

What has Orthodox Christian Ministry meant to me?

A letter from an inmate

Nov 24, 2015



St Joseph the All Comely Texas Prison Ministry

We turn Eeyores into Tiggers!

Introduction

I am speaking soon at an Orthodox youth conference ([St Herman's Youth Conference, Dec 28-Jan 1](#))¹ - on Prison Ministry, and I asked the men I see to tell me something about how our humble ministry has affected them. I intend to read some of their responses to the youth. I was, as the Fathers no doubt never said, "blown away" by this letter. This person, whom I know very well, has gone through many positive changes, and I joke with him that he was gone from a cynical "Eeyore" to at least half of a "Tigger". I am not telling tales out of school here, because he is happy to tell anyone who will listen how his attitude has changed.

I sometimes have attitude problems too. I get tired of the grind of prison ministry, and sometimes wonder if I am making much difference. Of course, this is just a "stupid human trick". I keep on getting up at 3am on Wednesdays and rolling down the highway, but I am not always a "Tigger" about it. Letters like this help me immensely.

I thought I would share it with you, since he knows it will be made public, and to encourage you, and (full disclosure) to encourage everyone to consider donating to our ministry, which costs about a thousand dollars a month in travel, books, and postage. We recently bought \$750.00 worth of books and prayer ropes for the inmates. If you want to help our ongoing needs, or give any donation, please contact me at (Priest seraphim), seraphim@orthodox.net. An always out of date description of our fast changing ministry (with a Pay Pal donate button) is at: <http://www.orthodox.net/ministries/orthodox-prison-ministry.html>

Re: thankfulness

Thank you again for your tireless love and devotion for all of us who are incarcerated.

Seldom do I feel the true love of our God in this place, so it is such a joy to know I am loved when I am at the Orthodox services. Although I'm not Orthodox, I enjoy your service more than any other because God is real to me when I am there. You ask us today to write how Orthodox service has

affected us individually so that you can share it with your prison ministry youth talk. This is weighed heavily on me since you left, because of the importance.

First and foremost, I expect others will say that the youth should learn from their past mistakes because this is not a place to spend their lives. I will not. I was one of those youth who was told by many others to not follow in their footsteps and this caused me to go down paths that I had to travel to become who I am today. I am NOT saying to ignore good advice, but we all have to choose our paths in life. It is the outcome of those choices that determines our destiny.

For me, my destiny was to come here prison so that I could see the love of God. My whole life I could not feel or understand what love was. I rarely felt I was loved by my parents, so I thought to gain attention from anyone, usually in a negative way. Coming in and out of prisons across the country (One state, another state, and now Texas) was the result of my acting out.

I am now 50(something) years old with no children. I have felt for years that I would die alone and that was the end of things. Today, although I still struggle with everyday things in life, I know that I am loved by God. I am NOT alone. I sought Him out. He has always been there. Some say that my life is hopeless. I have said it for years. So be it. I have made the choices in life and now face the consequences of those choices. The difference now is that I know I am loved and God is never going to leave me alone. Because I finally realize this, I surround myself with those who God sends my way for comfort.

It is for this reason and many others, that I continue to attend the Orthodox service. I see God in everything that you say and do and I can now see that God has wanted me for what God has wanted for me my whole life. PEACE. Thank you for always being you, and sharing the love of God constantly in both word indeed.

May God's will be done through our humble prayers always.

In his perfect love, N

http://www.orthodox.net/full-voice/prison-ministry-visits_2015-12-04-letter-from-inmate+how-has-orthodox-prison-ministry-affected-me.doc

- i Info about the St Herman's Youth Conference, 2015 (in McKinney, TX)
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1__AYJUJNwhWjVlfo-MHt0o940VzCrJ8YWACYQvRvZxM/viewform?c=0&w=1