

## August 2017 CHNewsletter

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# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## Faith Is Truly a Gift

By Tammy-Beth Montgomery

**Telling the Family Can Be Tough** I dreaded this heart-to-heart talk with Benjamin, my oldest son, not only about my journey into the Church but about that of his brother as well. He was away at college now, but over the years, I had given Benjamin much of the training I myself had received from seminary. We homeschooled from kindergarten through 12th grade and not only did constant Bible study, but he had listened to the copies of the class lectures over and over because of his great interest. Though he hadn't actually attended seminary, I was sure he could pass all the tests and qualify for a Master's degree. My Reformed seminary was known for its anti-Catholic theology. Our theology books taught us according to the formula, "This is what the Catholic Church teaches; this is why they are wrong and we are right." One of the professors taught anti-Catholic doctrine with such an authoritative voice that one would have thought God Himself might be speaking.

It was on this call to Benjamin that he asked me a question that put real fear into my heart. I answered him, "I am *not* influencing your brother to come into the Church. He is doing it with me on his own free will."

"But Mom, he *trusts* you," Benjamin replied. And there he spoke my biggest concern: What if he was right? What if I was leading my youngest son into heresy? The gap between my Protestant upbringing and the teachings of the Catholic Church seemed enormous. At the beginning of this journey of faith, I still had some lingering doubts, though I had pushed them to the back of my mind. By the end of RCIA, however, I would have no doubt whatever that I was making the right decision.

Coming home to the Catholic Church would be one of the best and most important days of my life, but for the time being, I was struggling. It was one thing to go down this road alone, but what if I was wrong and taking my son down that path with me? For anyone with the same doubts or fears, all I can offer is that you need to trust that quiet voice inside you that is driving you forward. God brought you this far; He knows where He is leading you.

The journey into the Catholic Church provides both spiritual growth and precious memories. In my experience there is nothing more precious. It is truly the pearl of great price. I wouldn't trade my journey into the Church, or my experience at Easter Vigil

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Journeys Home

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

2016, when I truly “came home,” for anything. Not anything! It was worth everything it cost me.

Like most people on this journey of faith, the seeds that brought me here were sown long before I began RCIA.

### Starting Out Jewish

I was born in Lawrence, Kansas. Both my parents were Jewish, and we attended Synagogue. As a child, my mother had Catholic friends who shared the Gospel with her. After my parents’ divorce, she began taking me to a Presbyterian church. When we moved to Alabama, we attended a more liberal Congregational church, and when I got married in my early 20’s, I began going to my husband’s Southern Baptist church. This background gave me a great love and appreciation for the Lord. So much so, I pursued two seminary degrees: one in Christian Studies and the other in Biblical Counseling. I loved God; I loved spending time in His Word; I loved ministry. But I always had a feeling that something was missing. I just couldn’t put my finger on it.

The earliest seed, then, was my Jewish roots. I never found the rich liturgical fulfillment I experienced as a young girl in Synagogue when I attended the Protestant congregations. Unfortunately, where I did find liturgy, it was devoid of anything that could resemble Christianity’s Jewish roots. Imagine my delight when I found both the liturgy and the readings not only from the Gospels and Epistles,

but equally from the Psalms and the rest of the Old Testament that our Jewish forefathers used — in the Catholic Church! Not only that, but the Church had cantors! My earliest memories are of men chanting the Hebrew Scriptures.

Much later, there were a few major lightposts that were landmarks as I passed through what I call the “Galilee Years,” since that was the name of the church I attended.

### The Galilee Years: Standing on the Shore

• **Lightpost 1:** I believed John, chapter 6, literally for three years before coming into the Church. John 6 teaches us “the true Presence” — that is, the bread and wine become Jesus’ Body and Blood, given for us. Hermeneutically it *has* to be literal. To take it symbolically is to break *huge* hermeneutical rules. Once I realized that the

Catholic Church has Christ Himself, and we are commanded to partake of Him to have *life* in Him, that alone made the decision pretty clear.

• **Lightpost 2:** To my great surprise, I discovered the rich history of the Church and that the early Church was undeniably *Catholic*. The Church up to Luther was undeniably *Catholic*. The doctrine of the Church Fathers was, again, undeniably *Catholic*.

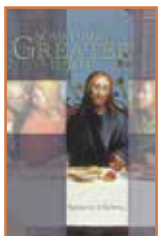
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“

I loved God, I loved spending time in His Word; I loved ministry; But I always had a feeling that something was missing. I just couldn’t put my finger on it.

”

## FEATURED RESOURCES



### Something Greater is Here

— By Kenneth Howell

Kenneth Howell was a committed Christian who had served in Presbyterian ministry and taught in a Protestant seminary. But two nagging questions wouldn’t let him alone. Is what he believes really true, and is this all there is to being a Christian?

Could there be a deeper spirituality out there that he had not yet encountered? His pursuit of truth, goodness, and love gradually led him into a world he had only vaguely glimpsed from afar. It was the fullness of truth. This book tells his inspiring, insightful, and unexpected journey towards the Catholic Church.

\$35

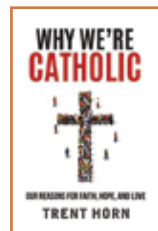
Receive a *Something Greater is Here* for a donation of \$35.

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Receive *Why We’re Catholic* for a donation of \$50.

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Receive *Something Greater is Here* and *Why We’re Catholic* for a donation of \$75.



### Why We’re Catholic — By Trent Horn

*Why We’re Catholic* is the groundbreaking new resource by apologist Trent Horn — that one, general book you can hand to anyone as a starting point for helping them find their way into, or back to, the practice of the Catholic Faith. *Why* do we believe that God exists, that He became a man and came to save us, that what looks like a wafer of bread is actually His Body? *Why* do we believe that He inspired a holy book and founded an infallible Church to teach us the one true way to live? Beginning with how we can know reality and ending with our hope of eternal life, it’s the perfect way to help skeptics and seekers (or Catholics who want to firm up their faith) understand the evidence that bolsters our belief — and brings us joy.

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# The Axe Murderer and the Crocodile: More on How I Evangelize Atheists

By Kenneth Hensley, Pastoral Care & Resources Consultant

“It’s wrong, God or no God, to torture little children just for the fun of it. What basis we have for making this confident moral claim is another thing, but we know, if we know anything, if we have any moral understanding at all, that that is wrong.”

These words, spoken by atheist Kai Nielsen in debate with Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland (*Does God Exist?* p. 99) illustrate beautifully the tension the thoughtful atheist finds himself in when it comes to the issue of morality.

Notice that on the one hand, Nielsen insists that he “knows” the torture of little children is “wrong.” He *knows* this. On the other hand, he hints at the difficulty he has providing a philosophical “basis” for his sure knowledge when he writes, “What *basis* we have for making this confident moral claim is another thing.”

In effect, he’s saying, “Look, I understand that as someone who believes that nothing exists but material substances interacting according to unbending chemical and physical laws, I may have a hard time explaining *exactly how* I can make absolute moral statements. But whatever ... I still *know* that the torture of little children is absolutely morally wrong.”

So let’s ask the question: On what basis, Mr. Kielsen, *do* you make “this confident moral claim”? In fact, forget “confident”: on what basis do you make moral claims of *any* kind?

After all, according to Richard Dawkins, isn’t our godless universe one in which there is “no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference”? (*River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*, p. 33).

From an atheistic premise, how can “right” and “wrong” be anything more than words we use to describe what we approve or disapprove? What we find helpful or unhelpful? What is to our tastes and what is not?

In which case, why doesn’t Nielsen just say he doesn’t approve of the torture of little children for fun and leave it at that?

## A Common Misunderstanding

When I discuss the issue of morality with those who doubt or deny the existence of God, it’s common to hear in response:

“It sounds like you’re saying that atheists don’t believe in right and wrong, or that atheists are bad people.”

In fact, what I believe is nearly the reverse. It’s that because atheists have been created in the image and likeness of God and have the moral law etched into their very beings, they cannot *escape* believing in right and wrong. Whatever they may *say* about the non-existence of God and the non-existence of moral law in a materialist universe, like Kai Nielsen, they care about right and wrong and wind up living more or less as though they believed in the existence of a real and absolute moral law.

As Nielsen says, “God or no God ... we *know* ...”

My point is *not* that atheists don’t believe in right and wrong or that they are bad people. My point is that *on the basis of their worldview*, they cannot *account* for right and wrong. They cannot provide a *basis* for the existence or authority of an objective moral law.

You can’t get soup from a stone and what I tell my atheist friends is that you can’t get moral law from material substances, no matter how much you tweek them by random mutation and natural selection.

If atheists wish to be consistent with what they say they believe about the nature of the universe in which we live, they should admit that “right” and “wrong” are ultimately illusory and abandon belief in them. If there is no God, morality is, as atheist philosopher Michael Ruse says, nothing more than “an aid to survival and reproduction.”

Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” they think they are referring [to a moral law existing] above and beyond themselves .... Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction ... an ephemeral

product of the evolutionary process .... It has no existence or being beyond this and any deeper meaning is illusory (*The Darwinian Paradigm*, pp. 262-269).

## The Happiness Standard

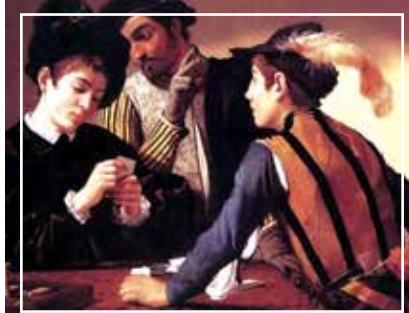
My experience is that simply drawing out this logical implication of the materialist worldview in the realm of morals can make some atheists stop and think — precisely because, like Nielsen, they *know* right and wrong are real and morality is important to them.

Others will respond as though there’s no problem: “Hey, we don’t need God in order to have ethics!”

For instance, take Peter Singer, Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University. He believes we can derive our own moral law from a consideration of what will bring about the greatest total amount of happiness in each situation.

On this basis he argues for abortion. And it’s interesting to follow his logic because it’s the exact opposite of how most pro-abortion advocates argue. Most accept the universally held premise that “innocent human life” should not be taken, but then reject the notion that the unborn fetus counts as “innocent human life.”

Singer does the reverse. He accepts the premise that the unborn fetus is an innocent human life (it’s total fiction, he says, to try to argue otherwise). What he rejects is the idea that innocent human





life should never be taken. Rather, he argues that innocent human life *can* be taken, if the result is a greater total amount of happiness.

It's a matter of weighing things out on the scales of happiness.

Using this same rationale, Singer also argues in favor of infanticide — at least in certain cases. In his book *Practical Ethics*, he explains how the happiness standard works in practice:

When the death of a disabled infant will lead to the birth of another infant with better prospects for a happy life, the total amount of happiness will be greater if the disabled infant is killed. The loss of a happy life for the first infant is outweighed by the gain of a happier life for the second [not yet born]. Therefore, if killing the hemophiliac infant has no adverse effect on others, according to the total view, it would be right to kill him. (Quoted in *First Things*, May 2002, Letter from Wesley J. Smith)

Now, besides the fact that Singer's logic here is utterly indistinguishable from that used by Nazi doctors to justify the elimination of the disabled and others with lives not worth living, some may have problems with this moral theory.

The question arises: what act *couldn't* be justified if the standard of evaluation doesn't include an act's intrinsic goodness or evil but only the amount of happiness that accrues to others?

## Can Science Answer Moral Questions?

Sam Harris presents a variation on the happiness theme. In his lecture "The Moral Landscape" (available on YouTube) Harris argues that since (a) morality is concerned about increasing the happiness and well-being of conscious creatures (especially humans) and (b) these questions have factual answers, (c) these are questions science *could* over time answer for us — even as science answers all sorts of other factual questions.

For instance, does abortion on demand tend toward the enhancement of human happiness and well-being? Would allowance for infanticide on demand contribute to this goal? What about same-sex marriage? Science may not know the answers at this point. But these questions must have factual answers, and as science finds those answers then we'll all know what is right and wrong on these issues.

That is Harris's argument. And it can seem at first blush that maybe he has a point. After all, Christianity has always taught that the moral law of God is for mankind's ultimate happiness and good. And Christianity has always taught that this moral law is written into nature and therefore accessible to reason. So why couldn't reason/science over time figure out what is most conducive to the enhancement of human happiness and well-being?

This, we would call "right." Whatever doesn't tend to human flourishing, we would call "wrong."

There's our "moral law."

But the more you listen to Harris the more you realize that he isn't thinking in "moral" terms at all. When Harris uses the word, he's thinking in purely practical, utilitarian terms. Just like Peter Singer.

Whereas most anyone would say that torturing little children is intrinsically "evil," and that one who does this is "guilty" in a moral sense and "morally accountable" for his actions, Harris would prefer

to say that the one who tortures little children is "really lousy at enhancing human happiness and well-being" and needs to be treated, well, as we might treat a dangerous crocodile that has somehow gotten loose. We don't slap moral labels on the crocodile; we simply stop it from harming anyone.

You think I'm creating a straw man here. I'm not.

In fact, Harris explicitly equates the way we should think of and treat an axe murderer with the way we should think of and treat a dangerous crocodile. When a crocodile attacks and tries to eat you, Harris explains, assuming you survive, you don't think of the attack in moral terms. You don't think of the crocodile as being "evil" or "guilty" or "morally accountable." You just want to do whatever is necessary to enhance human happiness.

You understand that as a crocodile, it was only doing exactly what it has no choice but to do, given its nature.

The same holds for someone who attacks and tries to kill you with an axe. The axe murderer is only doing, Harris explains, what he *must do* given his nature, background, brain chemistry, etc. Because of this, there is no reason to start throwing around terms like "evil" or "guilt" or "punishment." Rather, we should deal with him as we would a dangerous crocodile or snake. Cage him, but don't call him names.

Personally, I appreciate Harris's consistency. I really do, because it brings clarity.

After all, in a universe without God, where morality is, as Michael Ruse has explained, nothing more than a "biological adaptation" like hands and feet and teeth, where morality is seen as nothing more than "an aid to survival and reproduction," where "any deeper meaning is illusory," how else could right and wrong be conceived but in purely practical terms?

Sort of like traffic laws. We don't enact traffic laws because we think there's something intrinsically "immoral" or "evil" about, for instance, driving on the left side of a road. (I hope there isn't. I have some friends in England and Ireland.) We do it for the purely practical purpose of enhancing human happiness and well-being by keeping our streets from becoming rivers of blood.

And when Harris conceives of axe murderers as he conceives of crocodiles, and laws of morality as akin to traffic laws, he's being consistent with his naturalist worldview.

## Conclusion

For the atheist, moral law, right and wrong, must boil down to something along the lines of traffic laws or rules for a healthy diet. It just isn't healthy to go around torturing little children for fun.

Of course, once again the logic of atheism drives us to conclusions that seem completely at odds with our intuitive sense of things as human beings. Who has ever looked at Charles Manson or Idi Amin or Pol Pot or Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler and thought to himself, "Yeah, those men weren't very good at the enhancement of human happiness and well-being. There's no reason to call them evil or desire to hold them morally accountable. After all, what they did is only what they had to do given their particular natures. No different than a rattlesnake biting someone who steps on it."

I mean, who on earth actually thinks like this and believes it? ■



### The Luminous Mysteries

By Marcus Grodi

"The Luminous Mysteries"

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Like many Evangelical converts to the Church, devotion to Mary was one of the harder hurdles for me to get over. Protestants have so many negative misunderstandings concerning the Catholic devotion to Our Lady — and it seems these all become hyper-focused in the Rosary. I mean, didn't Jesus warn His disciples against praying with repetition?

But by God's grace, once my heart was opened to the truth of the Catholic Faith and the truth about what she teaches about devotion to Our Lady, I came to understand the truth about the Rosary — about the benefits of meditating on the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries of our Lord's birth, life, death, Resurrection, Ascension, and coming of the Holy Spirit. And it took seeing these events in the life of our Lord through the eyes of the Church to also see them through the eyes of Our Lord's Mother and her necessary place in salvation history, through the Annunciation, Visitation, Presentation, finding of Jesus in the temple, her Assumption, and her Coronation.

Yet then, just when I'm getting comfortable with these Mysteries, especially how to organize my week according to these Mysteries, good Pope John Paul II has the audacity to add an entire new set of Mysteries — the Luminous Mysteries! I remember life-long Catholic friends being a bit befuddled about how to respond to this — how to meditate on these new Mysteries and how to restructure their weekly devotional routine. (Our CHResources had even developed and published a special triangular Desktop Rosary, to help converts become comfortable with praying the Rosary, but now this had become obsolete!) Some Catholics even questioned the wisdom of our good Pope!

I'm sure you know the five Luminous Mysteries, which emphasize five events from the earthly ministry of Our Lord: His Baptism in the Jordan river, the wedding at Cana, the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom, His Transfiguration on the Mount, and His giving of the Eucharist. Non-Catholic Christians may recognize these events as, indeed, important events in the life of Jesus, but they may wonder why these five? There are so many other important events that could have been included instead, such as the stilling of the storm, the feeding of the five thousand, the clearing of the temple, or the choosing of the twelve. Why these five?

One morning recently, I continued my reading of *This Tremendous Lover* by Fr. M. Eugene Boylan (The Newman Press, 1954), a Catholic spiritual classic that was highly recommended to me by CHNetwork board member Monsignor Frank Lane. It was a beautiful day and I had time, so I went for a walk along the dirt road by our farm with our dog Beatrice Buttercup. Since it was Thursday, I began praying the five

Luminous Mysteries, and combined with what I had just read from Fr. Boylan, I was struck and humbled by the wisdom of Saint John Paul. Mysteries mean that there is a deeper meaning to the events in the life of Christ. A more obvious, literal meaning points to a deeper spiritual meaning that is often only seen through the eyes of the Church.

In the third chapter of his book, on the Redemption, Fr. M. Eugene Boylan wrote, "The most obvious part of [our Lord's] plan for extending His benefits to all men is His Church ... For the Church is not merely an organization, it is a vital organism; it is, in fact, the living Body of Christ ... Let us here notice two vital processes that are found in this society, which will illustrate its unique character" (p. 23). The second mysterious "vital process" that Fr. Boylan emphasized is Our Lady, Mary, the Mother of Our Lord, the Mother of God. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church has proclaimed that she is "the Mother of the living, the new Eve, who was to be the custodian and the dispensatrix of the life that Our Lord was pouring out for our Salvation" (p. 25).

The first mysterious "vital process," though, which gives "evidence of the extraordinary nature of the Church as a vital organism ... is the sacramental system" (p. 24). With this thought, the Luminous Mysteries, and the wisdom of Saint John Paul, came alive to me — they point to the establishment of the sacraments in the life of Christ.

The Baptism of Jesus points to the singular importance of this rite as the beginning of our justification, of our new life in Christ, in which, by grace and faith, we become new creations in Christ, adopted children of God. Even though this was not necessary for our Lord, He wanted to emphasize its singular importance, so He submitted Himself to the baptismal hands of John the Baptist. When we pray this Mystery, we can meditate on how we have been "born again" by grace through faith and the waters of Baptism.

The wedding at Cana points to the Sacrament of Marriage through which a man and a woman are made one through the grace of the Holy Spirit. When we pray this Mystery, we can meditate on how members of the Mystical Body of Christ become channels of new members of God's family, through giving natural birth and then supernatural birth through Baptism which incorporates them into God's mystical family.

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The proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom points to the Sacrament of Holy Orders, through which God calls and anoints His new Apostles (bishops) and their helpers, priests and deacons, and as St. Paul instructs, these gifts were given for equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4). This Mystery, therefore, points to how our Lord empowers His baptized adopted brethren to help others enter into the Mystical Body of Christ.

In the Transfiguration, Scripture tells us that “his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light” (Mt 17:2). In His High Priestly prayer, our Lord prayed, “Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee ... The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one” (Jn 17:1,22). Then Saint Peter later wrote a very mysterious description of how we are changed in Christ: “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:3-4). This Luminous Mystery points to how, by grace and our obedience in response to grace, we grow to become more like Christ, sharing in His glory and divine nature. This Mystery, therefore, points to the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick, through which new life is restored through the hands of Christ’s anointed priests.

And finally, the last Luminous Mystery points, of course, to the gift of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, by which we are united with Our Lord and receive the gift of eternal life.

Non-Catholic Christians, who do not believe in the power, the truth, and the necessity of the sacraments, cannot appreciate the meanings of these important five mysteries. They see Baptism as nothing more than an empty sign of faith, a mere rite of passage; they see marriage as mere vows made by a man and woman to love one another; they see the proclamation of the gospel as words shared in evangelization; they see the Transfiguration as only pointing to a truth about Christ, and nothing about us; and they see the Lord’s Supper as but a symbol of an event that happened two thousand years ago.

But through the eyes of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, we are able to see that these Luminous Mysteries, and the sacraments to which they point, also point to how much we have been changed by grace through faith. Conversion to Christ is not merely a change of our mind and heart, intellect and will; we become adopted children of God, change by grace, and, as St. John emphasizes, “and so we are” (1 Jn 3:1b). He goes on to exclaim: “Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (1 Jn 3:2-3).

This is why we pray the Luminous Mysteries: we meditate on how He has shown Himself so that we can see how we are to be like Him — how we have been changed by the graces of the sacraments to be like Him — and how, by the same graces, we can purify ourselves “as he is pure.” ■

## CHNetwork Staff Interview



**What is your name and title?**

Scott Scholten, Director of Studio/Media

**How long have you worked for the CHNetwork?** I have had the joy of working with the Coming Home Network for 8 1/2 years.

**Before working at the Coming Home Network, what was the most unusual or**

**interesting job you’ve ever had?** I have to say, that the most “interesting” job I’ve had is actually the one I enjoy right now! As for the most unusual, early in my career I was a disk jockey at a “country” radio station in Bloomington, Illinois, and for a short time I was also a General Assignment News Reporter for the ABC television station in Peoria, Illinois. I quickly realized I enjoyed being “behind the camera” in television much more than being in front of it!

**How would you describe your job to a stranger on an airplane?** This actually happened to me just a few weeks ago on a flight to Chicago! The woman sitting next to me turned to me and said “Are you religious?” I said, “Why do you ask?” and she replied, “I see that you are wearing a gold crucifix on the chain around your neck, so I’m guessing you’re religious.” I responded that yes, I’m a Catholic and that I have the blessing of working for a Catholic apostolate called the Coming Home Network

where we assist Protestant clergy and laity who are interested in coming into, or returning to, the Catholic Faith. As for my specific job, I am the Studio Director, and I oversee the production of EWTN’s weekly television program, *The Journey Home*. It is my responsibility to find/book guests for the weekly one-hour program that we tape here in central Ohio. I am also the director for the production of this program as well as all other audio/video programs we produce in our small studio.

**What does a typical day in the office look like to you?**

One of the joys of my job is that there really isn’t a “typical” day. On days we are taping programs such as *The Journey Home*, I spend the day in the control room directing the production, choosing camera shots, etc. When we are not in the studio taping programs, most of my time is spent looking through the many recommendations we receive each week for *Journey Home* guests and (with much help from the Holy Spirit and other CHN staff) deciding which guests to invite to be on our program. I also work out all the travel logistics for bringing guests here to Ohio.

**What is the most rewarding part of your job?** Without a doubt, the most rewarding part of my job is having the opportunity to meet a new *Journey Home* guest each week. I typically spend time with each guest before we tape the program to



answer any questions they may have about being a guest with Marcus. *The Journey Home* program has been on every week for nearly 20 years, and, as such, we have had over 800 guests on the program. People often say to me that after that many programs, the “journeys” must all start to sound the same. Quite the contrary! Every guest has a unique “journey,” and it’s a blessing to hear it first hand from each one. It’s amazing how much I actually learn from every guest!

**What is one fact that people would be surprised about if they knew about you?** As a teenager growing up in the 1970’s, I loved listening to “Top 40” radio in the Chicago area. There were two “Top 40” radio stations in Chicago that competed against each other and were typically having contests to lure in listeners. Just two weeks after receiving my driver’s license at the age of 16, I won a new car from one of those “Top 40” radio stations in Chicago.

**Who do you nominate to be our next staff interview?** I nominate Wendy Hart! ■

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## A BEAUTIFUL UPGRADE



We’ve recently launched a beautiful and powerful new version of our website, [CHNetwork.org](http://CHNetwork.org). Along with the overhaul to

the look and feel of the site, you’ll notice six new main pages: Conversion Stories, Answers, Connection, Spiritual Direction, and Vocational Support. Take a few minutes to explore, share the new website with others, and let us know what you think!

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# Prayer List



## Clergy

- For a man who is now reconsidering the Catholic Church through the reading of the Church Fathers in his seminary studies.
- For Doug, an Evangelical minister, that the Holy Spirit would guide his earnest prayers concerning his entry into full communion with the Catholic Church.
- For a Presbyterian minister in Pennsylvania, that God would show him how to speak the truth in love to his elders and presbytery.
- For the wife of a minister, that the Lord would clear a path for her and enable her to return to the Catholic Faith.
- For Joe, an Evangelical minister, that as he draws closer to the Catholic Church his wife may become more open to the Church.
- For a Salvation Army Officer in Australia, that as she begins the process of entering the Catholic Church God would bless her with His peace that passes all understanding.
- For Vince in Ohio, that our Lord Jesus would guide him home to the sacraments and graces of the Catholic Church.
- For Holly, a former seminarian, that her husband's barriers to the ancient faith of the Catholic Church may crumble through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

■ For a non-denominational minister in Virginia, that the Lord Jesus would guide his every step to the fullness of the Catholic Faith.

■ For Curtis, a minister in California, that, as he seeks employment outside of ministry, God would guide him to a good position where he may support his family.

## Laity

- For Courtney who is waiting to begin RCIA and is continuing to learn more about the Catholic Church.
- For a fallen-away Catholic who has concerns about obtaining annulments and also the Catholic emphasis on Mary.
- For a Baptist who is wondering whether she should continue her pursuit of the Catholic Faith after watching a disturbing documentary about priestly abuse.
- For Melissa who is having a hard time navigating relationships with family members who don't understand her conversion.
- For Cindy who is watching EWTN and learning more about the Catholic Church, that her searching yield abundant fruit in her spiritual life.
- For a woman who is attending a Seventh-day Adventist church and has many questions about the Catholic Church.

■ For Barry who feels himself drawn towards the Church and is praying the Rosary.

■ For a woman in Canada who is struggling with various issues, that she finds a good counselor to help her heal from past hurts and move forward with her faith journey.

■ For Brian who is reading and is reconsidering the claims of Christianity.

■ For Becky who is conflicted between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, that the Holy Spirit guide her search for truth.

■ For a girl in India who is navigating issues as she seeks to return to the Catholic Church, that she be given good local support for her journey.

■ For Pete in the United Kingdom who is hoping to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church soon.

■ For Wade, a convert who is having some continuing struggles, that he will find a good priest for spiritual direction.

■ For Mary as she moves forward with her faith journey and develops a devotional life.

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](mailto: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*: Wednesday 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

#### August 7

Damian Santiago\*  
 Formerly unchurched

#### August 14

Melissa Zelniker-Presser\*  
 Convert from Judaism

#### August 21

Marie Joseph\*  
 Revert

#### August 28

Bryan Cross\*  
 Former Pentecostal, Reformed Presbyterian, and Anglican

To access the full archive of past Journey Home programs go to [chnetwork.org/journey-home](http://chnetwork.org/journey-home).

\*Schedule is subject to change.



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

► “Journeys Home” continued from page 2

Even the early Protestants retained a lot of Catholic theology. Luther had a devotion to our Blessed Mother and so did Charles Wesley. Wesley would pray a Rosary while riding on horseback from one evangelistic event to another. And thus John Henry Newman’s words became imprinted on my soul and life: “To be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant.” I was tired of protesting. (Along the way, I had discovered that “Protestant” referred to *protesting* against the Catholic Church.)

- **Lightpost 3:** I came to the conclusion that there had to be an authority in the Church. So many of the Protestant congregations disagreed with each other. They couldn’t agree, even within their own denominations, on how to be saved. I knew God couldn’t have left His true Church with this confusion. For several years I spent hours each day searching through the Scriptures and through piles of theology books. The more I read, the more I felt “tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14).
- **Lightpost 4:** I was drawn to the Rosary but fought it. It was too “Catholic,” so I made “Protestant beads.” They are actually very popular, and they serve as a benign starting place for someone looking into Catholic prayer practice. Their physical form is similar to rosary beads, but they have a different bead configuration. I didn’t pray Hail Marys on them. Instead, I prayed a verse from the Psalms or the Jesus Prayer (“Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”). Soon I began giving them away and sharing about them with my friends. This practice was nice, but it didn’t bring me the peace the actual Rosary did — so back I went to the Rosary!
- **Lightpost 5:** I watched a close friend enter the Catholic Church and marveled at how she soared spiritually. I was amazed at such growth because I knew her to be an active believer before, but wow did she grow when she became Catholic and began receiving the Blessed Host! Her life witness over the first year she was Catholic was one of the most powerful factors in my own conversion. Things that used to upset her she faced with faith. She had more joy. She had more courage. She had a different outlook. I wanted what she had!

### Feeling the Need to Move Forward

About a year before I became Catholic, I began feeling so uncomfortable at my Baptist Church that I knew I would have to retire from my ministries and leave.

This was really difficult for me. I had begun serving in ministry as a teenager and had devoted my life to serving Him. Would I even find a place in the Catholic Church? I was struggling to leave over 30 years of ministry in the Protestant congregation and go into the unknown. But God stepped in, and I felt the Holy Spirit speak to me while I was out walking one day. I was praying about giving up

a lifetime of service, and God said to my heart, “Are you serving for you or for me?”

“For you,” I replied.

Then He said, “Do you want to serve me the way *you* want or the way *I* want?” Ouch!

Well, that settled it. The Spirit always has a way of cutting to the chase, doesn’t He?

During this time, I was still struggling with Mary. I had come to terms with all the other areas that were different from my own past beliefs: the Sacrament of Reconciliation, purgatory, the communion of the saints, calling a priest “Father” ... but Mary was a most stubborn obstacle. I felt like I would risk idolatry if I spoke with her. I was concerned that the titles given to her were too much like Christ’s titles. The more I studied, the more I understood, yet Mary truly was a journey of the heart more than of the mind. I decided to do the same thing Kimberly Hahn had done: when I found a penny, I thought “Your momma (Mary) loves you!” Simple as that was, it opened my heart to take this journey by faith and to take Mary by faith. She is now simply so precious to me and such an example. It is amazing how some of our biggest obstacles become our biggest treasures!

### The End of Doubting, the Beginning of Desire

The third Mass my youngest son and I attended was a weekday Mass. It was an especially beautiful Mass, with an African baby dedication, complete with the family in African dress and clapping. The infant had been baptized just a few days before. Our parish is cul-

A poster for the CHNetwork Fall Retreat. The background is a warm, golden-hour photograph of a large, ornate chandelier hanging in a room with stone walls. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, in large white letters, is "CHNETWORK FALL RETREAT". Below that, in smaller white letters, is "ORLANDO, FL" and "SEPTEMBER 25-28, 2017". On the right side, there is a vertical banner that reads "CHNETWORK FALL RETREAT". In the center, there is a white box with black text that provides details about the retreat, including the location, dates, costs, and contact information.

**CHNETWORK FALL RETREAT**  
**ORLANDO, FL**  
**SEPTEMBER 25-28, 2017**

Our fall retreat will be held in Orlando, FL September 25-28 at the San Pedro Spiritual Development Center.

Open to all journeyers and Catholic converts who are members of the CHNetwork, the retreats are a great opportunity to meet (or catch up with) CHNetwork staff and other members, to enter into prayer, attend Mass, reflect on the “journey home” and the call to lifelong conversion to Jesus, and of course to enjoy some good food and fellowship.

The costs are \$325/person double room, \$440/person single room, or \$250/person if no room is needed.

Visit [CHNetwork.org/retreats](http://CHNetwork.org/retreats) for more information or to RSVP. Please feel free to email [retreats@chnetwork.org](mailto:retreats@chnetwork.org) or call 740-450-1175 with any questions about this or other CHNetwork events.

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

turally diverse and honors the customs of each ethnic group when possible. Apparently that dedication was a first for our parish, and I was blessed to be there. The church steeple bells chimed a hymn after the service as we left. Walking to the car, my son commented on the awesomeness of that dedication and service: “I don’t think I can ever set foot in a Protestant church again.” I felt the same way.

Please don’t misunderstand. There was no hatred. There was no resentment. It was a strange and foreign moment. My son was 18 and had been raised in a Baptist church his entire life. I had been involved in Baptist and Presbyterian churches for over three decades. It was also a foreign feeling because I had loved the churches I had been a part of. I was thankful for my church family. They were and still are a gift from God, but something in me had changed. I longed for the Eucharist, and I would sacrifice anything to have it. The Catholic Church was where I had to be.

During my journey into the church I wrote: *I feel a bit like a snake shedding its old skin. God is transforming me, and it is uncomfortable. I have to admit, He is using this waiting period.* The waiting period was difficult and seemed very long to me. I was literally champing at the bit to partake in the Eucharist. I was consumed with the thought nearly every moment of every day. I wanted nothing else. During that time I really learned what it was to “pray without ceasing.” I had few friends who understood what I was going through, my desperation. It was a very private walk.

### Those Who Don’t Understand — And Those Who Do

It was painfully obvious that the Protestant friends I had that were not loudly opposed to my actions were doing all they could to not

be too verbally negative about my decision. They certainly didn’t understand my longing. I was thankful for their love and concern for me, but I desperately wanted to share with someone this wonderful treasure I had found!

Cradle Catholics (Catholics from birth) had not experienced what I was going through, so while they gave me invaluable support, encouraging words and good counsel — and I am truly grateful for this — they couldn’t empathize. In a way, it was a very lonely time.

Thankfully, God began bringing new friends — Catholic friends — into my life. He is a wonderful provider. He even used my new-found knowledge and enthusiasm to reignite the fire in one of those new friends, who had been a Catholic for 30 years. She had never understood why she believed what she

believed. I was more than happy to enlighten her!

During this time, I also leaned on my friend who I witnessed “come home” before me, as well as my sponsor. I also corresponded with a mentor from the Coming Home Network. This is a ministry where those on the journey can request a mentor who is also a Catholic convert and has a similar background. This is an invaluable ministry I’d encourage anyone on the journey to utilize; it certainly

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### WHAT IS THE CHNETWORK?

The Coming Home Network International was established to help non-Catholic Christians, clergy and laity, discover the beauty and truth of the Catholic Church.

Through the one-on-one outreach of our pastoral staff and volunteers, our monthly CHNewsletter, regional retreats, social media, and through the online community forums and groups at our website CHNetwork.org, we strive to ensure that each person touched by grace has fellowship and resources for their journey of continual conversion to Jesus Christ.



**CHNetwork**  
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info@chnetwork.org



The Coming Home  
Network International



**www.chnetwork.org**

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

was a blessing to me. And now I get to be a mentor for someone else! God is good. Remember, He will use *everything you go through* — nothing is wasted.

Again, the waiting period felt long for me. I was blessed to have a newly ordained priest who helped me through this time period and was faithful to pray for me, comfort me, listen to my fears, and deal with all my paperwork! I don't know what I would have done without him. He was truly a gift from the Lord in my journey. I was awaiting an annulment. My husband and I had been married over 25 years at the time, but before we were married I had been in a three-month abusive marriage in my early 20's that needed to be cleared up. Daily I prayed, hoping the Church would receive all the witness accounts in time and that the paperwork would get completed in time.

There were friendships that were uprooted and people that loved me but didn't understand what I was doing. If it took longer than Easter Vigil to come in, I was sure I would just die. Seriously, I don't mean this as a turn of the phrase. It literally felt like I would die of anticipation and a broken heart if everything could not be put in order in time.

Both my oldest son and my husband chose not to come on this journey with me. They both feel fulfilled in their Protestant church and don't really understand Catholic doctrine — and at this point, they don't want to. They have been very supportive, but there have also been many difficult conversations. I hope someday I can share my love of the church fully with my love, but for now, I am thrilled to at least have his support.

### Friends Share and Support

Meanwhile, I found solace in a Scripture passage that was not in my old Bible; it was only in my new Catholic Bible. It is found in Sirach 2:1–7 RSVCE2:

My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord,  
prepare yourself for temptation.

Set your heart right and be steadfast,  
and do not be hasty in time of calamity.

Cleave to him and do not depart,  
that you may be honored at the end of your life.

Accept whatever is brought upon you,  
and in changes that humble you be patient.

For gold is tested in the fire,  
and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.

Trust in him, and he will help you;  
make your ways straight, and hope in him.

You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy;  
and turn not aside, lest you fall.

When I confided my fears to a Catholic friend, she wrote me back the following words, in which I have found comfort and strength. I hope that it will provide you, too, food for the journey: “St. Teresa knew the only thing to be frightened of in this life is sin, because that is the only thing that can separate us from the love of God, not the evil one's empty threats or scare tactics.”

God changed me during that waiting period. I stopped praying the way that I had all my life when I encountered discomfort, which was for God to “take away anything that is uncomfortable or pain-

ful.” Because of the model of the saints, I began to think, “*This is nothing compared to what Christ went through. The saints bore worse things patiently and to the glory of God.*” Then I prayed for God to help me honor Him in this. Don't ever let anyone tell you that the testimony of the Catholic Church, and those who make it up, isn't powerful!

My friend also encouraged me with this thought, and I want to encourage you with it: “Every single stone that you step on will become the road in someone else's journey.” In God's economy nothing is wasted. Your journey — everything you are going through — will help others.

The exact same weekend that I gave my testimony to this year's RCIA class — one year ago, coincidentally I had a significant event in my walk that I journaled:

In the nave, while waiting for Mass to start, I was looking at the cross and telling God how much I loved him. At that very moment one of the Eucharistic ministers walked by me and stopped. He put his hand on my shoulder and said, “Do you know God loves you?” As he continued on to his seat, I was so taken aback that someone had spoken out loud in that holy place that I didn't think quickly enough to respond. However, I soon realized that God had blessed me so much by having someone tell me for Him, “I love you too” — in the very moment that I was praying and saying those very words to God.

### My Turn to Share

Please allow me to be that someone who tells *you*: God loves you, and this is why He has brought you right here, right now.

The wait to come into the Church can be both beautiful and tumultuous. We have to answer our own doubts, settle our own issues; some of us have past marriages to clear up, and we have to grow in our relationship with God's Church. In all these things, God grows us and heals us.

Some have given their lives for the Church. Their testimony reminds me that, if I have Jesus, I have enough. And if you are like me, much of the reason you want to “come home to Rome” is to partake weekly of His Body and Blood — to truly “have Jesus.” *This is enough. It is all we need.*

I'll close with a quote from my younger son, something he said after he came into the Church. He said, “I've had the Eucharist. I can die now.” Me too.

God cares for you so much. Remember, every single stone you step on will become the road in someone else's journey — because this is the Church. He brought you this far; trust Him for the rest. ■



DR. TAMMY-BETH MONTGOMERY *has served in teaching and women's ministries for over two decades. She has also served as a grief counselor in several nursing homes. She was received into the Catholic Church in Austin, Texas at the Easter Vigil 2016 and now serves as a catechist in RCIA and as the chastity educator in her parish's Pro-Life and Chaste Living ministry.*



**The Coming Home Network International**

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# CHNETWORK FALL RETREAT

ORLANDO, FL  
SEPTEMBER 25-28, 2017

## JOIN US

in a great opportunity to meet CHNetwork staff and other members, to enter into prayer, attend Mass, reflect on the "journey home" and the call to lifelong conversion to Jesus, and of course to enjoy some good food and fellowship.

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