



October 2019 CHNewsletter

“Searching For A Firm Foundation” By Kathy Faas.....	1
“A Damning System of Works Righteousness” By Kenneth Hensley.....	3
“Memorable Scripture Verses” By Matthew Swaim.....	5
“Crossing the Tiber” By Giovanni Madriz.....	6
Joyful Journeys.....	7

THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



Searching For A Firm Foundation

Kathy Faas

Early Life I was born July 11, 1954, the first of seven children. One week later, I was baptized into the Catholic Church. From second through tenth grades, I attended Catholic schools, receiving the Sacraments of Penance, Communion, and Confirmation along the way.

I am grateful for my years of Catholic schooling, and I appreciate the sacrifices my parents made to send their children to Catholic schools for as long as they could. In addition to a love for academic learning and study, I acquired a great love for the Church during those years. That love for the true Faith never really left me, even during my long years of wandering far from the Church. Being taught from childhood the truths of the Faith, receiving the sacraments, learning about holiness through the lives of the saints — these things contributed to my long-term desire to know more of God.

Although our family was not “churchy,” we did say grace before meals and went to Mass every Sunday. I don’t recall that we ever read the Bible or prayed the Rosary together at home, but our lives to some degree revolved around church and school, and there was a general synergy between what I was learning in the classroom and experiencing in church, between what was being taught about virtue and holiness and what I was observing in the lives of the priests and nuns. What I experienced in real life, at Mass, and through the sacraments built on, rather than contradicted, what we were learning at school and what our parents were trying to teach us at home.

There was even a time during junior high school that I thought I wanted to become a nun. I read up on all the different religious orders and sent away for information from many of them. After reading the autobiography of Thérèse of Lisieux, I was definitely leaning toward the Carmelites.

After junior high, I attended two years of Catholic high school, where the teachers were all lay folk. That was fine, but gone were the angelic beings walking around in their full nun’s habits. There was still quite a bit of discipline, though, and the academic standards were high.

High School & College: Wanderings

One significant event from my two years of Catholic high school was a week during which normal classes were suspended and workshops on a variety of subjects were offered. One that I attended was given by a representative from the Association for Research and Enlightenment (ARE), otherwise known as the Edgar Cayce Institute. Although I had never heard of Edgar Cayce or the ARE, I was very interested in the subject matter of the talk: meditation. Having been exposed to many of the great Catholic saints and mystics, I definitely wanted to learn more about growing closer to God through meditation.

Continued on page 2 ➤

Journeys Home

...Journeys Home Continued...

The presentation also piqued my interest in the ARE, which was located in Virginia Beach, not far from where we lived in Norfolk. I learned that Edgar Cayce was what they called a “medium,” a person who goes into a trance in order to allow a “higher being,” “spirit,” or “entity” to enter his body and speak through him. During his lifetime, Cayce often would enter a trance to give “readings” for people who were troubled or sick, and the “entity” would give spiritual advice or information on how to get well, or he would give a reading to explain some mystery of the universe, reincarnation, or a teaching about some spiritual topic.

At the time, I had no clue that I was entering into dangerous territory — that the practices and teachings of the ARE were in no way scriptural nor in agreement with the teachings of the Church. I was only interested in experiencing more of God in a deeper way, and it was my Catholic high school, after all, that had pointed me in this direction by inviting the representative to our school. So a door had been opened which eventually would lead to all kinds of spiritual confusion and darkness. But in the beginning, it was all light and excitement over the new things I was learning. Obviously, I was not very discerning, and I was gradually sucked in.

By the time I finished my sophomore year of high school, our dad had retired from the Navy and moved the family to Oxon Hill, MD, a suburb of Washington, DC. He could no longer afford to send us to Catholic school, so we were enrolled in public schools. Having spent nine years in relatively small Catholic schools, I experienced culture shock at finding myself in a large public school. We continued to attend Mass on the weekends, but we didn't have the same church-school connection, and we

developed no deep roots at the new parish. So church was no longer center stage in our lives, as it had once been, and school was no longer a place of spiritual nurturing.

I did, however, retain a great thirst for the things of God. Unfortunately, most of my attempts to satisfy that thirst took place outside of the Church, through resources of the ARE and in worldviews that nowadays would be called New Age. Again, I never outright renounced the Church or its teachings. I just gradually drifted away from it as I became more drawn into New Age teachings and philosophies. If there was any confusion in my mind back then, I just assumed that it was due to my own inability to reconcile these new teachings with what I had learned of truth from the Church. I figured that God and the Church understood everything perfectly, and someday I, too, would understand it all better. It didn't occur to me that I was completely on the wrong path.

Another development during this time, as I was finishing high school (1972) and moving into my college years, was that my parents' marriage was falling apart. My memories of home life during the final years before they separated are filled with confusion and unhappiness. Whether it was home, church, or school, it seemed that the ground under my feet was unstable. Although I continued my search for God, my life no longer had a firm foundation.

After high school, I enrolled in the local community college, with no real idea of what I wanted to study. So I ended up taking a lot of classes that sounded interesting. Philosophy and eastern religions were at the top of the list, which probably explains why it took me four years to complete community college.

Continued on page 9 ➤



SUPPORT THE CHNETWORK!

Through your tax-deductible donation to the CHNetwork, you become a partner in our ministry of assisting non-Catholic clergy and laity on the journey to the Catholic Church. As a thank you, we are delighted to offer the following resources to help enrich your faith.



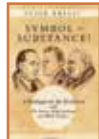
16 Barriers to Conversion CD

— By Marcus Grodi

In this insightful talk, Marcus Grodi discusses 16 different barriers that often prevent people from becoming Catholic. He shares how to help resolve these barriers and bring others to a better understanding of the Catholic Faith.

\$35

Receive 16 Barriers to Conversion CD for a donation of \$35.



Symbol or Substance? A Dialogue on the Eucharist with C. S. Lewis, Billy Graham, and J. R. R. Tolkien — By Dr. Peter Kreeft

In this engaging fictional conversation, Dr. Peter Kreeft gives credible voices to C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Billy Graham as they discuss one of the most contentious questions in the history of Christianity: Is Jesus symbolically or substantially present in the Eucharist? These widely-respected modern Christian witnesses represent three important Western theological traditions. Graham, an ordained Southern Baptist minister who traversed the world and the airwaves to spread the good news of salvation, represents evangelical Protestantism. Lewis, a prolific Christian apologist and the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, was a member of the Church of England. Tolkien was a friend of Lewis, the author of *The Lord of the Rings*, and a Roman Catholic.

\$50

Receive *Symbol or Substance?* for a donation of \$50.

\$75

Receive 16 Barriers to Conversion CD and *Symbol or Substance?* for a donation of \$75.

— THESE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY —

Obtain resources by returning the envelope included with your newsletter, calling 740-450-1175, or by going online to chnetwork.org/respond.

A Damning System of Works Righteousness

PART III: FAITH AND OBEDIENCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT*

By Kenneth Hensley, Online Resource & Pastoral Care Coordinator



Imagine you received a letter from a college you applied to informing you that from the moment you first expressed sincere interest in attending that college, a degree had been credited to you. You were now a graduate. Your diploma was on the way. It was a “done deal.”

Imagine you then received a second letter from this college, informing you that in order to graduate you would need to attend classes for four years, accomplish required homework, write papers, pass tests, and so forth. Think you might be a bit confused?

It's only when a diploma is something granted you *at the end* of your college experience that it becomes *natural* to describe little things like attending classes and doing homework and passing tests as though they were *requirements* for receiving a diploma. This is common sense.

And it illustrates pretty well the tension I felt as I tried to reconcile the doctrine of justification I had been taught as a Protestant with what I saw on nearly every page of the New Testament.

Justification as Imputation

According to the classic Reformed view of justification, I had been “declared righteous” in God’s sight the moment I first looked to Christ in sincere faith. At that moment, a legal transaction had taken place in which the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ was “imputed” or “credited” to my “account.” This is the sort of language we used to describe what happens in justification.

Yes, I believed that I would go on in my life as a Christian to grow in obedience to Christ. But this had *nothing* to do with my “justification,” which was having Christ’s righteousness imputed to me and received “by faith alone.”

From the instant I was justified, I was as assured of heaven as Jesus Himself. I was “saved.” It was a “done deal.”

Now, once you’ve defined justification as something that takes place and is completed forever the instant one believes, then, obviously, anything that comes *after* that in the Christian’s life cannot be viewed as a *requirement* for receiving the blessing of salvation.

Because of this, while I looked at the things that come after justification — discipleship, growth in holiness, good works, and so forth — as *evidence* of justification, as expressions of thankfulness to God for the free gift of justification, I did not view them as requirements or conditions for the inheritance of eternal life.

To make obedience to God a condition for being saved, well, that would amount to a damning system of works righteousness. That would be the equivalent of saying we earn our own salvation!

Old and New Testament Patterns

Now, as I related in last month’s article, I had come, during my time in seminary, to see that obedience in the Old Testament is *always* presented as a condition for receiving the promised blessings of God. From Noah to Abraham to Moses to the Israelites, the call of God is *always*, “Trust me, do what I command you to

do, and I will bless you.” The pattern we see in the Old Testament is always faith, leading to obedience, resulting in blessing. And never is this viewed as something negative. Never is the response of God’s people in faith and obedience portrayed as some evil form of “works righteousness.”

It was after I graduated from seminary, was ordained into the Protestant ministry, and began on Sundays to preach verse-by-verse through entire books of the New Testament that I was increasingly struck by the *sheer number* of New Testament passages that presented the same pattern I had seen in the Old Testament.

Faith and Obedience in the Gospels

For instance, what was I to make of a passage like Luke 9:23-25?

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

And what about Luke 14:26? Here Jesus says, “If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”

Verse 33 is even stronger: “So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”

If my salvation was assured the moment I first believed, and the righteousness of Christ was credited to my account, why is Jesus describing salvation as though it were contingent on my taking up my cross and following Him and even being willing to lose my life?

What was I to make of John 15:10, where Jesus says, “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love”?

Remain in my love? I thought that from the moment of my justification, when I was clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ — that, in terms of my standing before God, I was from that moment as righteous as Jesus Himself!

And then, what in the world was I to make of Matthew 25:31-46, where the eternal destiny of human beings is described as though it will be *determined* by their good deeds, or lack thereof?

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...”

It seemed that the preaching of Jesus reflected the same essential pattern I had seen in the Old Testament: “Trust me (faith), do what I ask you to do (obedience), and you will be blessed (salvation).”

Continued on page 4 ➤

*To read previous articles in this series, please see the August and September 2019 issues of the CHNewsletter available at chnetwork.org/newsletter-archive.

Faith and Obedience in the Epistles

And it wasn't just Jesus in the Gospels. I was continually running into the same message in the New Testament Epistles.

For instance, what was I to make of Galatians 6:7-9?

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, *if we do not lose heart.*

Here's Paul, in a letter supposedly *devoted* to teaching the doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from obedience, and how does he conclude his exhortation to his readers? He concludes by reminding them that they will reap exactly what they sow and that if they want to reap the harvest of eternal life, they had better focus on sowing to the Spirit by “doing good” and persevering in this.

Even more difficult to reconcile with the doctrine of justification by faith alone was Romans 2:6-7, where the Apostle describes obedience as though it were *the very key* to whether or not one will inherit eternal life.

For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

Finally, what was I to make of those passages, scattered throughout the New Testament, that speak as though salvation is not something that is guaranteed at the beginning of one's walk with Christ?

The Epistle to the Hebrews contains a number of such passages.

Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence *firm to the end* (Heb 3:12-14, emphasis added; see also 6:4-6, 10:23-31; 12:1-17).

In Colossians 1:22-23 St. Paul reminds his readers that Christ has reconciled them to God in order to present them holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him, “*provided that you continue* in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard” (see also 1 Corinthians 10:1-13).

And there were more of these as well.

Explanations and Answers

Of course there were ways of explaining these “difficult” passages, ways of defusing them. The only problem was, these explanations seemed in almost every case to amount to saying in one way or another that Jesus and Paul and the other New Testament authors *didn't really mean what they seem to be saying.*

“Sure, Jesus *says* that to remain in His love we have to keep His commandments. But He doesn't mean that keeping His commandments is an actual *condition* for remaining in His love.

Surely not. That would be salvation by works! *What Jesus really means here is...*” At this point there follows some fairly convoluted explanation of how “what Jesus really means here” turns out to be totally different from what Jesus actually said there!

The same with Paul. “Sure, Paul *says* that God will give eternal life to those who persevere in doing good. But he doesn't *mean* that perseverance in doing good is a requirement for receiving eternal life. That would be salvation by works! *He just means...*”

The same with those passages in Hebrews. “Yes, the author of Hebrews does urge his readers to make sure they do not become hardened by sin and fall away from the living God. But surely he doesn't mean that it is actually possible for a Christian to fall away from the Living God. *He just means...*”

I thought about Jesus speaking to crowds of simple men, women, and children and presenting the path to eternal life as though it were about believing in Him (faith) and following Him (obedience). “If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love.” “If any man will not take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple.” “It's not those who say, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but those who do the will of my Father in heaven.” If what Jesus really wanted these simple folk to know was that they would be justified by faith alone, completely apart from obedience, how could He look them in the eyes and say so many of the things He said? And why does Jesus never seem to feel the need to correct the impression His words are giving?

Why do we never find any of the New Testament authors sensing the need to “explain” to their readers how what they are saying about obedience doesn't conflict with justification by faith alone? There's not a hint that any of them felt the need to do so.

I struggled for years with how to make these New Testament passages fit the view of justification I had been taught and that I held. Over time I began to suspect that they simply *don't*.

It isn't natural to speak of attending classes and doing homework and passing tests as requirements for receiving a diploma you already have hanging on your wall. And it isn't natural to speak of persevering obedience as a requirement for receiving a salvation you've already had credited to you by faith alone. These New Testament passages do not sit naturally within the theological framework of the Reformed doctrine of justification. They don't fit.

At some point it struck me. I spent a good deal of time trying to understand how to interpret those “difficult” passages in such a way as to make them fit a doctrine of justification that I never questioned. I assumed the Reformed doctrine to be true to the teaching of Scripture. This was, after all, the very heart of the gospel as taught by Luther and Calvin and all of the Reformers. And what was the alternative but to accept some damning system of works righteousness, like that taught by the Catholic Church?

For the first time the thought entered my mind: What if these passages are not the problem? What if these passages *should* be read in their natural sense? What if the problem is with the Reformed doctrine of justification? *What if Luther and Calvin were wrong?*

It was about this time that I learned an old friend from my time in seminary had become Catholic.

To be continued... ■



"My God will supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

Memorable Scripture Verses

By Matthew Swaim | Outreach Manager

Catholics hear Scripture proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word at every Mass and know the stories of Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, and the life of Jesus by heart. But for those of us who came from Protestant backgrounds, not only did we know those famous passages and Bible stories, many of us committed them to memory, making a point to remember chapter and verse. We underlined them in our Bibles, memorized them in Sunday school, and even recited them publicly in youth Bible quizzing competitions! Some of these verses that were instilled in us as children have stayed with us for a lifetime and mean even more to us now than they did when we memorized them as children.



Recently, we began a new series on our *Deep in Scripture* podcast called "Memorable Verses," highlighting some of these key passages that are in every Catholic Bible and that we as former Protestants had memorized, chapter and verse. The goal behind this new series is to encourage our listeners to not only know the general idea behind Scripture, but also to commit to memory the actual words of Scripture and, beyond that, to be able to find those verses in their own Bibles. Invariably, Marcus and our guests also explain how they've come to more fully appreciate these "memorable verses" after "coming home" to the Catholic Church.

The new format has been a lot of fun and has a bit of a twist built into it: Marcus Grodi invites a guest onto the show, and neither Marcus nor the guest knows in advance which verse the other has picked to share. After Marcus and his guest each share their verses and take a few minutes to reflect on them, they then go on to discuss how the two verses fit together, which ends up taking the show in some pretty unexpected directions. It's been an interesting and enlightening exercise, to say the least!

Guests on "Memorable Verses" so far have included previous *Journey Home* guests and Scripture enthusiasts such as Jeff Cavins, Sonja Corbitt, and Dr. John Bergsma, as well as Coming Home Network staff, including Ken Hensley, Seth Paine, and Jim Anderson. One of the most compelling aspects of this new format is hearing the fascinating and, often, very personal stories behind why each guest has selected the verse they bring to the program. For example, TL Putnam was able to share how St. Paul's words in Philippians 4:19 have sustained his family through times of crisis ("My God will supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus"), while Jeff Cavins chose to highlight Jesus giving His Apostles the Great Commission in Matthew 18:19-20 and how that passage has informed his

lifelong mission to evangelize, both in his former role as a non-denominational pastor and his current apostolate as founder of the Great Adventure Bible Study. And without giving too much away, Dr. John Bergsma of Franciscan University of Steubenville decided to share the very first Bible verse that he ever memorized back when he was 8 years old.

All of the "Memorable Verses" episodes of *Deep in Scripture* are available online to listen to and, in some cases, watch at chnetwork.org/memorableverses. And, of course, you're invited to add your own thoughts on each of the featured verses to the discussion.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us that "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." The Scriptures are not merely static words on a page; rather, they speak into every aspect of human experience the wisdom and power of God for His people. For thousands of years, the people of God, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have collected and preserved an incredible testimony to the Lord's hand at work in salvation history. These stories and letters have survived flood, famine, exile, persecution, and war. Before the printing press, before even the bound book, these words passed through countless generations and were preserved on scrolls and parchment, detailing how God has guided His people from Eden to Egypt to the Promised Land to the New Covenant in the Blood of Jesus and beyond.

We take for granted that we can easily find something we're looking for in the Scriptures using a simple Internet search, but there are countries where it is illegal to even own a copy of the Bible! Sadly, too many of us either have a copy of it that's gathering dust on a shelf or have never sat down to intentionally read

the Scriptures on our own to see how God may be speaking to us through them.

Deep down, most of us know we should be reading the Bible more. There are probably a variety of different reasons why many of us haven't devoted more time to the Word of God, but perhaps one of the biggest reasons is that, well, the Bible is a big book, and *we don't know where to begin!*

That's one of the main reasons we've launched this new "Memorable Verses" theme on our *Deep in Scripture* podcast. We're hoping that by selecting a couple of Bible verses each week that Marcus and his guest have memorized, we can take a bit of the fear out of the idea of memorizing passages from Scripture. By hearing one of these verses, getting the broader context, and hearing how it's had a deep, personal impact on someone, hopefully it will inspire listeners and viewers to not only consider memorizing the verses featured on the program, but also to open up the Word of God for themselves and find verses of their own to take to prayer and commit to memory.

New episodes of "Memorable Verses" are posted every Thursday and are available on Podbean, through any podcast subscription app, and, in some cases, on our YouTube channel. They're a great way to add a weekly dose of Scripture to your listening routine and a great way to kickstart your own personal Bible-reading efforts. To hear the full archive of "Memorable Verses" episodes of *Deep in Scripture*, as well as to get updated with the latest new episodes, visit chnetwork.org/memorableverses. ■

Crossing the Tiber

By Giovanni Madriz

Plunge into the river with no hesitation
And let the fresh water renew now your faith;
You know once you cross it She'll be there smiling,
Your mother will embrace you and give you new strength.

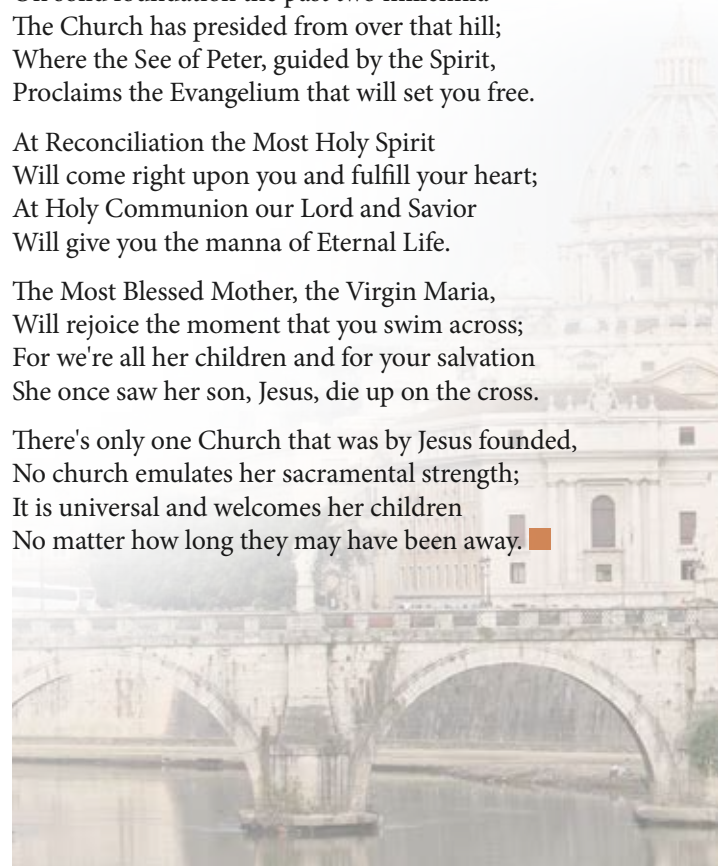
For long you've been thinking of that which awaits you
Beyond the riviera where you've tried to stay;
You know that the ground is not firm below you,
And little by little it washes away.

On solid foundation the past two millennia
The Church has presided from over that hill;
Where the See of Peter, guided by the Spirit,
Proclaims the Evangelium that will set you free.

At Reconciliation the Most Holy Spirit
Will come right upon you and fulfill your heart;
At Holy Communion our Lord and Savior
Will give you the manna of Eternal Life.

The Most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Maria,
Will rejoice the moment that you swim across;
For we're all her children and for your salvation
She once saw her son, Jesus, die up on the cross.

There's only one Church that was by Jesus founded,
No church emulates her sacramental strength;
It is universal and welcomes her children
No matter how long they may have been away. ■



ONLINE COMMUNITY



We have a great way for converts and journeyers to connect online! CHN's Online Community is the quickest and easiest way for people on the journey to Catholicism to connect with converts, as well as CHN staff, for fellowship on the journey home. We

invite you to connect at community.chnetwork.org.

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

October 7

Fr. John Bartunek* (former atheist)

October 14

Stacy Transancos* (former Baptist & atheist)

October 21

Toby Cook* (former Lutheran minister)

October 28

Sr. Theresa Aletheia Noble FSP* (revert & former atheist)

November 4

Leah Libresco* (former atheist)

*Schedule is subject to change.

To access the full archive of past Journey Home programs go to chnetwork.org/journey-home.

Joyful Journey Updates

From Andrew, on the journey "I wanted to let you know I've made my intentions known to a Catholic priest that I want to convert before my Catholic wedding in October. I am joyous with the knowledge that I can one day soon become a member of Christ's Church. Things may get a little sticky as I 'break up' with my current Episcopal church. I have met many great people there that I will always love and cherish. But the time is right for me to come home. Thank you for all you've done."

From Tony, on the journey "As I type these words I am about two months off becoming a Catholic . . . The only reason that I am still on this path is that I have been so mightily blessed in ways I could never have imagined and from directions I would have previously run away from. There are times when I experience a level of closeness to the Lord that His majesty is almost overwhelming. Rather like the experience of Isaiah in his vision in the temple (Isaiah 6), the glory of God is almost too much to bear and becomes more 'real' than the physical world around me. My prayer life has become such a precious part of my daily routine. I have never been a

disciplined pray-er, but this has completely changed. This, I think, has had a positive effect on the rest of my life with the fruits of the Spirit being more evident."

A Lutheran pastor in Europe "I'd like to share a precious moment with you: Last week at our talk, the vice president told me, with a lot of care and worry for me, when I opened to her my thoughts of converting: 'I'm afraid that I must inform you that you'll probably lose all retirement from us in case of dismissal. In the best case, the church will pay a very low minimum for your retirement assurance . . . I'll make sure about this information for you — so that you'll know exactly and can balance this consequence against your inclination to convert.' When I heard this, I felt a moment of fear. Yet I clearly knew that there was nothing 'to balance against' and that I will adjust to these conditions

without hesitation. The next moment I was surprised about my own reaction, but the certainty actually kept staying. I was at peace with this and still am. I didn't tell her that because I expected that she would really worry about my mental condition if I did. It was like realizing a clash of two worlds or two dimensions within a few seconds. I felt that I was making an unexpected spiritual experience. I didn't know before that I had the ground within me to stand that firmly on. It was like a grace to realize this by that information." ■

SHARE THE 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.



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/ or complete this form and mail to:

CHNetwork Attention: Ann Moore
PO Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702

Please contact Ann at 740-450-1175 or ann@chnetwork.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Your information

Name _____

Signature _____

Address line 1 _____

Address line 2 _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone number _____

Email address _____

Yes! I wish to make a monthly donation of \$25.00 on auto-payment to help support the CHNetwork's ministry.

Yes! I wish to make a monthly donation of \$ _____ on auto-payment to help support the CHNetwork's ministry.

Checking account or **Savings account**

Bank routing number (9-digit number) _____

Account number _____

Credit card

Card number _____

Expiration date / CVV Code _____

Visa

MasterCard

Discover

AmericanExpress

Prayer List



Clergy

- For Paul, an Episcopal priest, that he may find employment so that he can enter the Catholic Church.
- For a Reformed minister in New York, that the Holy Spirit would make the path clear to him to return to the Catholic Faith of his youth.
- For a Church of Christ teacher, that his wife's opposition to his interest in Catholic truth would be softened.
- For Ted, a missionary, and his wife, that his hunger for the sacrament and the liturgy would draw him home to the Catholic Church.
- For Daniel, a Presbyterian minister, that he may find viable employment options that will open the door to his entry into the Catholic Church.
- For Sandra, a missionary, that her newfound interest in the Catholic Faith would blossom into a mature love for the Church that is ever old and ever new.
- For a Nazarene pastor in Oklahoma, that all obstacles blocking his path to enter the Catholic Church would be cleared away by the Holy Spirit.
- For an Evangelical Free missionary in Southeast Asia, that she may find her way home to the Catholic Church.
- For David, a minister in Ohio, that he may find faithful Catholics to talk to.
- For Michael, a non-denominational minister, that he may find healing that will allow him to return to the Catholic Church.

- For a woman on the journey who is struggling attending an anti-Catholic Protestant church but doesn't feel like it's time to leave it yet on account of her husband not sharing her interest in the Catholic Church.
- For a man in Europe who is dialoging with a friend about the Eucharist, that the Holy Spirit will guide their discussions.
- For Roger who is struggling with some issues about the papacy, that he will continue seeking truth and God's will in his life.
- For Dawn's loved ones to be open to learning more about the Catholic Faith.
- For Casey as she continues to grow in her faith and devotions, that her desire to deepen her prayer life will be blessed with fruitful contemplation.
- For a man in Canada who is attending Mass periodically but doesn't feel led to move forward with his casual interest in Catholicism, that he will continue going deeper in his faith.
- For a non-denominational Christian who is reading and studying and hoping to find answers to her questions about the Catholic Church.
- For Haley who is searching for truth and has always been drawn toward the Catholic Church, that she will find the answers she seeks.

- For an Episcopalian in the south to be able to overcome her objections and be able to fully embrace the Catholic Faith.
- For Nicky who is struggling with her family not understanding her return to the Catholic Church, that they will in turn come fully home.
- For Sarah who is waiting to pursue her desire to become Catholic, that during this time she will continue to go deeper in her love for Jesus and His truth.
- For a woman from a non-denominational background in Washington State who has had a number of negative experiences with the Catholic Church but continues to be interested in conversion, that she will have the courage to continue to seek truth.
- For Mary Jo as she continues reading and learning about Catholicism, that she will know how best to move forward with her journey.
- For Tammy as she returns to the Church and the sacraments, that she will remain close to Jesus' heart.

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.

Laity

- For Chuck and his wife to receive word soon on their annulment petitions.

CHNETWORK STAFF, ADVISORS, & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President/Founder
Marcus Grodi
(former Presbyterian pastor)

Chief Operating Officer
Jon Marc Grodi

Ministry Membership & Pastoral Care Coordinator
Jim Anderson
(former Lutheran)

Office Manager
Ann Moore

IT/Facilities Coordinator
Bill Bateson
(former Secularist)

Resource Specialist
Janna Pitcock
(Revert)

Publications & Pastoral Care Coordinator
Mary Clare Miller

Outreach Manager
Matt Swaim
(former Methodist)

Developer of Web & New Media
Seth Paine
(former non-denominational)

Online Resource & Pastoral Care Coordinator
Ken Hensley
(former Baptist minister)

Ecclesial Advisor & Chaplain
Msgr. Jeffrey N. Steenson
(former Episcopal bishop)

Financial Advisor
Kevin Lowry
(former Presbyterian)

Spiritual Advisor
Brother Rex Anthony Norris
(former Anglican)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marcus Grodi *(President)*
Msgr. Jeffrey N. Steenson *(Vice President)*
Kevin Lowry *(Treasurer)*
Donald Brey *(Director)*

...Journeys Home Continued...

► “Journeys Home” continued from page 2

During this time, I joined a study group associated with the ARE. There were no strange rituals; we just got together weekly to meditate and study “spiritual” topics. It was all very interesting and “spiritual,” but after a while I began to notice the lack of any kind of moral teaching or standards to go along with the “spirituality.” I needed a strong moral authority in my life.

This dabbling in New Age philosophies and teachings led to a growing sense of confusion and dissatisfaction, but I didn’t know where to turn. I missed the Catholic Church and the solid foundation it had offered. I missed that feeling of having a real teaching authority in my life, coming straight from God. I missed the closeness to God that I had felt in the Mass. But by this time I had drifted so far away that I was no longer sure of what truth was or whether the Church could actually offer me anything substantial. I had for too long walked down a path where objective truth was not as important as subjective experience — the idea that any road you might choose is fine, for they all lead to God.

Objective truth is what I was seeking and longing for, but I was not sure where to find that truth. The disintegration of the family structure at home left me without confidence that any of my earlier experiences in the Faith had been real or substantial. I did not outright reject the Church or her teachings; I just no longer knew that she was the true Church. I was like the lover in the Song of Solomon: “I sought Him whom my soul loves; I sought Him, but I found Him not” (Song of Solomon 3:1).

Eventually, a friend invited me to a large non-denominational charismatic church in Washington, DC. Although the high-spiritedness of it all was foreign to me, I did enjoy the worship music and the great Bible teaching from the pulpit, as well as in the Sunday school classes. So I began to attend this church on Sundays, while at the same time continuing with my weekly ARE study group.

During the same time period, I encountered some people manning an exhibit at school. They had very nice pictures and claimed to be the true church. They turned out to be Latter Day Saints (“Mormons”). They were so clean cut and wholesome looking, so convincing in their enthusiasm, I thought they might have the answers I was looking for. So I signed up for their classes, and before long they were coming to my house every week to give me lessons in Mormonism. I attended some of their church services and social functions, and my, what a nice group of people they were! So family oriented and wholesome. Of course, I wanted to be a part of that, so I began to seriously consider becoming a Latter Day Saint.

Thankfully, a friend and some of his other friends at the non-denominational church became alarmed and began praying for me. Their prayers were answered. I quickly realized that Mormonism was not what I was looking for. Eventually, I also tired of the ARE and quit that group as well. But I was still looking for answers. I don’t think I even knew what my questions were, but I wanted to know truth, and I wanted to know God and the right path to finding Him.

I remember driving down the road one day, feeling desperate and crying out to God to please show me the way. The following Sunday in church, still the non-denominational one, the song leader, who knew nothing of my struggle, began to speak of “truth.” He said something that struck me like lightning: that if you want to know the truth, you need to seek it in Jesus Christ. The simplicity of his statement seemed to enlighten my darkness. I could see that if I clung to Jesus Christ, I would have the truth.

From that day forward, I confined my search for truth to Jesus Christ. Never again did any philosophy that did not acknowledge Him as King of the Universe, Lord and Savior, appeal to me. I knew and understood that He alone was the way, the truth, and the life. I didn’t yet quite have an answer as to where I should be attending church, or whether there really was only one true church, but I knew that I was on the right path: my answers were to be found with Christ. He would lead me and show me the right way.

Soon afterwards, I finally finished community college and transferred to the University of Maryland to pursue a degree in physical therapy. I also met my future husband, and we became engaged. During my two years of college in Baltimore, I attended a wonderful Episcopal church on Sundays. The services were very liturgical, which I loved. This church seemed to provide the perfect combination of solid Bible teaching, the reverence and solemnity of the liturgy, and some of the more positive aspects of the charismatic movement. I loved everything about it, especially communion time. I understood that their communion did not contain the Real Presence, but I wasn’t sure any more if I believed in that. Deep down, I missed the Eucharist, and this was the closest I had come to a Catholic Mass in a long time. I felt that I was getting closer to what I was looking for.

Marriage & Family Life

Right after graduation, I married, and my husband and I settled into an Assemblies of God church near where we lived. We had become used to the charismatic style, and this was a nice church, not too extreme for our reserved personalities.

CONTACT THE CHNETWORK



CHNetwork

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



740-450-1175



info@chnetwork.org



The Coming Home
Network International



www.chnetwork.org

...Journeys Home Continued...

After our first child was born, we moved to a different neighborhood and joined the closest Assemblies of God congregation there. This church had a little “looser” style of worship but was still not too extreme. The people enjoyed lively music — a lot of Southern Gospel — and encouraged raising of hands and dancing around in the sanctuary.

Over time, however, I became uncomfortable with both the Assemblies of God’s teachings and their style of worship. I missed having a sense of reverence during worship services. But I was no longer a young, single woman, free to go exploring and church hopping. My husband did not share my sense of restlessness, and we were raising four children who needed stability and a church home. On the other hand, I didn’t know what I was looking for. I seemed to be the only one who had problems with the Assemblies of God. It must be me, I thought. My deep longing for a sense of reverence and liturgy in church, for an observance of the liturgical year, for the Eucharist, for “heroes of the faith” beyond television evangelists, for a sense of being part of the historic Church reaching as far back as Christ and the Apostles — I figured all this must be just sentimentality for the things of my childhood. Not even practicing Catholics seemed to be talking much about these things. Yet, even with prayer and the Bible filling my life, Protestant theology and spirituality seemed to be shallow.

Years later, I discovered “The Bible Answer Man,” Hank Hannegraff, on the radio. He had a lot of wisdom and Bible knowledge, and he had some big issues with the extremes and abuses going on in some Pentecostal circles. Listening to him on the radio and reading his articles validated much of what I had been sensing — that something wasn’t quite right. Although the church we attended did not get into the extremes, they seemed to admire them from a distance. I felt very much out of synch with the rest of the congregation.

Finally, in 1998, we left the Assemblies of God and began to search for a new church home. We decided on a local Nazarene church. I did not sense that the Nazarene church was my “final destination,” but we had to go somewhere, and this church had a great pastor and very friendly people, and the Sunday services were at least civilized. The pastor even acknowledged something akin to a liturgical year. It was so refreshing to be attending church where they actually did special activities during Lent and Advent. Until that time, I don’t think I had even heard the words “Advent” or “Lent” mentioned in all my years of attending Protestant churches. Here, at least, there was some serious observance of Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Advent, and Christmas.

Still, I longed for something more — a deeper spirituality, more reverence, the lives of the saints, the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Basically, I wanted my life, and especially the spiritual dimension, to be filled with goodness, truth, and beauty. I began to sense that what I really wanted was the Catholic Church, not just a Protestant church that had a few Catholic elements. But given my family situation, I assumed that I would never be able to return to the Church. My husband had never had the beauti-

ful foundational experiences in the Church that I had. His only exposure to Catholicism was attending Mass at funerals or weddings, and his impression was that the Mass was pretty boring. So he had no interest in Catholicism.

Almost Home

We live about 45 minutes from the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, and when some of my Catholic relatives would come to town, I began suggesting that they might like to visit the Shrine. (It was a convenient excuse. The truth is that I wanted to check out the Shrine, and after my first visit, I wanted to return anytime I could find an excuse.) Once, when I took my dad there for a visit, I picked up a couple of books in the bookstore: Scott and Kimberly Hahn’s *Rome Sweet Home* and Jeff Cavins’ *My Life on the Rock*. I devoured both books, and on every page I was finding things in their experiences that I could relate to. Just as, years earlier, Hank Hannegraff had articulated an intelligent, Bible-based rationale confirming my suspicions about the wrongness of the situation I was in back then, the Hahns’ and Cavins’ books helped to confirm my dawning awareness that the things I had been longing for existed only in the Catholic Church. They gave intelligent and rational explanations, backed up by Scripture and Church history, for why the Catholic Church is the true Church. What a happy day that was when it all came together for me, when I realized that my longing for Catholicism was not merely a nostalgic sentimentality. It was truth that could not be denied. I was finally clear in my own mind about what I needed, and my desire for all things Catholic rose to a fever pitch.

I developed a craving for the Eucharist that just wouldn’t go away. I wouldn’t say I needed to be *convinced* of the truth of the Real Presence so much as I needed some scriptural confirmation that this *perceived need* of mine was real. I can’t tell you where I first heard the Catholic explanation of the sixth chapter of John, but I suspect it was on EWTN. The part of the explanation that struck me was where it was pointed out that, if Jesus had only been speaking symbolically about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, then why would He not have explained that more fully to His disciples? Why would He have allowed so many of them to fall away because of a misunderstanding? That was my confirmation that Christ was truly in the Eucharist. And then, all the other pieces began to fall into place.

Many times on EWTN, I would hear it said that it’s important to read the early Church Fathers, and so I did. It was such a revelation to find out that the early Church definitely believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Thus I was able to see that both Scripture and Church history support the Catholic belief. My yearning for Christ in the Eucharist was legitimate!

I discovered other things about the early Church and its beliefs that were so much in line with Catholicism, such as apostolic succession and the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. It made perfect sense that Jesus had established a Church and had given it authority to teach doctrine and that when it came to faith and morals, He would not allow it to be led astray. So He built His

...Journeys Home Continued...

Church upon the Rock and gave the keys of the Kingdom to Peter, and that authority has been passed down through the ages to the successors of Peter, the Popes.

In the end, these two things came together: an understanding of the Eucharist and of the authority that resides in the Church through the papal office and the Magisterium. This was the definitive, final piece of the puzzle that allowed me to come back to the Church.

Even so, at the time, I didn't know if I would ever really be able to return. I was still a wife and mother in a very Protestant family, and I didn't feel I could independently go my own way. So for the time being, I contented myself with reconnecting to my Catholic heritage in small ways while remaining in the Nazarene church.

I began making regular trips alone to the Shrine, sitting in a chapel, praying and reading my Bible. I also had a burning desire to pray the Rosary, to say the Hail Marys and hold the beads again. So I went out and bought a rosary and began to pray it daily. I can't explain it, but it just felt so *right*. I began reading more Catholic literature, both classic and modern. Through Jeff Cavins' book, I learned about EWTN and began watching many of its programs. I discovered that the Church still has holy priests and nuns! The teachings of Father Benedict Groeschel, Father Mitch Pacwa, Mother Angelica, and others brought such refreshment for this thirsty soul of mine. I began watching *The Journey Home* every week and found myself relating to every guest in one way or another. And I began staying up late at night to watch the Mass. It was all such a beautiful feeling of rediscovering my true home, not only because it was the Church of my childhood, but because it was the Church founded by Christ, my Savior. And it became ever clearer to me that I could no longer remain outside it. I really wanted to be back "home," where I belonged.

The Good Shepherd Carries His Lost Lamb Back Home

On Christmas Eve, 2003, I attended Midnight Mass at the Shrine. At Communion time, I was filled with angst at not being able to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. I prayed a desperate prayer, asking Mary to intercede, to help me somehow to be back in the Church by Easter. I felt I would die if I could not quickly come back into full communion with the Church. I also felt it might take a miracle, since I wasn't sure how my husband would react to my decision. The following week, I made an appointment with the priest at the local church and told him of my situation. He walked me through the steps for reconciliation. There was some paperwork involved. I went to confession, and with a little fear and trembling I approached my husband about my desire to return to the Church and about the need to have our marriage convalidated, since we had originally been married in a Protestant church. He was not so happy about my plan for returning to the Church, but since the plan I presented to him was one that would make a very minimal impact on our normal routines — I would attend Saturday vigil Mass and still attend Sunday School and church services with the family on

Sunday morning — I think he decided that there was no sense in resisting something that was obviously so important to me, even if he didn't understand it at all. He was a little more negative about going before the priest to say our marriage vows. He said he didn't understand why the Catholic Church did not consider us already married (going on 30 years by that point). I tried to explain it to him and insisted it was going to be a very short, simple ceremony that would really be painless. So he agreed. I believe he agreed to it mostly because he just hates conflict and it was just the path of least resistance. On our way home from the convalidation, though, he exclaimed how nice that was and how we should have invited people and had a little party afterwards. In spite of himself, he was blessed by participating in the Sacrament. So, I was all "official" a few days before Ash Wednesday — I didn't even have to wait until Easter. God is so good!

It was so *wonderful* to receive the Body and Blood of Christ again. And going to confession on a regular basis — what a blessing! Having the Communion of Saints to look to for inspiration and help. The Magisterium. The beauty of the liturgy. The complete Bible. The *Catechism*. The true Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The mystics and saints. The martyrs. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church. The Liturgy of the Hours. The security of being part of the Church Christ founded and which He promised He would never forsake. These are the things that satisfy the soul that hungers and thirsts for God (see Matthew 5:6). The blessings God provides for us through His Church are innumerable. I grieve that it took me so long to find my way back home, but I am comforted to know that God, in His Providence, is able to redeem what we have ruined and lost, to bring good out of evil and to "restore the years which the swarming locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25).

My husband did not object to my returning to the Church, but he still has no interest in joining me. He is content to remain with the Nazarene Church. By the time I finally returned, the kids were grown, and only one of them, our daughter Amy, raised any objections. Yet today, she herself is a devout Catholic! Many Rosaries and prayers to St. Monica go up continually, asking that her three siblings will one day discover the beauty, truth, and goodness which can be found only in the Catholic Church. ■



KATHY FAAS lives in Upper Marlboro, MD. She and her husband, Dirk, recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. They have four grown children. Kathy works part-time as a physical therapist.

Continue the **JOURNEY**

Please visit CHNetwork.org/converts to comment on and share this or one of hundreds of other powerful testimonies!

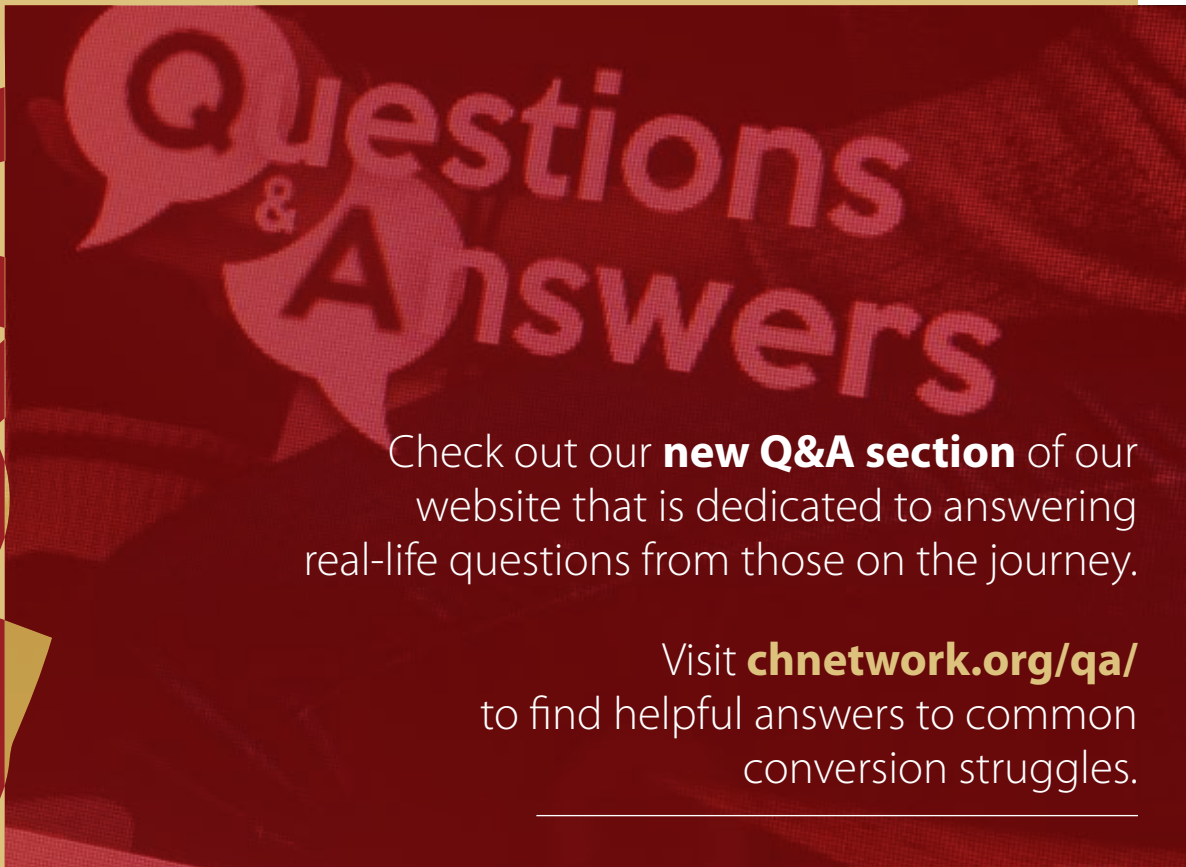
The Coming Home Network International

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Q & A



Check out our **new Q&A section** of our website that is dedicated to answering real-life questions from those on the journey.

Visit **chnetwork.org/qa/** to find helpful answers to common conversion struggles.