

July 2026 CHNewsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

Journeys Home

Religion is the Relationship

By Grant Adams

I was given the greatest gift imaginable by my loving parents growing up in Birmingham, AL in the mid-90s. They made sure that my brother and I had every opportunity to know, love, and serve God as well as have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.



The Greatest Gift

Some nights we read Bible stories after dinner, acting out the parts ourselves—I always took the part of Jonah being swallowed by the whale (which was typically a laundry basket being shaken around by my dad). They persistently ensured that we prayed together as a family at the close of each day.

At least once in my early teens I feigned going to bed early to get out of praying, only to find my mom, dad, and little brother bursting into my room, plopping onto my bed, and praying away. Prayer was non-negotiable even if we had just argued or been disciplined.

We attended a large Southern Baptist Church throughout my childhood and adolescent years. My mom enjoyed serving in the children's and music ministries, and my dad, who has always been gifted at teaching and mentoring teens, found his place teaching Sunday school.

About the time I was 8 years old, what Catholics would recognize as around the *age of reason*—when a child can personally engage in their relationship with

God—I decided that I wanted to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior.

It's an odd thing looking back. I don't remember a time not knowing about God or about the Gospel. There's a familiarity with Jesus that's even closer than the dearest friend or beloved spouse—one can typically recall the first time they met a friend and certainly the first time they saw their beloved. But with God, I cannot. This must be because from the very moment of my conception, I was held in the eternal gaze of Eternity. Learning of His love is like a newborn startling from their sleep, beginning to cry, only to realize that they are in their mother's arms—*ah, you were there the whole time.*

So, guided by Pastor Chuck, my wonderful children's pastor, I prayed the Sinner's Prayer:

God, I know that I am a sinner. And I believe that you sent your one and only Son to die for me because You love me. I want to be forgiven of my sins by His sacrifice and accept Jesus into my heart as my Lord and Savior so that I can be saved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

According to my pastor, I was saved! We soon planned for my baptism which I understood as the public declaration of the inward transformation that had already taken place after my sincere prayer. I was

Continued on page 2

...Journeys Home Continued...

told that baptism was like a wedding ring—it symbolized and demonstrated one’s commitment to God (it would be several years before I learned that this view of baptism would’ve been foreign to every believer for Christianity’s first 1500 years). So, I put that “wedding ring” on and we celebrated.

Eventually, that personal relationship with Jesus slipped into an impersonal weekly checklist, begrudgingly attended and completed to appease my steadfast parents. This, as I was told by many Evangelical Protestants, was “religion”. And this kind of “religion” was exactly what our Blessed Lord condemned throughout the gospels. He desired wholehearted full devotion, not halfhearted fulfilled duties. Yet there I was as guilty of practicing “religion” as the Pharisees.

How often is this the pattern of our lives? We resolve to live virtuously yet drift casually into vice. We say yes to God, only to excuse ourselves from commitment the moment inconvenience arises. The soil is rocky, the thorns grow thick, and many times the birds devour the seed before it even takes root (Mt. 13:3-9). Fickle wills find it hard to will any good.

God, have mercy on us.

And He does. But sometimes His mercy is severe.

Purgation and Preparation

One afternoon in 2006, towards the end of my 6th grade year, my mom and little brother picked me up from football practice, and we headed back to our home. As we rolled down our steep hill and turned into our driveway, I smelled that someone was grilling out—a little early for a cookout, but it seemed a good enough day for it. I slung on my backpack and began walking up the cracking brick steps from the driveway towards the front of the house while the tinge of fresh flames grew stronger. As I neared the front porch reality solidified. I looked up and saw smoke spewing out from my parents’ window. My home was on fire.

The rest is difficult to remember. I yelled to my mom; she

screamed to the neighbors. I tried to shoulder open the front door to let our dog and cat escape, only to find that they would not be able to do so. I remember my dad getting home from work at some time in the middle of all this, being unreasonably calm watching the chaos ensue.

While the conflagration was being contained, I walked up the street away from my former home. I remember praying then: “Why? God, why would you take away everything that I love?”

His response:

Silence.

I can only reason now that our reason fails to do justice to Reason itself. We think God to be like any of our other relationships. We call Him Father and expect Him to be like our father (for better or for worse). We call Him Savior and expect Him to do the saving from whatever we deem we need saving from. We typically view God on our terms—and that’s the kind of god many of us content ourselves to worship. But a god made in our image and likeness is no True God. And the One, True God is a jealous God who has been and always will be in the idol-smashing business.

This day, the worst day of my life up to that point, was a gift. The God who gives and takes away was giving me an opportunity by taking away—an opportunity for reorientation towards Beatitude.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

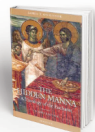
How shall we see God? Only by way of purification—of purgation and refinement. In the aftermath and in our grief, we were cared for by the Body of Christ. Members of our church family took care of our family. Someone paid for us to go to a department store that evening to get new clothes and other essentials. *I was naked and you clothed me.* Someone bought our

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

THE HIDDEN MANNA

FR. JAMES T. O’CONNOR

In this in-depth study, Fr. O’Connor lets the breadth and richness of the Church’s Tradition speak for itself. Both historically and theologically, the author treats the Real Presence, Transubstantiation, the Eucharist as pledge and foretaste of heaven, as sacrifice, as the Sacraments of Sacraments.

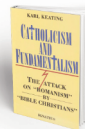


#3035 - \$21.95

CATHOLICISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM

KARL KEATING

Karl Keating shows the origins of fundamentalism, and examines representative anti-Catholic groups and presents their arguments in their own words. His rebuttals are clear, detailed, and charitable. Special emphasis is given to the scriptural basis for Catholic doctrines and beliefs.

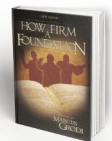


#2581 - \$19.95

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

MARCUS GRODI

Stephen LaPointe believed in Jesus. He wanted to obey God in all things, and had given up a career to become an ordained minister. But there was one problem: How could he be certain that what he was preaching was true? In his first novel, Marcus Grodi explores a scenario familiar to so many members of the CHNetwork family.



#3137 - \$14.95

family dinner that night and I can't recall how many more after that. *I was hungry and you fed me.* When we were in the confines of solitude picking up and picking through the pieces of our home after the smoke had cleared, our pastor came to visit us and brought us consolation. *I was in prison and you visited me.*

As He has always done, He did for me. God, in His magnificent humor, began transforming my tragedy into a comedy.

Up to that point I had maybe visited our church's youth group teen program once or twice. It was clearly unmemorable and left no impression on me, good or bad, nor a desire to return. But now, something was oddly stirring: I wanted to go to church.

I don't remember the games that we played, nor the songs that we sang, nor the message that was shared. I don't even remember the name of the person who made that night memorable.

As I stood there alone, I was approached by another young teen boy. He didn't know my story but took the initiative to invite me into conversation and friendship. And it changed my life. *When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.* I belonged there. And from the Valleydale Baptist youth group, my faith was resuscitated and given new life; my "religion" waned and gave way once again to a personal relationship with Jesus.

A School of Misery

Over the next few years, I became very involved with my youth group leading the praise and worship team and starting a Bible study at my high school. Eventually I had a profound encounter on a mission trip which birthed in me the desire to go into full-time ministry.

I turned down a full-ride scholarship to the University of Alabama and ended up at a no-name, unaccredited, very charismatic school of ministry in inner-city Atlanta, Georgia. It made sense to take advantage of the opportunity to pursue a practical degree and then step into full-time ministry. Yet I experienced a peace that surpassed understanding when contemplating forsaking it all to follow Jesus in this unconventional way.

The school ended up being a cult. At the very least it was a diet cult: similar flavor but maybe not quite the real thing. Almost immediately after arriving, we were passionately and persuasively taught that we had never received the fullness of the gospel, which just happened to be a private revelation received by the director of this school. We were encouraged to preach to other churches and youth groups this "true gospel". Sadly, those who left our school on bad terms were shunned and essentially recognized as apostates.

During all this, I still experienced profound, undeniable encounters with a good God who loved us and desired us to know Him. We organized mobile vacation Bible schools for kids living in the nearby housing projects. We participated in a ministry called Adopt-a-Block where we brought bags of donated groceries to families in need. We went on prayer walks in parks and saw God miraculously heal people through our petitions. We had moving times of worship through music where people were liberated from addictions and met the God who loved them into

existence.

I've come to the conclusion that experiences like these are not an either/or, but are instead a Catholic *both/and*; they are not either wholly holy or unholy, but rather, both the wheat and the tares grow together (Matt. 13:24-30). This was certainly the case during my time at this strange school. There were clearly demonically influenced persons and doctrines. At the same time, there were definite supernatural encounters with a good and loving God and beautiful followers of Jesus doing their best to know and love Him. In His mysterious mercy, God gave me many graces during this season of my life that would eventually lead me to Catholicism.

Amazing Graces

One of the graces I experienced was in a class where we were taught the concept of typology—how many of the events and figures of the Old Testament prefigured the New Testament reality which is revealed and fulfilled in and through Jesus (1 Cor. 10:1-6). I learned that baptism was one of those typological fulfillments in the Kingdom of God.

Paul recognized that the Israelites "were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." How? In their ancient exodus, they came to the Red Sea with freedom on the opposite side and their adversaries closing the gap behind them. God, through Moses, miraculously parted the Sea, and they walked through on dry land, guided by God in the pillar of cloud with their Egyptian slavers in hot pursuit to either kill them on the spot or bring them back into bondage. Once the Israelites made it through to the other side of the sea, the waters closed back upon their enemy, saving them from the power of their enemies and setting them free to worship God in the wilderness.

An even greater liberation takes place today in the waters of baptism. When a person enslaved to sin and the wicked tyrant, Satan, enters the waters of baptism, he undergoes a death and resurrection, not visible to physical eyes, but nonetheless real. Led by Christ, our New Moses, and the Holy Spirit, he who is baptized dies to his old self and way of life and is united to Christ in His death. He is then raised out of those waters and born again to a new life in the Spirit so that he can be free from the power of sin to freely worship and love God (Rom. 6:1-11, Jn. 3:5).

Baptism was *much* more than a wedding ring. It was the *wedding* itself!

I later learned that this class taught us the Catholic understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism. It astounded me to discover that this view of baptism had been held by most Christians throughout history and most of the original Protestant Reformers.

I couldn't find peace in waving away one and a half millennia of faithful Christian consensus when it came to the matter of baptism. I couldn't find any Bible verse implying that baptism was merely a symbolic "outward expression of an inward decision." But I found several verses stating explicitly that God saved people through baptism in a similar way to how He had saved the Israelites through the waters of the Red Sea (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:37-8, 1 Peter 3:21).

This also meant that salvation was not a one-time event as I

Laborers, Lambs, & Traveling Light



Dear Friends,

A few months ago we held our second annual Clergy Convert Conference in Steubenville, Ohio, in partnership with the Saint Paul Center for Biblical Theology. We were once again joined by around 40 current and former Protestant ministers and a number of their spouses for a weekend of reflection, powerful talks, prayer and sacraments, and of course an abundance of encouraging fellowship.

As I listened to the various testimonies, those shared formally in talks as well as those shared informally around the meal tables or during fellowship times, I was struck once again by the unique experiences and challenges that connect the stories of Catholic converts, and especially those of Protestant pastors and ministers who come home to full communion with the Church. I was reminded of Jesus' words to the seventy disciples that He sent out to proclaim the Kingdom of God:

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road. —Lk 10:2–4

This passage speaks to three aspects of the journey that so many converts experience: the call to preach the Gospel, the call to embrace suffering for the sake of the Gospel, and the call to persevere in living out the implications of the Gospel in detachment and purification of heart.

First, many Catholic converts are people who heard and heeded the call to preach the Gospel—to be laborers for the harvest—long before discovering the fulness of Christ in Catholicism. It has always been both humbling and encouraging to hear in so many conversion stories how deeply committed and effective evangelical Protestants have been in bringing people—sometimes even our own wayward Catholic children—to Jesus Christ. So many members of the CHNetwork come from broadly evangelical Protestant backgrounds, where they were rightly formed with a deep sense of the importance and urgency of sharing the Gospel. It is this zeal for the Gospel that so many converts bring home to the Church, as Pope St. John Paul II wrote in *Redemptoris Missio*:

Certainly, every convert is a gift to the Church and represents a serious responsibility for her...especially in the case of adults, such converts bring with them a kind of new energy, an enthusiasm for the faith and a desire to see the Gospel lived out in the Church. (RM 47)

God does not will the divisions in the Body of Christ, but in the midst of those divisions, He nevertheless raises up men and women of faith to proclaim the Gospel to those who might otherwise never hear it. The call to preach the Gospel that so many Catholic converts experienced long before discovering the Catholic Church is an answer to the prayers of the faithful for “the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest”.

Second, the journey home to the Catholic Church challenges

converts to accept and embrace suffering for the sake of the Gospel—to be sacrificial lambs sent out by the Good Shepherd in the midst of wolves. Every Christian who answers Christ's call to preach the Gospel, knows and expects, at least in theory, that some suffering will come with it. To stand with Christ means to stand against the world, the flesh, and the devil. But clergy converts especially face unique and unexpected challenges as a result of the often earth-shattering realization that the Gospel they loved and preached for so many years was incomplete—that there is “more Christianity” that the Holy Spirit is calling them to discover and embrace. As has frequently been shared in these pages, the decision (or even the consideration) to become Catholic so often turns a Protestant minister's world upside down: Immense challenges to marriage and family relationships; loss of ministry, community, and identity; loss of income with no obvious prospects for moving forward. And even if these challenges are overcome and a convert comes home, the new joys and consolations of becoming Catholic come with new and lingering challenges. “Is God done with me?” many wonder.

It takes time to feel at home in the Catholic Church, and it often takes patience to find a new sense of place and purpose with regards to that call to preach the Gospel. Helping Protestant pastors and ministers persevere in this journey is at the heart of the mission of the CHNetwork. At the darkest moments, we all need to be reminded and encouraged that while Jesus promised his disciples that they would suffer for the sake of the Gospel, He also promised that His grace would be sufficient and that through suffering willingly embraced we ourselves participate in Christ's redemptive act (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Finally, through the journey home to Catholicism, Christ calls converts to live out the full implications of the Gospel in a new and radical way—setting out on an uncertain road with no purse, bag, or sandals. For many, the journey challenges them to live out a Gospel detachment from possessions and worldly security that they may have preached on for years, but which now confronts them in a way they never expected. Perhaps hardest of all is the call to “salute no one on the road,” to detach from the good opinions and acceptance of friends and loved ones for the sake of single-mindedness in following Christ's call to journey onward. The Lord's instructions speak to the interior dispositions of detachment, purity of heart, and radical trust in His providence that are required of all of us if our preaching of the Gospel is to be fruitful—and if we ourselves are to continue being formed and converted by the very Gospel we proclaim.

The powerful stories we read each month in this newsletter are a reminder that we are all called by Christ to be laborers in the harvest, to be lambs willing to suffer with Him, and to travel lightly—undetached from all that would keep us from continual conversion to Him. The stories also remind us that the needs of the many converts and journeyers to the Catholic Church, both clergy and laity, are great. Let us continue the journey while supporting each other in prayer and encouragement.

In Christ,

JonMarc Grodi

Executive Director of the CHNetwork
Host of EWTN's *The Journey Home* Program

Joyful Journey Updates

Catherine, former Methodist Pastor

It was never our intent to become Catholic; we were looking for an oasis, not a destination. But the more we experienced and learned about the Church, the more we were healed in places we didn't know were broken and filled in places we didn't know were empty. Perhaps the greatest gift of all is the Eucharist: "Blessed are those who are called to the Supper of the Lamb." Those beloved words of Scripture have now become a very present and living reality. Thanks be to God! ■

Terry H., former Lutheran pastor

Coming back to the church after serving as a Lutheran pastor for 32 years was a long and prayerful journey. After studying Church history and the Early Church Fathers, I came to the conclusion that St. John Henry Newman did all those years ago during his own conversion from Anglicanism: "One cannot be steeped in history and remain Protestant." I feel totally at home, joyful and at peace. My faith has been emboldened knowing I have finally "gone from shadows into Light." ■

Nataki S., former Non-denominational Evangelical

I was so blessed to make pilgrimage to Rome twice last year for the Jubilee which was amazing. I have been in the Church for two years, and it has truly been such a blessing. Becoming Catholic was the last thing I ever thought I'd do, and it's turned out to be the best thing I've ever done. ■

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

JOIN US ON THE

CHNETWORK FALL RETREAT!

Intended for converts and those on the journey to Catholicism, both clergy and laity, our retreats are an opportunity to gather with the CHNetwork staff and other members of the network for a time of discussion, prayer, and worship. As we share our stories of how Christ drew us to the Church, the obstacles we faced, and the difficulties involved in finding a home in the Catholic Church, our goal is to promote Christian fellowship among the attendees, assist in discernment for those who are facing tough questions or decisions, and to encourage all in an ever greater walk with Christ. Find full details and register at chnetwork.org/retreats.

OCTOBER 5 - 8, 2026

Maria Stein Retreat Center

Maria Stein, OH



Instruction for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) will begin soon in most parishes. If you are planning to join the OCIA process this fall, let us know! Email info@chnetwork.org!

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

Monday, July 6

Frank Cronin

Revert & Former
Atheist

Orig. Air Date: 5/24/21

Monday, July 13

Chad Nelson

Former Pentecostal
Preacher

Monday, July 20

**Dr. Monique
Ruberu**

Catholic Revert

Monday, July 27

Erika Bachiochi

Former Agnostic

Monday, Aug 3

Sam Nunnally

Former Protestant
Pastor



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

Schedule is subject to change.

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



Reflection by Ken Hensley

This past May we held our second annual Clergy Convert Conference in collaboration with Dr. Scott Hahn and the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology in Steubenville, OH. As I prepared to address the opening night of the conference, I looked out and wondered: has there ever been anything like this? Has there ever been in the same room 50 former (some current and on the journey, some with their spouses) Protestant pastors, missionaries and academics, meeting to celebrate together and share their experiences at having left their former lives and ministries to become Catholic? I'm not sure there has been!

Our topic this year was **"Making a Home in the Catholic Church."** Conversion for those who have been in formal ministerial positions within the Protestant world is usually very difficult. The questions many have when they come to us include: How do I bring my family to see what I have come to see? What do I do with all the years of training I went through to become a pastor? What am I to think of the sense of divine calling I had to be a Christian minister, and all the years I spent in ministry? How do I turn around after all that and reinvent myself as a Catholic layman or laywoman?

This year, Kenny Burchard and I were joined by Drs. Scott Hahn, John Bergsma, and Jeff Morrow—all professors of theology and Scripture at Franciscan University—speaking on various subjects related to the theme. A highlight of the conference was David Currie, who wrote the well-known conversion story *Born Fundamentalist, Born Again Catholic*. But the thing that brought me the most joy was watching these men and women, most of whom were led to the Catholic Church by reading the works of men like Scott Hahn and John Bergsma, having the opportunity to get to know them in the intimate environment of a weekend conference where we were sharing all our meals together as well as social times each evening.

We also had the privilege of having some spouses of clergy in attendance. In our work, we have witnessed repeatedly how the journey into the Church for our clergy members is not a solitary one. As they wrestle with the many questions about what it means to leave their ministries, their decision also creates a ripple effect into the lives of their families. One of our participants shared with us the significance of attending this conference with his spouse:

"My wife was able to attend with me this year.

In fact, it was what God did in her this weekend that proved to have the greatest impact on me... On the car ride home from the airport we were talking about the conference and what our biggest takeaways were...After sharing some the things that stood out to me at the conference, I told her what I was struggling with the most was the call consider returning [to my post] as pastor. God knows how much I love those people. He knows how much I love to preach. He knows I need a job. If God is leading me to be Catholic, why would He put this in my lap? Why now?

My wife knew it was time to tell me something she had been hesitant to say previously. A few weeks ago she had been watching an episode of House of David in which Samuel asked Jesse why he sent all his sons to fight except David. Long story short, Samuel said to Jesse, "You are keeping the best for yourself, rather than offering it to God."

As she reflected on that scene and processed what she had heard over the weekend, she understood God was putting me in a position where I had to make a decision. Would I hold on to what I love, keep it for myself? Or, would I sacrifice it to God and for God? Would I grab at the chance to return to what I love, preaching? Or, would I give it up to follow God's call into the Catholic Church? She connected the dots I had been unable to connect.

As she shared this with me, with tears in her eyes, I finally understood. Coming from anyone else, what my wife said to me wouldn't have had the same impact. But I know her. I know her heart. And as she shared her heart with me, my path forward become crystal clear. I knew what I had to do. The decision was made."

The weekend was such a great success that I'm already looking forward to planning another for 2027! Thank you to all who attended and all who played a role in making the event possible! ■

Prayer List



Clergy

- **For Hayden, a ministerial student** who has come to the conviction that he must become Catholic; that the Lord will lead him as he attempts to deal with all the issues involved in changing the path he had planned for his life.
- **For Ignatio, an Anglican priest** looking into the possibility of becoming a Catholic priest through the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter; that the Holy Spirit would lead the way.
- **For Caleb, a former Baptist pastor** who has entered the Church with his wife and children and found new work but is struggling with the loss of the identity he had as a pastor; that the God of all comfort will comfort him and show him how he can be of service in his new life.
- **For Aaron, a Non-denominational pastor** who has entered OCIA; that the Lord's would continue to lead him as he works to bring his family into the Catholic Church.
- **For Cory, a Presbyterian pastor** in the process of resigning his ministry and moving his family to potentially enter a PhD program in Catholic theology; that the Holy Spirit would offer guidance in his new journey.
- **For Henry, a Presbyterian minister** who has begun attending OCIA and is preparing himself for the very difficult work of resigning his pastoral ministry to enter the Catholic Church; that the Lord will give him the courage he needs to follow his conscience in this matter.
- **For Austin, an Evangelical pastor** who left his pastoral position, entered the Church, and moved his family across the country to begin a new career; that the Lord will bless him in his work and as he seeks to lead his wife and children forward.
- **For Toby, a Baptist pastor** who began a deep study of the early Church and the case for Catholicism two years ago and is drawn to understand the ancient Church; that the Lord will lead him in his studies.

- **For Jeremiah, an Evangelical pastor** struggling deeply with how he would make a living and support his family if he were to leave his current position to become Catholic; that God will give him courage and wisdom.
- **For Julian, a Lutheran pastor** who is studying the case for Catholicism and finding himself drawn toward the Church; that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead him.
- **For John, a Baptist pastor** who has over the last two years become convinced that at the appropriate time he must become Catholic, but has a number of issues that stand in his way, including some serious medical issues; that God would bless him with healing and continue to lead him on his journey.

Lay

- **For David, a Non-denominational Evangelical**, that his friends and family would have open hearts to his interest in the Catholic Faith.
- **For Phil, a former Catholic**, that the Holy Spirit would guide him home to the Catholic Church.
- **For Karry**, that, as he delves more deeply into the teachings of the Catholic Church, he will gain a growing desire to embrace all of the fullness of its truth.
- **For Robert, a former Catholic**, that God would grant him the grace to make a good confession and return to the holy Eucharist.
- **For Michael, an Evangelical**, that our Lord Jesus would give him answers to the questions he has about the doctrines of the Catholic Church.
- **For Christopher, a Methodist**, that his interest in the Catholic Faith, inspired by Pope Leo XIV, would bear much good fruit.
- **For Joseph, a Non-denominational Evangelical**, that his search for information to be better informed would bring him to the Altar of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **For Leonardo, a Baptist**, that he may be given guidance, wisdom, and discernment for him and his family and the journey to the Catholic Church.
- **For Joshua, a Jewish brother**, that the Holy Spirit would guide him home to the Church of his Messiah.
- **For Vince, an Eastern Orthodox believer**, that he be granted the grace to come into full communion with the Successor of St. Peter.
- **For Mohamed, a Muslim**, that our Lord Jesus would open the doors to enable him to receive holy Baptism.
- **For Bartek, a Pentecostal**, that he and his family would find guidance as they return home to the Catholic Faith.
- **For Annagrace, a Non-denominational Protestant**, that the Holy Spirit would bless her with consolation so she might feel comfortable going to a Mass alone and guidance to find a good parish to attend.
- **For Pam, an Evangelical**, that the Lord may bless her with family unity in faith with her grown children.
- **For Jody, a Lutheran**, that she may be given the grace of perseverance as she and her husband begin their journey home and family unity in the faith with their children.
- **For Debra, an Evangelical**, that the Lord may grant her good health, the grace to become Catholic, and marital unity in the faith.
- **For Trenda, an Evangelical**, that God may bless her with the grace of perseverance as she continues on her journey of faith.
- **For Amanda, a Baptist**, that she may receive the grace of good discernment of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God's voice so she can stand on the promises of God and confidently articulate what and why she believes what she does.
- **For Renee, a Lutheran**, that the Lord grant her wisdom and comfort as she continues her journey home to the Church and for marital unity in the faith.
- **For Stephanie, an Assemblies of God member**, that the Lord may bless her with good health.



Introducing a new avenue for you to partner in mission with the Coming Home Network!



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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
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43702-8290



740.450.1175



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The Coming Home Network International



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

Encourage them to connect with us!
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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.

had previously believed. It was an ongoing process that could be jeopardized by one's own infidelity. We can rightly say that the Israelites were saved from the Egyptians after they were "baptized" into the Red Sea through Moses. But only a few of them were "saved" into the Promised Land after their baptism. Similarly, those who are baptized into Christ must continue to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12) knowing that only those who "endure to the end will be saved" (Mt. 24:13).

With newfound enthusiasm to uncover the typological treasures hidden in the Old Testament and revealed and fulfilled in the New, I would soon turn my attention to the Sacrament of Sacraments: the Eucharist.

Amidst this madness, I met the second greatest gift of my life next to Jesus: my sweet wife, Bridgette! We ended up marrying before the end of our time in the school. What a gift she was through that time and for the rest of my life. Praise be to God, that He put us on the same trajectory early on in our time together. We began to see and question things similarly and were able to accompany one another on the long, winding road of conversion. He knew that we needed one another.

During my second year of school, I felt more strongly that while some of the doctrines being taught might be sound, some were certainly mistaken (and probably heretical). However, I was at an epistemic dilemma with the Protestant framework I'd inherited.

How did I know what I believed was true and what they were teaching was false? We all had the same 66 book Bible but were coming to 6,600 different denominational conclusions. When two folks are reading the Bible and coming away with two different incompatible interpretations, how do you know who is in line with the Truth? As a Protestant, I didn't have a satisfying answer to this question.

This uniquely Protestant problem arises because of the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* that was introduced at the Protestant Reformation: that Scripture alone is the sole infallible authority for Christian faith and doctrine. However, in practice, one's *own* interpretation becomes the sole infallible authority for Christian faith and doctrine.

The chaos became clearer upon reflection: what did good-willed Protestants do when they got a new pastor whose preaching they disagreed with? They would go find a more "biblically sound" church. And how did they know when they'd found one? Well, they'd agree with that pastor's interpretation of the Bible! I'd seen this story play out dozens of times in my short life with friends and family.

I had been raised to believe that the Bible was God's inerrant word. I could always trust the Bible. But, I could not always trust myself. If there was no infallible *interpretive authority* (like a Church established by Jesus) then our attempt to discern Truth would remain a close approximation at best, and this was not

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THE GIFT OF THE CONVERT, THE GIFT OF COMPASS



Every time a pastor enters the Catholic Church, the whole Church receives a gift. I have seen that firsthand. For twenty years I served as a pastor in three Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. I taught through the Bible, disciplined believers, and devoted my life to helping people follow Jesus. It's what I thought I'd be doing for the rest of my life. But over time, questions emerged that I couldn't ignore—questions about the origin and interpretation of Scripture, the authority of the Church, and even the validity of my own ordination. Those questions led my wife MaryJo, my son Victor, and me into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil in 2019. And though none of them knew a thing about me, a faithful group of monthly donors were already helping make that journey possible. Through their generosity, the *Coming Home Network* was there for my family at exactly the moment we needed it most. They were our **COMPASS**.

Before I ever came to work for *CHNetwork*, I became a **COMPASS** donor myself. I wanted to give back to the ministry that helped guide my family home. And today, as Director of Development, I still see **COMPASS** the same way: faithful Catholics helping seekers find companions on the road home. That's part of what makes this ministry so extraordinary. The Church receives the gift of the convert—men and women who bring love for Scripture, zeal for evangelization, and a deep desire to serve Christ faithfully. But converts receive a gift too: people willing to pray, listen, answer hard questions, and walk with them through one of the most important journeys of their lives. And this year, we need your help more than ever. More pastors, missionaries, and curious Christians are reaching out to *CHNetwork* than ever before. Every week we hear from people wrestling with life-changing decisions, looking for clarity and faithful guidance as they follow where God is leading them.

This is why **COMPASS** matters. More than 600 monthly donors now give \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100 each month to help seekers find their way home. Their generosity funds the free distribution of the *CHNewsletter* you're holding in your hand, pastoral care, clergy-to-clergy networking, and one-on-one support for people making one of the most important decisions of their lives. If *CHNetwork* has ever strengthened your faith or reminded you of the truth and beauty of Catholicism, I want to invite you to join us. Visit chnetwork.org/COMPASS, return the enclosed envelope, or scan the QR code to become a **COMPASS** partner today.



In Christ,
Kenny Burchard—Director of Development, *The Coming Home Network International*

satisfying to me. I wanted the whole Truth! I wanted all of Jesus, not just my best estimation of Jesus!

Ironically, the school of ministry that unveiled this problem also provided me the solution: a church history class, specifically on early Christian worship. This was a dangerous class—a powder keg with a delayed fuse set to implode my career about ten years down the road.

Instead of searching for answers to these doctrinal questions from inevitably varying contemporary scholars, I began to discover and read texts from early Church Fathers who lived during the first few centuries of Christianity—they were the ones closest to the Source. It struck me that these men sounded very different from many of the Baptist, Methodist, Assemblies of God, or other denominational teachers I'd had. In fact, they sounded *very* Catholic especially regarding the sacraments and ecclesiology.

The patristic source who hit me the hardest was St. Ignatius of Antioch, who lived at the turn of the second century and was a disciple of John the Beloved, one of Jesus' Twelve Apostles. St. Ignatius had one degree of separation from the Word of God Himself. And in chapter seven of his letter to the Smyrnaeans he wrote a warning against the Gnostic heretics of that time:

"But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the grace of Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God...They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because *they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ* [emphasis added], which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again."

When I read this letter from the second century bishop, I was cut to the heart. Up to this point I'd held a symbolic/memorialist view of communion—that communion, like baptism, was merely a meaningful symbol. But by holding this perspective, St. Ignatius was putting me in the same category as the Gnostics.

I abstained from the Eucharist because I did not confess the Eucharist to be the true flesh and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. I began to see that this perspective of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist was not some medieval innovation, but that it had been believed by the Church from Her foundation. It made sense now why Paul would inform the Corinthians that the reason people were dying among them was because they were unworthily taking Holy Communion (1 Cor. 11:27-30). As my friend Justin Hibbard says, "symbols don't kill people!"

It also began to make sense why Jesus would allow his own disciples to walk away from Him after teaching that His flesh was true food and that his blood was true drink in John chapter 6. They hadn't misunderstood Him; they were just unwilling to

accept this hard teaching in faith like Peter and the other Apostles. At the Last Supper, those Twelve who remained with Jesus had the eyes of their hearts enlightened to see what our Blessed Lord had meant when He took bread, broke it and gave it to them saying, "this is my body," and of the chalice, "this cup... is the New Covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:19-20). When the Word of God who spoke creation into existence out from nothing says *it is*, then it most certainly shall be.

With openness to the sacramental understanding of the Eucharist, I began a decade-long journey of seeking to understand many more of these "religious" Catholic doctrines and practices that I had been averse to most of my life.

Real Relationship

By God's grace, my bride and I graduated from the school and started off our marriage serving on the mission field in India for several months. Once we returned stateside, I was hired as a children's pastor at a Non-denominational church in Dallas, Texas. Though there were some amazing families in this community, and sweet moments of seeing lives brought near to God, it was an incredibly difficult season of ministry that left us discouraged and nearly burnt out. Even so, the call to ministry and leading people into relationship with Jesus had not dried up.

After a couple of years, I accepted a youth pastor position at a smaller Non-denominational community church just outside of Atlanta. I was impressed to learn that though they only believed communion was just a symbol, they received the Lord's Supper every Sunday and did their best to honor it as a sacred moment—and they weren't thrown off that I was around ninety percent Catholic in my convictions.

Over the years, I had immersed myself in Catholic resources. I became acquainted with the works from scholars like Dr. Scott Hahn (*Rome Sweet Home, Hail Holy Queen, The Lamb's Supper*) and Dr. Brant Pitre (*Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*). I began to regularly listen to content from apologetes like *Pints with Aquinas* and Bishop Robert Barron's *Word on Fire* and, of course, anything from Fr. Mike Schmitz. I became more comfortable with—and even convicted—that the Catholicism I'd once viewed with suspicion was a bastion of truth in a world of relativism.

It was an amazing season of ministry and respite for my sweet wife and me. We experienced the loving care of our senior pastor, Mike, who was, and is, a friend and a real pastor: a shepherd of souls. I was given free rein to build a vibrant, tight-knit youth group, while also serving in the church's music ministry. We weathered the cultural storms of 2020 together and welcomed our first daughter into our family at this church. We were loved and I was content. I was happy. Until one day... I wasn't.

**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)

...Journeys Home Continued...

On Sunday, June 19, 2022, I was cut to the heart with a deep sorrow I had never felt before, nor to this day have felt again. Nothing to my knowledge was wrong. None of my loved ones were sick or suffering, yet I was.

I left as soon as I could after the church service ended, and wept on my drive home, crying out to God to show me what was going on. After arriving at home, I turned on a Catholic homily for that Sunday and discovered the reason for my downcast soul.

Though I had become familiar with many of the Catholic doctrines and dogmas and “religious” devotions that had once seemed opposed to a real relationship with Jesus, I was still (and still am) getting acquainted with the multitude of feast days. And that day, I learned from the man in the Roman collar, was the Feast of Corpus Christi, also known as the Feast of the Most Precious Body and Blood of Jesus. This is the day that the universal Church celebrates in unity the inestimable and unfathomable gift of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist. The Holy Spirit had pierced my heart and allowed me to experience the insatiable longing for which I was made.

All throughout the world, Catholics were celebrating and receiving my Jesus in the most personal and intimate way humanly and divinely possible this side of Heaven, and yet I could not. Not because the Catholic Church was judgmental and exclusive, but because I had not yet come into full communion with that same Church. It would have been an act of dishonesty for me to receive this Holy Communion when I was not yet in full communion with the Church who administered this Sacrament of Sacraments. It was not this Church who needed to change—for She cannot change no matter how hard her enemies within and without have tried throughout history—it was me.

My Jesus gifted me to suffer this longing for my body, blood, soul, and humanity to be united to His very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. And simultaneously He gave me a taste of His great desire to be united to me. It was time to sell it all and buy the field, for I had found the Great Treasure. It was time to come home, no matter the cost.

God *will* give you the grace to do whatever He says to do. The only reason St. Peter walked on water was because Jesus commanded him to come out to Him upon the waves—and as he did so have we.

My sweet wife and I were both confirmed and received into the Catholic Church on Pentecost Sunday in 2023—our own personal Pentecost and the greatest altar call of my life. I received Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior that day as my daily bread for Whom I had begged every time I had prayed the Lord’s Prayer throughout my life.

He also miraculously provided me a job in perfect timing with a local ecumenical pro-life clinic; my family never missed a paycheck. Now, I have the joy of giving talks at Catholic parishes, teaching a family discipleship program, and sharing my testimony to any who will listen.

We have been incredibly blessed— not primarily because of smooth transitions and miraculous provisions—but rather because of the One Whom we received and Who received us.

Throughout my entire Christian life, I have desired a deep,

intimate relationship with Jesus—and during the times when I have not, I’ve wanted to. There are many things which prevent us from drawing near to the God who loves us into existence, but the main obstacle apart from obstinance is ignorance. Thankfully, God is Love—and Love is patient, kind, and forbearing.

For so long I hated, or rather was indifferent (which is arguably worse), towards Catholicism due to my misunderstanding. I believed that “religion” was a bad word and something to be avoided at all costs, or else it would cost me my most important relationship. The truth is that “religion” is what I was longing for the entire time, because true and pure religion not only takes care of the orphan and widow (James 1:27); it is the way to a real and true and substantial relationship with Jesus Christ.

“Religion” originates from the Latin word *religare*, which means “to bind”. If a religion is binding you to a false god or pretentious pride, then it is to be avoided. But it is clear through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and Christian history that God Himself established a New Covenant—a new religion fulfilling the Old which is a clear way to bind oneself to Him.

This religion is promulgated by that same one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church which Christ Himself established. It is this Church which is the pillar and foundation of truth (1 Tim. 3:15). It is this Church who has survived trials and tribulations and persecutions and wicked leaders without compromising her fidelity to teach only that which She has seen and heard from Her Bridegroom. And it is this same Church that gives to us that same Jesus, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in the Most Holy Eucharist which is *the* way we bind ourselves to Him.

Our Blessed Lord promised to never leave us nor forsake us even till the end of the age, and He has most certainly kept His promise. We get to receive Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior at every Holy Mass in the Blessed Sacrament. And He really and truly receives us.

This religion is the relationship for which we have been made.

Truly adored.

Truly received.

Truly, truly I say unto thee:

Blessed art thou, lacking nothing indeed,

For I Am with thee, and thou art with Me. ■

Grant Adams is the husband of his sweet wife, Bridgette, and father of their three wild kids. After several years of children’s, youth, music, and pastoral ministry, God brought him and his family home to the Catholic Church to receive Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior in the Most Holy Eucharist. Grant currently serves as the teen chastity educator for an ecumenical pro-life clinic in Lawrenceville, GA, and gives talks to local parishes sharing his testimony and love for the Catholic Faith.

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

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Teach us, good Lord, to
serve you as you deserve;
to give, and not to count
the cost, to fight, and not
to heed the wounds, to
toil, and not to seek for
rest, to labor, and not to
ask for reward, except
that of knowing that we
are doing your will.

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Feast Day: July 31