



March 2023 CHNewsletter

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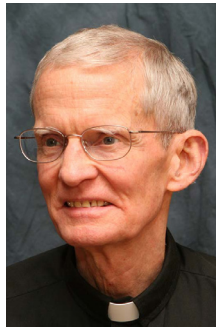
THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

Journeys Home

FOLLOWING CHRIST ACROSS THE TIBER

By W.E. Knickerbocker, Jr.

"What can I do but trust God?" I said that aloud when I was 10 years old, as I closed the Bible I was reading. What happened to me that night was a defining experience in my life.



The Trunk of an Old Tree

My sister and I grew up in Houston, Texas. Our parents were nominal Methodists. My Grandfather Knickerbocker had been a Methodist minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church (South). He died before I was born, but family

members spoke of him with great respect.

I remember my Grandmother Knickerbocker, who arranged for one of my Grandfather's brothers, also a Methodist minister, to come to Houston to baptize my sister and me. The baptism took place in the living room of our home, with several family members present. I was five years old, and I remember it well.

My earliest memories of a church experience were of St. Luke Methodist Church, a new congregation that was meeting in Lamar High School. When I was ten, I went through a Membership Training Class and was given a Bible at the conclusion of the class. The only class I remember was conducted by the pastor. In that class he drew the trunk of a tree on the blackboard and said it represented the Catholic Church. He drew branches on the tree and said they

represented various Protestant denominations. This impressed on me the fact that the Catholic Church was the original and largest Church.

We seldom attended Sunday worship services. My father would take my sister and me to Sunday school, leaving us at the door and picking us up when Sunday school was over.

While my father was not an active Methodist, there are two things he had internalized from his Methodist family background. One was a strict morality. I remember him saying a number of times, "There is no degree to honesty." The other was a love of family. Over the course of his life, he took care financially of his father and mother, provided some financial help and much personal attention to one of his brothers and his wife and one of his sisters and her husband. My Grandmother Knickerbocker died when I was 16. The last two years of her life, she was in a nursing home, and my father visited her every day on the way home from work. This emphasis on family has had a profound effect on me.

From an early age, I asked "why" questions. For example, "Why does God allow people to suffer from natural disasters?" My parents would respond by saying, "You're too young to be thinking about those things." I now realize that my questions made

...Journeys Home Continued...

them uncomfortable. But I still wanted answers to important questions.

Although we were not active Methodists, when I was lying in bed at night, I would sometimes think about my Grandfather Knickerbocker. I would say to myself, “A man would need to be very sure about some things before he became a minister.”

When I was in the fifth grade, that defining experience happened to me and is a vivid memory to this day. I was a shy, introverted boy and was picked on from time to time by other boys. On this particular occasion, I was having relationship problems at school. I decided to begin reading the Bible that had been given to me at the end of the Membership Training Class. I read it in bed at night and began with the Gospel of Matthew. The night when I closed the Bible and said, “What can I do but trust God?” a powerful Presence swooped down, and I experienced a peace I had never known. Then the Presence began to dissipate. Because my parents had never answered my “why” questions, and because we were only sporadically attending Sunday worship services, I did not talk about this experience. In the Membership Training Class, we had never spoken of being “born again” or of a personal experience of the Holy Spirit or of a personal relationship with Jesus. However, I knew that someday I would need to know more.

I believe that the grace of my Baptism, the gift of the Bible, and the prayers of Grandmother and Grandfather Knickerbocker were behind this experience. But it was some years before I reflected on this. I now believe that the experience of the Presence leaving me was God calling me to follow Him into the future.

Because I thought I had been a disappointment to my dad during my junior high and high school years, when I went to college, I was determined to change that. My dad had been an athlete and a good student, and I was neither. Consequently, when I went to Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, I joined a fraternity, played on the soccer team, and learned how to box. By my junior year, I realized I had not been very successful in changing my life, and I suffered a period of

depression. I talked with the Methodist minister in Lexington and the minister at St. Luke’s in Houston. What they said did not resonate with me.

I majored in Economics because my father was an investment banker and wanted me to go into business with him. Because I was on the BA track and not the BS, I was able to take three Bible courses, two semesters of philosophy, six history courses, and a course in the classics. In retrospect, that was my real education. What I learned in philosophy about the relationship of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics has influenced me the rest of my life.

While at W&L, I was in ROTC, and the summer after my junior year, I went to summer camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky. This was a good experience for me, because I met guys who were from a variety of backgrounds, and I could be myself, free of family expectations.

When I graduated in 1960, I received a BA in Economics and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the US Army. My orders specified that I would be on active duty two years, ready reserve three years, and standby reserve one year. I was assigned to the Air Defense Artillery and required to report to Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, on September 28, 1960. This assignment proved to be life changing. While I was there, I made a commitment to Jesus as my Lord and Savior and met the girl who would become my wife.

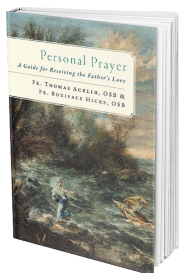
My father’s secretary and her husband knew a couple in El Paso who had a daughter attending Texas Western College. They told their friends about me and suggested I call their daughter and ask her out. I put off doing this until February 1961, calling her on a Saturday. She was very polite but said she had a boyfriend. However, she invited me to come to Sunday school and the worship service with them the next morning.

They picked me up at my Bachelor Officer’s Quarters (BOQ) and took me to Trinity Methodist Church. The class we attended was for college students and other young adults. I had just celebrated my 22nd birthday, and I was with about 40 people my age. A young couple taught the class, and they had a strong

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

Fr. Thomas Acklin, OSB & Fr. Boniface Hicks, OSB

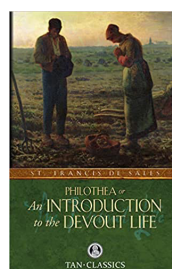
Personal Prayer: A Guide for Receiving the Father's Love brings the depth of human experience together with the Catholic tradition of prayer to present the path to an intimate and vulnerable relationship with God. #3258 • \$15.84



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE

St. Francis De Sales

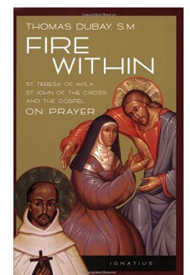
An Introduction to the Devout Life is a book to be read with pencil in hand. It is a book to be read again and again. It is a book to make your guide for the rest of your life. #2572 • \$14.95



FIRE WITHIN: ST. TERESA OF AVILA & ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Fr. Thomas Dubay, S.M.

Fire Within is the fruit of Fr. Dubay's many years of study and experience in spiritual direction. In it he synthesizes the teachings on prayer of the two great doctors of the Church on prayer—St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila—and the teaching of Sacred Scripture. #3003 • \$19.95



personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The class was like no other I had attended. All the students were committed followers of Jesus. In the worship service, the pastor unapologetically preached Jesus Christ. After the service, three guys invited me out to lunch and showed me around El Paso. When they took me to my BOQ, they invited me to come to the evening service.

My life would be entirely different if I had not gone to that service. The college class formed the choir, and they led us in singing several hymns. As I sat in the congregation, I noticed the choir members I had met that morning. But I also noticed a girl I had not previously met. She was wearing a blue sweater and a blue plaid skirt, had auburn hair, and even at that distance I could tell that she had beautiful eyes.

After the service, several college students invited me to join them at an after-church gathering called an “afterglow,” a social time for members of the college class, so I followed them to a home in the suburbs. When I walked in the door, one of the guys I had met that morning said, “Knick, there is somebody I want you to meet.” I turned to my right, and there was the girl in the blue sweater and plaid skirt who had such beautiful eyes. He said, “Knick, this is Sandie Hargraves.” As I write this, we have been married 60 years.

Getting to Know Christ

Meeting Sandie made me seriously consider my commitment to Jesus Christ. I began to get answers to some of my questions. Sandie helped me understand what the Lord was doing in my life, and the Sunday school class at Trinity became my community. Also, Sandie’s family members were committed Methodist Christians, and I saw what it was like to be part of a Christian family.

My experience of God when I was ten had been theocentric; this second experience was Christocentric. The difference was that, with Sandie’s help, I understood who I was experiencing, and I became a committed follower of Jesus Christ. One evening, as I was driving to pick up Sandie, the Lord spoke to me in the words of St. Paul: “Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7). I realized Jesus was saving me from the bad seeds I had sown and helping me to sow good seeds. Later, I understood He was making me a new person in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). I should say it has not been a smooth ride. My Old Adam still tried to manage my life, and I thank the Lord Jesus for being patient and faithful to me.

Sandie and I dated from February until September 1961, when I was deployed with my unit to Okinawa. I left my car with Sandie, and the night I boarded the troop train for San Diego, I gave her an engagement ring. We agreed we would write every day and marry when I returned the following September. But on the ship to Okinawa, I wrote to ask her to marry me in January at the end of her junior year in college! She said Yes,

and I returned to El Paso on leave for our wedding on January 28, 1962. Sandie then accompanied me to Okinawa, where we spent the first months of our married life.

Serving Christ

As we prayed together about what we would do after I was released from active duty, we concluded that I had a vocation to the ordained ministry in The Methodist Church. Consequently, I applied to several Methodist seminaries and was in contact with the Board of Ministry of the New Mexico Conference (like a diocese), which included El Paso and a large part of west Texas.

In September 1962, I was released from active duty and began to study at the Candler School of Theology of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. We spent three years there, and I graduated in June 1965 with a Bachelor of Divinity degree, majoring in Biblical Theology.

We returned to El Paso. I was ordained a Methodist minister in the New Mexico Conference and was appointed Methodist Campus Minister at Texas Western College. My primary duty was teaching in the Texas Bible Chair program that allowed churches to offer elective courses for credit in state colleges and universities. I taught both Old and New Testament courses and Comparative Religion. In the process, my vocation became more specific, and Sandie and I were convinced that the Lord was calling me to earn a PhD and teach religion in an undergraduate school.

The most important event in our lives while we were in El Paso was the birth of our son, Jon. He has been a delight for us and is now married with two children.

In September 1968, we returned to Emory University, and I began study for a PhD degree in Church History. I had decided not to study for a degree in Biblical Theology, because I had become disenchanted with the historical-critical (“higher criticism”) approach to Scripture. In retrospect, I realize that higher criticism allows its epistemology to determine its metaphysics, whereas metaphysics should determine epistemology. In other words, the nature of that which is known is the primary determinant of the way we know that which is known. This means, as St. Augustine and St. Anselm teach, that we have faith in order that we may understand. Higher criticism, conversely, seeks to understand Scripture without faith that God reveals Himself in Scripture and supremely in Jesus Christ.

I had originally applied to doctoral programs in Systematic Theology, thinking this would prepare me to teach religion and philosophy in an undergraduate school. One of the systematic theology professors recommended that I request my application be transferred either to New Testament or Church

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that we have faith in
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understand.”

A Note from Jon Marc



Dear Friends of the CHNetwork,

I hope and pray that this Lent—this season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—has been a fruitful one thus far. I pray that you feel closer to God now through your efforts to detach from material things and that you are experiencing a growing anticipation of celebration of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection this Easter. I pray that those members of CHNetwork who are in RCIA learning about the Catholic Church and preparing to receive the sacraments for the first time are having a wonderful experience of growth in prayer and fellowship.

I hope and pray for all these things fully realizing that Lent—like any season—may or may not turn out the way we hoped and imagined it would! Your best laid plans for fully embracing Lenten prayer and penance may have been frustrated, forgotten, picked up, and dropped again in the messiness of daily life. You may feel like Lent is nearly over and yet you are no more ready for Holy Week and the Easter celebration than you were at the beginning of the year—indeed you may feel like you have only increased in busyness, attachment and anxiety. Those members of CHN on the journey to the Catholic Church in RCIA or otherwise, may be a couple months closer to entering full communion, but may nevertheless be facing loneliness, discouragement, and spiritual dryness—just at a time when they would have expected themselves to be growing in fellowship, excitement, and spiritual consolation.

My brother, Fr. Peter Grodi, was speaking to a men's group recently and sharing with them an overview of the Liturgy of the Hours—the ancient prayer of the Church which centers around the recitation of and meditation on the Psalms. He remarked that on any given day one might be reading one of the “happy” Psalms or one of the “sad” ones, and that these might strike a discordant emotional note with what you yourself were experiencing that day. For example, you might open your Bible or Breviary to Psalm 92—“For thou, O LORD, hast made me glad by thy work; at the works of thy hands I sing for joy.” (Psalm 92:4)—precisely on the day when you feel that everything is going wrong. On the other hand, sometimes you're actually feeling quite chipper and cheerful, and then Psalm 88 pops up:

Afflicted and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer thy terrors; I am helpless.
Thy wrath has swept over me;
thy dread assaults destroy me.

They surround me like a flood all day long;
they close in upon me together.
Thou hast caused lover and friend to shun me;
my companions are in darkness.
(Psalm 88:14-18)

The secret to praying the Psalms, as Fr. Peter explained, was to recognize and embrace this reality: at every moment, there are other Christians in the world who are discouraged, isolated, lonely, suffering—asking, with the Psalmist: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1). On this and every day, you are praying for and in union with them.

When you are in a time of consolation, you must recognize that you are carrying, in prayer and sacrifices, those Christians who are desolate. Likewise when you yourself are desolate, you are being carried by the prayers and sacrifices of others—others you may never know or be able to thank this side of Heaven. Hence, the prayers and readings of the Liturgical cycle of the Church always give us a new opportunity to go outside of ourselves and embrace the Body of Christ, the Church, especially when we do so from our poverty of spirit.

And so once again I hope and pray that you are having a fruitful Lenten season—but let us not forget where the true fruit comes from. Even and especially if things are going contrary to how you expected—if this time has yielded discouragement and desolation when you had counted on growing confidence and peace—remember that you are not alone; you have a great cloud of witnesses praying for you. Remember also, that in a difficult time in your journey, you are closer than ever to the heart of Christ. You are walking with Him and you can freely embrace the cross with Him. You can choose to turn any and every difficulty into an offering of faith, hope, and love of Christ and His suffering Body.

This is, of course, the real secret to Lent and indeed to every season of our Christian life: we are to take captive and turn everything—every thought, every experience, every blessing, every difficulty—into an offering of love for Christ and for His Body, the Church (II Cor. 10:5). Whatever stage of the journey you happen to be on and however this season of Lent has gone so far, I hope and pray that this month's CHNewsletter is a source of consolation and inspiration to you as you continue the journey toward Easter.

In Christ,
JonMarc Grodi

Overheard

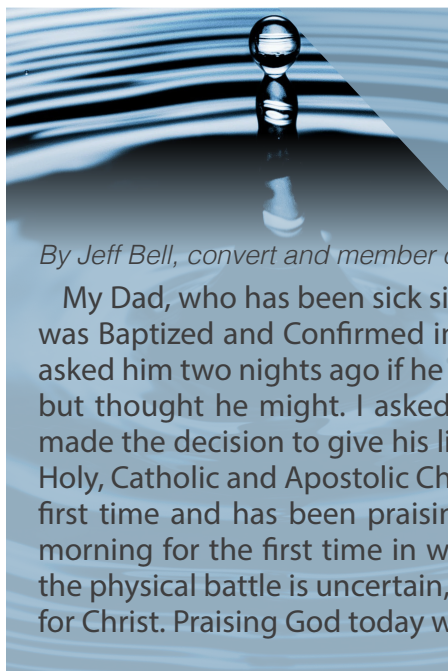
AROUND THE CHN WATERCOOLER

Denise Bossert, CHN Pastoral Care & Publications Coordinator **texted Brother Rex** after the staff morning prayer. "It is a messy business—this getting to know the Christ-in-me. It yields beauty, but the process is hard. I remember when I was choking on food and my husband did the Heimlich maneuver on me. The process of dying (for me, being deprived of oxygen) was quite terrible, a journey through the throes of gasping and grasping for air that would not come—and then it was over. Something shifted, and I could breathe. I think dying to self and becoming like Christ must be a submission to the throes of dying and rising."

In the morning's meeting, Seth, Web & New Media Developer, quoted the verse from Revelation 3:16 about being lukewarm before adding that trying to live for both worlds is a sure way to be lukewarm, and yet, it is difficult to be all-in for Christ. **Kenny, Director of Development, pointed out** that faith will cost us, and it will cost those we encounter, those who find our very life-in-Christ to be at odds with their life choices.

Let us "Die and rise 10 x 10,000 times...if that's what it takes." **Brother Rex pondered**, but we were all thinking it.

JonMarc, executive director at CHNetwork, reminded us that the ultimate question is, "Who am I, really?" Am I motivated merely by fear or desire, because those things change. We draw closer to the real—to Christ—when we temper a desire or a fear in order to be consistent and motivated by Christ, and Christ alone. Then, we will be the leavening. We will be salt. We will be the agent of change that is good, beautiful, true, lovely, and holy. That is to say, we will become "little Christs."



RIPPLE EFFECT

By Jeff Bell, convert and member of the CHNetwork Online Community

My Dad, who has been sick since April and is currently hospitalized, was Baptized and Confirmed into the Catholic Church last evening. I asked him two nights ago if he wanted to be Baptized. He wasn't sure but thought he might. I asked our priest to come visit him, and he made the decision to give his life to our Lord and come into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. He received the Eucharist for the first time and has been praising God ever since. He ate a meal this morning for the first time in weeks. We have a long road ahead and the physical battle is uncertain, but the spiritual battle has won a soul for Christ. Praising God today with all my soul!!!



ARE YOU GOING
TO BE RECEIVED
INTO MOTHER
CHURCH THIS
EASTER VIGIL
OR DURING THE
EASTER SEASON?

We would like to rejoice
with and pray for you. Email
Denise@CHNetwork.org to
share the good news.

Tax letters for 2022
contributions will be e-mailed
to donors who have email
addresses on file. If you would
like your tax letter sent by
postal mail, please contact:

Ann Moore
Ann@chnetwork.org
740.450.1175 x101

AN INTERVIEW WITH KENNY BURCHARD

CHNetwork's DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



Last year we introduced Kenny Burchard, a former Pentecostal pastor who came home to the Church in 2019. In late 2021, Kenny joined us as The Coming Home Network's first-ever Director of Development, and we asked him to provide some vision and perspective regarding our fundraising goals for 2022. We thought it would be great to hear from him again, to check in, and to see what is on the horizon for 2023 and beyond.

Q: So, year one for you in this new role is done. How did it go?

Kenny: In two words, I'd say challenging and encouraging. What I mean is that every charity out there was challenged in 2022 because it's just hard for people to feel like it's safe to give away money in an economy like this. But I add the word encouraging to what CHNetwork experienced in 2022 because, despite the challenges and the impulse to hold back, our donors came through for us. Glory to God, and thanks to our donors, we were able to raise 100% of our budget for the year, receiving all that we needed to carry out our important work!

Q: What were some of the high points as you think of what our donors accomplished in 2022?

Kenny: Four high points stand out to me. First, as I already said, 100% of our revenue goal for 2022 was met, and that is 100% thanks to our amazing donors. It's their win!

Second, last year we received over \$60,000 in Shepherds' Fund donations helping us to provide in-person pastoral care to non-Catholic ministers and their wives at our spring and fall retreats. The response was extremely positive and encouraging, and this year we are committed to continuing to do even more to help pastors on their journeys to the Catholic Church. I will share more about how this relates to our fundraising goals in a moment.

Third, we received a very generous response from a handful of donors to some equipment needs that we had in our television studio this year. Our donors helped us to raise \$15,000 toward new camera equipment for the CHN studio in which we film—among other things—EWTN's *The Journey Home* Program. It was the first time we had ever put a need like that out there, and we were incredibly pleased and humbled to see the response.

And fourth, we re-branded our monthly giving program now known as Compass in 2022. I'm pleased to say that we ended the year with the most monthly donors we have ever had in our history; 512! These are people who give automatically at one of four levels each month (\$10, \$25, \$50, or even \$100). This group of 512 people raised around 10% of our entire budget for the year.

Q: What does the CHNetwork hope to accomplish in 2023, and how can donors participate?

Kenny: I'd say there are two big things at the top of my priority list this year. The first one isn't even a fundraising goal. Rather, it's a relationship goal. Last year I had the honor of getting to know dozens of our donors in a more personal way. I was able to talk with many of them and express my own appreciation as a former pastor for the fact that they had made sure this apostolate was there for me and my family when we needed it. Through conversations with donors, we discovered the ways they were inspired to partner with CHN to expand our impact and mission. My hope this year is to build on that and to connect with our donors even more personally than in 2022.

But to the question of raising funds, I'd like to see us raise around \$350,000 (or more!) in 2023 for what has always been the core of CHN's ministry: helping pastors on their journey into the Catholic Church. As a former pastor myself, helped to come home to the Church by CHNetwork, I see this element of what we do as the tip of the spear. This program enables us to provide pastoral-care case managers who handle the many inquiries we receive from non-Catholic clergy every year, and the heavy counseling load that comes with that. In addition to our retreats and in-person events, we also provide all our resources (books, media, and other theological and apologetics resources) to these dear people at no cost to them whenever necessary. But these things aren't free. We are also working harder than ever to produce an ever-growing library of new media on our digital channels that are specifically targeted at reaching non-Catholic clergy, and there is a significant production cost behind this initiative. Finally, we want to continue to provide coaching and training resources for those non-Catholic ministers who will need to seek out other employment since most will never return to full-time vocational ministry if they convert.

Q: How can our donors connect with you about these and the other things you're working on?

Kenny: You asked me this last year, and joyfully, as soon as we put my information in the newsletter—my phone began to ring! Donors can call my personal cell phone at (757) 297-3761, or email me at kenny@chnetwork.org. I'll be on the lookout for one or two vanguard donors who may be willing to help with the first 20%-25% of our total program goal (around \$70K-\$87.5K) for 2023, and several others who can give gifts of \$20K and even \$10K. The remainder would, I hope, be funded by many gifts of \$1,000 or less this year. The fact is, there are many other pastors like myself out there. When they contact us, we want to be there for them. Our donors make that more than a possibility. They make it a reality! ■

Joyful Journey Updates

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 CHNetwork in-person retreats in 2022. Retreats in 2023 are scheduled for Ohio and Georgia.

From Caitlin Mason

I picked my sponsor! She's been meeting with me, and we have been discussing issues that I still have a hard time with. I'll be visiting the Latin Mass with her soon, and she even offered to let me join her family rosary.

An Update From Jason Fong

I'm still slated for a conversion date this April, but if anything changes with my life situation, it may even be sooner. As of tomorrow evening, I have scheduled an informal confession with my parish priest and will be confessing all of my sins.

Ongoing Journey of John Blackburn

It seems as though I'm only now beginning to learn what prayer is for myself. Many witnesses have testified to me of speaking to God as though a friend, but as often as I've longed to know this myself, the very experience has evaded me. It still evades me, but it seems as though at last I am coming upon a new horizon. I see a tunnel or a whirl of light before me leading on to Heaven, and though it is clear to me that I do not yet behold Him face to face, the lights I see ever more clearly

are, for me, hope of full sunshine, as I wade beneath the moonlight, the Star of the Sea, in a wonderful Night, given to me as a Love more beautiful to me than the Truth my heart so much yearns to know but as yet cannot bear.

A Word From Connie Regener

I was a Protestant pastor who came into the Church five years ago. This year I am doing Father Mike's *Catechism in a Year*. I have applied to membership in the secular institute *Voluntas Dei* so I can live a more consecrated life. As a Catholic board-certified chaplain, I respond to disasters all over the country to provide disaster spiritual care with the Red Cross. I gave my testimony on the radio program *Kresta in the Afternoon*. With my parish choir I have sung at the Vatican and toured the Holy Land. So many privileges in my life since conversion.

I am so thankful to the CHN for their support...and for the retreat I attended. And for the first saint medal I received. How gracious God is to let me find him. I now am a CHN monthly contributor. I want more people to find this path to fullness of life.

Update From Eduardo Hoover

My journey began in 1992...[before that] I lived basically as an agnostic. It's still a journey though I'm at home in the Catholic Church now. [Many things should have shaken] my faith... Sure, I have put my hand to the plow...I haven't gone back but pressed forward because a faith that goes unchallenged is but a small faith. I don't dwell on what I'm capable of enduring for my love for Jesus in my faith, but I have nothing that has not been given me outside of His blessing...it is all His.

From Karol Hellmann

I am so grateful that God answered my prayer for a spiritual director. She is guiding me through the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises into the great abyss that I had been longing for. Praise be to God for his mercy and abundance.

Update From David Supina

I am slowly attempting to make a transition towards greater devotion to God, to Mary, and to the Mass (and Divine Liturgy). My weakness is still probably that I don't operate as part of the community, that I am reluctant to do things like get to know the priest (I know they are busy, and I feel as though I shouldn't bother them except when I really need them), but my heart is slowly being softened, and I am gradually starting to settle in as a Catholic. The path of sanctity is difficult, but it is not complex. I hope to remain on that path. Any prayers some of you may offer to that end would be appreciated. ■

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

Monday, March 6

Fr. Michael Rennier

Former Pentecostal & Anglican

Monday, March 13

Charlie Johnston

Former Presbyterian

Monday, March 20

Lisa Cooper

Former Word of Faith

Monday, March 27

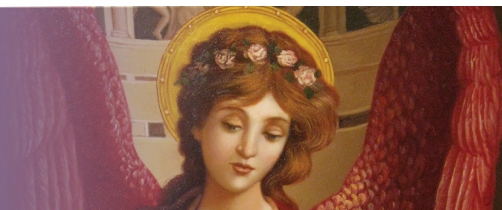
Fr. Stephen Hilgendorf

Former Anglican Priest

**Schedule is subject to change.*

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

Prayer List



Clergy

■ **For Walter, a former Assemblies of God pastor** who with his wife was welcomed into full communion with the Church last Easter Vigil and who is developing a parish ministry to serve families who have dependents with intellectual disabilities.

■ **For Michael, an Anglican priest** who after many years of prayer and contemplation has finally made the decision to enter the Catholic Church.

■ **For Grant, a non-denominational minister** on a journey toward the Church but struggling with a few of the Church's teachings, in particular the Marian dogmas, as well as the question of how he will support his family if he leaves the ministry to become Catholic.

■ **For Jay, a non-denominational pastor** with a wife and four children who was raised Catholic and now feels drawn back to the Church and is meeting regularly with a Catholic priest, that the Lord will lead him home.

■ **For Steve, a pastor in the Reformed Church in America** who feels strongly drawn toward the Catholic Church, that the Holy Spirit will open his wife's heart to the things he has tried, unsuccessfully so far, to share.

■ **For John, a Baptist pastor** who has been attracted to Catholicism for some time but is struggling a great deal with some of the things he sees happening in the Church.

■ **For Darshak, who resigned his Protestant pastorate** in 2020, found a new job, and has entered the Church but is struggling a great deal with a very anti-Catholic extended family and with earning enough money to support his family.

■ **For Gary, a Baptist pastor** who with his wife has made the decision to become Catholic and is working to leave his church in good hands, for wisdom and courage.

■ **For Dylan, a student at a Protestant seminary** whose eyes have been opened to the errors in his historical tradition and is having a hard time finding people to discuss his ideas without defensiveness.

■ **For Hunter, a Protestant seminary student** who is quickly becoming convinced that Catholicism is true, that the Lord will help him to navigate his next steps.

■ **For Greg, a Methodist minister** who feels strongly drawn to the Catholic Church and yet also feels strongly drawn to be a pastor.

■ **For Ken, a Baptist pastor** who is drawn to the Church and seeking wisdom and guidance on how best to proceed in an environment where very few will understand what he is coming to believe.

Laity

■ **For Marc, an Anglican** in the United Kingdom, that the Lord would grant him courage, wisdom, and peace for his family.

■ **For Frank**, who wishes to learn to navigate the division in Christianity and learn more about the steps to enter the Catholic Church.

■ **For Nenad, an Anglican** in Serbia, that our Lord would grant him grace and guidance to come into full communion with the Catholic Church.

■ **For William** in California, that the Holy Spirit would guide him Home to the Catholic faith in which he was baptized.

■ **For James, a Missouri Synod Lutheran** in Ohio, that God would stoke the flames of faith in his heart and guide him to his Eucharistic Banquet.

■ **For Jacob**, that our Lord Jesus would soften his father's heart, clearing an obstacle to Jacob's journey to the Church.

■ **For David**, a convert in Virginia who drifted from the Church, that the Holy Spirit would guide him back Home.

■ **For Charles an Episcopalian**, that the Lord would use his questions and concerns to draw him into the ancient, apostolic Catholic Church.

■ **For Robert, a Baptist** in California, that our Lord Jesus would grant his desire for a push that will motivate him to become a Catholic.

■ **For David, a Baptist**, that dipping his toes into the life of the Church, his time at Mass, and his journey through RCIA will prepare him for receiving the sacraments on Pentecost Sunday.

■ **For M.C. and E.C.** who were received into the Church with their daughter, that their interest in Marian theology would be met with many graces and the tender care of *this Mother* who always hears and answers the questions of her children.

■ **For N.H.**, a widow who will be entering the Church at Easter Vigil, that her sorrow/frustration when friends/family respond negatively when they hear of her conversion might be replaced with grace & understanding. Also, may she have clarity regarding her vocational direction. Although she is not yet Catholic, may her unquenchable thirst be filled as she draws closer to the Sacraments.



By the solemn forty days of Lent, the Church unites herself each year to Jesus in the desert. During His temptation, He reveals His Messianic way...

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH #540



My Spouse speaks not a word, and I say nothing save that I love Him more than myself; and in the depths of my heart, I know this is true, for I am more His than mine. I cannot see that we are advancing toward our journey's goal since we travel by a subterranean way; and yet, without knowing how, it seems to me that we are nearing the summit of the Mountain."

THÉRÈSE DE LISIEUX

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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.

† ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD † MARCH 25

CHRIST'S MARY NATURE

by Fr. "Knick" Knickerbocker

Through Mary, human nature you assumed,
And in that coming did not make it less;
On your prerogative did not presume,
But asked if you could come to be our guest.
When that pure Virgin Maid from Galilee
Received your own permission to respond,
Renewed our human nature's dignity—
By her consent restored with you our bond.
With Mary's restoration were enlarged
Our first created souls to Eden size
As you took human nature, long submerged,
And made it fully human and alive.
May we together say with Mary, "Yes,"
As you, through her, each one of us now bless.

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NEW EDEN – PROCLAIMING TRUTH!

History. I had already ruled out Biblical studies, so I asked that my application be transferred to Church History, even though I did not think this would be the best preparation for teaching religion in an undergraduate school. In retrospect, Sandie and I can see the Lord moving in this, because studying Church History and Historical Theology were good preparation for becoming Catholic.

In September 1971, our daughter, Amy, was born. She is now married, and she and her husband have a daughter.

We were at Emory five years this time. I received my PhD degree in 1972, and we remained in Atlanta in the 1972–73 school year while I taught Western Civilization part time at DeKalb Community College and took a post-doctoral classes.

Teaching positions in higher education were difficult to find, and I thought I might need to serve a congregation as a Methodist pastor. However, in the early spring 1973, a retired Methodist pastor, who was teaching at Memphis Theological Seminary, contacted Emory, asking them to recommend a graduate

from the PhD program for a new full-time

position on the faculty of the seminary. The

position was the instruction of Methodist

Studies and Church History. There were

several Methodist students from the

Memphis Conference attending the

Seminary, and the Conference had

voted to partially fund a faculty

position at MTS. The professor who

had directed my PhD dissertation

wrote MTS recommending me. I

interviewed for the position that

spring and began teaching at MTS

in September 1973. I remained on the

faculty until June 2005. The seminary and

the Cumberland Presbyterian Church became

like family for us, and they saw me through a move

to the Episcopal Church and Episcopal priesthood and then to

the Catholic Church, all the while allowing me to continue to

teach at MTS. I will be forever grateful for their wanting my

orthodox theology to be represented on the faculty.

In October 1974, the president of the seminary said he wanted

me to learn what spiritual formation is and teach the seminary

community about it. He said Roman Catholic Seminaries,

after Vatican Council II, were applying for accreditation in

the Association of Theological Schools, formerly a Protestant

accrediting agency. Once accredited, seminaries have input

into the standards for accreditation. Catholic seminaries had

introduced into the standards the concept of spiritual formation.

A Decision to Make

In carrying out my commission, I came in touch with the great Catholic spiritual tradition. My study of Church History had prepared me for this. In Lent 1976, I discovered the writings of C.S. Lewis, and he helped me understand spiritual formation as theosis. This is what St. Paul writes about in Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but

Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

In our early years in Memphis, Sandie was the Administrative Assistant to a Methodist District Superintendent. I was on sabbatical leave in the fall 1980 and had written a book directed toward Methodist seminary students. Sandie read the book over the Christmas holidays and said the book was too Anglican to appeal to Methodists. I was trying to claim the Anglican roots of Methodism, but Sandie was right. The Methodist Church, now The United Methodist Church, was becoming a combination of Protestant Evangelicalism and social action and was de-emphasizing its Wesleyan/Anglican roots.

In January 1981, the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee had its annual convention in Memphis at St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral. The diocese invited other Christian communions to send ecumenical delegates as observers. The District

Superintendent for whom Sandie worked was invited. He

could not go, and Sandie asked him to invite me

to be the ecumenical delegate for The United

Methodist Church.

I went to St. Mary’s Cathedral on a

Thursday evening to participate in the

opening celebration of the Eucharist.

The ecumenical delegates were seated

in the front of the nave on the ambo

side. We processed into the Cathedral,

and I will never forget being swept

up by the magnificent music and the

visual ambiance of the English gothic

cathedral with its magnificent stained-

glass windows and high altar.

That year, the diocesan delegates were

voting whether to divide the Diocese of

Tennessee into three dioceses, with Memphis,

Nashville, and Knoxville being the see cities. In his homily, the

bishop addressed this decision and repeated several times, “You

have a decision to make, and if you keep your spiritual eye on

Christ, whatever you decide will be acceptable to the Lord.” As

I listened to the bishop, I heard “You have a decision to make”

and realized that the Lord was presenting me with a decision

about whether to stay in The United Methodist Church or join

the Episcopal Church. When I told Sandie about this, she said

she had suggested to the District Superintendent that I be the

ecumenical delegate to the convention because she knew it was

difficult for me to make decisions. She had seen my growing

attraction to the Episcopal Church and thought that I needed

a little help in making the decision. She also said she had been

ready to move to the Episcopal Church for a while. Sandie and

I were confirmed, and I was ordained an Episcopal priest on

April 23, 1983.

During my eleven years as an Episcopal priest, I continued to

teach at Memphis Seminary and for two years was also Vicar of

St. Paul Episcopal Church. Sandie was the full-time lay ministry

coordinator and Director of Religious Education there. The



I can see the Lord
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parish was in a changing neighborhood, and we were there to help it transition to mission status. Our children, Jon and Amy, were confirmed in the Episcopal Church, so our family was being formed together in a communion with a magnificent liturgical tradition.

In 1992, Sandie and I spent the spring and summer of my sabbatical leave at St. Clement Episcopal Pro-Cathedral in El Paso, Texas. I worked on a book to instruct Episcopal seminary students and assisted in the liturgical ministry. We had begun praying the Rosary and had been led to an increasing interest in the Virgin Mary thanks to Fr. David Knight's book, *Mary in an Adult Church*. We had met Fr. Knight when he was teaching a course in spiritual formation at Memphis Theological Seminary. While in El Paso, Sandie and I also studied *The Woman and the Way* and *Our Father, Our Mother: Mary and the Faces of God* by Fr. George Montague, SM and *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* by James Cardinal Hickey.

At St. Clement, we participated in their interdenominational Charismatic Renewal Sunday evening prayer meeting. Our experience of the Holy Spirit deepened our understanding of the truth of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

During our time in El Paso, our daughter Amy, who was a student at the University of Memphis, called to tell us she was going to be confirmed in the Catholic Church. At her request, she had attended Immaculate Conception High School, and when she entered the University, she became involved in the activities at the Catholic Student Center. At Immaculate Conception, she had excellent Catholic instruction, and this continued at the Catholic Student Center. She told us she would wait until we returned in the fall to be confirmed.

As we were preparing to return to Memphis in August, Sandie and I decided to make a discernment retreat at the Franciscan Retreat Center in Las Cruces, New Mexico. While we were on the retreat, Sandie was led to ask the question, "Where is the fullness of truth?" which she understood to mean, "Where is the fullest expression of Jesus Christ?" We realized then that the fullness of truth is in the Catholic Church.

At Tiber's Edge

After we returned to Memphis, Amy was confirmed at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in October by Fr. David Knight, who had been praying for 19 years that we would become Catholic! Sandie and I began RCIA that fall at Sacred Heart Church. Sandie was confirmed by Fr. Knight on Holy Saturday 1993. It was difficult for me to surrender my priestly ordination in the Episcopal Church. However, I finally did so and was confirmed on November 19, 1994.

On the way to Sacred Heart to be confirmed, I presumptuously said to God, "OK, I've been faithful to give up Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church to be confirmed in the Catholic Church, and I expect you to deliver." Indeed, He has delivered! Our son, Jon, and his family were eventually confirmed as Catholics. Amy married a fine Catholic man, and they have a daughter. So, thankfully and joyfully, our entire family is being formed together in the fullness of truth in the Catholic Church.



**He must increase,
but I must decrease.**

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (JOHN 3:30)

As a result of the grace from my Confirmation, while Sandie and I were participating in a Life in the Spirit seminar in February 1995, I began writing Catholic poetry. The Holy Spirit has continued to give me the gift of poetry — about 3,000 poems to date. In August 2005, I heard God's call to offer myself for the Catholic priesthood. I was ordained a Catholic priest under the Pastoral Provision on January 28, 2009, at age 70, by Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI, in the Diocese of San Angelo in Texas. He ordained me on our 47th wedding anniversary. This is in keeping with a ministry Sandie and I were led to begin in the summer 1995, called "The Household of the Holy Family," a ministry encouraging Catholic marriage and family life.

On our website, proclaimingtruth.org, you can read my book, *Families are Forever*, a complete account of our conversions and the Catholic truth gleaned from my 32 years of teaching at Memphis Theological Seminary; my book of poetry, *New Eden; the Litany of Loreto in poetry*, and many other poems, plus links to seven years of monthly articles we wrote for our diocesan newspaper.

Again and again, we have experienced the Providence of God. Thanks be to God for His merciful hand in our lives! ■

*W.E. "Knick" Knickerbocker retired in 2005 from Memphis Theological Seminary, where he taught Church History and Spiritual Theology for 32 years and entered the Pastoral Provision process to become a Catholic priest after a 11 years as an Episcopal priest. In 2009, at the age of 70 he was ordained a Catholic priest, retired/serving as needed in the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas. He and his wife Sandie (and currently 20 goats) reside in Kimble County in the Texas Hill Country. Their website is proclaimingtruth.org, where his poetry is published, as well as his spiritual/intellectual autobiography, *Families Are Forever*, and links to seven years of diocesan newspaper articles.*

How are you preparing your heart this Lenten season?

IN PRAYER
IN FASTING
IN ALMSGIVING

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IS JESUS CHRIST CALLING YOU?

This issue of the *Coming Home Network Newsletter* is all about being formed in Christ (Spiritual Formation) and becoming like Christ (Theosis). What could be more exciting and enticing than hearing the call that Jesus wants to walk with you! Perhaps you are in Galilee with Jesus, hanging on each word that He speaks, trying to figure out where He rests His head at night, dashing around the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee to find where He is teaching today. Perhaps you are approaching the Jordan River, anticipating your Baptism. Maybe you are already in Jerusalem, and you are feeling every bit of the graces of Lent. You are carrying your cross through the Old City, to Golgotha's hill. Wherever you are in this holy journey, know that Jesus Christ walks with you—and so do we.

Thirty years ago Marcus Grodi founded this apostolate to share the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and to help others make the journey home. The Coming Home Network is here for you.

Come, let us journey together.