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# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## My Journey Home

By Clarence White

I am from Appalachia, born in Charleston, WV in November of 1959. My family lived along the Coal River in tiny communities near Whitesville, WV. My dad was a foreman at a nearby mine.

My paternal grandmother, Verlie, lived next door. She was very special to me and used to relate the story of the morning after I was born. My father came to her door and said, "It is a boy, but they do not think he will live long." I was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around my neck, causing cerebral palsy. I lived, but there was a long litany of things my parents were told I would never be able to do: walk, read and write, go to school, ride a bike, procure gainful employment, marry and have a family, etc. By the grace of God, I overcame every one of those obstacles.

"Mammaw" Verlie was the cook at my elementary school. I really never knew how different I was from the other children until I went to school. I remember looking out the screen door at the neighborhood kids at play and wanting to be able to join in, but the degree of difference startled me, as the school children made fun of me. Children can be cruel, even without intending to be. I used to tell my first grade teacher, Mrs. Radcliffe, that I had to go to the restroom, but I always stopped by the kitchen on the way back, and my grandmother would pour me a glass of milk and give me a biscuit. I thought I was really getting away with something until, years later, it dawned on me — my grandmother and Mrs. Radcliffe were good friends, so she must have been aware of what was going on!

Before I entered first grade, I was enrolled in Head Start. I now have three academic degrees and even have done a presentation at Oxford, but I think maybe being a Head Start alumni had more to do with my success than anything else I have done.

Because I could not keep up with the play activities of the other neighborhood kids, my mother read to me a great deal. I knew how to read at age four, so the academic side of school was never a challenge. It was always the physical stuff — getting from place to place, getting to class on time, and boarding the school bus, which was difficult for me. There was no Americans with Disabilities Act in the 1960s, to aid kids like me, so it was a struggle.

We moved a lot. My parents never owned their own home until I was in high school, living on the other side of Charleston from where I spent my childhood.

When I was seven or eight years old, we attended First Baptist Church in Whitesville, with a godly pastor, Rev. Howard Gwinn, whom I loved. Shortly after he came, I went down the aisle at the invitation and asked Jesus Christ to save me from my sins. Then my family drifted away from church until, when I was a freshman in high school, one of the coaches invited me

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*Journeys Home*

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

to a youth Sunday at the First Baptist Church in Racine, WV, where we lived by then. I rededicated myself to Jesus, was baptized there, and never looked back. That pastor is still my good friend. As it turned out, he eventually became pastor of the non-denominational church where I met my wife.

While at this church, at age 14, I sensed a call from God to preach the Gospel. Most people were skeptical of that call. In fact, when we moved in my senior year and began attending a Church of God congregation, even though they allowed me to preach a couple of times as an 18-year-old and told me that I did as well as most experienced ministers, the pastor said I could never be a pastor because of my disability. Nobody would want to marry me, and a single man could not be a pastor. I never understood that reasoning, when they had seen the gift I had in the pulpit. One of the associate pastors told me that, among a youth group of almost 100 kids, and maybe the entire congregation, I had the most spiritual insight. I told him it was because God had called me to preach and teach the Word, that such insights were not given just for my private edification.

A short time later, this same congregation left the Church of God and became part of a loosely-knit fellowship of churches which were connected through the “ministry” of a particularly charismatic evangelist who claimed to be an Apostle and even hinted that he had more authority than the Pope. For the life of me, I do not know why I remained in that group. This evangelist told me himself there was not a woman in the world sanctified or holy enough to be my wife. I would have to spend my life alone. And even though, after I was married, the church that ordained

me was a part of this same fellowship, the broader leadership never accepted me as a minister.

This group had some practices which now seem to me to be spiritually abusive. The leaders claimed to pray and receive divine revelations about who should marry whom, who should go to what college, etc. They told me God wanted me to stay near home and go to West Virginia State College, majoring in journalism. The funny thing was, when I walked onto campus, I learned that the college had no journalism program. That should have told me something about that group of leaders, but I did not want to defy their perceived authority. Mass communications was the next closest thing to journalism, so I declared that as my major. I remember my pastor telling me, “Whatever you do, do not take a philosophy course; it will mess with your mind.”

What I did discover was that mass communications was not the right major for me.

I was taking a psychology course that semester in a lecture hall and making the best grades in the class. The professor told me, “You are in the wrong major.” I agreed. I became a psychology major — a move which infuriated my pastor, even though he had been a psychology major himself. But then I had to take a class in philosophy.

When I got into that philosophy class, it was like Fourth of July fireworks went off inside me — it was that exciting! I decided that I wanted to do this the rest of my life. The instructor was a Catholic gentleman who eventually entered the priesthood. This was my first encounter with Catholic thinking. The textbook we used was a Catholic resource, Jacques Maritain’s *Introduction to Philosophy*. I went on to take all the philosophy courses I could.

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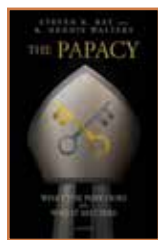
## FEATURED RESOURCES

### Peter, the Rock, the Keys, and the Chair CD



— Steve Ray

Steve Ray delves into the Jewish roots of the papacy, namely “the keys,” “the rock,” and “the chair.” Ray, a former Baptist, draws from his trips to the Holy Land to bring to life the commissioning of Peter as the first Pope, using vivid historical and contextual highlights.



### The Papacy: What the Pope Does and Why It Matters — Steve Ray

*The Papacy* explains that without the Pope’s divinely-guided leadership, the Church would suffer the contradictions and the divisions that many Christian groups know firsthand. The teaching passed down from the Apostles would be subject to arbitrary, relative, and numerous interpretations; holiness would be only a distant ideal; and the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church founded by Jesus would break apart.

In describing the Pope’s important and singular role as leader and teacher, the book addresses common misconceptions and objections to the papacy. It also explains how the papacy developed and how the Pope is elected. This book demonstrates that the Pope is important not only for Catholics, but also for non-Catholic Christians and even non-Christians.

\$35

Receive *Peter, the Rock, the Keys, and the Chair CD* for a donation of \$35.

\$50

Receive *The Papacy: What the Pope Does and Why It Matters* for a donation of \$50.

\$75

Receive *Peter, the Rock, the Keys, and the Chair CD* and *The Papacy* for a donation of \$75.

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# A Baptist Pastor Discovers Peter

By Kenneth Hensley

It's humbling for me to think about passages in the New Testament I simply didn't see when I was a Baptist pastor, passages that came alive and became bright with meaning only after I began to read them in the light of Catholic teaching.

One of those passages is Matthew 16:13-18.

You remember the story. Jesus leads His disciples into the region of Caesarea Philippi, where He asks them: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" The disciples begin to repeat what they've heard on the street: "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Jesus then directs the question to them personally: "But who do you say that I am?"

It's not clear how the Eleven would have answered this question had they spoken up. We only know how one of the disciples answered it. Verse 16: "Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

At this point Jesus speaks directly to Simon in the presence of the other disciples and makes a series of truly remarkable statements about the role that Simon is to play in the Church He has come to found. Notice with me six ways in which Jesus presents Simon Peter to the other disciples, and to us.

## 1. Jesus presents Peter in the role of a prophet.

Verse 17: *And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."*

Simon's father's name was usually given as John, not Jonah. So why does Jesus refer to him as Simon, son of Jonah?

A likely answer is that Jesus is emphasizing the prophetic nature of Simon's pronouncement. The knowledge Simon possesses of Jesus' true identity is not something he has learned by human means. It's something the Father has "revealed" to him.

Thus Jesus presents Simon as acting in the role of a prophet. But that's just the beginning.

## 2. Jesus presents Peter as the chief patriarch of the New Covenant community, the Church.

Verse 18: *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

In the Old Testament there are two primary characters whose names God changed. Do you recall who they were?

First, Abram's name was changed to Abraham ("father of a multitude"), as he was to become the father of the Hebrew people. Then God changed Jacob's name to Israel ("one who strives with God"). He was to become the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

It turns out that the two most important patriarchs of the Old Testament people of God, Abraham and Israel, just happen to be men whose names were changed by God.

When Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter ("the Rock") I believe He's saying, "Even as Abraham and Israel were the patri-

archs of the Old Testament people of God, the earthly Israel, I have chosen you, Simon, to be the patriarch of the New Testament people of God, the spiritual Israel."

Peter will be the father of a new people.

But there's more.

## 3. Jesus presents Peter as the foundation stone of the new temple He's building.

Verse 18: *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

The center of Jewish worship in the Old Covenant was the temple, where God dwelt among His people.

At the time of Jesus every Jew knew that the temple had been built on a great natural stone slab, which they referred to as the "foundation stone" (Hebrew *eben shetiyah*). Tradition held that this stone blocked the path to the underworld: the gates of Hades.

When Jesus speaks these words to Peter, He's identifying the Church as the New Covenant temple of God and saying that Peter is the "Rock" upon which this new temple will be built. He will serve as that foundation stone, holding the powers of hell at bay.

But there's more.

## 4. Jesus presents Peter as the royal steward of the Kingdom of God, the chief steward in God's house.

Verse 19: *I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

In ancient Israel the chief (or "royal") steward of the king's household wore the keys to the palace tied to his shoulder. He was in charge. Anyone who wanted to see the king had to go through him.

Notice how the royal steward is described in Isaiah 22:21-22:

*I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your belt on him, and will commit your authority to his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*

Against this background, the most natural reading of Jesus' words to Peter ("I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound.") is that He is informing Peter that in the kingdom He has come to inaugurate, Peter is to serve as the royal steward. Peter will be the chief steward in the New Covenant household of God.



But that's not all.

## 5. Jesus presents Peter as the chief rabbi of a new Israel.

The terms "binding and loosing" clearly refer to the authority of the chief steward to open and close, to lock and unlock. But it had another meaning as well in Jesus' day.

It was used to speak of the authority of the rabbis to render official interpretations of the Jewish law.

As Israel had twelve sons, thereby creating the twelve tribes of Israel, so Jesus has chosen twelve Apostles through whom He is creating a "new Israel." What Jesus is saying here is that Peter will function as chief rabbi in this new Israel. He will bind and loose.

As the Father revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Messiah, so the Holy Spirit will guide Peter in His leadership of the Church such that the gates of hell will never prevail over it.

And then, last of all:

## 6. Jesus presents Peter as the chief forgiver of sins.

While "binding and loosing" speaks of Peter's authority as teacher, in Matthew 18:15-18 Jesus uses this exact language to refer to the retaining and forgiving of sins.

In John 20:22-23, Jesus breathes on His disciples and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." The parallel between these words and the language of binding and loosing is clear.

Finally, in Revelation 1:5 Jesus is described as the one who has "loosed us from our sins." Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. He has granted this authority to His Apostles. And among His Apostles, it is Peter who will be the chief "forgiver" of sins.

## Objection: Peter and the Rock

Many non-Catholic Christians will argue that the "rock" Jesus is referring to in Matthew 16 is not Peter at all, but Peter's confession of faith, or Jesus Himself. In support of this, they point to the fact that the Greek word for rock is *petra* while the name Jesus gives Peter is *petros*. These are two different things, they say.

But this isn't difficult to explain.

First of all, in Greek, the language in which Matthew's Gospel is written, the word for rock (*petra*) is a feminine noun and,

therefore, has the feminine ending, which in Greek is "a." (We still see this feminine ending in a number of English names such as Sarah, Laura, Rebekah, Angelina, Tina.) Well, since Matthew wouldn't use the feminine form for a man's name, he would naturally add the masculine ending, which in Greek is "os." Thus we have *petros*.

But second, Jesus would most likely have been speaking Aramaic with His disciples, and in Aramaic the word for rock is *kepha*.

Peter is sometimes called Cephas in the New Testament. This is a transliteration of the Aramaic *kepha*. The point is: in Aramaic Jesus would have said, "Simon, you are *kepha* and on this *kepha* I will build my church." There would have been no confusion.

Finally, making the "Rock" refer to something other than Peter is simply awkward in a passage in which Jesus is speaking directly to Peter and specifically about the role Peter is to play in the New Covenant people of God.

"I tell *you*, you are Rock and on this Rock I will build my Church."

"I will give *you* the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

"Whatsoever *you* bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."

"Whatsoever *you* loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

In the Greek, Matthew uses the singular form of the second person pronoun all the way through.

No. For anyone not bending over backwards to make sure the Catholic teaching on Peter is somehow rendered ambiguous, uncertain, and essentially unsupported from Matthew 16, it is clear that in this passage Jesus is singling Peter out from the others.

It is Peter who has been chosen by Christ to be the patriarch of a new people of God, the foundation stone of a new temple, the royal steward of a new kingdom, the chief rabbi of a new Israel, the chief forgiver of sins in a new Church.

The passage is Catholic to its core. ■

## NEWSLETTER

The CHNetwork encourages members to make copies of the newsletter and distribute them to family and friends to encourage them to join our mailing list. They may also request to receive our mailings by using the response card included with this newsletter.. We do ask that copies of the newsletter not be sold. Unless otherwise indicated, the contents of this newsletter are Copyright © 2019 by the Coming Home Network International. All rights reserved.

## 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.



**CHNetwork**  
P.O. Box 8290  
Zanesville, OH  
43702-8290



740-450-1175



info@chnetwork.org



The Coming Home  
Network International



**www.chnetwork.org**

### Spiritual Malaise

By Marcus Grodi

"Spiritual Malaise"

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With all the rain we had earlier in the spring, plodding through the shin-deep mud from our house down to the barn and then out into the fields was like slogging through a thick, sticky world of un-set fudge. At times I wondered whether my mostly-clay fields would ever dry up. The farm and I seemed trapped in a hopeless malaise.



In some ways, I feel like we in the Church are also slogging through a malaise. Merriam-Webster defines "malaise" as "an indefinite feeling of debility or lack of health often indicative of or accompanying the onset of an illness." Does this suggest that there might be an illness in the Church?

Anyone with an internet connection knows that the battle continues to rage over whether the present scandal in the Church was caused by pedophilia, homosexuality, clericalism, or any number of other theories. But I continue to think that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI identified it most clearly back when the scandal first exuded to the surface in 2002: It was, and remains, a crisis of faith. Simply put, far too many of us in the Church — even dare, I say, in the hierarchy — seem to have forgotten (if we ever truly knew) what it means that through faith in Christ, and Baptism in His name, we have been born again.

In the early days of the Church, many Catholic Christians — priests and laity — were so excited and convinced about their Christian Faith, and what it meant to be "born again" in Jesus Christ, that their words and actions got them into trouble with the cultural leadership. Following St. Paul's warning (cf. Romans 12:2), they refused to "conform" to their culture, but rather did whatever was necessary to be seeds of "transformation." And when living out their "rebirth" led to threats of persecution and death, they refused to back down. As Tertullian wrote sometime in the late 2nd century, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church" (Ironically and sadly, in a time in which he also thought there was great malaise in the Church due to lack-luster leadership, Tertullian left the Church for what he considered a more enthusiastic, Chris-

tian sect). Yes, there are many American Catholic bishops, priests, and laity taking bold stands against the pro-choice agenda in our culture, but where is the "blood of the martyrs" of today willing to die for the truth and necessity of all aspects of our Catholic Faith?

Actually, it may be coming. In 2010, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago was giving a talk to a group of priests. When asked about his concerns over the rising secularism in American culture, his response (which he thought was private) was recorded and immediately went viral: "I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison, and his successor will die a martyr in the public square." Cardinal George did, indeed, die four years later in his bed, God rest his soul! And our culture continues to grow increasingly and disturbingly secular — in ways even Cardinal George may not have imagined!

Interestingly, when it comes to appreciating the eternal significance of being born again in Jesus Christ, both sacramental and non-sacramental Christians can suffer from the same damning presumption, leading to spiritual malaise, and ending in the sins against the

love of God, as enumerated in the *Catechism*: indifference, ingratitude, lukewarmness, acedia, and even hatred of God (paragraph 2094). Sacramental Christians, like Catholics and Eastern-Orthodox, can look way back years ago to their baptisms and say, "Sure, I was born again." Non-sacramental Christians, like Evangelicals, may similarly look way back years ago to when they "accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior" at a summer Bible camp and make the same claim.

But what does this mean right now? Scripture says that being "born again" by the water and the Spirit (Jn 3:5) and

It was, and remains, a crisis of faith. Simply put, far too many of us in the Church — even dare, I say, in the hierarchy — seem to have forgotten (if we ever truly knew) what it means that through faith in Christ, and Baptism in His name, we have been born again.

► "Spiritual Malaise" continued from page A

the mercy and grace of God (1 Pet 1:3-5) means that "we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." It means that by the merciful will of God all who are baptized are now children of God (Jn 1:12-13), have "put on Christ" (Gal 3:27), are "members of His body" (Eph 5:30), and are "new creations": "the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). If we truly understood and lived what it means that we have been born again by faith and Baptism, we would proclaim with St. Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

But the "indelible mark" we receive when we are baptized or confirmed does not guarantee that in the end we will be saved any more than the "indelible mark" received in ordination guarantees that a man will be a good, holy priest or bishop. Baptism is the grace-filled start of a journey of faith, which requires perseverance, and as "He who sat upon the throne said" in the book of Revelation, "He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son" (Rev 21:5a,7).

Therefore, we all — from the lowliest pew all the way up to the Chair of Peter — need to actively live this out in response to the empowering grace He has given us. We can't presume that something that happened to us years ago — no matter how sacramentally powerful it was, whether it was Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Anoint-

ing of the Sick, or Ordination — automatically keeps us in His grace forever. As St. Paul insists, all believing baptized Christians must "Put off [our] old nature which belongs to [our] former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds, and put on the

new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:22-24). He also warned that "since we have these promises," we must actively "cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God" (2 Cor 7:1).

"The fear of God." When was the last time you heard

a pope, cardinal, bishop, or priest even mention the need to "fear God"? I think this is symptomatic of the illness that has led to the crisis that has left so many of us slogging through this present spiritual malaise. But we can't point fingers. We need to pray for our leaders, who are under great spiritual warfare, and for each other, as the media attempts to convince us that Catholic Christians who take a stand for truth are nothing but intolerant bigots.

We ourselves need to remember what it means that through faith and Baptism we have been born again. This is why one of the longest standing traditions throughout Christendom is the Sign of the Cross, which reminds us, every time we do it, that through Baptism we have been born again, the old has gone, the new has come. Following St. Paul's testimony and "forgetting what lies behind" — repenting of and letting go of the myriad of ways we have failed our merciful God — we must "[strain] forward to what lies ahead, [pressing] on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:13-14). ■

We need to pray for our leaders...  
and for each other, as the media  
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but intolerant bigots.

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



### TELEVISION

Mondays at 8 PM ET — Encores: Tuesdays 2 AM ET, Thursdays 2 PM ET

*The Best of The Journey Home*: Sunday 7 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-Friday 1 AM ET

#### June 3

Casey Chalk\* (former Presbyterian)

#### June 10

Sohrab Ahmari\* (former Muslim and agnostic)

#### June 17

Heather King\* (former agnostic)

#### June 24

R.J. Snell\* (former Evangelical Protestant)

#### July 1

Jeff Cavins\* (Revert and former non-denominational pastor)

\*Schedule is subject to change.

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



# Joyful Journey Updates

**From Jason, on the journey** "I didn't notice those resources there [on the CHN website] and now, 'wow,' feel like I have opened Pandora's box not only with these resources, but there are so many available in print and video. It will take me a lifetime to consume all this content (which I am thankful and grateful for). The topics I'm currently honed in on are Mary and Apostolic Succession. I just prayed for you and the Coming Home Network."

**From Barnabas, a recent convert**

"I completed my 'swim' and was received into the Church through the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady at her shrine. I took the Confirmation name of 'Immaculata' in her honour."

**From Brett, on the journey** "I realize that the Catholic Church is not perfect — it is full of sinners just like any other church. But as Peter said, 'Master, to whom shall we go?' I know now that the Catholic Church is the church started by Jesus, and there is nowhere better to go. I realize the Catholic Church represents the

fullness of the Christian faith. I also love the sacredness, tradition, and beautiful cathedrals. And I have come to believe in Catholic theology over the views of Protestants. Thank you so much for all of your help! The Coming Home Network was instrumental in bringing my wife back to the Catholic Church and continues to be instrumental in my conversion to Catholicism. Please tell Marcus and everyone you work with how much we appreciate the efforts of the Coming Home Network. God bless you and everyone else at the Coming Home Network!"

**From Scott, a former pastor**

"Just got the news a couple of days ago. After sending a letter and speaking directly with our priest from India, he eventually responded to say that I get to do confession on the

16th and receive Communion on the 17th. I cried. Then and there. Couldn't even talk. It was almost one year ago, on March 4th, that I read aloud my elder resignation from the pulpit of a non-denominational church, the largest church in this area of about 12,000 people. By the next Sunday, my wife and I began to consistently attend the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Thanks for your support. Praise God." ■

## ONLINE COMMUNITY

We have a great new way for converts and journeyers to connect online! Accessible through an internet browser or mobile device via the MightyNetworks IOS/Android app, CHN's new Online Community is now the quickest and easiest way for people on the journey to Catholicism to connect with other converts, as well as CHN staff, for fellowship on the journey home. We invite you to connect at [community.chnetwork.org](http://community.chnetwork.org).

## SUPPORT THE CHNETWORK!

**Could you give \$25 a month or more to help support the CHNetwork as we help men and women come home to the Catholic Church?**

The CHNetwork is able to automatically deduct monthly donations directly from your credit card, checking, or savings account. If you would like to set up an automatic monthly donation, please go to [chnetwork.org/donate/](http://chnetwork.org/donate/) or complete this form and mail to:

**CHNetwork** Attention: Ann Moore  
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Account number \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Credit card**

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date / CVV Code \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Visa

☐ MasterCard

☐ Discover

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# Prayer List

## Clergy

- For an Episcopal seminarian who decided to withdraw from RCIA, that she will continue seeking truth and God's will in her life.
- For Peter, a non-denominational lay minister, that his studies in theology may lead him to Jesus in the holy Eucharist.
- For the wife of a non-denominational minister in Michigan, that the Holy Spirit would guide both of them to the Catholic Faith.
- For Jim, a minister in Arkansas, that, as he explores the Catholic Faith, the Lord Jesus would grant him the grace of entering into the fullness of the truth.
- For Billy, a Southern Baptist minister, that his love for Church history may bring him home to the Church that is ever ancient and ever new.
- For Terry, a minister in Ireland, that the Holy Spirit would answer his questions and draw him home to the Catholic Church.
- For a Baptist minister in Michigan, that his study into the history of Protestantism may convince him of the need for Catholic unity.
- For a former Pentecostal minister, that his return to the Catholic Church will bring reconciliation with his wife.
- For George, a United Methodist minister, that God would guide him to the Eucharistic table of Our Lord.
- For Peter, a former Presbyterian minister, that all obstacles that he perceives in his journey to the Catholic Church may be cleared away by Jesus.
- For a Wesleyan minister in Ohio, that the witness of Catholics in his life may bring him into union with the successor of St. Peter.

## Laity

- For Mary who is planning to meet with a priest soon to discuss returning to the Catholic Church, that the Holy Spirit will guide her steps.
- For Susan, that she will be once again drawn towards the Catholic Church.
- For a non-denominational Christian who would love to become Catholic but her husband won't pursue an annulment, that Jesus will open a door for her to come fully home.
- For a Baptist lay minister in Minnesota who is torn between her love of the Catholic Faith and her ministry, that she may have clarity as to how to proceed with her journey.
- For Loretta who recently met a practicing Catholic who is helping to guide her back towards the Church, that the Holy Spirit will guide them both into a deeper relationship with Him.
- For Michelle who is very drawn to the Eucharist, but her husband doesn't understand her interest in the Catholic Church, that she will know how to best navigate this difficult situation.
- For Valerie and her husband as they prepare to return to the Catholic Church, that the Eucharist will draw them fully home.
- For a Lutheran on the journey who is struggling to understand purgatory, that the Holy Spirit will guide her heart and mind.
- For Joan, that she will be able to once again proceed with her interest in returning to the Catholic Church.
- For Lisa who is studying church history and wondering if she should move forward with her interest in the Catholic Church.
- For Sally's discernment as she ponders how to return to the Catholic Church.
- For Madison, that she will be able to meet with a local priest soon and make good Catholic friends to support her journey.



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

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## ...Journeys Home Continued...

► “Journeys Home” continued from page 2

Even changing majors, I graduated a semester early. I had been working at the church's child care center through college and thought I might merit a promotion, since I was then the only college graduate on the staff. When no promotion was forthcoming, and I was still working for minimum wage, I decided to quit. I had no idea how I would earn a living, but I believed God had something out there for me. A couple of weeks later, after attending one of our fellowship's national events in Indianapolis, I stopped to meet the well-known Quaker philosopher, Elton Trueblood, at Earlham College in Richmond, IN.

My pastor in West Virginia had said he thought Dr. Trueblood might be the best Christian philosopher in America. I had read several of Trueblood's books and his wisdom, and his way of putting complex concepts into clear, simple words, impressed me. His idea that the Christian life was a three-legged stool of intellectual pursuit of truth, a warm devotional life, and service to others strongly resonated with me.

I met this man on an afternoon in July, 1982. I thought I would have him autograph a couple of books and be happily on my way. Instead, we talked for an hour. Then he looked at me and said, “I can see you have an unusually keen mind. I want you to come here to Earlham School of Religion to study and help us here at the Yokefellows ministry.” Ten days later, I lived in Richmond, IN.

Yokefellows was an ecumenical ministry which intersected even with Catholic Christians. Its purpose was to provide resources for people to serve in what Trueblood called “The Ministry of Common Life.” Catholics would call such a ministry an apostolate. The idea of the Yokefellows ministry is to have such a focus on Christ that whatever one does in life is done in the spirit of service to Christ and others. This ministry began in 1949, after Dr. Trueblood had an insight into what he called “Christ's clearest call to commitment”: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

Raised as an Iowa farm boy, Trueblood knew yokes usually were placed on teams of animals. He saw Jesus as calling us to be yoked with Himself in service to the Gospel. It was one of the joys of my life to serve alongside this Christian thinker in the Yokefellows ministry from 1982 to 1984.

Earlham's doctrine seemed more liberal than what I had been exposed to then, although now I would not particularly see it as “liberal.” There was a definite emphasis on the presence of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I had never been exposed to Quakers before, and, honestly, any Christian group may have been difficult to transition into after some of the aberrations of the group I had been part of. Over time, my appreciation for

the contribution Quakers made to Christianity as a whole grew. Some Quakers are closer to Unitarianism than to Christianity, but in the Midwest, in North Carolina, and on the West Coast, Quakers are more Evangelical, having been influenced by the Wesleyan revivals of the 1800s. Quakers, or the Friends Church, as the Evangelical group within Quakers calls itself, would be similar to some Methodists or groups like the Church of the Nazarene.

But I was not prepared for graduate study. I left Earlham School of Religion one-third of the way through the Master of Divinity program because of a break-up with a young woman whom I very much had hoped to marry. The experience left me so stressed and depressed that I could not focus on school. I ended up in Louisville, KY, teaching in a Christian school which was operated by a Nazarene church. I was also associate pastor of a non-denominational church, where I met my future wife, Gay. She was raised Catholic but had begun attending this non-denominational church with her mother, who was not Catholic. Since I was the only teacher who was not married, I had asked her to attend the school's faculty Christmas party as my date.

We began dating in December and were married the follow-

ing July. About a year later, we left the non-denominational church, and I became associate pastor of this same Nazarene church where I had been teaching. At the same time, I was completing my studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. After about a year, Dr. Trueblood recommended me to become pastor of the Quaker church in his Iowa hometown. I ended up serving three Quaker meetings in Iowa, one in North Carolina, and two

“They talked about the deposit of faith, which includes both Scripture and sacred Tradition. My professor said that we would overlook that and go with Scripture alone.”

in Indiana over the next quarter of a century. The Lord blessed us with two children while we were at our first pastorate in Iowa.

The Baptist seminary graciously allowed me to take the nine credit hours I needed at the University of Iowa School of Religion while we lived in Iowa and then transfer back to the seminary and graduate. I often tell people that I grew up Baptist, went to a Quaker seminary, transferred to a Baptist seminary, and ended up a Quaker pastor! During the ten years we ministered in Iowa, I also completed a Doctor of Ministry in Theological Reflection from Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Theological Reflection model was actually developed by two Catholic authors, Evelyn and James Whitehead. I remember that they talked about the deposit of faith, which includes both Scripture and sacred Tradition. My professor said that we would overlook that and go with Scripture alone.

Now, I already knew the early Church was the Catholic Church. I had studied with the renowned church historian E. Glenn Hinson, who was a close friend of Thomas Merton, the

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

famous Trappist monk and author. I also knew that the Church did not discern the canon of Scripture until the end of the fourth century. I had taken two semesters of systematic theology with a theologian named Dr. Molly Marshall. Dr. Marshall has been called the most brilliant Baptist woman of the 20th century. She is very closely connected with the Benedictine monks of Conception Abbey in Missouri. One day when Dr. Marshall was lecturing on the formation of the canon, I formulated a question like this: “You mean we did not have an authoritative list of biblical books until almost 400 years after Jesus was on earth?” She answered, “Mr. White, that is correct.” I went on, “Then *sola Scriptura* cannot possibly be true.” Someone in the back of the room gasped when I said that, but Dr. Marshall went on: “Mr. White, that is also correct.”

Our time in Iowa was followed by a four-year pastorate just outside of Winston-Salem, NC.

From there the Lord brought us to the Columbus, IN area and a very small Quaker congregation which could not afford a full-time pastor. I supplemented my income by serving as editor of the *Adult Friend*, which was the adult Sunday school/Bible study quarterly for Friends (Quaker) churches, and also by teaching psychology and philosophy at the local community college.

My mother died about five months after we moved to Indiana. My father had to go into a nursing home because he was diabetic and had already lost one foot. In addition, he was showing some early signs of dementia. My sister thought it would be a good idea for him to come spend a week or two with us in Indiana. It was spring, and he wanted to watch baseball on TV. Dad said he would pay the installation fees for cable or satellite TV, and after he went back to West Virginia, we could decide whether we wanted to keep it or not.

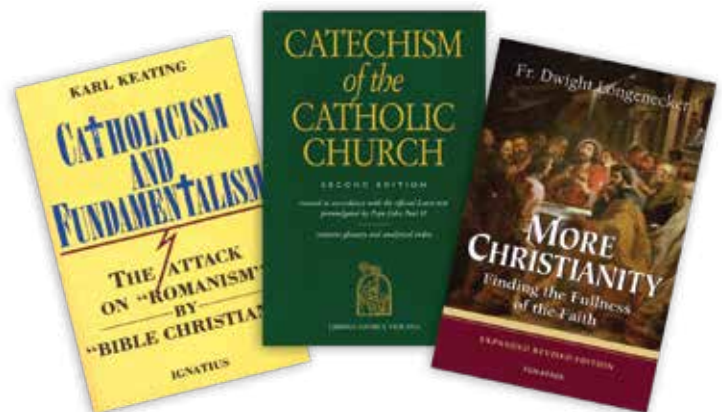
The satellite TV had a channel named EWTN. I found out it was Catholic. I was not favorably impressed initially, but the teaching gradually grew on me. I had married into a predominately Catholic family, and I loved them, but they were unable to articulate their faith very well, so I had dismissed it as something not to take seriously. I never was anti-Catholic, and I had never been around overt anti-Catholics. My studies with Dr. Trueblood and Dr. Hinson included reading many of the classics of Catholic devotional literature. I just did not realize that it mattered whether one was Protestant or Catholic. I had bought into the Evangelical thinking that all you need is a personal relationship with Jesus. I cannot say there were huge doctrinal struggles in my conversion process. From my earlier studies, I knew that Catholic doctrine added up intellectually, but I did not yet understand the importance of being part of the Church which Jesus

personally founded, under the leadership of Peter and the other Apostles and their successors.

One day, in the spring of 2003, I was channel surfing, and as I went by EWTN, I heard the host of a program say something like, “I did not think that either when I was a Presbyterian minister.” I was amazed! Why would a Presbyterian minister become Catholic? I learned this host was named Marcus Grodi, and the show was called *The Journey Home*. I began watching faithfully on Monday nights. It became the high point of my week.

At first, I watched because I enjoyed hearing the guests. I had absolutely no intention of converting myself, but I gained a valuable understanding of and appreciation for many of the faith traditions from which the guests had been brought into the Church. I read some of the books which were mentioned on the program. The most helpful was Karl Keating’s *Catholicism and*

*Fundamentalism*. Another book which influenced me along the way was *More Christianity* by Fr. Dwight Longenecker. (Interestingly, one of my colleagues at the community college where I now teach had attended Bob Jones University with Fr. Dwight.) Then I went online and read the entire *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I also looked at websites like Catholic Answers.



By 2006, I was persuaded that the Catholic Church was indeed the Church Jesus started, and that it did matter. I became filled with a desire to be part of the Church Jesus had started, the one which could trace its history back to the Apostles.

What struck me about the Catholic Church was two related things. While I did not struggle much over any specific Catholic doctrine, I think that the connection I saw between the two would have gotten me over any hurdles I may have had.

These two items were the following:

(1) In Matthew 16:18, where Jesus says to Peter, “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it,” my Protestant up-

I just did not realize that it mattered whether one was Protestant or Catholic. I had bought into the Evangelical thinking that all you need is a personal relationship with Jesus.

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

bringing insisted that the Rock was not Peter, but his profession in verse 16: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” But that is not what Jesus said. Translated more literally, Jesus is saying to Peter, “You are a rock, and on this rock I will build my Church.” A good friend tried to tell me this is not right because Jesus uses *petros* the first time and *petra* the second time. But they are two forms of one word meaning rock. *Petra* is necessary to agree with *ekklesia* (church), while Jesus is definitely saying that Peter himself is the rock. Jesus is entrusting the Church to Peter's pastoral care.

(2) Further, once I understood that Peter was the rock, then the beauty and wonder of apostolic succession became abundantly clear. In his letter to Titus, chapter 1, St. Paul instructs Titus to ordain elders in every city. Those who laid their hands on the next generation of leaders were themselves the recipients of the laying on of hands of those who came before them. In keeping with this, I realized that we have a record of who held the office of Bishop of Rome, all the way back to St. Peter himself. No other Christian body can claim this continuity.

My understanding of Jesus instituting the Papacy and apostolic succession is what sold me on the Catholic Church being truly the Church of Jesus Christ. I once saw an item online entitled, “Who started your church?” If you are Lutheran, it was Martin Luther. If you are Methodist, it was John Wesley. If you are Quaker, it was George Fox. These were all good and godly men, in my view — but the piece went on to say, “If you are Catholic, your Church was started by Jesus Christ when He said, ‘You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church.’” It came to the point where I could no longer live in disunity.

I remember once hearing an elderly Methodist preacher say that our problem is that we try to do what God wants without doing what God says. I suddenly saw this as the story of Protestantism. I could no longer serve my Lord while willingly remaining outside the Church He personally started.

The problem with converting, for me, was an economic one. I knew from watching *The Journey Home* program that many of the converted pastors ended up in a variety of employment situations, including some manual labor. As a disabled man, I realized my options would be limited. I was a half-time pastor and, by now, a half-time administrator at the college, and I taught a couple of courses in addition to my administrative role. I had two children nearing the time to go off to college. I said in prayer, “Lord, I want to follow you into your Church, but this is my livelihood. I will not be able to do this unless you help me get a full-time teaching position.”

That prayer was answered. In August of 2009, I became a full-time associate professor of philosophy, with no administrative duties. I was the first full-time philosopher in a college of

200,000 students on about 20 campuses around Indiana. I was also in the middle of a contract year with my church, so I could not leave them until the following June. Somehow, I stayed on; I did not leave them hanging.

One Monday evening in October of 2010, I was watching *The Journey Home*, and tears were streaming down my face. I do not like to cry. I would tell myself, “You are a philosopher. Your strong suit should be in your head, not your heart.” Yet I cry almost every week now, in Mass, out of gratitude for what Jesus has done for me. That October night, my wife saw my tears and said, “I was raised Catholic. I do not want to do this, but if God is asking you to become Catholic, I will not stand in your way.”

Immediately a voice spoke in my heart, and I knew it was the Holy Spirit: “You asked for a full-time teaching position. I did my part, but I am still waiting for you to do yours.” I announced the following

Sunday that I would not accept another contract, that I would be leaving them in June. I loved these people and loved ministering to them, so the parting was not easy. We now live about 15 miles away from that church and see many of the congregants while shopping, etc. Not one of them has said or done anything hostile in response to our becoming Catholic. In fact, they still call us at times and ask for prayer.

I go to work every day at the college and sit at the same desk at which I did when I was a Quaker pastor. It was a gift from God that I had employment, so I never had to do a job search. I went through RCIA and was received into the Church at Easter Vigil 2012. I am so blessed! The sacraments and the understanding the Catholic Church has given me of Scripture are invaluable.

My wife went through RCIA with me, gained an appreciation for the Church of her youth, and returned to it. We have both been commissioned as healing prayer ministers in our parish. I am part of the RCIA teaching team, do a lecture each year on the Creed, volunteer as a chaplain at our local hospital, and minister to people here at the college. I am like the unofficial campus pastor, thrilled to be in full communion with Jesus' Church. ■



CLARENCE G. WHITE, D.Min., is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Interim Dean of the School of Arts, Sciences, and Education at the Columbus, Indiana campus of Ivy Tech Community College. Clarence and his wife, Gay, are members of St. Bartholomew parish in Columbus.

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