

The

Coming Home Network International

AUGUST 2008 NEWSLETTER

Journeys Home

Lead Kindly Light
by
Father Douglas Grandon



“My early Pentecostal experience had infected me with a strong prejudice against the Catholic Church.”

Just yesterday, an Evangelical Free Church pastor inquired over lunch about my journey from the Free Church to the Episcopal Church and on to the Catholic Church. As Cardinal Newman once noted, one’s conversion story is a bit too complicated to be quickly recounted between the salad and main course of a dinner.

I became a Christian after first hearing the gospel from a young man named Dan in a Christian coffee shop in downtown Sterling, Illinois. It was there that I was first confronted with the question, “Are you a Christian?” When I replied that I wasn’t sure, Dan arranged to meet with me every other week for Bible study and conversation. In November 1972, I prayed that Christ would forgive my sins. In February 1973, at the age of fourteen, I was baptized.

During the next five years, I attended Dan’s church, a small Pentecostal Church, on the “wrong side of the tracks.” The pastor was a self-taught, but a serious Bible teacher, who emphasized that God had called us to holiness and service. However, his leadership style was overly dictatorial and he was much too confident in his ability to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. It was in that church that I first met my wife, Lynn, when I was fourteen, and, at sixteen years of age, felt a definite call to ordained ministry.

After five years in that Pentecostal Church, and having completed two years of college, a faithful missionary invited me to spend a summer with a Protestant pastor in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, where I was tutored in Serbo-Croatian. That missionary offered to support me if I would remain in Belgrade

and enroll in the Institute for Foreign Languages, which I was happy to do. For the next five years, I assisted his mission as a translator/interpreter in Communist Yugoslavia.

Upon returning to the U.S., I married my wife, completed my final two years at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, and then proceeded to seminary. I first earned an MA in Religion from Liberty University, then an MDiv from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, the Evangelical Free Church seminary. I was ordained in the Free Church, and started Glen Hill Evangelical Free Church in Peoria, which still exists today.

During that time, I met Edward MacBurney, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Quincy, a committed Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic, and a godly man. We enjoyed each other’s company and met regularly for lunch. During the course of our numerous conversations, he recommended that I read Tom

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Howard's *Evangelical is Not Enough*. (Dr. Howard was kind enough to meet me one day for breakfast in Wheaton.) Bishop MacBurney convinced me that my Evangelical experience was deficient.

Several points of Catholic theology became clear to me at that time: apostolic succession, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the role of saints as mediators, the value of liturgy, the sacrifice of the Mass, etc. My early Pentecostal experience had infected me with a strong prejudice against the Catholic Church. To overcome this, God led me into the Church in short steps, from Pentecostalism to mainstream Evangelicalism, and across the bridge of Anglicanism. To this day, I am grateful for each of those churches.

When the timing was appropriate for me to leave my Evangelical Free Church, I became Episcopalian. Bishop MacBurney made it very clear to me that the Episcopal Church was rapidly abandoning its Catholic and biblical roots. I was aware, however, that the world-wide Anglican Communion included a strong evangelical wing, which was profoundly committed to evangelization, good preaching, holy living, and serious academic work - and that Anglo-Catholics still defended those Catholic convictions championed by Cardinal Newman prior to his conversion to Catholicism. I felt comfortable exploring the Catholic tradition in a church populated by such evangelical leaders as Alister McGrath, Jim Packer, and John Stott.

During my Anglican years, I completed my doctoral course work at St. Louis University. With my doctoral advisor, Ken Parker (a convert himself), I engaged in a serious reading of Newman. With Ken's help, I began to understand the profound importance of Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. (*Development* was the answer to sola scriptura, which seemed more and more untenable.) My dissertation research on Flacius Illyricus, an immediate successor to Luther and the first Protestant historian, reinforced my doubts about Protestant separation from Rome.

In preparation for ordination to the Anglican priesthood, I was sent to Oxford for a year of post-doctoral theological study. Oxford was fantastic. However, at St. Stephen's House, I witnessed firsthand the serious degeneration of the Anglo-Catholic movement. I was shocked that the principal allowed a practicing homosexual to remain in residence and was admitting women, who would eventually be ordained to the priesthood.

My Episcopal bishop, Keith Ackerman, allowed me to transfer to Wycliffe Hall, the evangelical Anglican college, on the other side of Oxford. Scholarship was much more serious

there, as was an evangelical commitment to the faith. Wycliffe Hall was marvelous in many ways, although sacraments, episcopacy and other Catholic hallmarks were given minimal attention.

I flew back to the U.S. to be ordained to the transitional diaconate in May, 1999, but backed out. I almost became Catholic at that point. My wife and I discussed the matter after I returned to England. We concluded that I should proceed with ordination, in order to support my bishop, who had himself indicated that he might one day become Catholic. Later that summer, I was ordained to the diaconate. Bishop Ackerman assured me that he had authority to ordain me, not simply an Episcopal priest, but a priest in the "one, holy, Catholic and apostolic church." After all, he told me, Anglicans do represent the third branch of the Catholic faith. (The first and second branches are, according to this theory, Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy.)

As Bishop Ackerman later observed, I was a faithful and obedient Episcopal priest. Nevertheless, I began to question the validity of Anglican orders, which, of course, directly led to doubts about the validity of Anglican sacraments. For me, the fundamental problem was neither the ordination of women nor the toleration of homosexual practice. Most fundamentally, I could no longer confidently assert that Anglican orders were valid. This led to my contacting Bishop Daniel Jenky, who had been recently ordained as Ordinary for the Diocese of Peoria, to whom I expressed my desire to take concrete steps toward entering into full communion with the Catholic Church.

For a number of years, I had been reading Catholic authors and the Church Fathers. In Oxford, I had met an elderly French Jesuit, Bertrand de Margerie, at a Newman Conference. He kept in touch, encouraging my conversion and my application for Catholic priesthood. Also in Oxford, I had heard Christopher Haigh's lectures, offering his revisionist (and true!) explanation of the nature of the English Reformation. Others were also quite helpful, including a Catholic, former undergraduate professor, several Catholic priests in the Dioceses of Peoria and Davenport, and numerous Catholic laymen active in the pro-life movement.

When I first met with Bishop Jenky, I made it very clear that I was coming with no expectations whatsoever. I needed the Church; the Church did not need me. The Church did not owe me employment nor, even more certainly, Catholic priesthood. Bishop Jenky was kind enough to respond that he was very much open to having a married, former Anglican minister/priest among his diocesan clergy. (He subsequently made sure

"I began to question the validity of Anglican orders, which, of course, directly led to doubts about the validity of Anglican sacraments."

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My Dear Brother and Friend: Part II

A Letter from Father John Thayer

This is a continuation of a truly amazing letter written nearly 220 years ago! See July 2008 newsletter for Part I. It's amazing for several reasons: the author, Father John Thayer, originally a staunchly anti-Catholic Puritan Congregational minister from Boston, who served as chaplain to the forces under John Hancock in the American Revolution, eventually converted to the Catholic faith while on a trip to Europe and became the first American born Catholic priest. As far as we know, therefore, Father John Thayer is the first American born clergy convert!

His own account of his conversion was published in 1787 and reissued in several editions in the United States, London, and Ireland. It was also translated into French and Spanish, and created a great controversial sensation at the time.

Eventually he would return to America with the following conviction:

"This is the prevailing wish, this is the only desire of my heart, to extend as much as lies in my power, the dominion of the true faith, which is now my joy and comfort. I am ambitious of nothing more; for this purpose I desire to return to my own country, in hopes, notwithstanding my unworthiness, to be the instrument of the conversion of my countrymen; and such is my conviction of the truth of the Roman Catholic Church..."

Before returning to America, however, he received a letter from his still very anti-Catholic Puritan brother, Nathaniel, despairing of John's salvation. Here is Father Thayer's loving, brotherly defense of the Faith.

(This is also amazing because this letter was written fourteen years before John Henry Newman was born!)

8. This second species of infallibility far superior to the other, since it is entirely supernatural and founded upon the promises of God appears in the most striking manner, if we consider only these words of Jesus Christ to his Apostles: Go and teach, I am with you to the end of the world; that is to say, with you teaching; Now, a Church which is assured of the presence of Jesus Christ, during the whole time she is teaching must certainly be infallible, and this infallibility is found incontestably promised to the successors of the Apostles: for it is to the successors of the Apostles, as to the Apostles themselves, that these words of the Saviour refer: to the end of the world, unless it were proper to continue them to the very age of the Apostles, usque ad consummationem seculi (hujus); but nothing could be more absurd, since all the Apostles, except St. John, had died before the end of the first age of the Church; besides, Jesus Christ had promised his Apostles that the spirit of truth should abide with them forever (St. Joh c. 14. V 16 & 19) that is to say, again, to the end of the world, words which include again necessarily, as well as the preceding ones, the successors of the Apostles. If they have the spirit of truth for their guide, they assuredly cannot, united among themselves and with their head, the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Our Lord Jesus Christ, teach error, in matters of faith;--therefore they are infallible.

9. It was, therefore, upon reason, upon the Holy Scripture I rested, and not simply upon the fabulous legends of my Church, as you have been pleased to reproach me with having done, when I told you, in my last letter, that the Pope, united with the majority of the Bishops, was guided by the spirit of

truth, in his decisions of what we ought to believe: for, this proposition, the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, and the Bishops are the successors of the other Apostles, is it not a fact as publick, and as incontestable, as this other: Lewis the 16th is the Successor of St. Lewis?

10. All these arguments which I have just offered, prove evidently the infallibility of the Church. Our Lord furnishes a new proof of it when he says, that he who hears the Church hears himself; and when he commands every Christian to obey his Church under the penalty of being treated as a heathen and a publican. Would God command us to obey a Church capable of teaching errors which would infallibly lead us to an eternal death? Would it not be himself, in such a case, that would lead us into error, and to death which would be a necessary consequence of it? Why has God established his Church? St. Paul tells us, it was, that we might not be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; (Ephes. C. 4.V.14) that is to say, that we might not be placed in any doubt or uncertainty respecting what we ought to believe; but can you Protestants ever be otherwise than in a state of doubt and uncertainty? It is a thing which is impossible, since you possess no infallible authority capable of freeing you from error, and upon which you can rest your belief.

11. Besides the Holy Scripture, which is the law, there must necessarily be an infallible authority to terminate the disputes and contentions which may arise among Christians, respecting the sense of this law. If such an authority be not recognized, there cannot be any fixed rule of faith, nor any invariable articles of faith. The prodigious multitude of your Sects, which



increase every day, and which end by becoming Socinians, Deists, etc. is an incontestable proof of it, and one that admits of no reply; a proof which we have a sensible example of, and quite recent in the change which has just taken place among you in the articles of faith anciently drawn up by the members of the English Church.

12. Let me ask you my dear Brother, what is your idea of an article of faith? Is it not a doctrine revealed by God and founded upon his veracity? As then the divine veracity is unchangeable, the truths which depend upon it ought equally to be so. For, heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of God shall never pass away. It would consequently be absurd and impious to pretend to alter any thing in these truths, since it would make God capable of a lie; whence I conclude always that an infallible judge is necessary for you.

13. How can you be persuaded to believe that the Bible is itself this judge? It is the book of the law but a dumb book, a book upon which contestations and disputes arise daily. There ought to be a visible judge to decide the point in dispute and to decide it sovereignty and in the last resort, and to point out who is in the right. Now, the Bible can never do this; for, to abide by the Bible alone, and not to have recourse to the decision of the Church, one will always be stopped by the following doubts. 1st Is the bible a Canonical book, is it truly the work of the Holy Ghost? 2nd Is it entire, and has it not been altered? A doubt the better founded, as there are an infinity of variations. 3rd Is it faithfully translated? And what is more important to know 4th have the Translators given the true sense of it? In the midst of so many uncertainties, how shall I be assured of my faith? Nevertheless, it ought to be so firm and unshaken, that we should be ready with the martyrs to seal it with our blood; without this disposition, one cannot be said to belong to Jesus Christ, and merits not to bear the name of Christian. We, Catholics, are protected from all these perplexities, because we submit to the Church which we believe to be infallible. Besides, that which proves the necessity of an infallible Church, is that she alone can be brought to the level of every one, of the little as well as of the great. Is not Jesus Christ, according to St. Paul, the Saviour of all men? Does he not shew the most tender solicitude for the salvation of all men? Can Mechanics, Labourers and so many others burdened with the different cares of life study the Scriptures? Are they capable of those eternal disputes which the principle you assume entails upon them? Alas! The longest life of the most learned men would not suffice for it After all, with such

“Tradition is nothing more than the general unanimous and constant testimony of the Church of all ages, on the subject of truths revealed by Jesus Christ and taught by his Apostles.”

a principle, that every one if free and capable of examining for himself, I do not see of what great use your Ministers can be to you.

14. The infallibility of the Church once established, every doubt which a Christian might entertain will instantly vanish; for, if it be true that Jesus Christ cannot suffer his Church to deceive me, from that moment I am obliged in conscience to receive all her decisions, even those which appear incredible to my reason. This infallibility once established, the first consequence which should be drawn from it, is that the Church has never at any time taught any error, as Luther and Calvin have pretended, an assertion which they could make without blasphemy, that is to say, without making a liar of Jesus Christ when he said that the gates of hell should never prevail against his Church; for, if the Church here erred, the gates of hell have prevailed against her, and the promise of Jesus Christ is false. The second consequence is, that all those, who voluntarily and knowingly attach themselves to these pretended reformers,

and follow their doctrines, are evidently in the way of perdition; for, what reply can they give to the following argument? In the time of Luther and Calvin either the Roman Catholic Church was the true Church or this title belonged to some other society, or in find the Church of Jesus Christ was extinct; if the Roman Catholic Church was at that time the Church of Jesus Christ, no one could separate from her without renouncing salvation, since there is no salvation for those who separate themselves from Jesus Christ; if it was some other society, they were obliged to unite with it under the pain of eternal

damnation; this is nevertheless what Luther and Calvin did not do. If the Church of Jesus Christ has ceased to exist, Jesus Christ must necessarily be an imposter, since he provided that she should always subsist, in spite of all the efforts of hell and the world.

15. What I have said of infallibility will give you a just idea of what we call Tradition, a word so odious to Protestants, because they represent so badly and disfigure so strangely the thing expressed by it. Tradition is nothing more than the general unanimous and constant testimony of the Church of all ages, on the subject of truths revealed by Jesus Christ and taught by his Apostles.

This letter continues in the next CHNewsletter

* Excerpt from “Memoirs to Serve for the Future, An Ecclesiastical History of the Diocese of Boston” pages 44-46, (U.S. Catholic Historical Society, Yonkers, 1978).



Featured Resources

Newman to Converts

An Existential Ecclesiology
by Stanley L. Jaki

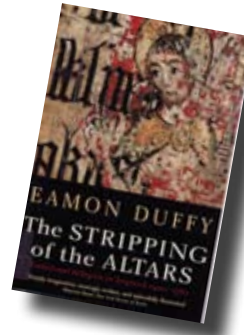


In this age of ecumenism and heterodox experimentation, Newman's emphasis on the inherent sinfulness of schism and heresy seems anachronistic. *Newman to Converts*, however, illumines the eternal, unchanging yet ever-fresh Truths of the Church that rightly claims to be the one true fold of salvation.

**RECEIVE EITHER BOOK WITH ANY
DONATION OF \$35.00 OR MORE!**

Stripping the Altars

Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580,
By Eamon Duffy



Eamon Duffy shows the true beauty of late medieval Catholicism in his prize-winning account of the pre-Reformation Church. Duffy shows that the Reformation created a rupture from a popular and theologically respectable religious system.

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CHNI also carries two of John Henry Cardinal Newman's books *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* and *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Both are excellent resources for the academic mind. To order these or other materials please call CHNI at 740-450-1175.

CHNI Bulletin Board



on EWTN television and radio

Mondays live at 8 PM EST
Tues 1 & 10 AM, Wed 1 PM, Sat 11 PM

August 4 Open Line
Fr. Douglas Grandon
Former Episcopal priest

August 11
Dr. John L. Gresham
Former Assemblies of God

August 18
Dr. Scott Hahn
Former Presbyterian minister

August 25
Pre-tape

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

LIVE RADIO
PROGRAM

WITH

MARCUS
GRODI

& GUESTS

WEDNESDAYS LIVE
AT 2:PM EST



REBROADCAST ON
FRIDAYS AT 9 PM EST
SUNDAYS AT 6 AM EST

Since we have now started the Year of Saint Paul, I will be inviting a host of friends to join me as guests to discuss their favorite verses from the Letters of Saint Paul. Some may discuss the "verses they never saw" that opened their hearts to the Catholic Faith. Make sure you check out our website where you'll find archived programs and discussion guides, plus other Bible study resources. deepinscripture.com

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Please pray ...

✠ CLERGY ✠

✠ For our brothers and sisters in the Church of England and the entire Anglican communion, that in this time of crisis the Holy Spirit would guide his people to peace and the assurance of the fullness of the Faith in Christ's holy Church.

✠ For a convert clergyman who has finished his Catholic seminary training, that the Lord would clear a path for him to ordination.

✠ For Sarah, a recent convert and the wife of a Methodist pastor, that her confused and worried family may not only accept her new found faith but one day call the Catholic Church their own home.

✠ For Sean, a former Lutheran seminarian, that as he looks to come Home to the holy Catholic Church his heart may be freed of the last vestiges of his previous confusion over faith and works in grace.

✠ For a Southern Baptist minister in Alabama, that the Lord Jesus would clear away all misunderstandings about the teachings of the Catholic Church and fill him with the joy of the fullness of God's revelation.

✠ For Brian, a Congregational minister in Virginia, that as he resigns from full-time ministry God would guide him to the vocation he has planned for him in the Catholic Church.

In every issue we include timely prayer concerns from the membership. Each person mentioned has contacted us and is somewhere along their journey home. 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 and answers to :

CHN Prayer List
P. O. Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702

You may also email your prayer requests to:

prayers@chnnetwork.org

We use only first names to preserve anonymity, and the following codes:

(QV) Quo Vadis Requests



✠ For a Southern Baptist minister in Louisiana, who is prayerfully considering a return to the Catholic Church, that Jesus, as He promised, would open the door when He heard the knock.

✠ For Jim, a former Episcopal priest in Ohio, that the Holy Spirit would guide and direct him as he investigates a possible calling to be a priest in the Catholic Church.

✠ For a Non-denominational minister in south India, that as he struggles to guide and support his flock of believers that he may come to realize that both he and his people will enjoy the fullness of all that Jesus intends for them only in his Catholic Church.

✠ Laity ✠

✠ For all the Deep in History planning for this October.

✠ For Fr. Darling, Fr. Bardy, Fr. Norden, and Fr. Henry, prayers of thanksgiving for all our Priests in hearing the call.

✠ For the needs of Meredith, Richard, Kevin, and Joy and for their families as they look to the Catholic Church.

✠ For all within the Helpers Network.

✠ For Louis in his work in Costa Rica.

✠ For all our members who have family members and friends serving over seas. Especially Pvt 1st Class Stephen Arriola.

✠ For all our new contacts, their fellowship and patience on the road ahead.

Fr. Douglas Grandon's story, continued from page 2

this was the case with his Presbyteral Council.) We also spoke about my interest in Russia, where I had lectured each winter for the previous four years. Bishop Jenky spoke most encouragingly about this as a possibility for future ministry. Bishop Ackerman attended my second meeting with Bishop Jenky. He graciously and semi-officially transferred me from his jurisdiction to that of Bishop Jenky. (A bronze bust of Cardinal Newman hovered over the table where we spoke.)

It was a bittersweet day when I left Christ Episcopal Church. I loved celebrating the Eucharist on Saturday, Sunday, and during the week. I spent hours preparing my homilies. I joyfully taught Adult Education, First Communion, and Confirmation classes. I enjoyed visiting my flock, especially the sick and elderly, and most especially when I could bring them communion. We had just completed a large addition to our church building, without incurring debt. I had a good reputation in the community and I was quite well paid. When I departed, I wondered, like Cardinal Newman (who also converted in his mid-forties), whether the best chapters of my life had already been written. My wife and I weren't sure how we would support our family of six.

My wife, four of our children, and I entered the Church at a vigil Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Moline, Illinois on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 2003. My first year in the Church, I was blessed to serve as Spiritual Director and Chairman of the Theology Department at Assumption High School in Davenport, Iowa. At the end of that year, Bishop Jenky appointed me the Director of the Office of Catechetics for the Diocese of Peoria, where I served with great delight the past four years.

In September, 2006, I traveled to Immaculate Conception Seminary in the Archdiocese of Newark, for the seven initial examinations required by the Pastoral Provision for former Angli-

can clergy. In November, 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith officially notified Bishop Jenky that they were "positively disposed" toward my candidacy for priesthood. This past February, I successfully completed the final written and oral examinations on the seven subjects. On April 18, the Congregation authorized Bishop Jenky to proceed with my ordination. On May 24, 2008, Bishop Jenky ordained me, along with five seminarians, to the Catholic priesthood. (Three of the six are former Episcopalians, although I am the only former Episcopal priest/minister.) I presently serve as Parochial Vicar (Associate Pastor) at Sacred Heart Church in Moline, where I was received five years ago.

It appears as I write this testimonial, that there may be a sizeable exodus of bishops, priests, and lay people from the Church of England into the Catholic Church, led by my friend and former professor, Bishop Andrew Burnham. Please pray for him and all those who find themselves in the Valley of Decision. My message to those pondering full communion with the Catholic Church: "Be not afraid. Obey your informed conscience. If you depart your present church, make sure you leave honorably. Be not afraid."

Fr. Grandon presently serves as Parochial Vicar at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Moline, Illinois and as Associate Director of the Office of Catechetics for the Diocese of Peoria. He is also a member of the Philosophy and Religious Studies faculty at Bradley University (Peoria, Illinois) and a parish speaker and board member for the Mary Mother of God Mission Society, whose mission is to restore the Catholic Church in the Russian Far East. Father Grandon will be a guest on the Journey Home Program on August 4th.

Come and hear Marcus Grodi speak on conversion and the truth of the Catholic Faith:



August 22-24
10th Arizona Marian Conference
Scottsdale, AZ
Contact info:
Website: <http://www.mirarizona.org>
Phone: (480) 964-6111
e-mail: registration@mirarizona.org

September 6
Faith Matters Conference.
Des Moines, Iowa
For more information please visit
<http://www.kwky.com>

November 7 & 8, 2008
3rd Annual Northern Nevada Eucharistic & Marian Conference
Reno, NV
Information and Registration: www.adoregod.org

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Come Join Us!
The 6th Annual Deep in History Conference
October 24-26, 2008

The Battle for the Faith: North America 1700-1900.

The Catholic faithful faced a seemingly endless growth of new churches. The continent was dotted with new Protestant faiths, all claiming a hold of the truth of Christianity. While in many regions, Catholics faced persecution for their faith as radical groups sought to extinguish the ancient Church.

October 24-26th
Hilton Columbus at Easton
3900 Chagrin Drive
Columbus, OH 43219

Speakers

Our Marcus Grodi will be joined by Msgr. Frank Lane, Dr. Paul Thigpen, Dr. Richard Chacon, Dr. Kenneth Howell, Fr. Ray Ryland, Fr. Charles Connor, Bruce Sullivan, Rosalind Moss & Patrick Madrid.

For registration please contact Sharon Coen 740-450-1175 or visit deepinhistory.com

Vendors please contact Rob Rodgers-rob@deepinhistory.com

August 2008