



February 2012 Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Evangelization Outreach Package	2
<i>Deep in Scripture</i> Radio Program.....	3
EWTN's <i>The Journey Home</i> Schedule.....	4
<i>Breaches Revisited</i>	9
Prayer List.....	11



THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



Cradle Mennonite to Roman Catholic

By Harold Wenger

On May 1, 2011, with great joy, I confessed my faith, was confirmed as a Roman Catholic, and received my first Holy Communion at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Mesa, Arizona. The church was packed with over a thousand reverent people for the 10 a.m. Mass, which made it so joyful and welcoming. For a 68-year-old Mennonite, career pastor and missionary, this was a dramatic move!

Mennonite Roots

As a “cradle Mennonite,” I grew up in Chesapeake, Virginia, the oldest of nine children. My ancestors were Mennonites from the Anabaptist movement, which started in Switzerland in 1525. They migrated from Europe to Pennsylvania in 1727. My Mennonite parents struggled to provide for us materially and my father worked very hard. Unfortunately, my father grew lukewarm and critical of hypocrisy in our denomination. During my growing years he hardly ever went to

church (he returned to the Lord when I was 18 and at age 90 is still a faithful Mennonite), but my late mother always took us to church. I remember her singing and praying with us at bedtime every evening when I was a child.

I enjoyed going to church, attending summer Bible school, and memorizing Scripture. I accepted Christ as my Savior at a revival meeting (meaning I was convicted of sin and sought forgiveness) when I was nine or ten and then was baptized with a group of my peers—in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. My upbringing as a Mennonite taught me serious discipleship as obedience to the Word, following Jesus, nonconformity to the world, pacifism or conscientious objection to war (we called it non-resistance), and the importance of foreign missions. I have great appreciation for my Mennonite spiritual heritage and for those who nurtured me along the way.

... continued on page 2

Journeys Home

EVANGELIZATION OUTREACH PACKAGE

As a special offer exclusive to CHNetwork members who send us a donation, we're happy to present a "grab bag" of great Catholic books perfect for inspirational reading during Lent.

As a premium, each donor will receive selections from the among these titles and others as well:

A Guide to the Passion

By the editors of Catholic Exchange

Crossing the Dessert

By James Keating

Introduction to the Devout Life

By St. Francis De Sales

Jesus We Adore You

By Dr. Paul Thigpen

Listen My Son

By Fr. Dwight Longenecker

Ordinary Path to Holiness

By Dr. Thomas Richard

The Catholic Church and Conversion

By G. K. Chesterton

The Imitation of Christ

By Thomas à Kempis

The Reform of Renewal

By Fr. Benedict Groeschel

Understanding "Our Father"

By Dr. Scott Hahn

➔ **For a donation of \$50 you will receive one book.**

➔ **For a donation of \$100 you will receive three books.**

➔ **For a donation of \$150 you will receive five books.**

➔ **For a donation of \$250 you will receive ten books.**

Note: For tax reporting purposes, IRS tax laws require us to deduct the value of any materials requested from your enclosed donation.

...Journeys Home Continued...

When a cousin of my father, who was a missionary in Ethiopia and Tanzania, spoke at our church, I felt the call of God to mission in Africa.

A Call to Mission Abroad

At Eastern Mennonite College, I met a black-haired girl with a beautiful smile named Christine Headings (a Mennonite from Ohio), whom I later persuaded to marry me. We became husband and wife on August 28, 1965. She agreed to go to Africa with me and we served as English teachers in Zambia from 1966 to 1969, where I did alternative service as a conscientious objector under the Mennonite Central Committee instead of doing military service in Vietnam. We served a second term in Sierra Leone. Upon returning to the States, we studied at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana, where I received good biblical teaching and Anabaptist theology and earned my Master of Divinity in 1975.

Near the end of seminary training, we wrestled over our call to mission. I believe that God sent a senior missionary couple to



challenge us to return to Africa where there was such great need. So Christine and I went to Swaziland in 1975 with our 3 young children and we served six years, initially teaching with African Independent Churches. In 1976, the African students revolted in Soweto, near Johannesburg, South Africa, and a good number came to Swaziland. At that point, some of the churches organized the Council of Swaziland Churches and a Catholic bishop was chosen as the chairman. At the organizational meeting, he looked at me, a young missionary, and nominated me as secretary. I thanked him and said I had come to serve the churches but I thought that they should choose a Swazi leader for secretary. With a twinkle in his eye, he said that since I had come to serve the churches, I should do what I was told! So I was secretary under a gifted and eloquent Catholic bishop. Several years later he died in a tragic accident and his funeral service was a great celebration of life. I was impressed with the Catholic funeral Mass!

In 1981, after six years in Swaziland, there were mounting personal and professional reasons to return home so I applied for pastoral ministry back in the States. After seven years as pastor of Mennonite churches back in Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh and Altoona), I had the longing to return to Africa. Christine struggled over that call, but then agreed with me. We served in Tanzania as Bible teachers for six years followed by six more years in Mozambique as country representatives for Mennonite Central Committee. It is now hard to believe that we spent a total of 24 years in Africa!

Primed to Come Home

Throughout our years of service in Africa, we were exposed to many positive aspects of the Catholic Church. A list of reasons for my "Big Move" to Catholicism began to mount:

LITURGICAL WORSHIP AND COMMUNION. In Mozambique we had worshipped primarily with the Anglican Church and I was ordained a sub-deacon to assist the priests with the sacraments and to preach. While I remained officially a Mennonite pastor in the Allegheny Mennonite Conference, we were practically Anglicans for six years. We came to love the liturgical worship and regular communion.

... continued on page 4



DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

On EWTN radio with Marcus Grodi & Guests

Airs: Wednesdays @ 2:00 PM ET
Encores: Thursdays @ 1:00 AM ET

Be sure to check out our *Deep in Scripture* website, deepinscripture.com, where you can:

- **Watch** the program live or anytime afterwards.
- **Join** in a live discussion during each show.
- **Find** more information about the guests and the Scriptures being discussed.
- **Access** archives from previous *Deep in Scripture* shows.

Deep in Scripture Guests

February 1

TBD*

February 8

TBD*

February 15

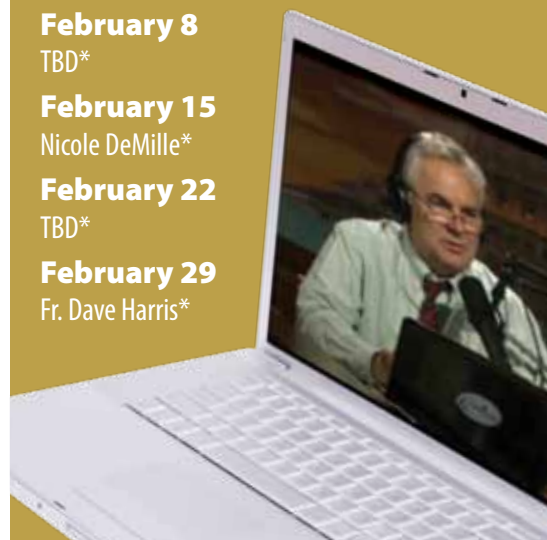
Nicole DeMille*

February 22

TBD*

February 29

Fr. Dave Harris*



*This schedule is subject to change.



EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME

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

TELEVISION

Mondays 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 at 8:00 PM ET

Encore: Saturdays 7:00 AM ET

Sundays 1:00 AM ET

February 6

Panel Discussion from 2011 *Deep in History*
Conference*

February 13

Nicole DeMille*
Former Lutheran

February 20

The Journey Home International *

February 27

Fr. Dave Harris*
Former Baptist

*This schedule is subject to change.



...Journeys Home Continued...

After we returned to the United States, I served as pastor at a Mennonite church in Virginia for two and a half years. I encouraged communion once a month to which the congregation reluctantly agreed, but I missed the liturgy with weekly communion.

DISCONTENT AND SPIRITUAL HUNGER. As pastor of that small church in Virginia, I began to experience a lack of fulfillment and affirmation. After months of struggle and prayer, we felt that God gave me the freedom to resign. We decided to move to Arizona in 2005 to be near our daughter and grandchildren, even without a job or position lined up! I made contact with Mennonite churches in Arizona and had serious discussions with the chair of a search committee, but when I learned how wide open they were to same-sex relationships (an issue that had already made me uneasy about the larger Mennonite Church), I told the chairman that we would not make a good fit. There were very few Mennonite churches in Arizona and no other opportunity for me. At the same time, following the difficult experience in Virginia, I was struggling over my sense of call to pastoral ministry. With encouragement from my father and realtor friends, I decided to pursue training as a realtor. I saw it as a source of income and the kind of business that would give me flexibility in schedule. I was able to get my license right away and began a new challenge in business.

After stepping back from ministry, we soon joined Koinonia Mennonite Church in nearby Chandler where our daughter and family were attending. It is an expanded house church with an attendance of around sixty. We came to appreciate the fellowship and joyful worship, and I did occasional preaching. As in Virginia, I again encouraged more frequent communion which was increased to six times a year. In 2010, for various reasons, I became discontented enough with the church to go visiting elsewhere. I felt a spiritual hunger for something more. The next nearest Mennonite church was about 45 minutes away in Phoenix and I was not interested in other the Protestant churches around.

But I was curious about the Catholic Church. This interest was sparked by many positive encounters with Catholics in Africa, such as the Catholic bishop in Swaziland and wonderful Catholic nuns and sisters, especially in Tanzania and Mozambique. While in Virginia, my spiritual director was a wonderful Catholic priest. I had drawn much inspiration over the years from the writings

“

But I was curious about the Catholic Church. This interest was sparked by many positive encounters with Catholics in Africa, such as the Catholic bishop in Swaziland and wonderful Catholic nuns and sisters...

”

east Arizona for a spiritual retreat. There I met a former Episcopal priest, who shared his Catholic conversion story with me. He listened patiently to my questions about the Real Presence, Mary, the pope, and the Church's attitude to war. He counseled me and gave me a book by Dr. Scott and Kimberly Hahn called *Rome Sweet Home*. I was deeply moved by their journey from a conservative, anti-Catholic, Presbyterian church to the Catholic Church, and it had a powerful impact on me as I realized my own anti-Catholic bias from childhood, though not as strong as what Scott Hahn had grown up with!

THAT FIRST MASS. I first went to Mass at Holy Cross Catholic Church on October 10, 2010, and found it packed with about a thousand people for the 10 a.m. Mass. The beauty of the Mass—the reverence, the music, the singing of the Gloria, the Scriptures, the confession of sins, the Profession of Faith, the sacrament of Holy Communion, the whole Christ-centered worship experience—moved me to tears. In my heart I felt greatly blessed to have been there and had a strong desire to return. I dared to continue going to Mass (to the dismay of Mennonite friends) ... continued on page 6

of Catholics such as Henry Nouwen and Mother Teresa. My call to mission left me with a great curiosity about Christianity throughout the world and a longing for richer, liturgical worship. The fact that the Catholic Church has a similar focus on Jesus and the Gospels, rather than starting with Paul and justification by faith—as did many other Protestant denominations—also sparked my interest.

SPIRITUAL RETREAT. As part of my search, in November 2010, I went to Holy Trinity Monastery in south-

SUPPORTING CHNETWORK JUST GOT EASIER!

For your convenience, CHNetwork is able to automatically deduct monthly donations directly from your credit card, checking, or savings account. If you would like to set up an automatic monthly donation, please go to **chnetwork.org/donate/** or complete the form below and mail to:

CHNetwork

Attention: Ann Moore

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

Please contact Ann at 740-450-1175 or ann@chnetwork.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Yes! I wish to make a monthly donation of \$_____ on auto-payment from my:

☐ Checking account

Bank routing number (9-digit number)

Account number

☐ Savings account

Bank routing number (9-digit number)

Account number

☐ Credit card

Card number

Expiration date

☐ Visa

☐ MasterCard

☐ Discover

☐ AmericanExpress

Your information

Name

Signature

Address

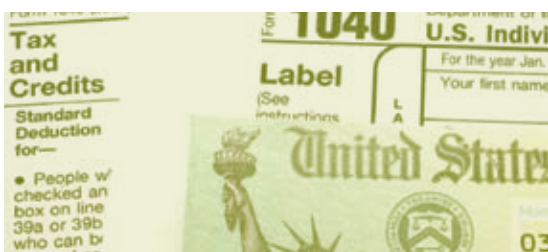
City/State/Zip

Phone number

Email address

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Please go to chnetwork.org/resources to see current job listings. Or, if you know of an employment opportunity that you would like posted, please e-mail it to jim@chnetwork.org.



TAX LETTERS

If you need a record of your 2011 contributions for tax purposes, please contact Wendy Hart.

Wendy Hart

wendy@chnetwork.org
740-450-1175 ext. 102

UNSOLICITED MAIL

The CHNetwork 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 CHNetwork 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.

NEWSLETTER COPIES

CHNetwork encourages members to make copies of the newsletter and distribute to family, friends, and church groups. We do ask that copies of the newsletter not be sold. Unless otherwise indicated, the contents of this newsletter are Copyright © 2012 by the Coming Home Network International. All rights reserved.

...Journeys Home Continued...

and with great excitement invited friends and family to go with me, of whom several did. With growing desire, in December I went to see the director of Christian education and signed up for the RCIA class beginning in January 2011.

In the RCIA class, I had to review the basics of the faith again. I remember being touched by the Nicene Creed (which is not used in Mennonite worship), and commented to the teacher: "As a Mennonite that is exactly what I believe." As we continued, I realized the Creed's importance for the unity of the Church's faith. During the course I had many questions and I kept borrowing books from the parish library. The teachers were so clear on Church doctrine and practice and explained it with passion. I struggled with new terminology, new practices, and with the Church's great respect for Mary. At some point along the way, I realized that in my heart I was ready, that I really wanted to be Catholic, that I respected and trusted the teaching authority and magisterium of the Church, and that I did not have to understand everything. I could hardly wait to be received and to receive Holy Communion.

THE REAL PRESENCE. The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is such a joyful, faith-building Sacrament, the heart of our faith. Using a phrase from Scott Hahn, it is "heaven on earth." From my reading I am convinced that Protestants have had to ignore or reinterpret the teachings and practice of the early Church in order to circumvent the clear message of the Scriptures, as in

John 6 ("unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood"). I had taught the symbolic view for so many years, criticizing the Catholic view as absurd. However, with further study, I rediscovered early Church history, and realized that the Catholic Church has faithfully maintained the clear teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. From the Coming Home Network



Kriss Szkurlatowski/stock.xchng

I received the book, *Ignatius of Antioch & Polycarp of Smyrna*, by Dr. Kenneth Howell, confirming the Catholic faith of these early leaders. In fact I chose St. Polycarp, a second century bishop and martyr, as my confirmation name! Now I find it such a joy to receive the Body and the Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist, and I sometimes go to Mass twice on Sunday. Already I am privileged to serve as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.

CLARITY OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE. I had tired of endless dialogue over issues of theology, biblical interpretation, leadership, worship style, homosexuality, etc. In the Catholic Church I found a fixed structure and leadership, with clear lines of authority, and I respect that. I appreciate the Nicene Creed, the clear teaching, the *Catechism*, and the magisterium of the Church. I trust that the Spirit of God will continue leading the Church to work through difficult issues, and to continue proclaiming the faith of the Apostles. Plus, I have come to greatly admire the late Pope John XXIII, the Blessed Pope John Paul II (whose life story has amazed and inspired me), and the current Pope Benedict XVI, whom I consider one of the greatest theologians of our time.



COMING HOME. It is a surprise to everyone—even myself—that I am now a Roman Catholic, but it truly feels like coming home to the “Mother Church.” My father thinks it is a temporary phase, one of my sisters is shocked, and our three children are respectful. My wife, Christine, has done considerable reading as well and has gone with me to Mass a number of times, but she is not ready and is still serving as an elder at Koinonia Mennonite Church (but we are still deeply in love!). I remain grateful for my heritage in the Mennonite Church: for the emphasis on Jesus as Lord and Savior, for the strong sense of community

... continued on page 8

HELPERS NETWORK

Are you on the journey?

The Coming Home Network International exists to aid Protestant ministers and laypeople who are on the journey to the Catholic Church. If you are not Catholic and interested in learning more about the Catholic Church, please contact our office to learn how best the CHNetwork can be of assistance to you. In particular, we have a “Helpers Network” to provide one-on-one support and fellowship to those on the journey to the Catholic Church. If you would like to be paired with a CHNetwork Helper, or if there is any other way we can help you on your faith journey, please feel free to contact us by e-mail: jim@chnetwork.org or maryp@chnetwork.org, or by phone: 740-450-1175. We look forward to serving you!

SHARE YOUR STORY

SHARE YOUR STORY!

The CHNetwork always welcomes those of our members who are converts or reverts to share their written conversion stories of how they were drawn (or drawn back) to the Catholic Church. If you feel called to share your story, please feel free to go to <http://chnetwork.org/converts> to review our writer’s guidelines, see sample stories, and upload your testimony.

WWW.CHNETWORK.ORG

The CHNetwork invites you to visit our website where you can read the latest CHNetwork news, follow our blog, read conversion stories, watch videos, and join in discussions on our forum. Keep up to date with the CHNetwork and become more involved in our mission to assist men and women who are on the journey to the Catholic Church.

VISIT! SHARE! ENJOY!

THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

PO Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702
740-450-1175
www.chnetwork.org

President/Founder

Marcus Grodi (*former Presbyterian pastor*)

Chaplain

Fr. Ray Ryland (*former Anglican priest*)

Chief Operating Officer

Kevin Lowry (*former Presbyterian*)

Senior Advisor – History & Theology

Jim Anderson (*former Lutheran*)

Director of Studio/Media

Scott Scholten (*former Presbyterian*)

Financial Coordinator

Ann Moore

IT/Facilities Coordinator

Bill Bateson (*former Mormon*)

Publications and Laity Coordinator

Mary Clare Pieczynski

Communications Coordinator

JonMarc Grodi

Financial Assistant

Wendy Hart (*former United Methodist*)

Resident Theologian

Dr. Kenneth Howell (*former Presbyterian pastor*)

Board of Directors

Marcus Grodi (*former Presbyterian pastor*)

Fr. Ray Ryland (*former Anglican priest*)

Dr. Charles Feicht (*revert from Evangelicalism*)

Dr. Robert Geiger (*revert*)

Bruce Sullivan (*former Church of Christ minister*)

NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

Download and print full-color copies of all previous CHNetwork newsletters from our online archive.
Visit www.chnetwork.org/newsletter-archive

...Journeys Home Continued...

(now enlarged with the community of saints!), for the teaching on peace and non-violence (which is still very important to me), and for the emphasis on non-conformity to the world. However, I now realize the tragedy of the broken and divided Christian world, which continues to splinter into thousands of groups. There are scores of Mennonite groups alone, and more every year. Yet we all confess one Lord, one faith, and one Baptism.

THE LORD
OF FAITH
AND BAPTISM

At age sixty-eight I have begun a new spiritual journey, with so much to learn, so many new resources, and so aware of my human weaknesses. I have become part of the Church established by the Lord Jesus, part of the worldwide community of faith, and an heir to the treasures of Christian history and the witness of the saints. I am excited with my continuing journey and ready to tell my story to anyone who will listen! Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. ■



HAROLD WENGER currently resides in Mesa, AZ with his wife, Christine. They have three children and three grandchildren. He is employed as a realtor.

BLOG

Please visit www.chnetwork.org/blog to comment on and discuss this story!



By Marcus Grodi

BREACHES

Revisited

I've often described conversion as starting from a *breach* in the walls of our defenses. Normally our hearts and minds are ensconced in layers of barriers that form a wall of protection that prevents us from *hearing* and responding to the truth. By the working of grace, however, a *breach* can occur—an opportunity or moment of grace (as Blessed Newman would say)—through which truth can be seen or heard and then, again by grace, received, or freely rejected—for He never forces Himself upon us. Often, on the *Journey Home* program or in the conversion stories shared in this newsletter, some of the many issues that lead to conversion are necessarily condensed, summarized, truncated, and even forgotten over time. Such is true with my own conversion.

I've kept prayer journals periodically over the years. These are essentially in the form of what is called *Lectio Divina*, in which I copy texts from my morning Scripture readings and record my reflections which are addressed to Jesus.

Recently, over Christmas break, I was perusing some of these old journals and found, buried in a partially demolished moving crate, my journal from 1990 to 1992—the period in which Marilyn and I discovered and entered the Catholic Church! My recorded thoughts were never intended for human eyes, but written only as a prayerful conversation with Jesus. What I found, reading over them now twenty years later, was quite startling (to me).

For years, I've summarized my journey into the Church as a search for truth in the midst of the confusion of Protestantism. This, of course, is true, for it does describe the common thread that runs through the past 40-years of my adult life. But what surprised me was that this was not the gist of my journal entries during those first weeks of my conversion process.

I've decided to share these entries, not because my particular journey is in any way significant, but because I hope what I discovered by looking back is helpful to those of you still on the journey, as well as those of you praying for those either on the journey or still closed to the Church. Also, by necessity, these entries only give a glimpse into our journey home, and unfortunately leave much unsaid (the rest of our story can be found in *Journeys Home*).

What I discovered was that there were other, more private, issues the Lord was using to open my heart and mind to the truth of the Catholic faith. It's possible that if these issues were not at work in my life, I may not have paid attention to the new information I was receiving about the Church. As I reviewed

my journal, I rediscovered a few of the ways the Spirit was creating *breaches* in my defenses.

In May 1990, I was nine months into my new position as a Senior Minister of a Presbyterian church of 350 families ("2000" claimed members). I had long since surrendered my life to Jesus Christ, and was seeking to serve Him faithfully. When I recorded the following entry on May 1, I had NEVER before considered the Catholic Church as a viable option for my life or ministry (and was still five months away from my first Catholic "awakening"). I wrote:

My self-doubt seems to prevent me from feeling/thinking of myself as having arrived at the level of competency required for my present calling & responsibilities. With all my experiences, education, readings, resourcing, and relationships, I yet still feel like I don't have enough "info" to do adequately what I've been called to do. But to this Jesus calls me; He reminds me that He, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, promises to fill in the gaps where I am lacking. He calls me to step beyond what I can do on my own and trust Him. He has put me in a situation that forces me to depend on Him! If I could do all on my own power, I would turn my eyes only upon myself. In fact, the frustration & self-doubt occur because I fail to keep my eyes on Him! Nothing I can do or acquire or learn can eliminate self-doubt, because the self-doubt is real, a part of my character. It isn't really based upon my "equipment" or equipped state—because I admittedly am gifted beyond many people! My "character flaw" is a gift, a sign post to turn to God; a reminder. Lord, thank you for the many ways You demonstrate Your love and grace!

In this, I admit to a constant INTERNAL *breach* in my defenses, the "gift" of self-doubt that has always plagued me. I believe this is one of the chinks in my armor that God established to keep me receptive to His Will. Whenever I struggled over the proliferating theological confusion amongst myself and other Protestants, or the disturbing differences between how I and others pastored and led our congregations, it never crossed my mind that the problem was Protestantism or *sola Scriptura*. I always assumed the problem was me. My journals are full of my requests to God for His guidance.

In many ways as a result of the above, I was constantly questioning whether I should remain in the pastorate. Though my congregations always responded well to my pastoral min-

... continued on page 10

istry, yet in my journals I was constantly questioning my VOCATIONAL call to the ministry. I was always second guessing my skills as a pastor, counselor, preacher, leader, and this was a constant spiritual battle.

In fact, exactly one month before “discovering” the Catholic Church, I made the decision to leave the pastorate to return to school:

I've decided to once again consider aiming toward college teaching by getting a masters in biology and a PhD in bioethics...[because, among other reasons] after 15 years of pastoral type work I still do not feel comfortable with most of the things I'm called to do, and I don't want to spend the rest of my life feeling this way ... Lord, [a long] list of things seems to point in this direction ... Please guide me! I want to do Your will and to be pleasing in Your sight! I guess I feel I'm un-burying the rest of my talents so that I can invest them all for you! Thank you Jesus!

One of the many reasons I was deciding to leave the pastorate (which forms the backdrop for my novels *How Firm a Foundation* and *Pillar and Bulwark*) was my loss of confidence in whether what I believed as a Presbyterian, based on *sola Scriptura*, was true. Again I assumed the problem wasn't Protestantism or *sola Scriptura*, but me, so I discerned it was time for me to return to school.

A third important continuing *breach*, however, was more RELATIONAL. Often in my journals I addressed the struggles that my wife Marilyn and I had over my work as a pastor. We admittedly were dealing with a boat load of tension and, in November of 1990, Marilyn was four months pregnant with our second son (Peter). It seemed that everything I did was wrong—especially whenever I was called out of the home at odd hours for pastoral meetings or emergencies. Again, I assumed the problems had to be me, so this added to my openness to seeking employment elsewhere.

On November 13, 1990, I wrote:

“Now I believe you have brought me to the place where I can take a bold step to serve You in a very exciting way that utilizes all the gifts You have given me in an area that needs a strong Christian voice: bioethics, and science & religion... Lord, continue to guide me. I want only to do Thy will! It is so hard to hear & discern, though. You know the frustrations I feel! Please close the doors if You don't want me to change. I love You Lord and want to serve You.”

Two weeks went blank without a journal entry, until Tuesday, November 29, 1990:

Dear Lord, what a pilgrimage I am on! My sincere prayer is that I am being led by You! Ever since I went to hear Scott Hahn [Sunday, November 17], I've been re-examining the validity of the Catholic Church and the Reformation's withdrawal. I've skimmed Vatican II; I've read part's of Sheed's “Theology for Beginners”; I've had lunch with Fa-

ther S_____; and am half-way through “Catholicism and Fundamentalism” by Karl Keating. I'm finding that most of what I believed about the Catholic Church was unfounded. I'm also beginning to question some of the doctrines I've held to as an evangelical Protestant, i.e., sola Scriptura and sola fide. I've had some problems all along with these: namely, where do we get the idea that Scripture is an inerrant, authoritative source for all of life? Historically this came about through the decision of the Church—the Catholic Church!! I've felt comfortable with sola fide, except that it requires that I water down all the verses where we are called to do good works, or where we will be held accountable for our lives! I feel I've had to do some creative side-stepping on lots of issues that the Catholic Church has very clearly and scripturally defined. Their views of baptism, the Eucharist, authority, confession, holiness, and the Church all follow the clear meaning of Scripture, and seem to follow the clearest sense.

Yesterday, I talked with Scott Hahn on the phone. He greatly affirmed my search. ... Lord, please please continue to guide me! Scott also reminded me that you are my Father, I am Your son, and that Your love for me is so great that even my struggles will not turn You from me. Thank You Jesus!

This terse but candid account may give the impression that in two weeks I went from self-doubting, discouraged, and lost to confident, convinced, and “found.” In reality, however, it took another two years to work through all the relational, theological, and vocational issues—most of which formed the basis for why we saw the need for the Coming Home Network International—but in December 1992, by God's merciful grace, Marilyn and I, with Jon Marc (5) and Peter (1 ½) entered the Church.

Perhaps if I had been a more self-confident person, comfortable and content in the challenges of my pastoral ministry, and unmoved by the cacophony of differences between my beliefs and practices and those of other ministers—and if Marilyn had been more comfortable and excited about our life in the ministry—I'm not so sure how open I would have been to recognizing the problems of Protestantism and the truth of the Catholic Church. And frankly, the “gift” of self-doubt didn't disappear, but has kept me, these past 20 years, continually examining all aspects of our new Catholic faith. All I can say, however, is that Marilyn and I are both eternally grateful for how our Lord reached out to both of us to bring us home together.

Please pray for those on the journey—as well as the thousands of non-Catholic ministers who seem completely closed and content. May God do whatever is necessary to form breaches in the barriers of their defenses that they might be open to the truth of Christ's Church. ■ — Sincerely in Christ, Marcus

BLOG

Please visit www.chnetwork.org/blog to comment on and discuss this article!

Prayer List



Clergy

■ For an Anglican deacon in Colorado, that he may be able to overcome the frustrations he finds in his RCIA program and persevere to the reception of Jesus at the Easter Vigil.

■ For Keith, a Pentecostal minister in Illinois, that, as his eyes and heart are opened to the truth of the Catholic faith, peace may settle more deeply into his heart.

■ For an Eastern Orthodox priest who wishes to return to the Catholic Church of his youth and be in full-communication with the Pope whom he loves.

■ For an Anglican deacon in Ohio, that the Holy Spirit would calm his and his wife's fears and send them welcoming and loving brothers and sisters in their new Catholic parish.

■ For a Baptist minister in Oregon, that our Lord Jesus many use the knowledge he obtains, through his study of the Catholic Faith, to ignite a desire to possess the fullness of the faith found only in the Catholic Church.

■ For Debra, a Non-denominational minister in Virginia, that she may be drawn by our Lord ever more deeply toward the center of His loving heart.

■ For a Pentecostal missionary and his wife in Jamaica, that the Holy Spirit would answer their questioning hearts and reveal to them how they may use their gifts and talents to further the Kingdom within the Catholic Church.

■ For Jonathan, a Baptist minister in Mississippi, that our Lord would show him a new way he can radically glorify the Father and witness his faith as a Catholic Christian.

■ For Eric, a Nazarene minister in the Midwest, that he may joyfully discover the sacraments as a powerful source of holiness.

■ For Bryan, an Anglican seminarian, that he may soon enjoy true Catholic unity in full-communication with the successor of St. Peter.

■ For Mike and his family as they transition out of ministry and into the Catholic Church, that our Lord guide their steps and give them the right words to tell their family and friends of their decision.

Laity

■ For Cathy who is looking to become Catholic but her husband is not.

■ For Mary as she goes through an annulment process, that Jesus' saving love heal the painful wounds of her past.

■ For Pat who is continuing to seek the Lord's will by learning more about the Catholic faith.

■ For Sheila, that she experience God's abundant graces as she lives out her new life as a Catholic Christian.

■ For Vicky's RCIA journey and that she be able to receive our Lord's Body and Blood at the Easter Vigil.

■ For Lindsey, that her many questions and concerns about the truth of Catholic teaching be answered by the Holy Spirit's grace.

■ For Peter, that his interest in the Catholic Church continue and deepen during the Lenten season.

■ For Karen, that she find good Catholic fellowship and support as she continues her faith journey.

■ For Kim, who is searching for answers and learning about Catholic teachings, that she may come to understand that the Church is truly Christ's voice in the world.

■ For Linda, that she continue to be open to the truth about the one, holy 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 CHNetwork Prayer List, PO Box 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702. Or email prayer requests to prayers@chnetwork.org.

We use only first names to preserve privacy.

The Coming Home Network International

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SPECIAL EDITION
OF



February 6th, 2012

MARCUS GRODI and THE COMING HOME NETWORK

INTERNATIONAL are pleased to announce that the panel discussion taped live at the 2011 *Deep in History* conference will be broadcast as a special *Journey Home* episode February 6, 2012. Mark your calendars and tune into EWTN to watch this exceptional episode in which four converts — Dr. Scott Hahn, Fr. Ray Ryland, Mark Shea, and Roy Schoeman — discuss Sacred Tradition.

