



The Insider

A quarterly publication from The Saints Prison Ministry

Winter 2024

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Crusade News!

While most of us were looking toward the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays to close out 2023, two of our teams took to the road to share the Good News with men who needed encouragement. In the process, they set the standard for annual crusades for both teams in the future.

In November, the Saints Prison Ministry's NJ soccer team boarded a flight to South Georgia - the first time this team ever left the NE part of the country. While softball crusades might report 12-15 games at the end of the trip, soccer is a VERY different experience. Our men played four soccer games in two days - the last two games in a steady rain! They ended the crusade with a won-lost record of 2-2, but that wasn't why they flew 800 miles.

Given the opportunity to share the Gospel message three times, they did so boldly and unapologetically, resulting in 24 men making the life-changing decision to put their trust in Jesus Christ! They also distributed 100 Gospels of John, a tool the Holy Spirit will use for weeks, months and years to come.

One month later, with Christmas and all its trappings just weeks away, the softball team from Landmark Church (Ocean City, NJ) set aside all the distractions to join with SPM in the Church-

Crusade Partnership. This 5-day trip to South Florida was planned months before a major storm charted its course for the very same area, but the team was undaunted and arrived as scheduled, ready to do battle for the Kingdom.

The weather became a large part of the story of this crusade, but in a unique way. This story wasn't about playing in the rain; it was about getting completely rained out on the final day... and being grateful for it! The final day in Florida was supposed to be multiple games and lunch with the inmates. Instead, it became multiple chapel services, a tour of the facility, and almost an hour spent with the Warden as she outlined her vision for the prison. As an added bonus, this team is now in the record books for being the first SPM athletic team to sing Christmas carols in prison!

The results of this crusade - in the midst of a serious storm that dominated the news - were 56 professions of faith and more than 500 Gospels of John distributed. The Landmark Church MAs carried themselves as proven veterans and God used them in a mighty way. They are already discussing the next crusade opportunity with the anticipation of... a kid at Christmas!

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Georgia's Heartland Soccer Crusade 2023 Results

Facility	Attended	Stayed for Gospel	Gospels Distributed	Total Cards Collected	Professions of faith	Games Played
Riverbend CF #1	37	37	37	36	8	0-1
Riverbend CF #2	49	44	23	23	4	0-1
Jenkins CF	50	37	40	28	12	2-0
TOTALS	136	118	100	87	24	2-2

The Inside Story

An Inmate Speaks Up

You have read many times that the Saints Prison Ministry is appreciated by inmates, officers, and administration. You may have read letters to the ministry, written by inmates, thanking us for coming. But recently we received a letter unlike anything this ministry has ever seen before! We were copied on a letter written from an inmate at the Federal prison in Terre Haute, IN - a letter he wrote to the Warden!

Warden Kallis,

While I realize this letter may be atypical coming from an inmate, I feel the need to express my gratitude for the action of your staff this weekend.

The Saints Prison Ministry had a scheduled softball game between them and the inmates, to take place at 1300 hours. Upon their arrival, they were informed that the game had been canceled due to events that had occurred at the FCI. It should be noted that they drove over two hours to get here. As they began to load their equipment back into the vehicles, your officers were persistent in making contact with a supervisor, who ultimately granted the game to be played.

Due to the actions of B. Reese (Recreation Director), J. Skinner, and C. Howell, the game was not only salvaged

but several of the inmates re-dedicated their lives to the Lord! Unfortunately, Teat Terre Haute lost that day 26-12.

Officer Reese indicated to us that it had been 10 years since a game by outside players had been allowed to occur against the inmates! It is my hope that the Administration will continue to allow outside ministries to spread the Word of Jesus Christ, as it was a moving moment to see fellow inmates re-dedicate themselves. If not for the persistence of your staff, this would not have happened.

While I hope this becomes an annual event, I also hope for a victory for Terre haute next year!

How humbling! To see that an inmate was so moved by a visit from our team that he would take the time and resources to write a letter encouraging the Warden to "keep up the good work." He also copied not only us, but also the Director of the Bureau of Prisons!

We know God works through our missionary-athletes every time they set foot on the field, court, or pitch. This only serves to remind us that we don't know how He is working each time - and for that reason we will continue to answer every invitation to the best of our ability and make every trip we have scheduled, regardless of circumstances. Praise God, His ways are clearly higher than our ways!

Crusade News!

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Lake Okeechobee Crusade 2023 Results

Facility	Attended	Stayed for		Gospels Distributed	Total Cards Collected	Professions of faith	Games Played
		Gospel					
Charlotte CI	50	50		50	48	10	1-0
SFRC	53	53		46	46	12	2-0
Everglades CI	150	35		132	54	9	0-1
Moore Haven CF AM chapel	70	70		70	41	7	none
Moore Haven CF lunch	32	32		13	13	1	none
Moore Haven CF PM chapel	20	20		20	20	3	none
South Bay CF AM	200	100		181	84	14	1-0
TOTALS	575	360		512	306	56	



FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Correspondence from behind the walls

I appreciate you all so much for never forgetting to send me great Gospel and birthday greetings every year. Thank you all so much for remembering. Hopefully, God continues to bless and grow your ministry with further outreach. Please continue to pray for men behind the gates, for reform, rehabilitation, and reintegration. I am here at SCI right now. I met your ministry at CCI while I was on the institution basketball team. Hopefully, at some point you all visit here. I will continue to pray for your ministry team. Thanks again for never forgetting to say Happy Birthday!

- Cameron Y.

How are my friends doing today? It is my profoundest wish that the warmth of this letter reaches you in the best of health, as well as a wonderful Spirit. Well I'm blessed, too blessed to be stressed. I'm taking this time to drop my friends a few lines of love and concern. To thank you all for thinking of me during my special time of year, my birthday. I want you to know and I understand that I really do appreciate the birthday card. I also would like you to have me in your prayers with a special request that I'm released from prison this year. I do have a lot of favor in my release this year. Hopefully, it's God will because His will is most important. I pray that the heavenly Father would continue to bless you all.

- Arthur N.

I am truly thankful for all God has delivered me through and I try my best to be a good steward with my talents, time and treasures. When this letter arrived, I was also being advised of my pending release date, a double blessing indeed. The Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead lives in me. This I know from my faith and the trials and tribulation I've endured for the last 30 years. Even though I am guilty, I wasn't always thankful for my journey. Below is a poem that identifies my truth, struggle and rebirth.

- Tyrone D.

Thank God for your Problems
by Tyrone D.

Thank God for your problems
For that's where blessings hide.
In the midst of trouble,
An answer - tucked inside.

Problems are only blessings,
Turned from inside out.
Do not get discouraged,
Do not begin to doubt.

For the Lord does His best work,
When all hope is gone.
It's when you are at your weakest,
That He will make you strong.

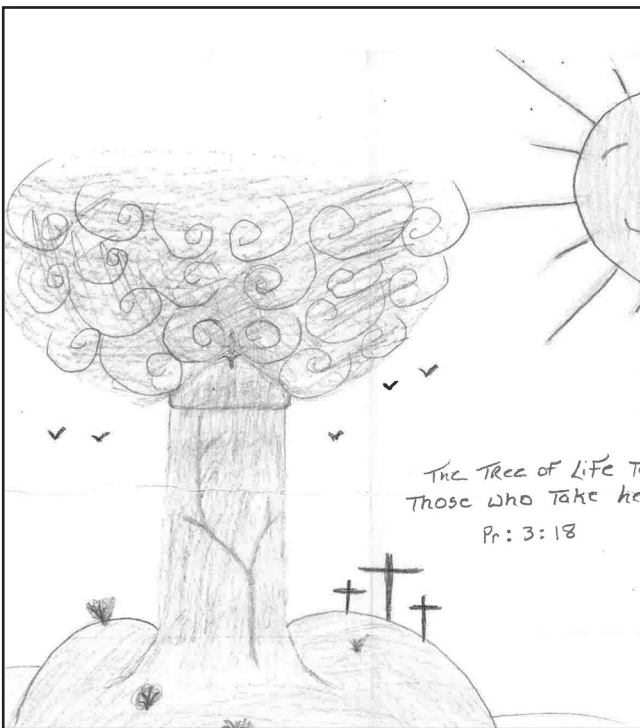
You know you're walking with the Lord,
When trouble comes your way.
For the devils mighty mad,
And would like your faith to sway.

But troubles are a sign post,
God's working in our lives.
It's then he shapes and molds us,
To be just like Christ.

He may not take the prickly thorn,
From beneath our flesh.
But his grace is sufficient,
To see us through the test.

Just hold on through the darkness,
Then the light will come.
It's only after the struggle,
That the victory is won.

Yes, problems are only blessings,
Clothed in dark array.
Thank God for your problems,
For a blessing is on the way.



Richard T.

*The Tree of Life to
Those who take heed
Pr: 3:18*



Inside the Mind of Gibby

The Benefits of Injury

By Tom Gibson, IL Saints Softball Coach

“Why Getting Hurt on a Crusade is AWESOME!”

For those of you who don't know, I tore my Achilles tendon a few months ago on our Crusade to New Mexico. I am making some progress in my recovery but one thing that is often overlooked is all of the great stuff that happens when you get hurt while on a trip! Here are three perks to being an injured member of the Saints Prison Ministry:

Benefit #1- No one can blame you when the team isn't winning

When playing softball, it is a terrible feeling when you make an error on a play that should have ended the inning. That feeling gets worse when the opposing team continues to pile up runs while your team is desperately trying to find that third out. That feeling is even more terrible when the coach is staring you down from across the field because this bad inning is all your fault. If you are injured, and on the bench, you can relax because this is no longer your problem! While the team was out there trying to get that third out, I got to use that time on the bench to stare off into space, get caught up on thank you notes, and do my favorite crossword puzzle. It is also a good reminder to the team that softball is a team sport, and no one can play that bad all by themselves...

Benefit #2- All of the comparisons to Aaron Rodgers

NFL quarterback Aaron Rodgers and I have more in common than phenomenal facial hair and our popularity in the Midwest. Approximately three weeks before I got hurt, Rodgers also tore his Achilles. By the time I got back from the emergency room, our Saints team was already making Aaron Rodgers comparisons. Any time that he was seen on television playing catch on the sidelines while on crutches, I got a text from my teammates wondering when

I would be playing catch. Any time that Joe Buck brings up Rodgers' speedy recovery on a Monday Night Football game, I get a text from my teammates wondering if I'm up and walking around yet. While Rodgers is likely to hit the field before I do, it was fun to share his injury and recovery from a distance. Now if I can just figure out a way to share in his \$75 million contract!

Benefit #3- Navigating logistics

Hopping around on one foot with crutches does tend to foul up the normal day-to-day routine in general, but it seems compounded when on a trip. Getting in and out of vehicles and ordering food proved to be challenging when I was first injured. Of course, when on a Saints Crusade, I had people that offered to do that for me! Need help getting back into the van...get a teammate! Need a drink refill...get a teammate! Need help going through airport security...get a teammate! *Please note for future applications, the sympathy of your teammates has a limit and exceeding that limit usually results in being left in the middle of a parking lot in the rain or having to crutch between terminals at an airport by yourself!

While I'm looking forward to getting back on the field, being injured has tons of advantages too. If I had known all this earlier, I would have torn this thing years ago!

Pen Pals Needed

You can fill a volunteer need right from the comfort of your home!

Right now we have more than 100 men and women on our waiting list - many of whom write to us just to remind us to keep them on the list! Please do not make them wait any longer!

For more information, including the Pen Pal guidelines and expectations, please contact the Saints office at 609-845-3197 or office@saintsprisonministry.org

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