



## June 2022 CHNewsletter

"I Met Him in an Adoration Chapel"

By Lori Ann Mancini ..... 1

"Confessions of a First-Time Adorer"

By Janna Pitcock ..... 4

"A Basic Guide to Adoration"

By Brother Rex Anthony Norris ..... 5

EWTN's *The Journey Home* schedule ..... 6

Joyful Journeys..... 7

# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## I Met Him in an Adoration Chapel

By Lori Ann Mancini

I grew up having a serious faith. My parents were among the many young couples in the late 1950s who made the trek up Route 23 from the coal-mining region of Kentucky to find work in Ohio. By the time I was born in 1969, my parents were members of the Church of Christ. Many households of extended family lived in our small town and shared this same faith. To this day, I still cherish the songs and *a capella* singing that mark this particular faith tradition. The Church of Christ's tenets regarding full immersion, adult-only baptism, and Bible-only teachings seemed right and reasonable to me.

### Cracks in the Foundation

However, around the time I was 12, my parents' marriage began falling apart. There was a lot of chaos in our home. I had always been a sensitive child and thought about things deeply. I was left largely on my own to read, question, and explore the outdoors. Around this time, I decided to get baptized. This led to the first significant challenge to my faith. After I was baptized, I had concerns that it wasn't sufficient. I never felt "saved." Rather, God seemed to be retreating from me, and although I stayed in church and continued to pray, this feeling grew. The next summer, I was "re-baptized" at church camp. But I *still* didn't feel "saved." Instead, I developed a truly deep and dark existential angst that would define the rest of my teen years.

I also had many questions about God, the universe, eternity, and the Bible, and with all of that on my plate, I headed off to David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee at the age of 17. I

met some wonderful faith-filled teachers there, but my deepest questions remained unanswered. The summer before my junior year, I could not face the prospect of returning there, so I instead enrolled at The Ohio State University.

### Falling Apart

I signed up for a philosophy class my first quarter, and what was left of my fundamentalist faith crumbled. It was a frightening time. I had trouble sleeping at night, not knowing how to feel at home in the universe. I began drinking and learned to distract myself from all the deep questions nagging me by socializing and partying. I took on the secular feminist ideology promoted in my university studies and in society in general. I was going to live "as free as any man." In hindsight, I lived freer than many men who had enough common sense to avoid the high-risk situations in which I routinely placed myself. I attended the Episcopal church on campus for

*Continued on page 2* ➡

Journeys Home

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

a time, thinking I could find a way to still be Christian while rejecting the fundamentalist tenets of my childhood faith. But that didn't work for long.

### Attempting to Pick Up the Pieces

During these years, I completed two bachelor's degrees, one in French and one in education. I somehow picked up the French language easily and soon became fluent. I couldn't afford a study abroad program but was able to organize a longer stay in France one summer through Volunteers for Peace. I then returned to France as an English teaching assistant for the 1994–95 school year after being selected as such by the Fulbright Teaching Committee. These were absolutely life-changing experiences. I made some lasting friendships, and I embraced the French sense of secular, intellectual humanism, shockingly unaware of the Christian history in France. (The nearly complete obscuring and misrepresentation of Christian history had deeply marked my university education.) My time in France did give me enough moments of beauty to provide a lifetime of memories.

At the end of that year, though I truly wanted to stay in France, my temporary visa expired, so I returned home. It was a tough adjustment coming back to Ohio. My spiritual quest turned to occasional yoga classes (I don't advocate them now), but by then I had learned not to ask any hard questions. By the second half of 1999, I was almost 30, a smoker, still single, and unhappy with my live-in boyfriend.

An opportunity to move to Texas opened up. A former boss had called and offered me a six-month contract to work on a textbook project there. This was exactly what I needed to gain clarity. During my time away, I realized that my relationship with my boyfriend, much like my smoking, was an unhealthy way for me to relieve stress. Seeking solace, I was actually taking in poison, instead. So, I quit smoking and also ended my relationship when I returned to Ohio from Texas.

### Lost in New-Age Mayhem

Several months later that same year, I met a fascinating man, Nick. He was a sensitive, deep-thinking person. He had studied philosophy extensively, completing his master's degree and most of his Ph.D. studies. He was not a heavy drinker (as I was), but we had many common interests, and he had a natural kindness and humility that was disarming. I loved him, and we married in July of 2002.

Around the time I met him, near the end of 2000, I had started a job at a vegetarian restaurant operated by serious environmentalists. They were starting a community, based on creating a wilderness sanctuary, and they had some extensive New Age spirituality underpinning their activities. Specifically, one of the owners was deeply involved in Theosophy, and she taught classes on it. I enjoyed my job in the café and eventually decided to join these New Age environmentalists at their sanctuary.

Nick was hesitant about the whole scene. With the wisdom and foresight I've come to rely on over the years, he suggested that I not sell my house before I moved to the sanctuary. So, Nick moved into my humble two-bedroom home, as a renter, while I relocated to the countryside, as a caretaker for one of the sanctuary properties. He wanted to cover me in case things went awry with my new living arrangements.

My involvement with this group lasted a couple of years even though things did get strange very quickly. I will only say that we were delving into spiritual teachings and practices, thinking that we were doing so to encourage love and healing within ourselves and in the world. We were naive; these spiritualities were a dangerous game. There were some long-lasting repercussions that affected my physical and mental health, and my quality of life, for years. I remember being gripped by a terrible depression near the end of my involvement with this group. For instance, during that time, the café owner, an advocate for population control, told me that she thought the earth would appreciate "volunteers" — by which she meant suicides. That was a wake-up call, showing just how far afield I had strayed.

Toward the end of this chapter of my life, I developed a severe case of pneumonia and was bedridden for nearly a month. Several months after that, I developed a pulmonary embolism that doctors initially misdiagnosed as sudden-onset asthma. A rare false negative in a CT scan did not help matters, either. My condition, therefore, remained a mystery to doctors for over eight weeks.

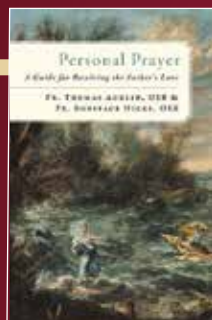
### PERSONAL PRAYER: A GUIDE FOR RECEIVING THE FATHER'S LOVE

FR. THOMAS ACKLIN, OSB  
& FR. BONIFACE HICKS, OSB

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian life. What does it mean to have a personal relationship with God? How do we grow in prayer?

*Personal Prayer: A Guide for Receiving the Father's Love* brings the depth of human experience together with the Catholic tradition of prayer to reveal the path to an intimate, vulnerable relationship with God.

Spiritual directors Fr. Acklin, OSB and Fr. Hicks, OSB (a 2020 *Journey Home* guest) explore forms of Catholic prayer and demonstrate that vulnerability is essential to growing in relationship with God. Rich with the wisdom of Scripture, Catholic teaching, and writings of the saints, *Personal Prayer* is a guide for laity, religious, and priests alike desiring to receive the Father's love in a profoundly personal way. **Item #3258**



Continued on page 3 ➤

### Finding a New Lease on Life

The pulmonary embolism was finally diagnosed in October of 2004. By that time, I had seen enough to know that the New Age scene was very unhealthy for me and fraught with spiritual dangers. Additionally, I felt myself slipping away, and it seemed that I could just “let go” and die. I could also sense what I interpreted to be the prayers of my loved ones wrapped around me like a warm blanket. I remembered that, during my deep depression preceding the pneumonia, I had a strong feeling that I no longer wanted to exist. Thus, faced with the reality of these thoughts, I reflected on my life with my husband of only two years. I formed the words very clearly in my mind that, if it was my time to go, I wanted to just go – because slowly and literally suffocating to death was so horrible. *But* if I had a choice, I would rather stay and live my life with Nick and become a mother.

Over the next few hours, my life changed course. The doctor was able to get an accurate reading from a lung ventilation/perfusion scan that showed a large clot in my right lung. A cardiologist also intervened to help me, saying he hated that I was so young and suffering so much. He decided to do a pulmonary angiogram to help determine what was wrong. Just before the procedure, my husband had a sudden “bad feeling” about the medication a nurse was about to give me. He stopped this nurse from mistakenly giving me blood thinner. (The head nurse later came by, almost in tears, to thank him.) And somehow, after all those weeks of fighting to breathe, exhausted and scared, I was able to get through that procedure, and the doctor confirmed that there was a large clot present in my lungs.

Prior to that day, I had been sent home from various ERs over a dozen times and nearly declared a psychiatric case. The relief of finally knowing what was wrong was overwhelming. There was a long recovery after that. I hadn’t walked much in weeks and had lost a lot of muscle tone and stamina. But slowly, over the weeks, my ability to walk longer distances improved. It took years for my breathing to feel more comfortable, and even now, I still have some remnants of that long-term illness.

### Re-Evaluating Christianity... Through Buddhism

Sometime in the spring of 2007, I learned about a local Buddhist temple. It followed the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism called Karma Kagyu School. A college friend, and accomplished psychologist, had been a serious Buddhist for decades. This temple was the one he had attended. Curious, I sought it out one day, leading to my regular attendance there for seven years.

What I liked about the talks there was their practicality. Essentially, the teachings were agnostic regarding the big spiritual questions. Yet they did provide a very pragmatic framework to help people become more aware of their thoughts and habits, thus encouraging them to cultivate better ones. One of their foundational teachings was that all humans are born with a tendency toward pride and selfishness, and one must conquer these

impulses to grow in loving kindness. These teachings struck me as similar to some Christian teachings, and it was a welcome respite from the spiritual chaos of my New Age experiences.

It is an irony that my Buddhist studies were what taught me to be less reactive, less hostile toward Christianity. I had developed quite a negative attitude toward Christianity over the years as I lost my belief in the historicity of the Bible and, thereby, in the justifications for Christian social and sexual prohibitions. Furthermore, the feminism that I had picked up in college had led me to a pro-choice viewpoint; I had no patience for Christian pro-lifers. I thought the whole matter was about controlling women. However, interestingly, at the temple, I was dealing with the pro-life question as a Buddhist. Although many American Buddhists reject pro-life teachings, Tibetan Buddhism teaches that abortion is immoral and a grave wrong that carries with it a heavy karmic debt. This concept seems obvious now, but it was an uncomfortable teaching for me to have to face at that time.

### Turning Toward the Church

The reason I even set foot on Church property in 2014 was because I realized the local public school wasn’t going to be a good fit for our oldest child, Liliana. Later, I would also seek a better education for our 15-month-old twins, Eve and Georgia. I had tried every other option besides the local Catholic school four blocks away. But my husband, Nick, though agnostic, suggested I at least check it out because we were “open-minded people.”

When I went to tour the school, I had such a positive experience that I found it confusing. Prior to visiting, I originally felt like I was entering “enemy territory.” But when I opened the door and walked into the school, I noticed a palpable sensation of goodness, warmth, and peace. After Nick and I decided to register our daughter, I started studying Catholicism... to *protect* her from it. I soon realized I’d have to deal with the Bible again, and I was filled with fear.

Looking for answers, I came across the website of a man who was a former Church of Christ member and a Catholic convert. He provided many answers to my lingering questions about the Catholic Faith that contrasted with the teachings of my childhood faith, especially those regarding the proper mode of baptism, the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* (Bible alone), and calling priests “Father,” to name a few. That site is no longer available, but I later came across an even more helpful guide to answering these questions: *Christ in His Fullness* by Deacon Bruce Sullivan. Sullivan, himself a convert to Catholicism from the Church of Christ, included several very helpful appendices in his book that addressed my concerns in detail. *Catholicism and Fundamentalism*, by Karl Keating, was also a very informative book, as well as *Bearing False Witness* by Rodney Stark, a non-Catholic. Stark’s book deals with the most common complaints against the Catholic Church in society and in academia. The excellent radio show *Called to Communion*, by Dr. David Anders, also provided many answers to my questions.

Continued on page 9 ➡



# Confessions of a First-Time Adorer

By Janna Pitcock

*“When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now.” – Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

I first met Jesus on a bookmark, in the “Footprints” poem. Perhaps you are familiar with it – you know, the one in which a man dreams that he is walking on the beach with Our Lord, and then scenes from his life flash before his eyes. The man mistakenly believes that Jesus abandoned him during the most difficult times of his life, as there is only one set of footprints visible in the sand during those moments. But the Lord reassures the man that He was there all along... carrying him.

I can still remember thinking, after reading and re-reading what was a profound idea to me at the time, “That sounds nice. Wouldn’t it be nice if there really was an ever-present, ever-loving Savior? Wouldn’t it be nice if I could feel that presence comforting me during my own struggles?”

So, from that moment, I have found myself on a journey toward Our Lord, longing for that personal connection with Jesus. While I have been a Catholic for almost 25 years, my bond with Our Lord has always been, until recently, an intellectual one. For when the seeds of grace and faith were planted within me, they settled in my brain, not my heart. Our sacramental connection has been one of reverence, humility, and steadfast belief, yet it has been a “knowing” rather than a “feeling.” Therefore, it is no surprise that when I read conversion stories, especially those centered around the Eucharist, I feel a renewed desire to experience Christ’s love in a similar, deeper way – an “I want what they have” sort of sentiment.

And it is with great trepidation that I also admit... until last month I had never been to Eucharistic Adoration. (Try confessing that out loud as an employee of a Catholic apostolate – gulp!) My excuses were varied, but typical: mostly fear of doing it wrong, coupled with the struggle to find one quiet hour without a toddler hanging from my arms. However, when the subject of Adoration recently resurfaced in this month’s conversion story, I felt called to go. Don’t get me wrong, I was still deathly afraid of being judged by cradle Catholics. I am married to one, after all. So, I am quite familiar with being gently told (gently most of the time, anyway), “That is not quite right.”

In particular, I have often felt that some devotions, especially Adoration, are like an exclusive Catholic club to which I do not belong, each with its own secret signs, rules, and “handshakes.” I felt if I went to Adoration I would immediately be “outed.” I also understood the importance of honoring the traditions and authority of the Church, especially with regard to this devotion. There are reasons for such Church protocols, the most important

being, of course, that Jesus Himself is on that altar. Needless to say, I didn’t want to get it wrong.

The day arrived, and I nervously drove to church. As I got closer and closer to Our Lord, I found myself asking: “What will I do?” and “What will I say?” and “Do I really want to do this?” And then my deepest, darkest fear was exposed, the one I really shuddered to confront: If I *didn’t* have a grace-filled experience, if I didn’t *feel* anything, what would that say about my faith? Would that mean I really didn’t believe?

I tearfully sat in the car for a few moments, yet I plucked up my courage and resolved that this was my moment to spend time alone with Jesus, one on one, protocols or no protocols, intimidated or not. I got to the door, and... it wasn’t the Lord greeting me, but rather a sign. It said, “Adoration Cancelled.”

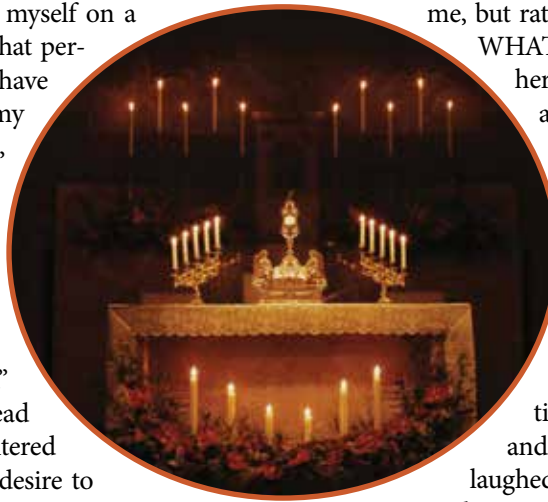
WHAT?!!! Seriously? It took me 25 years to get here, and Jesus stood me up! Of course, I realized immediately that that was the most ludicrous thought ever.

I returned to my car, and I found myself crying, again. I was so terribly disappointed. I actually felt like I was missing out on something. I felt that longing again, so much so that I was ready to drive however far I had to in order to find a church with perpetual adoration. And then, I heard my own thoughts, and I started to laugh. I laughed at the sign; I laughed at myself, and I laughed at the Holy Spirit, who I am convinced planned this so that I would

realize how much I really wanted to go, how much it really did mean to me – and to Jesus. God can be oh-so-wonderfully clever and oh-so-wonderfully funny and sweet, all at the same time.

I returned, two weeks later, and had my one-on-one encounter with Christ. It got off to a bumpy, not-so-charitable start. My husband, I assume in a show of support, decided he wanted to accompany me and bring our kids. Unfortunately, I found myself perturbed, even a little indignant and possessive. It was my turn to tell him, ever so gently, that this was *my* day/time to be alone with Jesus, not his. Deep down I knew that I needed to share Jesus, but I also knew that there was no way I could open my heart to Him with my family there as a distraction.

After arriving, I double genuflected and proceeded to a pew. I knelt for a while, cried for a while, then sat, then knelt again. It was, at times, difficult to ignore the trivial, worldly thoughts trickling into my brain. I did peek at the other adorers around me and noticed that they were all spending time with Christ in their own ways. I had contemplated reading a devotional while there, but I wanted this meeting to be more personal. So, I poured out all



my anxieties and troubles, my lamentations sprinkled with a bit of thanksgiving and actual adoration. I think I felt overwhelmed, unworthy, and content all at the same time. In my favorite church, surrounded by strong witnesses to the Faith, including my favorite nun, I never once felt judged; rather, I was comforted by their presence.

I suppose that was one of the many graces of that evening – not one time did my previous fears enter into my consciousness. Other fears did emerge that were gnawing at my heart, but none of those related to “doing it wrong.” In fact, there was no shortage of words on my end. My mind and heart tumbled through so many disjointed thoughts – from praying for departed souls, to the Last Supper, to the first disciples, to my journey of faith, to my own trials, to my future.

So great was the flood of thoughts and emotions, that at one point, I felt Him saying, “Be still, and know I am God.” Now, I *never* quote Scripture, and I have always felt like a harried Martha, so those words were particularly meaningful to me. It was as if God was saying, “Are you finished yet? Now, it’s my turn.” So, I tried to be still, in imitation of the literal silence enveloping the church. And I let Jesus in. I understood that I had to listen. It was no longer about me; it was about Him. I soaked in His Presence, along with the quiet. Not only was I face to face with Him, but I was surrounded by the beauty and the history of our Faith, in the lingering incense, the candles, the artwork, and of course, the Real Presence of Love on the altar.

I recalled the vision I had recently had, while reading about the history of Adoration, of Jesus’ actual heart in the monstrance. It was a comforting reminder of not only His Sacred Presence and sacrificial love, but also a reassurance of my own faith. At one point, I felt Him answer another important question I had brought with me that evening. And His answer astounded me, literally stunned me into a calm state of reflection (and intrigue). And it gave me hope: hope for the future and hope that I would always have a place for my woes, my worries, and my weariness. I could lay them all at His feet. He wants us to give Him our own thorns, our own nails, our own crosses, thereby uniting our lives, our very hearts, with His. Only then can we submit our will to His and trust in His love.

I did feel His grace and peace that night. It was so comforting to be with Him that I didn’t want to leave. Outside lay the human world, fraught with responsibilities and difficulties that must be faced. I wasn’t ready to go back there. Like Peter after the Transfiguration, I wanted to linger in His Presence, in His safe, loving arms. I wasn’t ready to go back “down the mountain.” But then I was struck by another verse. Christ’s light and our faith are not meant to be hidden under a bushel basket. We must go “down” and toil on earth. We must go forth and take our faith out into the world, where it might not be easy and where it will be tested. Yet He is there with us.

And that is how I discovered the importance of Adoration, at least for me. As I emerged from the church into the dark night, He was still there. I was more aware of His presence, for having emptied myself at His feet, there was now room for His love and His graces in my heart. I could now focus on what really mattered — *Him* and our newfound connection. Life suddenly seemed less burdensome, tinged with a sense of peace and hope. He was always there, of course, but this time I *felt* Him. Our walk together had changed. After almost 40 years of my own wandering, I had finally found His heart, and He had opened mine. “On that day you will know that... you are in Me, and I am in you.” And I don’t need a bookmark anymore to prove it. ■

## A Basic Guide to **ADORATION**

By Brother Rex Anthony Norris

### **1 Why should one go to Adoration?**

A person ought to spend time with the One Who lived, died, rose from the dead, and lives again for love of that person. A lover and the beloved spend time in each other’s company for many reasons, all of which amount to one reason: love for each other. In this case, the Lover (Christ) is there to spend time with His beloved (you). Shouldn’t we want to spend time in His Company?

### **2 What do I do when I first arrive?**

Proceed to a pew. Before entering the pew, make the sign of the cross while facing the Lord Jesus in the monstrance, kneel on both knees, and place your head on the floor for a brief moment in humility before the King of heaven and earth. Assume a normal position, enter the pew, and kneel again for a few moments. If a person is unable to bow, a simple bow of the head, a profound bow from the waist, or a simple genuflection are all acceptable. First and foremost, Jesus is happy to have you there!

### **3 What do I do during my time there?**

Sometimes I kneel during my entire time of Adoration. Sometimes I kneel for a period of time until I feel moved to sit. I may alternate kneeling and sitting as the Holy Spirit moves me. Some people sit silently without a particular agenda, offering prayers of adoration, intercession, confession, or thanksgiving as the Spirit moves. Some people read and reflect upon Sacred Scripture or a book of spiritual reflections by a favorite saint or other author. There are a number of written aids available to help one focus during Adoration. Some chapels have written materials available in the pews or near the entrance.

### **4 What do I do upon leaving?**

When you are ready to leave, exit the pew and make the same gestures of genuflection as described above (in #2) before leaving the church or chapel.

### **5 Can I leave at any time?**

It is traditional to stay for 60 minutes, called a “Holy Hour,” but it is not absolutely essential that you remain for one hour, unless you have made a commitment to do so beforehand as part of a team of Eucharistic Adorers.

### **6 Is there anything I shouldn’t do?**

Do not speak or otherwise make noise, i.e. listen to music or talks via earbuds, etc. that could disturb other adorers or the silence of the chapel in general during Adoration.

*Continued on page 6* ➤

## 7 Who can go to Adoration, and do I need to sign up ahead of time?

All are welcome to spend time in Adoration. Thanks be to God! You do not usually need to sign up in advance. However, many parishes that offer Eucharistic Adoration do so only at select times. It would be advisable to contact the parish to ask about the days/times/location of Adoration. Some parishes have Adoration on a more or less continuous basis. In that case there is usually a group of Eucharistic Adorers who sign up for particular time slots so that every hour is covered. With regard to Adoration protocols, there may be variations within each parish, but the protocols will be similar enough such that once a person becomes accustomed to Adoration in one place, she or he will be comfortable most any place. ■

*"The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with Him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in heaven, and will help bring about everlasting peace on earth."*

– Saint Teresa of Calcutta



## SUPPORT THE CHNETWORK!

**Could you give \$25 a month or more to 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

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

Please contact Ann at 740-450-1175 or [ann@chnetwork.org](mailto:ann@chnetwork.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

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## EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME on television & radio



### TELEVISION

Mondays at 8 PM ET — Encores: Tuesdays 1 AM ET, Thursdays 2 PM ET

*The Best of The Journey Home*: Saturday 6 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 6**

Casey & Erin Phillips\*  
(former Southern Baptists)

**June 13**

Christopher Reibold\* (Catholic revert  
and former agnostic) (re-air from 7/22/19)

**June 20**

David Currie\* (former  
Fundamentalist Protestant)

**June 27**

Kevin Stephenson\* (former Anglican and  
Charismatic) (re-air from 8/5/19)

**July 4**

Carlos Zamora\* (Catholic  
revert) (re-air from 8/12/19)

\*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 Julie, a convert** I am still reading the Coming Home Network newsletters that I receive in the mail and just want the whole non-Catholic world to read them and be changed! I said "yes" to teaching our parish's Confirmation Prep class! We are in our second year of teaching, and as long as God wants me there, I will be there. I [have also been] on the core team for RCIA – it has been an adventure! I opened up an online Catholic gift shop last August. We were invited to share our products at the Catholic Marketing Network Christmas Show in Texas, where we were able to meet the guest speakers: Dr. Scott Hahn, Chris Stefanik, Raymond Arroyo, and Fr. Chris Alar! I have also become very involved in parish life. I serve as a lector on Sundays, and my younger son is an altar server. I am still an Adorer and have recently become our parish's Pro-Life Coordinator. I am still part of the "Come, Lord Jesus" Bible study group that we have, and I enjoy listening to Catholic podcasts and reading Catholic material. I am currently listening to *The Bible in a Year* with Fr. Mike Schmitz. I love all things Catholic and liturgy! The

goodness of God continues to be very present in my life, and I will be forever grateful to the people He has placed in my life that have led me home to Him in the Catholic Church.

**From William, a convert** I've been having an interesting time. I lost my job back in October and got a new one in December. I [sold] my house, which was easy. My wife and I are in the process of trying to buy a new house. . . . We . . . have been attending a nearby parish for Sunday Mass, but it isn't likely to be the parish I will attend once we buy a house, as the area is a little too pricey for our budget. It's too bad, [but]... I am confident that God will provide in due time. Though, I still would appreciate prayers for guidance and wisdom.

**From Margaret, a convert** I work in our parish, especially with missionaries, to encourage spiritual development by sponsoring programs and also to encourage [parishioners] to return to Mass as the [COVID] restrictions are lifted. Between this group, RCIA, and singing in the choir, I'm pretty busy – and enjoying it all, I have to say! Sometimes it's still

hard to sing the "Alleluia" or "Gloria" without crying because I'm so thankful God brought me to His Church.

**From Jacob, a lay convert** It's great to hear from you! Man, oh, man. I [had] the best year of my life [recently] when I returned home and connected with a devout Catholic girl there. We briefly texted back and forth, but she was really intensely praying for my vocation (unbeknownst to me). She was such an encouragement to me in her devotion to Our Lady and St. Joseph. One thing led to another, and we officially started dating. I [ended up] proposing to her on the Feast of St. Joseph, after a consecration to St. Joseph, at a parish dedicated to St. Joseph, in the Year of St. Joseph. I spent a lot of the past couple of years focusing on theology and philosophy, trying to detangle everything I believed before. But [now] I know I'm realizing how much deeper I need to go in my prayer and spiritual life. I still find episodes of *The Journey Home* to be such an inspiration in my own spiritual journey. God bless! ■

# Prayer List

*For those who were received into full communion with the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil Mass, may they know the joy of true intimacy with the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist during all their earthly pilgrimage, and may they experience the consolation of the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Mystical Body of Christ now and forever.*



## Clergy

■ **For Gregory, a Methodist minister** who is powerfully drawn toward the Catholic Church but convinced at the same time that he was called to the ministry and is struggling to understand how both could be true.

■ **For Calvin, a Protestant minister** working toward bringing his family into the Catholic Church, that the Holy Spirit will give him wisdom.

■ **For Mark, a former Protestant pastor and evangelist** who has caught a vision of the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and yet continues to wrestle with many questions, that the Lord will give him peace and joy as he continues to learn.

■ **For Jeffrey, an Anglican minister** who has been attracted to the Catholic Church for a long time but has personal issues that make it very difficult for him to become Catholic.

■ **For Justin, an evangelical pastor** who has been watching shows on the CHNetwork every week and is on the road toward the Church, that the Lord will give him answers to the questions he still has.

■ **For Julie, a Reformed pastor-in-training** who appears to be on a slow path toward the Catholic Church, for the Spirit's leading in her life.

■ **For Donald, a Presbyterian pastor** looking to return to the Church but dealing with a number of hurdles, both theological and practical.

■ **For Ben, a Nazarene pastor** firmly on the path toward the Church, that the Holy Spirit will give him courage to make the hard decisions he sees on the horizon.

■ **For Wieslaw and his wife**, who are on the path toward the Church but after 30 years as Protestants struggle with a number of questions, that they will find the answers they need.

■ **For Barend, an Anglican priest** drawn to the Catholic Church and struggling very much with a family who is strongly opposed.

■ **For Jay, a non-denominational Protestant pastor** who was baptized and raised Catholic and now finds himself drawn back toward the Church, that the Lord will lead him and give him courage.

■ **For Barnabas, who was in formation for the ministry in the Anglican Church** but is now becoming convinced he must become Catholic and struggles with how he will find a place of ministry if he does.

## Laity

■ **For Jeffrey, an Anglican**, that he may have direction regarding making the leap from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism and that the Blessed Mother herself will help with allaying his concerns about Marian devotion, veneration, and practices.

■ **For Michael from the Philippines** who prays, "I just want to go home to the Catholic Church, but home looks like a long way." May the Holy Spirit fill him with peace, wisdom, and an ongoing deposit of graces as he grows in fortitude and fidelity on the journey home.

■ **For Steven, a Baptist on the journey**, and for his family, that they might find their way/timing into the Catholic Church, and for his son who is dealing with health issues.

■ **For Chris, a Baptist**, who just attended his first Mass, that the Lord would lead him as he begins the journey of considering the Catholic Faith.

■ **For Noah, an Evangelical**, that the Holy Spirit would help him to overcome his confusion caused by misguided Catholics.

■ **For Hugh, an Episcopalian in Alabama**, that our Incarnate Lord Jesus would draw him home to the Catholic Church.

■ **For Mary and her husband**, both converts, that they will place their trust and hope in the Lord and that Our Lord would guide them through their continued struggles with the Church, giving them peace and assurance of the beauty and truth of the Catholic Faith.

■ **For Joshua in South Carolina**, that our loving Lord would successfully guide him through the uncharted waters that he is navigating.

■ **For Jason, an Eastern Orthodox**, that he would find a home in the Catholic Church, in whichever rite the Lord leads him to.

■ **For Fredrik in Sweden**, that he may receive the graces of the Holy Eucharist.

■ **For Jeremy, an Evangelical Free**, that his relatives and friends would be accepting of his journey to the Catholic Faith.

■ **For Leonard, a Jewish brother in California**, that his Messiah would guide him home to the Church He founded.

■ **For Jeff in Pennsylvania**, that our loving God would guide him and provide answers to his questions about the Blessed Virgin, the saints, and purgatory.

■ **For Jerrad, a Mennonite**, that the Holy Spirit would bless and guide his pilgrimage.

■ **For Adam, a Muslim**, that Our Lord Jesus Christ would open the doors needed to enable him to be baptized into the Catholic Faith.

■ **For Jim, a former Reformed Baptist**, that he may soon enjoy the benefiting graces of the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

■ **For Caroline, a recent convert**, that she would find joy and peace in her walk with Our Lord and be faithful in thanksgiving.

■ **For William, a Seventh-Day Adventist**, that he may be freed from the confusion and untruths he has been told about the Catholic Church.

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.





# DONOR SPOTLIGHT

BILL & ANN KARPINSKI — DONORS SINCE 1997 - 24 YEARS

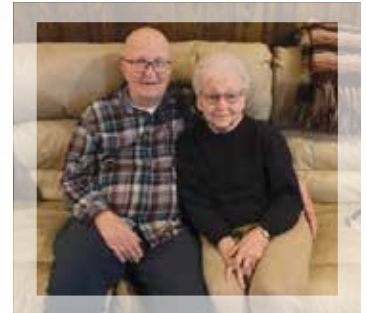
**W**e can still remember watching the very first episode of *The Journey Home* on EWTN. As the episode drew to a close, we were both so impressed with what we saw and heard that we immediately looked for a way to lend our support. We discovered that the Coming Home Network was doing something no other apostolate was doing – helping non-Catholic Christians (especially Protestant clergy and their families) work through the difficulties of conversion to the Catholic Faith. This is something that, frankly, neither of us had personally experienced, as we are both cradle Catholics.

Ann and I met each other when we were both teaching in a high school; Ann taught English and Spanish, while I taught social studies. We have been married for 64 years and have served the Lord in the Catholic Church all our lives. We have seen our own children, Susan and John, grow up to love and serve our Church as well. Our own personal experience with those navigating the journey of conversion has primarily been through our leadership of the RCIA program at our parish, where we also serve as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

It was through the testimonies of conversion on *The Journey Home* that we first remember hearing that now-familiar phrase from Saint John Henry Newman – quoted by an Episcopal priest who had converted: “To be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant.” It so impressed us that an Anglican priest would relinquish his position and standing in the Episcopal Church

to become Catholic that we wanted to find a way to help others like him who had to face the same decisions.

Over and over through the years, we have watched so many non-Catholic clergy and laity share similar stories, and it warms our hearts to know that we, through our annual gift, have had some part to play in that. We want to do what we can to ensure that everyone hears these important and wonderful stories, knowing that God is working through the CHNetwork to make sure these stories are told. We hope others will join us in making sure the Coming Home Network continues to do its good and important work long into the future.



*BILL & ANN KARPINSKI have the single honor of being our longest-active annual donors, with their first gift being in December of 1997. Bill and Ann have faithfully supported the work of the Coming Home Network year after year with a monthly pledge through our annual giving campaign.*

*Thank you to all our donors! If you would like to join the Karpinskis and other donors who are part of our monthly giving program known as COMPASS, visit [www.chnetwork.org/compass](http://www.chnetwork.org/compass)*

► “Journeys Home” continued from page 3

## A Eucharistic Greeting

One day, in September, I felt particularly drawn to a certain chapel on the church campus. I had read that it had been open 24/7 since 1998, staffed entirely by volunteers. The dedication of these volunteers for all those years was quite impressive to me. That particular afternoon I had headed out to spend a gift certificate and have a “Mom’s Day Off,” but instead, I went over to this chapel, nervous because I felt I didn’t really belong there.

I rang the bell, and a man opened the door. I walked in and genuflected on both knees, as I had read was the proper etiquette. Then I sat down and began counting my breaths, as I had been taught to do at the Buddhist center. That was really all I had to fall back on at that time. I didn’t get very far with my counting. It is hard to explain what happened then, but I began to notice a feeling of intense love, almost like a crushing weight. I felt that I was called to lie face down on the floor. However, there were other people present, so I was too embarrassed to do that. The feeling was strong enough that I actually had to brace my hands against the pew to hold myself up. The following

words clearly echoed over and over in my head: “I’m with you always; I’m with you always; I’m with you always.” I also heard a heart beating in my ears. In my mind, I remembered the many times I had felt “lost in outer darkness,” beyond God’s grace. The message I was hearing now was closer to: “I was never not with you, even then.” This sensation continued for about 20 minutes.

I had a sense of the word “Eucharist.” Understanding that what was before me was the Eucharist, I repeated that word to myself. It then occurred to me that this Eucharist was, indeed, what the Church said it was. It was Jesus, and He had just claimed me for His own and had surrounded me in His love.

This Eucharistic Jesus was here in the bread, in this chapel, by way of the Church, which had made it the Eucharist as He had instructed them, through the Consecration. And though He allowed me to remain seated before His Presence instead of falling prostrate, as I felt I should have done, I had a special insight into the Scripture that says, “At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow.” Every knee shall, indeed, bow, as He wills.

Continued on page 10 ►

## Finding A New Foundation

The next few weeks and months were a flurry of research and expanding insight as I tried to make sense of what had happened to me. I remember learning that what Jesus left us when He said, “Do all that I have commanded you,” was His teaching authority. He bestowed this authority upon His Church when He said, “You are Peter, and upon this Rock, I will build my Church.” This Church predated the Bible by hundreds of years, in terms of the Bible’s arrangement and “table of contents,” and it is the authority of this Church that even Protestants rely on, often unknowingly, for the Bible they hold in their hands. Thus, I realized that the Bible was essentially a Catholic document.

Moreover, I remember learning about St. Irenaeus being a student of Polycarp, who was a student of the Apostle John, to whom Our Lord spoke from the cross. That’s authentic lineage! How had I never known this? Apostolic succession is a *real* thing, and the Catholic Church has an unbroken lineage all the way back to Jesus.

## Walking and Growing in the Faith

Just a few weeks before I entered the Church formally, I had an interview with the parish priest. He asked me, “So where are

you with Our Lady?” I said I didn’t know. I did want to be sure that no line was crossed in terms of giving worship where none was permitted, except to God alone. I had noticed that Marian devotion seemed to spill over for many Catholics into a more general respect for and appreciation of women in general and motherhood in particular. It was a noticeable difference from the rest of the world, one I was not prepared for. I had believed the cultural lie that says that the Catholic Church hates women.

Conversely, over the years since then, I have found the Faith to be very healing, as well as an antidote to the harmful messages I had absorbed coming of age while surrounded by secular norms. God wants so much more for us than our society can even dream of. The Church’s teachings regarding the integrity of the whole human person, even in our sexuality, are beautiful and life-giving. The dignity God has bestowed on us is truly awe-inspiring. And I had traded all that in, not realizing what a terribly bad deal I had made in falling for the lies of the world. But the Lord took pity on me and gave me the opportunity to learn these truths in time to be of benefit not just to me, but to my marriage and my three beautiful daughters as well.

On the day of our interview, the priest mentioned that I shouldn’t be surprised if Our Lady made some kind of an appearance in my life in the coming weeks. I didn’t know what to make of his statement. I was joyful coming into the Church even though no friends or family were present at that Easter Vigil rite. To be fair, Nick was as supportive as he could be, as he was still an agnostic himself. Yet he was unable to attend that late-night vigil, opting to stay home in order to cause as little disruption to our three young kids as possible. He did have serious disagreements with Church doctrine, but he respected my desire to enter the Church and was accepting of my conversion.

## Discovering That Love Has a Mother

Then, about six months later, a series of events unfolded over the course of one weekend. Our Lady did, in fact, make an appearance in my life when I was not at all expecting it. She did this in a very sweet and loving way, lining up blessing after blessing, each personalized just for me, letting me know that it was important for me to begin wearing a Miraculous Medal as a devotion. Prior to that, I had not even known what the Miraculous Medal was. In fact, the whole Catholic practice of using sacramentals (blessed objects) was quite foreign to me. I learned on the very night I began wearing the medal that the saint to whom the devotion had been revealed was St. Catherine Labou-*ré* and that her American feast day is the same day as my birthday. Later on, I learned that the medal commemorates Mary’s Immaculate Conception. This also happens to be the name of the parish where my conversion had taken place.

And as if this wandering daughter hadn’t been spoiled enough already, within just another few months, through a series of impossible coincidences, I found myself once again traveling to France, this time as a devout Catholic. I was eager to take in all the beauty of the Church there, in her cathedrals and throughout the country. Until I arrived, I was completely unaware that

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The Coming Home  
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## ...Journeys Home Continued...

my hotel was just a short walk from the very chapel where St. Catherine Labouré had received her visions. So there I was, almost a year after I entered the Church, accompanied by my oldest daughter, offering prayers in the very chapel where Mary had revealed to the world the very medal that I was wearing.

My understanding of God's plan for us through Mary continues to unfold. I'm so grateful He is giving me the time to learn about these mysteries and wonders here in this life.

### Forever Loved and Forever Home

Several years after that day in the Adoration chapel, I remembered something that had happened to me years before my experience there. In 1995, I had traveled to Paris. A church I visited there had left an impression on me. I had felt something there, too, a spiritual Presence. It was noticeable enough that I perceived it even through the fog of my then deeply materialistic and hedonistic mind. That experience even led to some spiritual questioning on my part in subsequent years. That church was Sacré-Coeur, and though I didn't know it at the time, the Eucharist has been exposed in perpetuity there since 1885, on the main altar in that beautiful church. *Sacré-Coeur* means "Sacred Heart," and the Eucharist is deeply connected to Jesus' heart of love. In some of the recorded eucharistic miracles, when the host turns to flesh perceptible to human senses and laboratory analysis, that material is identified as striated heart tissue, tissue that has undergone extreme stress. But I knew none of this on the day of my 1995 visit, nor on the day when I first entered a Eucharistic Adoration chapel and heard a heart beating in my ears, as Our Lord told me He was with me always.

So it was that, in that one encounter in the Adoration chapel, the Lord offered me the immense grace of the gift of faith in

His Eucharist and in His Church. I didn't even know then what a blessing it all was, that great confidence He gave to me. I just knew then that He had claimed me, despite my dangerous wanderings, and that I was still His, and now I never wanted to be without Him and the Eucharist. May I praise the Holy Name of Jesus forever, my Lord and my God.

**Author's note:** This Easter my husband, Nick, was joyfully received into the Catholic Church in Columbus, Ohio. Our family is so grateful to St. Patrick Parish and the Dominican Friars, in particular to Fr. Charles Shonk, whose beautiful, faithful instruction in the gospel of Jesus Christ has moved so many hearts and changed so many lives. Our two youngest children were very excited to attend their first Easter Vigil service, and all of our children were thrilled to be present to witness their Dad entering the Church. Thanks be to God! ■



LORI ANN MANCINI was born and raised in Ohio. As a child, she made frequent treks to her parents' home in Kentucky, which was a formative part of her upbringing. She has spent time as a singer/songwriter, copywriter, and editor, among many other jobs. She has lived in Nashville, Tennessee; Lyon and Rennes, France; and Austin, Texas. Lori Ann experienced a radical conversion in September of 2014 and was received into the Catholic Church on Easter of 2015. Today she lives in Columbus, Ohio with her husband, Nick, whom she met playing music, and their three daughters.

### Continue the JOURNEY

Please visit [CHNetwork.org/converts](http://CHNetwork.org/converts) to comment on and share this or one of hundreds of other powerful testimonies!

THAT  
**HE**  
WHO  
LAY ON

Mary's  
**KNEE**

—Mother Loyola

*That He who lay on Mary's knee,  
Who stilled the waves of Galilee,  
Was the dear guest at Bethany,  
And bled and died on Calvary,  
That He in truth abides with me  
I hold with faith's sure certainty,  
O God, O hidden Deity,  
Profoundly I here worship Thee.*

*Jesus, My Master!*

*O God, most wonderful, in all Thy ways,  
Most in this Mystery of love, upraise,  
My heart to Thee in canticles of praise,*

*Jesus, My Master!*

*And since my hungry soul this day is fed  
With 'meat indeed,' with Thee the living Bread,  
Give me to live by Thee as Thou hast said,*

*Jesus, My Master!*



# EUCCHARISTIC MEDITATION



**The Coming Home Network International**

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

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ON THE JOURNEY?

## RECENT CONVERT?

The Easter season is the time when many people officially enter the Catholic Church. If you have been recently received into the Church, please let us know so that we can update our records and welcome you home!

Additionally, whatever the status of your spiritual journey, we'd love to hear an update and answer any questions you might have.

Please reach out to our *Pastoral Care Team* at [info@chnetwork.org](mailto:info@chnetwork.org).