

# ADEODATUS

A Christian Ministry to the Forgotten



## VOICES FROM PRISON AND THE EDGE...

Quarterly Journal No. 19  
Winter 2015

"For what God is still doing in my life,  
I know that He forgives me.  
Can you forgive me Fr. Paul?"



Greetings in the New Year! Our theme this quarter is REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS. An inmate I know, "Gil," wrote the above words to me in a letter, and they jolted me, challenged me. *Can I forgive him? Do I?* He killed his own child. Read on to see his letter and the questions he raises. Fr. Paul Morrissey O.S.A.

Who are we?

Where do we meet?

We are Adeodatus, a support group for ex-inmates and anyone who cares about their reintegration into society. We also attempt to give spiritual support to the addicted and people whose struggle has brought them to the edge. We meet on Thursday nights (7:30 to 9:00 P.M.). On the first Thursday of the month, we meet at the Bevilacqua Center at Kensington and Lehigh Aves. On all other Thursdays we meet at St. Rita of Cascia rectory, 1166 S. Broad St. Through prayer, the Gospel and Christian fellowship we offer strength to meet the challenges of life in this world. Donations can be sent to:

**ADROP**

Augustinian Defenders  
of the Rights of the Poor  
Adeodatus Prison Ministry  
2130 S 21 St. Phila. Pa., 19145

George Munyan  
Administrator and Newsletter Editor  
215 925 3566  
gmunyan@rightsofthepoor.org

"I was in prison and you visited me."  
Mathew 25:36

## LETTER FROM GIL



*"Dear Father Paul,*

*I pray you are okay! You haven't written me yet, and you've been on my mind. Are you upset with me or something?*

*I know the case was bad, but it happened like I told you, and not like the way they made it seem. I didn't mean it Father; that was not me. But I am accountable to God for being careless with my drug and alcohol use, also my feelings. I do not have disregard for the sacredness of life. It was my child Father Paul, and I love my children.*

*God loves me Father Paul, and I love Him. I told the truth and that's all I could do. It's in God's hands now."*



**"SO LORD, THERE IS NO REPENTANCE ALLOWED?" THIS 'PRAYER' CAME TO ME AS I SAT IN A COURTROOM LAST WEEK AND HEARD THE JUDGE SENTENCE THIS 'GODSON' OF MINE TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE. I HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW THIS MAN—CALL HIM 'GIL'—OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS AS I VISITED HIM IN THE PHILADELPHIA PRISON. I HAVE WITNESSED HIS GENUINE REMORSE FOR KILLING HIS OWN CHILD IN A DRUNKEN 'OUT OF HIS MIND' STATE. HORRIBLE, YES. A DEATH THAT CRIES TO GOD FOR VENGEANCE? YES, MOST WOULD AGREE. YET, YET. .. I HAVE HEARD GIL EXPRESS HIS HEART-FELT REMORSE (AND HORROR) THAT HE DID SUCH A THING, AND TO AN INNOCENT CHILD—HIS OWN CHILD! NOT INTENTIONALLY, HE PLEADED, AS FIRST DEGREE MURDER REQUIRES, BUT THAT WAS NOT ACCEPTED. THE CHILD WAS ON EVERYONE'S MIND AS HE WAS SENTENCED, OF COURSE.**

**BUT GIL'S WORDS AS HE SPOKE TO ME BEFORE AND AFTER THE SENTENCE SHOW A GLIMPSE AT HIS SOUL: "WHATEVER GOD WILLS, I ACCEPT," HE TOLD ME. SO HE WILL BEGIN SERVING HIS SENTENCE THIS WEEK—"LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE." THIS MAKES ME THINK OF ALL THOSE SENTENCED TO THIS PUNISHMENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA WHERE SUCH A SENTENCE MEANS EXACTLY THAT: NO CHANCE OF PAROLE EVER, NO CHANCE OF REHABILITATION.**

**SO, I ASK GOD, AND WHOMEVER MAY READ THIS— "NO REPENTANCE ALLOWED?" BY AGREEING TO SUCH SENTENCES, WE CITIZENS, MANY OF US CHRISTIANS, SAY TO GOD: "NO, THERE IS NO REPENTANCE ALLOWED, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR SON SAID. NO ONE CAN EVER CHANGE. NO ONE CAN EVER SERVE TIME—20, 30, 40 YEARS PERHAPS—AND BE JUDGED CHANGED IN HEART AND MIND ENOUGH TO RELEASE HIM OR HER BACK INTO SOCIETY.**

**I THINK OF GIL (IN HIS EARLY FORTIES) IN HIS CELL AS I ALSO THINK OF HIS CHILD. WILL ANY PUNISHMENT BRING BACK HIS CHILD? WILL ALL THOSE YEARS AHEAD ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING? "WHATEVER GOD WILLS," YES. BUT WHAT DOES GOD WILL? IS THERE NO REPENTANCE ALLOWED IN OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND BEFORE GOD?**





## LETTER FROM GIL

(CONTINUED)

*" I JUST WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU, TO KNOW IF YOU ARE OKAY OR NOT. I MISS YOU FATHER PAUL.*

*THIS IS ME: ONE DAY JESUS WENT TO THE PHARISEE'S HOME FOR DINNER. WHEN A WOMAN, IN MY CASE A MAN, WHO HAD LIVED A SINFUL LIFE LEARNED THAT JESUS WAS THERE. SO SHE BROUGHT AN ALABASTER JAR OF PERFUME, AND AS SHE STOOD BEHIND HIM AT HIS FEET WEeping, SHE BEGAN TO WET HIS FEET WITH HER TEARS.*

*WHEN THE PHARISEE SAW THIS, HE SAID TO HIMSELF, " IF THIS MAN WERE A PROPHET, HE WOULD KNOW WHO IS TOUCHING HIM . . . A SINNER." JESUS ANSWERED HIM, " TWO MEN OWED MONEY TO A CERTAIN MONEY LENDER, ONE 500 DENARIII AND TO THE OTHER 50. NEITHER HAD THE MONEY TO PAY HIM BACK, SO HE CANCELLED THE DEBTS OF BOTH. NOW WHICH OF THEM WILL LOVE HIM MORE?" SIMON REPLIED, "I SUPPOSE THE ONE WHO HAD THE BIGGER DEBT CANCELLED." "YOU HAVE JUDGED CORRECTLY" JESUS SAID.*

*NOW BECAUSE THE WEEPING WOMEN SHOWED HOW MUCH SHE LOVED HIM, LIKE I LOVE HIM, JESUS SAID "THEREFORE, I TELL YOU, YOUR SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, FOR YOU LOVED SO MUCH. BUT HE WHO HAS BEEN FORGIVEN LITTLE, LOVES LITTLE."*

*FATHER PAUL, FOR WHAT GOD IS STILL DOING IN MY LIFE, I KNOW HE FORGIVES ME. CAN YOU FORGIVE ME FR. PAUL? I LOVE YOU AND MISS YOU.*

*YOUR SON,*

*GIL*

*P.S. DO YOU WANT ME TO STOP WRITING YOU? PLEASE LET ME KNOW.*



## THOUGHTS FROM THE EDGE

BY GEORGE MUNYAN

Self control. When I was six years old and received my first report card there was a grade category for Self Control, and I had no idea what it meant. I got a B grade. As we got older Sister would order the class to "control yourselves". What was happening here was one of the most important lesson of life a child could have, how to control yourself and not have the worst of the world control you. In our prison ministry it is the essential foundation for recovery from prison and addictions. Until it is achieved we see the sad continual cycle of troubled souls leaving and returning to prison until they finally see prison as the normal, the comfortable, the control they cannot create for themselves. It becomes home.

Full of sorrow they have wept before us, written off as hopeless by their families. Their freedom from prison is imperiled by the world they return to. It is a world of costly addictions which demand daily feedings. It is a world eager to receive, devastate and return these tormented ones back to prison. Adeodatus exists to rescue those out of control, former inmates or just the addicted who have yet to go to prison. Through prayer and mutual sharing of life's struggle, we try to give them rest, support and direction as they seek "self control". A grading category to a confused six year old was one of the secrets of a good life. Indeed Jesus has told us "I am the way, the truth and the life" . John 14:5 At Adeodatus all of us seek to follow those words.



## **MARY MOTHER OF CAPTIVES**

BY SUE AND JOHN KILLEEN

Are you trying to cope with a loved one in prison, on trial or about to be sentenced to prison? Do you know anyone who has loved ones in prison? Join us.

**First Thursday (7:00 PM)**

**St. Cyprian**

**Parish Hall**

**501 Cobbs Creek Pkwy**

**Phila, PA 19143**

**484-432-5695 (Sue)**

**[Susan\\_MMOC@comcast.net](mailto:Susan_MMOC@comcast.net)**

**610-259-3178 (John)**

**Second Thursday (7:00 PM)**

**St. Charles Borromeo**

**Parish Meeting Room**

**3407 Dennison Ave.**

**Drexel Hill, PA 19026**

**610-626-2304 / 484-620-1586**

**[Maryann4582@yahoo.com](mailto:Maryann4582@yahoo.com)**

**484-432-5695 (Sue)**

**Third Wednesday (7:00 PM)**

**St. Francis de Sales**

**Bishop Shea Meeting Room**

**4625 Springfield Ave**

**Phila. PA 19143**

**484-432-5695 (Sue)**

**[Susan\\_MMOC@comcast.net](mailto:Susan_MMOC@comcast.net)**

**610-259-3178 (John)**

Mail call, for many inmates is their only connection with the outside world. Many in prison are cut off and abandoned by their family members. They feel isolated, lonely and forgotten by the world. Thanks to the volunteers of Mary Mother of Captives Pen Pal Program, inmates now have an outside connection, someone who cares. This program, initiated 12 years ago by Jack and Sophie Weber, continues to grow. As of today, there are over 550 inmates in 176 prisons across the United States receiving mail from 376 volunteer writers. Would you like to help? Volunteer writers are needed. It only takes a few minutes a month to brighten the day of those living in the shadows. Most importantly, anonymity is guaranteed. For more information contact us at [susan\\_MMOC@comcast.net](mailto:susan_MMOC@comcast.net) or 610-259-3178.

