



## April 2010 Newsletter

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# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## From Prophetess to Pope

— by Arthur and Teresa Beem

### Arthur

In silent horror, I listened to my Seventh-day Adventist pastor's mini-sermon as I watched blood trickle down the little Boy Scout's leg. After crashing his bicycle, the boy had timidly approached our picnic table. In a weak, shaky voice he begged, "I lost my group. Could you catch me up to my group?" Seeing this as a "teachable moment" my pastor responded to the young lad by gently putting his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Saturday is the Sabbath," the pastor said with an enlightened smile and began a short homily explaining why the fourth<sup>1</sup> commandment kept us from helping him. However, he offered to pray for him. To this day, I am baffled as to why the pastor refused the Boy Scout, unless it was the Adventist taboo of riding bikes on Sabbath. That experience symbolized my frustrations growing up in the SDA church.

As a cradle Adventist, there were so many unexplainable taboos I had grown up with. On the Sabbath we couldn't play with the neighbors, swim, go to the store or mall; no television or radio. A sampling of the list I'll entitle, *Adventist's Iniquities*, (any day of the week) included dancing,

drinking, smoking, going to the theater, eating meat, drinking coffee or anything with caffeine in it, and wearing jewelry. Drinking root beer was our family's version of walking on the wild side (it contains no caffeine but it looks like Coke).

However, Adventists evidently believe God sanctioned *imitations* of evil. Adventists are well-known for their substitute meats. My mother would spend hours in the kitchen making a gray, gelatinous mass of whole-wheat gluten as fake beef. My parents would drink a hot, black liquid substance called Postum, which kids would tease was "bad to the last drop." Any jewelry dangling from your ear or wrist or neck was scandalous, but if it could be pinned onto your blouse it was endorsed.

Adventism, to me, was not only confusingly hypocritical but scary. Some Adventist doctrines are based on the visions supposedly given by an angel to a 19th-century prophetess and one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Ellen White. According to my childhood church, heaven opened up to her a crucial new addition to the Gospel—called the "Everlasting Gospel." In fact, White calls ...continued on page 2

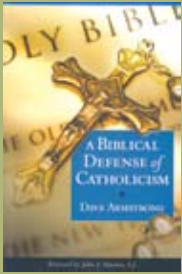
*Journeys Home*

<sup>1</sup>Adventist numbering of the 10 commandments lists the fourth commandment as "Remember the Sabbath day."

## FEATURED RESOURCES

### A Biblical Defense of Catholicism

By David Armstrong

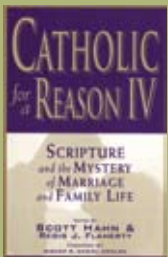


Written in a popular and contemporary style, *A Biblical Defense of Catholicism* is an exposition and defense of the Catholic faith by means of copious scriptural citations which support Catholic doctrines and dogmas. Each

chapter offers a precise definition of the doctrine considered, often from conciliar or papal pronouncements, with a brief explanation, and verifying references from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

### Catholic For a Reason: Scripture and the Mystery of Marriage and Family Life

Edited by Dr. Scott Hahn and Regis J. Flaherty



Marriage and family life lived according to God's plan can change lives and change the world! *Catholic for a Reason IV* explores the scriptural basis for the Catholic understanding of marriage. Join Scott and

Kimberly Hahn, Mike Aquilina, and ten other well-known Catholic authors, who along with their spouses, present solid biblical testimony to the joys, struggles, and sanctity found in the sacrament of Marriage. Essays include The World as Wedding, Lessons Learned at Nazareth, and Reflections on Pope Benedict XVI's First Encyclical.

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To order you may call CHNI at 740-450-1175 or return the envelope enclosed in your newsletter.

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

it the most important message of *all time*<sup>2</sup>. According to her Revelation 14 prophecy, Adventists are the sole remnant of God and the 144,000. They are then given the task of proclaiming the three angels' message (vs. 6-12).

First and foremost, they must warn the world that Christ's Second Coming is imminent (which they have been broadcasting since 1844.) After that, the Sabbath issue dominates their doctrines. Ellen White's messages, affectionately dubbed "The Spirit of Prophecy," teach that very soon laws will be enacted that will force a great crisis between those who only profess to be Christians and genuine Christians. God's dramatic test between His false and true people pivots upon which day of the week you go to church. Those who fall prey to the antichrist's strong delusion and receive the *mark of the beast* are those who worship on *Sunday*. Truly obedient Christians will become Seventh-day Adventists who attend church on the authentic Sabbath—*Saturday*.

The disturbing and bizarre twist to their prophecy is that Christians who attend church on Sunday<sup>3</sup> will become the Whore of Babylon, seize national power, and enact laws that force all people to attend church on Sunday. Then in a drunken madness this spiritual prostitute will track down, torture, and kill Adventists who do not succumb to her demands of worshipping on the false Sabbath. Guess who the Adventist church claims will spearhead this coming barbarity against them? The Catholic Church. Adventists earnestly work and pray for the pitiful souls who have been deceived by Rome<sup>4</sup>.

Our SDA Bible teachers showed pictures of the pope and pointed out the "pagan-inspired, Devil's horns of his mitre." Using only denominationally published theology books, they warned of the dangers of stepping outside of the church. When I finally was old enough to ask a coherent question about our doctrines, I received no biblically backed answers that made sense without quoting Ellen White.

Once, on a rainy day, my neighborhood non-Adventists (but Christian) friends invited me to go bowling with them. Excited, I naively asked my mother if I could go. She shot my dad a deflecting glance, "well, ask your father." Giving the same answer I am sure my dad was given by his parents, he responded, "I don't think that is something we want to do." To my inquiry of why, his answer was typical, "Ellen White speaks against it." That was no real answer, but I had been taught to respect, or at least obey, anything she wrote. Even if my dad had personal concerns himself, which I doubt he did, he would never have breathed them aloud. He was the principal of the SDA church school I attended and not only would spend thirty years of his life as

<sup>2</sup>Ellen White's Manuscript number 760.29.5 You can find these quotes at [www.WhiteEstate.org](http://www.WhiteEstate.org)

<sup>34</sup>"Protestants will throw their whole influence and strength on the side of the Papacy; by a national act enforcing the false sabbath, they will give life and vigor to the corrupt faith of Rome, reviving her tyranny and oppression of the conscience." Ellen White, *Maranatha*, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup>As we write, "It Is Written," a television program run by the SDA church, is taking an evangelistic series to Rome to bring the "Everlasting Gospel" to Eternal City, passing out over 800,000 invitations.

a teacher, principal and eventually an Educational Superintendent, he also would become an ordained minister of the Adventist gospel.

With my upbringing, I could easily have become like many of my SDA friends: bitter and angry. I had a total lack of spiritual intimacy with God or a church. Although I had never gotten an accurate description of who God was, in my heart I was holding out for a God of *love*.

Our Blessed Lord decided to teach me about selfless, passionate, intense love when I met my stunning wife in an Adventist boarding school in south Texas. He gave me the love of my life to teach me of *His* love for me. But it was going to take a while for God to get through. The beginning of marriage was tough. I was unbelievably selfish. But the Lord worked through my patient wife who was the consummate pantomime of the Lord's sacrificing love. Yet still remaining in spiritual confusion, one Saturday I just stopped going to church. In fact for a while I told my wife I did not know if I could even believe in God.

In my thirties, I finally came to my own personal age of enlightenment. I had gotten to the point that I wanted some answers, not just for myself but for my young children that were looking to me as their father and priest of the family. And, like before, I received none through the SDA church.

My uncle David founded a Biblical Research Institute that recorded eschatology studies on audio tape. At the time I was doing sales on the road and would listen to several of the tapes each week. Some of his research was truly profound and listening to these tapes showed me that there might be another way of reading the Bible. Ellen White just may not have known what she was talking about. In one tape, "The Law," David's systematic explanation of God's law in Scripture was the first time I realized it was based in love. God's law was not a tool to kill you with but a tool He fulfilled to save you. I was struck like a lightning bolt. I had to pull over to the side of the road because I was weeping so profusely.

After this lightning bolt, I started to read C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* and A.W. Tozer's *The Pursuit of Man*. I never knew that there was flesh on those old dry bones of religion. For the first time, between my uncle David, Lewis, and Tozer I earnestly studied spirituality. It was like these writers poured the wine of the Eucharist upon my tortured mind and it exploded to life. As God's grace was transforming me, my wife had reached the same point but from a completely different direction.

## Teresa

It was as if, until that moment, I had been a merry, floral-crowned damsel tossing rose petals through the air as I skipped through my Pre-Raphaelite, bucolic life—when I was hit by a Mack truck. In shock, with my emotions plowed into the ground, I pondered how my whole life had been a lie. But then the thoughts turned even darker; my parents' lives had also been based in fiction. Then the circle grew wider—my grandparents, my teachers, my pastors. Oh, it was just too painful to even think about. ...continued on page 4



## DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

### On EWTN radio with Marcus Grodi & Guests

Wednesdays **LIVE** at 2:00 PM ET

Encore: Wednesdays @ 9:00 PM ET

Sundays @ 7:00 AM ET

Join Marcus and his weekly guest as they discuss "the verse(s) I never saw."

For more information and a link to watch the program LIVE online go to

[www.deepinscripture.com](http://www.deepinscripture.com)

### Deep in Scripture Guests for April:

#### April 7

Fr. Leonard Klein\*

#### April 21

Gail Buckley\*

#### April 14

Ben Eicher\*

#### April 28

Dr. Robert Rice\*

*\*This schedule is subject to change*

## SHARE YOUR STORY!

*The Coming Home Network International* always welcomes those of our members who are converts or reverts to share their written conversion stories of how they were drawn (back) to the Catholic Church. If you feel called to share your story please feel free to e-mail a written conversion story of either around 1700 or 4000 words, along with your name and contact information to:

**Mary Clare Piecynski**

[maryp@chnetwork.org](mailto:maryp@chnetwork.org)





## EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME

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

### TELEVISION

Mondays **LIVE** at 8:00 PM ET

Encores: Tuesdays 1:00 & 9:00 AM ET

Thursdays 2:00 PM ET

Saturdays 11:00 PM ET

### RADIO

Mondays **LIVE** at 8:00 PM ET

Encore: Saturdays 7:00 AM ET

### April 5

Alan Clune\*

*Former Episcopalian*

### April 12

Dr Brennan Pursell\*

*Former Neo Pagan*

### April 19

*The Journey Home in Scandinavia\**

### April 26

Mark Kurowski\*

*Former United Methodist Pastor*

*\*This schedule is subject to change*



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

You see, I loved serving my precious Jesus through the Seventh-day Adventist church. My family had been part of this church for so many generations we were not sure when they had been converted. In fact, we had become cultural Adventists or cafeteria Adventists—who would pick and choose the doctrines and rules we personally believed and roll our eyes at the rest.

Our family were the “cool” Adventists. We openly drank Dr. Pepper to the gasps of the orthodox, and watched Disney movies—in the *movie theaters*. (I was told by my teachers that I would be in trouble if I mentioned that fact in school.) You would see our family eating out at a restaurant every Sabbath. Though we wouldn’t have thought of leaving the church, our family had proudly thrown off the shackles of what we considered silly, hypocritical teachings. Oh, I don’t want to mislead you. I still believed that Jesus was coming soon and looked for evidence of it in every newscast. Sincerely and earnestly I had wanted to be obedient to Christ and I assumed keeping Saturday as Sabbath *was* keeping His commandments. With all its blemishes, I was proud to be one of God’s chosen people, part of the remnant spoken of in Revelation. After all, it made one feel special to know that one’s denomination was God’s elite.

Because I was an “enlightened” Adventist, I saw myself as the future of the church and was devotedly active. I sang in the choirs, wrote for its publications, taught in its schools and Sabbath morning study groups. Then, in the mid 1990’s, life had become busy as a homeschooling mother of three and time with the Lord in prayer and Bible study had dwindled. For the first time in my life, new temptations doggedly pursued me. I felt God calling me back to Scripture, but once there, the illusion of my life and my worldview of truth was shattered. There wasn’t a shred of biblical evidence to support Adventist unique doctrines. Adventists had woven texts into Ellen White’s prophecies, rather than build doctrine upon the Bible alone. It wasn’t that I hadn’t read the Bible before; indeed, I could win any biblical trivia game I played. It was confusing. I stomped the ground in a tantrum to God and reminded Him that as a good Protestant I knew Scripture by heart. I knew Scripture... I *knew* Jesus, He was my best friend! “Don’t change the rules on me now.” Yet knowing my yearning for truth, God lifted the veil from my eyes and showed me that I had been living in delusion. I could see for the first time how Adventist doctrine was not just wrong, but even spiritually dangerous.

No matter how painful it was to tear myself from my culture and indoctrination, I knew I could no longer support a church—as sweet and well-meaning as it was—that taught beliefs that were not based in authentic history or Scripture, that taught spiritual fear and elitism. So, I went to my husband to break what I thought would be horrifying news.

### Arthur and Teresa

Sitting staring at each other, we both were thinking the same thing, “How do I say: ‘Honey, I don’t think I’m an Adventist anymore.’” God gave us the grace to tear off our religious facade and words began to pour. We had never



spoken so candidly about our spiritual life. We went from parallel paths to one miraculously united with Christ.

In 2001 we formally placed our resignation letter on the desk of our pastor. As we left his church office, Arthur's hand steadied me for I felt a bit faint. My life had just fizzled away quietly like a wet fire cracker. There was no wake, no funeral, and no public grieving for my loss. Yet, in that moment Christ ignited a new spark that would later turn into a bonfire of joy.

Arthur felt pleased we had made a gracious and respectful break. Even more, he was startled at his feelings of exhilaration—like fleeing a dry desert for the ocean. Since we lived in an Adventist community Arthur did detect some guilt thrust in his direction by the condemning gaze of Ellen White in the eyes of some church members. He missed by inches the brushes that were attempting to paint a “scarlet A” (in this case meaning “apostasy”) on his chest. In apologetic desperation, I stayed close to my family and friends vainly attempting to prove to them we had a basis for leaving.

Soon we were eagerly worshipping and studying with other Protestant denominations, so happy to be awash in our newfound brothers and sisters in Christ. Within a few months we began to discover a real problem in choosing our own church. Oh, it's easy if all you are looking for is an inspirational service. There are so many wonderful, joyful, and fulfilling communities of Christ to which you can feel like you belong. (I just left one!) The problem comes when you want your church to be based in *biblical truth*. We had spent a lifetime dedicated to a church who had indoctrinated us into fiction, so we were understandably hesitant to repeat that same mistake. Fearing deception, we spent years grilling pastors about their doctrine.

Every single denomination out there claims its beliefs are the most Bible-based. One pastor proof-texts infant baptism, while the pastor down the road proof-texts adult baptism—quite confusing. Theologians dueled with the original languages claiming that really, if we could read Greek, the Once-Saved-Always-Saved position would be ridiculously clear or just ridiculous—depending on which scholar we asked. One pastor with two Ph.D.'s in theology insisted that if we could, *“acquiesce to neo-orthodoxy's ontological and soteriological exegesis of justification through the feminist theological worldview we would become at peace with our post-modern epistemological quest.”*

I looked at Arthur and whimpered, “what?” Then we went home and sent off for applications to all the different US seminaries. We decided, in order not to be deceived we had to be able to read the Scriptures in their original form. Arthur and I became consumed with theology. It seemed the more we knew, the more we realized that it would take every second of every waking hour in theological study for the rest of our lives to begin to know all this stuff. ...Wait... I had to take a shower ...and fix dinner... and phone my mother...I was running out of time! It was devastating to realize that to really avoid deception and know truth, we would have to be... *God*.

The thought terrified us. My Protestant friends all told us to relax, all we needed to understand Scripture was the Holy Spirit. Yet, ...continued on page 6



## MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

**April 8, 2010**

**Catholic Radio Indy Annual Dinner**  
Indianapolis, IN  
317-870-8400  
jim@catholicradioindy.org

**April 10, 2010**

**Divine Mercy Conference 2010**  
Cajundome Convention Center  
444 Cajundome Blvd  
Lafayette, LA 70506  
337-654-8682  
mbergeron@gmail.com

**April 24, 2010**

**Lift Jesus Higher Rally**  
Catholic Renewal Ministries  
Toronto, ON CANADA  
763-662-1730  
jmasherwood@gmail.com

## 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.

## DEEP IN HISTORY MP3s

The *Coming Home Network International* is pleased to announce that MP3s of our 2003-2009 *Deep in History* conference talks are now available for download online. Go to [www.chresources.com](http://www.chresources.com) to download the MP3s. Each talk costs \$5.





## SPOUSES NETWORK

### Are you the spouse of a clergy interested in becoming Catholic?

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 are 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 Pieczynski by e-mail at [maryp@chnetwork.org](mailto: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.



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

we knew there were false prophets (Ellen White!). As sincere Christians, how could we guarantee that we would not fall prey to false doctrine again? Had God abandoned us to correctly, *infallibly* interpret Scriptures with nothing but our average IQs?

God sent a Catholic friend to introduce a revolutionary idea. He cut through our despairing cloud of confusion with a new inquiry. "Perhaps you are asking the wrong question. Maybe, just maybe, instead of finding what you think is perfect theology, try looking for the church God set up as *His* authority." That haunting statement changed our lives as we took it to Christ in prayer and study.

For years, we had watched an online Catholic-Protestant discussion group, but we had dismissed the Catholics' defense of their faith because it was too biblical. We thought it was just another plot of deception. We had been warned about online Jesuit plants—tricky papist spiders—drawing the web into their ultimate antichrist designs. We purchased a *Catechism* to find out if the tricky papists were lying about what Catholics believe. After all, what they were saying wasn't what we had been taught they believed. Yet there they were! Catholic beliefs! Just as the Catholics claimed—in the *Catechism*, the Catholic Encyclopedia, history books, and everything else we could get our hands on to read. So Arthur and I immersed ourselves in our new quest of discovering real Catholicism.

As my husband and I began reading the early Church Fathers, we were shocked at how Catholic they were. Could it be Catholic corruption had already been trickling in *before* the Apostles died? But that cannot be right, can it? These early writings were not just by any convert; these were writings by bishops who had been taught by, anointed by, and chosen by the Apostles themselves to lead the churches they started. That just didn't seem to make sense that they would have become apostate so soon. If God had abandoned His Church so quickly after its inception, then we really have a problem because we can't trust the Trinity doctrine, the canon of Scripture, or the divinity of Christ because these were the men (and later Fathers) who defined these doctrines and who attested to which writings were by the apostles and which were forgeries.

So we either had to believe God protected His Church's theology, or we have to cut the Church off right after its birth. Is it possible that these godly men, who were martyred for their faith, could have gotten it that wrong? In the end, we had to admit, that their writings didn't actually conflict with Scripture; their writings were in conflict with *our* personal interpretation of Scripture, or rather I should say, the way we had been taught to interpret it.

After acknowledging Adventists had disseminated error about Protestants, it was not impossible to accept the idea that Protestants disseminated error about Catholics. Christ was now opening up a frightening, exciting, new worldview of Christianity for us.



It was about this time that Arthur and I published a book called, “It’s Okay Not to be a Seventh-day Adventist” (Amazon.com). It lays out the history and doctrine of the Adventist church, comparing and contrasting it with Scripture and supporting former SDAs in transitioning into mainstream Christianity. After leaving that church, we had been contacted by numerous hurting Adventists who needed someone to whom they could talk. Many were terrified of Ellen White’s last-day prophecies and were afraid to go to other churches for fear of being deceived. Since we had been down that same road, we could sympathize. So God handed us a ministry for them.

As the book was announcing to the SDA world that we had left Adventism, we had a new announcement they would find even more horrifying. We had finished the RCIA program and now, after intense study, we were entering the Catholic Church. Not that we understood the doctrines perfectly, but we began using an acronym, *BEAU*, believing that if every other doctrine within Catholicism wasn’t true, it just didn’t matter if they got *these* things right. (Now, we are discovering all the other doctrines, including Marian Dogmas are not only breathtakingly true, but biblical.)

**BEAU** (the French male form for “beautiful”—apropos for Christ):

**BIBLE:** We were shocked to discover that for 1600 years the Bible was more extensive; that Reformers took out unwanted books. Contrary to Protestant teaching, the Catholic Church protected Scripture with her life, copied, translated and transmitted it. We realized that *Sola Scriptura* was not biblical but was a Protestant tradition and that the Bible actually points to the apostles and the Church as the foundation of truth (Eph. 2:20, I Tim. 3:15).

**EUCCHARIST:** We eagerly embraced the clearest scriptural meaning that God’s body was actually miraculously present in the Holy Communion endowing us with special grace. Coming before Him at mass, experiencing the love at the cross, becoming one with Christ through the Eucharist, we delighted in knowing these things are not figurative, not just a symbol, but really living the Kingdom of God.

**AUTHORITY:** As we analyzed our culture, we saw the crumbling of western society because of the lack of authority. The rebelliousness of children, divorce, sexual promiscuity, abortion—at the root, all are a rejection of God’s sovereignty. Nature attests to a hierarchy of leadership; Israel was structured around their appointed authorities; is it possible we had missed this in the New Testament? Again, we had been blind to an obvious part of Scripture. Repeatedly the apostles command Christians to submit to God’s appointed authorities even when they were less than perfect.

**UNITY:** Finally, as we read Jesus’ fervent desire that His disciples remain unified, we recognized there was something distinctly ...continued on page 8

## 2010 DEEP IN HISTORY CONFERENCE

Marcus Grodi and *The Coming Home Network International* invite you to join us next fall in Columbus OH for our 8th annual *Deep in History* conference.



### How Firm A Foundation: Authority Through the Scriptures Oct 22-24, 2010

With the *Deep in History* conferences standing on the *Pillar and Bulwark of Truth*, in October 2010, we will turn the focus to the Word of God, as we look to the authority and history of the Sacred Writ.

Join us in the fall of 2010 as we bring together another exciting group of speakers to discuss the authority of the Scriptures. We will look at the inspired Word of God, from the penning of its books, to its binding into the Bible we hold today, so as Catholics, we might better profess our faith through His inspired Word.

The Sacred Writ is inerrant; however, through man’s individual interpretation of God’s inspired Word, division tears through Christianity like a jagged edge. As we look to answer, “How firm is your foundation?” we will respond to the errors of today and yesterday as we continue our journey into the teachings of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

We invite you to come and be a part of another inspiring weekend, with an aim to end ignorance, and enlighten the heart, mind, and soul, as we dive into the history of the Sacred Word of God, that we might with confidence ask and respond to each other, “How firm is your foundation?”

#### Confirmed speakers include:

- Marcus Grodi
- Dr. Paul Thigpen
- Dr. Scott Hahn
- Richard Lane
- Patrick Madrid
- Kimberly Hahn
- Dr. Kenneth Howell
- Bruce Sullivan
- Fr. Mitch Pacwa
- Msgr. Frank Lane

For more information go to [www.hfaf2010.com](http://www.hfaf2010.com) or to register call 740-450-1175.

## THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTL'

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## *...Journeys Home Continued...*

unscriptural about all the different denominations. Scriptures did not allow for sects. Christ stresses unity more than many doctrines Protestants deem "essentials." Indeed, unity is an essential of faith. We had to ask ourselves if Protestants had a biblical basis to break with the Church. The answer was no.

It is difficult to express our duality of grief and exhilaration in the first two years of being Catholic. We have learned obedience to Christ brings unfathomable joys. There is no honor in heaven or earth like giving undying fealty and faithful love to the Savior and His Bride. It is thrilling to be a part of this historical, triumphant Church.

God has given us many surprises. Becoming Catholic has improved our marriage. Through participating in the Eucharist, we have gained a penetrating insight of the privilege of sacrificing for our spouses. As Christ broke Himself for us, we then also give of ourselves, fully, unreservedly, tenderly to our spouses. Our rights fade away in the glory of offering ourselves to each other.

We have understood our own irreplaceable importance to God as we study the Catholic Church's doctrines on life and birth control. No longer are we, as we felt in Protestantism, an army of one. We find great relief as we drink from a vast two-thousand year reserve of living water from the immovable Rock that Christ founded upon Peter and the Apostles. We relish the safety of the Church's treasury of faith and communion of saints. We delight in knowing that God is changing us from glory to glory and erasing the original sin that stained our souls. Pain no longer elicits confusing questions of offending God: now we lift up our sorrows in redemptive suffering. We no longer fear other Christians nor do we see ourselves pridefully as God's elite.

And yet our decision to follow Christ into the Catholic Church has left our Adventist families heart-broken, fearing for our sanity and with some, even worse, believing we are traitorous to the Gospel. We humbly ask your prayers that one day our families' hearts will be open to this blessed of all faiths. For truth heals the deep pains of false beliefs. We thank each one of you who faithfully prays for unity and for little straying lambs, like we were, to find our way home into the Roman Catholic Church. ■



*Arthur and Teresa Beem were both raised in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and attended their schools from elementary through the University level. Arthur is a travel nurse and Teresa writes as she travels with him. Their three college-age children are on the East Coast, way too far from their parents who are currently in the state of Washington. The Beems attend the beautiful St. James Cathedral in downtown Seattle. They run a ministry for former Adventists and would someday love to be involved in the RCIA program helping other Protestants to understand the beauties of the Roman Catholic church.*



# Prayer List



## Clergy

■ For John, a Four Square pastor, that as he reads the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch he may be docile to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

■ For Steve, a Lutheran minister in Ohio, that the Holy Spirit would fulfill his desire to be an Evangelical Catholic in full communion with the See of St. Peter.

■ For an Evangelical Free youth minister in the Midwest, that he and his family may joyfully return to the one, catholic and apostolic Church of his youth.

■ For Nick, a Presbyterian minister in Maryland, that he be granted the grace to have the courage to follow the Truth wherever it may lead him.

■ For a Nazarene youth minister in western Ohio, that she may find the answers to all of her questions about the Catholic faith and be led into full communion with the ancient Church founded by Jesus the Lord.

■ For Lee, a former Southern Baptist youth minister in Tennessee, that both his heart and mind may be conformed to the will of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as he prepares to receive Him in the Holy Eucharist.

■ For a professor belonging to the Vineyard Fellowship, that Jesus would soften the hearts of his family to become open to the Catholic Faith.

■ For Charles, a minister in North Dakota, that the Holy Spirit would guide him as he prepares his congregation for his departure to the Catholic Church. May he be a witness who would call others Home.

■ For Daniel, a former Baptist seminarian, that his wife may learn the honor and glory of being a Catholic and no longer believe it is shameful to abandon the Baptist church.

■ For Alan, a former Independent Baptist minister in Colorado, that all obstacles barring his entry to the Catholic Church may be rectified.

■ For John, a former Lutheran seminarian in Wyoming, that as he seeks Christ's will for his life he may be able to comprehend the fullness of all that God is offering him in the fullness of the Christian faith found only in the Catholic Church.

■ For Rod, a Presbyterian minister in Louisiana, that God would bring every theological mountain low and fill every doctrinal valley so as to make his way straight to the holy Catholic faith.

■ For Ed, a Lutheran seminarian in New York, that he may find guidance and direction as he explores the richness of the Church of the holy Fathers and Martyrs.

■ For Brian, a Church of Christ minister in Texas, that the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints would pray him into full communion with the ancient Church which he already loves.

■ For all clergy and people of the Anglo-Lutheran Catholic Church that they may be granted their hearts' desire, full communion with the See of St. Peter.

## Laitie

■ For all the members of *The Coming Home Network International* received into the Catholic Church this Easter. May they find abundant blessings and graces as they continue drawing closer to Christ and His Church.

■ For Mark, that he may be blessed with good health.

■ For all those who struggle with depression and thoughts of suicide.

■ For Jody, that she will be able to receive a successful transplant and experience complete recovery.

■ For Janna, that her reading about the sacraments brings her home to the Catholic Church.

■ For the health and healing of Tina, Kelly, and Paul.

■ For Elaine who is undergoing surgery. May she have a speedy and complete recovery.

■ For Ken, may Jesus lovingly draw him to the richness that is contained in the Catholic faith.

■ For Mark and his health.

■ For Angela's children to come back home to the Catholic faith.

■ For John, his family, and their intentions.

■ For Richard, may he fully recover as he undergoes treatment for lung cancer.

■ For Jane as she undergoes a heart catheterization.

■ For Russ and Nancy to be open to the fullness of truth found in the Catholic Church.

■ For Jacob, may God grant him good health.

■ For Terry and his heart problems. May he experience complete recovery and healing.

■ For Jay, that the Holy Spirit give him guidance and discernment in his vocational calling.

■ For Joshua and his family, may God open the doors necessary for their reception into the Catholic Church and that Joshua find employment that is best suited to his gifts and talents.

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 or you may also email your prayer requests to: [prayers@chnetwork.org](mailto:prayers@chnetwork.org)

We use only first names to preserve anonymity.

# Sabbath to SUNDAY By What Authority?

In the fine conversion account presented in this *CHNewsletter*, by Arthur and Teresa Beem, we are confronted with a central question that has led to so many other conversions: is the authority underlying our faith trustworthy enough on which to lean the eternal weight of our lives?

Many, many things separate Catholics from Seventh-day Adventists, and there are also many truths that we share, i.e., our love for Jesus Christ. The key issue, however, that most separates Seventh-day Adventists from Catholics, as well as nearly all other Christian traditions, is their insistence on the critical importance of worshipping God on Saturday, or the Sabbath as they insist the two ought to be equated.

Their basic foundation for this is that the Sabbath law was an essential tenet of the Ten Commandments given to Moses at Sinai:

*"Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day ... In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord has blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exodus 20:8-11).*

Many specific Sabbath regulations followed in Exodus and Leviticus, and then expanded over the centuries, particularly under the conservative leadership of the Sadducees and Pharisees of Jesus' day.



How the Church began worshipping on Sunday, the Lord's Day, instead of Saturday is an interesting study, but is not something I'm going to cover in this article. If you want the details, one of the best summaries of this history is in an article by James P. Guzek entitled *From Sabbath to Sunday: How the Church Moved Its Holy Day*, published in the February 1999 edition of *This Rock Magazine* (You can read it online at <http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1999/9902fea1.asp>).

Instead, I want to focus on the basic underlying question: did the Church have the authority to make this change? Up until and through the life of Jesus, the People of God worshipped on Saturdays, the Sabbath; then sometime during the early days of the Church, Christians moved to worshipping exclusively on Sundays, the Lord's Day. Who had the authority to make this significant change? Wasn't worshipping on the Sabbath, as Seventh-day Adventists claim, an unalterable part of the Ten Commandments?

To illustrate the foundation of this authority in the Church established by Christ in his Apostles, I'd draw our attention to a more debated issue in the early Church, which had just as significant of an Old Testament foundation, which pre-dated the Sabbath regulations: circumcision.

In Genesis 17 we read:

*"I will establish my covenant between you and me and your descendants after you throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant, that I may be a God to you and to your descendants after you...This is my covenant which you shall keep, between you and me and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised...My covenant shall be in your flesh as a perpetual covenant. If any male have not the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, that person shall be cut off from his people: he has broken my covenant" (17:7-14).*

This was a major issue in the early Church as non-Jewish, non-circumcised converts were brought into

the Church: did they first need to be circumcised? When Peter and Paul began expressing the audacious idea that circumcision was no longer necessary—that the new sign of the covenant was Baptism—the Judaizers rose up in defense of the traditional sign of the covenant established by God as perpetual!

How was this solved? The first Council of the Church, held at Jerusalem, under the leadership of the Apostles, examined this issue and decided to no longer require circumcision. The specific instructions now were “not to disquiet those who from among the Gentiles are turning to the Lord; but to send them written instructions to abstain from anything that has been contaminated by idols and from immorality and from anything strangled and from blood” (Acts 15:19-20). What we have here is essentially the first Church encyclical which was to be read in all the churches explaining the new regulations concerning circumcision.

The audacity! This perpetual law was not only instituted by God Himself but was clearly a portion of the holy inspired Scripture, yet the apostolic leaders of the Church had the authority, given to them by Christ (Mt 16:19; 18:18; 28:18-20; Jn 16:13; 20:22-23), to change the perpetual requirements of the Law. This was certainly not *Sola Scriptura* but Church authority re-interpreting and re-applying Scripture in light of the growing needs of the Church.

If the Apostolic Church had the authority to do this, then why not something like which day of the week was appropriate to worship and observe the Sabbath?

One other application of this question of authority is illustrated by two not dissimilar understandings of the necessity of the Church shared by Catholics and Seventh-day Adventists. The Catholic view is clearly stated in the Vatican II Document, *Lumen Gentium*:

*“Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it” (LG 14; quoted in CCC, 846; cf. Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5)*

Seventh-day Adventists have a similar view of their church, as expressed by Jan Paulsen, their President:

*“...We do have a very specific identity, which we lose to our destruction ... We have consistently held that we shall stand apart and be separate from the organized ecumenical movement... We believe that being Seventh-day Adventists has a direct bearing on our salvation; that while a believer can be saved as a Catholic, I would risk my whole spiritual life and salvation were I to leave what I am now and join any other community... The fact is that one cannot as a disciple step out of what one is today and go back into a state of less knowing and less understanding” (SDA President Jan Paulsen, “Theological Unity in a Growing World” May 8, 2002; available online at <http://www.adventistreview.org/2002-1524/story3.html>)*

Does it matter which Church we belong to? Is any Church necessary for salvation? Many Christians today follow Catholic Church authority when it comes to the apostolic rejection of circumcision and Saturday worship, and conciliar decisions like the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the canon of sacred Scripture—all decided by bishops in union with the Bishop of Rome—but then turn around and reject everything else declared by the authority of the Church, even the necessity of the Church itself.

This, of course, is another issue for further development another time, but again, is the authority underlying your faith trustworthy enough on which to lean the eternal weight of your life? Are you leaning the weight of your eternal life on the opinions of self-proclaimed prophets or charismatic Bible-teachers or flamboyant media personalities or modern democratic annual assemblies, or upon the authority of the Church founded upon the Apostles and committed to preserving, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the apostolic Deposit of faith?

I agree with some things the SDA President said: I “believe that [which Church we are a member of] has a direct bearing on our salvation” and that “I would risk my whole spiritual life and salvation were I to leave what I am now and join any other community.” Where we differ is that I have no question that this trustworthy authority rests in the Catholic Church.

—Sincerely In Christ, Marcus Grodi ■

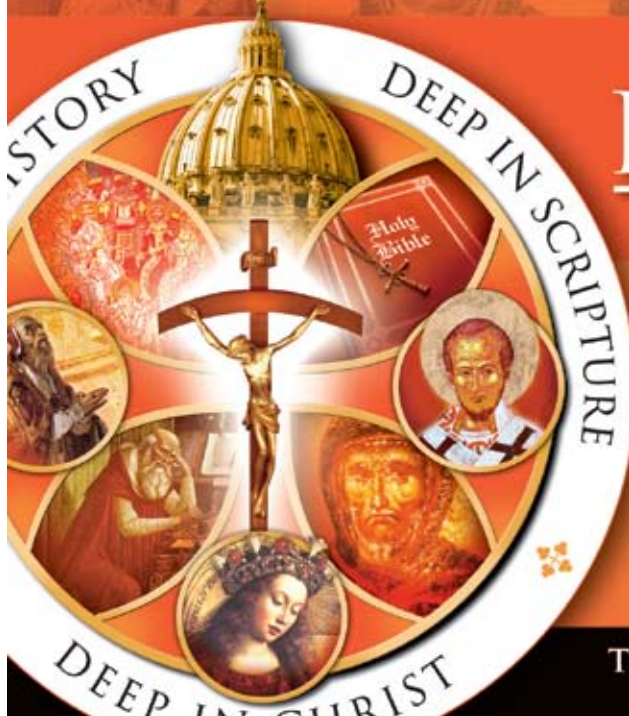


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