVEĽÚ RODINU
 KTORÁ DRŔÍ SPOLU A DRUHÁ "V NEŠTASTÍ SPOZMÁŠ SKUTOČNÉHO PRIATEĽA"..
 A JA SOM SPOZMAL TEBA MICHAL, DISMAS, BOHA... **UY STE MOJA RODINA!!**
 ĎAKUJEM VÁM VŠETKÝM ZATO ČO PRE MŇA (NÁS) ROBIETE, ĎAKUJEM
 ŽE SI, ŽE JE DISMAS, SKVEĽÍ ĽUDIA V ŇOM, KTORÍ SA PODIELAJÚ NA JEHO

Photo: A part of a letter from Noro, where he also writes that we are his family. We are really touched by such letters.

Full text of the letter: 'One of the things that keep me.... it's that I have a great family holding together and the second is that "a friend in need is a friend indeed" ... and I have met you Michal, Dismas, God ... you are my family!! Thank you all for what you do for me (us), thank you Dismas and great people who are a part of this community....'

I just add to this letter that if we read the Holy Scripture, we just have to confirm it because our Lord, Jesus Christ, said, 'Look, these are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!' (Matthew 12: 49-50, NLT; also Mark 3:33-35) Amen.



Photo: A drawing from Róbert.

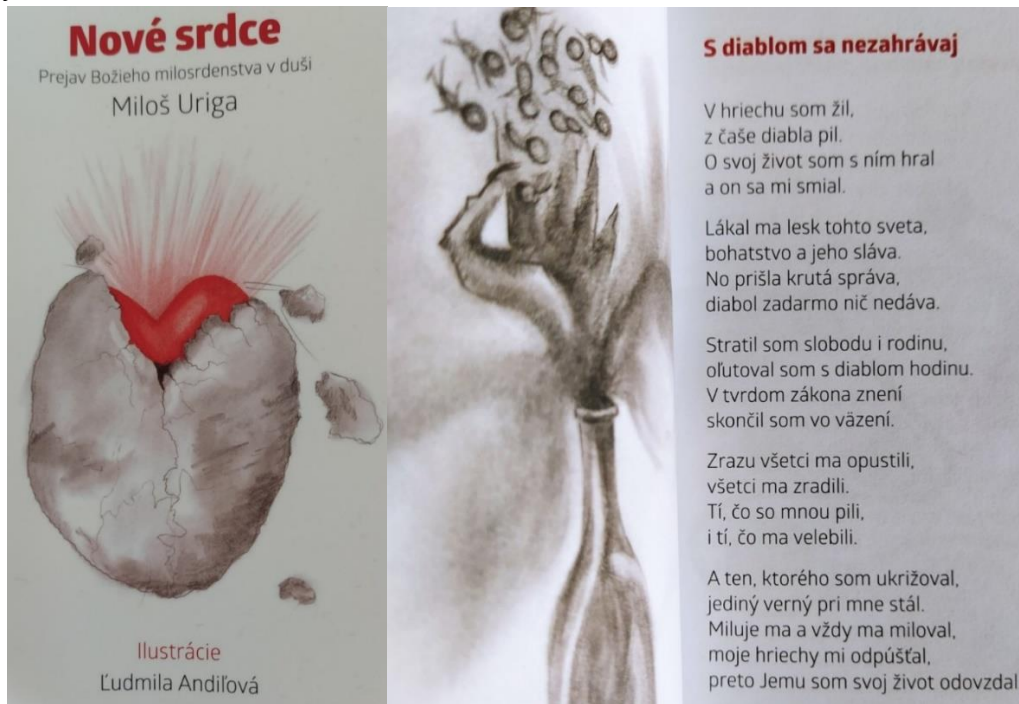


Photo: A collection of poems in the publication 'Nové srdce' (New Heart). Photo: a poem by Miloš U. with the title 'S diablom sa nezahrávaj' (Don't play with the devil):

*'In sin I lived,
from the devil's chalice I sipped.
For my life playing,
while he was laughing.*

*By the lustre I was attracted,
with the wealth and its glory blinded.
Then the cruel news appears,
for free the devil nothing gives.*

*From freedom and family I departed,
the time spent with the devil I regretted.
As by the act amended,
in prison I ended.*

*Suddenly left without anyone,
but betrayed by everyone.
By those who were drinking with me,
by those who were praising me.*

*And the One whom I crucified,
was the only faithful one by my side.
He loves me and has always loved,
my sins He has pardoned,
so I have given my life to Him to be restored.'*



Photo 1: The author of the poem Miloš U., Michal Libant from the DISMAS community and Michal Szabo from the community Čenakolo during evangelisation of prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment.

Photo 2: During another evangelisation of prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment, where I invited Dominik Pecho to the brothers - members behind the prison walls. Dominik was singing and introduced them the main character of a theatre play, a French young man Jacques Fesch who was sentenced to death as a murderer in the middle of the last century. In prison, however, he finds faith in God, also thanks to Saint Therese of Lisieux. Dominik was the one who played this main character in the play called 'Remember me'.

Source: <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cisloclanku=20180328011>

Miloš also likes to draw and his paintings hang on the wall of a specially secured room intended for meeting sentenced for life imprisonment. The room also serves for making rosaries in a project 'Angelic weapon' of the DISMAS community.

Public perception

Our service does not dwell only in visits to convicted, correspondence etc., but we are also invited to various festivals, conferences, lectures and testimonies. You could read about Campfest and March for life on previous pages, but now I would like to mention a meeting of communities from Trnava Archdiocese since I received a letter there.

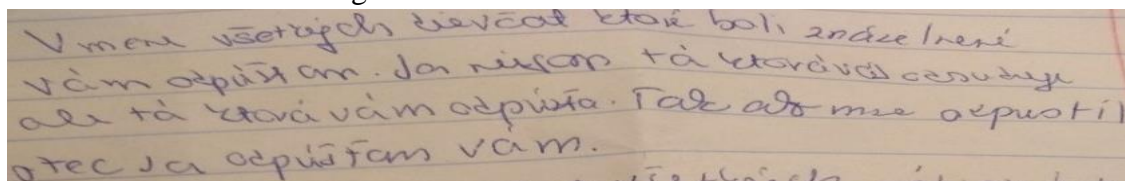


Photo: A part of the letter from Kristina, a young girl from Trnava who made several members of the Dismas community in prison cry.

The wording of the letter: 'On behalf of all girls who have been raped, I forgive you. I'm not the one who condemns you, but the one who forgives you. So as my Father has forgiven me, I forgive you.'

I would like to show you another mail that came to me in 2017.

My name is Ludmila Hunková, mother of František Hunka who was in the Leopold Prison and now is in Hrnčiarovce nad Parnou. This way I want to thank you for my son who has not chosen the best way of life. But thanks God he has decided to change his life and to choose the Lord's path. When I visited him, he was talking very nice things about you. It is weird that a "jailer" (sorry for that expression) can be interested in the souls of those who are punished for their sins. Because many "jailers" treat them as sinners, they behave haughtily and often humiliate them. I know what I am talking about! I just want to thank you again for what you do for them in the Dismas community, too. May the Lord Jesus lead your steps and Virgin Mary hold her protective hand over you and your family. May God repay you. Sincerely, Ludmila Hunková. God be with you.

We receive reactions also on Facebook, so I will provide at least one of them, from a performance on Campfest 2019, where the Dismas community members prayed and blessed families during the performance of Lámačské Chvály.

Najsilnejším momentom pre mňa osobne bolo, keď muž zo spoločenstva Dismas (spoločenstvo obrátených väzňov) žehnal rodinám veľmi láskavými, milými slovami. Slzy mi tiekli ako hrachy, že si Boh dokáže takto premeniť srdcia... don Boscovské slzy.

Photo: A part of a Facebook post of a girl who participated in the mentioned event.

'The strongest moment for me was when a man from the Dismas community (community of converted prisoners) blessed families saying very nice and kind words. Big tears rolled down my face because God can transform hearts like this ... Don Bosco's tears.'



Photo: From Campfest 2019, where all people in this huge tent bless the Dismas community.

We also work regularly on different programmes with the media, as the already mentioned radio Lumen, TV Lux, Slovak Radio and Radio Mária. In 2017, the Ordinariate bishop approached me and asked me if I wouldn't go within the resort of ZVJS (the Judiciary Guards and Prison Wardens Corps) to say something about our Biblical school in Leopoldov and the Dismas community in a documentary of TV LUX called 'Golden pipes', which shows the armed forces. In the documentary, each pipe represents a voice of a Christian in this given resort and we were selected for ZVJS resort or the prison. The documentary has brought a different view on evangelisation service of laity working in the prison, who are given talents and abilities by Jesus Christ to bring light to difficult environments where no one expects it. Now I would continue by saying that shooting the documentary in Leopoldov was really unwanted, unaccepted and if it wasn't the will of the Highest, it would be impossible. But as God's word says where he opens the door, no one can close it, 'What he opens, no one can close' (**Revelation 3:7**, NLT) because Jesus is the 'King of all kings and Lord of all lords' (**Revelation 19:16**, NLT). Anyway, when the superiors learnt there would be a shooting, I was again summoned by them and it became regular, but I praise the Lord because now they don't have excuses. Conditions which were completely different from those expressed by the bishop were given to me. The biggest and most unacceptable condition for all of us was that the shooting had to be without convicted. Well, I want to give a testimony about this condition. I announced the condition to the boys in Biblical school and they were a little disappointed but we went to our knees and prayed. I told them the only thing we could do was to pray and that Daddy is the one who decides even on already decided things. As the day 'D' came, the superiors visited me in the office, and again, they emphasised the conditions on the absence of convicted. I don't know why they repeated it to

me since it was clear and the deputy director for business affairs was also present at the shooting. But of course, I didn't want to provoke and change God's plans, so as I learnt, I got my head down and let them talk since 'the supervisors are always right' (I'm smiling, asking Daddy to bless them). But the superiors imagined that I would tell them something in civilian clothes and then in the uniform (see the photo). They would make a few shots in the prison and then go home. They came to the castle (prison), which is the most guarded object in Slovakia since there are high security prisoners and life-sentenced, to be precise, to the chapel that has been created from a cell (see the photo TV LUX on the first page) because it was previously a chapel. They have made it an exchanger station - it's unbelievable how the 'Monkey' (the Devil) was attacking. Thus, the shooting team from TV LUX came and we started talking and then I felt a supernatural courage as last time in the testimony from NL No. 43. Unexpectedly, the Director of the Prison changed his decision and the signed conditions where only 50 convicts from medium security prison should have been, ended up that Jesus Christ said it would be different and, in the end, there were about 70 convicts from a high security prison (including DS 'C') 50 convicts from a medium security prison and even 27 accused, plus camera shooting the entire prison. As the Scripture says, 'Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!"' (John 12:19, NLT) Well, the courage made me go to the deputy director and ask him if a few convicted from the Biblical school could come and play so that it would be more real. And he said 'yes'. My reaction was incredible gratitude to Daddy and immediately we called the boys to come and join us. The boys were excited, singing and celebrating the One who made it possible, Jesus. I would also clarify the information on the chapel; since about 70 years ago, holy masses took place in a local church of saint Leopold, which was demolished by the Communists after 1950. I can share with you that I received a call from a bishop Rábek who told me about the planned rebuilding of the church in the Leopoldov Prison. Let's pray for it. Thank you.



Photo: From the Leopoldov Prison and Detention during shooting the documentary 'Golden pipes' for TV LUX.

A word I would like to say to conclude it is that still more often I perceive that everything is about returning to God's path, on the path we have lost. Our Daddy is still calling us and it doesn't matter where you are right now or what your occupation is. Be blessed.

Regards,

Capt. v.v. Mgr. Michal Libant

Acolyte of The Military Ordinariate of Slovakia, founder and leader of the Slovak-Czech prison community DISMAS

Note: Most of the information mentioned here is also in a book 'Crisis - what about it?' (Soňa Vancáková at al.) (see the photo)

GOD BLESS YOU! +

