



June 2026 CHNewsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

Journeys Home

Nothing has Changed, but Everything is Different

By Luke Nelson, Jr.

“He was born in the summer of his 57th* year
Coming home to a place he'd never been before.
He left yesterday behind him, you might say he was born again.
You might say he found a key for every door...”
“Rocky Mountain High,” John Denver



Recently, I heard these lyrics made popular by folk singer John Denver some years ago, and I realized how well I related to them (*with one variation—my 57 years as opposed to his 27!). The story behind the song goes that as a young adult John discovered something magnificent that changed his life. It had always been there, but he had never encountered it, until one beautiful night when he observed a dazzling meteor shower in the crisp clear skies of the Colorado Rocky Mountains. He would never be the same.

Such was the case with me. One day I, too, discovered something truly amazing that changed my life forever. It was always there, closer than Colorado from my rural Pennsylvania home. All my life it had been just down the street, or over in the next town,

but I was blind to its beauty. The place is known as the Catholic Church, and it is there that I have more fully come to understand what it means to be born again; and it is there I have found a key for every door. In this setting, once unknown, an Evangelical Protestant pastor has experienced an environment where nothing has changed, but everything is different.

How can something be so much the same and, at the same time, so dissimilar? It is a paradox I wrestled with for some seven years before my conversion. Ever so slowly, the pieces came together to expose a beauty beyond compare. Each one of us have those transformational moments in our lives where there is a before and an after event that changes our lives forever; some of us have many of them.

It may be the moment we meet the love of our lives; from that day on, we know things will never be the same. It may be the birth of a child or, in the case of my wife and I, the adoption of a teenager after 30 years of having an empty nest! Instead of diapers and

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...Journeys Home Continued...

nightly feedings, we went straight to teenage attitude. Needless to say, life changed on a dime.

Human history itself has had such moments. Western civilization recognizes such in its A.D. and B.C. delineations. Jesus himself marks a moment in time when the before and after are radically different. And, the Church He instituted from its earliest days could testify to the transformation. A moment called Pentecost changed fearful disciples into Spirit-filled leaders who in their generation “turned their world upside down (Acts 17:6)”. The Roman Empire had met her match.

While I speak of such lofty events, my personal transformation is hardly worthy of such association. Yet revolutionary for me, it most certainly was. I was a small town Protestant pastor, in a modest Evangelical denomination. The Wesleyan Church was the denomination of my upbringing, my father himself a full-time Wesleyan pastor for some forty years before official “retirement.” I then spent some ministerial time in the Assemblies of God, as well as layman service in the United Methodist Church, my wife’s denomination when we first met. It is the Wesleyan Church, though, where I had a consistent and fruitful ministry for some twenty-five years.

My involvement in the church extended beyond the local congregation to serve on the Western Pennsylvania District Board of Administration for ten years as District Secretary and Secretary for the Board of Ministerial Development, the second Board handling the ordination process for those called to credentialed ministry. It was in my District involvement that a question of doctrine came before the board, on which there was significant difference of opinion. From this, a series of events transpired which transformed me forever.

The question under consideration is not significant to this story, but passions ran high on both sides of the issue. In this particular case, I found myself in the minority and began to question my position on the matter. In an effort to more thoroughly research the topic, I did what any person would do in

our modern age—I googled it! This search led me to an unfamiliar place and to people I barely knew.

I discovered a church not 200 years old, but 2,000 years old, to scholars who spoke with great wisdom not in recent centuries but in a distant millennia, and insights of a nature far superior to much of what I had embraced. My first mentor in this new world was St. John Chrysostom, who set me straight on the matter in question. But, now, the door was open. Who was this unfamiliar man with a strange name? Who were these other, “fathers” of the faith, with such keen insight and depth of knowledge? Why had I heard so little about them as a born-again, Bible-believing Christian? The answers to my initial questions would quickly become all too clear. These men were Catholic to the core. They loved the Holy Scriptures every bit as much as me, but theirs was a Catholic interpretation, the first interpretation, and in most cases, the only interpretation for 1,500 years.

As I studied, I realized my Protestant understanding of Christianity was a relatively late and very novel innovation to an ancient and established faith. I became aware that the question was not, nor had it ever been, a truly biblical one. The Church, from day one, had always held her sacred text close to her heart. The question was one of authoritative interpretation and the role of God’s Word in the ongoing life of the Church. I had made a journey upstream to the headwaters of my Christian faith and tasted a refreshing purity, the likes of which I had never known before.

Learning From The Fathers

Once one begins to sit at the feet of the early Church Fathers, it is hard to walk away. The more I heard, the more I wanted to hear. Not that this was by any means easy listening. Many an instruction left me on my knees searching the Scriptures and my own heart. More than one trip home from the office was filled with tears as I shared with my wife almost daily discoveries. The Church Fathers turned me inside out, upside down, a sharp turn

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

FILLING OUR FATHER’S HOUSE

SHAUN MCAFEE

Converts often bring to the Catholic Church a zeal that can renew parish life. Shaun McAfee shares what he learned about evangelization from his time as an Evangelical, and what Catholics can glean from our Protestant brothers and sisters about sharing the message of the Gospel with a hurting world.



WHY CATHOLIC BIBLES ARE BIGGER

GARY MICHUTA

Gary Michuta presents a revised and expanded version of his authoritative work on this key issue. Combing the historical record from pre-Christian times to the Patristic era to the Reformation and its aftermath, he traces the canon controversy through the writings and actions of its major players.



#3234 - \$17.95

FOUR WITNESSES: THE EARLY CHURCH IN HER OWN WORDS

ROD BENNETT

With all the power and drama of a gripping novel, Rod Bennett takes readers on a journey of discovery of ancient and beautiful truths through the lives of four great saints of the early Church—Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus of Lyons.



#2595 - \$21.95

to the right, a movement to the left, an about face. Like Star Trek, “boldly going where I had never gone before,” but with fear and trembling moving forward, following holy men and a young church dynamically defending the faith entrusted to them. These were the great defenders of orthodox Christianity protecting Trinitarian doctrine, proposing the canon of Scripture, while all the while teaching baptismal regeneration, the communion of the saints, and the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The men who gave us the Nicene Creed would be as uncomfortable with me as I was with them at the start of my journey. “I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.” I could give lip service to their creed, but I certainly would have had to explain away what they intended to teach. “One holy catholic”: “one” could only be imagined in some mystical abstract sense of an invisible church of all believers. “Holy”—I suppose that statement might be a struggle no matter which side of the fence you find yourself on. “Apostolic”—perhaps, but only in the sense of following their writings and certainly not in any linear, historical fashion. “Baptism for the remission of sins”—really? This was far from my understanding as an Evangelical protestant. Baptism was an act of obedience to a command given to those already born again, a symbol—a sacred symbol, but none the less, just a symbol. In the administering of baptisms, I would declare, “Baptism is not itself the door to salvation, but rather is an outward sign of the new birth which God has wrought in your heart.” This did not sound like quite the same thing to me. St. John Henry Newman said it best, “And this one thing at least is certain; whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or extenuates, whatever it says and unsays, at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth, it is this.”

I mused that while the early Church Fathers might have something to say, there was a huge difference between them and the modern Catholic Church with all her smells, bells, and pagan perversions. My research led me from the past to the present which I presumed would stop the expedition in its tracks. I started to read the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the documents of the Second Vatican Council as I thought to myself, “you cannot get more Catholic than that.” Far from offense, I found these to be some of the most profound and scholarly documents I had ever read. To be sure there were Mary-type issues that challenged my Protestant sensibilities. But far more

common were core elements of the faith, defended and proclaimed in a way that caused me to say “amen.” Pull out a few Catholic expressions that would give the origin of the document away, and any Bible believing Evangelical Protestant would be proud to have their denomination produce such an outstanding definition and defense of the faith.

Ever more loudly the question became, “What am I protesting?” Seeds were being sown, and as difficult as it was, I was attempting to be fertile soil. So much within me resisted these Catholic themes, yet the evidence increasingly led me to believe that there was abundantly more to the Christian faith than I had ever been led to believe or embrace. What do I do with my discoveries?

After several years of personal study, another defining moment occurred. It came by way of an invitation. An elderly parishioner in my congregation had a daughter who worked as a nurse in a local monastery. I was given an invitation to speak at an ecumenical luncheon held there that was called “Lunch with the Lord.” Many priests and pastors had been invited over the years to share in this simple soup and sandwich gathering. When invited, I thought “Sure, why not?,” little realizing the new world I was entering. The original contact was uneventful, a nice lunch with a small group of good people. After speaking at the luncheon, my wife and I were invited to return at another time for a tour of the monastery. We accepted, as it sounded interesting. And so a date was set.

These were the great defenders of orthodox Christianity protecting Trinitarian doctrine, proposing the canon of Scripture, while all the while teaching baptismal regeneration, the communion of the saints, and the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Time At The Monastery

St. Joseph’s Monastery was located in St. Mary’s, PA. As the name suggests, this is a predominately Catholic town in the central Pennsylvania mountains. The town was founded by German Catholics seeking freedom from persecution in the 1800’s. St. Joseph’s Monastery was the oldest Benedictine Monastery in the United States. (I say “was”, because it has since closed due to dwindling numbers and the age of the sisters.) Our tour was provided by a saintly sister named Victoria, who became a very important person to me through my conversion experience. Although she had to relocate to a monastery in Chicago, we remained in close contact until her death. This little sister took us on a wonderful tour of St. Joseph’s. The tour was supposed to last about an hour, but we were there the entire afternoon. All was strange to my wife and I.

As revivalist Protestants we were surrounded by high church sounds and symbols. “What does that mean? Why do you do that?” These were the questions asked repeatedly. By God’s grace we were given someone who could answer our questions as again



Comforting Those Who Sojourn



Dear Friends,

One of the great blessings our team experiences constantly here at the Coming Home Network is that of being present and part of so many fortuitous meetings between Christian journeyers seeking the fullness of Christ. We stand at the crossroads meeting people who in many cases were traveling the spiritual journey alone, and we welcome them, encourage them, equip them, and perhaps,

most importantly, help them find community with others who are experiencing a similar journey. A week does not go by that we are not reminded in numerous ways—between emails, phone calls, online live group video chats, in-person retreats, and through the amazing stories we are able to share in this newsletter—just how special and important this network is, and how privileged we are to be a part of and witness to it.

For example, during one of our recent Fellowship Friday calls, a CHNetwork member was recounting the excitement of his reception into the Church at the Easter Vigil this year. He shared that he has felt like a “kid in a candy shop” as he delves deeper into prayer and the sacramental Catholic life. Another member, a Protestant pastor still in active ministry but feeling drawn to the Catholic Church, shared how astounded and grateful he was to have found a network of fellow converts and journeyers, as he had thought he’d be making this journey alone. Yet another member shared how she had been ready to join the Church, but had gotten cold feet at the last moment and now was feeling confused and defeated; in response, she received an outpouring of love, encouragement, and consolation from other members who had truly been there before. In each case, these Catholic converts and journeyers were able to share their stories—both the joys and the sorrows, the blessings and the challenges—among friends who would understand, offer encouragement and advice, and who would (really) continue to accompany them in prayer and fellowship.

The numerous anecdotes shared with us continuously in our work reinforce the uniqueness and importance of the Coming Home Network as a network of fellowship and encouragement. Every Christian is on a journey, and journeys have peaks and valleys. We need fellowship, good counsel, and encouragement from fellow believers, and we recognize that as we are helped to persevere through each challenge, God is giving us, in a mysterious way, a gift of our own testimony and experiences that we can in turn share with others. Over the years, we’ve taken St. Paul’s opening words from his second letter to the Church in Corinth as one of our “mission verses.” He writes:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Sharing the truth and beauty we discovered in the Catholic Church and passing on the comfort and encouragement we

ourselves received on our own journeys is what the CHNetwork is all about. As important as apologetic and informational resources might be, perhaps more than anything else, Protestant pastors and laypeople whom the Holy Spirit is leading home to the Church need the fellowship, witness, and encouragement of others.

Recently, I was interviewing a former Protestant pastor on *The Journey Home Program*. He recounted how in the midst of active Protestant ministry, his investigation of certain doctrinal questions in the writings of the Early Church Fathers had brought him to the shocking realization about just how “Catholic” the first generations of Christians had been. The more he studied, the more convinced he became of the truth of Catholicism—but also the more trapped he felt. Alone with his thoughts, unable to tell his fellow pastors or his wife, fearing for how he’d be able to support his family if word got out, he buried the truth and for many years tried to continue as if nothing happened. He eventually found his way home to the Church, but only after many years of lonely struggle and the eventual collapse of his ministry and marriage. This former pastor shared with me that he wished he had discovered the Coming Home Network during those lonely years—perhaps relationships could have been saved and heartache spared. Thankfully, his testimony is now proving to be a comfort to others in a similar predicament.

I share all of this with you today as hopefully an encouraging reminder of what you are a part of as a reader of this newsletter and a member of the CHNetwork. Whether you yourself are one of the many Protestant pastors or laypeople in the network who are exploring the Catholic Church and discerning the next steps God is calling you to take, whether you are a recent or not-so-recent Catholic convert continuing your spiritual journey and perhaps helping to encourage others, or one of the many lifelong Catholics who support CHN with your prayers and donations—THANK YOU for being a part of the Coming Home Network and for being a source of encouragement and comfort to those who sojourn.

If I could make one additional observation and request: While we are blessed as an apostolate to help those journeyers that reach out to us, there are many, many more out there—like the pastor I mentioned above—who never hear about the Coming Home Network and end up traversing the difficult journey home to full communion with the Catholic Church alone. In addition to continuing your prayerful support and participation in the CHNetwork, please consider inviting those converts and journeyers in your life to connect with us as well by sharing this newsletter and/or inviting them to explore our website: CHNetwork.org.

Thank you, as always, for your prayers and for being a part of this apostolate of encouragement!

In Christ,

JonMarc Grodi
Executive Director of the CHNetwork
Host of EWTN’s *The Journey Home Program*

Joyful Journey Updates

Ron Y, former Presbyterian pastor

The last 15 months have been ones of intrigue and resistance. I pushed back for months saying I did not want to be Catholic. Not at all. But the pull continued. It was not something I wanted.

Over this period, as I learned of the Church and shared with my wife and children, they all grew in their faith. My wife had been confirmed as a Catholic, but had not been well educated in the biblical basis of her faith. Not anymore: she can now defend the Catholic Faith and practice from the Bible.

My wife, a saint for sure, had let me lead the family as best I could for 17 years. And she would let me lead again; only this time into the church. She is overjoyed and has already been to reconciliation. My four children (ages 11 through 16) and I completed OCIA and entered the Church at the Easter Vigil.

This has been the hardest journey of my life, especially separating from my Presbyterian church and ordination. It's been painful. I will probably lose friends over this. But the truth? I see it in its full glory now. I've never felt so close and loved by Christ. His saints? They surround me and encourage me. And if you can feel the excitement in my words, wait until you hear my children speak from the heart. We are overjoyed to be with you all in the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. ■

Do you have a journey update to share?
Submit it to info@chnetwork.org

Remember, O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, that in what need so ever, no one who had recourse to Your most loving Heart was ever rejected or sent away unrelieved.

Animated with this confidence, Jesus, we come to you; burdened with miseries we fly to You, and with our miseries we throw ourselves on your Heart.

Do not, O God, our Father, cast us off, your all-unworthy children, but give us admittance, we beseech you, into your Sacred Heart, suffer us never to be separated therefrom.

Aid us, we entreat you in all our wants now and forever, but above all at the hour of our death,

O most benign, O most compassionate, O most sweet Jesus.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, we trust in You.

Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus—June 12

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

Monday, June 1

Fr. Allan Phan

Former Buddhist

Monday, June 8

Dr. Lisa Heerema

Former Christian Reformed Church

Monday, June 15

Deacon Michael & Jean Nixon

Former Hare Krishnas

Monday, June 22

Jeremy Darling

Former Evangelical Worship Leader

Monday, June 29

Dr. Ryan McDermott

*Former Episcopalian
Orig. Air Date: 4/12/21*



TELEVISION

Mon. 8PM ET—Encores: Tues. 1AM ET, Thurs. 2PM ET
The Best of The Journey Home: Sat. 6PM ET

RADIO

Mon. 8PM ET
Encores: Sat. 7AM ET, Sun. 1AM ET and 5PM ET
The Best of The Journey Home: Mon.–Fri. 1AM ET

Monday, July 6

Frank Cronin

*Revert & Former Atheist
Orig. Air Date: 5/24/21*

Schedule is subject to change.

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

CONVERSION CONVERSATIONS

HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE I BECOME CATHOLIC?

A CHNetwork Member Asks: I've been reading the Catechism, and there's a lot that makes sense to me, but there's a lot that goes over my head, and I'm a little intimidated at how much there is to learn... I'm afraid I can never become Catholic, because I don't think I can ever absorb it all. How much information do I have to know before I can make an "informed" decision to become Catholic?

This question is a common one, and it comes up in regard to all kinds of aspects of Catholicism. Do you really have to memorize the entire Catechism before entering the Church? Will there be a test?

A couple of distinctions in regard to “knowing”: in many ways, we can know God: through His creation, through His Word, through our neighbor, et cetera; just as we might have a certain kind of knowledge of an artist through that artist’s work. Therefore, we truly can **understand** certain things about God, especially through the incarnation of Jesus.

On the other hand, God is infinite, and we are finite, so there is no possible way to fit everything about God into our brain; therefore we cannot **comprehend** God fully.

In some theological circles, there’s an argument that because we can’t **comprehend** God fully, there’s no point in saying anything about Him at all, since he’s so far beyond us.

But in the Catholic worldview, we argue that we can indeed **understand** some things about God, so there is a point in saying at least a few things about Him based on what He has shown us about Himself through reason and revelation, while at the same time acknowledging that our language and concepts are going to be extremely limited.

Let’s take, for example, the doctrine of the Trinity: that term doesn’t really come about until people start challenging the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit. The first real use of the term “Trinity” as a way to describe it comes in the late 100’s, but it comes from decades of reflection by the Church on the mystery of who God is. That doctrine tells us that we can **understand** that God is Triune, and we profess that belief in the Creeds and the Sign of the Cross. But can we ever fully **comprehend** that mystery? If we could, then that would actually put us *above* God.

In fact, even if you did absorb everything that human beings have ever written about the Trinity through the centuries, you still

wouldn’t “know” all there is to “know”, because new insights into this one mystery will continue to emerge the longer the Church reflects upon it. And none of it will contradict what the Church already believes, but rather further illuminate it.

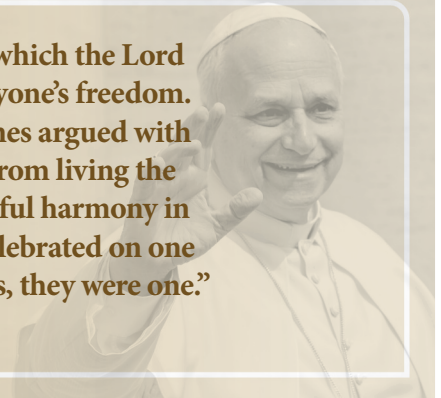
An analogy from the world of medicine might bring it down to earth a bit: medical research learns more about the brain every day, but the brain remains a mystery. In fact, we know very little about the total workings of the human brain. But everything we learn will build on what we already know about the human brain. It is highly unlikely that the medical world will wake up one day and say, “we’ve been wrong this whole time, the brain is located in the kneecap,” or something like that. And while it’s the job of experts to research and explain what the brain is and how it works, and further unpack its mysteries, the job of most of us is just to realize it’s there, and use it in everyday life the best we can.

Depending on our faith backgrounds, some of us have come from places where there was an emphasis on simply believing and not asking questions. In the Catholic Church, however, between St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Teresa of Avila and a whole bunch of others, we have example after example of witnesses who prove that the Church is not afraid to ask complex and difficult questions about God.

But we also are part of a Church that through the centuries has been full of beautifully holy men and women who had no formal education whatsoever. In fact, Jesus chose an uneducated fisherman, Peter, as its first earthly leader. So learn and absorb what you can; but realize that the ultimate question is not, “can I know everything there is to know about Catholicism?” But rather, “do I trust that the best way to be in relationship with Jesus is in His Church?” At the end of the day, it’s that relationship that will carry you forward in ways that mere studies cannot. ■

The history of (Saints) Peter and Paul shows us that the communion to which the Lord calls us is a unison of voices and personalities that does not eliminate anyone’s freedom. Our patron saints followed different paths, had different ideas and at times argued with one another with evangelical frankness. Yet this did not prevent them from living the *concordia apostolorum*, that is, a living communion in the Spirit, a fruitful harmony in diversity. As Saint Augustine remarks, “the feast of the two Apostles is celebrated on one day. They too were one. For although they were martyred on different days, they were one.”

Pope Leo XIV (Feast of Sts. Peter & Paul—June 29)



Prayer List

Clergy

■ **For Andrew, a former Baptist elder** who was received into the Church this Easter, that the Lord Jesus will fill him with faith, hope, charity, and joy as he begins his new life as a Catholic.

■ **For Rick, a Baptist pastor** who has been wanting to become Catholic for a long time but faces a number of obstacles that at this point seem insurmountable, that the Lord will give him peace and he seeks a way forward.

■ **For Catherine, a former Methodist pastor**, who came into the Catholic Church this Easter season with her husband John, that the Holy Spirit will give them great joy as they begin to live this new life.

■ **For Joseph, who after many years as a pastor in various Protestant denominations** has been exploring Catholic teaching and finds himself drawn to the Church, that the Lord will encourage him as he attempts to communicate what he is learning to his family.

■ **For Joseph, an Anglican priest** who finds himself drawn back to the Catholic Church in which he was baptized and raised, that the Holy Spirit will lead him as he considers what this would mean for his wife and children, not to mention his ability to earn a living.

■ **For Gabriel, a former Church of Christ minister** who has become Catholic, that the Lord will guide him as he works to bring his family into the Church as well.

■ **For Christopher, a Methodist minister** who finds himself increasingly nostalgic for the Catholic Church of his childhood and fed-up with the changes that have taken place within the Methodist Church, but who is just beginning the serious study of the theological issues, that the Lord will enlighten him.

■ **For Corbin, a young and newly-wed Protestant pastor** who has been exposed to the writings of the early Church and begun to struggle with how Catholic they seem to be, that God will give him much wisdom as he continues to pursue the truth for his ministry and family.

■ **For Terry, a former Lutheran minister** who was received into the Church this Easter, that the Lord Jesus will fill him with faith, hope, charity, and joy as he begins his new life as a Catholic.

■ **For Tony, a former Presbyterian pastor** who became Catholic this Easter season and moved to a new state; that the Holy Spirit will fill him with joy and peace and direct his steps through all these changes.

■ **For Mitchell, a Protestant pastor** who has known for some time now that he wants to become Catholic but whose wife has no interest whatsoever, that the Holy Spirit will give him wisdom as he navigates this very difficult time of life.

■ **For Ron, a former Presbyterian elder** who was received into the Catholic Church this Easter, that the Lord will continue to lead and bless him as begins to learn how to live the Catholic life.

Layity

■ **For Hunter, a Presbyterian**, that his wife would become open to and understanding of his journey to the Catholic Faith.

■ **For Ethan, a Non-denominational Evangelical**, that he might find good Catholic friends who are willing to assist him on his journey.

■ **For Scott, a secular Jew**, that God would open his heart to his Messiah in the holy Church He founded.

■ **For Dylan, a Southern Baptist**, that the Holy Spirit would continue to bless and guide his studies.

■ **For Robert, a former Jehovah's Witness**, that our Lord would grant him understanding of the saints and holy Eucharist.

■ **For Edward, an Anglican**, that his love for the liturgy and the Eucharist would draw him into full communion with the Catholic Church.

■ **For Rich, a Non-denominational Evangelical**, that our Lord Jesus would guide his OCIA journey.

■ **For Martua, a Buddhist**, that our Lord Jesus Christ would guide him to the peace that surpasses all understanding which he is seeking.

■ **For Sage, an Orthodox Presbyterian**, that the Holy Spirit would calm his confusion and anxiety around the prospect of joining the Catholic Church.

■ **For Mohammad**, that the Holy Spirit would guide him to a priest who is willing to baptize him.

■ **For Stephen, an Evangelical**, that our Lord Jesus would open his heart to the fullness of the truth in the Church's teachings concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary.

■ **For Andre, a Reformed Baptist**, that our Lord would grant him the courage to hold to the truths of the Catholic Faith which is discovering.

■ **For Destin, a Southern Baptist**, that his desire for the fullness of the faith and of the sacraments may bring him to the altar of our Lord Jesus.

■ **For Skyler, a Charismatic**, that he may discover a sense of community and find good and faithful friends in his Catholic parish.

■ **For William, a member of the Church of God**, that our Lord Jesus would grant him the courage to share with his wife his love of the Catholic Faith.

■ **For Austin, a Presbyterian**, that he may gain an understanding of the Catholic teachings on salvation, sanctification, and the intercession of the saints.



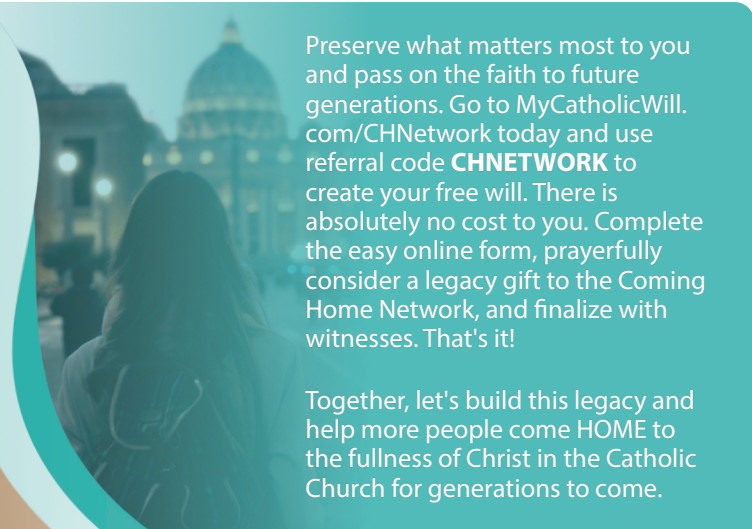
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Together, let's build this legacy and help more people come HOME to the fullness of Christ in the Catholic Church for generations to come.

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



740.450.1175



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\$100/month

CHNetwork.org/Compass

Please contact Ann at 740.450.1175 or via email ann@chnetwork.org if you have any questions.

Do you know a Catholic convert or someone curious about the Catholic Church?

Encourage them to join our network!
chnetwork.org/join

CHNetwork was founded to help men and women, clergy and laity, from every background imaginable, discover the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and make the journey *home*.



COME JOIN US!

This journey of faith we are all on consists of so many mountaintop experiences, as well as the low valleys of loneliness at times. It is an experience best lived out with others, especially others who understand. No one in our lives can support us more perfectly than those who are traveling the same path.

I will never forget my first CHNetwork retreat. There was a gentleman present who remarked that he felt like he had found "his people." That has remained with me ever since. I have attended several retreats since my first one in 2019, and I can honestly say I come away each time blessed by the whole experience. These moments sharing how God has worked in our lives, praying together, celebrating Mass together, laughing and crying together, have built the foundation for lifelong friendships.

Our recent retreat in Nebraska was truly incredible. At every retreat, I love getting to meet so many people in person who I have only known through our Online Community. It is always a joy for our Pastoral Care Team to witness the friendships between so many of our members that began online come

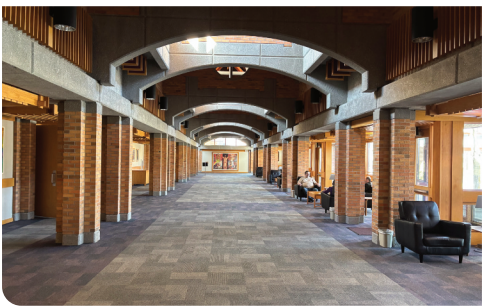
together in person—it feels very full circle.

Our mission at CHNetwork is to inspire, encourage, and support one another as we grow in our own understanding and living of the Catholic Faith. We are also blessed to be able to now host three in-person retreats every year—two in the United States and one in the UK! My hope is that you will have an opportunity to attend one. Please consider joining us on an upcoming retreat. I would love to meet you there!

—Melissa Slagle is a Pastoral Care Coordinator for CHNetwork.

Find the latest information and register for all upcoming Coming Home Network retreats at chnetwork.org/retreats.

UPCOMING RETREATS	
CHNETWORK UK RETREAT	CHNETWORK FALL RETREAT
September 14 - 16, 2026	October 5 - 8, 2026
Franciscan Centre Ladywell Godalming, Surrey, England	Spiritual Center of Maria Stein Maria Stein, Ohio



and again I recognized elements of the ancient Church that I had, to this point, only read about in my studies. Perhaps, the best word I can use to describe my experience is overwhelmed. It was spiritual, intellectual, and sensory overload.

Everywhere I looked, everything I heard, and even what I smelled, spoke to me of God Almighty who made heaven and earth and revealed Himself in the Incarnate Son. (In time, I would come to discover that the center of it all was a meal bar none.) At the same time, God was both transcendent and tangible, so far beyond me, yet meeting me where I lived. I had always known of his incarnate flesh, but could it be that our Lord was willing to connect with the material in so many more diverse ways—sacraments and sacramentals where the divine infuses the earthly? Where oil becomes holy and water actually washes away sins? Where bread becomes flesh and wine becomes blood? I had never been exposed to such a reality. For the first time, I was fully confronted by the ancient faith that I had only read about up to this point. What is a Protestant pastor to do with such things? I wasn't really sure. All I knew was that all these things spoke volumes to me on a deeper spiritual level than I had ever ventured into before, and I wanted to know more.

After this, trips to the monastery became almost a weekly event. My visit usually included Mass, breakfast with the sisters and an elderly priest, Father Daniel, who eventually became my sponsor, along with theological discussions after breakfast with Sister Victoria. These senior Catholics were so patient with someone who was clueless on everything from the Hail Mary to holy water. In time, I began to learn the Mass and even arrive early to join the sisters for Lauds, a service of Morning Prayer in the Liturgy of Hours.

All the while, I continued to study Scripture and the writings of the early and modern Church. I would often have those ah-ha moments when some "strange" Catholic teaching or ritual suddenly made sense. The lights would come on, and I would ask myself how I could have missed that for so long. It was a slow process that deserved prayerful reflection at every turn. I would often discuss my discoveries with Sister Victoria. She would tell me I made her think. For me, the unique teachings of the Church were something I had to deeply ponder to understand, but they had been given to her from youth. It is said that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and I was determined not to

be the fool. But, on the other hand, how can one deny truth? It was Winston Churchill who said, "the truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is." It was also he who said, "Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened." While I was resolute not to be the fool, I was equally firm in my conviction that I would not ignore what I had discovered, regardless of where it might lead.

The entire process took about seven years to complete, with completion being a full embrace of Catholic teaching, and the recognition that I could no longer function as a Protestant pastor. Truthfully, my heart was won before the time was complete, but there was so much to consider. A positive and fruitful career would be dealt a death blow. How would I pay the bills? Time does not allow me to tell of the wonderful doors the Lord would open for me after my conversion working in the mental health field. What of my wife and daughter? They had not entirely made this journey with me, but they would soon follow. What of my godly parents, Wesleyan to the core, and certainly not understanding their son's obsession with Catholicism? And, then, there was my wonderful congregation, along with my pastoral brothers and sisters. What would they say, and how would I ever explain all this to them? I became convinced that I had to leave most of these answers to the Lord.

What About The Bible?

While there isn't room to go into extensive detail on all that I have found with the Holy Spirit's guidance, allow me to briefly share an important discovery I have made on this journey. I did not leave my Bible behind when I became a Catholic. Early in my pastoral ministry, I had asked my father, also a Wesleyan pastor, to write something in my Bible, and here are the words he penned;

*To my son Luke,
Dare to live by the words
of this book and God will
make a spiritual giant out of
you. Please, whatever else you
do, don't be just a hearer of the
Word, but a doer also.
-Dad & Mom*

**Everywhere I looked,
everything I heard, and
even what I smelled, spoke to
me of God Almighty who made
heaven and earth and
revealed Himself in the
Incarnate Son.**

When I was confronted with the claims of the Catholic Church, one of my first thoughts was that I would have to abandon in some form the book I loved so dearly. I do not think I

**READ, PRAY,
GIVE AWAY!**

Once you've finished reading this issue of the CHNewsletter, consider sharing it with someone who might enjoy it as well! (They can always sign up to receive their own at chnetwork.org/join)

am alone in that perception, but nothing could have been farther from the truth. All I had to do was begin to attend Mass to realize I was mistaken. There I was exposed to more Scripture than I had ever encountered or made use of in my Protestant worship. I believe a good expression might be “saturation” when it comes to the use of the Bible in the Mass. I would propose that to remove the very Words of God from the Catholic Mass would require its people to become something like Quakers, sitting in long periods of silence. The Catechism states, “The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord” (CCC 141). Anyone who understands Catholic theology would recognize that hardly a more powerful or profound statement of endorsement of God’s Holy Word could be professed.

It was a true surprise to realize I could be a Bible-believing Catholic. But why should one be astonished that the Church with the most ancient roots cherishes that which was birthed in her own womb? If one considers the proverbial question of which came first, the chicken or the egg, the answer is crystal clear in the question of the Church and the sacred text. First, came the Church, and the New Testament developed under her tender care through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Only a Catholic tradition could have produced such a compilation of inspired books. This realization hit me very hard on the journey home. I became convinced that a Protestant tradition could never have compiled an agreed-upon canon. Just look at the breadth of convictions held on the canon we now possess.

To realize the vast library of competing gospels and epistles that circulated in the early Church and to then believe that a Protestant philosophy could produce such a sure and solid foundation is fantasy. The Bible is a Catholic work, preserved and compiled by Catholics, under the inspiration and watchful eye of the Holy Spirit. To claim my Bible was a Protestant book was to ignore every element of history and literally to remove it from its clearest context. Mine was a borrowed book, and I was enjoying the benefit of something that my own tradition could never produce. While my tradition stood alone on the Word of God, *sola Scriptura*, such a position would not have even been possible for some three centuries after the Church was established at Pentecost. These were troubling realizations to say the least.

I came to grasp the fact that the Catholic Church had been pro-Scripture from day one, which was quite a revelation. She cherished the writings of the apostles, sharing the manuscripts with her fellow believers. She read the words with discernment to be certain they were authentic works. Her early councils validated the authenticity of the works, and her words were read to the common people in the liturgy. I had always thought that we Protestants had been the ones to take on the challenge of placing the words of God in the hands of the common people. The great King James Version of 1611, along with others like it, blazed a trail for the dissemination of the Word of God.

But I came to appreciate that more than a thousand years before our groundbreaking works, the Catholic Church had done the same thing. Saint Jerome translated the newly-formed canon into the language of the people. He moved to the Holy Land to

work on his translation to better understand the culture; he insisted on working from the original language of Hebrew in the Old Testament translation rather than the Greek Septuagint; and, then, to top it off, he wrote commentaries to assist the people in understanding what the verses meant. Far from hiding this Vulgate Bible, the Catholic Church embraced his work. Within a century, monastic institutions were creating writing rooms within their monasteries to copy and disseminate the Scriptures. Why had I thought that we Protestants had an exclusive Bible franchise of some kind? It seemed far more realistic that the only way I could claim this book as mine was to first pry it out of the Catholics’ hand, a hand calloused from the holding of the quill and stained with the ink of the sacred page.

I heard someone say that Protestants think they are right, but they are not, meanwhile Catholics are right but they do not know it. I find a lot of truth in that statement. I was very happy to discover that such attitudes have greatly faded in today’s Catholic Church. Especially since Vatican II, the Church has once again courageously recommended Bible reading and study to her children. From the pope, to my local priest, the reading of God’s Word is heartily recommended. This Easter, when my parish welcomed a number of individuals into full conversion to the Catholic Faith, I had the honor of publicly presenting each of them with a Bible.

Soon after my conversion, I was offered an opportunity to teach a Bible Study in our parish. It was well received and has now been going strong for over nine years. I had initially wondered if my gifts and calling would have a place in my new home, but God only closed one door to open another. My teaching ministry has a far greater impact now than ever before as Catholics come to better understand their Bible.

I would not be surprised to discover that some heads are spinning as they read my story; I, too, have ridden that merry-go-round. More than once on my journey home, I wondered if I should jump from the train or abandon ship; it’s a lot to process. But, the destination is very much worth the hazards of the trip. What one comes to discover is a place of authority, yes, even Biblical authority. I can testify to the immense clarity that comes from ceasing to resist God’s ordained authority, and to rest in Apostolic, historic Christianity, not five hundred, but two thousand years old and counting. In this environment, I have discovered the Bible does not produce an uncertain sound; Sacred Tradition expounds on and reaffirms Sacred Scripture, and apostolic authority provides a firm and enduring foundation. ■

Luther A. Nelson, Jr. is a former pastor in the Wesleyan Church, having served on both a local and district level. He is a graduate of Central Bible College (Evangel University) in Springfield, Missouri, with a BA in Biblical Studies. His continuing education includes numerous correspondence and university courses, and Graduation from the Billy Graham School of Evangelism.

The Coming Home Network International
PO Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



AND THIS FOOD IS CALLED AMONG US **EUCCHARISTIA** [THE EUCHARIST], OF WHICH NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO PARTAKE BUT THE MAN WHO BELIEVES THAT THE THINGS WHICH WE TEACH ARE TRUE, AND WHO HAS BEEN WASHED WITH THE WASHING THAT IS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND UNTO REGENERATION, AND WHO IS SO LIVING AS CHRIST HAS ENJOINED.

FOR NOT AS COMMON BREAD AND COMMON DRINK DO WE RECEIVE THESE; BUT IN LIKE MANNER AS JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR, HAVING BEEN MADE FLESH BY THE WORD OF GOD, HAD BOTH FLESH AND BLOOD FOR OUR SALVATION, SO LIKEWISE HAVE WE BEEN TAUGHT THAT THE FOOD WHICH IS BLESSED BY THE PRAYER OF HIS WORD, AND FROM WHICH OUR BLOOD AND FLESH BY TRANSMUTATION ARE NOURISHED, IS THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF THAT JESUS WHO WAS MADE FLESH.

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR, *First Apology*, 66
Feast of the Body & Blood of Christ: June 7