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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



One Moment of Grace

By Adrienne Pueschel

I was 51 years old, married for 15 years and without children, living on five acres in the woods of Southern Oregon, at the time of Pope John Paul II’s death. My husband, Brad, had not been as concerned as I over not having a real church to attend, but it bothered me very much for years, especially at Easter. Yet here was the largest Church on earth holding the world captive at Easter in the year 2005, and I could not stop crying.

“Follow Me!”

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger began the funeral homily in this manner, using the same words our Lord spoke to Peter as road signs for John Paul II’s life.

Just two weeks before the funeral, Brad and I had happily celebrated our wedding anniversary in the rugged California coastal town where we were wed. The road home via Pacific Coast Highway I was full of perilous hairpin turns and drenched in heavy rain. We were grateful to arrive home safely.

In the news, a lady named Terri Schiavo, brain damaged by an accident, had been put to death at the end of March. I was surprised how this affected me. Though sympathetic to the pro-life cause, I was unaware of the moral and spiritual implications. It was impossible to find mainstream news talking intelligently about what was happening to this poor soul. So I surfed satellite channels and discovered a Catholic station called EWTN, where they had serious commentary, a tough-talking nun, a grey-robed, grey-bearded friar who had a Jewish sense of humor, and even a show on

the British writer G.K. Chesterton. The injustice of Terri Schiavo’s death was a sword through the heart for our country, and only EWTN was giving it accurate and perceptive coverage. Then it was revealed that John Paul II’s last days were upon us.

Saints Mary Magdalen, Monica, and Teresa, Pray for Us

I was just a non-denominational Christian, not even Catholic, yet I had cried over the Pope’s heart-rending final Easter Sunday, appearing at the window of his Vatican apartment, not able to speak to us. I felt Karol Wojtyla (his birth name) had been my “friend” and elder brother for a long time. Ever since he made worldwide news, coming out on the balcony at the Vatican on October 1978, I had been intrigued by this unique Polish Pope. My mother’s side of the family also came from Poland, so I felt we had something in common. Television news even noted his early years as an actor, doing something intriguing called “Theater of the Word.” Wow — this was amazing. I, too, had grown up under the spell of theatre in all its colorful dimensions, material

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Journeys Home

...Journeys Home Continued...

and spiritual. How was it possible that this new Pope and now leader of the Catholic Church knew some of these aspirations and dreams? They even made much of his losing his mother at an early age. My own mother had died when I was 14, leaving a husband and four children behind. It had certainly formed my life, so I could very much empathize with John Paul II.

All those years as a Christian, I was longing for something more, but I was only watching Masses televised from the Vatican. All this art, beauty, and ceremony I could well appreciate, but I did not dare believe there was real history and meaning to it. Particularly on New Year's Eve 1999, the message coming from the Vatican and this Pope had been almost enough to get me out of my easy chair. Politicos had spent months in angst over the mythic Y2K "disaster," yet here was Rome, happily proclaiming a "Jubilee Year," as they called it, fully confident in the millennium to come. What on earth did they know that everyone else forgot in all their malaise?

Still, I did not believe one could just up and go to a Catholic church. It seemed like something you had to be born into, and surely America's heritage was all "grey and white Protestant," was it not?

Growing Up "Nothing"

Our family had no faith on display when I was growing up. Despite my mother being from all-Catholic-and-Polish Chicopee Falls/Springfield, Massachusetts, her mother had been a "black sheep" and run away with an Episcopalian "black sheep"

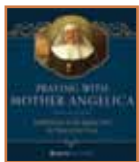
to the west coast during the depression. When I was about eight years old, I had sincerely asked my mother why our family was not "something." Why didn't we go to church? My mother's answer then was that she and Dad believed that children should "discover it on their own."

Mom must have felt guilty after this, because soon I was taking Bible lessons (for a brief time) from a very old, eccentric neighborhood lady in her green grass back yard. She gave me a sugar-dipped strawberry for every time I recited the gospel: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The verse sunk in quickly, as I loved strawberries, its meaning mystically clearer in the recitation.

A few years earlier, I had made a friend in Claremont Day Nursery School. She was an Italian girl named Rosemary. I was taken to her Catholic parish in Oakland, California, one Sunday. Even though just five years old, she carefully instructed me on how to cross myself (which I botched), how to kneel by the pew before I entered (I nearly fell over), what to look for during this beautiful Mass (even though I was paralyzed with fear over kneeling too soon), and especially, how to stay put in my seat when they went up to receive something good up front.

By contrast, my father's family was Mormon. He, too, was a "black sheep" and never attended the church of his family beyond high school. Yet God's blessings on our family came from my grandparents and aunts in Alameda, California, who made us the center of every birthday and holiday gathering. Oddly

FEATURED RESOURCES

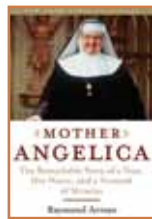


Praying with Mother Angelica: Meditations on the Rosary and the Way of the Cross

Mother Angelica's meditations combine the spiritual insights of a master with the warmth of a loving mother. Her short but powerful reflections will lift your soul to heaven and lead you into a thoughtful and penetrating reflection on the love of God and the life of Our Lady. These devotional meditations — including the Mysteries of the Rosary, the Way of the Cross, and other original prayers — are a treasury that will allow you to pray as Mother Angelica faithfully taught.

\$35

Receive *Praying With Mother Angelica* for a \$35 donation.



Mother Angelica: The Remarkable Story of a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles — By Raymond Arroyo

This book tells the extraordinary saga of Mother Angelica — who passed away on Easter, 2016 — founder of the multimillion-dollar Eternal Word Television Network and "the most influential Catholic woman in America" according to *Time* magazine.

Raymond Arroyo combines his journalist's objectivity and eye for detail with more than five years of exclusive interviews with Mother Angelica. He traces Mother Angelica's tortured rise to success and exposes for the first time the fierce opposition she faced in founding EWTN. It is an inspiring story of survival and proof that one woman's faith can move more than mountains.

\$50

Receive *Mother Angelica...a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles* for a \$50 donation.

\$75

Receive a *Praying With Mother Angelica* and *Mother Angelica...a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles* for a \$75 donation.

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See page C for how to enroll in our *Premiums Club* and automatically receive these resources plus a bonus item each month!

...Journeys Home Continued...

enough, they never proselytized. I went to LDS church services with them many times as a child. Those tiny paper cups passed around on a glass tray with water and a cube of white bread to consume were a great curiosity. Yes, it was a symbol, but at least they cared enough to give us that. I can remember “feeling” something as I consumed this water and bread — at least I was trying to understand Christ’s dying on the cross for us. Our grandparents were still the best Christian witnesses in our lives then. My grandfather was known for his friendliness to everyone.

I grew up in Berkeley, California, at the dawn of the 1960’s. I had played adventure games with my friend on the U.C. Berkeley campus during the Free Speech movement. Our city bus rides home in 9th grade had to swerve from the tear gas pouring down Telegraph Avenue during the People’s Park riots. I attended an experimental high school program centered in “tribes” around the Berkeley Community Theatre stage. Chaos would be erupting all around us, yet we happily played improvisational

theatre games in class, wondering just which “reality” was real, theirs or ours. You may laugh, but it is no wonder that I majored in playwriting and “Theatre of the Absurd” in college.

Just a Girl Who Cain’t Say No

What was really important, however, was music. It was our religion. No surprise here, since all my earliest theatre loves had music in the soundtrack. Seeing the musical “Oklahoma!” on an outdoor movie screen in Twain Harte, California, with shooting stars in the background, would baptize me into a life-long devotion to movement and musicals. “I Cain’t Say No” was my special sing-along song in my grandparent’s rec room — I even felt I got the innuendos. Being the Mickey Mouse Club generation certainly predisposed us to love music class in school, where we gleefully learned all the American folk songs and military marches with all the lyrics. When 1964 was upon us, the tectonic plates of the world shifted forever. I was not a rabid Beatles fan, but John Lennon would become an idol, *Continued on page 5* ➤



“Great Role Models in the Faith”

INTERVIEW WITH FR. PIERRE INGRAM
(FORMER BAPTIST)

I became a Christian in my family. My father and my mother both passed on their faith to me. My father was a very strong Baptist and my mother was a faithful Catholic. Both of them taught me to know the Lord, to know Jesus. I was raised in my father’s church, attended Sunday School from a very young age, where we were invited to give our lives to Jesus and accept Him as our personal Lord and Savior — which I did as a very young lad.

I would say the death of my father was a defining moment, because my mother really began to lean on God more and more, began to come alive in her own Catholic faith, began to get more interested in it, and she brought me along with her, so that I began to grow. I began to discover more about Catholicism.

My mother was involved in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and that was where I really saw great role models in the Faith. People who were believers in Jesus, but who were bold about it, who were passionate about it, who were “all out” for the Lord, and I decided to be what they were and to have what they had.

But I think the Church’s spiritual tradition was one of the best kept secrets — the rich tradition of spiritual teaching that we find in the great masters of the spiritual life, like St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Francis de Sales. These are things that the Church seems to reserve for those who are very devout, but this deserves to be much more broadly known.

There is a very strong emphasis in Catholicism on growth in holiness, and this is something that I have begun to take much more seriously since following a vocation to the priesthood. Growth in holiness through personal prayer — that commitment to daily, personal time with the Lord — is something that I have been encouraged to do by reading the works of the great masters of the spiritual life, and also as part of my formation for the priesthood. That has been the single, biggest factor that has lead to spiritual growth in my life. ■



READ & WATCH
chnetwork.org

Be sure to share this short interview with friends and family. To watch Fr. Pierre’s full Signposts interview and his *Journey Home* program, go to chnetwork.org and click the magnifying glass icon to quickly find them in our archive.

In Gratitude to Mother Angelica

The CHNetwork staff has been blessed to receive kind words and condolences from our members after the passing of Mother Angelica. We wanted to share a few to show Mother's impact on those on the journey to the Catholic Church and on converts who have been influenced by her witness in their conversion.

"I have been thinking of you and the CHN staff especially in the past weeks since Mother Angelica's death. I am thankful that EWTN covered her burial and so many other events. I learned so much and felt a kinship to her and to Raymond Arroyo."

"I was saddened but joyful for Mother Angelica when I heard she passed away. I read her biography about five years ago and came to understand what an amazing thing she accomplished in establishing EWTN. Her work has blessed me tremendously. Thank you Mother Angelica!"

"In my spiritual journey I have learned so much from Mother, especially about giving God EVERYTHING and learning to live totally in each moment. This is what God is teaching me as how to live my changed life."

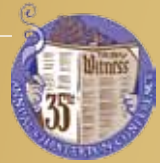
"I am saddened by the passing of our dearest Mother Angelica. So shocked beyond disbelief. My spiritual mother."

"My sincerest condolences on the passing of Mother Angelica. We know she is with her blessed Lord. I, for one, am eternally grateful for EWTN. We will miss her." ■

MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

August 4–6, 2016

2016 Chesterton Conference
Slippery Rock State University
Slippery Rock, PA
<http://www.chesterton.org/35th-annual-chesterton-conference/>



September 17–18, 2016

EWTN Family Celebration
Birmingham, AL
<http://www.ewtn.com/familycelebration/>



DEFENDING THE FAITH CONFERENCE

CHNetwork at the 2016 Defending the Faith Conference
The Franciscan University of Steubenville
July 29-31, 2016

Conference Theme: Speaking the Truth in Love — Morals, Marriage, and Mercy

The Coming Home Network will be sponsoring its annual social for **Defending the Faith** conference attendees on Friday, July 29th at 10pm (*JC Williams Center: Gentile Gallery*). In addition this year, we will be holding a coffee and networking meeting for any non-Catholics and converts in attendance on Saturday, July 30th at 12pm - 1:45pm (*JC Williams Center: Fireside Lounge*). Contact info@chnetwork.org for more information. **We hope to see you there!**



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Prayer List



Clergy

- For a former non-denominational Charismatic minister in Georgia, that the Lord would overcome her fears of the annulment process.
- For a Southern Baptist minister in North Carolina, that the Holy Spirit would guide him to a solution to finding a way, other than ministry, to provide for his family.
- For Joshua, a Pentecostal minister, that our Lord Jesus would grant him the grace to overcome his doctrinal reservation about purgatory.
- For a former non-denominational lay minister in Colorado, that God would turn the hearts of his wife and son to the Church as they witness the fruits of his journey.
- For Carol, a Southern Baptist lay minister, that the Holy Spirit would send her funds to replace lost Protestant support so she may continue her ministry to women in need.
- For an Evangelical Anglican priest in the south, that our Lord Jesus Christ would give him a hunger for unity with the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church in union with the Successor of St. Peter.
- For Andrew, a minister in Australia, that God would guide his prayer and reading to bring him home to the Catholic Church.
- For Keith, a Presbyterian minister, that God guide him to an accepting understanding of the truth of the Catholic teaching concerning the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Eucharist.

■ For a former missionary in Washington, that her heart may find healing in the Holy Eucharist.

■ For John, a minister in Texas, that our Lord Jesus Christ would bless and guide him as he journeys to a greater understanding to the Catholic Faith.

■ For Jim, an Anglican lay minister, that the Lord would use his love of the liturgy to bring him into full communion with the Catholic Church.

■ For the wife of an Episcopal priest in Louisiana who is struggling how to reconcile her new-found Catholic faith with her husband's Protestant ministry.

Lay

■ For a Baptist in Minnesota who is struggling to explain to his Protestant friends his desire to become Catholic.

■ For Paul who loves the Lord and has questions about Catholic practices and beliefs from a scriptural standpoint.

■ For a Presbyterian who identifies with much of what the Catholic Church teaches and is reading many books that have been recommended on *The Journey Home*.

■ For a woman in Texas who is on the journey and is very encouraged by Mother Angelica's message and faith, that she be able to come into the Church that Mother loved so much.

■ For Jason who is studying and reading about the Catholic Faith, that he be able to connect with a good local parish.

■ For Colin who is discerning how to proceed with his journey.

■ For a woman who comes from a Hindu background and is intrigued by much about the Catholic Church.

■ For Susan to come to appreciate the scriptural basis for Catholic beliefs.

■ For John who is on the journey, that he and his wife be able to receive Jesus in the Eucharist soon.

■ For a young woman who became Catholic at Easter but is very disappointed in not finding good Catholic friends in her church yet.

■ For a convert living in Europe who is struggling with her faith and feels like she is drifting away from the Church.

■ For a young adult on the journey who is dialoging with her family who are anti-Catholic.

■ For John, a recent convert from Easter, whose family doesn't understand his conversion and it is causing tension at home.

In every issue we include timely prayer concerns from the membership. All members are encouraged to pray at least one hour each month before the Blessed Sacrament for the needs, both general and specific, of the CHNetwork and its members and supporters.

Please submit all prayer requests and answers to CHNetwork Prayer List, PO Box 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702 or email prayer requests to prayers@chnetwork.org.

We use only first names or general descriptions to preserve privacy.

EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME on television & radio, hosted by Marcus Grodi, president of CHNetwork



TELEVISION

Mondays at 8 PM ET — Encores: Tuesdays 1 AM ET, Fridays 1 PM ET

The Best of the Journey Home: Monday-Thursday 1 PM ET

RADIO

Mondays at 8 PM ET — Encores: Saturdays 7 AM ET, Sundays 1 AM ET and 5 PM ET

The Best of the Journey Home: Monday-Thursday 12 AM ET

June 6

Mosongo Osong*
Revert

June 13

Deacon George Butterfield*
Former Church of Christ

June 20

JonMarc Grodi*
Lifelong Catholic

June 27

TBD

*Schedule is subject to change.

...Journeys Home Continued...

► “Journeys Home” continued from page 3

thanks in large part to the wackiness of his two cult books. In the decade of the 1970’s, it became urban legend to believe that the Beatles would re-unite some day, in apocalyptic fervor, and that world peace, with love being all you need, would thereby ensue.

All You Really Needed Was Love

That dream ended on December 8, 1980, when John Lennon was shot dead in front of his apartment building in New York City. No one noticed at the time, but this happened on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Millions mourned worldwide. I was obsessed with Lennon’s death. But that ended three short months later, in March 1981, with the shooting of President Ronald Reagan, an assassination attempt he survived with graciousness, good humor, and grace from God for our country. Though not Republican at the time, I prayed for our country and his healing.

Then on May 13, 1981, a few professional bullets narrowly missed taking the life of Pope John Paul II. Just what horror had been unleashed upon the world now? Popes simply did not get shot like this. Minutes before on that same day, I had received a call at work telling me that my grandfather had died. The patriarchal head of our family, and then the Holy Father. It was not until 2005 that the significance of this date, the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady to the children at Fatima, Portugal, would become known to me.

I had been living and working in San Francisco (broadcast advertising, word processing) for several years. One day, thanks to a documentary called *Girl Groups, the Story of a Sound*, I became an instant fan of early 1960’s pop music, and in particular one songwriter of the Brill Building era called Ellie Greenwich. Her music was like a return to innocence. So by October 1984, I moved to Manhattan to be a part of the Ellie Greenwich Fan Club there, as the musical of her life, *Leader of the Pack*, would be opening on Broadway soon. Unfortunately, it did not open until April of the next year, and by that time my freelance word processor punch card in the Big City had expired. So I returned to California very reluctantly, but before going, I did get to meet Ellie Greenwich herself backstage at the show’s opening. The fan club president would eventually make me an official West Coast Coordinator. He sent word that this man in San Francisco had joined the fan club, and I should write to him.

Today I Met the Boy I’m Gonna Marry

This particular fan was 38 when he walked into Max’s Diner, arms loaded with Girl Group memorabilia and rare records to share. My first letter and invitation to Brad Pueschel had arrived at his door only a week after his widowed mother had

moved into his house to live with him. Talk about God’s timing. Brad’s mother was, by his own admission, a difficult and angry woman, but he felt he was just honoring the Fourth Commandment. And there I was, wondering why this guy was a bit tense. However, we quickly discovered we had years of Bay Area experiences and pop culture in common.

We soon began an old-fashioned courtship. Our first date was May 24, 1987, the 50th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge, and there we were with one million bodies crowding the bridge with us, actually bending the structure in the middle. Yes, this crowd, a carnival on the Marina Green later, and a birthday dinner with friends that night, were all a magical part of our first 20 hours together. Walking home late at night with him all the

way up Nob Hill, I could not imagine how it would get better than this.

My future husband was no ordinary guy. He worked in the music business as an accountant for a music manager-producer in SF. Brad was also writing a monthly column for a baseball magazine. He was a freelance DJ at a Bay Area radio station with his own Top 40 oldies countdown show. And in

his spare time he volunteered teaching English as a Second Language to Vietnamese refugees.

Chapel of Love

We were married on March 19 — the feast day of St. Joseph, as it turned out. We had no idea at the time, of course. We wanted “tradition” so much that we had carefully researched and written our own old-fashioned marriage vows, yet we walked down the aisle to our Top 40 Godmother’s #1 hit, *Chapel of Love*. After all, we had a telegram from Ellie herself saying “The Chapel of Love will ring again today.” She knew we were “true believers.” We had kept our courtship chaste for marriage because we felt it was right and true. Certainly everyone was rooting for us, but no one dared to ask us if we were going to “start a family” or not — what with his mother part of the household. We were just too different, too old, too “something” to have expectations of normalcy in our marriage.

After we started dating, we realized we both had “discovered Christ” thanks to the airing of Franco Zeffirelli’s *Jesus of Nazareth* on television Easter 1977. It had caused quite a media evangelization moment, and we were no exception. We were thrilled to discover that we had both felt Christianity finally come alive for us during this epic. Mind you, we still did not see the need to attend a church over it.

Our life in San Francisco was difficult with the three of us under one roof. Thanks to an article about Steve Miller once living in Southern Oregon with a recording studio on his country

“ We kept searching for more...I would angst over our “mission” and why we were here, my husband... said he did not know, but that we should respond with trust in God... ”

acreage, we also moved there in 1992 for open spaces, tall trees, and a guest house for Brad's mother to live in. We even had two Romney sheep, named "Wooly and Bully," to mow all the pasture grass. Green Acres, here we come!

Why Are We Here Again?

We kept searching for more, however. Whenever I would angst over our "mission" and why we were here, my husband, in his natural wisdom, said he did not know, but that we should respond with trust in God, despite all doubts. He is the only person who could have made me accept this at the time. We had read our New King James Version Bible from Genesis to Revelation twice through already. We listened to several talk shows, spiritual and political, promoting American and Judeo-Christian values. We read and loved C.S. Lewis and his *Mere Christianity*. I had even discovered a classical school model and historic classical education. In the mid-1990's, a Reformed Protestant group had formed a school and movement around that curriculum, but there was no such church group in our area. This is a very Evangelical Christian area, but every church we visited seemed stuck in the 1970's. We walked out if there were audio-visual screens with bouncing balls instead of hymn books. Where was the history, the tradition, the gravitas?

What I had been aware of was the "alliance" between John Paul II and Ronald Reagan in the fall of communism. At the time of Reagan's funeral in June 2004, that week my tears over his passing and the fate of our country seemed to have nowhere to go. I was worried that the Pope's turn would come soon. The increasingly endangered world would face its future alone.

The Exaltation of Grief and Gratitude

It was to this convergence that we arrived at April 8, 2005, the day of John Paul II's funeral. EWTN had become my lifeline, and their coverage of the Pope's final walk to Calvary was groundbreaking. Hosts Raymond Arroyo and Fr. Richard John Neuhaus were engaging messengers, like Puck and Oberon from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, watching down for us on the streets of Rome and a grieving world, providing warmth, wisdom, and history about the Catholic Church. I remember Fr. Neuhaus remarking how it was so like our Church to take its time with the long Mass, despite the huge throng of monarchs, presidents, and world and religious leaders in their plastic chairs, together paying respects to a man who had met more people than anyone in history. Now they were all coming to him, in grief and gratitude.

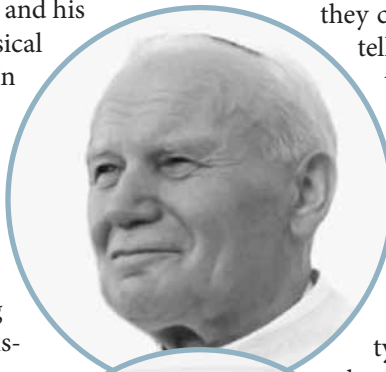
"You Did Not Choose Me, but I Chose You, and I Appointed You to Go and Bear Fruit, Fruit That Will Last" (John 10:11)

Seeing the pages of Sacred Scripture wistfully blowing in the wind atop the plain wood casket, I never felt more alone. Alone with John Paul II, that is. Why was I being called here, crying throughout these days like the pilgrims now gathered in Rome? Fr. Neuhaus had a phrase, "the exaltation of grief and gratitude," to capture what we were all feeling — the King of Jordan, George W. Bush, and me, all at the same time.

The Litany of the Saints was chanted in Latin. Somehow I understood why the Church was calling out to these long-departed and varied saints, asking for their prayers upon us. Imagine — they could pray for us from heaven! Why didn't they tell me this before? A new waterfall of tears. Why, the Church had been right about heaven all along! They alone had kept this faith, despite so much ignorance, confusion, and disdain. Popes had come and gone, and no matter. Suddenly I said aloud: "They have been right about everything for 2,000 years! And here I am, merely blubbing along in front of the television about it." All this chant music, beauty, and deep, ancient ceremonies — this Church knew what to do and did it so well.

"The Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life for His Sheep" (John 10:11)

Then came Cardinal Ratzinger's homily. The Bible quote above and the two following it in the Mass were chosen to interpret the priesthood of John Paul II. Arroyo and Neuhaus had well prepared my mind for this moment, but nothing could have prepared me for my former life melting away into a dew by the end. The Cardinal's exquisite words and insight guided us through the three main themes of John Paul II's remarkable papacy. He carefully underscored the love of literature, poetry, and theatre in the life of this man, and how it had all been used for the glory of God in his calling to follow Christ. I felt I understood why he had embraced the crucifix during his last Stations of the Cross that year. Above all, Cardinal Ratzinger presented for us how "the Holy Father found the purest reflection of God's mercy in the Mother of God." He who had lost his mother so young learned from her to conform himself to Christ. And dare I mention my own mother was named Mary? Then, tenderly, this head of the College of Cardinals and world-class theologian lifted up his head to the papal apartment and called upon the Holy Father to look down on us from his window in heaven,



...Journeys Home Continued...

and bless us. How could millions of people be so united in tears at this moment?

A week later, with *Habemus Papam!* (“We have a Pope”) and a beaming Joseph Ratzinger, now Benedict XVI, I felt so relieved at his election, as if I had been transported to the papal balcony. Here, finally, was a home, my Holy Father. His exquisite words had shaped it all. I was walking on air that day. I asked my husband to watch this transformative three hours with me again that night on television. Without any complication, he agreed we would be doing something big about this very soon.

The day following, a friend called, and I blurted out that I thought I was becoming Catholic — whatever that meant and wherever it would lead. He reunited us with a couple who had reverted (her) and converted (him) as Catholics just the year before. Together we would drive 45 minutes to a small parish dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima, which they had discovered a few weeks earlier.

Meanwhile, after prolonged illness and hospital stays, Brad’s mother died on May 13, 2005. I was reminded how my grandfather had died the same day in 1981. It only took a few more weeks for us to discover the Fatima message and the special meaning of that date.

“We’re In the Right Place”

In September, Brad and I entered the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) program in that parish and were blessed with a crusty Irish priest, Fr. William McHugh, an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, for one-on-one classes. His poetic contemplations on the Four Last Things (death, judgment, heaven, hell) even included a spontaneous singing rendition of “Poor Jud is Dead” from the same musical, *Oklahoma!* that had captivated me decades earlier. Further proof, I averred, that we had come to the right place. We were officially in the Catholic Church and truly home on Easter Vigil, April 15, 2006.

As far as problems with any doctrines of the Church were concerned — sorry, but we had none. We were there simply to learn. Once you find the pearl of great price, you never let it go. Or as G.K. Chesterton had said, the Catholic Church looks small and narrow from the outside, but open to infinite spaces from the inside. Besides, we had EWTN on almost 24/7 to keep us informed, vigilant and praying. We can thank Mother Angelica for that.

What we did have a problem with was some current Church practices. Locally, a parish I first visited wasted no time telling me that Latin, among other things which I was excited about, had been “pushed to the side” after Vatican II. Huh! We also

became somewhat distressed over modern, casual liturgical practices so prevalent out here in the wild West. We continue to wonder about cradle Catholics who seem to take their faith for granted. How can you not shout this gospel out to the world?

In 2010, we were deeply transformed after a pilgrimage with Steve Ray’s tour group to Italy, traveling from the Shroud of Turin, to Assisi, the Holy House of Loreto, the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, Padre Pio’s home, St. Michael’s Cave, the Holy Face veil in Manoppello, and then Eternal Rome, with our first steps onto St. Peter’s square, within six feet of Pope Benedict gloriously floating by in his popemobile. There we discovered the memorial in the stones beneath our feet where John Paul II had been shot. We were deeply saddened

“Once you find the pearl of great price, you never let it go. Or as G.K. Chesterton had said, the Catholic Church looks small and narrow from the outside, but open to infinite spaces from the inside.”

by the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI in 2013, even though he had gifted us with a new archbishop, Alexander Sample, only a few weeks before. The Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon is the second oldest in the west, and we pray for it and our new archbishop every day during our Rosary.

“As the Father Has Loved Me, So I Have Loved You; Abide in My Love” (John 15:9)

Our humble but feisty parish has kept us plenty busy in the almost ten years since then. We both served on the parish council and board of directors. For almost seven years I have been a catechism teacher to some amazing students. Brad joined me this year in that calling, so he is, in a way, learning his faith all over again. I’ve been blessed with helping the parish historian scan and archive our parish scrapbooks and photos, in the process learning with amazing gratitude our parish’s history. Around this time we also began sponsoring a Catholic teenage girl in India, through an international program. Our continued communication with her has been a joy. We keep praying for God’s will in our lives. And if our past is any prologue, our future story will become even more vivid — together with Him. ■



ADRIENNE and her husband, Brad, have lived in Southern Oregon since 1992. They still attend the parish of her Baptism and their Confirmation. She is currently looking to start a classical Catholic school. They praise God for their journey home and the gift of Mother Mary Angelica and EWTN.

BLOG

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