

A Very Great Revival In A Prison Olmos, Argentina



Free At Last!

by Juan Zuccarelli

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Incredible !

The Worst Prison in the World?

Introduction by Edgardo Silvoso
copied in The Evangelical Beacon

One of the greatest and most dramatic transformations/miracles/revivals in modern history has taken place inside the walls of a prison in Argentina. Olmos Prison is the largest prison in the nation, and is a maximum-security facility that houses about 3,000 inmates

Until a few years ago, the prison was in total chaos. Crime was rampant. Riots, murders, sexual abuse, extortion and male prostitution were commonplace. The prison was so out-of-control, that by default the authorities turned the daily running of the prison over to the mafia and drug dealers serving time there. These de facto leaders chose to reside on the fourth of five floors, which came to be known as the “elephant’s floor” since all the ‘heavyweights’ lived there.

Imagine what this place became when the worst inmates were given the run of it! Even a Church of Satan was established on the premises and animal sacrifices were offered regularly. Olmos—as the prison is commonly known—was so impregnable that pastors from the nearby towns had great difficulty getting inside its perimeter.

Some inmates reported being tormented by demons which, according to reports, literally materialized in their cells. Satan was in control indeed.

However, the Bible says that where evil abounds, there God’s grace abounds that much more. Well, if that is true, Olmos Prison is a good place to start. Also, the Bible says, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.” That is, Satan meant Olmos to be evil, but God overturned Satan’s plans and brought up a most astonishing testimony to his saving grace.

That is the only word that could possibly describe this story. Nobody could possibly do what was done here except God. How exciting to watch what God is doing!

Let’s start with Hector Marquez. Who was Hector? In Argentina he was known as a career criminal, one who was in and out of prisons often till 1985 when he finally ended up with a life-without-parole sentence. Let’s look at what happened to him:

In the prison, Hector was the one who made all the contacts to smuggle drugs in and distribute them in his cell block. One day, he said to his cell mates: “My contact man has arrived, and I’m going after the drugs now.” “Yeah!” chanted all his cell mates, and some added, “about time!” But things turned out drastically different than anyone expected—radically different. Nobody could have guessed what would happen that day.

On his way, Hector came to an open door, and he walked right in, but it didn’t take more than five seconds to realize that he walked into the wrong room. What! No chains! None of the inmates were chained—some of Argentina’s worst scoundrels! But that wasn’t the only things Hector noticed—most of them were carrying Bibles. Whoops, wrong room! Right back to the door Hector went. “I gotta get outa here,” Hector said to the officer at the door—speaking in Spanish language. But the officer, also speaking in Spanish, said, “You all came in together, and you will all leave together”.

As Hector began to realizing his situation, Hector thought about his cell mates, “What would they do if I don’t bring them the drugs? What will they do to me when I do go back?” Finally he decided: “If I become disruptive, they will kick me out of here”. However, when he started disruptive behavior, nobody paid any attention to what he was doing. So he thought, “What else can I do?” Next he went to the front and tried to take the microphone away from the minister. The minister jerked the microphone back, and moved his other hand in front of Hector’s head, and said, “Peace”. At that moment, Hector fell to the

ground. Without realizing or understanding what happened to him, he had been touched by the spirit of God. Now, Hector was a big man, a former boxer, but to him, the spirit of God felt like a blow to his chest. Still not realizing that it was God’s spirit that knocked him down, he immediately tried to jump back up, but his legs did not work. When the ministers realized what was happening, they picked Hector up, and placed him on a chair on the front row.

Then, Hector started thinking: “Is this God’s curse on me for all the evil things I have done? Maybe I should listen to what the ministers have to say” —at the same time being forced to sit there for the two-hour salvation message—at the same time being unable to walk! So it was that Hector Marquez, one of Argentina’s career criminals, was ‘force fed’ the gospel of Jesus Christ!

At the end of the message, the minister placed his hand on Hector’s head and began to pray to the true God—not to Mary as Hector was used to hearing in the church where he was raised as a child. The minister prayed asking God to cleanse Hector, fill him, and use him. Hector was filled with the Holy Spirit and immediately began to speak in other tongues (other languages given by God spirit). For a while, he could not even speak in Spanish, his native language.

When the church service was over and the guards let the prisoners leave, the ministers let Hector stay with them. But when the guards realized that their group was short one person, they looked for him and told him to “Come on”. But Hector was still so overwhelmed by God’s spirit that he was still unable to speak in Spanish. When he tried to speak to the guards, all that came out was the ‘other tongues’. The guards thought he was crazy. Finally, they had to carry Hector back to his unit.

However, back in his unit, his cell-mates were eagerly awaiting the fresh supply of narcotics. Seeing and hearing Hector, they began to speculate what type of drugs he had gotten. They were speculating and arguing over what country the drugs came from. They demanded he share the drugs with them. Because the spirit of God was still heavily on Hector, they just grabbed him and started searching him for the drugs. Not finding any drugs, they became angry and said to him, “How could you be so selfish and use all the drugs yourself?”

Not knowing what was happening to him, Hector was at a loss as to what to do. Suddenly, he placed his arms around the men, and all of them fell down on their backs—filled with the spirit of God, and, miracle of miracles!, they all began prophesying and speaking in tongues. (By this time, Hector’s feet and legs were ‘working’ again.) To make a long story short, it was out of this group of convicts and drug addicts that a new group of believers emerged, and Hector eventually was recognized as their leader/pastor. Eventually two of the men became associate pastors, and eventually there were thousands of prisoners in their church.

Some time later, during a visit by some Americans to Olmos Prison, one of the ministers prophesied to Hector that he would be released and go around the world to share his testimony. Hector just chuckled saying, “That would be a miracle. My sentence is for life and without possibility for parole”.

At this point, we are moving forward a few years.
The following events were written by Juan Zuccarelli:

Juan Zuccarelli wrote:

I entered Olmos Prison walking along a wet and stinking tunnel. A prison officer, an unbeliever, accompanied me. For the first time, I was entering the Penal Sector to meet the inmates of Olmos Prison face-to-face.

I had walked only a few yards, when a powerful force of some kind came upon me, going throughout my body and choking me. The presence of the enemy was so strong that I couldn't go on. I told the officer who was accompanying me that I was feeling sick and needed to go to the restroom.

So we returned to the entrance, and I locked myself in a restroom to pray and cry out before the Lord. I pleaded with God, asking that I be free from any spiritual oppression in order to serve Him on this mission. Though I did not know at the time what was happening in the invisible world, that prayer proved important to the future of a church—the Christ-the-Only-Hope Church inside Olmos Prison.

Called to the Prison

One year earlier, in 1983, I received God's call to preach in the prisons of Argentina. To be honest, I did not want to preach to prisoners. My desire was to hold evangelistic campaigns, to win souls for the Lord, but not inside prisons. However, God's call grew stronger and stronger. So the day came when I set out to share the gospel at Olmos Prison, near Buenos Aires. But there had been a recent riot among the prisoners, and some had been killed. Therefore, I was not allowed to preach, or even enter the prison. I went home that day quite relieved. I said to my wife, "I obeyed. I tried to enter, but they didn't let me in. Now it is no longer my problem, but God's!" But God insisted, speaking to me much louder than before. He then opened a new door for me.

God showed me the potential of getting into Olmos Prison as an employee of the Penitentiary Service. But I was told that the process that would take many months. I applied, but my heart wasn't in it. Surprise! Only one week later, I was accepted! But still there were some doubts in my heart.

Olmos Prison

On my first day at Olmos, I was being instructed by a man named Nestor Papa. I asked Nestor if there would be a problem if I talked about religion in the Unit.

"What is your religion?" he asked.

I answered, "I am a Protestant."

"So, you are a Protestant!" he said. "I hate Protestants. You will have a lot of problems with me!"

"Well, God thinks differently," I answered.

He looked hard at me and said, "For you, I *am* god." He persisted, "If you continue like this, you will be in a lot of trouble." He really had a thing against Protestants. That was my first day at Olmos. Now, a few years later, he is a member of my church and a deacon in the church!.

Olmos was built in 1939 to be a high-security prison for 1,200 inmates—later enlarged to hold 1,728. The building consists of six floors. Each floor has 12 cell blocks designed to hold 24 inmates each. At this writing, the prison holds around 3,200 inmates—1,472 above capacity.

When I started working, there were only about 4 or 5 prisoners who were from an Evangelical Christian background. As an officer, I was not allowed to preach to the prisoners; however, an evangelist from my own church, named Luis Tessi, did come and preach to the prisoners. He and I worked together well, but he did all of the preaching. At times, when we were praying for a prisoner, I'm sure there were angels protecting us from the warden who wanted to fire me.

The Radio

Inside the prison was a small, inoperable radio station. Tessi and I decided the radio could be useful for the Lord's work, so we proposed to pay for fixing the station if we would be given some time to preach over the air. The authorities agreed, and the station was repaired. At the time, the inmates had no TV sets. In each cell, there was a loudspeaker directly connected to the radio broadcasting system. There was no switch on the speaker, so it was impossible for the inmates to turn off

the speakers—all the inmates were forced to listen to anything that was being broadcast.

When Tessi preached the gospel on the prison radio station, he would feel intense pain throughout his whole body, as if somebody were beating him with sticks. Many times when he got home, he would go straight to bed in order to recover. This was all-out spiritual warfare. Tessi's preaching was simple, but powerful. The messages were on God's love and mercy and our need for repentance and salvation. The demons that had been ruling the prison found themselves in a power encounter. Our home church began fasting and praying for the work in Olmos.

The Evangelistic Campaign

Next we started planning an evangelistic campaign inside the prison. This seemed impossible, but we prayed. The director of the prison said NO, but we kept praying. God heard and answered our prayers. Several days later, the director called me into his office and said, "Now, just what was it you wanted to do?" I answered him that we would bring in musical instruments, sing, preach, and pray for the inmates. He agreed and added: "If there is any trouble, I will have you beheaded!" I shouted, "All right". But when I prayed, I told the Lord that I didn't want to lose my head.

"Acto Y Culto!"

At times, different music or theater groups came to the prison to perform. At those times, an officer would go through the prison shouting "Acto," and the prisoners would come out. However, when their were church groups that would come out, the officer would call out "Culto," and only about 10 Evangelical Christians would come out. However, on the day of our evangelistic campaign, the officer called out, "Acto y Culto," and about 300 came out. However, there was one restriction: Inmates would not be allowed to leave until the meeting was over; the doors were locked. And, yes, when they saw us carrying the Bibles, some tried to leave.

After some music and singing, Luis Tessi gave a message, and about 100 of the 300 men made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Those 100 men came to the front to be prayed for, but when we prayed for/with them, many of them were so overwhelmed by the great change that was taking place in them that they couldn't even stand up; they just fell down. We weren't expecting anything like that and were at a loss as to what to do. However, some of the officers were so touched by what they saw happening that some of them also fell to the floor. We almost got scared when we saw that, but God was in control and we ministered to them also.

The Vision Expands

After this extraordinary experience, our vision and our faith expanded. Once or twice a week, visiting pastors came to preach, and those ministries turned out very well.

However, we soon realized that what was needed in the prison was a true Christian church with leaders emerging from among the inmates. We focused our efforts on training the leaders of the future prison church which took the name Christ-the-Only-Hope Church.

Shortly before this, the city of La Plata awoke one morning to newspaper headlines screaming, "Evangelical Pastor Is a Thief!" One of the evangelical leaders of the city had robbed a store at gunpoint! He had been arrested and was later convicted of the crime. When I learned of the crime, I was furious. I admit that I felt like laying hands on that brother—hands with a clenched fist! But God dealt with me about my hateful attitude. When I finally met this man in Olmos Prison, I could lovingly talk to him about the Lord and invite him to repent of his sin/crime. He sincerely did so, reconciling himself to the Lord and re-consecrating his life to Him.

Both Luis Tessi and I wanted not only to minister to him, but to his family as well. The Lord, in His mercy, began to work. We saw significant changes in this man, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit became evident in his life. He helped us with the radio programs and rapidly matured in Christ. When the time came to appoint the leaders of our new church, the Lord guided us to designate the "redeemed thief," Antonio Arcadio Garcia, as the first inmate pastor, fully recognized as

such by everyone in the penitentiary.

Garcia disciplined a small group of potential leaders in the church. One of the members of this group was “Chiquito” (Spanish for “Shorty”) Delgado, a broad, giant of a man who stood 6 feet, 4 inches tall, and had been in prison for more than 20 years. This man had experienced a marvelous change in his life, and he quickly matured in the word of the Lord. When Antonio Garcia was released from prison, Chiquito Delgado became the pastor. The leaders that followed him were: Hector Marquez, Jorge Kuris, and Jose Cardozo.

Evangelical Cell Blocks

Confession is a sign of weakness among prisoners, and the weak are always attacked by other inmates. Thus new Christians repenting and confessing their sins are exposing themselves to real danger. For this reason, we decided to request that all of our new Christians be placed in a separate cell block. To everyone’s surprise, our petition requesting an evangelical cell block for Christians was granted! [In Argentina, inmates are usually housed with others who have committed similar crimes: thieves with thieves, murderers with murderers, rapists with rapists, etc.] An area of the facility was opened to house 24 inmates under the leadership and responsibility of Hector Marquez.

Sometime later, there was a fire in the prison, and some inmates were locked in a place where it seemed they were about to be sacrificed. One man, Hector Marquez took quick action to save (release) those men. This brave action was noted by the officials and in 1990, Hector was honored for this action by means of a presidential pardon. Hector continued to preach in the free world. Such outstanding miracles happened in some of his meetings that even wheel-chair bound people were healed and started walking!

Having an exclusive cell block allowed the brothers to pray in peace, read, study their Bibles, fast, and even have all-night prayer meetings without being harassed or disturbed. This worked so well, we began to implement it in other parts of the prison. Jorge Kuris was the next to start an evangelical cell block on his floor, and before long we had a block on each floor.

The Strongman on the Fourth Floor

We all knew the spiritual “strongman” was located on the fourth floor. The entire prison was informally ruled from there. So we felt we needed to do whatever was necessary to take the fourth floor for the Lord. The Lord guided us in our prayer time to take/claim authority in the name of Jesus over the strongman, thus binding him. The believers then began to pray and take the whole prison cell-block by cell-block. An intense strategy of prayer was then organized, and the kingdom of God began to grow inside Olmos Prison..

By 1988, the prison authorities decided to consolidate the evangelical cell blocks which, up to then, had been functioning on every floor. Their idea was to concentrate all the evangelical cell blocks on one floor. So this was done, and the believers occupied six of the twelve cell blocks located on the infamous fourth floor. By this time, Christ-the-Only-Hope Church had 240 members.

We began to pay more attention to the internal organization of the church. Rules of faith, strict requirements for church membership, and a permanent fasting and prayer program were implemented. We intensified our spiritual assaults against the demonic enemy in order to maintain our growth. In 1990, there were about 400 brothers in the church. By 1995, the members of the Christian community numbered more than 1,000. Not included in these figures are some 400-500 inmates who had made a decision for Christ, but who were not yet mature enough in their faith to fulfill the strict membership requirements of Christ-the-Only-Hope Church. By the end of 1995, about 45 percent of the prison population had put their faith in Christ and were members of the church.

Once a year, large baptisms are held at Olmos, with 300 to 350 brothers giving public testimony of their faith in Christ each time. As of this writing in 1997, there are about 1,480 brothers in Christ-the-Only-Hope Church. Keep in mind this has happened inside the highest security prison in the nation.

The Church in the Prison

Christ-the-Only-Hope Church is very different from other evangelical churches, not only because it is inside a prison, but because almost every day we lose a church member. Approximately 300 Christians leave the prison each year. Some are released, having served their sentences. Some are moved to other penal units, and others are paroled. This means that if we did not evangelize every day, the church would disappear in five years. So in order to simply maintain our present size, we must win about 10 percent of the prison population to Christ every year!

The Christian workers in our church are also quite different. Within the church, we recognize pastors, elders, evangelists, deacons, and helpers. The training of these servants of the Lord is unique as they all live in the church, so to speak, 24 hours a day. For example, when anyone gets up in the morning, takes a shower, has breakfast, reads the Bible, prays, fasts, or worships, he is surrounded by his brothers in Christ. There is no such thing as privacy, which means they are also surrounded by brothers in Christ when they do *not* read the Bible, or do *not* take a shower, or when they are angry or in a bad mood. Because they are on display before the church every minute of their lives, it is not easy to be a leader. Nevertheless, we cannot stop training leaders, because so many of our leaders, including some of the best, are constantly being released.

God has had to teach us daily what to do and how to do it. We had no textbook on how to win a whole prison for Christ. We were forced to write it ourselves as we went along. All we could see in the natural were battles, troubles, and hardships, but our trust in the Lord was like that of a child.

My vision was to establish Christ-the-Only-Hope Church in Olmos Prison, and this has been done. New leadership has been raised up in the congregation—Antonio Franco, Daniel Vazquez, and Ramon Avalos—and they have worked very hard. A Bible institute was opened to train Christian workers, with a ministerial training program that lasts four years. A plan was implemented to evangelize the whole

penitentiary for Christ, and large evangelistic campaigns have been carried out, with significant results. We had to begin holding our services in the sanctuary of the Roman Catholic Church on the prison grounds, since all the meeting places we had been assigned were too small. God has given us (the use of) the prison.

However, a serious problem still remained. The majority of our inmates' relatives were not Christians. We began to pray, seeking the Lord's guidance to find ways of evangelizing these lost souls seemingly beyond our reach. We asked permission for the church members to be allowed to meet their relatives in private, separated from the unbelievers. Permission was granted, and Yard No. 1 was designated as the meeting place. Now before visiting hours are over, the leaders of the church hold a brief service in which they sing praise songs, read the Bible, preach, and give an altar call. Many have been converted in these meetings, and later they testify, "I had to come to a prison in order to be set free!" Some have been healed, and others have been delivered from evil spirits that had tormented them. In all cases, we recommend that they look for an evangelical church close to their homes. In this way, the work of the Lord grows both inside and outside of the prison.

Many converts testify,
"I had to come to a
prison to be set free."

A Day in Olmos

A day on the evangelical floor in Olmos Prison is very structured. The inmates get up at six in the morning and commit the day to the Lord. Then, the officers call the roll, counting them one by one. [This is how we can give precise figures regarding the number of church members at any given time.] After roll call, they have breakfast, take care of personal needs, and study the Bible. At noon, they have lunch, then they have a free period, and again they dedicate time to Bible study. After dinner every day, a church service is held in the cell blocks.

Most importantly, prayer vigils are held every single night in all the evangelical cell blocks. Six men from each cell block go to the dining

room portion of the cell block. The prayer meeting is held in the dining room from midnight until six in the morning. During this time, two of the six members of the group share for two hours what they have learned from the Bible during the day. Two other kneel and intercede for a list of needs they received beforehand. The remaining two go from bed to bed, praying for the inmates who are sleeping, for their families, their situation in the prison, and so forth. After two hours, they shift roles. Those who were sharing from the Bible kneel down, the ones who were kneeling go to pray for the ones asleep, and those who were praying in the dorm come to share the Word. Two hours later, another shift change takes place. In this way, during every night of the year, 132 brothers in Olmos Prison are on prayer duty.

Intercessory Cell Blocks

Two prison cell blocks are designated as “entry-level cell blocks.” New believers, those who are taking their first steps with the Lord, are housed together and given the teachings of Jesus Christ there. As they grow spiritually, they will be assigned to other cell blocks.

Until a few months ago, we also had five intercessory cell blocks in full operation. However, we sensed that God was telling us to select some brothers from these cell blocks and place them in a new intercessory cell block. We did so with excellent results. Our ordinary cell blocks fast twice a week, from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., and someone there is praying 10 hours every day, apart from the all-night prayer meeting, which is mandatory. That is why, when we submit a prayer request to this cell block, we sleep in peace, because we know that God’s answer will come soon.

Obviously, we put a great deal of emphasis on prayer and intercession. These two activities, together with fasting, are the fundamental columns/pillars/foundations of our church. Through them, God has worked extraordinary miracles among us. We also place a strong emphasis on holiness. Today, every prisoner in Olmos has a TV set. However, we do not allow church members to use them, due to the high pornographic content of most programs and movies. During a prisoner’s years of confinement, watching TV will only further damage his moral and spiritual life.

The believers are very obedient. For example, they know that the Bible teaches tithing. However, according to present regulations in the prisons of the Province of Buenos Aires, inmates are not allowed to have money. So they tithe out of the gifts brought by their relatives. What they collect is used to share with the inmates who do not receive visits, those in the prison hospital, poor relatives or even inmates in other prisons. Some time ago, for example, there was a great flood in our province, and the brothers in Olmos decided to gather the tithes of two months and send them to the flooded areas. The “least of society” was helping these cities in trouble. This made a great impression on the authorities.

Whenever God gets ready to do a great
work,
He always sets His people to praying.

And to the Ends of the Earth

Within our prison system, Unit No. 10 in the city of Melchor Romero is a neuro-psychiatric unit, where all inmates have serious mental disorders. When the director of this unit heard what was being done in Olmos, he called us to say he wanted an evangelical church in his prison, too. We visited this place and found that the inmates there were highly medicated. It was very difficult to talk with them for any length of time. We told the director we would pray about what we could do, because we did not have anyone in our ministry who had the training or the experience to start a church under those conditions.

While we were praying, the Lord reminded us that brother Ramon Avalos, who at the time was pastoring the church in Olmos, had once been confined in this neuro-psychiatric unit. Later, he had been transferred to the Olmos Prison due to a clerical error. [Probably it should be called “a divine appointment” rather than a “clerical error.”] Diagnosed as schizophrenic, Avalos had been given 19 doses of drugs

each day at Olmos, and he still was disturbing his fellow inmates. Things got so bad that his cell mates *forced* him to come to one of our meetings. The Lord instantaneously and miraculously healed him—both in his body and in the mind. While we were praying for him, he fell to the floor overwhelmed by the great miracle what was taking place in him. It was quite some time before he came to and got up. Looking around, he said, “Where am I?”

“At Olmos Prison,” we said.

“This can’t be!” he said, totally confused. He then innocently asked, “Why am I in prison?”

This man had committed more than 30 crimes, and he did not remember a single one of them. Soon we came to realize that there had been such an astonishing work of grace in him that God had totally erased all of Avalos’ ugly crimes from his mind!

So it was that we thought of Ramon Avalos as the person who could start a new work in Unit No. 10. When I suggested this to him, he said, “Amen, Pastor! You know that I am committed to your ministry.” This man was leader of 1,400 inmates in Olmos. Now I was sending him to evangelize the insane!

I talked to the authorities about the possibility of transferring Avalos to Unit No. 10. At first they did not agree. How could they officially justify sending an inmate from Olmos as an evangelist to the mentally ill in Unit No. 10? Truly, this was crazy! But we began to pray and to fast. After a few days, God moved and the authorities decided to accept our unusual proposal. Ramon Avalos was transferred to Unit No. 10.

At the beginning, Avalos’ tasks consisted mainly of bathing the prisoners and looking after them. Then he started preaching to them. He lived with the inmates, ate with them and slept with them. He took every opportunity to show them the love of Jesus. So from Olmos we have now sent out our first inter-prison missionary!

When I later went to inspect the work there, I was amazed. The brothers were singing, praying and praising the Lord! Today in Unit No. 10, there is a church with more than 40 inmates—at a prison for the insane! At this writing, brother Avalos has been released from prison, and has rejoined his family.

By God’s grace, we have now reached out to other prisons in the province of Buenos Aires. Our vision for each prison is the same: to establish a growing evangelical church in every one. The work is growing, and with the Lord’s help, we are ready to win every prison in Argentina for Christ!

The Rest of this page is from Ed Silvoso’s message

Recent unconfirmed reports state that the number of guards has been reduced from 300 to 30 as a result of behavior standards of the Christians. Normally 50% of the inmates find themselves back in prison following their release. Of the 604 released Christians, only three have returned—less than half of one percent!

During an International Institute which Harvest Evangelism holds in Argentina every fall, we (Army of Intercessors) organized a trip to the prison to meet with the inmates. We saw more than 800 inmates stand shoulder to shoulder. Their vibrant singing is incredibly moving. One of the inmate pastors said to our group, “If you came to see prisoners, you have come to the wrong place. We are free men, free indeed!” Even though their bodies are in prison, they roam the heavenly places in prayer and intercession!”

Olmos Prison, Argentina's largest maximum security prison, houses about 3000 prisoners. One of the greatest and most dramatic miracles in modern history has taken place inside the walls of that prison.

Until a few years ago, the prison was in total chaos. Crime was rampant. Riots, murders, sexual abuse, extortion and male prostitution were commonplace. The prison was so out of control that by default the authorities turned over the daily running of the place to the mafia and drug dealers serving time there. Even a Church of Satan was established on the premises and animal sacrifices were offered regularly.

Read about one of the most astonishing transformations the world has ever seen:

Criminals being turned into Saints !