



September 2022 CHNewsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



Higher Ground

By Becky Mayhew

Shortly before my sixth birthday, my Baptist-minister daddy baptized me in the Mississippi River following a tent revival. He placed me at the front of the line while folks sang "Shall We Gather at the River?" Though a Calvinist, Daddy often preached on sanctification and the importance of growing in holiness. When he prayed aloud, almost overcome, he would sometimes exclaim, "Christ, we adore you!" My mother had a servant's heart as well and taught me to love God with all my heart and to obey Him in all things.

Before my sixteenth birthday, I began what would become a four-year courtship with a young man named Larry Mayhew. His brilliant mind and devotion to Christ made him quite a catch, so I set about making him mine. Our long-term relationship prior to our marriage gave us plenty of time to discuss how we would handle marriage, child rearing, and careers.

After Larry completed his doctoral program in 1972, we moved to Kentucky for Larry's job at a university there. I taught English at a nearby high school. In our new Baptist church home, we taught adult Sunday School classes. I sang in the choir, and Larry was ordained as a deacon. We gathered weekly in a home Bible study group with seven university couples, a fellowship of Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Baptists.

Larry and I found deep joy, and even humor, together despite the crosses we carried. For instance, although Larry remained the spiritual leader of our home, he was no longer able to attend church with us because of health problems. And when both my parents became cancer patients, they lost

the energy to hold together what had been a difficult marriage. Nevertheless, others frequently commented on the fine Christian example of our son Chris, who enjoyed Young Life, an evangelical organization for Christian teenagers. Thus, God's grace was sufficient, and our happy marriage and our sweet son left us mindful of the Lord's blessings even in our darkest hours.

As the Holy Spirit continued to work powerfully in my life, I thrived in the Southern Baptist world – until I reached middle age. By then, both Daddy and my husband had died. Missing them both and adjusting to retirement, I felt restless and frustrated, and I seemed stuck spiritually. Something was missing, and the old hymn, "Higher Ground," expressed my longing well:

*I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.
Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on Heaven's tableland,*

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Journeys Home

...Journeys Home Continued...

*A higher plain than I have found;
My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where those abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.
I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
the song of saints on higher ground.
I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till heav'n I've found,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.*

Restless Quests

I found myself trying to make peace with the Baptist faith, yet God was at work, even then, preparing me to become a Catholic. I was beginning to recognize the power of the physical to impact the spiritual, evident in my growing desire to collect small statues and prints depicting scenes from the life of Christ. Moreover, for years I had been craving periods of silence and

attention to reverence in our worship services. Yet, most Southern Baptists seemed to appreciate an increasing move toward informality. I had also known for a long time that something was missing from the Protestant celebration of the Lord's Supper. Almost imperceptibly, I slipped into sacramental theology and found myself asking God to minister grace to me through the Lord's Supper, even as our pastor was reminding folks that, for Baptists, it was only symbolic. Even the ideas of confession and absolution became more and more appealing.

I began to feel that there had to be more for a follower of Christ. My desire to overcome spiritual pride and to grow in holiness caused some pastors to see these as marks of humility, so they put me on an undeserved pedestal. Ironically, I was invited to lead yet another ministry. A kind of spiritual fatigue set in as if I had been running a race without access to the best possible nourishment and coaching. Yearning for "more," I explored Lutheranism and Eastern Orthodoxy but decided that neither was the answer.

God's Providence

For twenty-eight years, I had asked God to give my son a fine Christian woman with whom he could enjoy a happy marriage and serve the Lord. He chose a Catholic, and, though surprised by this, I often joined her for Mass when they visited me. During their St. Louis wedding festivities in 2004, I met two delightful Catholic seminarians with permanent residency at a religious community near my Kentucky home. At the rehearsal dinner, the younger seminarian and I enjoyed almost three hours of animated dialogue about the Catholic Church. He won my trust with his sensitivity, humor, and fine listening skills. I was amazed to hear myself admitting to an occasional longing for the release and comfort that must be found through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I also heard myself, a Baptist minister's daughter, referring to then Pope John Paul II as the Holy Father.

Out of deference to our Protestant family, the Mass had been reserved for the morning after the wedding ceremony. During the ceremony itself, I was deeply moved by the beauty and reverence of the liturgy, and the emphasis on Scripture was a surprise. The next day, we toured the incredible Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, and the celebration continued with Mass in a side chapel. At that point I understood very little about the Mass, but I was paying attention and accumulating questions. Upon my departure from St. Louis, the seminarians gave me a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and challenged me to find out for myself what the Church taught. So, in 2004, I began studying the Catholic Faith with the hope of leading my daughter-in-law into Protestantism and of being prepared for my son's questions – should he someday consider Catholicism.

The younger seminarian and I had laid the groundwork for a future friendship. The older seminarian (who was my daughter-in-law's brother) would soon become a special friend as well. For two years, during their vacations from seminary, I would

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LITURGY OF THE HOURS — SINGTHEHOURS.ORG PAUL ROSE



AVAILABLE ON
YOUTUBE, SPOTIFY, OR
AS AN APPLE PODCAST

Join musician (and convert!) Paul Rose as he sings the Church's Morning (*Lauds*) and Evening (*Vespers*) Prayers, uniting with *all* Catholics worldwide in their celebration of the daily prayer of the Church, the Liturgy of the Hours (or the Divine Office). In this FREE resource, the hymns, psalms, and prayers of the Catholic Church are sung and posted daily, in a mixture of English and Latin. The Latin elements, along with their side-by-side English translations, connect participants with the ancient traditions of the Office, thereby allowing them to pray in unison with the Church's many voices throughout the ages.

The Divine Office is a continuously-tended tradition, both ancient and living, having been sung in all ages of the Church. The Office may be spoken, but, like the Psalms themselves, *it was designed to be sung*. The musical aspects of the Office provide emotional depth to the prayers; thus, we return the gift of song back to our Lord as we sing to Him, through the heart of the Church. Whether by simply listening to the Hours, or by bravely singing along, **SingtheHours.org** will help everyone learn, practice, and enjoy this treasure of our Faith.

...Journeys Home Continued...

attend a Mass with them at the Fathers of Mercy, and the three of us would have long theological discussions. By 2006, I was fully aware of the gift God was giving me in those conversations.

Guideposts and Revelations

Most of what I had once believed about the Catholic Church turned out to be misinformation or misunderstanding. I had first questioned my parents' view of Catholicism when Billy Graham included Catholic priests on his revival podiums, and my fundamentalist father had no answer for why Graham believed those priests were Christians and worthy to be seated there. God planted additional seeds in my mind through the novel *Quo Vadis?* and the British miniseries *Brideshead Revisited*.

In *The Imitation of Christ*, I found Thomas à Kempis' intimate knowledge of Christ compelling. I initially ignored the section on the Eucharist but later decided that such a holy man might have something to teach me about that as well. The haunting melody and lyrics of "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence," an ancient chant of Eucharistic devotion, stirred my spirit in a mysterious way. Sacred Scripture was also speaking to me about the Eucharist. I realized that Jesus was not speaking of symbolic body and blood in John 6, and his poignant prayer for a united Church in John 17 broke my heart.

William F. Buckley, Peggy Noonan, Kate O'Beirne, and other intellectual heavyweights whom I admired seemed to have discovered something in the Catholic Faith. I respected them enough to conclude they must know some things about Catholicism that I did not. Through *The Journey Home* on EWTN, I became aware of devout evangelicals like Dr. Scott Hahn and Rosalind Moss who had been students of Scripture yet had embraced Catholicism. I had believed that only Catholics left their faith for another tradition, never the other way around. The lives of St. Teresa of Calcutta and Pope Saint John Paul II revealed humility and holiness. When Pope Benedict XVI stood on the balcony for the first time in 2005, the Holy Spirit delivered an unspoken message to me: "This is the leader of the Church."

Theological Obstacles

Sometimes, I would ask myself, "What if the seminarians are right?" Then I would pray, "Lord, lead me to the Truth." Part of me was afraid of what that Truth might prove to be. I had heard converts say there was no turning back once they had read the Church Fathers and studied the worship practices of the early Christian Church, which involved receiving the Eucharist. Reading Rod Bennett's *Four Witnesses: The Early Church in Her Own Words* confirmed what others had shared – the first Christian leaders clearly believed Jesus was present in the bread and the wine, not just symbolically represented.

The Baptist belief in *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) was surprisingly easy for me to leave behind when I reflected on these two verses:

But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that

the world itself could not contain the books that would be written (John 21:25).

So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Similarly, I considered how many things about my late husband would have remained unknown if others only knew what I'd written about him (without hearing what I shared about him in conversation). Oral accounts are so important for the complete picture. The early leaders of the Church passed on Jesus' teachings orally and instructed Christians to obey what they had heard.

Nevertheless, Protestant ordination was a thorny issue for me. My father was an ordained Southern Baptist minister, and my father-in-law was an ordained Free Will Baptist missionary. Would my becoming a Catholic suggest a lack of respect for their sacrificial, lifelong service as ministers of God? Both gave their lives to evangelizing, teaching, and serving. As faithful shepherds, they tended their flocks at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Their impact on my life helped prepare me to hear the call of God into Christ's true Church.

The Perpetual Virginity, the Assumption, and the Coronation of Mary were also challenging. Perhaps I would be able to take those three teachings by faith. Could I jump into the arms of Mother Church and trust Her to catch me, to help me understand them better in time?

Resistance and Obedience

In 2007, the Holy Spirit began calling me to embrace the Catholic Faith. I questioned and resisted the call during a painful time of begging God for clear direction. Despite my restless yearning for something more, I did not want to become Catholic. In a desperate effort to keep me in the Baptist fold, my elderly mother told me that she would rather stand at my graveside than see me become Catholic. I did not want to hurt her or other family members!

Obedience to God's call seemed so costly. I had also invested fifteen years in my relationships with other women at church. Our spiritual fellowship and monthly socials had helped me survive my husband's early death. I had hoped to grow old with them at our Baptist church. How could I exchange what I had for a small Catholic parish with no Sunday School, no women's group, and no adult choir?

More than once I was prostrate on my floor, weeping and assuring God that I would do whatever He wanted me to do, and yet — how could He expect me (at my age and with my background) to become a Catholic? But He would not relent. I knew where Christ's true Church was. The choice was simple: resist or obey.

As I surrendered, I began to understand and embrace Catholic doctrines, so my older seminarian friend suggested that I meet with a priest. I had naively hoped to receive the Eucharist at this first meeting, but my efforts to persuade Father were un-

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A Note from JonMarc

Dear Friends of CHN,

Greetings! At this time of year, we hear from many CHNetwork members who are beginning RCIA in preparation for entering the Church at Easter. This is often a time for reflection on their journeys thus far and God's graces that have been showered upon them along the way. Please keep your fellow members in prayer, especially those for whom the final stretch of the journey home, and beyond, will entail difficult challenges and tests of faith. Reflecting on these journeys and our own path ahead, I want to take a moment to share a few things with you.

Pastors on Retreat

This past May the CHNetwork held our first in-person retreat since the pandemic began in 2020. Over the course of two years, our staff spent a lot of time praying, strategizing, and making proactive ministry plans to increase our outreach and support of non-Catholic clergy on their journey into the Church. At our May retreat, we finally began to see some of these prayerful efforts come to fruition.

I'm thrilled to share that we were able to bring eight current or former Protestant clergy to the retreat: two former Brazilian mega-church evangelists, an Assemblies of God minister, a United Methodist minister, two Church of Christ ministers, and a co-pastoring couple from the Salvation Army. Through the generosity of our donors and various foundations, we commissioned the Shepherd's Fund to help more clergy converts and inquirers attend our in-person events. We committed to raising at least \$100,000 in our first year to support the cost of hosting retreats and **to cover any portion (up to the entire amount) of retreat travel and registration costs for any non-Catholic clergy who wish to attend.** To date, we have successfully raised just over \$57,000, and we look forward to using those funds to assist more clergy at October's retreat.

I can't emphasize enough what a blessing these in-person retreats are. We work hard to use the internet and media to share stories and cast a wide net of evangelization — but there is nothing quite like seeing that outreach culminate in 30 members, all from various backgrounds and stages of the journey, coming together for deep discussions, prayer, testimony, and fellowship. The experiences and conversations that result are life-changing.

Sing the Liturgy of the Hours

As this month's newsletter focuses on music and liturgical prayer, I wanted to share with you a resource that my family and I enjoy — *Sing the Hours*. It is the labor of love of a convert to Catholicism by the name of Paul Rose. Paul and his father, John, publish a free, high-quality chanted recording of Morning (*Lauds*) and Evening Prayer (*Vespers*) of the Liturgy of the Hours of the Catholic Church.

The Liturgy of the Hours is a cyclical, daily set of liturgical prayers, incorporating meditation on the Psalms and

other Scriptures.

It is the universal common prayer of the Church that priests and religious are obligated to pray daily, and the laity are highly encouraged by the Church to add this to their own prayer life as well. I have prayed the Hours sporadically as part of my personal devotion, which began during my brief stint in seminary in 2006. My family was delighted to discover *Sing the Hours*, which features morning and evening prayer, fully and beautifully sung, in a mixture of Latin and English, available via YouTube and podcast.

My wife, Teresa, and I have been gathering our six children together each evening to sit and pray (and sing!) along with these moving liturgical prayers, and it has proven to be such a blessing. For any cradle Catholic, convert, or inquirer who is interested in digging into this amazing, ancient form of Catholic prayer, *Sing the Hours.org* is a truly wonderful and easy way to get started. You'll find additional details about this project on page two of this newsletter.

The Journey Home Program Update

Finally, I am extremely humbled, and excited, to share an announcement with you: September 12th will mark the 25th-anniversary episode of *The Journey Home* on EWTN, hosted for all those years by my father. **This episode will also officially mark the transition to my taking over for Dad as the show's host.** As you may have noticed, I have been filling in for my father more over the past year, and that is because earlier this year he announced to EWTN, and to me privately, that he had prayerfully decided it was time to begin stepping back from the show (to spend more time with grandkids, among other things!). After further conversation and prayer, EWTN confirmed their invitation for me to carry on in his stead, and we have been in preparation for this transition ever since.

It was my honor to step into the Executive Director role for the CHNetwork in order to carry on my father's legacy of helping people come home to the Catholic Church. And now I have the immense, and humbling, privilege of carrying on another of his legacies — that of helping people share their conversion stories with the world through *The Journey Home* on EWTN. I ask for your continued prayers for Dad, myself, our family, and the entire CHNetwork team as we move into this next stage of the journey together.

Thank you for your support and prayers for our team and for all of the members of the CHNetwork. *Deo Gratias!*

In Christ,

JonMarc Grodi, *Executive Director*



JonMarc and his family sing *Vespers* each evening in their home.

The Liturgy of the Hours

A TREASURY OF PSALMS & PRAYERS

The Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office (and formerly called the Breviary), is the collection of daily prayers of the universal Catholic Church. Required of the clergy and recommended for the laity, this official prayer book of the Church divides each day of the year into seven different “hours,” or times of prayer, each with a Latin name:

Office of Readings	formerly <i>Matins</i>
Morning Prayer	<i>Lauds</i>
Mid-morning Prayer	<i>Terce</i>
Midday Prayer	<i>Sext</i>
Mid-afternoon Prayer	<i>None</i>
Evening Prayer	<i>Vespers</i>
Night Prayer	<i>Compline</i>

Each “hour” is assigned its own set of psalms, hymns, Scripture readings, and prayers. Each day also includes an introductory prayer, the Invitatory, and writings by Church Fathers or saints (the Office of Readings or “Lessons”). Over the centuries, all of these thematic elements have been meticulously chosen and brilliantly arranged by the Church. The Hours parallel the seasons and feasts of the Mass, thereby diffusing the praise and thanksgiving of the Mass throughout the entire day.

The Hours are Deep in History *“The Holy Ghost and the Church have been working on the Breviary for over 3,000 years. It [is]... a precious common fund to which the great men of prayer from every age have contributed their thoughts and sentiments.”* – Pius Parsch, priest & liturgist, 1940

By cycling through the Psalms, the Hours find their origin in the Jewish liturgy. This ancient tradition of reciting the Psalms – “Seven times a day I will praise you” (Psalm 119) – was preserved and passed on by the Apostles, thus becoming the foundation of the Christian liturgy as well. Hymns were added to the Church’s daily prayers in the fourth century when St. Hilary, inspired by songs that he heard during his exile, suggested the use of hymns to combat the heresy of the Arians. St. John Chrysostom and St. Ambrose enthusiastically followed their friend’s advice and thereby became the first hymn writers of the Catholic Church. Future saints and pontiffs later took up their own pens, creating new hymns to commemorate Scripture, develop Church doctrine, and celebrate new feasts.

The Hours are Deep in Faith *“Since to the chant of the hymns and the psalms the Divine Office is celebrated, there is accomplished in the Church of God a public ministry, organized for the good of all.”* – St. Thomas Aquinas

The purpose of the Hours is twofold: Through the voice of the universal Church, it presents the prayers and needs of the body of Christ, yet it also serves as a beacon that guides our individual spiritual growth. The Hours illuminate the Faith of the Church and invite us to deepen the content of our personal prayer. Its psalms and hymns encourage an evangelical fervor; its readings solicit solemn reflection, and its prayers and intercessions precipitate penance as well as praise.

The Hours are Deep in Christ *“What lights are obtained from the divine words! With what holy maxims is the soul penetrated! How many acts of love, of confidence, of humility, of contrition, may one not make by merely paying attention to the verses.”* – St. Alphonsus Marie de Liguori

The Hours give us a unique opportunity to journey with Christ, while also offering our prayers to Him. Our Lord Himself recited and prayed the psalms within its pages. We encounter the life of Christ, and grace, in its Scriptures and express our love for Christ and His Father in its songs and prayers. Moreover, the story of the Crucifixion directly references the hours into which the Divine Office is divided. And sharing the exact same prayers with the entire Catholic Church on earth unites us with all our brothers and sisters in Christ across time and space.

While the length and content of the Hours can seem intimidating, it need not be prayed (by laity) in its entirety every day. And although labeled as hours, each “hour” averages only 10-15 minutes of prayer time. So, perhaps select only one hour to pray each day, such as *Lauds* or *Vespers*, and then add to that if time allows. Or, pray a different hour each day of the week. Several online sites offer free versions of the Hours, whether written, recited, or sung.

The Hours were meant for *all* the faithful in all ages of the Church. It is the same set of prayers that was carried on parchment by the Knights of the Cross in the Middle Ages. It is the same book that Mary Queen of Scots took with her to her execution and in which St. Teresa of Avila scribbled her poetry. It traversed Italy’s hills and caves with St. Benedict and his monks, and it crossed oceans with missionary priests like St. Damien of Molokai (who managed to save his in a near-drowning incident). And today, it is the same set of prayers tucked inside a worn briefcase carried by Pope Francis, everywhere he goes. Just as the body of Christ is broken and shared in the Mass, the heart of the Church’s prayer life is broken open and shared in the Hours. With its outpouring of grace and wisdom, it is the Church’s gift to us, and how we celebrate it is our gift back to God. ■



Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

From: Eastern Church's Breviary

ORIGINAL: GREEK, CIRCA AD 275

BASED ON: HABAKKUK 2:20



*Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.
King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heav'nly food.
Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.
At His feet the six-winged seraph,
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry:
"Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord Most High!"*

EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME on television & radio, hosted by JonMarc Grodi, CHNetwork Executive Director



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

September 5

Mark & Desiree Hausam*
(former Orthodox Presbyterians)
(re-air 9/30/19)

September 12

JH Anniversary Special*
Marcus & JonMarc Grodi reflect on
25 seasons of *The Journey Home*

September 19

Nick Alexander*
(former Episcopalian)

September 26

Katie Jacobson*
(former Evangelical Protestant)

October 3

Rakhi McCormick*
(former Hindu)

**Schedule is subject to change.*

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



Joyful Journey Updates

From Debbie, a recent convert

How happy I am to be Catholic! I came into the Church this Easter. It was so amazing to FINALLY be able to partake of the Eucharist. I cried during all of the Consecration and Communion. I couldn't control it. I felt so grateful to our Lord Jesus for the sacrifice that He made and how, through God's grace, I was able to partake of His body and blood. I am a professional violinist, so I have been playing for our 'Night of Adoration' each month. I joined the choir, and I am thrilled to be singing again in the Lord's house. I am reading literature by Dr. Scott Hahn and Bishop Barron. Both of them have helped me along the way to becoming Catholic. I love to pray the Rosary, but my favorite prayer is Divine Mercy. God bless all of you!

From Lanny, a convert I was chrismated on Saint Nicholas Day last year and have enjoyed regularly attending the Divine Liturgy; I love being Byzantine Catholic and am pleased I have access to the Eucharist in the Roman Rite Church as well as other Eastern Rite Churches. While still very ecumenical, I love being Catholic.

From Chris, a clergy convert During my journey, one of Jesus' prayers that has stood out is His prayer that His followers 'be one' (Jn 17:21), just like He and the Father are one. The more I've meditated on the Gospels, the more my love of the Church and my desire for unity have grown. When my wife, three children, and I were brought into the Catholic Church this Easter, my heart

was filled with such joy knowing that we can, in a small way, embody the kind of unity that Jesus desired. I've also found incredible joy knowing that Christian unity is one family closer to a reality. Bless you and your ministry.

From Barbara, a convert This Christmas I will be 3 years old [in the Church]! I have enjoyed these years and was able to use the slower Corona pace to do LOTS of reading. [I have wondered] why God would call me home at this point in time. On the other hand, I've often thought of what Mordecai said to Esther in the Bible: 'Maybe God brought you here for such a time as this.' So, I pray a lot and try to learn a lot so that I have answers for people who ask what I think. ■

RCIA REMINDER September is the month when most parishes begin their RCIA programs to prepare those entering the Church next Easter. Please prayerfully consider this for yourself or for a loved one! And please remember to keep those entering RCIA, and those inquiring about the Church, in your prayers.

Prayer List

Clergy

■ **For Angel**, who informed his church leaders that he is leaving the ministry to become Catholic, that the Lord will comfort him, his wife, and the confused, saddened congregation they leave behind.

■ **For Craig, a former Methodist pastor** born, baptized, and raised Catholic who was received into the Church during our May CHN retreat this year.

■ **For Everett, a former Protestant chaplain** who was received into full communion with the Catholic Church, together with his wife. Let us pray for this transition in their lives.

■ **For Robert, a Messianic Jewish Rabbi** who is drawn to the Catholic Church yet unsure what to do, that the Holy Spirit will give him peace and courage during this time.

■ **For Bobby, a former Baptist pastor** who has entered the Church and is struggling with both financial and health problems.

■ **For Houston, a Methodist pastor** facing the daunting decision of how and when to announce to his congregation that he is leaving to become Catholic.

■ **For Jeremiah, a Baptist pastor** who, having faced tremendous family opposition to his study of Catholicism, has decided not to make the journey at this time, that the Lord will be with him and eventually lead him home.

■ **For Michael, an Episcopal priest** seeking full communion with the Catholic Church and exploring possible ordination as a Catholic priest.

■ **For Bret, a former Baptist pastor** who is examining the teachings of the Catholic Church and attending Mass but struggling to reconcile his Protestant understanding with what he's now learning.

■ **For James, a Baptist pastor** who has become convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith, that the Holy Spirit might soften his wife's heart and give him the wisdom to know how to lead her toward the Church.

■ **For Brian, a Methodist pastor** who is convinced he must become Catholic but struggling with how he will support his family when he does.

■ **For Will, a former Lutheran pastor** who has resigned his ministry, found a teaching position, and entered RCIA – all while working to complete a D. Min. program at a Protestant seminary, that the Lord will continue to lead and bless his decision to enter the Church.

Laity

■ **For Ben, a Calvinistic Methodist**, that, as he comes to realize the actual teachings of the Catholic Faith, he may embrace the Church founded by Christ.

■ **For Andrea, a Pentecostal on the journey**, that her husband may join her on the journey, that their children might be baptized into the Faith, and that RCIA will be filled with many graces.

■ **For Ty, a non-denominational Evangelical** in Tennessee, that, through his journey to the Catholic Church, he may become closer to Jesus.

■ **For T.C., a former Baptist and Anglican** who is converting to the Catholic Faith, that her husband and children might find their way home as well.

■ **For Joseph, a lapsed Catholic in California**, that the Holy Spirit would lead him to a life of sanctity and freedom from mortal sin.

■ **For Dennis, a Lutheran in Ohio**, that our Lord Jesus would guide him as he prepares to begin RCIA this fall.

■ **For Caitlin, on the journey**, that her first meeting with an RCIA director will go well and that she will learn to take each step slowly, not rushing ahead of grace but learning to walk in step with it.

■ **For Ron, a Baptist**, that the Holy Spirit would motivate him to act on his convictions and lead him into full communion with the Catholic Church.

■ **For Andreas, in Norway**, that, as he continues to study Catholic teaching, he may develop a hunger for our Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.



■ **For Barbara, a long-time Protestant**, that the annulment process will go quickly and that she may “make up for all [her] years as a Protestant” and that the difficult journey of learning this Faith late in life will be made easier by grace.

■ **For Jason, a former Evangelical and Sunni Muslim**, that he will do well as he begins a theology degree and that his family's current struggles will be resolved with a clear leading by God.

■ **For Michael, a Charismatic**, that he may find healing and joy in Christ's holy Catholic Church.

■ **For Tyler, a non-denominational Evangelical**, that the Holy Spirit would guide his journey to the Church as he begins college this fall at an Evangelical university.

■ **For Donna, a former Baptist and Wesleyan on the journey**, that she will know the comfort of Jesus and all the saints as she mourns the loss of her husband of 52 years.

■ **For Jaan, in Texas**, that, through the grace granted to him by our Lord Jesus, he may return to the Altar of the Lord in the Catholic Church.

■ **For Greg, on the journey**, that he may know the peace of Christ as he officially renounces all the oaths he made as a Mormon in preparation for full communion with the Catholic Church.

■ **For Joseph, a former Quaker on the journey**, that he might find a faithful Catholic community to embrace him and, ultimately, receive him into the 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 CHN network and its members and supporters. We use only first names or general descriptions to preserve privacy.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

JIM MILLIGAN — DONOR 9 YEARS



I was born into a Presbyterian family in Scotland, where I attended church and Bible classes, yet I had a strong conversion experience in Ireland in the late sixties. Following some covert study, by mail, through the Catholic Enquiry Center in London, I became Catholic at the age of 19. I later married a beautiful Irish girl, and after the birth of our first two children, we returned to Scotland. The anti-Catholicism there was the catalyst for our moving to Australia in 1980. We made a new start and became involved in the life of our young, vibrant Catholic parish. But in 1992, the sex-abuse scandals broke, which shook us to the core. Like many Catholics, we left the Church in despair. I was “in the wilderness” for 20 years.

In 2013, I felt a strong call to return to the Church after stumbling across literature from the organization “Salt & Light.” Slowly, I rediscovered the truth, goodness, and beauty of the Catholic Faith (words integral to the CHNetwork’s mission) and realized that turning away from the Church was a mistake. I reverted and stayed! Searching for resources, I discovered the CHNetwork in 2014 – I was 64 years old! Initially, I just ordered books on the Church Fathers but then realized the breadth of this apostolate. So, I became a donor and have sent a contribution every year since.

I’ve read a lot since my return to the Church and now realize how little I once understood the Faith and the Church’s mission. My dear wife of 51 years (a cradle Catholic) no longer believes, nor do my children. As the only Catholic family member, it’s a lonely journey. But thanks to the CHNetwork, I know I’m not entirely alone! God is good!

I truly value CHN’s ministry and continue to watch *The Journey Home*. Ken and Matt are also amazing! I pray that God will continue to bless all at the CHNetwork. Because I believe the Lord works through the CHNetwork in such important ways, it has been a privilege for me to support their work. I encourage everyone to join me in making sure the CHNetwork is here for many years to come.

If you would like to join donors like Jim in supporting the CHNetwork, we encourage you to join our monthly giving community, COMPASS. To make a one-time donation, visit our website, chnetwork.org/donate, or return the enclosed donation envelope. ■

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...

successful. Instead, he took me into the chapel, pointed out the tabernacle, and said, "If you believe Jesus is truly present here, it would be good to show your love for Him with a silent prayer and a gesture of reverence." I genuflected, and looking at the tabernacle, silently said, "Jesus, I love you." Using holy water, Father made the Sign of the Cross on my forehead, said some prayers in Latin, and then said in English, "May you be given a strong desire for Truth."

I drove to the chapel twice each day, seeking all the strength I could get to deal with this stressful transition and immersion in the Catholic world. The denial of access to the Eucharist was difficult for me at first. I had already done enough study to know that I wanted to enter the Church. The prohibition did feel like rejection; it was also a matter of pride on my part. Given my family's background, my leadership positions, and decades of faithful Christian service, how could anyone feel I did not deserve to receive the Lord? I attended 128 Masses without being allowed to receive.

I submitted to the exclusion of remaining behind in the pew as others went forward because I was convinced the Holy Spirit had directed me to embrace Catholicism. This included obedience to Church authority, to the successors of apostolic leadership. That time of waiting was an essential part of my Catholic formation. It was a time of learning my place as a member of the community rather than as an elite. I also submitted because the Church emphasizes the importance of attending Mass. Through making a spiritual communion, I received my own strength and grace at each Mass.

I was learning to give thanks for all the mortifications of flesh and spirit that helped crucify my pride, and I gained understanding of the reasons behind some of the practices that strike Protestants as so unwelcoming. Having been a devout Baptist Sunday School teacher for almost forty years did not prepare me to receive the Eucharist. I needed Catholic formation and a Catholic heart.

Formation of a Catholic Heart

It was a humbling adjustment that in a Catholic parish I would no longer be the pastor's daughter, deacon's wife, director of adult discipleship, or soloist. Protestants who have shouldered several ministries need time alone in the desert with God. It is there, in private wrestling with the Lord, then in submission to Him, that we grow in self-knowledge and in knowledge of God.

Catholicism directs us to know God and love Him, not just to serve. It focuses on what we are spiritually, not on what positions we hold in our church. I learned that becoming a good Catholic involves a formation process of further developing my interior life, with attention to taking up my cross and to humility, docility (being teachable), and interior stillness.

God calls us to holiness and to union with Him. During my first year as a Catholic, I attended Mass every morning, studied Catholic writers, spent time daily in silent Adoration, and attended Benediction and Confession regularly. As a retired widow, I had time to immerse myself in developing a Catholic spirituality. We cannot demand or be guaranteed a fulfilling ministry until we surrender to Christ's call into His true Church.

I was not required to go through RCIA after two priests met with me to discuss my journey. They had already been meeting with RCIA candidates and felt it was unfair to let me jump into their group months later. Given my background, my decades of church service, and my hours of discussion with seminarians, both priests agreed that I could operate and study on my own. Then, I met with the priests a few times before they were satisfied that I was ready for Confirmation.

My relatives, despite their hurt and deep misgivings, attended my Confirmation in 2007. They were deeply wounded, though, and a few withdrew emotionally for a time. My wonderful Baptist pastors and friends were kind and supportive of my decision, yet during my first years as a Catholic, I was alone with the Lord in the desert. His love sustained me and gave me peace.

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



740.450.1175



info@chnetwork.org



The Coming Home
Network International

Newfound Ministries and Peace

Immediately after my Confirmation, a strong spiritual tugging began. Thinking that God wanted me to become a nun or a consecrated widow, I entered a period of discernment, with guidance from a priest. Eventually, it became clear that the Lord had placed no strong desire in my heart to become a nun – to detach myself from my family, friends, and independence.

Instead, with the blessing of my pastor and confessor, I started a Catholic Bible study group in my home, with priests in attendance. I also discerned joining OCDS, a group of lay persons who vow to follow a rigorous daily schedule of prayer, Adoration, Mass, and study of the great Carmelite saints, but found I was not a good fit for this third-order group. I volunteered as a Eucharistic Minister, sharing Scripture with and distributing Holy Communion to hospitalized and homebound patients.

For years, as a member of the Coming Home Network's online community, I responded to inquiries from pastors, pastors' wives, and laity, supporting them on their journeys into the Church. It was an honor to serve as a co-moderator of the forum, educating and encouraging those wrestling with God's call into the Catholic Church.

Currently, I lead Bible study and try to be available when others need counsel or encouragement. Several priests have become like brothers or grandsons to me. Spiritual motherhood, especially to priests, is an important ministry. It is also a joy to share their burdens and prayer requests and to enjoy entertainment together. Like Jesus Himself, priests need good friends.

St. Augustine's and St. Paul's commentaries on widows once gripped my heart, yet I have realized that I have no desire to belong to any man other than my late husband. The suffering of living without him is my cross to bear. God uses that cross to sanctify me and uses my freedom as an unmarried person to serve others. I have peace knowing this is God's plan for me.

How blessed I am to have been reared in the home of a Southern Baptist pastor and his wife – how important to have memorized Scripture and studied it from childhood. I learned about giving, ministry, fellowship, evangelism, spontaneous prayer, and the necessity of adult Bible study and spiritual support. The memorized lyrics to hundreds of Baptist hymns and gospel songs formed me and still tune my heart to God quickly and effectively. This spiritual foundation prepared me to respond to Christ's call into His true Church. ■



BECKY MAYHEW is a retired school administrator and a former co-moderator of the CHNI online forum. She is the daughter of a Southern Baptist pastor and the widow of a Baptist deacon and philosophy professor. She was a guest on The Journey Home television program in 2010 and attends Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Continue the **TOURNEY**

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

Blessed Notker Balbulus (the Stammerer) AD 840 - 912



While early hymn writers did contribute to the music of the Church's daily prayers, the musical elements of the Mass itself were limited to the text of Sacred Scripture. For 800 years, no human words were deemed worthy enough to be sung in the solemn celebration of the Eucharist... that is, until a gifted monk who struggled to speak changed the sound of the Mass forever. Notker, a monk in the Swiss abbey of St. Gall, decided to add Latin text to the prolonged chanting of the last syllable of the "Alleluia" (which went on for minutes). Notker wrote many such sequences (hymns of joy), and his lyrics caught the attention of fellow monks and Emperor Charles III. Thus, the use of Notker's sequences in the Mass took hold and spread throughout the Church in Europe. Notker's idea to include hymns

in the Mass to praise God was the spark that ignited the creation and use of new liturgical music. For Notker realized, "He who sings prays twice" (CC 1156). Some of Notker's hymns, from his *Liber Hymnorum*, are available on YouTube. ■

He who
SINGS
prays **TWICE**

The Coming Home Network International

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