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www.chnetwork.org

The Coming Home Network International

Membership Letter

April 2002
This Month:

Choose This Day
From the Director's Desk
Prayer List
Helpers Network Changes

“Choose This Day”

The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to His promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation.

2 Peter 3:9-15 RSV

Dear Friends and Fellow Believers in Jesus Christ:

A month ago my father Daniel made his final journey home (and we thank all of you for your prayers and your kind condolences). His departure was truly a source of joy as well as grief, because on his last day he told us clearly that he was ready to die and go home to Jesus. This blessed admission was a long-awaited-for confession; as is the case with so many, he had rarely talked openly about his spiritual life.

For nearly twenty years he struggled under the increasing debilitation of emphysema, the last two of which he spent enslaved to oxygen cylinders twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. During those last years, his world consisted of his bedroom, the hallway, and the kitchen. Yet his world became greatly expanded and enriched by his email community of friends.

Five years ago he was told that he had six months to live, but by the miracle of modern technology and God's mercy, he just kept holding on. In fact, even on his last day we weren't

sure how close he was to the end. His last words to me, which he uttered before he fell into a sleep from which he never awoke, were “Marc, I love you, and I'll see you in the morning.” Two hours later I sat next to him, holding his hand, as he left this world for the next. I didn't realize until a week later, though, that his words were literally true, for he certainly was there with us all week long during our “mourning.”

There is so much I could say—I miss him a lot—but what I need to say is this: Never take anyone in your life for granted. Never put off saying you're sorry and asking for forgiveness, or saying how much you love them. And never be too busy for your wife and children.

What keeps me going is that I know he is not dead, but very much alive—he's of the communion of saints, and it's very possible that he is closer to us now than he has been for a long time, for now he's healed and whole. Where we still see in a glass dimly, he sees face-to-face; where we still know

only in part, he now fully understands, as he has always been known by his loving Lord.

Given the above text from St. Peter's epistle, it is fitting that I close by reminding you, and myself as well, that we must never take today for granted: Yesterday is gone, and in this world of shadows, tomorrow is but a fleeting possibility in God's mysterious plan. How many of us continue to procrastinate on decisions—especially spiritual decisions—that for the sake of our souls and the souls of our families should be taken care of immediately.

Let us never put off what we know in heart must be done, for as Joshua beckoned: “Choose this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 25:15).

Your brother in Christ,

Marcus C. Grodi
President/Executive Director



Please Pray for...

- ✦ Russ a Lutheran pastor who is seeking out the truth of the Catholic Church.
- ✦ Relief from the pain and struggles of Deacon Joe and his family caused by their becoming fully Catholic.
- ✦ Sean who may lose his job because of his intention to enter the Catholic Church.
- ✦ Pete a Nazarene minister who wants to come home but has been diagnosed with early onset of Alzheimerís disease.
- ✦ David a Lutheran pastor who is increasingly finding himself drawn to the Catholic Church.
- ✦ Doug a Presbyterian pastor who is reading himself into the Catholic Church.
- ✦ Andrew a Baptist seminarian trying to discern his options should he convert.
- ✦ Helen a Protestant minister with many questions.
- ✦ Wisdom and guidance for John an Episcopal minister who has resigned his position in the Episcopal communion.
- ✦ A Lutheran military chaplain who is looking at his options, should he become Catholic.
- ✦ Randy a Southern Baptist pastor who is Catholic at heart, that his resignation from the pastorate would come about without lasting wounds.
- ✦ Marissa a Nazarene minister who wants to grow closer to Jesus.

The Helpers Network has recently undergone some slight changes and we are looking forward to a successful year. This is the core of our apostolate, comprised of CHN member volunteers who provide support, answer questions, offer encouragement and prayer, and when necessary, ongoing contact with inquirers to the Catholic faith. Our Helpers are matched with people based on faith, life, and if required, geographical location.

One of the major changes is the switch on the web site from the discussion email group to the great new **Discussion Forum**. This tool enables the Network of Helpers to select topics that would interest them. The Forum gives Helpers the ability to develop a "private chat room" to use when in contact with someone on their journey.

We have new ideas to be incorporated into the Helpers Network such as a Helpers newsletter or a full section in the current monthly newsletter. The **Helpers Newsletter** would include information like a "Helper of the Month", current success stories, and progress that the Helpers are making. We are open to suggestions and looking for comments. There will be a survey going out to the members of the Helpers Network. Please fill this out and return it promptly. Also, please answer specifically as this will enable us to update records completely and allow us to expand the horizons of the Helpers Network. We look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions.

If you need help on your journey home, or would like to be a Helper;
 Contact CHN by phone at
 (740) 450-1175
 or by email,
helpers@chnetwork.org.

Attention Members!

If you have joined the Church this Easter please notify us. We would like to have this information to keep up our records. Call us at (740) 450-1175. or e-mail jim@chnetwork.org. Thank you.



Upcoming guests on the Journey Home Program on EWTN, Mondays live at 8 p.m. EST

*April 15
Bill Rutland*

*April 22
Michelle Willis*

*April 29
Daniel Ali*

*May 6
Karl Keating*

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

*Tune in for re-airs: (EST)
 Tuesdays 10 a.m.
 Fridays 1 a.m.
 Saturdays 11 p.m.*

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

From the Director's desk

Easter and springtime—what a wonderful time of the year.

After all the recent strife in our country, it seems maybe we need to take a step back and make a special effort to be reborn in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It certainly isn't a coincidence that Easter (the rising of our Lord Jesus Christ) and spring (the season of nature's "rising from the dead") should occur together. It is truly a glorious time for us Catholics, and for all Christians. I hope you took advantage of the Lenten season to prepare yourself for the glories that Christ has given us in this Easter time.

It's been a couple months since I've written anything for the newsletter, but as director, my primary duty is the management of the business of the Coming Home Network. People usually don't want to know about the business "stuff." They are interested in the exciting apostolate work our network does so beautifully.

I would, however, like to take an opportunity occasionally to keep you "up to speed" on the internal workings of CHN.

As you know, the "911" crisis took a very large toll on our fundraising. In the weeks and months following that tragedy, donations practically dried up. At that time we decided that we needed to make an appeal.

The appeal was largely a success, and I truly thank each and every one of you who helped with your generosity, but it certainly didn't match the results of our appeal in November/December 2000. With the loss of most of our "regular" donations, I need to ask you to please keep us in mind when you pay those monthly bills. A monthly donation to our cause helps assure our continued success.

We still have ministers coming home to the Catholic Church on a weekly basis, and many have financial needs and a need for the books, tapes, and other items we furnish. One of our top goals is to get good Catholic materials into their hands at this special time for them, and meeting this goal takes money. Additionally, there are many new and exciting projects "on the table" awaiting the necessary funding.

One of these projects is to furnish all new inquiring clergy with a multimedia package for the computer that is very through and interactive. (We think this approach is best because even people who don't own a computer now have access to one at most public libraries.) The planned package includes three different Catholic Bibles, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, writings of the early Church Fathers, and many, many more interesting documents important for assisting those who are discerning their calling to the Church. Stay tuned—we'll announce more of our projects in future newsletters, along with suggestions for ways you can participate in them.

On a happy note, the Coming Home Network operations are finally getting to the "lean and efficient" stage I've been striving for since taking the director's job in September of 2000. Our staff is growing in experience, and operations are becoming smoother.

As the confidence level of the staff increased, we decided to start a hearty and consistent membership drive. My opinion as a "cradle Catholic" is that every Catholic should be aware of our ministry and have the opportunity to be a part of this great

apostolate. The first month's results show that my thoughts are correct and in line with those of others.

Some of you reading this newsletter were contacted through that membership drive. To you new members, a sincere welcome! You've joined a unique and important apostolate. Besides offering your financial support, you may want to become involved in our helpers' network or join in one of the many exciting forums of our web discussion group. You can check out some of the possibilities on our website at www.chnetwork.org.

Thanks again for your faithful prayers and support. May the Lord bless you now and always!

Robert J. Smeltzer
Director
rjsmeltzer@chnetwork.org



CHN Regional Conference St. Paul, Minnesota

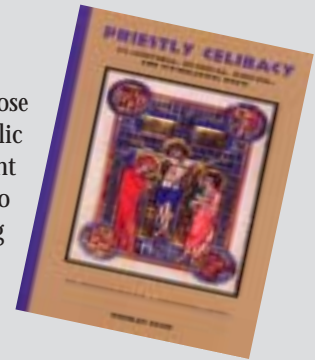
The Coming Home Network is having a regional conference in St. Paul, Minnesota. On Sunday May 26, 2002. All CHN members are invited to attend. Beginning at 2:30 p.m. at the O'Shaughnessy Education Center Auditorium, University of St. Thomas. Marcus Grodi will be giving a public talk "What is Truth?" To be followed afterwards with a CHN members only social. with Marcus and other special guest. To get more information contact CHN at (740) 450-1175 or e-mail info@chnetwork.org.

Coming Home Resources

Priestly Celibacy

edited by Fr. Peter M.J. Stravinskias

The requirement of celibacy for priests in the Catholic Church has been under close scrutiny and even heated debate for almost three decades now. Many people in the Catholic Church, both clerical and lay, wonder about the necessity and value of retaining this ancient tradition. Many of the problems they perceive in the clergy can be attributed, in their view, to this ancient practice. Some look to non-Catholic Christian traditions as models for avoiding the problems they see among Catholic clergy, while others question whether non-married clergy can really address the problems pressing on families in our parishes. On every side, clerical celibacy is being questioned, examined, and debated. This book addresses those questions.



In this book, seven authors argue that there are many solid reasons to retain and promote the discipline of clerical celibacy: biblical, historical, theological, and practical. Because the Catholic Church places unmitigated trust in the Bible as the Word of God, she turns first to Scripture to see what inspired authors have to teach us.

“Priestly Celibacy is a surprising collection of seven essays by modern scholars from within and outside of the Catholic Church. Their perspectives are different, but their conclusions wonderfully coherent and compelling. The book can help make better priests and homilists! It is also a wonderful defense of marriage, so you will need to buy at least two copies.” – Thomas Welsh *Retired Bishop of Allentown*

Yours free with a \$35 or more donation. Please indicate on donation form.

Check out this exciting New Resource!!

Welcome to the Catholic Church Cd-Rom

An exciting multi-media presentation providing a complete guide to the Catholic Church. Two Catholic Bibles, hundreds of Church documents and Encyclicals, all Vatican II documents; 400 lives of the saints; 2,000 years of Church history; prayers; spirituality; catechism; 3,000 pages of moral teaching; 1,500 pictures, chant clips and more!! This awesome collection contains over 20 volumes, \$500 worth of books on one CD-ROM.

- 3-volume Lives of the Saints
- 2-volume Church History
- Vatican II documents
- Hundreds of Encyclicals
- A complete Catechism
- Denzinger document collection
- The New American Bible & Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition set together for comparability
- Books of Rubrics on Mass and Sacraments
- Spirituality classics

Windows and Mac Compatible



Yours free with a donation of \$100 or more. Please indicate on donation form.

Come visit us at www.chnetwork.org

During 2002 our web site has grown to average over 300,000 hits per month. You can find support in the ways of online discussion boards, chat rooms, an online prayer list, job postings; as well as conversion stories, CHN news and events, and “*Journey Home*” program information. **Now making donations to the network is fast and easy online!** Come join this rapidly expanding community.

You will be glad you did!