

Compassion

Written by Death-Row Prisoners

HELPING PRISONERS ON DEATH ROW LIVE CONNECTED AND FRUITFUL LIVES

140 W. South Boundary Street | Perrysburg, OH 43551

July 2020 | Vol. 25 | Issue 115 (Bi-monthly)

Publishing compassionate and introspective articles written by death-row prisoners.

Don't Be Late

When all is gone

When time stands still

When all in life seems uphill

Don't give up

Stand and fight!

A little prayer won't hurt,

It will make things right.

If you know you've sinned

Ask God to forgive

And if it's not too late

A peaceful life you'll live

Don't waste time!

Start saying your prayers today

Asking God to stand before you

Because Satan is running astray



Antonio L. Doyle
Nevada Death Row
Ely, NV

www.compassionondeathrow.net

Repair Broken Bridges Out of the Ruined Relationships

Isaiah 58:12 "Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings."

Some guys feel like their lives suck and they have failed beyond ever being repaired and that they belong on death row living amongst demons and the unspiritual dead just like Legion in the New Testament (Luke 8:26-39). They become as dead men and women who have given up all hope of ever being repaired. So they remain unsaved broken people as broken down bridges unrepaired, lying down in the ruins. Until they meet Jesus Christ face to face as Legion once did.

Am I afraid of what I've found in the dark recesses of their ruined broken lives, minds, and lost unspiritual dead souls? Sure I am troubled within from time to time. Just like our Lord Jesus Christ before he was condemned to death, (Mark 14:33-36) and in John 11:17-44 before Jesus raised Lazarus from his death, Jesus saw Mary weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping and he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

But one must keep in mind sitting still in the darkness of another person's ruins with them can become at times overwhelming, hard, challenging,

sorrowful, distressful, fearful, and greatly troublesome. While shifting through one's own ruins as Job did when Job's three companions Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar came to mourn with Job and comfort him. "When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him because they saw how great his suffering was." (Job 2:12-13)

I've learned to be more patient and longsuffering, to be more humble in spirit, and to pay more attention to their hurts, sorrows, disappointments, and rejections. They stop believing in God, stop trusting in others and themselves, and become like dead men and women who are just a set of bones or clouds without rain. They go insane, beyond the point of return. It is sad, but it is true.

But being in their ruin and being silent beside them, I hear the voices of my own silences speaking. As I feel Christ's inspiration flowing deeper into my own contemplative spirit, we become one – my companion and I – and I realize that I am not alone. I begin to clearly comprehend how connected I am

Continues on page 2

ATTENTION ALL ARTISTS!

We are soliciting your work for **Compassion's 2020 Calendar**. It may be in any medium – pencil, water color, pastel, crayon or paint. Be sure that it is at least the size of a sheet of typing or notebook paper. Otherwise, when it gets enlarged, the detail blurs and it loses all its sharpness of detail.

This year, we also ask that you send with it a sentence or two. It may be about your artistic creation – what inspired it – or just a statement you'd like to share. We think this would make the calendar even more attractive to buyers.

DEADLINE: THE END OF AUGUST

But feel free to send at any time before then. And thank you!



Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor are welcomed from all prisoners (this includes non-death row prisoners) and the outside community.

In submitting letters, we ask that compassionate and introspective guidelines apply to your communications.

Limit size to 400 words or less. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations.

SEND ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO:

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PLEASE NOTE: Any opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individuals writing them and not of Compassion or other staff members. Anything death row prisoners write may jeopardize their future appeals. This may limit the scope of their expressions.

All stories are subject to editing for grammar, sentence structure, and clarity.

EDITORIAL:

In Prison During COVID-19

my self-isolating family no longer visits me. we must keep everyone at arm's length – flatten the curve of yearning for connection. we must strap on masks before exiting our cells; many of us shelter in place instead. we flinch away from those who cough or sneeze. the consequences of getting sick is a constant topic of conversation.

Everybody knows the terms **medical** and **attention** only cohabit our sentences in prison like loveless marriages.

we stockpile ramen, coffee, batteries, soup, and stamps as money from our families dries up. it could last perhaps two months.

mail takes longer and longer to reach us. weeks sometimes. if pressed most of us would admit to feeling increasingly lonely, abandoned, forgotten.

nevertheless we check the news all day, praying not to recognize the names of people victimized while buying toilet paper.

AND THEN THE PANDEMIC BEGAN

and changed some things.

first the prison prohibited all visitors.

now my family couldn't visit even if they tried.

next the prison closed our barbershops.

so many of us look like mangy savages.

then the prison issued uniform masks to us, flimsy black fabric behind which we can relax the veneers of indifference we'd kept flexed on our faces.

to reward us for not rioting, the prison started playing movies from Netflix every day.

then posted a memo to warn us that any noncompliance with coronavirus restrictions will be punished:

to get too close to anyone now is to pay a ten-dollar fine plus weeks in the hole.

the prison is enforcing – not just facilitating – social isolation.

to gauge the mandated spacing we may stand apart extending our arms toward each other.

our fingers may not touch.

that's six feet.

the right distance is as long as the grave is deep.

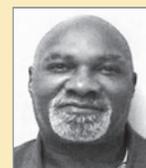


George Wilkerson
Editor
North Carolina Death Row
Raleigh, NC

Repair Broken Bridges... *Continued from cover*

to the Lord Jesus Christ, family, neighbor, friends, acquaintances, pen pals, enemies, strangers, holy angels to protect me, the legion of demons to test me, the universe, and self.

Since we all are connected to God, each other, holy angels to protect us, a legion of demons to test us, and the universe, let us start to fill in the gaps that keep us separated from God, themselves, and each other, by starting to repair broken bridges from out of the ruined relationships. Let us connect them back to God and each other. Let us rebuild this newfound relationship on the solid foundation rock which is Christ Jesus our Lord Good Emmanuel who can bring beauty from out of the ruined bridges that we have broken down. Allow God to use you to repair people's broken lives, broken hearts, broken homes, broken marriages, broken spirits, broken friends, broken relationships, broken neighbors, broken neighborhoods, broken government, and broken justice system not only in broken America, but also around the ruined broken globe.



Brother Frank J. Chambers
North Carolina Death Row
Raleigh, NC

Letter to the Editor:

The Garbage Can Experiment

Look at you, Black man you're vulnerable. You walk around as if you have no worries, no direction; you're lost. I have a place for you. A place where our children, family, and friends will forget about your existence. It's all a part of my design and plan for you. You won't need any transportation for this ride you're about to take. Don't worry, I'll pick you up on my bus, and provide your basic necessities: food, clothing, and shelter – all free of charge!

I'm accepting all minorities so this includes you, my brown Latino brothers. There's enough room for you too! Your dreams can also be put on a respirator; along with a little division I will break down your 33 vertebrae and dismember any solidarity you have left in your very soul.

Don't worry, my poor White brothers, I have this saying I go by. I'm sure you heard of it before. It's called "No Child Left Behind." You too are welcome to board this bus, we have plenty of room! We are color-blind here; the only color we recognize is Green.

Once you all get to your new home we will go over some rules. I want my Black brothers ("We are brothers, aren't we?") I want you to destroy one another. I want you to rob and fight one another even to the death. Go on and form your gangs – it's alright! That way you'll never unite. Promise me you'll never take the time to read any books about W.E.B. DuBois, Nelson Mandela, Marcus Garvey, or any prominent black leaders. We will teach you everything you need to know about yourself. You don't need to search for who you are. You don't have time for that. Just keep reading your Triple Crown books, XXL'S, and playing cards and dominoes. We don't want you reading any of those Black Enterprises, or anything about your culture and history; those things are all poison and will be considered contraband.

If you can behave yourself and be a good boy then I'll give you a little treat. I'll let you shop at my store once a week. Just have your family make the money orders out in your name, but we can keep the money in my account. So it's just like it's the both of ours. You trust me, don't you? Don't I treat you right? I put a roof over your head, clothes on your back, and food in your stomach. I do my best! I even give you \$17 a month just for pocket money! Now don't you be ungrateful. I only physically put my hands on you because I love you!

It's not my fault your families don't get to see you often, or that your kids hardly even know you and some of them you never even met. You can't blame me. I had to take you far away from your communities, away from your families, and away from your love. That's the only way I knew you would listen to me. Don't worry, you never have to leave here. I'll never abort you! You'll always have a place to call your home.

All I ask is that you continue to destroy each other instead of building one another up. Stay divided so you'll never rule the world. And please don't ever reach your highest potential. Realization that you were born to be KINGS!

Love Always, The Garbage Can Experiment

P.S. Please don't forget to let your children and grand children know all about me. I can't wait to meet them.



Robert N. Brandy
North Central Correction Complex
Marion, OH

Practice

Act like a son in your Father's Kingdom.

Be like your teacher Jesus.

When you venture outside, hold your peace inside.

Don't get nervous or excited about worldly experiences.

Walk into life with mind blank.

Imitate Christ, be like him.

Listen to the voice you pray to hear.

Stop anticipating what will be.

Know you don't know; do good!

Forgiveness offers total freedom from sin + guilt.

Perfect Christ, eternal life, salvation.

Nothing needs changing in reality.

Praise God thank you Jesus Lord

You couldn't be better any place else.

Everything needed is here now.

Walking down Main Street doesn't mean you're free.

When you don't care, it doesn't matter.

Love is no suggestion but a command.

Fires need fuel to burn.

Bad ideas keep troubles blazing.

Let's pray:

God open my lips and my mouth
Shall declare your praise.

God, come to my assistance; Lord,
Make haste to help us.

Glory be to the father, and to the
Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was
In the beginning – very good – is now very
Good – and ever shall be very good.

In the name of Jesus Christ
Sharpen your sword, read his words.

"Anyone who does not stay with the teachings
of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God!"
(2 John 1:9)

Rules of St. Benedict: (Prologue 15 – 17).

"Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see
Good Days?" (Ps. 34:13). If you hear this and your
Answer is "I do," God then directs these words to you. "If you
desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue free from vicious
Talk, and your lips from all deceit; turn away from evil and do
Good. Let peace be your quest and aim."
(Ps. 34:14 – 15)



Charles Henry Diller
Assistant Editor of Outside Communication
Dallas State Correctional Institution
Dallas, PA

Public Opinion

As I've spent over half my life in this place I figured that not only would I change but the place around me and also the people I live with. Sadly, for the most part, that's untrue. If we'd just sit still change would happen automatically, without any effort on our part. For change not to happen we must actively resist it. My motto has always been that more of what got me here won't get me out. Others don't hold to that philosophy. In fact, most don't adhere to any kinda standards but whatever pleases their so-called "friends." You really gotta feel bad for such people as they are doubly enslaved – once to the state system and then again to the opinions of others.

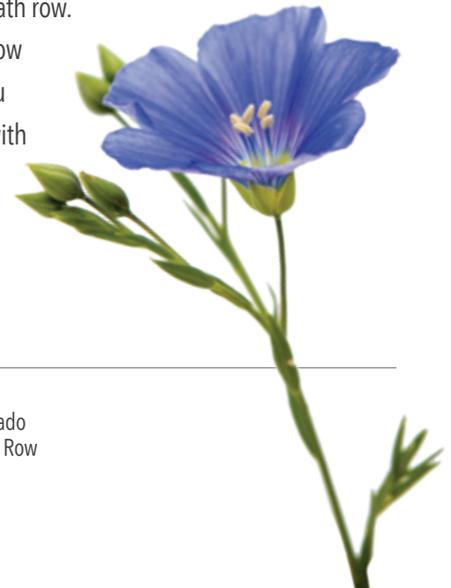
In the end another's opinion matters little. As one man said, "they got no heaven to reward me with and no hell to punish me with". That really hits the mark, someone's opinion only matters to the degree it has power over us. Ask yourself this question: in the end, when they're shoveling dirt on your face will it really matter? The opinion of the One who can give us heaven or hell is the only One to be concerned with. All others are irrelevant. When we try to please everyone we're sure to displease ourselves. Be true to yourself, cause you're the only one you gotta live with.



Kevin Marinelli
Pennsylvania Death Row
Waynesburg, PA

The Plant

The plant manifests itself from the seed through the stem, to the blossom of its flower, to the fruit, which again is the beginning of a new seed, a new individual that runs through its course and so on. Indeed, the constant renewal of human endeavors is to become what God has created for us, that is, to his image. Such constant transition can only be obtained when the will is enlightened by the knowledge of God. After all, willing desire arises from want, therefore from deficiency and suffering, respectively. So long as we are the subject of willing desire we can never have lasting happiness or peace. But those whose willing desire is to find the delight in the pursuit of one day reaching God's likeness, can find change, joy, tranquility and God's peace, even on death row. Wherefore my fellow death row prisoners, let me reaffirm you that so long as we are filled with the will to live in God's likeness, we need not fear for our existence, even in the presence of death.



Pablo Maldonado
Georgia Death Row
Jackson, GA

VICTIMS VOICE I Turned My Brother In



Bill Babbitt with his wife, Linda



Manny Babbitt

Bill Babbitt's brother Manny Babbitt was executed in San Quentin in 1999 after being convicted of the murder of Leah Schendel, who suffered a heart attack after Manny broke into her home. Manny had served two tours of duty in Vietnam and had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Paranoid Schizophrenia.

Bill has told his brother's story and spoken out against the death penalty before lawmakers in California, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. Bill said: "The police promised me that Manny would get the help he needed. For the rest of my life I have to live with the fact that I turned my brother in and that led to his death. I wish we had been able to get Manny the help that he needed. I wish that as a society we would devote our resources to treating people like Manny instead of imposing the death penalty and creating more funerals, more grief and more tears."

For More Information see mvfhr.org

Original Art Work for Scholarships



8.75" x 11.5" Watercolor
\$150.00 matted
includes shipping
and handling

This beautiful watercolor was donated to Compassion by artist **Thea Rossi Barron** from Annandale, VA. When sold proceeds will go to death row prisoners' scholarship for family members of murder victims. Our sincere thanks to Thea for her donation.

To purchase make your check to Compassion and send to the address on page 2.

COMPASSION READERS: To date \$55,988.72 has been awarded in college scholarships to family members for murder victims. Make a purchase of their artwork. To view available selections, view Art for Scholarship in the past issues at www.compassionondeathrow.net. Call **419-874-1333** and ask for Compassion office to verify availability.

The Fruitful Life of More

There isn't much to do in prison, so they say. The public thinks we just sit around watching TV, eating, and lifting weights. The false perceptions of the reality show craze haven't helped either. There are different ways to spend your time behind bars and it all depends on what kinda person you are. If you don't have a long term view to some possible release, or a future judgment of your actions, or feel a need for self improvement, then you'll be content with the latest gossip, material pleasures, sports, etc. However if you hope for the best you prepare for it, when you count on an assessment of your life and desire to be more than you were, there's more for you. Within this "more" is found purpose, meaning and fulfillment. Learning to draw, write, play an instrument or speak another language, take college courses or volunteer some of your time to help others, it all adds up in the end.

When I look back at my last 25 years, it's been filled with pain, sorrow and struggle, but I have something to show for my time and you can too. Aspire to be more and you will be, otherwise, as a wise man said "if you do as you've always done you'll always get what you've always gotten." Are you just a condemned man or are you more?

Kevin Marinelli
Pennsylvania Death Row
Waynesburg, PA

A to Z You Are

Adorable you are,
Beautiful you are,
Charming you are,
Delectable you are,
Exquisite you are,
Fine you are,
Gorgeous you are,
Harmonious you are,
Ingenuous you are,
Joie de Vivre you are,
Kindhearted you are,
Ladylike you are,
Magnificent you are,
Noble you are,
Opulent you are,
Pulchritudinous you are,
Queenly you are,
Radiant you are,
Supernal you are,
Transcendancy you are,
Ubiquitous you are,
Vixenish you are,
Wealthy you are,
Xurious you are,
Youthful you are,
Zenith you are,



Wm. Morgan Herring IV
North Carolina Death Row
Raleigh, NC

A Prayer from the Street

People always buggin' us to pray.
They do lots of tellin' and
preachin' not much listening.
Do the right thing!
Be cool!
Turn to God!

People tellin' us you is the answer.
We didn't even ask them
any questions.
Fact is those people up at the church
don't much care about us.
May be they are the ones who need
your help to get real?

We really want to believe in you
but it's damn hard.
Prayin' to someone you can't see,
who doesn't answer.
Kinda gives you the creeps.

Besides, prayin' is hard too.
Sometimes the words just don't
come out right.
We ain't sure anyone's listenin' or
hearin' us.
But just in case we're gonna
keep tryin'.



John Robinson
Kansas Death Row
El Dorado, KS

If Our Family Had One More Day, One More Tomorrow with Our Beautiful Baby Girl Sarah

For Sarah's Family Who Is Suffering So Much After Her Lost!
Our precious little girl Sarah, who we love and miss so very, very much,
was called to heaven the other day despite being only seven!
God took her away so prematurely –
she will not be with us to celebrate her eighth birthday –
despite it being in July just a few months away –
from when our precious baby girl died on Valentine's Day!
The unbearable soul-wrenching pain that her family has suffered since she went away,
no one truly knows of such devastating pain –
and I pray they never do know of such devastating soul-wrenching pain –
of losing such a beautiful and vivacious little girl as Sarah was.
Her infectious smile and happy-go-lucky nature
brought enormous joy and happiness to all who knew her.
If only we had one more day – one more tomorrow with our precious little girl Sarah,
before the Lord took her away.
Through our broken hearts we want you to know our darling little Sarah that
we love you so dearly and miss you so much!
And know that we will continue to blow kisses to heaven for you,
as our love will always continue to grow for you each and every day,
until we can actually hold you in our arms again – and
you can actually know and feel how strong that love for you is!
Yes, Darling, we love you and miss you so very, very much.
Know that our deepest heartfelt regret is that
we did not have just one more day with our baby girl Sarah
or just one more tomorrow to share with her before the Lord took her away!
We love you, our baling baby girl, and miss you very, very much!!!



Wesley I. Purkey
Federal Death Row
Terra Haute, IN



**Please mail your writings to:
COMPASSION**

140 W. South Boundary St. | Perrysburg, OH 43551



If you want to share someone else's work, please be sure you include the name of the author or its origin.

**PRISONERS OF DEATH ROW
YOUR ASSISTANCE WILL BE APPRECIATED**

7 Suggestions and Guidelines

1. Write about an experience that impacted you.
2. It doesn't have to be religious. Here are some themes: anger, apathy, beauty, betrayal, boredom, change, complacency, courage, fear, friendship, growing older, jealousy, pride, purpose, vices, and wisdom.
3. Use sensory details — the smell, who said what, its color, how cold it felt. Sensory details connect your experience to your readers.
4. There's no need to use big words when a simpler one suffices: leave your ego at the door with your case: this isn't the place for either one.
5. Look for ways to unify; help; and solve problems.
6. Be authentic. Be yourself. No one's perfect.
7. Try to limit it to 400 words or less, and if possible enclose a photo of yourself.

As there are numerous submissions it may take up to eight months for selected articles to be published.

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Growing Together

From seeds of very different trees.

From separate journeys to the same field.

From ending up buried deeply side by side.

From resisting confinement, darkness and ignorance.

From daring to break through and reach out.

From welcoming new nourishing and nurturing ways.

From forming deeper and stronger foundations.

From embracing true warmth and trusting in the Light.

From two freshly sprouted thin stems.

From finding mutual strength by entwining.

From equal support enabling individual growth.

From branching out in many ways.

From each shading the other from extremes.

From many good and harsh seasons.



Kurt Michaels
California Death Row
San Quentin, CA

Compassion

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215 E. Front Street
Perrysburg, Ohio 43551

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Comparisons

A crow was absolutely satisfied with life. But one day he saw a swan – the swan is so white, so majestic, and I'm so black, the crow thought. This swan must be the happiest bird in the whole world.

He expressed his thoughts to the swan. "Actually," the swan replied, "I was feeling that I was the happiest bird around until I saw a parrot, which had several colors. Now I think the parrot must be the happiest bird in the whole world."

The crow then approached a parrot. The parrot explained, "I lived a very happy life until I saw a peacock. I have only a few colors but the peacock has multiple colors."

The crow then went to visit a peacock in the zoo and saw that hundreds of people had come just to see him. After the people left, the crow approached then peacock. "Peacock," he said, "you're so beautiful, every day thousands of people come to see you. When people see me, they immediately try to shoo me away. I think you must be the happiest bird on the planet."

The peacock replied, "I always thought that I was the most beautiful and happy bird in the whole world but because of my beauty I'm trapped here in this zoo. I've looked over this zoo very carefully and I have come to realize that the crow is the only bird not kept in a case. So, for a long time now, I've been thinking that if only I was a crow I could roam happily everywhere."

Sometimes that's our problem too. We make unnecessary comparisons between ourselves and others and become sad. When we don't value who we are or what we have it leads to a vicious cycle of unhappiness.

Check out II Corinthians 10:12. Respect who you are, what you have. Don't compare your situation with that of others. That path only leads to unhappiness and disappointment.

John Robinson
Kansas Death Row
El Dorado, KS