



## November 2022 CHNewsletter

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# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## Hindu to Hedonist to Catholic

By: Kailash Duraiswami

I am an unlikely convert. I am in my early 30s, grew up in a Hindu household, and worked in the technology sector in San Francisco, where morality was low on the priority list. Not even joy factored into my life after I abandoned my family's religion (before becoming Catholic) as I continued to squander the gifts and talents God had given me. Eventually, I managed to trek out of this darkness into the Catholic Church, and God has worked some miraculous moments in my life since that first Holy Communion.

### From Hindu to Hedonist

My parents were born in India and moved to the United States after getting married, eventually finding their way to Florida. I was born in a small town outside of the Tampa Bay area. It was a tight-knit community, where I would see the same people at school, in stores, and in restaurants. Even today, it holds to its Southern and Christian culture and is a quintessentially American town. Religion was extremely important to my family and a big part of my upbringing. We would frequently go to the Hindu temple in our area or participate in religious ceremonies at home. I learned about the Hindu philosophical tradition at home and through classes at the temple.

In college at Emory University, I was president of the Hindu Students Association (HSA). There, I took classes on Hinduism and Sanskrit, the dead language used for scriptures and commentary in the religion, like Latin in the Catholic Church. Hinduism is broken into a higher- and lower-level form of

philosophy and worship. Often, we hear about the lower form, which involves polytheism, sacrificial offerings to idols, or fire pits. I believed, instead, in a philosophical approach to the Hindu scriptures, called Vedanta. The Vedanta school relies on meditation, philosophy, and chanting to form a unitive relationship with God. This comprised the only habitual form of faith practice I knew prior to entering the Catholic Church. As I progressed through college, I fell away from morality and positive habits. By the end of college, I was living a wholly secular life of drinking, partying, drugs, and self-destructive romantic relationships.

After graduating from college, I eventually found my way to San Francisco, CA. I came to Silicon Valley in search of better career possibilities, since otherwise I could only find dead-end jobs in my early 20s. I did not have any set career plan, slept on a friend's couch, and lived on little money and food as I practiced my skills as a software developer. Much to my surprise, I turned out [Continued on page 2](#) ➡

Journeys Home

to be an acceptable software developer after just a few months of training.

After this short, uncomfortable trial, I accepted a high-paying software engineering position in the financial services industry. While this was a great boost to my career, the high income levels I had quickly graduated to became the agent of ever-increasing immorality and were a danger to my soul.

### Riding High; Living Low

I am ashamed of how I lived for the next period of my life, but it shows how God can later lift any person into His embrace, no matter how far you have fallen from the state of grace. In the years after changing my career, I could never say no to a party; I had no self-restraint with hard drugs, and I would routinely pursue the most extreme forms of sensual pleasures, whether that was with romantic partners, expensive meals, or travel. During this time, I partied with Silicon Valley billionaires, was in a relationship with a “blue checkmark” verified Instagram personality, and attended the most exclusive VIP experiences possible in Las Vegas. I had access to the resources and relationships to furnish a hedonistic lifestyle and saw no reason to change. My lavish lifestyle was a veneer, however, as I was riddled with anxiety and uncertainty. Despite my self-absorption, I felt increasingly alone and increasingly unhappy. I thought I was living the high life, but everything I touched turned to dust. I was the founder of many business ideas that went nowhere, and I started many relationships that fell apart rapidly.

During this time, I still read books and continued my interest in philosophy. I discovered atheism through Sam Harris and felt very sure of his intellectual atheism. For me, God was simply a fiction created by ignorant people of the past to explain things we did not understand, an explanation that we had outgrown.

God was a paltry attempt to explain the origin of the universe by human beings of a former time, people with less knowledge than we have. I believed science could explain everything and that God was a fictional character set up to explain things our brilliant minds and advanced material resources could readily explain today. I believed in a so-called “God of the gaps.” That is the philosophy that God exists (in our minds) to fill in the gaps of human understanding; however, now, as we approach the ability to know everything, we do not need God to fill in those gaps. God was our past; science is our future — that was the way I saw it.

I continued along my merry way of self-destruction and an embrace of a false etiology on the origin of God... until November 2016, when an unexpected event occurred: Donald Trump, an archconservative, won the 2016 presidential election. Trump’s victory was a surprise to many metropolitan areas throughout the country. In San Francisco, it was a cataclysmic event that completely shocked my world view and that of many around me. At that time, I would have considered my political beliefs to be socially liberal and economically libertarian. I did not believe that the government, or any entity, had the authority to adjudicate morality. I thought economic freedom would go a long way toward solving all the problems of mankind, and personal freedom was an imperative to societal harmony.

It cannot be overstated how profoundly that election changed the energy in the city of San Francisco. People working in Silicon Valley companies did not show up for work in the days following the election, and it seemed to many that things were not making sense anymore. City officials and politicians also repudiated the results and all those whose votes had taken us in this direction. The people I knew had their worldview shattered and could not account for this electoral outcome. Many people grew angry and frustrated, but I began an intellectual journey that led to something more.

In time, I grew to appreciate Catholic morality and the Catholic understanding of the dignity of the human person. But initially, I was focused on the election results. And I didn’t realize that the confusing end of my worldview was really about far more than politics and economics. I began by asking myself one thing: This election did not go the way I anticipated, so... “What else is true that I am missing?”

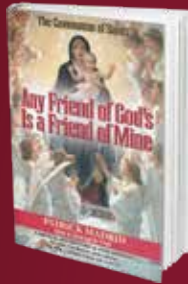
### Asking the Right Question

To answer this question, I started a blog where I would interview people on why they voted for Trump. I needed to find out how it could be that millions of people made a decision that I did not think was possible. I would draw on people that I grew up with in Florida, met in San Francisco, or encountered on internet forums. I was given many explanations for their votes, including policy issues in economics and immigration. I found myself sympathetic to economic policy, but eventually most of the conversations would boil down to “values” and morality.

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## ANY FRIEND OF GOD’S IS A FRIEND OF MINE *PATRICK MADRID*

Patrick Madrid’s book is one of the best explanations of the Catholic doctrine on the communion of saints written for a popular audience. Madrid explains in a clear, easy-to-follow style why Catholics honor Mary and the saints and ask for their intercession. Using the Bible and the testimony of the early Church Fathers, he provides a concise overview of the biblical and historical foundations of this often-misunderstood Catholic doctrine. He also walks the reader through the standard anti-Catholic arguments against invoking Mary and the saints and demonstrates, from the Bible, why these arguments are themselves unbiblical. Item #2588



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

In my blog, I would talk down to these individuals from my atheist, materialist view of morality. However, something kept me going in pursuit of learning more, and I routinely heard the phrase “Judeo-Christian values.” I did not want to learn about religion, but my political research was running into a dead end. There are a zillion pieces of content created on politics every day, but they are mostly the same few stories regurgitated in different ways. I had exhausted the political explanations in my blog and had come to the end of what people had to say about politics and economics. Still, it appeared that there *was* more to say about the principles that motivated people in voting. Even morality was not the end of the line. I had nowhere else to turn but to learn more about Christianity and its values, in hopes of coming up with an answer to the question that haunted me: “What else is true that I am missing?”

### Beyond Politics and Economics

Although I grew up in a strong Protestant area, I did not know anything about Christianity. My introduction to anything Christian in this journey was a conversion testimonial video from the actor who played the grandfather on the television show *Duck Dynasty*, Phil Robertson. By this time, I had quit my lucrative job and was trying to build yet another software company that was failing. I was living on savings in the highest-priced rental market in the world — San Francisco — and was running out of money. I had no friends and no community. I was in utter darkness. Nevertheless, I was being drawn into the faith by the testimonies of those who had found their entire lives changed through Jesus Christ. I knew only one thing: I, too, needed a change.

In their testimonies, people would describe their lives before finding their Christian faith, and their narratives were similar to mine. They shared an inability to control any impulse and a compulsion towards drugs, alcohol, partying, and other sensual pleasures. In my deepest heart, I wanted to be done with these activities, but I did not have the strength or ability to say no to them. I was a slave to my appetites, incapable of refusing any pleasure presented to me. I appreciated the narrative these conversion testimonies described, but I was still not sure whether any of it was true. As a skeptic and an atheist, I did not even believe a person named Jesus Christ had ever existed.

### The First and Greatest Thing I Was Missing

The first step in my journey was to address my skepticism regarding the historical Christ: Did Jesus of Nazareth even exist? Dr. Gary Habermas and his apologetics argument — the “minimal facts argument” — helped considerably in answering this question. From this logical foundation, I conducted a considerable amount of research on the historicity of Christianity. That is, I formed an opinion through archeological evidence and textual analysis of written sources. The only rational conclusion I could justify was that certainly Jesus of Nazareth existed, and He had been crucified.

I did a complete 180 degree turn from my doubt, understanding that the Resurrection is not simply an event in history, but the single most well-attested event in human history. If we know any fact of history, it is that Jesus Christ lived, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and three days later reappeared alive in a bodily manner to many people in ancient Israel. I knew at least one verse of the Bible was a fact: St. Paul in First Corinthians writes, circa 56 AD, that “he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve...” (1 Corinthians 15:4–5). Over the course of several months, the only plausible explanation for me was that Jesus of Nazareth is God. I was stunned.

My research had catapulted my intellectual journey, but I felt the need to *know* God as a person, not just to know facts about God. I did not know it at the time, but this need had triggered my interior journey. I found a video online of a Protestant pastor who offered a very simple step to begin a faith journey with God: read the Gospel of John. First, I studied the historicity of the Bible itself and was surprised that the text is reliable and has not changed substantially from the original manuscripts. The result was that I purchased a Bible online and began to read from the Gospel of John.

I wish I could tell you that I had visions or some other powerful mystical experience, but my search for truth was quite unremarkable. I read the Gospel of John and felt completely sure it was the truth. Reading from the Gospel of John brought the person of Christ into my mind and made inroads into my heart. It is like when you read an autobiography and the personality enters into your imagination. Reading from the Gospel of John allowed the person of Christ to break through my doubts and allowed me to form a relationship with Him.

The Bible told the truth about what happened in Christ’s life, and it was also the truth about my experience on earth. Much is said about the opening chapter of John and its profound description of God, but that was way above my head. Actually, the verse that made the most impression on me was where Pontius Pilate asked, “What is truth?” Those in darkness ask, “What is truth,” just as I was doing. Those in the light understand; they know that Jesus Christ is the Truth. Let me say it plainly: reason, combined with historical and archeological evidence, points to Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God, the Creator of the universe.

I now believed Jesus Christ is God. It made sense that I would want to join a church and be baptized, but none of the Protestant churches I researched made sense to me. No Protestant church appeared to have any claim as the best choice among the dozens that presented themselves. I could find no distinct reason to be Methodist over Baptist or distinguish any as the best option. What about the Catholic Church? It did not appear on my radar as a positive option at this time. I was learning, however, to dig deep, to not take the easy answers. And eventually, I found that the Catholic Church was something distinct and different — including also some moral teachings which I found

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# Something Old, Something New

By Denise Bossert, Pastoral Care & Publications Coordinator

It is the time of year when one Church calendar year ends and a new one begins. Each year, the liturgical calendar is like a net thrown out to catch new converts. Maybe you are in the net right now. Maybe you were caught up in that net years ago.



At the Coming Home Network, we have front-row seats to the conversions of Protestant pastors and missionaries. For the husbands and wives who worked in ministry, including the sons and daughters of those ministers, the journey into the Catholic Church can be painful. They sometimes question the validity of God's call to pastoral ministry all those years ago.

Now, it seems God is speaking to them in a foreign language that they have only begun to learn. Let's call it the Catholic language. Even God's blessings don't look anything like what they used to. People talk about dark nights and desolations as blessings. New converts have never heard the word grace used like it is now being used. Everything is strange. But there is no denying that God is in this strange land called Catholicism.

Even when they are journeying together and willing to give Catholic teaching a fair shake, husbands and wives are bound to have moments that give them pause. *What will we do for jobs if we follow this all the way to its logical conclusion?* What is a former pastor or missionary to do now that he goes by the title: Catholic *layperson*? What is he to do if he still feels *the call*? They often settle for a *good-enough* Catholic position and a *not-quite-good-enough* salary.

For many Protestant clergy, it is hard giving up the leadership position, a place at the head of the line, and a position of influence behind the pulpit. Is one destined to give up so much in order to receive the Lord in the Eucharist?

If that is what is required, so be it. But really, Lord, what is one to make of the clarion call to ministry during those Protestant days, only to be called into the Catholic Church where one cannot see a place to fulfill that calling?

A few lines of a Robert Frost poem capture this well. The speaker in the poem laments the changing season, fall to winter, and he's not quite ready to go home:

## "Reluctance"

*Out through the fields and the woods  
And over the walls I have wended;  
I have climbed the hills of view  
And looked at the world, and descended;  
I have come by the highway home,  
And lo, it is ended.*

*Ah, when to the heart of man  
Was it ever less than a treason  
To go with the drift of things,  
To yield with a grace to reason,  
And bow and accept the end  
Of a love or a season? (lines 1-6, 19-24)*

Clergy converts wonder if this is how the Apostles felt when they left their nets to follow Jesus. Then He dies and rises and says He is going to meet them in Galilee. When they arrive at the shores of Galilee after the Resurrection, the Lord is not there. Maybe they misunderstood the call. They do what seems familiar. They go fishing. And that night, there were no fish to be caught. Maybe they won't be successful at anything now.

Then, they hear the familiar words. *How was the catch?* Maybe drop the net on the other side of the boat.

A joke of the trade. They had all heard it before. The other side of the boat—as if! But then someone recognizes Him. This time, Peter doesn't even wait for the boat to reach the shore. If that's Jesus, the boat can find its own way to the shore. The fish can stay in their hidey holes all over this sea. *His Calling* is everything.

This is a confusing time of letting go and reaching forward, of trying to decide what to keep and what to purge. But...

This is where it gets scary, where one trusts that there *is something new* waiting. It's just so dark right now. And maybe, that is okay. Jesus is here.

Another Robert Frost poem called "Acceptance" describes the waiting and the unknowing.

*Now let the night be dark for all of me.  
Let the night be too dark for me to see. (lines 13-14)*

Night is good. The dark obscures the path ahead, and one must rely completely on the Guide. He not only knows the path because He forged it; He knows the destination. He knows what comes next.

When I came into the Church seventeen years ago, my husband refused to come into the Church with me. (He changed his mind three years later.) I was trained in secondary education to teach. I had lost my taste for teaching languages, and I just



wanted to evangelize. So, my conversion changed things in my marriage and in my career. In those days, I got used to walking in mystery. It was the Land of Unknowing; it was the Kingdom of God. I tried to find my place in this new world.

I didn't have the assurance that I would stumble into the work He planned for me. On a lark, I sent an article from my prayer journal to our local diocesan newspaper. They ran it, and they wanted one every month for as long as I had something to say about becoming Catholic. Other diocesan newspapers picked up the column and ran it under the banner *Catholic by Grace*. A book publisher invited me to send a book proposal. Another one asked me to help edit their RCIA series. I shared my conversion story. I edited, wrote, spoke, traveled, and taught.

God used my degrees and work experience. He took my gifts and, like a frugal baker, made something out of everything I knew how to do. Nothing was wasted.

On one shelf in my house, I have a gift from my CHN helper, Mary Beth Kremski, who walked beside me when I came into the Church 17 years ago. The calligraphy on the framed parchment describes what it was like for me. "Every scribe trained for the Kingdom of God brings forth from his treasury what is old and what is new" (Matthew 13:25).

Why didn't God show me the whole plan seventeen years ago? Wouldn't that have made the journey easier? Yes, of course it would have been easier, but ease does not create good disciples. Trust does. A malleable soul does. A humble heart does. One who has learned to be little, one who knows how to stay hidden—these make good disciples.

The new convert has become part of the Bride of Christ, and the Bride carries with her *something old and something new*. *YOU carry something with you that is part old and part new*.

God wants all of it. He will use all of it. ■

## TRUTH: Ever Ancient, Ever New

By Matt Swaim, Director of Outreach

"The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ." Yet even if revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 66)



Is Christian truth something that was delivered once and for all, with no further reflection necessary? Or is it something subject to change, based on the needs of each generation or culture?

According to the *Catechism*, it's more complicated than either of those options. As the above passage states, the revelation of God's plan for his people is complete, and we are not awaiting another Gospel. At the same time, every generation of Christians has reflected on what that revelation means.

The above passage from the *Catechism* is an example of this process! The first sentence in paragraph 66 is directly lifted from paragraph 4 of *Dei Verbum*, the Second Vatican Council's document on Scripture. In that same paragraph from *Dei Verbum*, we find this:

*For He sent His Son, the eternal Word, who enlightens all men, so that He might dwell among men and tell them of the innermost being of God. Jesus Christ, therefore, the Word made flesh, was sent as "a man to men."* (DV 4, emphasis added)

Where did *De Verbum* find the phrase, "A man to men"? The phrase comes from Chapter 7 of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, a 2nd century text. The phrase "A man to men" was taken word-for-word from this epistle:

*"(As) a king sending a son, he sent him as King, he sent him as God, he sent him as a Man to men..."*  
(*Diognetus* 7:4)

And of course, this is not an idea original to the writer of *Diognetus*! He's drawing on a far more famous passage, familiar to us all:



*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.* (John 3:16-17, RSV)

The current *Catechism* is "new" in that it came out in 1992. But here in a single paragraph, we can see it drawing from the Second Vatican Council, which draws from a Church Father, who is drawing from the Scriptures themselves. One Truth, given once, reflected upon for generations in a clear, methodical, unpacking of Truth — a Truth ever ancient, ever new.

The truth revealed in Jesus does not stay locked up in a safe; nor is it subject to change based on what a particular culture or time period finds convenient. It is ever ancient, ever new and preserved through the hands of the apostles down to the present day in the Catholic Church. ■

# The Shepherds' Fund is Helping Protestant Clergy Make the Journey Home

By Kenny Burchard, CHNetwork Director of Development



What happens when a non-Catholic minister converts to the Catholic faith? For over 25 years, the Coming Home Network has witnessed manifold answers to that question – beginning with the story of our Founder, Marcus Grodi. While the Church eventually receives incalculable blessings when non-Catholic clergy become Catholic, the personal cost to these men and women and their families can often seem unbearable. Many risk losing their ministry, financial stability, long standing friendships, and sometimes, even close family members who refuse to accept that God would ever lead their loved ones into the Catholic Church.

In November of 2021, CHN launched The Shepherds' Fund. This new fund would be 100% devoted to building up what we have come to see as one of CHNetwork's key pastoral care efforts: In-person CHNetwork retreats and other events for Protestant clergy converts and those who are seriously considering the claims of the Catholic Church. These events are specially designed to be safe places where non-Catholic clergy can confidentially process the myriad implications of becoming Catholic, far from the scrutiny of their congregations.

In-person events are embedded with pastoral support and faith-forming, evangelizing, and discernment-facilitating discussions to help these ministers (and their spouses when possible) gain much-needed clarity and relational connections as they plan their journey into full communion.

We know first-hand that even if pastors have a budget to attend retreats or conferences, no church board would approve their use of that fund to consider becoming Catholic. Addition-

ally, ministers who have recently left clergy positions in preparation to become Catholic are often financially very vulnerable, often barely making ends meet and deeply in debt because their career training prepared them to be clergy, and they have not yet fully recalibrated their skills to be competitive in the conventional job market. Sponsorships to our in-person retreats and other events are therefore a gift that could awaken a sense of hope as they begin to contemplate a future that includes being Catholic – but does not include being clergy.

Thanks to generous gifts to the Shepherds' Fund, eight active and past Protestant clergy representing the Church of Christ, Salvation Army, Assemblies of God, United Methodist, Presbyterian, and Vineyard backgrounds – including two pastors from Brazil, were able to join us for our May retreat in Ohio.

As you will read in the testimonials on page 7, Protestant ministers come to the retreats uncertain and anxious. As they spend time with our staff and other attendees, they make serious progress in their journey to become Catholic. We regularly see non-Catholic ministers come to understand and embrace Catholic teachings they previously rejected. They make the decision to begin attending Mass regularly, join RCIA, find a way to communicate their decision to become Catholic, and even set a date to enter full communion – which is ultimately our primary goal.

As I write this article (which you're reading in November), we are preparing for our Maine retreat in mid-October, which ten clergy and their spouses plan to attend.

We announced our \$100K funding goal for the first year of *The Shepherds' Fund* in November of 2021. Since then, we have received a Foundation Grant of \$10K, a \$25K Vanguard gift from a private donor, and numerous gifts from an additional 20 donors, raising a total of \$58K (\$42K from our goal). Would you join these 22 visionary donors with your own gift of any amount to help these men and women come home?

Use the enclosed envelope to make your donation to *The Shepherds' Fund* or give online at: [CHNetwork.org/shepherd](https://CHNetwork.org/shepherd). ■

**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

**November 7**

**Mallory Smyth\***  
Catholic Revert, Former  
Non-denominational Christian

**November 14**

**Jennifer Fitz\***  
Catholic Revert

**November 21**

**Garrett Cichowitz\***  
Former Presbyterian

**November 28**

**Dr. Stacy Trasancos\***  
Former Baptist and atheist  
(re-air from 10/14/19)

**December 5**

**Norman bin Yazid\***  
(Former Seventh Day Adventist)

\*Schedule is subject to change.

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





***Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Shepherds' Fund, several past and active Protestant clergy on the journey home to the Catholic Church experienced help and guidance at the recent CHNetwork in-person retreat in May of 2022 in Fremont, Ohio.***

### **N.B., a current Pentecostal Pastor**

This year, I attended my first-ever CHNetwork retreat. I'm still an active minister in a non-Catholic Church, but I know that I am on a journey that will likely mean I have to make some life-changing decisions. I grew up Catholic, and I am feeling God's call to return to the Church. The process is very difficult on many levels. Coming to the retreat has made it possible for me to learn more about the faith, to better understand its depth and beauty, and to spend time with others who are on a similar path. I so value the generosity of those who made it possible for me to be there.

### **Bruce, former Church of Christ Pastor**

My first CHNetwork retreat was instrumental in one of the most difficult but important decisions I have ever had to make; the decision to leave pastoral ministry in the Church of Christ and convert to the Catholic Church. There is no doubt that donors to this apostolate are a very big reason why people like me can make this journey. To every donor to the Shepherds' Fund, I simply want to say thank you!

### **Rachel, former Salvation Army Minister**

It has been so challenging for me after 21 years in the Salvation Army (12 of those years as a full-time minister) to know how to leave it all and become Catholic. I have no doubt that attending the CHNetwork retreat was one of the most transformative elements in my own journey into the Church.

I had several barriers when I arrived at the retreat. As we worked through each of the discussion sessions, I felt those barriers being knocked down one-by-one. I came to the retreat seeking God's truth. I knew by the end of the retreat that the fullness of that truth could only be found in the Catholic Church and that God was calling me home.

I want to personally thank all of those who gave to the Shepherds' Fund for making it possible to be there.

### **Matt, former Salvation Army Minister**

I was a minister in the Salvation Army for 12 years. In addition to disturbing doctrinal and moral decisions that were recently made in our denomination, and the fact that the Salvation Army doesn't believe in any Sacraments, I felt the Lord calling me to look more closely at the claims of the Catholic Church. My wife and I discovered the CHNetwork, decided to attend a retreat together, and it was at the retreat that I found many of the answers I was looking for. It was actually at the retreat that I came to accept the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist and where we made our decision to resign our pastorate and enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. I want to thank every donor to the Shepherds' Fund for making it possible for us to receive this gift.

### **Celso, former Presbyterian & Vineyard Pastor**

When I arrived at the CHNetwork retreat, made possible by the generosity of donors to the Shepherds' Fund, I immediately found a group of people just like me; people who had made (or were making) the difficult journey into the Catholic Church. These people instantly became a support to me, prayed with me, and encouraged me to continue to look for God's direction in my life after leaving years of non-Catholic ministry. Because of those who gave toward the Shepherds' Fund, CHNetwork was able to bring me to the U.S. all the way from Brazil and provided me with a way to find the in-person help I needed. Thank you! I could not have been there without you.

### **John, former Church of Christ Preacher**

For more than 35 years I was a preacher in the Church of Christ. It can be a lonely

journey for pastors who, like me, feel the Lord calling them to reconcile with the Catholic Church. When I was invited to the retreat because of a generous donor to the Shepherds' Fund, I found that I was not alone! I met so many people whose stories are very similar to my own. Because of those who gave to the Shepherds' Fund, I have been able to meet new friends, learn more about the Catholic Faith, and discover that I don't have to make this journey by myself. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

### **Eduardo, former Presbyterian Pastor**

I was a Presbyterian Pastor in Brazil for many years. Three years ago, the Lord called me into full communion with the Catholic Church. I found the CHNetwork in my quest for others who had made a similar journey. Early in 2022, because of generous donors to the Shepherds' Fund, I learned that I would be invited to come to the U.S. to attend a retreat, and it was just what I needed. We learned together, had fellowship together, and found that there were others with the same challenges. I thank God for those who found it within their hearts to help me personally and to bring me to this life-changing retreat. Thank you!

### **Craig, former United Methodist Minister**

I grew up Catholic and received the sacraments of initiation as a child, but as a young man, I left the Church and became a Methodist. Recently, the Lord called me to return to the Catholic Church.

This retreat was a turning point in that decision. It was at the retreat in Fremont that I returned to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and worked with Msgr. Steenson and the parish priest in my hometown to come into full communion. I have resigned from my pastorate, and I am trusting the Lord to show me what is next. Without the help of the CHNetwork, and those who helped bring me to this retreat, I'm not sure any of this would have happened as it did. I can't thank you enough. Please keep me in your prayers as I face the difficulties ahead. ■

# Prayer List



## Clergy

- **For Philip, a Pentecostal pastor** who is convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith but is struggling to communicate to his wife what he has learned.
- **For Michael, an Episcopal priest** seeking full communion with the Catholic Church and exploring ordination through the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.
- **For Darshak, a former Protestant pastor** who has entered the Church but has yet to find work that can support his family.
- **For Christopher, a former Mennonite pastor** who was received into the Church with his wife and children and is looking forward to life as a Catholic family.
- **For Greg, a Methodist minister** who feels strongly drawn to the Catholic Church and yet also strongly feels that he was called to be a pastor.
- **For Calvin, a Protestant pastor** convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith and struggling to lead his family to understand what he has come to understand.
- **For Hunter, a Protestant seminary student** who is quickly becoming convinced that Catholicism is true and needs wisdom to know what to do next.
- **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 Stephen, a Methodist pastor** who wants to become Catholic but whose wife has no interest whatsoever, and for wisdom and grace as he attempts to reach her.

- **For James, a Lutheran pastor** who wants to convert but has serious obstacles, including the need for an annulment from a previous marriage.
- **For Jeff, a Presbyterian pastor** who is only beginning to work through what it will mean for him and his family to convert to the Catholic Church.
- **For Jonathon, a pastor** who has been digging into the readings of the Church Fathers, that the Holy Spirit would continue to lead him.
- **For Mark, an Anglican priest** who is drawn to the Church but has some theological issues that are holding him back.

## Laity

- **For Kristen who is on the journey**, that she may receive and accept the truths of the Church through her RCIA program and discard all that is not true from her previous faith journey.
- **For Steven, a Baptist, and his family**, that their private instruction will yield many graces and that all their journeys will be clearly a work of the Holy Spirit.
- **For Thomas, a non-denominational Evangelical**, that God would grant him the grace to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.
- **For Marc, a member of the Church of Christ**, that the Holy Spirit would guide him back home to the Catholic Church.
- **For David, a Baptist** who seeks to unlearn things he was taught about the Church, that he may cling to the Church as the pillar and bulwark of truth given to us by God.
- **For Amanda, a former member of the Church of Christ** who is in RCIA, that she may have clarity and the humility she desires in everything that she learns and that her parents' hearts may soften and be open to the Catholic Faith when she is ready to share her journey with them.
- **For D.B.**, that his wife will find peace in his return to the Catholic Church.
- **For Kevin, an Anglican** who is guiding his family to Mass, to the Communion of Saints, to all that he is discovering, that the Lord would help them to enter the Church together and bestow upon them sufficient grace to follow this journey to the joy of Easter Vigil.
- **For J.K., a Lutheran**, that her journey through RCIA and her husband's annulment process will be filled with peace and culminate in the unity God desires of all couples, all families.
- **For Leslie, a recent convert**, that the Holy Spirit would open the minds and hearts of her husband and daughter so that they might also see the truth and beauty of the Catholic Faith.
- **For Wieslaw in Poland**, that the Lord would lead him to solid answers to his many questions.
- **For Dave in Massachusetts**, that our Lord Jesus would answer his many questions about the Catholic Faith.
- **For Paul in England**, that his search for his roots in the Church would lead him Home.
- **For Gary, a Baptist**, that the Holy Spirit would grant him the grace to overcome the roadblocks that he believes are insurmountable.
- **For Keith, an Anglican**, that as he journeys closer to the Easter sacraments he would keep his eyes fixed on Jesus.
- **For Gless**, that the love and many graces of Jesus would lead him Home to that Catholic Faith of his youth.
- **For a former Mormon in Australia**, that his interest in the Catholic Faith would lead him to our Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
- **For Marko in Oregon**, that the Holy Spirit would touch his heart and mind and grant him a strong conviction of the existence of God.



## IN MEMORIAM *Our prayers and heartfelt gratitude go out to the families of donors who have died in the last year. Please remember them in your prayers.*

- |                                |                          |                          |                          |                       |
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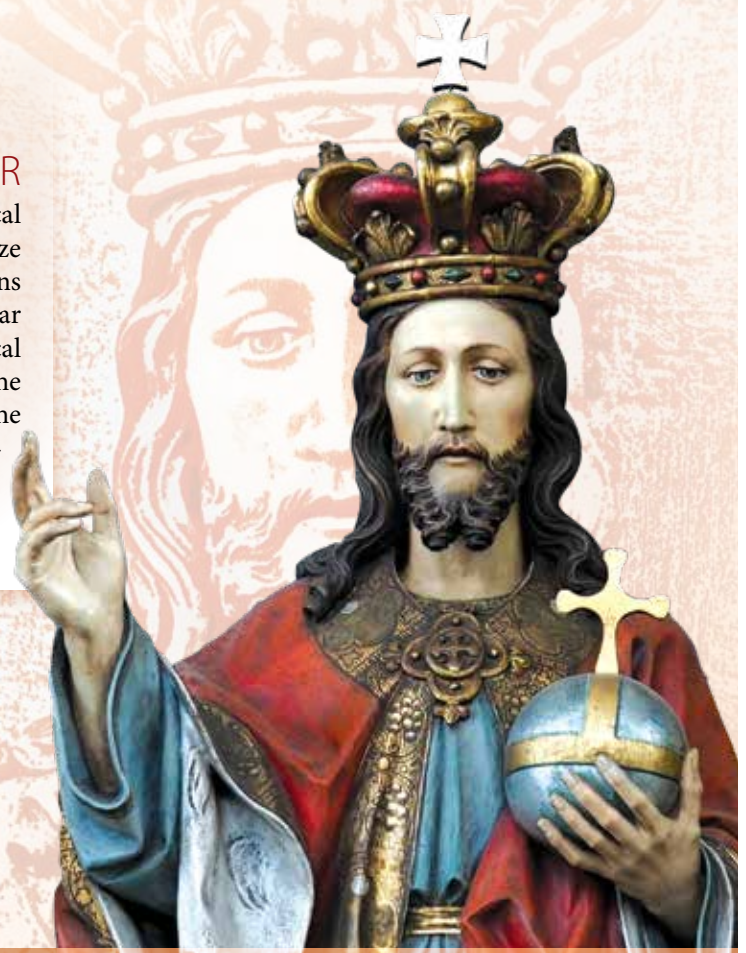
In every issue we include timely prayer concerns from the membership. All members are encouraged to pray at least one hour each month before the Blessed Sacrament for the needs, both general and specific, of the CHNetwork and its members and supporters. We use only first names or general descriptions to preserve privacy.



# Christ the King Sunday

## THE END OF THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

While Christ the King Sunday was added to the liturgical calendar by Pope Pius XI in 1925, all Christians recognize that this title for Jesus is biblical, and all Catholic Christians who follow the life of Christ throughout the liturgical calendar should rightly embrace and defend concluding the liturgical year with Christ being proclaimed King. This feast marks the end of the old liturgical year and ushers in the beginning of the new liturgical year. Advent begins the following Sunday (November 27) and traces the events of Christ's glorious return, the long wait for the Messiah throughout Salvation History, and the Incarnation of the God-Man, Christ Jesus.



# 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](http://chnetwork.org/compass) or

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CHNetwork  
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Please contact Ann at 740.450.1175 or [ann@chnetwork.org](mailto:ann@chnetwork.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

unacceptable and contrary to the way I had lived my life, particularly on those points dealing with sexual dignity and contraception. However, as I continued to research the meaning of baptism, the Catholic Church began to stand apart. I disagreed with the social teachings, but the best explanations of Christianity and the sacraments were written by Catholic thinkers. There was nowhere else to turn as I attempted to answer, "What else is true that I am missing?"

Despite what it meant for my personal life, I had to pursue more Catholic perspectives, because no other source or explanation had such a stable foundation, such a long-standing historical link to Christ. The Catholic resources, theologians, and apologists I found had great answers. They explained Christianity in the past, but also responded to questions of morality and ethics in our world today.

Catholics had the worldview that explained reality with total coherence. More importantly, as I continued to consume Catholic content, one undeniable intuition stood out to me: those Catholics were certain. Catholic individuals who knew their faith had something I craved more than anything in my life: certainty. They had a rock in their life; they were not floating around aimlessly, as I was. They used this platform of moral certitude to reject lies and temptations and avoid self-destruction. They could advance in their lives because they were not still struggling to answer fundamental questions for themselves.

Once I got beyond the teachings I didn't like, I could avail myself of the fullness and truth of the Catholic Church. For example, instead of viewing the teaching on artificial contraception as an impediment to my life, I came to understand that the moral teachings of the Church are rooted in recognizing God as Creator so that we can step into our own human dignity as co-creators of life. I also came to appreciate the authority of the Church. God had invested His own authority in the organization.

In this way, I too became certain. Jesus Christ was the incarnation of God and established a Church on the Apostle St. Peter to be His organization in Creation. The Protestant view was insufficient. God offered a covenant that led to salvation and the hope of sainthood. He created an organization on earth to be the keepers and administrators of His covenant. I became certain that this is the only way the world makes sense, and I decided to join the Catholic Church through RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), the Church's course for people to become Catholic Christians. The strange thing about my faith journey is that the RCIA director was the first Catholic person I had ever spoken to in person. Everything I had learned up to that point was from online resources. I had never actually interacted with a Catholic face-to-face until I met him.

The step of going through RCIA was not the end of my journey, by any means. While my mind was decided on Christ, my daily life clung to the darkness of my old ways. In three areas of my life, I was struggling with wrenching challenges. My decision to join the Church pushed my romantic life into a tailspin. My friendships dwindled as I fought to distance myself from my old habits and the people that shared my former lifestyle. Not only that, but I was immersed in building a startup company that was failing. But I needed a change, I needed *this* change, to live by truth and not by the darkness. So I did what I had to do.

In those days, my bank balance reached a low of \$1,032.89. This was literally all the money I had, with no savings or retirement. My monthly rent at the time was \$2,150, so what I had could not even pay the rent. I had no friends. My old friends from my days of partying and debauchery were a path backwards to what I was trying to leave. The woman that I was living with had moved out, taking all of her furniture. My desire to join the Church and change my life was not something she could be a part of. I remember waking up on a mattress in the middle of the floor of my expensive apartment, with all the fur-

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The Coming Home  
Network International

*The Coming Home Network was established to help non-Catholic Christians, clergy and laity, to discover the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and to make the journey home.*



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

niture removed, without a stable income and thinking, “This is the worst day of my life.” Yet I knew baptism was ahead of me, and I told God: “On your worst day, you chose me; on my worst day, I will choose you.”

### Seek First the Kingdom of God

Moving forward from that low point, I gave everything I could to the Catholic Church and God. Through the Church, I made some very dear friends, and God has utterly transformed everything about my life. I have now gone without partying, alcohol, or drugs for years. I am engaged to a spectacular Catholic woman who is also a convert to the Church, with her own remarkable conversion story. I have since started and sold a technology startup, called Pantenix, that used artificial intelligence to automate manual data entry processes in financial firms. The business built upon the knowledge I had gained in this sector over many years. In this way, I have found financial freedom. God did all these things in my life, and I am overjoyed and fulfilled.

St. Teresa of Avila writes in *Interior Castle* that love consists of “a fervent determination to strive to please God in all things” while seeking “the increase of the glory and honor of His Son and for the growth of the Catholic Church” (Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, Riverhead Books, 2004, 91). I hope my life and example can provide a way for others to join the Church and encounter the Sacraments.

I used to have many doubts. I used to be full of confusion. What was true? Was objective truth real?

The first thought I can offer to those facing this kind of existential crisis is the importance of framing the question in the right way. Coming from an engineering mindset, I was fortunate to be able to build from the ground up and ask the question the right way for me: “What else is true that I am missing?”

I did have some hangups on the Church’s social teaching. I especially had to go through the process of engaging that question, “What else is true that I am missing,” regarding Church teaching on morality. As a libertarian I had felt that morality was not something that mattered, so I left moral dilemmas to private decision. As I learned more about the faith and authority of the Church, I realized that I felt relieved that I no longer had to make these decisions for myself.

### Following the Path to Truth

A great place for anyone to begin his spiritual journey is to ask: “What claim does the Catholic Church make about itself?”

I encourage anyone outside the Church to investigate this claim first of all. Did God establish the Catholic Church on St. Peter as His organization on earth? Did He promise clearly that the gates of hell will not prevail against it? Come to your journey on first principles, and you will see the truth of our faith. Once these questions are settled, doctrine and dogma will make sense.

The second thought I can offer is on the irrationality of atheism. Today, atheism is presented as a science-friendly position that is perfectly rational. This is not really the case. As St.

Thomas Aquinas details, there must be a first and final cause of existence. That is, if there is energy and thermodynamic differential in this universe, the energy must have come from some source. This source started the universe when it was, at first, in a nonexistent, resting state. Atheism is a convenient way to gloss over reality. If we exist, our existence must have come from some source.

The third thought I can offer is on the costs of conversion. I recognize there are costs to change your life in terms of relationships or new habits to form. I have paid a price for joining the Church. My family does not accept my faith.

There are many friendships I had that are now feeble. There are almost no television shows that I can watch, because the world is too profane. It is a life of sacrifice. No matter what we “understand” about Christianity and the truth, our flesh and our sensitivities will not want to sacrifice pleasure or go against our momentum and will. But every one of the sacrifices we make for our faith and relationship with God is worth it. He is the source of eternal, unconditional love.

At the very least, explore the historicity of Christ and the Bible. Try to convince your heart through reading the Gospel of John about the divinity of Christ and the gift of the New Covenant. Join me. Follow after me as I follow Him.

What else is true that I am missing? Nothing. The Catholic faith is the fullness of the truth. Now, I am missing nothing. ■



KAILASH DURAISWAMI joined the Catholic Church as an adult after discovering the meaning of truth. He was the founder of a technology startup in Silicon Valley, Pantenix, which was acquired by Orion Advisor Solutions in 2021.

Continue the **JOURNEY**

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



Kailash & Lily Engagement†

† In June 2022, Kailash Duraiswami and Lily Sin became engaged. Lily converted to the Catholic Faith prior to meeting Kailash. She, too, went through RCIA at the Shrine of St. Jude. They met after they had both converted and later realized that they had also both entered the Church at the same parish. The couple will be married this month at the St. Jude Shrine in San Francisco.



**The Coming Home Network International**

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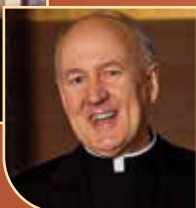


# HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

**APRIL 21 – MAY 2, 2023**



Ken Hensley



Msgr. Jeffrey Steenson

Join us on a journey through the Holy Land! Our pilgrimage will begin on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in Tel Aviv. We will visit the ancient cities of Joppa and Caesarea, where St. Paul was imprisoned, and the Cave of Elijah on Mt. Carmel. From there we will travel to Nazareth and Cana and then wind our way to the Mt. of Beatitudes and Tabgha, where Jesus multiplied the loaves and the fishes. We will celebrate Mass along the way and explore the shores of the Sea of Galilee. We will also learn about the roots of our Faith, as we encounter sites associated with Saul, Joshua, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The latter half of our journey will be spent in Jerusalem, spending time walking in Our Lord's footsteps, from the Church of the Nativity to the Via Dolorosa.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** please contact Ken Hensley at [kenh@chnetwork.org](mailto:kenh@chnetwork.org) or visit our website: <https://chnetwork.org/pilgrimage>