

# PRISONERS' RIGHTS VICTORY

The Catholic League's intervention in a prisoners' rights case ended in victory when a New Jersey correctional center bowed to the league's demands.

In the fall, the league was contacted by an inmate at the Cape May County Correctional Center in Cape May, New Jersey, alleging that Mass was being denied to those incarcerated in protective custody. The league accepted the case after learning that Protestant inmates in protective custody were not denied religious services. The league asked for equal treatment.

The problem was resolved when the correctional center worked out a schedule with Our Lady of Angels Church in Cape May and the Legion of Mary to provide for weekly Mass. The prisoner first contacted EWTN for advice and then EWTN contacted the Catholic League.

The league respects the rights of correctional facility authorities to maintain order in their prisons. It also understands that there are inmates who invoke religious rights for bogus means, as when escape plans are hatched and/or drugs are exchanged when they meet in private for supposed religious services. But in instances such as this one, there is no excusing the authorities.

What settled the issue for the league was the flagrant discrimination of Catholic inmates: if Protestant inmates (or those who belong to other religions) are accorded rights, and Catholics aren't, then that is reason enough for the Catholic League to enter the fray.