



April 2009 Newsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



3 Treasures of the Church: Allen Hunt's Journey Home

My friend, Sean, watched his father, Henry, die. Henry had been a WWII hero, a flying Tiger. Henry radiated Yankee independence, frugality, and self-sufficiency. He built his own house in Connecticut. He loved time in the woods. He raised his children well. But now he was gone.

Sean's mother, Mary, continued to live in their family home for the next few years, until she chose to move to Florida. My friend, Sean, helped her clean out the decades of belongings and collections from the family home so she could sell it and relocate. Fifty years of memories had accumulated in that old house.

On the last day of moving out of the old house, Sean took one last walk-through, just to reminisce on years gone by and also to look for any possessions that had been missed in the packing. In his parents' bedroom, Sean noticed an odd screw in the ceiling, an object that had never before captured his attention. Sean knew his dad and knew that the screw surely had some purpose, so he stepped on a stool to look at the screw in the ceiling. When he removed the screw, a panel slipped out of the ceiling. Behind the panel rested two Folger's Coffee cans, each of which was filled with cash. The

thought occurred to Sean that, if his father had hidden cash in one place, there might be others, so Sean soon discovered screws, panels, and coffee cans in holes in the wall all around that old house. By the end of the hunt, Sean had found more than \$5000, hidden years before in the old house by a Depression-era man who knew what we all now know: you cannot always trust banks. Instead of using banks, Henry had carefully hidden his treasure in the ceilings and walls of his old house.

For the first thirty+ years of my life, the Catholic Church was just an old house. Having grown up Methodist, the descendant from at least five generations of Methodist pastors in the South, the Catholic Church existed in my world simply as an old house. The Catholic Church was old and historic, often architecturally remarkable, but never something that attracted my attention in any real way.

Even in my nearly twenty years as a Methodist pastor, I neither liked nor disliked the old house of the Catholic Church. It meant nothing to me; I had no reason ever to notice its existence. It was just an old house, with some old rituals, old buildings, and old ideas. *...continued on page 2*

Journeys Home

FEATURED RESOURCES

CHNI's monthly newsletter is featuring resources that we believe will specifically aid our members in evangelization. The resources we feature are materials that CHNI uses to give away to those on the journey to the Catholic Church.

The Salvation Controversy

By James Akin

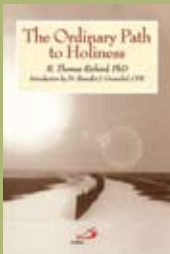


Perhaps nothing splits apart Catholics and Protestants like the topic of salvation. The arguments rage over how we're saved, when we're saved, and whether we can be assured of salvation. If you want to understand both the Catholic

and Protestant positions on salvation--and be equipped to defend the Church's teachings--there's no better guide than "The Salvation Controversy." It's a complete guide to salvation that no Catholic should be without.

The Ordinary Path to Holiness

By R. Thomas Richard, PhD



How do we work out our salvation? What are we to expect, and anticipate, on this journey through life? When our earthly sojourn has ended, what will we have to account for before God? This work provides an overview

of this traditional Catholic spirituality which has been tested and proven in the crucible of the lives of the saints. Understanding this traditional Catholic spirituality will give the reader powerful insights into his or her personal pilgrimage. This book is an invaluable aid to that understanding.

Receive either book with any donation of \$35.00 or more!

Receive both books with any donation of \$50.00 or more!

Please visit
www.chresources.com
for closeout prices on selected books while supplies last.

...Journeys Home Continued...

Along the way, however, God began to reveal to me the treasures hidden in the life of the old house known as the Catholic Church. Over time, as I discovered those hidden treasures, they proved so powerful and meaningful that they led me home to the Catholic Church.

Six hidden treasures, in particular, I discovered in the Catholic Church, but three stand out most of all. And I found them in various parts of the house.

I. The Dining Room: The Treasure of the Eucharist

I found a hidden treasure in the dining room of the old house, but it took fifteen years for me to realize it. This discovery began my journey home and also proved to be the climax of that journey.

After completing seminary at Emory University in Atlanta, my family and I moved to New Haven, Connecticut, for me to pursue a Ph.D. in New Testament and Early Christian Origins. Of the four students admitted to the degree program that year, one was a Presbyterian, one a Jesuit, one a Dominican, and, of course, I was a Methodist. The Dominican friar, Fr. Steven, and I immediately became close friends in our first week at Yale, and he opened the doors to the Catholic Church for me for the first time.

In our second year at Yale, Fr. Steven arranged for the two of us to give Lenten lectures to a group of cloistered Dominican nuns in North Guilford, Connecticut. In their monastery, God planted the seeds for my conversion, seeds which took nearly sixteen years to come to fruition, and seeds which I did not even realize were being planted at the time.

Fr. Steven and I enjoyed a wonderful time with the nuns at the Monastery of Our Lady of Grace. I discovered later that I had been the first male who was not an ordained Catholic priest ever to instruct the sisters behind their enclosure. It was a rare privilege and blessing.

Our lectures focused on Thomas Aquinas, John Wesley, sanctification, and the places where our beliefs intersected far more than we had anticipated. We enjoyed great interaction and conversation with the nuns. After our last lecture, we reserved time for questions and answers. For many of the sisters, I was the first Methodist pastor they had ever met.

One sister, whom I call "Sr. Rose," raised her hand and said something like, "Allen, thank you for having come these past few weeks. We've enjoyed your teaching. You sound so Catholic. After hearing you, I can't help but wonder, Why aren't you a part of the Church?" The question startled me. "I AM a part of the Church," I responded. It had never occurred to me to use that kind of language: a part of THE CHURCH.

It took me a moment to realize what she was saying. Then I responded that there were a handful of reasons why I was Methodist as opposed to being Catholic. I mentioned one reason was the Eucharist. I told her, "It just seems obvious to me that, when Jesus said that He was the Bread, He was speaking metaphorically. I mean, it is bread and juice. I really do not understand why you all take it so literally. It is a symbol."

Sr. Rose then came right back at me, kindly but directly. "Well, you are a New Testament scholar, right? So why does Jesus say..." She then began to walk me through John 6 and Jesus' teaching on the Bread of Life. She then moved to 1 Corinthians 11 and pointed out where Paul uses the language of

Jesus, "This is my body...this is my blood." She schooled me for about five minutes! Then she concluded, "What don't you understand, Allen?" We all laughed, I shrugged it off, and we moved on.

Looking back, however, God planted a seed at that moment. That seed, in the end, led to my conversion.

In the years that followed, God continued to water that seed, often in unseen ways. For example, when my family and I would vacation, I usually worshiped at a Catholic Church, which may seem unusual for a Methodist pastor. As a Protestant pastor, I normally had about four Sundays off per year. I always wanted to worship somewhere since those Sundays were precious occasions when I did not have the responsibility of leading worship. However, worshiping in towns where I knew no Protestant pastors meant that I would be "rolling the dice" since most Protestant worship experiences usually revolve around the pastor's sermon rather than the eucharist. I did not want to squander the handful of Sundays where I could worship on my own by attending a church where I had no idea what the quality of the sermon would be. So I usually worshiped at a Catholic Church where I knew exactly what I would get – not so much a sermon, but a timeless liturgy centered on the Eucharist, the creed, and the sacrifice of our Lord. Frankly, I never thought much about it other than when our family was on vacation.

As time passed, however, I grew increasingly uncomfortable with my role as pastor and the emphasis on the sermon as the centerpiece of worship. As the pastor of the largest Methodist church in the Southeast at that time (in terms of average worship attendance on a normal Sunday), that discomfort put me in an increasingly awkward position. Only then did I begin to examine why the Catholic Church felt like home when I was on vacation. It was because of the altar as centerpiece and the Eucharist as focal point.

Again, this transformation occurred over time, not in some mid-day epiphany. God put pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together in my spirit one at a time over many days and years. But as I reflected on the early Church fathers and how they saw the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and on the early martyrs who went to their deaths accused by earthly authorities of being cannibals for their consumption of the body and blood, God changed my heart.

Such a change of heart was only confirmed by the art of Salvador Dali and then in my reading of Flannery O'Connor and Thomas Aquinas. O'Connor, in her famous comment in a letter to a friend, says regarding a Protestant's dismissal of the Eucharist as merely a symbol, "Well, if it is just a symbol, all I can say is to hell with it... it is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable." And Aquinas, while celebrating Mass himself at the altar, had such a moving experience of the real presence of Christ that he reflected, "All that I have written seems to me like straw compared to what has now been revealed to me."

Ultimately, I realized I had nothing to "protest." Why was I a "Protestant"? I had no real reason to dissent from the mother Church, and when you have no reason, you go home. So I did. Because I had discovered the treasure of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, served in the dining room of this old house all over the world every day at the Mass.

...continued on page 4

CHNI NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL

The *Coming Home Network International's* monthly newsletter is now available to be received by e-mail. Though CHNI members will always be able to continue receiving the newsletter through regular mail, members now have the option to have it delivered right to their inbox. Through e-mail the newsletter is more readily accessible to take with you; it is easier to forward onto friends who are not members, and it is simpler to make multiple copies. As an added bonus, e-mail newsletters will be in full color. CHNI members have the option to receive the newsletter both by e-mail, and through regular mail. To sign up to receive the *Coming Home Network International's* monthly newsletter by e-mail, please contact Rob Rodgers.

Rob Rodgers

rob@chnetwork.org
740-450-1175 ext. 109

NEWSLETTER COPIES

CHNI encourages members to make copies of the newsletter and distribute to friends, family, church groups etc. We do ask that copies of the newsletter not be sold. CHNI and the authors reserve all rights and permissions.



EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME

on television and radio, hosted by
Marcus Grodi, president of CHNI.

TELEVISION

Mondays **LIVE** at 8:00 PM EST
Encores: Tuesdays 1:00 & 10:00 AM EST
Wednesdays 1:00 PM EST
Saturdays 11:00 PM EST

RADIO

Mondays **LIVE** at 8:00 PM EST
Encores: Wednesdays 2:00 PM EST
Saturdays 6:00 PM EST

April 6

Dr. Kenneth Howell
Former Presbyterian pastor

April 13

Dr. Allen Hunt
Former United Methodist Minister

April 20

English Pre-tape

April 27

Pre-tape



...Journeys Home Continued...

II. The Kitchen: The Treasure of Holiness

During our three years in New Haven, my family and I encountered suffering and struggle unlike anything we had ever experienced then or since. I battled ulcerative colitis, a battle that culminated two years after its onset with the removal of my entire colon. My wife suffered two painful miscarriages. We already had two daughters and were delighted to receive more, but that plan failed to materialize. Shortly after the removal of my colon, I was diagnosed with melanoma. Fortunately, the diagnosis came early enough that the cancer was not life-threatening. Nevertheless, for our little family of four, these three years proved to be a crucible of suffering and purification that we had not anticipated, being 1000 miles away from home with no family anywhere in the vicinity.

To make matters worse, for the first time in my life, I was at the bottom of my class. Of the four of us in the Ph.D. program, I clearly was the weakest when it came to academic preparation. My weakness revealed itself most plainly in our coursework in classical Greek. Each day that class presented the greatest struggles I have ever faced in a classroom.

Fortunately, my good friend, Fr. Steven, was far better prepared than I was. So I usually stopped by the priory where he lived each day on my walk home from classes. He could offer wisdom and guidance to help me.

I entered the priory from the rear door, which led into the kitchen. I would sit and chat with the cook, Mary, until Fr. Steven came downstairs to work with me for a few minutes at the kitchen table.

Nearly every time I entered the kitchen, I met Fr. Cajetan Sheehan, O.P. Fr. Caj was 89 when I met him. He stood about 5'2" and weighed perhaps 120 lbs. A wisp of a man. With a fiery spirit. And an aura.

Fr. Caj had "retired" from more than a half-century of pastoring and had evolved into a new ministry of prayer. Each morning and each evening, he and the other priests gathered for prayer. Some attended as they could; Fr. Caj was **always** there. Prayer permeated Fr. Caj's life.

Without fail, each time that I saw him, Fr. Caj asked about my health. He asked about my wife, and he asked about my children. Every time. Without fail. And each time, without fail, he would say in his curmudgeonly New England Catholic priest kind of way, "Well, I've been praying for all of you." I knew those were not empty words. Prayer permeated Fr. Caj's life.

When he retired, the secretary at his new home, St. Mary's Priory, always knew that if someone in the parish needed a pastor in an emergency, Fr. Caj was the one to call. He stood always ready and always eager to go. At age 89, Fr. Caj stood ready to do the right things rather than merely the easy things.

When I met him, Fr. Caj still wore the same clothes he had been wearing for nearly 30 years. He took his small pension each month and placed it in its entirety in the Poor Box, the small box at the front of the church where believers could give to help ease pain and hurts of others. The parish where he lived provided all that he actually needed, and Fr. Caj figured that was enough. So he gave all that he had. At 89.

I will always remember the day that I stopped by the kitchen and ran into Fr. Caj. I knew that he had been in continuous prayer for a friend of ours.

When I saw him, his head was swollen with a large bruise on it. “Fr. Caj, what happened?” I asked. His matter-of-fact reply came, “Oh, I was in the prayer chapel, and I was praying for you. And I fell asleep and hit my head on the railing.” He bowed up with just a touch of pride, the first time I had ever seen someone with a red badge of prayer courage.

I experienced, in a way I had never experienced before, that Fr. Caj had a deep aura of holiness that comes only with time. Fr. Caj possessed a holiness, probably without ever realizing it, that most of us will never attain. A life of faithful prayer, generous and sacrificial giving. A life of eager, willing, and joyful service. Caj and Jesus were good friends. The Spirit of God flowed so deeply in Caj’s veins that it nearly oozed out of his pores. Caj was walking closely with Jesus – seeking to do that which would be helpful and to avoid that which would be harmful.

That holiness never landed him on any magazine cover; it never made him wealthy beyond compare. It just made him a whole lot like Jesus.

“
And that
holiness
made an
impression
on me. An
impression
that never
left me.”

And that holiness made an impression on me. An impression that never left me.

Why had I never encountered anyone this holy before? The question just turned over in the back of my mind for years, slowly cooking in my spiritual crock-pot.

Then, I encountered Pope John Paul II, a man from whom holiness emanated, even through a television. His holiness attracted me like a magnet.

As a Methodist, I knew the theology of John Wesley and his emphasis on holiness. I believed that theology, and I yearned for holiness in my own life. But I had never encountered holiness like that which I observed personally in Fr. Caj Sheehan in the kitchen of St. Mary’s

Priory or vicariously through Pope John Paul II in my reading and viewing.

God put these odd jigsaw pieces together for me through the writing of Thomas Merton. As a Methodist pastor, I normally took a daylong retreat at the Cistercian monastery on the east side of Atlanta. The silence and solitude moved deeply within me. Oddly, I had never considered why I chose a Catholic monastery for my monthly retreats, although it seems a bit obvious now, huh?

One afternoon, I was reading Merton’s *Seven Storey Mountain*, while sitting in the library at the monastery. The words leapt off the page.

First came the words that captured what I had been considering for years but had never been able to articulate.

...continued on page 6



DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Live Radio program with
Marcus Grodi & Guests

Wednesdays **LIVE** at 9:00 PM EST
Encores: Friday @ 9 PM EST
Sundays @ 6 AM EST

Following our Holy Father’s call to rediscover the inspiration of St. Paul and his writings, our *Deep in Scripture* live radio programs will be featuring guests discussing their favorite verses from St. Paul.

The live broadcast of the program has moved to **WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 9 PM EST**. Marcus Grodi and his guest will be taking your calls and emails about the evening’s text from St. Paul.

Go to www.deepinscripture.com for more information.

CATHOLIC ANSWERS’ CRUISE

Marcus is pleased to announce that he’ll be a speaker on Catholic Answers’ upcoming 10-day cruise in the western Mediterranean: October 6-16, 2009.

The theme is *Witnesses to the Faith throughout the Centuries: saints, martyrs, scholars, statesmen, and even art and culture.*

Among the other speakers will be Karl Keating, president of *Catholic Answers*, and Christopher Check, vice president of *The Rockford Institute*.

The Holland America Line ship will sail from Rome. We’ll visit Florence, Monaco, Barcelona, Mallorca, Tunis/Carthage, Palermo, and Naples/Herculaneum. There will be instructive talks aboard the ship and exciting excursions on shore. For complete details, please visit www.catholicanswerscruise.com, or call 1-800-707-1634.



THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTL'

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...Journeys Home Continued...

Professor Hering was a kind and pleasant man with a red beard, and one of the few Protestants I have ever met who struck me as being at all holy; that is, he possessed a certain profound interior peace...

Merton was right. Holiness comes with a profound interior peace, and in the busy-ness of Protestantism, much of which produces Kingdom fruit, I had rarely encountered anything like the holiness I had encountered in several Catholics. In fact, in the monasteries and other settings, I had even encountered whole pockets of holiness. In Fr. Caj, Pope John Paul II, not to mention the witness of the Dominican sisters, Brother Lawrence and countless others, there resided a holiness that I yearned to experience for myself in some measure. A holiness rarely found in my experiences as a Protestant. A holiness that flows from God through the Eucharist in His Church to us.

That holiness is God's calling and promise for each believer, even me. It is a sure thing in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 where the apostle Paul writes,

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.

I experienced that deep level of holiness in the kitchen of this old house. And in many ways, that treasure called me home.

III. The Storage Shed: The Treasure of God's Family

My grandmother died in Ohio in 1991. She had lived in the same house for nearly 60 years, a small four room house near the Ohio River.

When she died, my brother's family and my own joined my parents in Ohio for the funeral and to settle the simple estate. My mom, who is an only child, coordinated the affairs and asked my brother and me to clean out the storage shed in the back yard.

In the shed, we found a large foot locker, looking eerily like a treasure chest. It was locked but not heavy. No one had the key nor knew the key's whereabouts, so my mind instantly began to flash with the idea of a hidden pirate's treasure that my grandmother had stored for years and never revealed to anyone. A treasure of jewels and gold only to be discovered after her death, a treasure that was going to make me rich beyond my wildest imagination and dreams!

My brother and I pried open the treasure chest with a screwdriver, eagerly anticipating the riches that would soon be ours. As we opened the foot locker, we discovered it was filled to the brim with....old pictures. Old, black and white photos. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of them. All kinds of people in all kinds of poses. These photos clearly captured my grandmother's family members, whom I had never met, and friends who had filled her life with joy.

We sifted the pictures through our fingers, and then turned them over, only to discover that none of them contained any writing or identification whatsoever. Sadly, we realized we were in possession of countless photos of people who were important to us but we had no idea who the people were. It was almost like being an orphan. You know you have relatives; you just are not sure who they are.

As a Protestant, I had always known “of” the saints. I just really did not know who they were. I was like a spiritual orphan who had photos of thousands of relatives in the family of God, but had no names or identification for the photos.

In fact, on one journey to England to attend the World Methodist Conference, I visited holy sites like St. Paul’s Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and Canterbury. The event frustrated me to no end because I realized how little all we Methodists had in common other than the name “Methodist” and a loose claim to the paternity of John Wesley. However, while attending the conference and traveling England, I encountered St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher, old relatives whom I had not encountered before. When I heard their stories, and gazed at their “photos”, I saw men of great courage. Men who had lost their lives (by losing their heads) for standing for truth against King Henry VIII.

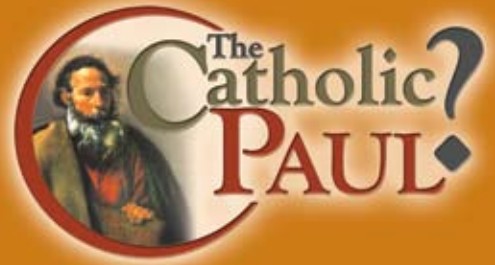
Again, it is my own fault. As I had never really considered teachings on the Eucharist, I just never had really given much thought to where the Methodist Church had come from and its origins in the Church of England. The Methodist Church had always been an assumption for me. My family had been saturated in Methodism for as many generations as we could trace. My relatives had launched Methodist colleges, edited Methodist newspapers, unified Methodist denominations, and led Methodist congregations. I myself had been a pastor and leader in the evangelical realm of the United Methodist Church. Still, I had never seriously considered the origin and authority of my own spiritual home.

St. John Fisher emerged as the chief supporter and trusted counselor of Queen Catherine when Henry sought his divorce. He declared himself ready to die on behalf of the Church and her teaching on the sanctity of marriage. Fisher spent time in prison, lost all his property and possessions, suffered countless indignities and humiliations, and ultimately lost his life for his stance.

In May, 1535, Pope Paul III, made Fisher Cardinal Priest of St. Vitalis. King Henry replied to the pope, telling him not to send the cardinal’s hat to England, saying that he would send Fisher’s head to Rome instead. Fisher was beheaded on Tower Hill, and his head was stuck on a pole on London Bridge for all to see. Fisher became one of the 54 English martyrs of the Church during the Reformation.

Fisher had much to protest. He stood between truth and error, defending truth at any cost. Somehow, I had never absorbed that story before, and it sank deeply into my spirit. I had a bold relative in the faith who called into question the lineage and authority of my own tradition. The questions became clear in my mind: Did I stand in the way of King Henry or in the way of St. John Fisher and the Church? What am I protesting? I could find no justifiable reason to be separated from the Church. Again, I discovered that God was calling me home.

Becoming Catholic has filled my life with the names and faces of countless saints and relatives in the faith. The New Testament uses “family” as a description of the Church more than any other term. I now have a very large family. Family members who walk alongside me, cheer me on, pray with me, encourage and inspire me. Family members from ...continued on page 8



THE CATHOLIC PAUL? CONFERENCE

Conference Registration Rates

Single.....	\$65.00
Married couple.....	\$110.00
Group.....	\$55.00
<i>(To qualify for group rates, you must book ten or more at a single time.)</i>	
Religious.....	\$50.00
Meal Plan (lunch & dinner).....	\$50.00

Location—Easton Hilton

Conference Room Rate	\$165.99
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Contact Information

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www.thecatholicpaul.com



“Saint Paul is Apostle of the Gentiles, who dedicated himself to the spreading of the good news to all peoples, spent himself for the unity and harmony of all Christians.”

“May he guide us and protect us in this bimillenary celebration helping us to advance in the humble and sincere search for the full unity of all the members of the mystical body of Christ.”

—Pope Benedict XVI



...Journeys Home Continued...

SPOUSES NETWORK

The *Coming Home Network Intl'* is pleased to announce the introduction of a *Spouses Network* to our apostolate. The mission statement of the *Spouses Network* reads:

The *Spouses Network* exists to aid and provide fellowship for the spouses of clergy on the journey to the Catholic Church as well as those who are new Catholics. The mission of the *Spouses Network* is that through one-on-one assistance given by spouses of clergy who have embraced the Catholic faith, clergy spouses who are on the journey to Catholicism or have recently become Catholic will find a source of friendship, support, and increased love of Jesus Christ and His Church.

If the *Spouses Network* is something you feel called to, whether you be a spouse of a clergy who has made the journey home and would like to assist someone, or if you are a spouse of a minister and are either on the journey or a new Catholic, we would like to invite you to contact *CHNI* to assist us in the development of this network.

If you would like more information or if you feel called to become a part of this apostolate please contact Mary Clare Piczynski by e-mail at maryp@chnetwork.org or by phone at 740-450-1175 ext 105.

We do ask all the *Coming Home Network International's* members to please keep the *Spouses Network* in your prayers as we seek to answer the needs of those spouses of clergy on the journey home and those who are new converts.

whom I had been distanced in my Protestant formation. Family members who once lay unidentified in the storage shed of the old house but now make themselves known in marvelous ways. Family members who welcome me with gladness into the greatest family of all!

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Heb. 12.1)

In the Atlanta airport, a three-story escalator leads you from the underground tram system up to the baggage claim area. At the top of that steep escalator is a waiting area where moms and dads, sons and daughters, friends and family, stand eagerly awaiting the arrival of their beloved family member who is arriving from a faraway land. The waiters stand with signs, with balloons, and with eager faces teeming with anticipation. They stand waiting and peering at the top of the escalator as each passenger pops into view. "Will the next one be our family member?" "I hope so." "Is that him?" "Isn't she supposed to be here by now?" The waiting area literally tingles with anticipation. Each passenger arrives to squeals of joy, roars of laughter, tears, embraces, and twirling arounds in the arms of the family.

That is how I envision heaven. Each of us arrives one by one into the presence of God, appearing on the horizon like travelers from a faraway land. Our family members and "heavenly greeting team" stand waiting, tingling with delight and joy as they anticipate our arrival.

I do not think that I get to pick, but I can hope that my greeting team includes not only my father and grandmother, but also John Fisher and John Paul II, Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena, Fr. Caj, Sr. Rose, Mary, and Jesus Himself. All waiting to receive me as the newest arrival into the family of God once and for all. Waiting to show me around the newest renovations of this old house. Waiting to say, "Welcome home!" ■



Allen Hunt served as a United Methodist pastor for nearly twenty years. He now hosts a nationally syndicated talk radio show on mainstream news/talk stations. The show focuses on "where real life and faith come together," and can be heard on 75 stations each weekend. He speaks and teaches at churches and meetings around the country and also serves on the Board of Overseers at the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC. Allen was received into the Church on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 2008. He and his wife, Anita, have two daughters, ages 19 and 17. He will be a guest on the Journey Home program on April 13. You may contact Allen at:

*8460 Holcomb Bridge Road
Suite B-210
Alpharetta, GA 30022
www.allenhuntshow.com*

“Take the Log out of Thine Own Eye”... Before You Give Advice

On November 24, 1790, the following was posted in a prominent Boston newspaper:

“Mr. Thayer, Catholic Priest, of Boston, fully persuaded that he has found the inestimable treasure of the Gospel, is greatly desirous of imparting it to his dear countrymen. For this purpose, he offers to preach on the evenings of the week days, in any of the neighboring towns. If any persons desire to hear the exposition of the Catholic faith, (of which the majority of Americans have so mistaken an idea) and will furnish any place for the accommodation of hearers, Mr. Thayer will be ever ready to attend them. He will also undertake to answer the objections any gentleman would wish to make, either publicly or privately, to the doctrine he preaches; and promises that if any one can convince him he is in error, he will make as public and solemn a recantation of his present belief, as he has done of the Protestant religion in which he was educated. —Freely he received—freely he gives.”

For a time there were no responses, until January, 1791, the following appeared in the same newspaper: *“As the gauntlet is thrown by Mr. Thayer, it is taken up by George Leslie.”*

A month later Father Thayer submitted his first of many apologetic salvos, which he described as follows: *“By way of preface to the controversy which I am opening, and to avoid all misrepresentations of our doctrines, I here offer to the public an abridgment of the Catholic faith.”*

Before Mr. Leslie was able to respond, however, the following very interesting article appeared, first a week later in the New Jersey Journal and then immediately afterwards in several other East Coast papers. The article, submitted anonymously, was a word of dyer warning to this Protestant David preparing to attack the “papist” Goliath!

What is extremely interesting about this article of warning—and why I am passing it along for your pleasure—is that **the author does not seem to catch the significance of his own warning.** In trying to caution Mr. Leslie to make sure that everything he argues is firmly supported in Scripture, he does not seem to recognize that, as a result, no Protestant, including himself, can stand against this “papist” Goliath. He is blind to the short-comings of *sola Scriptura*.

Read for yourself. . .



New Jersey Journal, March, 1791:

“As Mr. Leslie has accepted the challenge given him by Mr. Thayer in defense of the Roman Catholic faith, a friend in the protestant camp presents his compliments to Mr. Leslie, requests him to examine well, before he takes the field with this Goliath, whether there are any appendages of popery cleaving to his system of religion, and, like David, lay them aside, as they will be found an unwieldy and dangerous part of his armor.”

“As a consistent protestant, Mr. Leslie will attempt to defend no doctrine, principle or practice in religion, for which he has not a “Thus saith the Lord.” The moment he goes beyond this, he enters papal territory; and it is presumed Mr. Thayer will fight him well on his own ground. As soon as any doctrine or

practice is admitted, for which there is not Scripture authority, a popish principle is admitted; and so far our ground becomes indefensible.”

“If Mr. Leslie may believe or practice any one article in religion, for which he has not Scripture evidence, Mr. Thayer, or any one else, may believe or practice two, five, or ten articles on the same principle, and so on ad infinitum. It is by the admission of this principle, the door has been opened to the introduction of all the corruptions of christianity.”

“If Mr. Leslie is of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and, in the course of the contest, it is demanded of him, what Scripture authority he can produce for the constitution—numerous offices—long liturgy—various festivals, &c. of his church?—the Scriptures knowing of no constituents of a Gospel Church, but professing believers; no officers in it, but pastors, elders or bishops, and deacons; nothing of a liturgy; nor of any festivals in the gospel dispensation, any more than it does of the fourth of July; they must fail to support him. He must be led to argue from the Fathers, councils, synods, canons, made in the corrupt ages of the church, or from the like sources. Here will not Mr. Leslie find himself in an awkward situation? Every step he advances, he establishes papal principles. In fighting his own, he fights the battles of his adversary. Mr. Thayer may stand still and see him fight on, and reap the advantage; or attack him on every side, with as powerful arguments, for the defense of the constitution—very numerous offices—extensive liturgy—ceremonies and festivals in the Catholic Church; cut off his retreat and must ensue?”

“If Mr. Leslie belongs to the Presbyterian department of the Protestant allies, and in the debate it is required of him, by what Scripture evidence the constitution of his church, and the aristocratical jurisdiction of presbyteries, synods and triennial general assemblies, assumed over individual church is supported? How will he furnish himself with precedent or example from the New Testament? Does it know any more for him in this situation than in any other? Does it know of any other materials for a Gospel Church but professing believers, or any other spiritual jurisdiction in it, but the church and its pastor or bishop, governed by the laws of Christ in his word? If so, will not Scripture fail to support the constitution and hierarchy of his church? Will he take refuge in the dark regions of the church, and plead the authority of Fathers, councils, Synods, or ancient usages of the Church? Will he thus desert the sacred records, and, by so doing, establish papal principles? Will he plead that any of these important articles respecting the constitution and spiritual jurisdiction of a church of Christ, are left to human prudence? Let him tell us also by what authority. Is not the exercise of human prudence as free for Mr. Thayer and his fraternity, as it is for Mr. Leslie and his brethren? It may also be asked, where are the boundaries of which it may be said, this far shalt thou go and no further? Will not Mr. Thayer smile, to see Mr. Leslie pleading from principles which are the very basis of the papal hierarchy, and establishing, instead of demolishing it? Arguing from these sources, is but running into an ambuscade, where Mr. Thayer will bring him up on right and left, front and rear, with like powerful argument in support of the constitution and hierarchy of the Roman Church. How will Mr. Leslie make an honorable retreat?”

"If Mr. Leslie is of the independent or Congregational branch of the Protestant Church, though nearer the primitive pattern of gospel simplicity; yet are there not some usages in his community of which a papal antagonist will avail himself to great advantage? If it should be demanded of Mr. Leslie, by what authority he practices the christening of infants? What will he answer as a fair and honest disputant? The Scripture is silent as death on the subject—no command—no example—Mr. Leslie's more candid and judicious brethren of almost every distinction in the Protestant Church have acknowledged it —Scripture failing him—he must here also be reduced to the necessity of trudging up through the adulterated ages of Christianity into the third century, a century remarkable for innovations in religion, where it is first mentioned by Tertullian, but mentioned by him with disapprobation—By the same authority of the fathers, and ancient usages of the church; Mr. Thayer can plead baptism is a regenerating ordinance—the authenticity of the sign of the cross in baptism—the use of cream and spittle, too—holy unction—exorcism—infants' right to the Lord's Supper, &c. &c. with almost every tenet of popery. How will Mr. Leslie come off the field this foiled by his own weapons?"

"A friend could exemplify the application of this principle to every department of the Protestant Church; but hopes what has been said may have a tendency to shew, that this principle of admitting any doctrine or practice in religion, for which there is not Scripture authority, is the very life—the soul of popery—that without it, antichrist can have no existence—that to make good every step of genuine protestant ground, it must be laid aside, that the reverse—the principle of receiving nothing in doctrine or practice in religion, but what has "a thus saith the Lord for it," under the equal government of the United States in matters of conscience, would do every thing, that human agency can effect, to sever the world from the church, and restore her to her primitive simplicity and original glory. He wishes this swaggering popish emissary may fall like Goliath; but he wishes his brother David would go forth with only his sling and stones of Scripture

authority. Thus armed, he ardently wishes him to advance; he will devoutly pray for his success, and rejoice with the armies of Israel to see the Philistine fall—He will conclude by adding an anecdote from Crosby's history, vol. 4 page 247."

"In the days of king Charles Ild lived Mr. Jeremiah Ives, an eminent baptist minister, particularly noted for his great polemical abilities. The king being acquainted with his character, sent for him to dispute with a popish priest. Mr. Ives appeared in the habit of a clergyman; and the dispute was carried on in the presence of the king and many others. In the course of the debates, his opponent pressed the priest very closely, showing that whatever antiquity they pretended to, the doctrine and practices of his church could by no means be proved apostolic, since they are not to be found in amy writings which remain of the apostolic age. The priest, after much wrangling, at last replied, that this argument was of as much force against infant baptism, as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. Mr. Ives readily granted it was so. This concession gave the priest an opportunity to know his man; and he immediately broke up the dispute, declaring that he had been cheated, and would proceed no farther: for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the established church, and it was then evident his antagonist was an anabaptist preacher."



The author of this article from 1791 said it well himself: "If Mr. Leslie may believe or practice any one article in religion, for which he has not Scripture evidence, Mr. Thayer, or any one else, may believe or practice two, five, or ten articles on the same principle, and so on ad infinitum. It is by the admission of this principle, the door has been opened to the introduction of all the corruptions of christianity." This is precisely why there are today more than 35,000 independent Christian denominations or traditions: the Bible alone can not stand as a trustworthy authority for truth, apart from the Spirit-guided Church to whom the Scriptures were given. —Sincerely In Christ, Marcus Grodi ■



Helper's Network Update

The *Coming Home Network Intl'* is updating its information for the *Helpers Network*. If you have not already responded to the survey by e-mail, *CHNI* would deeply appreciate if current helpers would fill out the survey so we can verify and/or update our current information and better serve our members.

If you are currently a Catholic and would like to be part of the *Helpers Network* and assist someone who is interested in the Catholic Church please contact Mary Clare Piecynski.

Please return survey information to:

Mary Clare Piecynski
PO Box 8290
Zanesville OH 43702
maryp@chnetwork.org
740-450-1175 ext. 105

Name: _____

Do you still wish to be considered a Helper? Yes No

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Phone number 1 — Cell Home Work : _____

Phone number 2 — Cell Home Work : _____

E-mail address you prefer: _____

Are you a convert to Catholicism? Yes No

If yes, from what denomination did you convert? _____

Do you currently have a helpee (*a person interested in the Catholic faith*)? Yes No

If no, would you like a helpee? Yes No

If yes, would you be willing to have another helpee? Yes No

Comments: _____



DEEP IN HISTORY MP3s

The Coming Home Network is moving history forward, with all past *Deep in History* Conference talks now available in MP3 format through our website. Check out www.deepinhistory.com and click on a

previous year's conference page. There you will find a list of all the talks with a link for downloading. Each talk will cost \$5.

Take our Catholic history wherever you go as we continue to make our resources more accessible to you.

Prayer List

Clergy

■ For Lloyd, an Episcopal priest in Texas, that he would find a good mentor who will inspire his to complete his journey to the Catholic Church.

■ For Tom, a Lutheran minister in Pennsylvania, that as he draws near to the Holy Eucharist the Holy Spirit would guide him as to his true calling in the Church.

■ For John, a Southern Baptist minister in Virginia, that God would eliminate any barriers that may remain before him in his journey to the Church.

■ For the wife of a Congregational minister in Iowa, that the Holy Spirit would comfort her as her husband seeks his home in the Catholic Church.

■ For a Mennonite pastor in Virginia, that Jesus would reveal the fullness of his truth to him in the Church founded on the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the corner stone.

■ For Allen, an Episcopal priest and his wife in Alabama, that God would effectively call them home to the true holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus.

■ For Todd, a Non-denominational professor, that he would find the truth, peace and joy for which he is searching in the Catholic faith.

■ For Casey, a Baptist minister in Texas, that the Holy Spirit would guide his prayer and study for the Truth.

■ For Bill, a Church of Christ lay minister, that he may learn the rich depths of holiness and truth in the original Bible Church which is in communion with the successor of St. Peter.

Layity

■ For Trisha that her desire to enter the Catholic Church be met with support from her family and friends.

■ For a young lady who is exploring the Catholic Church, that she be given the grace to follow God's will (QV).

■ For all of those who are on the journey to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ.

■ For Penny, that God endow her with the richness of his grace.

■ For all those who are considering a religious vocation.

■ For Diane and her children, that they rediscover the truth and beauty of Catholicism.

■ For a member as he seeks to minister to an agnostic friend.



■ For Jill who is battling cancer.

■ For Julie and her recent hip replacement.

■ For Natalie and Mia, that our loving God may grant them healing.

■ For David, that he may find gainful employment.

■ For Lee as he learns more about the teachings of the Catholic Church.

■ For Caroline and her cancer treatment.

In every issue we include timely prayer concerns from the membership. All members are encouraged to pray at least one hour each month before the Blessed Sacrament for the needs in general and specific of the *CHNetwork*, its members, and supporters.

Please submit all prayer requests & answers to:

CHN Prayer List

P. O. Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

You may also email your prayer requests to:

prayers@chnetwork.org

We use only first names to preserve anonymity, and the following code: (QV) *Quo Vadis*

The Coming Home Network International

P.O. Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702

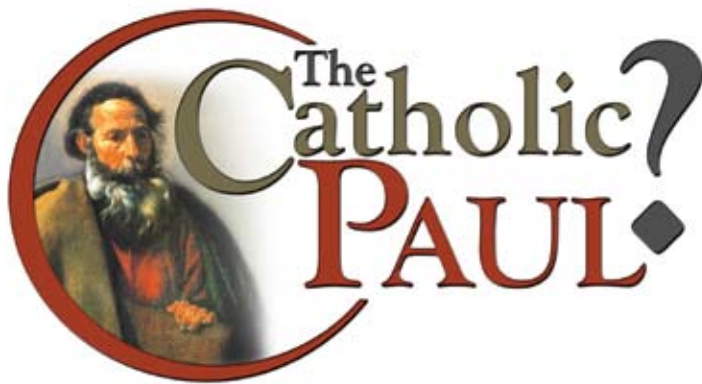
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Marcus Grodi & Dr. Scott Hahn

— along with —

**The Coming Home Network International &
The Saint Paul Center for Biblical Theology**

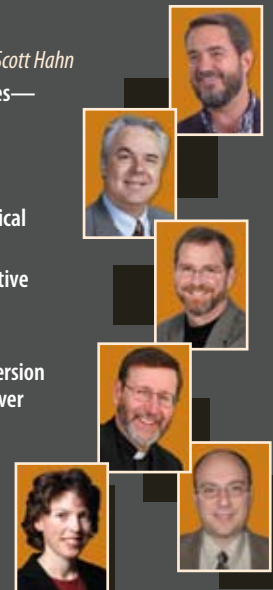
— present —



Saturday - May 16th, 2009 - Hilton Easton - Columbus, OH

SCHEDULE

- 9:00 The Catholic Paul—*Dr. Scott Hahn*
- 10:15 Paul through Jewish Eyes—*Dr. Jeff Marrow*
- 11:45 Mass
- 1:00 Lunch
- 2:15 Saint Paul and the Mystical Life—*Dr. Mary Healy*
- 3:15 The Mystery of Redemptive Suffering—*Jeff Cavins*
- 4:30 Dinner
- 5:45 The Pauline Texts: Conversion through The Verses I Never Saw—*Marcus Grodi*
- 6:45 Romanism to Rome—*Father Mitch Pacwa*
- 7:45 Closing—*Marcus Grodi*



For more information contact:
COMING HOME NETWORK INTL.
1.800.664.5110
www.chnetwork.org

www.thecatholicpaul.com