



August 2010 Newsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



From Punk to the Papacy *by Daniel Weikert*

I lacked any experience of the Catholic faith growing up as a child and had little until about six years ago. I was introduced to Jesus and the Christian faith by my mother, who had a “born again” experience when I was six. She turned to Christ and told me about it. But there was no mention of the Catholic Church in a positive context. In fact, my grandmother, coming from a Puritan background, once commented that Fulton Sheen was one of those “Catholic wizards.”

As I grew into my teens I had no desire to belong to an antiquated, superstitious, oppressive, and deeply flawed and human institution. That’s how I viewed the Catholic Church.

My father had left and faded away from my awareness while I was just a boy. He and I didn’t speak for almost twenty years, until we reconciled before his death. As I reached adolescence, I felt no need of a man I barely knew, much less a Church that was non-existent in my experience and formation.

I mention my lack of a relationship with these two — my father and the Catholic Church — because it played a significant role in my rebellion as a youth. But I’m grateful to say that, where my father had failed his son, much later God the Father would fill the gap.

If the Catholic Church and heaven were anything like a shining city on a hill, I could not see them. All I knew was that my mother had encountered a man named Jesus in her wilderness. As I scanned the horizon, all I saw was my rebellion and brokenness over a fractured family, and the history of human hurt and suffering. If there’s a God, I thought, He shouldn’t run the world this way.

Very early on, then, in my teenage years, I rejected God and the Church. I did, however, delve into substitutes. “Progressive” philosophy and politics, underground music and art, drugs and moral heathenism filled the growing void in my heart and mind.

Even worse, as I grew older, declining Western civilization seemed to reward me for these indulgences. I started working with music professionals and was paid to engage in radical left-wing environmental activism. Any reason or logic I encountered at the university level was overshadowed by my moral debauchery and relativistic ideology.

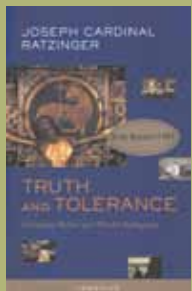
As my body and soul drifted farther from any standard of authentic human living and spiritual reality, I was having some success in life that masked the lies I was living. *...continued on page 2*

Journeys Home

FEATURED RESOURCES

Truth and Tolerance

By Pope Benedict XVI



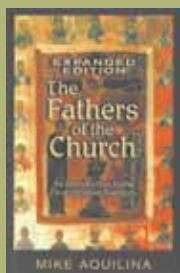
Is truth knowable? If we know the truth, must we hide it in the name of tolerance? Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, engages the problem of truth, tolerance, religion, and culture in the

modern world. Describing the vast array of world religions, Ratzinger embraces the difficult challenge of meeting diverse understandings of spiritual truth while defending the Catholic teaching of salvation through Jesus Christ.

“But what if it is true?” is the question he poses to cultures that decry the Christian position on man’s redemption. Upholding the notion of religious truth while asserting the right of religious freedom, Benedict outlines the timeless teaching of the Magisterium in language that resonates with our embattled culture. A work of extreme sensitivity, understanding, and spiritual maturity, this book is an invaluable asset to those who struggle to hear the voice of truth in the modern religious world.

The Fathers of the Church

By Mike Aquilina



Catholic tradition calls ancient Christian teachers such as Cyprian, Origen, Polycarp, Justin, Ambrose and Augustine “the Fathers.” They were the leaders and teachers of the Christian community during the first

Christian millennium, the faith’s most formative period. Their judgments and insights gave us the Church’s creeds, liturgies, and customs, and even the Bible as we know it today. Now, their stories and writings are brought together in this vivid overview of the history of the early Church. A must-read for all who seek to understand the Church’s past — and prepare for her future.

...Journeys Home Continued...

I worked with three Grammy award winners and had a constant platform to spout anti-Christian ideology via radio, press, and other media. They were major media outlets, too; it seemed only appropriate to deconstruct what Judeo-Christian values had accomplished using them. Family, the Church, a traditional understanding of man and woman, traditional morals — nothing was exempt from my post-modern reinterpretation.

Just as there is good fruit when we turn our life toward Jesus, there are deadly fruits when we rebel against Him and the way that leads to life. St. Paul says “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). In those days I never would have guessed that these “wages” could be more than just effects on the mind or heart.

Not only can sin kill a sharp mind and a contented heart; it can literally take a person’s life. I lost multiple good friends to drug overdoses. Their deaths should have acted as a red flag and proof that there is no real glory in debauchery.

I was too far from God to realize that hope is stronger than fatalism. Fatalism, without God, reduces human life to mere existence. From the perspective of fatalism, a person’s life could end tragically without purpose.

Yet even then, humans seemed more valuable than that. It appeared only reasonable that there should be something more. But it was more than reason that drove me to hope for something more. Hope seemed like a necessity for life.

While all this was happening, I never accepted atheism. I did, however, study major world religions and some cultic and pagan practices. It was obvious that something existed beyond this material world, and a little ray of light always struggled mightily against all the darkness with which I was saturating myself.

This ray came from a prayer I prayed with my mother when I was six years old. I had seen her change her life, pray, and worship. I remember these words popping out of my mouth one day: “Mommy, I want Jesus to live in my heart.”

I knew from that moment on, with every fabric of my being, that He was real. Although I let go of Him and tried to run away as an adult, He never let me out of His sights. How heartened I was to read years later about St. Augustine’s spiritual experiences with his own mother!

By the time I was twenty-seven, the time of confrontation with Christ was coming. My ideologies were proving empty. Politics had no real answers for how to solve the human condition. My romantic relationships were rarely more than indulgence and failure, and secular philosophy had no saving grace, just dimensional reflection.

A series of events landed me in jail. It wasn’t the first time, but this time was different. I had grabbed a Bible — I’m not sure why, but I think I could sense that all I was, was about to be challenged. I turned myself in and spent a few days in a cage. Looking back, I see it now as the most beautiful thing that has happened to me other than the chance at salvation.



I was broken. I remember thinking that something had gone terribly wrong. For some reason, the guard allowed me to take the Holy Book in with me, even though it was against the rules.

I read large portions of the Scriptures and found it to be the only thing offering respite from my desperation and failure. It was like water in a desert. When I finally got out, the grass seemed a different shade of green. Perhaps I was simply seeing that it was green for the first time.

Later when I faced the judge regarding my previous wrongdoing, she asked me where I stood. I told her of my realization of guilt and repentance. I mentioned that I wanted to help others and to teach.

She paused and looked right at me, probably trying to discern my sincerity and comparing my plea to the thousands of others she had undoubtedly heard just like it. Then she said: "Go do what you should do. I exonerate your record."

For the first time I had experienced mercy from the justice system, and it was just the beginning of God's many mercies to me.

From Heathen to Christian to Catholic Christian

Becoming Christian was a total paradigm shift. I had to reorder just about everything I knew. As I did this, I could only do as St. Paul had done after the road to Damascus: throw myself into this new reality and purpose. I could now forgive and be forgiven. I could now see and appreciate the truth, beauty, and goodness in the world.

My first year was one of repentance and discovering my new heart and mind. Soon I was ready to start working for Evangelical and Anglican denominations. In the following years I was a music director, Bible study leader, guest speaker and lay pastor.

Training in evangelization and missions, I studied ferociously. I developed ministries and did church planning, spoke at large cathedrals and led retreats for house churches. All the while, I was blessed with mentors and others whom I myself mentored. It was a beautiful and wonderful new life. I continued to study the truth with fervor and prayed that God would mold me and take me — all of me.

In my past life, when the Hound of Heaven had pursued me to catch me in my brokenness, I had wanted to surrender to His love. I now realized that I must also open myself up to who He really is. But I had no idea how dangerous that attitude was.

It wasn't dangerous in the same way as the behaviors that I had engaged in before my adult conversion to Jesus. It was dangerous in the sense that God will actually show us who He is regardless of our preconceptions — even if only partially because of His vast immensity. As He continued to show Himself to me, something unexpected happened.

I was a history major in college. Of course, at that point I was more of an expert on sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll than on history. Yet I loved to gain knowledge and find truth. *...continued on page 4*

2010 DEEP IN HISTORY CONFERENCE

Marcus Grodi and *The Coming Home Network International* invite you to join us this fall in Columbus, Ohio, 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 authenticity of the Sacred Scriptures as we look to the authority and history of the Sacred Writ.

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

The Sacred Writ is inerrant; however, because of individual human interpretations of the inspired Word, the Christian world is divided. As we look to discern how firm is our 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 Scriptures. The result, we trust, will be a new confidence in the firmness of our 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 or to register call 740-450-1175.



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

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Saturdays 11:00 PM ET

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

Encore: Saturdays 7:00 AM ET

August 2

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Former Pentecostals

August 9

Open-line with Deacon Alex Jones*

Former Pentecostal pastor

August 16

*The Journey Home in Scandinavia**

August 23

Deacon Bill Jarrell*

Former Baptist

August 30

Corey Chambers*

Former Nazarene seminarian

**This schedule is subject to change*



...Journeys Home Continued...

If you want to stay a Protestant, you shouldn't start researching Church history or praying to know what the early Church was like — or even to know what the word "Church" actually means. My Christian faith was mildly comfortable. Then I encountered the Apostolic Church and the early Fathers of the Church. Once again my life was about to be turned upside down.

As I studied the early Church and avidly read the Fathers, I encountered a new language about Jesus, the Church, and how we should actually *be* Christians. Even more astounding to me was how clearly and directly this new language spoke to my heart and mind.

I also started meeting a *new* type of Christian, true Catholic ones. I began sneaking into Catholic churches (well, the doors were unlocked) and observing the art there. Finally, a church that believed in art!

I had heard that Billy Graham was asked once who was the most effective evangelist of all time (other than the Apostles). He made a reference to Pope John Paul II. I'm not sure exactly how that conversation went, but the comment prompted me to begin reading JP II. I discovered that the early Fathers were not the only ones to write of the Holy Spirit with insight and clarity, but this man did as well. This man who was the current leader of — gasp — the Roman Church!

But where would all this study lead me? I felt I couldn't blindly jump into a different denomination or tradition, much less one that is so intensely stigmatized and criticized by the evangelical Protestant brand of theology. So I had to proceed cautiously.

Turning Points and Tipping Points

I would have made little real progress in my journey into the Catholic Church without a certain disposition and preparation that God had been fermenting within me for at least a year or two. I had learned to open my mind to what God was telling me: not in the sense that I believed anything I heard or read, but quite the opposite. I became more discerning and critical of sources.

I wanted to be sure about my faith and what I believed. When I opened my mind and truly searched, I found a great peace, joy, and stability in orthodoxy. By orthodoxy I don't mean the Eastern Orthodox Churches, but what the Catholic Church was teaching about faith and Christ as compared to unorthodox theology and ideology. The more intelligently and purposefully I opened my mind, the more orthodox I became.

Many speak of the heart's conversion to God. While this of course is essential, in Luke 24:45 we read that when Christ was with His followers after His resurrection, "He opened their *minds* to understand."

Where my heart had not accepted true Catholic doctrine and teaching, I would pursue with my mind. Where my mind struggled, I would open my heart. One would follow the other when praying for discernment and conviction from the Spirit. When they sought God together, it was a wonderful



symphony. I would not have become Catholic had my will not been open to their playing together to the tune of truth.

The Book of Acts and the early Church fathers were my foundation of study. After all, to learn what something is you must go to its roots. Then I branched out to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paying attention to scriptural citations.

Next I delved into what I call the “power saints,” St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, who both spoke powerfully to me and almost never in contradiction to one another. John Henry Cardinal Newman became a mainstay in my diet as well, and I still read him often. Then I supplemented with encyclicals and other Church writings. I didn’t even breach contemporary writers such as Hahn, Kreeft, or others until my decision was made, although their positive contribution is obvious.

It is important to mention that my heart was sincerely being moved. I was starting to see the Catholic Church as a beautiful garden in full bloom. Studying it, looking at it, and praying for it made me want to walk within it.

I had treasured a dream in my heart that Christ’s Church could be glory-filled, pure and holy. I was starting to realize that my dream just might come true. Not only because the Church and believers are *in* Christ supernaturally, but also because He instituted a tangible *something* here on Earth.

This time as I scanned the horizon, I saw gardens, gardens of fruit. Beyond the gardens, there was the elusive city, the City of God! Leading me there was not just a conceptual Church, but a real, tangible, yet holy thing.

I have compiled an incomplete but important list of doctrinal issues that influenced me to consider leaving behind much of what I had grown to accept as a non-Catholic Christian.

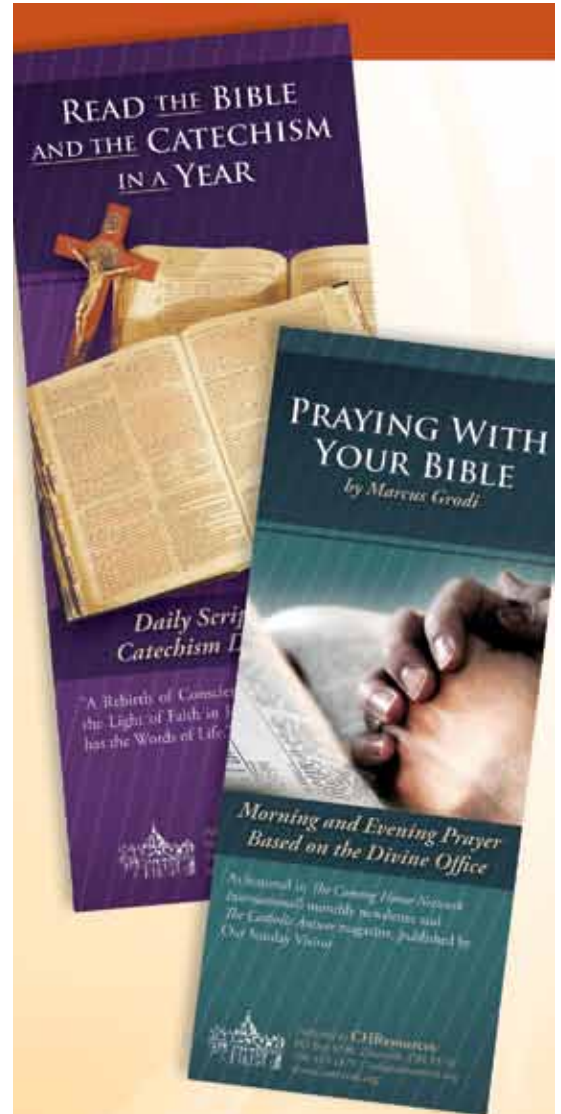
Authority and unity. The need for spiritual authority seemed only logical, as it reflects a reality of heaven. Why doubt the need for authority in the Church if the King uses it in His Kingdom and Christ displayed it on earth? Additionally, human history shows that structured authority is natural to our race.

Regarding unity, Jesus’ prayer on the night He was betrayed sealed the deal for me. “That they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me and I in you” (Jn 17:21). If I were to admit that Christ’s Church could not be unified as He instituted it, then that would show humanity’s flawed state to be greater than Christ’s power and word. The Catholic Church is the only Church that maintains its integrity in Him and by Him unified.



The Pope. I came to understand that Peter is the rock (see Mt 16:18), and Peter’s role as leader of the Church seems almost to be assumed in Acts.

I saw too how the early Church often sought and heeded the words of the bishops of Rome. As these bishops were Peter’s successors, this reality offered more proof of papal authority. *...continued on page 6*



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MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

September 18, 2010

Why Be Catholic Series

St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church
11441 Hubbard RD
Livonia, MI 48150
www.livoniastmichael.org
734-261-1455 ext 207

October 22-24, 2010

How Firm a Foundation

www.hfaf2010.com
740-450-1175

November 5-6, 2010

YB Catholic Conference

St. Luke The Evangelist Parish
8 Atkinson Depot RD
Plaistow, NH 03865
603-382-8324

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SHARE YOUR STORY!

The Coming Home Network International always welcomes those of our members who are converts or reverts to share in writing the stories of how they were drawn (or drawn back) to the Catholic Church. If you would like to share your story to be considered for publication in this newsletter, please email it, along with your name, a brief bio, and contact information, to Mary Clare Pieczynski at maryp@chnetwork.org. We welcome both shorter stories (approximately 1,700 words) and longer ones (4,000 words).

...Journeys Home Continued...

I also came to realize that through anointing and apostolic succession, the popes are continually guided by the Holy Spirit. Hence, the truth that the seat of Peter is infallible could be arrived at by reason. And I knew from personal experience that humans are capable of having moments of holiness.

Sola scriptura. Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:15 that the *Church of God* is the pillar and foundation of truth. Scripture debunks *sola scriptura*. I realized as well that the hermeneutics used for non-Catholic biblical exegesis was wildly inconsistent and led to heresies. The Bible had to be interpreted by what canonized it, followed it, and complemented it: the Church.

The Protestant Reformation. Simply put, the Holy Spirit didn't have it wrong for 1500 years. I had to trust Jesus when He promised the Holy Spirit would lead the Church (see Jn 16:13). It was earth-shattering for me to read the history of the Protestant Reformation, especially in England. I was heartbroken to learn of the instigators' motives and the subsequent schism and bloodshed. Not the fruits of the Spirit.

Mary. I wanted what Christ had given us at the foot of the cross. While not minimizing Christ's role as Savior, I understood that in order to be a child of God and a brother to Jesus, I would have to get to know my family. Not only my Christian brothers and sisters, my personal spiritual father, and all of Christendom, but my spiritual mother and father *in Jesus*, Mary and Joseph.

I began learning about Mary's roles — New Eve, Ark of the New Covenant, Mother, and Queen, among others — and discovered these roles are scripturally supported, doctrinally sound, and theologically definable. In addition, I personally discovered her intercession to be powerful. Just as the Queen Mother would intercede before Davidic Kings, Mary intercedes on our behalf with her Son, Christ the King.



Communion of saints. As Christians we believe in eternal life. So knowing that we don't cease to exist when we die, I realized the communion of saints helps make sense of the mystery of life after death. I hope that entering heaven is a Rubicon that I will cross, so that when I do I'll be more alive than ever. As I tell my Protestant friends: Yes, I speak to "dead" people! But these "dead" saints are actually more alive than they ever were on earth! (See Lk 20:34–38.)

Other issues. With regard to moral teaching on contraception, sexuality, social justice, human dignity and equality, and care for the poor and imprisoned, I finally found in the Catholic Church a Church that was consistent and loving. With regard to women's ordination to the priesthood and homosexual

lifestyles, I finally discovered a Church that would take a stance, understand all sides, and maintain biblical integrity.

Philosophically, nothing could rival what I was learning: the relationship of faith and reason; the need for an informed conscience; the nature of man and woman; the drama of redemption history; the splendor of truth, beauty, goodness, and the created order, to name just a few subjects.

The Eucharist and transubstantiation. Accepting Christ's Real Presence, when the bread and wine become His Body and Blood, was for me at first not the result of study, but rather purely a moment of grace. Kneeling in a church one Sunday, it just hit me like a brick: If God is all powerful; if He is all and in all, the Alpha and Omega; and if faith like a mustard seed can move a mountain; why then shouldn't I accept with faith that He is able to be truly present in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine?

I didn't know it when I first realized this truth, but it would be a major factor in my choosing the Catholic faith. I found the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist in John chapter 6; the multiple accounts of the institution of the Eucharist in the Gospels and St. Paul; the foreshadowing of the Eucharist in the Genesis story of Abraham and Melchizedek; and on and on. As I studied the history of the Church, I found early Christians being accused of cannibalism because of their insistence that the Eucharist was truly Christ's Body and Blood. And I encountered apostolic Fathers with direct connections to the Apostles speaking explicitly of the Eucharist as the true Body and Blood of Christ, not a symbol.

I realized that if I was truly to accept everything Christ taught and established, then communion with Jesus in His Body and Blood was unavoidable. I searched and searched and found that the one, holy and apostolic Church taught and preached Christ's coming in the Eucharist. It was time to choose. It was time for another sweet surrender.

Another New Beginning

Many other experiences, prayers, and moments of revelation led me to become a Catholic. For example, in a matter of two weeks, three people who knew nothing of one another, from different parts of my region, all referred me to the same priest for catechesis. He was gracious and agreed to meet with me.

The Very Rev. Father Drew Morgan, C.O., National Director of the Newman Institute and Provost for the Pittsburgh Oratory, was my catechist. I owe him a great debt for his time, theological prowess, understanding help, and true Catholic catechesis.

We met privately for a year, covering both the essentials and the nuances of the faith and sacraments. I came into the Church in a private ceremony just before Easter by permission from our bishop, and only a handful of close friends and relatives were present. After my first Confession, which took more than forty-five minutes and many tears, I received the sacraments of Confirmation and my first Eucharist on February 17, 2007. ...continued on page 8



DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

On EWTN radio with Marcus Grodi & Guests

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

Encores: Wednesdays @ 9:00 PM ET

Sundays @ 7:00 AM ET

For more information and a link to watch the program **LIVE** online go to www.deepinscripture.com

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CHNI ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!

The Coming Home Network International now has a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Get up-to-the-minute updates on *CHNI* and our work to help those on the journey to the Catholic Church. Search for us on these two social networking sites — we look forward to connecting with you!

UNSOLICITED MAIL

The Coming Home Network International would like to remind our members that we are unable to send unsolicited mail. Since our ministry exclusively responds to non-Catholic clergy and laity who initiate contact with us, we cannot add anyone to our mailing list or send materials unless they themselves first make a request. However, if you would like to have *CHNI* send materials with a gift card in your name, or if you have any questions about this policy, please contact our office at 740-450-1175.

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...Journeys Home Continued...

(The priest said my confession was rousing and an inspiration! Funny how I felt quite depleted but completely free.)

I was received into the Church at the Pittsburgh Oratory, a great spiritual resource. The monks there host reverent, rousing, intellectual, and spiritual Masses; hours of adoration; classes in religious instruction; and much more. They have a beautiful new research library and online kiosk dedicated to the works of soon-to-be canonized Cardinal John Henry Newman. It's an excellent place for scholars and available (via kiosk) for anyone interested (go to www.newmanstudiesinstitute.org).

I lost friends, a job, and a community when I made the leap. I am fortunate that despite a few difficult conversations I have kept my family and regained friendships with a few doubters whom I valued. It broke my heart to leave so much that I had grown to love as a Protestant: the ministries and people who love Jesus passionately. Meanwhile, I gained a universal Church and new parish communities as well as some new friends, given by God to me in a timely way.

By providence I developed quality work relationships quickly with a diocese and moved into parish work, including RCIA, youth ministry, and young adult ministry. I also began speaking, teaching, and giving musical concerts. God placed wonderful Catholic leaders in my life to give advice, offer research direction, and provide a helpful letter when needed. It's a great honor to serve the Church Christ started.

I had been an alien in a land that didn't always teach what Jesus taught. But my new beliefs brought me home, and I found the deepest sense of peace I had ever experienced. It was a peace found in one Church that had taught, ever since His death and resurrection, all that Christ is, a Church that the gates of hell cannot prevail against and that is leading us to glory and sanctification!

I felt freedom and joy knowing what my heart, mind, and body were made for: union with God my Father. I was home. I had become a Catholic. ■



Daniel "Rodan" Weikert is a speaker, musician, writer, and lay minister. He has worked with three Grammy winners, and since his conversion to the Catholic faith he has overseen RCIA, youth, and young adult programs for parishes.

Daniel is the Director of MGO Media, a gospel outreach ministry that focuses on Christian evangelization, discipleship, and domestic missions. He currently works for parishes in the greater Pittsburgh area, with additional speaking engagements, retreats and concerts nationally. For more information visit www.mgoarts.com or email mgoarts@yahoo.com.

Daniel was a guest on The Journey Home program in February 2010. Copies of that program can be ordered from EWTN at 800-854-6316. Ask for item number JH 361.

Prayer List



Clergy

■ For Marie, a Lutheran minister, that God would grant her the grace to overcome the fear of the loss of income and its effects and open the door to enable her to return to the Catholic Church.

■ For an Anglican deacon in Missouri, that God would guide his steps as he discerns his relationship to the holy Catholic Church.

■ For Joseph, a Pentecostal minister in Pennsylvania, that Jesus, who is truly and really present in the Holy Eucharist, will effectively call him to return to holy Communion with Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

■ For Barbara, an Episcopal minister, that the Holy Spirit would guide her every step into the joys of full communion with the one holy Catholic Church.

■ For an Eastern Orthodox seminarian in Louisiana, that every perceived obstacle may disappear so that the way to full communion with the successor of St. Peter may open to him, so that his Orthodox faith may be fulfilled in the Catholic Church.

■ For Doug, an Anglican minister in Canada, that he will find his true home and become thoroughly Catholic in the ancient Church of the apostles and prophets in communion with Pope Benedict XVI.

■ For a Pentecostal minister in Nigeria, that the Father would call him home to the authentic Catholic Church in the name of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

■ For Andy, an Episcopal minister in the southeastern United States, that when he becomes a Catholic Christian the Church may be edified through the many gifts God has given him.

■ For Barry, a Southern Baptist minister, that he may find employment as he seeks to enter the Catholic Church.

Laity

■ For Angie, that she will completely recover from surgery.

■ For Sheila, that the Holy Spirit will give her words of wisdom to share with her family and friends how God is drawing her to the Catholic Church.

■ For Elizabeth and Elaine, that God will surround them with His love and shower them with His grace.

■ For Julie, who has cancer, that God will give her healing and comfort.

■ For Helen, who has fallen away from the Church, that she will return to the arms of her loving Mother.

■ For Michael, to find gainful employment.

■ For Anne's two nephews, who are atheists, that they will realize that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

■ For Lisa, that she will return to the richness contained within the holy Catholic Church.

■ For John and Stephen, that they will receive the gift of faith.

■ For Ellen and her family, that they will experience spiritual healing and return home to the Catholic faith.

■ For Mario and his intentions, that God will answer his prayers according to His will.

■ For Chris, that he will find employment in which he will be able to use best his gifts and talents for the building up of the Kingdom.

■ For a woman who is experiencing difficulties in her marriage, that the loving heart of Jesus will give her comfort and courage.

■ For Norm, that he will have a conversion of heart and lifestyle so that he can experience the freedom of being a child of God.

■ For Michael, that God will grant him full health.

■ For Deirdre, that she will find healing for her marriage and help in her financial difficulties.

■ For Natalie, that she will return fully to the Catholic faith through the Sacrament of Confession.

■ For Peggy, that God will grant her a successful surgery so she can experience a complete recovery.

■ For Patrick, that God will protect him and keep him in good health.

■ For Larry and Lynne, that they may experience God's healing and mercy and find their way home to the Catholic Church.

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, both general and specific, of the CHNetwork and its members and supporters.

Please submit all prayer requests and answers to CHN Prayer List, P. O. Box 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702. Or e-mail prayer requests to prayers@chnetwork.org.

We use only first names to preserve privacy.

BARRIERS, FEARS, & Hopes FRUSTRATIONS,

The primary reason *The Coming Home Network International* was founded seventeen years ago was to offer encouragement, fellowship, and support for Protestant ministers and their families who were considering “coming home” to the Catholic Church. Since then, the Lord has been very gracious, blessing our efforts, especially through your prayers and generosity. Our apostolate has expanded.

Today we help not only clergy on the journey, but also non-Catholic laity as well as fallen-away Catholics. We publish *CHResources*, organize conferences and retreats, and even have a fully operational television and radio studio for our weekly media broadcasts. All of this is possible through your prayers and generosity.

As our activities have expanded, however, we have never lost track of our primary charism, for the needs of non-Catholic clergy on the journey continue to demand attention. I asked Jim Anderson, our Director of Pastoral Care, to pass along some comments from clergy on the journey. Reading these can help you pray for those you are helping come home to the Church as you appreciate more fully the barriers, fears, and frustrations they face — as well as their hopes.

Please pray for these men and women and their families. Pray as well for our staff, who do all we can to help them work through their barriers, fears, and frustrations, and to realize the fullness of their hopes.

— Sincerely in Christ, Marcus Grodi ■

Barriers, Fears, Frustrations

Comments from those who have not yet entered the Church:

“I really do yearn to be Catholic, God knows. But I am so concerned about my wife, primarily. She knows some of my leanings, but the couple of times we’ve discussed things did not go well. I doubt she would come with me, and I am so concerned about our relationship, and her faith, which would be rocked. I wouldn’t want to see her lonely and driven farther from Christ.”

“I have resigned as pastor of my Baptist Church. I am entering a one-year Clinical Pastoral Education residency. The stipend I will receive is significantly less than my present salary. Therefore I need to be able to supplement my income with part-time work of some kind, and I will appreciate any prayer support toward this end.”

“I have reached a plateau in my faith journey, at least for the time being. Reading the Church fathers, and a nineteenth-century Church of Ireland minister, Rev. Archibald Boyd, has convinced me that some form of episcopacy is the biblical form of Church government. Vatican I is a major hump for me that I cannot seem to get over. In light of that, I struggle with Pope Boniface VIII’s *Unam Sanctam* and what is said in Vatican II. I do have other things that ‘bother’ me, but I think this is a very big hurdle; at least, it is for me. If you can suggest reading material that I could look into, I would like that.”

“My journey is still in a holding pattern. My wife has no interest in investigating the Catholic Church.”

“My situation is the same. I’ve been looking for employment elsewhere so I can afford to make the change. The same road block arises: no employment in exchange for conversion. As long as that mistaken attitude prevails, then I’ll have to wait until the Lord opens up a door.”

“I want to rejoin the Church, but I fear the loss of income and its effects.”

“If I came into the Church, what about my children? Pardon me for saying so, but the Catholic Church does a terrible job of educating people about their own faith. My children and grandchildren and even great-grandchildren would potentially be in that Church; would they ever hear the Word and get great teaching like I have? It is my conversion from sin and growth in faith through the teaching of the Word that really has brought me to this point. And I do see a huge need in the Church for good teaching.”

From a former clergyman who has entered the Church:

“I am frustrated that I am not able to use any of my gifts and talents to serve in the Church. I feel like wasted material. I am trying to figure out something that the Lord seems to be indicating in my prayer times, but there seems to be no one to serve as a sounding board. That is mostly due to my job driving over the road. Hard even to get to Mass on any kind of regular basis.”

From a clergy convert who is actively reaching out to Protestant ministers:

"Today, I experienced my first outright rejection. A minister of an independent storefront church said to me, 'You mean, you converted from being a Christian to being a Catholic?' like they were two different things."

"No matter how much I tried to teach her that the Catholic Church was not 'founded on Mary, worships Mary and is so crazed with idols, Mary, and talking to dead people,' she simply refused to even entertain the idea that I was salvageable. I was 'unclean.' She refused to meet with me because she was 'praying that [!] would come to the truth.'"

"The fact that she refused to 'fellowship with' me was jarring for some reason. I had grown so used to being rejected by Catholic leaders within the Church because of my enthusiasm; it was an eye-opener to be rejected because I was part of the Church. Thanks be to God!"

Hopes

From former clergy who are planning to enter or have already entered the Church:

"It has been a long journey. My fears and hesitation are finally over. After five years of reading, contemplating, and struggling, I have finally put it all before my King and said, 'I am beat!' I contacted a priest, and he will be guiding my wife and me into the Roman Catholic Church the first week in August when I renounce my Anglican Orders. Praise the Lord!"

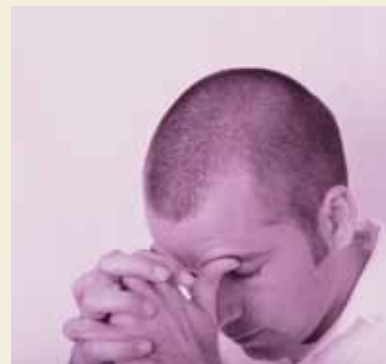
"I am deeply gratified by the welcome I have received from the Catholic community. After a lifetime as an evangelical Protestant (Nazarene Church), to have found my way across the Tiber as an evangelical Catholic has been nothing short of astonishing. Each day I grow more intensely grateful to find myself in solidarity with saints past and present, with our Blessed Mary, and with the traditions that have safeguarded the Gospel throughout the Christian age.

"Mine was a thirty-year journey that climaxed during my doctoral work in the catechumenate, which I undertook shortly after early retirement a few years ago. What a grand epoch in life! Who says old dogs cannot learn or be persuaded contrary to their most stubbornly resistant beliefs?"

"My wife and I are thrilled to be part of the Universal Church established by our Lord and to partake in the blessing of the presence of Christ through the Eucharist. It has been a very rewarding, deepening, and fulfilling journey. I continue to meet weekly with the Network Helpers (with whom you connected us) and have been encouraged and blessed by our time together.

"In the midst of this joyful journey my employer has decided to let me go because of a Catholic expression of our faith. I am working as a licensed counselor for a small Christian counseling agency. The short version of a long story is that they are unwilling to have a Catholic on staff, as it is in contradiction to their 'Evangelical Mission Statement' and may 'misrepresent' them to their referral sources.

"We are choosing to believe God is who He says: 'I AM.' Not the God who was or who will be, but the God who is. In moments of weakness my flesh is drawn toward anxiety, being unemployed with three young children. However, He IS!"

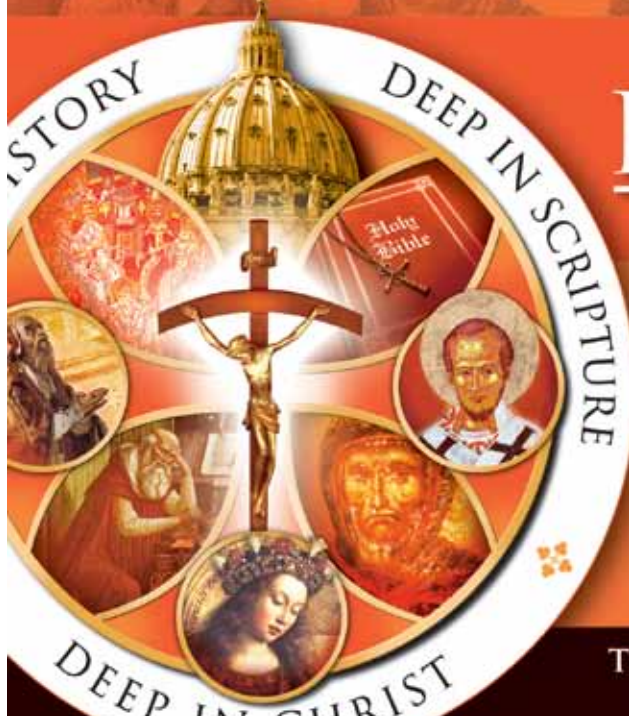


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