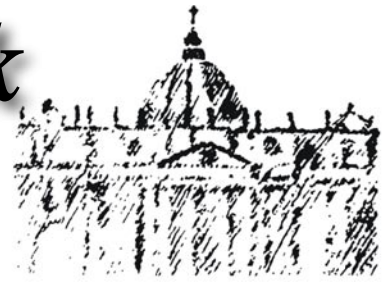


The Coming Home Network NEWSLETTER



The Coming Home Network International
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September 2004

Journeys Home

And There Was Light

by Joshua McMillian

As I lay across my bed, anxieties about the future of my family and my vocation filled my mind, for I had just resigned from the pastorate of my church. The reasons that I gave to my congregation were only partially true, however, for I was terrified at the thought of what my family and I would have to endure once the news of my new emerging beliefs became public. It would cause a spiritual earthquake amongst those with whom I had ministered.

For over twenty years, I served in one form or another of Protestant ministry, becoming fairly well known amongst Pentecostals up and down the east coast. I loved the Lord Jesus with all my heart and soul, mind and strength, and was an avid student of the Scriptures, studying the original text in Hebrew and Greek. Over time, however, I began to experience an elusive, indescribable spiritual unrest. Questions and yearnings of heart became more prominent in my thinking, making my preaching, teaching, and pastoral work difficult and awkward. This was not due to the influence of any specific person, for I knew of no one

who shared these beliefs and questions. Rather they were rising from within my heart as a result of my pastoral work and studies, and this great unrest was making me spiritually famished for the Living God.

“What is wrong with me?” I asked myself and my Lord (and my poor wife who endured this with me). Why was I so miserable, especially when I served communion? Whenever one of my associates or I served, I found myself wanting to move quickly on to something that was real and alive. I would decry to myself and others, “If this is *just* bread and *just* wine, then



WHY BOTHER DOING THIS AT ALL?” I could not reconcile in my mind how *anything* we do as Christians could be “just a ritual.” If our Lord was in it, then *it had to be vibrant and real... charged with His presence.*

As these and other questions plagued my mind, I eventually admitted to my wife that I did not want to administer communion again. It was this thought that literally drove me out of my pastorate.

I presumed, however, that I was simply preparing to begin again in another

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church or evangelistic ministry. Then a few nights later, I experienced a very powerful and vivid dream. In it I was standing in, of all places, a Catholic Church somewhere towards the back, as if I had just walked in. Somehow, I knew that I was late for the service and it was just closing. Then, like a white cloud

billowing throughout the church, I saw the glory and Presence of our Lord. On

the wall to my right was a huge crucifix and to my left I saw someone praying the rosary. In this dream, I began to weep as the realization overwhelmed me that I had missed something wonderful from our Lord. Then, I heard the voice of Jesus say, "There is nothing wrong with statues and pictures as long as they are just to inspire your faith." With this, I awoke. I told my wife about this dream and that I was absolutely sure it was no mere dream but a vision granted by my Lord Jesus, though I didn't understand what it all meant.

A few days later, having remembered seeing a small Catholic bookstore downtown, I decided to stop in and visit. As I entered such strange and foreign territory, no one seemed to be in the store, shopping or working. I looked around and said aloud to myself, "Boy, there are a lot of statues and pictures in here!" Suddenly, a little Irish woman's head popped up from behind the counter and said, "There is nothing wrong with statues and pictures as long as they inspire your faith." Her words were the exact same as those in the vision! All I can say is that it was a miracle. I didn't fall over in a dead spiritual faint on the floor, but I was glowing from this awesome and strange experience and rushed home to tell my wife. Indescribable hope rose in my heart that God might be showing me something to quench my deep spiritual thirst.

But the Catholic Church! I had deep,

dramatic concerns with how far it seemed God was telling me to go with this. As a Pentecostal minister, there were many things that disturbed me about Catholic doctrine, especially given how I understood the Scriptures and what I believed Catholics believed.

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God in the FACE of Jesus Christ.

to one of the Journey Home testimonies, I turned to my wife and said, with what I believed was His inspiration, "He dwells in our bodies, His Presence was in the bones of Elisha and the clothes on Paul's body in the book of Acts... and miraculously, mysteriously, He puts His Body and Blood in the Bread and Wine!" With the witness of this program, our Lord ended for me years of suffering and misery. Even then, however, the

— 2 Cor 4:6

Then back in my bedroom, flipping through the television channels, I found a show on the Catholic station. It intrigued me since the host of the program was a former Protestant minister. He was interviewing another former Protestant minister who was sharing his conversion story to the Catholic Church. Week after week, I found myself looking for this program, listening to convert after convert. Many times I thought that certainly these Catholic answers to Protestant issues would collapse under the burden of proof, but every time the Catholic response held true and began to answer the questions that were deep in my heart. The program spoke of "coming home" and the "journey home," and in my mind, I certainly wasn't 'home' yet, since I still yearned for our Lord's shining face and to adore Him forever. I continued to struggle with many questions, but our Lord used this program to provide answers time and again. I look back now and wonder, "What would have happened if this program had not been there? How many years could have been added to my suffering if He had not been speaking to me through Marcus Grodi and the 'Journey Home' program on EWTN?"

enemy of our souls would return again and again to challenge this insight, but our Lord would use the *CHNetwork* to encourage and strengthen me and reinforce what He had revealed to me.

Time and space do not allow me to even get near the dramatic path He took me down that convinced me to leave the Protestant ministry and join the Catholic Church, but Our Lord used this *CHNetwork* apostolate like a ship that came and rescued me from a desert island.

Our Precious Lord is forever faithful and in His mercy He has allowed me a glimpse of His beautiful shining Face. He has picked me up and He has carried me 'home'. Thanks be to God for the gifts of *EWTN*, programs like the *Journey Home*, and the *Coming Home Network* so that His shining Face can freely be seen by our thirsty and yearning hearts and souls.

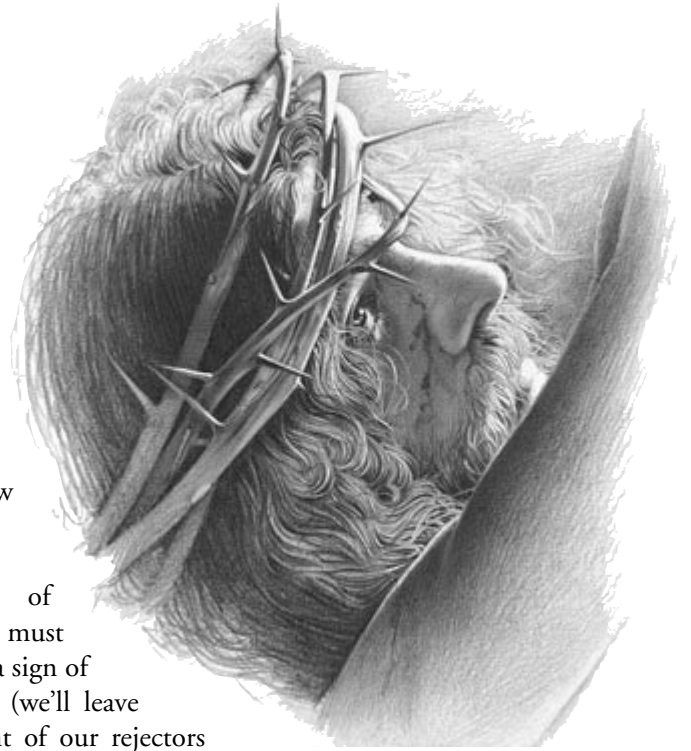


I still remember the day when our Lord showed me without a doubt from the Scriptures that He was truly present Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Bread and the Wine of the Eucharist. My heart overflowed with joy Listening

That Nagging Dust

“And if any one will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.”

— Matthew 10:14



How many times have ministers tried to guilt you into evangelizing (as you ought) by reminding you how, whenever you receive a wonderful gift or make a fantastic discovery, you just naturally want to tell everyone? Of course, some of you like me may have been on the preaching—guilting—side of this. Our congregations had received the greatest gift in the world! Salvation in Jesus Christ. Yet they were surrounded by dozens of friends, family members, neighbors, and business associates who had not received this free gift. As their pastors, we just wanted to prod them into ignoring their fear of rejection or ridicule to do their duty: “Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations...”

But their fears are well founded. Each of our sincerely committed members—every one of us—has experienced the rejection that comes with taking a stand for Jesus. This rejection may be subtle, it may be overt; it may be a harsh word or a cold shoulder; it may be the settling in of an endless silence. And all of this can lead to discouragement and an understandable unwillingness to fulfill our calling to be His witnesses.

So what did Jesus mean when he told us to “shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town”? Sounds kind of harsh. Especially when coupled with what he said next: “Truly, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomor’rah than for that town.”

The key, of course, is that His words must never be interpreted apart from the rest of His teachings. How did Jesus tell us to treat those who reject us, who treat us like enemies? *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love*

your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:43-45)

Shaking the dust of rejection off our feet must not be understood as a sign of judgement, therefore, (we’ll leave the ultimate judgment of our rejectors as something between them and Jesus—it’s not our affair) but rather the setting aside of any lingering emotional effects of being rejected. Like water off a duck’s back.

Ever sink knee deep in a muddy, glucky mire of clay and cow manure? Try walking around the down hill side of our barn! Even once rescued, it’s still nearly impossible to walk with your boots encased in the residual smelly gluck. This is what happens when we allow the dust of rejection to accumulate in our hearts. It not only discourages us from telling others about the joy of knowing Jesus, but the accumulated bitterness of being rejected makes it increasingly difficult to love and pray for our rejectors.

And of course this is equally true for the rejection we receive when we tell others about our conversion to the Catholic Church. Maybe in spades! The ridicule, the suspicion, even the outright expressions of hatred can make for very dust covered, glucky, feet.

I can think of the disastrous, discouraging experience of one clergy convert. Not long after his conversion to the Church, he came home only to find his wife packing to remove herself and their

children from his influence. This was partially because her extremely anti-Catholic parents had convinced her that because he was considering seeking the priesthood, he, therefore, must be a pervert and untrustworthy. This clergy convert has many issues to deal with, and we are doing all we can to encourage and assist him, but how should he respond to the dust of this rejection by his wife and her family? From the same chapter of Matthew, we find Jesus’ difficult words:

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

— Matthew 10:34-38

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Jesus never said that conversion would be easy, but he did say he would never leave us nor forsake us.

There is one other layer of dust, however, that converts sometimes face and need to shake off before it accumulates into bitterness: the rejection by lifelong Catholics, from priests, bishops, religious, and laity who do not understand, appreciate, or even agree with our enthusiasm for Jesus and His Church. Sadly, I know of few former clergy who have had positive experiences once they were hired by a parish or diocese to teach adult education, or direct evangelization, or lead some such ministry. For these highly trained and experienced men and women it becomes increasingly difficult to shake the dust of bitterness off their feet once they have given up everything to become Catholic only to discover that no one is interested anymore in their skills.

Following Jesus is truly a dusty job, but not an unrewarding one. As He said earlier in the same chapter about radical discipleship.

[E]veryone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven."

— Matthew 10:32

Please remember to keep all of our inquirers and convert members in your prayers, for a day doesn't pass for any of us when the dust doesn't try to accumulate.

Sincerely in Christ,

Marcus Grodi

Clergy on the Journey

Scholarship Fund Reminder 2nd Annual CHNetwork Conference

The 2nd Annual CHNetwork Conference — with this year's focus on the Early Church — is just around the corner. We want to remind you that there is still time to donate to the *Scholarship Fund*.

In recent weeks we have received phone calls from several non-Catholic ministers asking if there was a way for them to attend the Conference even though they could not afford the registration and room fees. Thanks to the generosity of many of you, we are able to grant the desire of these clergymen who wish to learn more about the riches of the Catholic Church.

The *Scholarship Fund* is specifically for primary members who have special financial needs and would truly benefit by attending the conference. A full scholarship, which includes conference registration, meals, and motel room for two nights, totals \$308.00. We also offer partial scholarships to those who can contribute a portion of the expenses.

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In order to offer the Conference Scholarships, however, we need the support of CHNetwork members who feel so led, contribute to the Conference Scholarship Fund. All your donations will be greatly appreciated.

If you are a primary member, clergy inquirer, or a convert and would like information about a scholarship, please contact our office for an application. All information about your application will be taken in the strictness of confidence.

Please do not pass up this opportunity to assist your brothers and sisters who wish to grow in their understanding of the fullness of the Faith which is the Catholic Church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Jim Anderson



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. They would be greatly disappointed if, having entered the ecclesial community, they were to find a life lacking fervor and without signs of renewal! We cannot preach conversion unless we ourselves are converted anew every day.

— John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio, 47

Helping 'em Home

In life, we bear numerous Crosses, but how many do we carry in the peace with which Christ bore our sins? "Oh Jesus, meek and humble of heart, hear me." These were the words heard under the breath of Cardinal Merry del Val following each Mass. This was his cry to God—his *Litany of Humility*—to strengthen his own life as he fought his interior battles with the struggles of life (If you want a copy of his beautiful Litany, see our website). These words need to be our words, as we witness the truth of His Church and seek to surrender fully to His will.

By God's grace, the numbers of lay *Inquirers* continues to grow. Over the last month, eighteen new *Inquirers* were paired with *Helpers* to enjoy and profit from the fruit of active Catholic fellowship. Also, two *Inquirers* were received into full communion with the Catholic Church, and are now grateful to offer their time to assist others on the journey. All of you, *Inquirers* and *Helpers*, please keep up your regular

correspondence, and should any of you reach a low, please contact me directly for further aid.

...through the aid of my CHN contact I am slowly finding answers to the questions I have long had of the Catholic Church."

—An Inquirer from CA

I am realizing that many of the (so called) truths I learned as a child are merely misrepresentations of the truth truly taught in Catholic teaching.

—An Inquirer from TN

...hearing someone on the end of the phone who truly cares and finds honest interest in my journey has been the greatest blessing in this walk so far.

—An Inquirer from MN

...many different vehicles were used by God but the Coming Home Network has proven to be a great place of resource and fellowship.

—An Inquirer from WI

Each day by Gods' grace, I have the privilege of meeting so many who love and fear God that my faith can only be revitalized. At the same time, I hear so many stories of spiritual, physical, and mental anguish that my heart cries out, "Hear me, oh Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and heal the meek and broken of heart."

In your prayers, please remember particularly the needs of:

- ✦ Jeff, Carol, Jennifer, and Diane
- ✦ Scott and Lisa
- ✦ Karen
- ✦ Crystal and her family

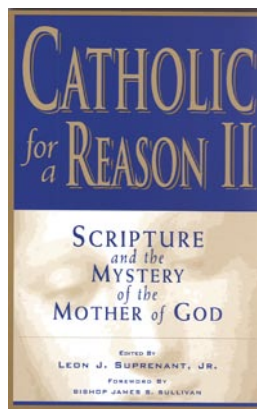
May they find the peace of Christ and His Church.

In Christ, His servant and yours,

Robert Rodgers
Coordinator, The Helpers Network & CHN Events
rob@chnetwork.org

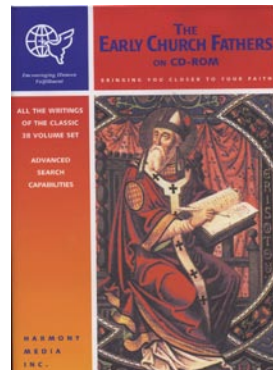
Featured Coming Home Resources

Catholic for a Reason II
edited by Leon J. Suprenant



This book demolishes misconceptions about Catholic teaching on the Blessed Virgin Mary. The truth is that Catholics do not worship Mary. Catholic teaching on Mary is Scriptural, and the Rosary and other Marian prayers encouraged by the Church are not vain repetitions.

The Early Church Fathers CD-ROM
All the writings of the classic 38 Volume Set.



The study of the Fathers has a special place in the Church. The Catechism calls them "models of catechesis" (CCC 8) and "always a timely witness" (CCC 688) to the Tradition of the Church. This CD-ROM allows the viewer to gain an understanding of the Tradition of the Church in an interactive-learning format.

Receive this book with a donation of \$35 or more!

Receive the CD-ROM for your PC with a donation of \$75 or more!

CHAPTER AND VERSE: Defending The Catholic Faith From Scripture

Catholics And The Messiah: Who Decided Jesus Is God?

By Gregory Oatis

THE CHALLENGE: Nowhere in the Bible do you see Jesus claiming to be God. In fact, he clearly states the opposite: "...The Father is greater than I (Jn. 14:28) and again, "...I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (Jn. 20:17). Certainly, Jesus was a great man, a great prophet, perhaps even the greatest human to ever live. But the claims for his divinity were a later addition, concocted by people who wanted to enhance their own positions in the eyes of society.

The question is whether Jesus ever claimed to be "one in substance with the Father," as the Creed puts it so succinctly. And, as is clear in the pages of scripture, Jesus was quite explicit about who he is and why he came.

Now, the verse cited above – and there is an entire set of such passages – show Jesus as subject to the Father. This is not difficult to explain, considering that Jesus is the Son of God. So it is only natural that the Father is in a certain sense "greater" than the Son, as is the case with human fathers and sons.

But Jesus and the Father are also co-equals in terms of their natures – as is also the case with human fathers and sons. No one would say that, even though a human father might be "greater" than his son, that the son is not a human being, alike in substance to his father.

Also, in Jesus' human nature, he is created and is thus subject to the Father. The Father is indeed "God" to Christ's humanity.

But the Bible also gives very explicit witness to Christ's divinity. The most

poetic, of course, is found in the opening to the Gospel of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1-3). This is a simple, beautiful statement of the relationship of Jesus and the Father: "God with God."

Also, note the inescapable meaning of the words of St. Paul: "...You tend the church of God that he acquired with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). In this passage, "God" is the only possible antecedent of the pronoun, "he." So we see that Paul is stating definitively that Jesus is God, for the blood that was shed for the Church was his.

Another very compelling point is the fact that we see the faithful actually praying to Jesus in the New Testament: "As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'" (Acts 7:59).

Key passages in the New Testament present explicit parallels between Jesus and various Old Testament texts and prophecies that referred to Yahweh. Applying such passages to a mere creature would be unthinkable blasphemy.

For example, in Acts 2:25-28, St. Peter applies words David wrote of Yahweh to the resurrected Jesus: "I keep the Lord always before me; with the Lord at my right, I shall never be shaken..." (Ps. 16:8-11).

Other such parallels include Ps. 68:19 and Eph. 4:8; and Joel 3:5 and Rom. 10:13.

Just as telling, Jesus uses the ancient, unutterably sacred name for God in referring to himself: "Amen, amen, I say



to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM" (Jn. 8:58). Such a statement could not possibly have been misunderstood – or overlooked – by the Pharisees.

So we see that the Pharisees and the Sadducees knew what they were doing. As these passages illustrate, Jesus did claim to be "equal to God" (Jn. 5:18) as they charged. His only possible defense was that he was telling the truth!

For if he was not, then he was every bit the blasphemer they made him out to be – and his death was entirely just according to the Jewish law.

So, you see, there is no middle ground. As C.S. Lewis pointed out so deftly, if Jesus was not God, then he must have been either evil or mad. Because no good or holy man makes unfounded claims of divinity unless he is seriously psychologically unbalanced.

Mr. Oatis is author of the book, 'Catholic Doctrine in Scripture: A Guide To The Verses That Are Key To Affirming The Faith', published by CH Resources. It is available at your local Catholic bookseller, or by calling toll-free: 877-455-3208.

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CHN Bulletin Board

Coming Home Conference 2004

Deep in History...Deep in Scripture...Deep in Christ

History of the Early Church

November 5-7, 2004

Holiday Inn, Columbus, Ohio

Members Only Conference Special!

Member Rate \$80

Religious Group Rate (10 or more) \$48

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Newly revised meal plans available for 2004!

Visit www.chnetwork.org/deepinhistory.htm
for more details.

Or make your reservations today by calling
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Limited Space Available!

New Network Added to CHN!

Please see the insert in this newsletter
for our new addition, ***Quo Vadis***.

This youth network will provide guidance to those who
have questions about their family's journey, and even
assistance with their own conversion.

If you have any further questions please contact:

Jon Marc Grodi 740-450-1175 or by email
jonmarc@chnetwork.org

Please notify us of any address changes. If you tell us, it
costs us nothing; if the post office tells us, it costs \$0.60.

Please help us to be better stewards of your donations.

Call 740-450-1175 or e-mail us at info@chnetwork.org.

Thank You.

Attention Members!

If you have joined the Church, or will be doing so soon,
please notify us so we can update our records.

Call us at 740-450-1175 or e-mail info@chnetwork.org.



*Upcoming guests on the
Journey Home Program
on EWTN, Mondays live at
8 P.M. EST*

*September 6
Canadian pre-tape*

*September 13
Fr. Richard Barker*

*September 20
Sr. Mary Rose Chinn*

*September 27
Gerald & Jennifer Tritle*

*October 4
Bruce Sullivan*

***Can't catch the show
when it's broadcast live?***

Tune in for re-airs: (EST)

Tuesdays 1 A.M.

Tuesdays 10 A.M.

Saturdays 11 P.M.

Best of Journey Home:

Wednesday 1 P.M.

Or listen on the Internet at
www.ewtn.com.

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Zanesville, OH 43702

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

That Nagging Dust

“And if any one will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.”

— *Matthew 10:14*

