



August 2022 CHNewsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



Paradigms, Parachurches, and Patristics

By Andrew Shadel

Change begins at the end of your comfort zone. It's more than a cliché. With regard to faith journeys, the change may simply be a move from one Protestant church to another, which is usually a minor shift in thought and practice that allows for quick assimilation. In my case, the pendulum swung much farther. I experienced a complete paradigm shift that truly changed every aspect of who I was in Christ. The changes came incrementally, but their sum total was transformational.

Traveling Toward the Tiber

I grew up in Ft. Smith, Arkansas, where I had a pretty typical childhood. I have the usual memories of jumping on my bike after school, spending time with friends, and going to church three times a week. My family was immersed in the life and culture of the non-instrumental churches of Christ (officially spelled with a small 'c'), with its weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. Our church originated from the more conservative side of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement, which wished to restore a pure New Testament Christianity. This commitment was strong and held dear by my extended relatives, who had all graduated from colleges related to the churches of Christ.

My family was devoted to our church tradition and tried to live within that faith system to the best of our understanding. Like everyone else, my father and mother had their imperfections, but they were good parents who loved me, and I am continually grateful that they taught me to love the Lord. My parents also allowed me to develop a curious, active

mind, and they accepted my desire to study human nature, including aspects of our fallen nature and our tendency toward sin. As a child, I was intrigued by religious beliefs and devotion, and they supported me when I borrowed library books about various Christian and non-Christian faith traditions. By fostering my curiosity, my parents became an important and instrumental part of my faith journey and, ultimately, my conversion to the Catholic Faith.

One aspect of my childhood that became the impetus for my future swim across the Tiber (the river that flows through Rome – crossing it implies conversion to Rome) was the privilege of world travel. My father's job required frequent overseas travel, and several times my mother, my sister, and I were able to accompany him on his trips. As travel so often does, those trips affected my world view. My understanding of life, and the lens through which I viewed it, were formed through personal exposure to different cultures, traditions, and faith practices. For instance, I remember visiting Lutheran church-

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Journeys Home

...Journeys Home Continued...

es in Germany, Anglican churches in England, and in Mexico, Catholic churches for Mass.

I believe the seed that later germinated and grew into the faith I now have was planted during a trip to Paris, France, when I was 17. At that time in my life, I had no idea what I believed, and I was questioning everything that I had been taught. While in Paris, we visited the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and I was awestruck by its beauty. As Mass started in a gated-off area of the church, I remember looking at my dad, and he said I could go in. I had no idea what was happening liturgically or linguistically, but what struck me was seeing worshipers fervently praying and exhibiting a reverence I had never previously witnessed. It was there that I encountered the Eucharist for the first time. During the Mass, everyone went forward to partake of the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. I went with them and did what they did. I had no idea that I was not allowed to participate, so I stuck out my hand and received the Eucharist. Oblivious to the reality of Christ's Real Presence, I consumed the Body of Christ, having no idea what was happening to me. Afterwards, my father bought me a rosary from the cathedral's gift shop. That small gesture started me down a path I had no inkling that I would one day follow to its end. This is how the Lord prepared the way for me to come home to the Church He Himself established.

The next year of my life was teeming with school, a girlfriend, and plans for my future. As so often happens in our youth, I put the Lord on the back burner. I wound up following my girlfriend to Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. However, we soon broke up, and I spent much of the next two years partying on the weekends.

During my sophomore year, I met the woman who would later become my wife. We started dating, and eventually, I began to change. By my junior year, I was again attending church regularly with my future wife, although I was uncomfortable with my religious roots. I had recently gone to a Promise Keepers rally (a large evangelical men's movement prevalent in the 1990s), where the Holy Spirit transformed me. When I came back, I was saddened to realize that there was a controversy in the churches of Christ concerning this movement. Deterred by this conflict, I began to visit the instrumental Christian Churches (another branch of the same Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement). They had a more welcoming view of other Christians, and I found myself at home there for several years.

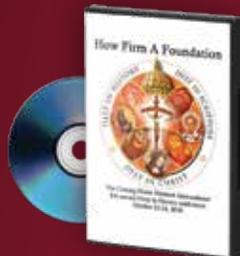
Scouting the Riverbank with the Church Fathers

I graduated from Harding in 1997, and my wife and I were married in 1998. About four years later, we relocated to Pulaski, Tennessee, for my job. One night in 2002, when I just couldn't sleep, I got up and turned on the TV. I found myself watching *The Journey Home* on EWTN — a show I had never seen, on a channel I had never watched before. I had heard of Catholics converting to Protestantism, but I had never seen or heard of Protestants converting to Catholicism. It was "rerun" night, so I watched two episodes of the show. I found out the show was on every week, so I watched it regularly for the next two years. I started to notice a pattern developing with the guests. The vast majority of them mentioned how they had read Church history, and they mentioned a group of believers called the Church Fathers. I remember realizing one day that, while I knew a lot about the Stone-Campbell Movement and the Reformation, I knew almost nothing about the first 1500 years of Christian history. With that realization, my life changed — I would never be able to go back to being oblivious to what the Early Fathers were about to teach me.

We lived in a town with a small Methodist college that had a library full of Church history books. I found myself frequently visiting this library whenever I had free time. I discovered the Nicene and Post-Nicene Church Fathers (those who lived at the time of the First Council of Nicaea in the fourth century and those who lived in the centuries immediately following) and the *Didache*, a very early anonymous writing about Christian practices. I learned about the various Church heresies that occurred in the first few hundred years of the Church, doctrinal development, and the seven early Ecumenical Councils. My studies continued

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THE FATHERS KNOW BEST: A LOOK AT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCRIPTURE & TRADITION IN THE EARLY CHURCH
DVD - PATRICK MADRID 2010
CHNETWORK CONFERENCE



In this *Deep in History* lecture, renowned author and radio host Patrick Madrid explains that the best way to understand disputed passages of Scripture is to look at the way they were interpreted by those closest to the Apostles - the Early Church Fathers.

Item #1282

"If ever you are sojourning in cities, inquire not simply where the Lord's House is... nor merely where the church is, but where is the Catholic Church. For this is the peculiar name of this Holy Church, the mother of us all." — **ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM**

...Journeys Home Continued...

for three years. I even amassed my own library of Church history books and found myself reading the works of Clement, Polycarp, and Irenaeus online. Then I took another job, and we moved to Columbia, Tennessee, becoming active in a local independent Christian church.

Mentally, spiritually, and emotionally, I tried to suppress all that I had been learning, but it was too late. I was already standing at the bank of the Tiber, but I was afraid to swim. For the next eight years, I did what I could to silence what I had learned in my studies. As a family, we immersed ourselves in the life of our church, and I eventually became a deacon and a church elder there.

By 2015, I realized that suppressing the Truth wouldn't make it go away. I discovered the *Catholic Answers* apostolate and found myself reading about the history of the Church – again. I expanded my reading to include information about the liturgy and the stories of converts. I also regularly read material from the Coming Home Network, and I corresponded with them.

About a year later, I told my wife and my parents that I wanted to convert to the Catholic Church. It was not well-received. I was so distraught by their response that I put my studies into hibernation for a few months. Eventually, however, I picked up my studies again and started to research the Eastern Orthodox Churches. I noticed that this did not elicit the same negative reaction (as my study of the Catholic Church had) when I discussed faith traditions with my family. I dove deep into the works of Peter Gilchrist, Timothy Ware, and Alexander Schmemmann. I researched intensely online about the Eastern Church Fathers and came to realize that I didn't fully understand where our Eastern brethren were coming from. I loved what the Eastern Church brought to the table, but my mind was so occidental (western) in thought and practice that the Catholic Church just made more collective sense to me.

I was back to where I had initiated my journey, with my feet at the edge of the Tiber.

Struggling in the Muddy Shallows

In 2017, I was still serving on the board of elders for our local independent Christian church. Over the years, my Catholic convictions grew to the point that I was actively thinking of stepping down from my leadership role and starting RCIA. I kept praying to God to help me discern what I should do.

There were a few incidents that became the catalyst for me to move forward. At the time, my local church had a vibrant and talented worship pastor. He had been on staff for about two years when I noticed he was getting very selective about song choices. He seemed to be interested only in songs that related to God's love, not those in conjunction with orthodox truth. This continued for weeks until he eventually pulled me aside and admitted that he didn't believe in the truths of orthodox Christianity anymore. He could not accept the exclusivity of Christ and the triune

nature of the Godhead. The elders met with him and decided that he needed to move on. We tried to change his mind, but he was not interested. Since the congregation was autonomous, I wondered what would have happened if we had kept this worship pastor on staff. ... Nothing! It was likely that *nothing* would have happened. Churches lacking a hierarchical structure are open to believing and practicing just about anything they want. While I knew many Christian denominations were orthodox and loved the Lord, the idea that we were doing this thing called "church" all by ourselves was nerve-wracking.

During this time, I started an early-morning Bible study for the men at our church. I was hoping it would be a time of growth and learning and, in many ways, it was. But as time went by, I began to notice the wide variety in our theological perspectives. We had always been a church that focused on what we would call "essentials of the faith," while allowing for freedom in secondary matters. As our church grew, it attracted people from multiple religious backgrounds. This variety, combined with a church that was strictly non-denominational, was, sadly, a recipe for confusion. People would move to town, come to church, and simply assume that the church here was similar to their church back home. Sometimes it was, but more often than not, they found out it was very different. People had no idea that this church had its roots in the Stone-Campbell Movement. Furthermore, when all this variation was brought into our men's Bible study, it resulted in twenty-plus men reading God's Word and expressing several different opinions on important subjects.

There were varying beliefs on baptism and salvation, the ever-present Calvinism/Arminianism debate on whether Christians could lose their salvation, and much more. Some members were also uncomfortable with the church being part of the Stone-Campbell Movement. It perplexed me how we could all read the same Bible but still all come to vastly different conclusions. It would have been easy to assume that everyone else was wrong since they didn't see things as I did, but these men were all sincere believers, all with their own reasons for believing what they did.

I was witnessing firsthand what happens when a person asserts that the Holy Spirit guides all believers, while privately reading Scripture, to know the truth. We do know the Holy Spirit guides believers, but the Lord is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33), and a Bible-only faith leads to much confusion, even among faith-filled believers. We should, indeed, place importance on personal Bible study, but the ultimate interpretation of Scripture must be in light of how the Church has historically understood God's Word. If one isn't rooted in doctrinal and historical continuity, one can develop novel ideas that represent private interpretations rather than Biblical truth (2 Peter 1:20). All these

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"A controversy over the Scriptures can, clearly, achieve nothing but pains of the stomach and the head." – **TERTULLIAN OF CARTHAGE**

The First Seven Ecumenical Councils

By Jim Anderson

Even though our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit who “... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (Jn 14:26) and to “... guide you to all the truth” (Jn 16:13), Our Lord did not promise that false teaching and confusion would not arise in the Church. As St. Paul wrote, “For there must be factions (“heresies” in the KJV) among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized” (1 Corinthians 11:19).

The earliest factions began in the first century in reaction to gentiles who were becoming Christians. The Judaizers insisted that gentile converts needed to be circumcised and obey the Laws of Moses in order to be saved. The Apostles responded to this error by convening a council in Jerusalem. This is the first known example of apostolic teaching authority (the magisterium) being exercised in the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to settle disputes and to define authoritative dogma to be held by all Christians. The Council of Jerusalem would not be the last such gathering.

Over the following centuries, the successors of the Apostles called many councils to settle disputes. During the time of the persecutions, such councils dealt with controversies in the Church and were, of necessity, small and local. With the legalization of the Church, in AD 313, freedom of association was now granted to Christians. By the providence of God, the bishops of the Church could now assemble and exercise their authority as a universal body. For, just when attacks from outside the Church came to an end, the evil one devised a new strategy – causing errors and divisions to spring up *within* the Church at an unprecedented level of intensity.

Thus, over the next few centuries, the Catholic Church would be rocked by false teachings concerning the identity of God and Jesus. The Church’s answers to these new heresies would come through ecumenical (general) councils. There have been twenty-one ecumenical councils of the Catholic Church, the latest being in the 1960s (Vatican Council II).

An ecumenical council is a gathering of Church bishops, who represent the united apostolic authority of the Church, in union with the successor of St. Peter. Such a council has the authority to infallibly define teachings of the Church concerning topics of faith and morals. A general council need not be called by the pope; the earliest ones were called into session by the emperors in Constantinople. Nevertheless, in order to have universal and general authority, an ecumenical

council must be recognized as such by the pope in Rome. The first seven ancient councils are recognized as authoritative by both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches.

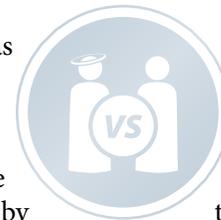
1

THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF NICAEEA, AD 325

St. Athanasius vs. Arius

At stake: Jesus’ divinity

This council was convened to address the new, and popular, teachings of Arius, an Egyptian priest. Arius taught that Jesus was not fully God – rather, He was a creature created by



the world was made, and “there was [a time] when he (the Son) was not.” Although Arius was disciplined by his bishop, his errors began to spread like wildfire through the Church. At the bishops’ request, Emperor Constantine I assembled a council, with the bishops of the entire Catholic Church attending at imperial expense. Pope St. Sylvester was too elderly to attend, so St. Hosius of Cordoba presided over the council. A young deacon from Egypt, named Athanasius, was also in attendance. He would later become the hero of orthodoxy, devoting his life to the defense of Nicaea’s teaching that Jesus is fully God. From this council we were given the first version of what we now know as the Nicene Creed, which declares that Jesus is: “... the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the essence of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial (*homoousion*) with the Father.”

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“While [the Arians], like men sprung from a dunghill, truly ‘spoke from the earth’ [Jn. 3:31], the bishops, not having invented their phrases for themselves, but having testimony from their fathers, wrote as they did... and censured those who said that the Son was a creature and not consubstantial with the Father.” – **ST. ATHANASIUS**

2

THE FIRST COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, AD 381

St. Gregory of Nazianzus vs. Macedonius *At stake: the Holy Spirit/Trinity*

In response to a by Macedonius I, Constantinople, assembled. Mace- the Holy Spirit was God. His followers



heresy invented the Archbishop of this council was donius taught that a creature and not were called *Pneuma-*

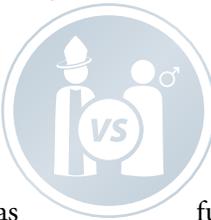
tomachi (“Spirit fighters”). Confirmed by Pope St. Damasus I, this council condemned Macedonius’ teaching as heresy. It did so by adding a new segment to the Creed of Nicaea: “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.”

3

THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS, AD 431

St. Cyril of Alexandria vs. Nestorius *At stake: Mary, the Mother of God*

St. Cyril of Alexan- this council, initi- Theodosius II in errors promulgated Nestorius and his denied that Jesus was



dria presided over ated by Emperor response to the by Archbishop followers. Nestorius fully God and Man.

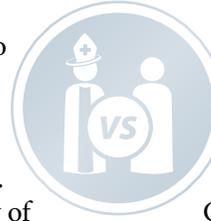
He condemned an ancient title of the Blessed Virgin Mary – *Theotokos* (“God Bearer” or “Mother of God”). Instead, he taught that Mary was only the Mother of Christ the *man*, not his divinity. It was understood by many that his doctrine held that Jesus was two Persons, God the Word and the Man Jesus. The Council of Ephesus declared that Mary is the *Theotokos* because Her Son Jesus Christ is both God and Man. He is *one* divine Person with two *natures* (divine and human), intimately united. The council, confirmed by Pope St. Sixtus III, also condemned Pelagianism, which held that people could earn their own salvation through their natural powers, without the need of God’s grace.

4

THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON, AD 451

Bishop Eusebius vs. Eutyches *At stake: Jesus’ humanity*

In response to some people ran extreme. One Eutyches, an abbot nople monastery. defend the unity of



Nestorius’ heresy, to the opposite such person was of a Constanti- In his attempt to Christ’s incarnation,

he went too far. He stressed the unity of Christ’s nature to such an extent that Christ’s divinity consumed His hu- manity, as the ocean would consume a drop of vinegar. His followers, known as Monophysites (“One Naturists”), denied that Jesus was truly human and divine. Convened to respond to Nestorius, this council was presided over by the papal ambassadors Paschasinus, Lucentius, and Boniface. It confirmed Pope Leo I’s epistle, dogmatically decreeing “... that our Lord Jesus Christ is to us One and the same Son, the Self-same Perfect in Godhead, the Self-same Perfect in Manhood; truly God and truly Man; the Self-same of a rational soul and body... like us in all things, sin apart... acknowledged in Two Natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably... the properties of each Nature being preserved, and (both) concurring into One Person.”

5

THE SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, AD 553

Eutychius vs. “Three Chapters” *At stake: Jesus’ humanity, part 2*

This council, called by Emperor Justin- ian I, condemned Theodore of Mop- of Cyr, and Ibas of as the “Three Chap- tainted by Nestorian-



ism. It reinforced the Church’s condemnation of Nestorianism and condemned the teachings of Monophysitism and some teachings of the third-century Egyptian theologian, Origen. It also pro- claimed ten dogmatic canons which defined Chalcedonian Christology with a new precision.

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“That anyone could doubt the right of the holy Virgin to be called the Mother of God fills me with astonishment. Surely she must be the Mother of God if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, and she gave birth to Him!”

– ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

6

THE THIRD COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, AD 680

St. Agatho vs. Monothelitism

At stake: Christ's divine & natural wills

Held in the imperial nople, 151 bishops popular heresy Monothelitism, Jesus had only *one* During the council,



palace in Constanti- met to discuss a in the east called which held that will, the divine will. a letter by Pope St.

Agatho was read that explained the traditional belief of the Catholic Church – that Christ has *two* natural wills and *two* natural operations, divine and human. The bishops of the Council accepted the letter, proclaiming that St. Peter spoke through St. Agatho. They minced no words, declaring the heresy a tool of Satan and “ruinous to the mind,” asserting: “We proclaim equally two natural volitions in Him and two natural principles of action which undergo no division, no change, no partition, no confusion, in accordance with the teaching of the holy fathers.... His human will... was not destroyed by being made divine, but rather was preserved... for the miracles and the sufferings are of one and the same.... And the two wills [are] not in opposition.... [but] in a communion... meeting in correspondence for the salvation of the human race.”

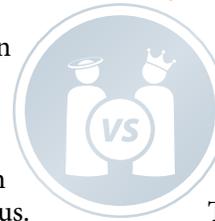
7

THE SECOND COUNCIL OF NICAEEA, AD 787

St. Tarasius vs. Emperor Constantine

At stake: veneration of icons & relics

In an era when being condemned AD 754 Emperor banned the veneration (images) in such usage idolatrous.



Christianity was by Muslims, in Constantine V tion and use of churches, declaring Thus began a period

of iconoclasm (icon smashing). This ban precipitated the persecution of monks and others who venerated icons. After 34 years of persecution, a council was convened, and the Fathers decreed: “It is proper to accord to icons a fervent & reverent *veneration*, not, however, the veritable *adoration* which, according to our faith, belongs to the Divine Being alone, for the honor accorded to the image passes over to its prototype, & whoever venerates the image venerates in it the reality of what is there represented.” They also condemned Adoptionism, for it held that Christ was not the Son of God by nature but by *adoption only*, thereby denying the incarnation of the Word made flesh. ■

Read more about all the Church's councils online at: papalencyclicals.net/councils

EWTVN'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

August 1

Dr. Abigail Favale*
(former Evangelical Protestant)
(re-air from 8/26/19)

August 8

Fr. Randy Sly*
(former Charismatic Episcopal Bishop)

August 15

Vern & Chad Steiner*
(former Evangelical Free Church)
(re-air from 9/9/19)

August 22

Larry Chapp*
(Catholic Revert, former Evangelical Protestant)

August 29

Noel Culbertson*
(former Baptist)
(re-air from 9/16/19)

**Schedule is subject to change.*

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

“Words are the progeny of the soul. Hence we call those that instructed us fathers.” – **ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA**

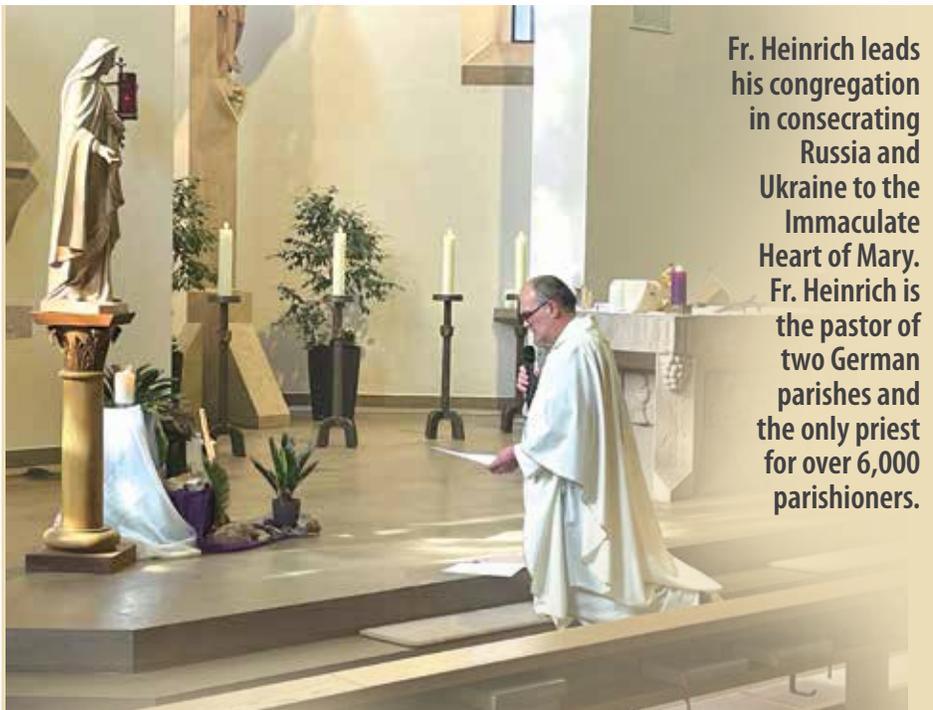


Joyful Journey Updates

From Fr. Ingo Heinrich in Germany, a former Pentecostal and Baptist minister “I am infinitely grateful to God for my being able to be in His Catholic Church. It is a blessing to see and discover the fellowship and beauty of the Church. And I'm happy to be able to serve people inside and outside with my Protestant heritage (cf. Mt 13:52). The best thing is when people discover faith

in our Lord Jesus Christ - and we have to see how we can give these people a good home in the Church. And, Jim, I also thank God that He sent you into our lives back in Germany. You were an important instrument in our journey into the Church. And it's nice that we're still in touch. You and the CHNetwork are doing such an important ministry - may God increase and increase your fruit!”

From Luke, a former Baptist pastor “Today my family and I entered the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. We have believed in Jesus for years, but today we touched the risen Lord! His flesh and blood are true food and true drink. Today is the day of salvation, and we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Glory to God in His Son and in His Church! Thank you for your prayers and for your love and service in Christ.”



Fr. Heinrich leads his congregation in consecrating Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Fr. Heinrich is the pastor of two German parishes and the only priest for over 6,000 parishioners.

From Marian, a recent convert “I was received into the Catholic Church last year, one month before my 70th birthday. My long journey was a search for truth which, to my surprise, I found in the Catholic Church. I also found the beauty of the sacraments—something I didn't even know to search for. As I received my first Communion, I said to Jesus, ‘I can never love You enough.’ That is still true, but I can honestly say that each time I receive the Eucharist I love Him more and more. My heart is filled with gratitude and joy. Thank you for your part in my journey to the Church.” ■

“Thou, O Christ our Savior, has become for me the path of life which leads to the Father. There is but one path, and it is my joy, and at the end of it is the heavenly kingdom.” – **ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

Prayer List



Clergy

- **For Hunter, a Protestant seminary student** who is quickly becoming convinced that he needs to become Catholic, that the Lord will help him to navigate his next steps.
- **For Christopher, a former Mennonite pastor** who has just been received into the Church with his wife and children.
- **For Greg, a Methodist minister** who feels strongly drawn to the Catholic Church and yet also feels strongly drawn to being a pastor.
- **For Calvin, a Protestant pastor** who is convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith and is attempting to lead his family to see it as well.
- **For Austin, a Baptist pastor** who is on the road to the Catholic Church, that the Holy Spirit will go before him to soften the hearts of his wife and family.
- **For James, a Lutheran pastor** who wants to convert but has serious obstacles, including the need for an annulment.
- **For Jeff, a Presbyterian pastor** who is only beginning to work through what it would mean for him and his family to convert to the Catholic Church.
- **For Mark, an Anglican priest** who is drawn to the Church but has some theological issues that need to be ironed out.
- **For Stephen, a Methodist pastor** who wants to become Catholic but whose wife is strongly opposed, for wisdom as he attempts to reach her.
- **For Stephen, a Mennonite pastor** who is firmly on the journey toward the Catholic Church and meeting with a spiritual director to work through the next steps.

- **For Andrew, a Lutheran pastor** who is attracted to the Church but does not yet believe that he will need to actually become Catholic.
- **For Gary, a Baptist pastor** who is convinced of the truth of Catholicism and plans to become Catholic but who has a lot to take care of before he can resign his position and enter the Church with his wife.

Laity

- **For James in Florida and George in Texas**, that through the Mass, they will feel Christ's love for His Church and witness the truth and beauty of the Catholic Faith.
- **For Sherry in Louisiana and her husband**, who are discouraged by annulment issues, that the Holy Spirit would open hearts and doors, so that one day they may be one with our Lord at His Altar.
- **For Tim, a lapsed Catholic**, that God would heal him of his alcohol addiction and bring him back to the sacraments.
- **For David, a Lutheran**, that his love of the Mass would draw him Home to full communion with the Catholic Church.
- **For Laura**, who is studying the Catholic Faith and is experiencing spiritual battles.
- **For Adam, a Muslim**, that he will find his way to baptism in the Catholic Church and that his parents will not resist his conversion.
- **For Aaron, a Baptist in Pennsylvania**, that our Lord Jesus would open his wife's heart to accept the Catholic Faith.
- **For Bryan in South Africa**, that the Lord would guide him Home to a vocation to the Catholic priesthood.

- **For J.M.** who is on the journey, and for her son, who was the first to pursue the Catholic Faith, that they may be guided and protected along the way, and for healing for her son.
- **For Jeff, a Charismatic**, that he may come to know that the Catholic Church is truly Christ's Church and that God is calling him to be part of it.
- **For Benjamin**, that he may find a Catholic parish that he can call home and that his wife would become open to his journey.
- **For Scott, a United Methodist**, that, as the Holy Spirit reopens his heart to Christ, he and his family may be drawn to the Catholic Church.
- **For Sarah, on the journey**, that she will follow her convictions and continue her journey to the Church even though it includes leaving her current church family.
- **For Thomas, an Episcopalian in Missouri**, that through his hunger for the Body and Blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit would bring him to the Altar of the Lord.
- **For Tim, a recent convert**, and for his spouse who struggles with this change, that they would receive ample marital grace.
- **For Steven, a Baptist**, that he and his family will have peace as they draw closer to entering the Church and that they may begin to feel a connection to their local parish.
- **For Derrick, an Adventist**, that our Lord will care for and sustain his family during this time of Derrick's conversion, drawing all of the family closer to Jesus in the Eucharist.

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.

"But pray unceasingly also for the rest of man, for they offer ground for hoping that they may be converted and win their way to God... [and] become... disciples." – **ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH**



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THOMAS YOUNG — DONOR 19 YEARS



In his gospel, St. Luke records how Christ Jesus, following His Ascension, sent the Holy Spirit to continue His saving mission to the world through the works of His Apostles (that is to say, through His Church). And He will continue to do so until the end of time.

I first became aware of the Coming Home Network in 2003. I so clearly recall that from the beginning, I was convinced that right here, in my own generation, I was witnessing how the Holy Spirit was continuing to spread the saving grace and truth of Jesus Christ. As I recognized the impact of the CHNetwork's ministry, I knew it was an apostolate that I should support – and I have been doing so ever since.

The CHNetwork's ministry struck a chord with me, though I am a cradle Catholic. Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, I received an exclusively Catholic education. My memories of the Church in those days center around religious formalities and practices like Sunday Mass, fish on Fridays, wearing scapulars, trying to get nine First Friday Masses done, etc. Never in my life did I have to face the existential and life-changing challenges like those of the converts on *The Journey Home*. Over and over again,

I have witnessed their diligent, and sometimes extremely difficult, journeys to find the true Church of Jesus Christ. That kind of arduous and rewarding journey stands as an important challenge to many lifelong Catholics, some of whom tragically, for a variety of reasons, no longer practice their faith.

I find it particularly encouraging that the CHNetwork reminds us that converts continue to come into the Church despite the realities of Church scandals. This has been the case in every generation. To me, this has also been a joyful reminder that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ in which the Holy Spirit, in spite of all obstacles and human weakness, continues to share the Good News of eternal salvation through Christ.

Since 2003, Thomas Young has been a faithful supporter of the CHNetwork through his participation in our monthly giving program (now known as Compass). If you would like to support the CHNetwork with a monthly gift, use the enclosed envelope, or visit us online at www.chnetwork.org/compass ■

COMPASS

SUPPORT THE CHNETWORK!

Join **COMPASS** — an ever-growing community of donors who give a monthly gift of \$10-\$100 (or more) to support the CHNetwork as we help to guide men and women who are coming 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/compass or complete

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

...Journeys Home Continued...

issues hit me at once. I realized that I couldn't do what I was doing any more, and I resigned from the elder board.

Jumping in and Swimming Hard

In 2018, I stopped merely floundering near the edge of the Tiber and jumped completely into its deeper waters. I had to figure out how to swim the width of that river. My main problem was how to break this news to my wife. She had been there with me through the whole process. She had always acknowledged Catholics as fellow Christians but was not interested in following me into the Catholic Faith. I found myself in an agonizing fix. Was there a way to honor my wife *and* to follow the Holy Spirit into the Church? I found my answer in Alabama.

My job required me to manage distribution in, and travel to, four states. On one such trip, I found myself praying at the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, Alabama, where the Lord put the following in my heart: I could attend 8 am Mass each Sunday and then attend the Protestant church with my wife for the 10:30 am service there. After this revelation, I stopped praying, went to the visitor desk, and asked for a priest. Thankfully, one was just then coming around the corner, and we discussed my dilemma. I was informed that if I decided to join the Church, I was still allowed to attend Protestant services with my wife, but I was not to take communion there. I also needed to step down from my ordination (which allowed me to officiate Protestant marriages). Those were reasonable steps that I could easily take, so I went home and presented this "hybrid" plan to my wife.

The plan was not ideal in her eyes, but she is an amazing, patient, and understanding spouse, and she agreed to my suggestion. I also promptly informed my parents, sister, and the elders of my local church. My family was better prepared for this go-round, especially since I was able to dispel many caricatures about Catholicism. However, my local church was still shocked; they had never heard of anyone doing what I was doing. Yet they respected my decision. I had some church pushback, but overall, my transition to the Catholic Faith was not tumultuous.

Reaching the Shores of Home

In 2019, I started RCIA. Through personal study and RCIA, I noticed other aspects of the Faith that allowed Catholicism to truly come alive. My whole life, I had been taught that the Bible made the Church. I began to realize that, instead, it was the Church that gave us the Bible. I also learned about the development of doctrine and that many teachings were not completely set in stone at the birth of the Church. Becoming Catholic was, indeed, a paradigm shift. Finally, in 2020, I was received into the Church, and I stepped onto the shores of Rome. I was home!

While this journey has been a paradigm shift for me, it has also been a cultural shift. I have experienced a steep inculturation process since Protestant churches are predominately relationally-driven, and Catholics are sacramentally-driven. I had no illusions that the grass was greener on this side of the fence. I knew I would have to defend the Church against a long list of caricatures, the bad press from sexual- and financial-abuse scandals, and the overall stereotype that all Catholics are apathetic to their faith. To some outsiders, the Church can appear to be a huge conglomeration of mediocrity, but once you pull back those layers, you find a church immersed in deep theological reasoning with amazing

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The Coming Home
Network International

"Having received the invocation of God... the Eucharist consists of two realities, earthly and heavenly, so our bodies, having received [it] are no longer corruptible, because they have the hope of the Resurrection."

— ST. IRENAEUS

...Journeys Home Continued...

believers who want to help you on your new journey. Also present are liturgical beauty and a worldview that truly make sense.

For the past two years, I've been immersing myself in growing in my faith. I'm thankful for my local parish and all that I have learned there. Its parishioners have helped me settle into the Faith and become part of a community striving to follow Christ.

Becoming Catholic truly transforms a person through the life of Christ that is embodied in the Liturgical Calendar, the sacraments, and the overall graces that come with being a member of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church that Christ Himself founded. Now that the pendulum has stopped swinging, I can say, without a doubt, that there is no place like home. ■



ANDREW SHADEL is a district sales manager who manages four states. When not working, he spends time with his two daughters, a son-in-law, and his wife. He also is active in his local parish (St. Catherine's in Columbia, Tennessee), a men's group, Exodus 90, and the Knights of Columbus. And to this day he finds himself a regular visitor to the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, Alabama.

Continue the **JOURNEY**

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

CHURCH FATHERS

CHURCH FATHERS & THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FAITH

St. Ignatius of Antioch – first to use the term “Catholic” Church

Justin Martyr – developed Logos theology (John 1:1)

St. Irenaeus – limited the Gospel canon to 4 writers

Aphraates the “Sage” – recognized 6 of the 7 sacraments

St. Gregory of Nyssa – edited final copy of the Nicene Creed

Maximus the Confessor – wrote first full biography on Mary

St. John of Damascus – defended the Assumption of Mary

Tertullian – first to use the terms “Trinity” & “Old” and “New” Testaments

St. Jerome – translated the Bible into Latin

St. Augustine – defended infant baptism and purgatory



Read Pope Benedict XVI's addresses about the Church Fathers online at:

annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en/credo/padri-chiesa.html

Find all of the Church Fathers' writings, in English, at:

newadvent.org/fathers

“Keep ‘The Deposit [of Faith]! Keep it because of thieves, because of adversaries... that which has been entrusted to you, not that which you yourself have devised: a matter not of wit, but of learning; not of private adoption, but of public tradition; a matter brought to you, not put forth by you... you are bound to be not an author but a keeper, not a teacher but a disciple, not a leader but a follower. Preserve the talent of the Catholic Faith inviolate... You have received gold; give gold in turn.” – **ST. VINCENT OF LÉRINS**

The Coming Home Network International

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CHN RETREAT

October 17-20, 2022

Marie Joseph Spiritual Center

Biddeford, ME



“**W**hen we were wrestling with deep convictions as pastors within our denomination, we needed a safe place to retreat in order to seek God’s truth and direction. The Spirit led us to a CHNetwork retreat. It was exactly what we needed at a pivotal time in our journey; we found solid truth! We left everything to follow Christ to His Church: our ministry as clergy, our denomination and Protestant

understandings, our known future . . . If you are earnestly seeking God’s truth, this is for you.

– *Matt & Rachel Sheils* (former Salvation Army pastors)

Please go to chnetwork.org/events to learn more or to sign up!