



## February 2013 Newsletter

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CHResources .....	2
EWTV's <i>The Journey Home</i> Schedule .....	5
<i>Saint Worship</i> By Orestes Brownson .....	6
Support the CHNetwork .....	7

# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## Tears from My Father *by Randall Gorman*

I was raised in a family that was steeped in the Assemblies of God (AG) tradition. My grandfather, Marvin Gorman, was the pastor of the largest AG church in the state of Louisiana with around four to six thousand people in attendance every Sunday. As an adult, I was a third generation minister in an Assemblies of God (AG) turned non-denominational church in Ruston, Louisiana.

During my formative years, I remember the bright lights of that huge church; the music, the people, and the atmosphere were entrancing. I remember sitting on Jimmy Swaggart's lap in my grandfather's office as he told me that I was going to be a great man of God one day. I remember flying on my grandfather's private plane to Jim Bakker's Praise the Lord ministry headquarters and even being on his nationwide broadcast with my grandfather and parents.

My father, for whom I was named, was also a very dedicated minister on Marvin's staff and spent his entire life trying to continue the legacy my grandfather had built in the name of Christ. I am proud of my heritage and it has provided me with a strong foundation in Christ.

### Rocked by Scandal

Although I was "born and raised" on the pews of a very large church, I also remember things that were not so glamorous. My grandfather's ministry crumbled in front of our family's eyes as the result of a moral failure. I remember people,

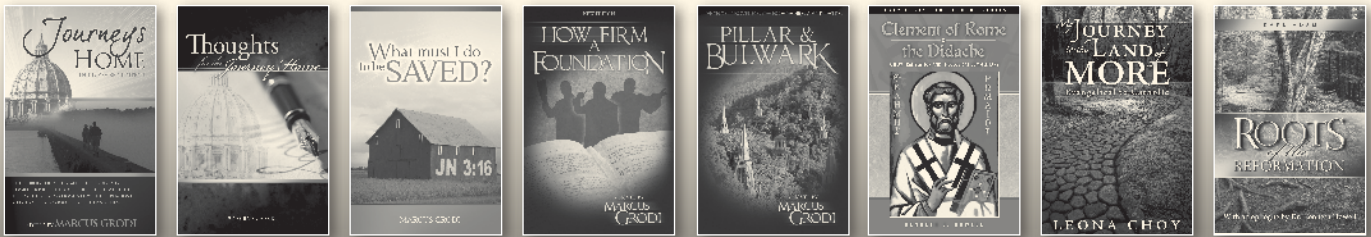
who at one point were very close to my family, trying to convince my father and his siblings to turn against their own father. Some smeared my grandfather's name with incredibly outrageous accusations. Not long after, Jimmy Swaggart's ministry began to crumble as well. Millions of people were left wondering: what has happened in the Protestant world?

It was a time of turmoil for me as well. Seeing all of my heroes go down in flames in front of millions of people, exacerbated by major news networks covering each and every scandal that occurred in the Protestant faith, was very confusing for a 10-year-old. My faith had been shaken to its very core. The world in which I so comfortably grew up no longer existed. My family was ousted from the AG denomination. I couldn't help but thinking that this was not how God's people were supposed to treat each other.

At some point during my teenage years, I heard about other books that existed in the Catholic Bible and did not understand why Protestants didn't have access to those Scriptures also. I was able to get a hold of a Catholic Bible and was introduced to what Protestants called "the Apocrypha." I, like many millions before me, found much inspiration in these "new" Scriptures. I felt like God was revealing Himself to me all over again and all I could think was, "I love this."

Then, life caught up with me. My family members had moved on from the ... *continued on page 2*

*Journeys Home*



Visit [www.chresources.com](http://www.chresources.com) or call 740-450-1175 for these and other great resources to learn more about the Catholic Faith.

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

scandal and began rebuilding their ministry, but no matter how hard I tried, I could not forget what had happened. I became bitter and wallowed in hurt and self-pity. In my late teens, I began to experiment with alcohol, drugs, and sexual sins as I ran further away from God. I had no idea what I believed anymore, or if I even believed at all. Although I was heavily involved in church, I looked at church and religion to serve a social need rather than a spiritual need.

### **Tragedy brings new light**

My family watched my life unwind and knew I was wandering down the dangerous road to perdition. There were times when I felt I had no control over my own life and I was simply living for the moment without fear of what repercussions my actions would bring. This was ultimately my darkest hour.

Then, on September 11, 2001, I watched the news of the planes that crashed into the World Trade Center. All I could think, in my state of sin and disgrace, was that I needed to pray. I drove around New Orleans looking for any church that showed signs of life. The city was eerily quiet and still. I drove onto Tulane Avenue and pulled into the parking lot of St. Joseph Catholic Church. It was a huge, beautiful building. The beauty and reverent atmosphere of this church struck me. A Mass was being held for the victims of the attacks. I had never attended a Catholic Mass before, so I sat there quietly and prayed as the Mass proceeded. Aside from reading “the Apocrypha,” this was my first tangible experience with the beauty of the Catholic Faith and it would prove instrumental for me over the next few years.

### **A new commitment to God**

Later that month, my family decided that I would be sent into an AG mentorship program called Masters Commission, as a kind of “rehab.” My uncle paid for my flight to Florida and I stayed at the home of a close family friend. It was one of the greatest things they could have done for me.

In Lakeland, Florida, I found myself touring the campus of another mega church that had a 10,000-seat sanctuary. I was awestruck at how dedicated the other young adults in the program were to God and church. I went to dinner with my “guide” for the weekend and at that dinner I met an amaz-

ing woman who would later become my best friend, wife, and mother of our precious children. During that weekend I made a new commitment to God and to my family: I was putting away the past and pursuing God.

After our wedding, my wife, Mary, and I became very involved in the youth and music ministries of that church. Life was wonderful, yet I found myself yearning for more. I was immensely grateful to God for changing my life so completely that the only way I could thank Him enough was to give Him my life in service to the church.

When Mary and I first married, I met her uncle, Fr. Andrew Mallick, who is a priest in Ocala, Florida. All my life I heard that Catholics are good people but they are wrong. I took it upon myself to study the Catholic Faith in an attempt to prove it wrong. One thing that I quickly noticed was that the more I studied Catholicism, the less I could find error in their teachings. In our discussions, Fr. Andrew would listen to my points and then respond in love with surgical (and scriptural) precision to show me my error. My wife, Mary, was raised Catholic, but at an early age, after her parents divorced, her mother started attending the same AG church at which we met. The entire paternal side of her family are, to this day, amazing and devout Catholics.

### **Trouble in ministry**

One weekend in Orlando, I met with my grandfather, who was there ministering in another church. I told him that I would do any type of ministry, but that I just had to serve God through His church. One month after we had that conversation, Mary and I were on a plane to Ruston, Louisiana, to meet the pastor of a local church who was in desperate need of a new assistant minister. Two weeks after that meeting, we had all of our belongings in the back of a Ryder truck and were moving to Ruston to do what I felt God was calling me to do.

When I first arrived at my new church home, I was amazed at how large this church was in such a small community. It was a fast-paced learning experience for Mary and I. Prior to this, I had only worked in churches in minor roles and the information I had to process in order to do the job well was overwhelming, to say the least. Unfortunately it turned into a

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

very visceral experience for me. I began to sense that the focus of this church was not God but on seeking church size and notoriety in the community. I also experienced negativity and ridicule from those within the church. I spent four difficult years in ministry at that church and I reached a point yet again where I was questioning my decisions. All I could think was, “how could a God who loves me allow me to experience such pain and rejection by people who call themselves His servants?”

Disillusioned and hurt, I told my father that I would never work in a church again as long as I lived! Thus, I began seeking out a new career path. My dad was a reserve deputy in the New Orleans area and he was my childhood hero because he was a cop. I was excited when a new career opportunity opened and I was able to fulfill a childhood dream of working for the sheriff's department. Five years later, I still love every second of it. I realized that ministry takes many different forms. In law enforcement, I help serve the people of my community.

### **Pain hidden in agnosticism**

Upon leaving the church, I again found myself questioning my religious beliefs. Only this time, those thoughts were taking on a much more cynical pattern. I began listening to several atheists rant about Christianity and how ludicrous faith in an unseen Being was. I never reached the point of calling myself an atheist, but I told people I was an agnostic. I felt a certain pride in doing so, because I felt as though it was a slap in the face of everyone who contributed to my unfortunate experiences in the world of religion. I felt vindicated in the strangest way by my newfound “freedom” of mind. I remember sitting alone in a car with my father as I told him about my lack of faith. This time, however, something was different. Usually self-satisfied, I felt in my heart as though I was crying out, from the depths of my soul, “Daddy, give me even a glimmer of hope that this God I have believed in for so long is real.”

My father was understanding and compassionate to my plight. I knew I had just dropped a colossal weight on his shoulders. Also, being a father myself, I thought, “how would I react if one of my kids placed a burden like this on my shoulders?” I was receptive to what he said and thanked him for listening to me. I asked him not to mention our conversation to my mother, since I knew it would crush her. By this point in my life, my family and I had not set foot in a church for almost three years unless we were visiting family.

Being an avid outdoorsman, I recall one morning while I was hunting in the woods behind my home, looking at every tree, animal, and blade of grass. As I did so, I thought to myself, there is no way that what I see all around me every day could just be a random accident caused by a random universe.

I recalled the words of a hymn that was taken from the text of Psalms 42:1, “As a heart longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for thee, oh God.” I thought about my two beautiful daughters — there was no way that those precious, little lives were accidents either. I felt like God was speaking to me at my lowest point, saying, “You are not on a quest to find out that there is no truth, but you are on a quest to find out where truth lies.” I was almost moved to tears by this experience.

### **Finding God while flipping channels**

The next day, after working the night shift patrol, I came home from work, sat on the couch, and turned on the TV. I happened upon EWTN just as the daily Mass was about to be celebrated. I sat on the couch and watched every second of it — not even flinching! After the Mass had ended, a show came on that would change my life forever: *The Journey Home* with host Marcus Grodi. I watched a few minutes of it and then got on YouTube to find more episodes. I stumbled upon two that had great impact on me; the conversion stories of Tim Staples and Michael Cumbie. I wrote Michael Cumbie a letter and, it turned out, he knew my grandfather well and complimented his ministry. Both of these men had come from the same religious background as I and listening to them speak with authority on the Catholic Faith was awe-inspiring.

I had to have more! Watching the celebration of the Mass and *The Journey Home* became a regular experience for me. All of the study that I had done concerning Catholicism came back to my mind as I watched EWTN. Therefore, I wanted to study even harder and began to believe the Catholic Church was the fullness of the faith. I had a sense that this was exactly where God had been leading me for all of these years. In spite of my misgivings, God loved me enough to gently, but persistently, guide me home. It is amazing to me how the Lord has a way of opening a closed heart to His beautiful truth through life's experiences.

### **Blessed are the persecuted**

Mary and I decided to attend Mass at the end of September of 2011 and by that November we were headlong into RCIA at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Ruston.

I knew that the time would come for me to tell my father and I knew it would not be an easy conversation. In December, while visiting my parents, I told my mother about our decision to convert. She sat quietly as I spoke with enthusiasm about our decision. She asked a few poignant questions, which fortunately I was prepared to answer.

Upon returning home from our visit, my father called me and asked, “is there something you need to tell me?” It dawned on me that, in my haste, I didn't even bring our decision up with my father. I told him over the phone ... continued on page 4



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

that we were converting to Catholicism and he said, "Have you lost your mind? Are you crazy?" I was caught completely off guard by his response, but then reminded myself that this was not an easy thing for him to hear.

As time went on, whenever I spoke with my father and tried to excitedly share an aspect of my new-found faith, it turned into ridicule and criticism. This was a difficult struggle, the likes of which I never thought I would endure. I was reminded of Matthew 5:9-12 which stated "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you." I know my father was not actually trying to *persecute* me, but I couldn't help but feel that way due to his passionate displeasure with my decision to embrace Catholicism.

Mary and I labored on in the Faith, even in the face of opposition. Every RCIA class was masterfully presented by Professor Tom Garza. The classes were insightful and presented with the understanding that most of us were babies in the Faith.

### Mary

There were two things in particular that helped to make my decision to join the Church almost effortless. I began to read several books in an attempt to quell the lingering questions about the Catholic Church that a Protestant can't really answer without help. The first hurdle was with the Blessed Mother Mary. I had always respected Mary's role in Christianity as the Virgin Mother of Our Lord, but never understood Catholic dedication to Mary and, frankly, I was taught it was wrong. Mary's lack of original sin, her perpetual virginity, and Assumption, were in many ways the smaller doctrinal hurdles for me to overcome. The biggest objection was the idea of Mary being an *intercessor* for us to Jesus.

I was at the library one day and I came across a book, *Hail, Holy Queen*\*, by Dr. Scott Hahn that clearly explained the Catholic doctrines about the Blessed Mother from Scripture. God used the book to answer every possible objection I had ever heard with respect to the role of Mary, including her intercession to Jesus on our behalf. Furthermore, while listening to other notable Catholic apologists, the exposition of Revelations 5:8 and the subsequent verses were enough proof to me of not only our Blessed Mother's intercession, but the intercession of all the angels and saints. It was not just in reading or listening, but also the fruit of much prayer that caused this skeptic to have a great devotion to our Blessed Mother. I can recall reading a quote by St. Louis Marie de Montfort

\* To order, please call 740-450-1175 or go to [www.chresources.com](http://www.chresources.com).

that explains my steadfast devotion to our Blessed Mother: "We never give more honor to Jesus than when we honour His Mother, and we honour Her simply and solely to honour him all the more perfectly. We go to her only as a way leading to the goal we seek – Jesus, her Son."

### True Communion

My "problem" with the Eucharist was not something that Protestants typically have. I had a severe distaste for what I experienced as "communion" in the Protestant church. Everybody I knew thought that communion was symbolic, but they *also* thought that it wasn't really necessary in our lives and, thus, was treated as something in which we partook only once in a while. Even as a little child in the AG churches, I believed communion was something special. Once while working as a staff pastor, after informing a staff member that we had run out of communion wafers, I was shocked at the response I received: "Just go get some little crackers and cheap grape juice, nobody will care."

"Nobody will care" had echoed in my head for several years. I have always felt that communion should be at the forefront of Christian life, but until I found the Catholic Church I didn't realize what I was longing for. I asked Mary's uncle, Fr. Andrew for his explanation of the Eucharist. Simply, but eloquently he stated, "I believe that God loved us so much that He gave us His Son, one time, as the ultimate expression of love. However, He loves us so much that He has given us the gift of being able to partake in His Son's Body and Blood every day of our lives."

At first, the idea of Transubstantiation was a little hard to wrap my head around. We as Christians believe that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. Bearing the previous statement in mind, is it really that hard to understand that Christ our Lord meant the words He spoke at the Last Supper literally (in other words, it was not a parable)? Is it really so hard to believe that Christ's, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity are present in the Blessed Sacrament if He is present everywhere all the time? Is it really hard to believe that He loved us so much that He wanted us to partake in His sacrifice every day until we meet Him face to face?

There was zero ambiguity when Jesus said, "This is my body and this is my blood." He did not say "this is just a symbol of my body and blood, which should be received casually as a memorial." His words were clear and concise. He was saying, "I'm leaving this earth to be with my Father, but I leave this gift of life-giving sustenance to you." When I realized what Fr. Andrew was telling me, I knew that I had found what I had been looking for all along.

Before being baptized and confirmed, I would sit in Mass watching others go up to receive our Lord ... continued on page 5

# Revisiting & Reclaiming Our Mission

by Marcus Grodi



*“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thess 2:15).*

*“... maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you” (1 Cor 11:2).*

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful” (Heb 10:23).*

These, and verses like them, are rightly understood to emphasize our need to accept the Sacred Tradition of the Church, as opposed to private interpretation. But I also believe these verses can be a reminder to “stand firm,” “hold fast to,” and “maintain” the mission we believe God has given us to follow in our apostolate. The NT writers and early Church Fathers had to constantly re-emphasize this because from the beginning the enemy tried to stop, destroy, or derail the mission of the Church. Such is true of every faithful apostolate, as I believe has been true for ours.

Often over the past 19 years, we have needed to re-visit our Mission to make sure we were still hearing and following our Lord. Sometimes this has required minor nudges and slight course corrections; other times it has required more drastic, even controversial measures.

I would like to suggest that we are presently facing a course correction, that to some may seem radical but in reality brings us right back in line with our original mission.

Over the past few years, in reaction to many temptations to pull us away from mission, I have strongly, even narrowly, emphasized our primary mission of “standing beside” non-Catholic clergy and their families, with all other aspects of our mission secondary. Especially I have emphasized that our focus is not on helping Catholics be better Catholics, but on helping our separated brethren “come home.” I have also re-emphasized that the work of the CHNetwork staff is mainly “passive”: non-Catholic inquirers need to come to us; we don’t go out directly after them.

This has served us well these past 19 years, as evidenced by the encouragement and support we have received from many, many donors, bishops, priests, religious, and laity.

But as we start our 20th year, several things have caused me to once again re-examine our mission.

First, the number of Primary Members (non-Catholic clergy, academics, missionaries, seminarians, etc.) who continue to contact us on a weekly basis is in itself an impressive number (presently more than 2100 non-Catholic clergy from over

100 non-Catholic traditions). However, I came to realize a few years ago just how small this number is in comparison to the total number of clergy in America—estimated at over 600,000 ministers! Since 55,000 of these ministers are Catholic, this leaves 545,000 outside the Church, separated from Catholic sacraments. This also means that our 2100 Primary members represent only 0.4% of all non-Catholic ministers! I remain very committed that our work is necessary and of God, but yet I wonder: Why is it that 99.6% of American non-Catholic clergy show no interest in “coming home” to the Catholic Church? Is it just ignorance? Or prejudice? Or the absence of evangelistic outreach? Or just the mysterious plan of God?

The Church has just completed a world wide synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization, and, though I’m waiting for the final report, it seems that the heightened emphasis will be on reaching out to fallen away Catholics and non-believers, with little emphasis upon baptized non-Catholics. Is this mission, therefore, unimportant? Should we assume that they don’t need to “come home”? What should legitimately be done to help baptized Christians come home?

Secondly, however, I came across something that was an eye-opener. I was digging through an old file, and found the very first description I penned of the soon to-be-formed Coming Home Network. Though the *Network* had been formed in early 1993, the idea to establish the Coming Home Network as a self-supporting non-profit—with my leaving Franciscan University to work with it full-time—did not arise until early 1996 (February 5, 1996 to be precise). This first description formed the outline for our first brochure and, as I perused the details, I was amazed and humbled by how closely we have followed these early goals and purposes—but also on how a wider interpretation of our mission was expressed there from the beginning.

**The GOAL of the to-be-formed CHNetwork** was the same which we now follow: **“To assist the Catholic Church in fulfilling its mission of evangelization and its Call for Christian unity, as most recently proclaimed in Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*.”** It is particularly this Call for Unity, in response to Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer for Unity that has inspired the journeys of so many to come home.

**The PURPOSE of the to-be-formed CHNetwork was, and also is still the same: “To help our separated brethren return home and then be at home ... continued on page B**

in the Catholic Church...". It was this particular statement that got my attention. The reason the Network arose was in response to the unique needs of inquiring as well as convert non-Catholic clergy and their families, yet from the beginning I saw that our apostolate was to more generally help all of our **separated brethren come home**.

There was much more in this original document than can be reviewed here, but most importantly I believe these original "marching orders" encourage us to prayerfully expand our mission to include a wider outreach to all our separated brethren. In the coming months, we will be considering how the Lord is calling us to use the gifts He has provided—particularly our television, radio, and recording studio, our CHResources publishing, our internet pages and Forums, and our wide partnership of donors and supporters—to more proactively "help our separated brethren return home and then be at home in the Catholic Church."

If there are presently over 545,000 non-Catholic clergy outside the Church, just imagine how many hundreds of times this number are laity, including friends and family, who are seeking to live out their baptisms (whether they know it or not) and feel secure about their future salvation, yet are outside of the necessary graces of the sacraments.

The first step in this expanded outreach is to return to a special format of this CHNetwork newsletter that enables it to be a more useful instrument of evangelization. The inner *Member's Section* will contain articles, letters, the Prayer List, and a Bulletin Board of information pertinent for CHNet-

## MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Coming Home Network International (CHNetwork) is to provide fellowship, encouragement, and support to non-Catholic clergy and laity who are examining the teachings of the Catholic Church.

To learn more about our work, please go to [www.chnetwork.org](http://www.chnetwork.org).

work members. The outside *Evangelistic Section* will contain the monthly conversion story plus an evangelistic or apologetic article.

Please consider being an active partner in our outreach by removing the inside *Member's Section* from each newsletter and then giving away the outside Evangelistic Section to a non-Catholic friend, family member, or neighbor—maybe even a non-Catholic clergyman you know!

We each have much to do in fulfilling our small piece of the New Evangelization, but yet together we have a very honored and important piece, to which I continue to believe God has called us, for I also believe the perspective from which we approach this task is unique among all other Catholic apostolates. May we be faithful to this task. ■

Sincerely in Christ,  
Marcus

## Accompanying Pilgrims to the Church

by Kenneth J. Howell, *Director of Pastoral Care and Resident Theologian*



Since the beginning of my full-time employment with the Coming Home Network last Spring, it has been a marvelous privilege to accompany men and women in their questions, struggles, and joys as they move toward the Catholic Church. Those of us who were Protestant clergy have experienced the joy that every true pilgrim to the Church knows but also the unique struggles of those who have spent a large part of their lives in ministry outside the Church. Over these months I have come again to see many of the recurrent themes that characterized my own journey to the Church.

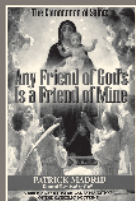
I have worked with an Anglican couple in Canada whose vibrant faith in traditional Christian doctrines was being repeatedly challenged in their own tradition. When they saw the indispensable role of Peter (the papacy) for unity and

truth, their already deep convictions made it easy for them to embrace the Church. I have had countless hours of conversation with men and women who struggle to be obedient to God in a marriage where their spouse does not understand their attraction to the Church. It is always a delight to see husbands and wives communicating and understanding one another better even if agreement is not reached. I know the pain and joy of it; my wife and I were members of different churches for fourteen years. One young family has made giant strides in walking together in faith as they both seek to follow God's call to obedience in faith.

The Coming Home Network is a unique organization in the world-wide Church. I am so blessed to work in it and to support our separated brethren as they feel the pull home to Rome. ■

# Member-Specific FEATURED RESOURCES

## Any Friend of God is a Friend of Mine — Patrick Madrid



Learn why Catholics pray to and honor Mary and the saints. Using the Bible and the testimony of the early Church Fathers, Patrick Madrid provides a concise overview of the biblical and historical foundations of this often misunderstood Catholic doctrine.

## Hail, Holy Queen — Dr. Scott Hahn



*Hail, Holy Queen*, demonstrates Mary's essential role in Christianity's redemptive message. Building on these scriptural and historical foundations, Hahn presents a new look at the Marian doctrines: Her Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, Assumption, and Coronation. Hahn helps readers rediscover the ancient art and science of reading the Scriptures and gain a more profound understanding of their truthfulness and relevance to faith and the practice of religion in the contemporary world.

\$50

For a donation of \$50, receive *Any Friend of God is a Friend of Mine*.

\$50

For a donation of \$50, receive *Hail, Holy Queen*.

\$75

For a donation of \$75, receive *Any Friend of God is a Friend of Mine* and *Hail, Holy Queen*.

— THESE PREMIUMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY —

## NEWSLETTER COPIES

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## KEEP IN TOUCH!

The CHNetwork would like to keep in touch with you via e-mail. Please go to [www.chnetwork.org/update](http://www.chnetwork.org/update) to ensure the CHNetwork has your e-mail address on file. We especially ask non-Catholic clergy and converts to provide us with your e-mail to allow us to keep in contact.

## MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

### March 2, 2013

**Columbus Catholic Men's Conference**  
Lausche Building, Ohio State Expo Center  
Columbus, Ohio  
[www.columbuscatholicmen.com](http://www.columbuscatholicmen.com)

### March 11, 2013

**Annual Bishop Lucker Lecture 7pm**  
Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota  
[www.dnu.org](http://www.dnu.org)  
1400 6th St. N. New Ulm, MN 56073

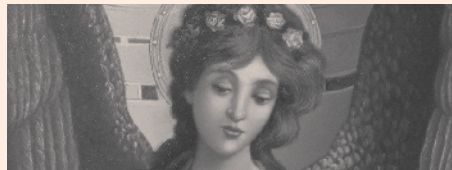
## SHARE YOUR STORY!

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.

## TAX LETTERS

If you need a record of your 2012 contributions for tax purposes, please contact Wendy Hart: [wendy@chnetwork.org](mailto:wendy@chnetwork.org) or 740-450-1175 ext. 100





# Prayer List

## Clergy

- For a Pentecostal minister in Wisconsin, that God would heal the wounds he has received from what he perceived to be arrogant and uncaring Catholic priests and open the path for him to come home.
- For Fred, a Presbyterian minister, that the our Lord would send him more faithful Catholic friends who would encourage him to continue investigating the Catholic Faith.
- For a Pentecostal minister in Togo, that the Holy Spirit would guide him and open his heart to accept the fullness of the true Faith, no matter the consequences.
- For Rachel, an Episcopal lay minister on the East Coast, that the witness of Catholics would deepen her sense of calling to come home to the Catholic Church.
- For Judy, a missionary in Cambodia, that, as she prays and studies the teachings of the Catholic Faith, the Holy Spirit would draw her ever more deeply into the center of God's love and grace.
- For Edward, a Southern Baptist minister, the he may soon be shown the path by our Lord Jesus to come into full-communion with the Catholic Church.

- For Tara, a former Evangelical seminarian, that, as she draws ever nearer to the Easter Vigil and our Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, God will increase her desire to receive every blessing He desires for her.
- For a Pentecostal minister in Massachusetts, that our Lord Jesus would call him home to the Church of his youth and that his wife would develop a hunger for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
- For Daniel, a Lutheran pastor, that Jesus guide his heart and mind towards the Catholic Faith.
- For a Baptist minister in Delaware, that the Holy Spirit touch his heart to be open to the Catholic Church.

## Laity

- For Nikolas, who suffers from clinical depression, for all his spiritual and temporal needs.
- For Bob and his wife, that their reception of the sacraments continue to bring them happiness in their new walk as Catholic Christians.
- For Kerry, that Jesus surround her with His grace and love and strengthen her through the Eucharist for the trials she has encountered after conversion.

- For Sarah, that she be blessed in her new life as a Catholic and that God provide for her family's every need.
- For Craig and his wife, that their missionary zeal for the Gospel bring them home to the Catholic Church.
- For Angela and her husband to come into full communion with the Catholic Church and reconcile with their family.
- For Ann, that her life in the Catholic Church bring her joy and help her through the difficulties she is experiencing.
- For Katherine, that the Holy Spirit guide her heart and mind as she seeks answers to her concerns about the Catholic Faith.
- For Rachel, that she finds all the help and support she needs on her journey towards the Catholic Church.
- For Jack, that the Divine Physician gives him comfort and peace as he suffers from health problems.

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](mailto:prayers@chnetwork.org).

We use only first names to preserve privacy.

**Please also pray for the Coming Home Network International's staff and Board of Directors.**

**President/Founder,** Marcus Grodi (former Presbyterian pastor)  
**Chaplain,** Fr. Ray Ryland (former Anglican priest)  
**Chief Operating Officer,** Kevin Lowry (former Presbyterian)

**Director of Pastoral Care and Resident Theologian,** Dr. Kenneth Howell (former Presbyterian pastor)  
**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 Piecynski  
**Communications Coordinator,** JonMarc Grodi  
**Financial Assistant,** Wendy Hart (former United Methodist)

**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)



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

and honestly would weep with happiness (and a touch of jealousy) for those receiving Him in the Blessed Sacrament. I was anxious for the moment I too would be able to receive the Lord in Holy Communion.

Then April 7, 2012, Mary and I were received into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. It was the most perfect and beautiful representation of Christ's love that I have ever witnessed. Needless to say, when I stood before the priest to receive the Eucharist for the first time, I bowed deeply out of respect for my Lord and received His Body on my tongue. Trying to hold back a tsunami of tears, all I could think was, "WOW!" I said, "Amen," and made the Sign of the Cross, realizing that I had just experienced the fullness that the Christian Faith has to offer. To this day, tears fill my eyes when I see the faithful approach the priest at the foot of the altar, as our precious Lord's Body is distributed to His people. I am a better man through the grace and acceptance of our Lord in the sacraments, than I could ever hope to be without having done so.

### Thanks to my fathers

Even through the happiness, a struggle still exists with my family. Every time we speak to my parents, chaotic and misinformed ideas are still prevalent in their colloquy. The difference is that I now *thank* God for the struggle. The pain inspires me to strive for excellence in my walk with the Father. It inspires me to rise above the negativity and to smother them with love. I pray for them using the same words that our most gracious Lord prayed for those who persecuted him while He hung on the cross on Golgotha: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34).

I recently communicated with my father through e-mail and told him how much I loved him. I told him how he was my hero as a young boy. I told him that it is a direct result of his loving instruction and guidance that I am able to be the husband, father, and man I am today. He taught me that I must be resolute and make wise, well-informed, and rational decisions. He told me that sometimes we need to make choices and that people will not always understand or agree with our choices.

As long as I have breath in my lungs, I will glorify the Lord in all things. It is because of my father's parenting that I cry tears of happiness, because I have come home and found my place in our Father's kingdom. I owe my conversion to Catholicism to our Father in heaven, first and foremost, but I also owe my father on earth a huge debt of gratitude for giving me the heritage that allowed me to come to the fullness of faith. So, I say, thank You most gracious and holy Lord, for the tears from my father. ■



RANDALL GORMAN, JR. and his wife, Mary, live in Ruston, Louisiana with their three children, Sydney (5), Sadie (3), and Sophie who was born on August 4, 2012. Randall works as a Deputy Sheriff and is helping teach RCIA and assisting with CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Ruston.

### BLOG

Please visit [www.chnetwork.org/blog](http://www.chnetwork.org/blog) to comment on and discuss this story!

## EWTVN'S THE JOURNEY HOME on television and radio, hosted by Marcus Grodi, president of CHNetwork



### TELEVISION

Mondays at 8 PM ET — Encores: Tuesdays 1 AM ET, Fridays 1 PM ET  
*The Best of the Journey Home*: Monday-Thursday 1 PM ET

### RADIO

Mondays at 8:00 PM ET — Encores: Saturdays 7 AM ET, Sundays 1 AM ET  
*The Best of the Journey Home*: Monday-Thursday 12 AM ET

#### February 4

Vaughn Kohler\*  
Former Baptist

#### February 14

Maria Romine\*  
Former Presbyterian

#### February 21

*The Journey Home International*

#### February 28

Msgr. Jeffrey Steenson\*  
Former Episcopal Bishop

\*Schedule is subject to change.

# Saint Worship<sup>1</sup>

By Orestes Brownson

All love is demonstrative. It seeks always to express itself, and the expression of love is worship. From love springs alike the worship of God and of all that is godlike or related to the supreme and central object of love.

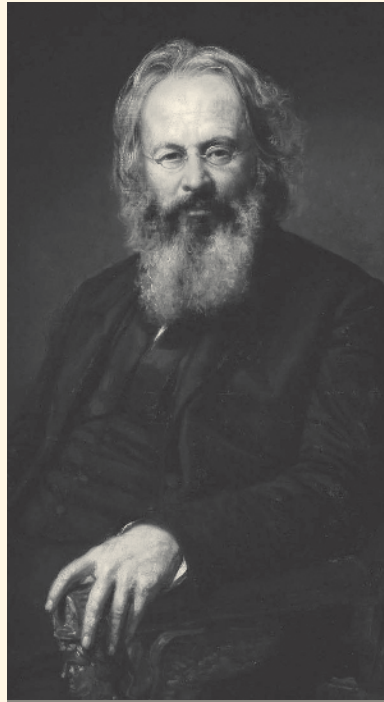
In every age of the Church saint-worship has obtained – never, I believe, by virtue of any positive precept, but from the overflowing of the pious Catholic heart. It is, if I may so speak, a necessity of Catholic piety. The love with which the regenerate and faithful soul is filled, cannot be satisfied without it. That love must worship, and it must worship the universal God: God in Himself and God in His works, all of which through His creative act partake of His divine being and are, through the medium of the act, identified with Him. The worship would seem to the soul incomplete, defective, if it did not embrace the creature with the Creator, and especially if it did not include the saints, who of all His creatures are the nearest and dearest to Him. The heart that does not include them in its love to God, and honor them in its honor to Him, may break no positive command, but it may be assured that it has at best only a stingy love, and no reason to applaud itself for either its logic or the fullness of its devotion.

The Protestant sects regard the worship which we render to the saints, especially to the blessed mother of our Redeemer, as idolatry. But this is because they do not consider that to worship God in His creatures, especially His saints, redeemed by His Blood and sanctified by His grace, is still to worship God; or that the worship which we render to the saints is never that which we offer to God Himself. Supreme worship is due to God alone, and to give it to another is idolatry, is treason to the Most High, to the Majesty of heaven and earth; none know this better than Catholics.

But worship is a general term, which includes not only different degrees, but different species. The word is from the Anglo-Saxon *weorthscipe*, which means simply the state or condition of being worthy of honor, or respect, or dignity; and to worship is to ascribe worth, honor, dignity, or excellence to someone – literally, to honor, it may be God, the magistrate, or simply any man for his office, station, acquirements, or virtues. The word itself may with like propriety designate the religious homage one owes to God, the reverence we give to the saints, or the civil respect we pay to persons in authority, whether in Church or State. Idolatry is not in rendering worship to men, but in rendering to them the worship that is due to God alone.

Protestant [critics] overlook this fact; and when they see us unmistakably worshipping saints – and perhaps rendering the saints as high a worship as that which they [Protestants] in reality render to God Himself – conclude, rashly, that we are idolaters. But they seem not to be aware that the supreme and distinctive act of worship of God is sacrifice, and that we offer sacrifice never to any saint, never but to God alone. That Protestants should regard our saint-worship as idolatrous is not strange or surprising. Having rejected the sacrifice of the Mass, they have no sacrifice to offer, and therefore really no supreme, distinctive worship of God; and their [highest] worship is of the same kind, and very little, if any, higher than that which we offer to the saints themselves. Doubtless, so-called orthodox Protestants hold that a sacrifice, an all-sufficient sacrifice, has been offered by our Lord in offering Himself on the cross; but in their view, this

sacrifice was completed, finished in the past, and is not an offering continuously made, and therefore made now on our altars, as really and as truly as on Calvary. In regard to men now living, according to them, [there is] no sacrifice to offer,



“...the supreme and distinctive act of worship of God is sacrifice...”  
Orestes Brownson  
(1803-1876)

consequently no supreme, distinctive worship of God. Hence their churches have a table, but no altar except by a figure of speech, as it is only by a figure of speech that they commune of the body of our Lord.

Their divine service or religious worship consists chiefly of prayer and singing of hymns or psalms, and comprises in kind nothing which is not perfectly lawful to offer to men. It is lawful to love our neighbor, to honor the magistrate, to pray to those in authority, to sing the praises of the conquering hero, and to confide in our friends. What in all this is distinctively religious worship, or that which can be given only to God?

But, because Protestants have, and believe in, no higher worship, it does not follow that there is none higher, or that we have it not. It is not good logic to argue that because they in their worship anthropomorphize God, we in ours divinize the saints. The sacrifice of Calvary, perpetuated in the sacrifice of the Mass, really and truly is the supreme, distinctive worship of God. As we have the true spiritual worship and offer it only to God, we can accept and encourage the over-flowings of the pious heart towards the saints without any danger of idolatry.

The holy sacrifice is never offered to a saint, not even to the mother of God; our churches and altars are all dedicated to God alone. Those that bear the name of some saint are, like all the others, dedicated to God, and simply placed under the patronage or intercession of the saint. The saints honored by offices in the church service are not the direct object of the worship. The sacrifice is offered to God in thanksgiving for them: the prayers are all addressed directly to God and only the saints' intercession is invoked. [So, too], in the authorized litanies of the saints and of the Blessed Virgin, the saints are indeed invoked, but nothing is asked of them but their

prayers for us; which is no more than we all ask daily of our pastors, of our friends, and of one another. And why may we not ask as much of a saint in heaven as of a sinful mortal on earth? Is the saint less living, or less dear to God?

But saint-worship does not simply spring from the exuberance of Catholic piety, is not simply an instinct or spontaneous outburst of Catholic heart; it has a reason in the deepest mysteries of our religion, and there is a profound philosophy in it, undreamed-of by those who neglect it. It is no excrescence on the Christian religion, no corruption of the simplicity of primitive worship, but a normal development which has its root in the very essence of the Christian system, or the divine plan of creation, redemption, and glorification. It is defensible not only to pious affection, but to the understanding, and rests on the deepest philosophical and theological principles that we know by either reason or revelation. The Christian religion is Catholic, all its principles are Catholic, and for everything in it or pertaining to it there is a Catholic reason. Catholic means whole, and universal because it embraces the whole. The Christian religion is a systematic whole, and all its parts cohere and are inseparable parts of a complete whole. The catechism is supremely logical, is a dialectic whole, and no part can be denied without denying the whole.

The worship of the saints does not stand alone, but rests on a principle as universal, as integral, and as essential as the worship of God. The command "Love thy neighbor as thyself" rests on the same principle or ground as the command "Love God." There are two senses in which we may consider saint-worship. The first, as the worship of God in His saints; the second, as the worship of the saints for what they are personally, or what nature and they themselves, by the grace of God, have made them. ■



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### CHNetwork

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PO Box 8290  
Zanesville, OH 43702

Please contact Ann at 740-450-1175 or [ann@chnetwork.org](mailto:ann@chnetwork.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

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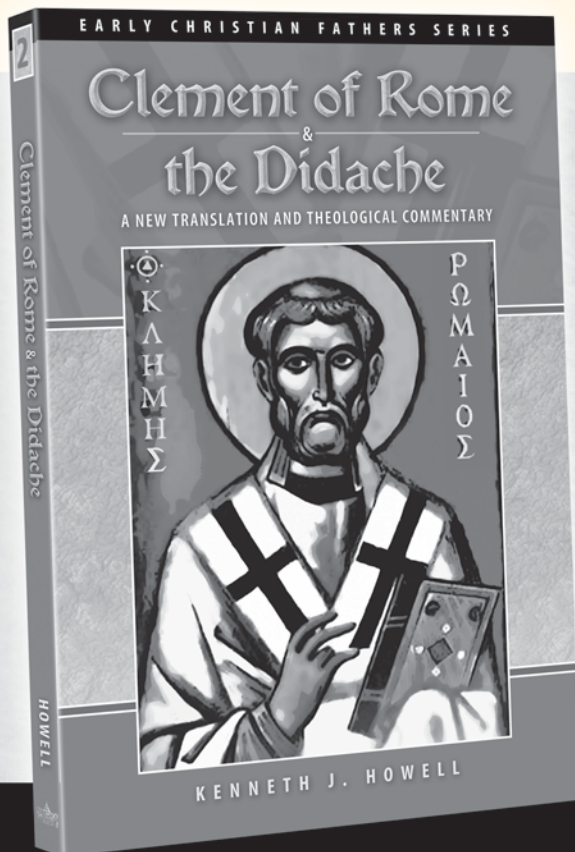


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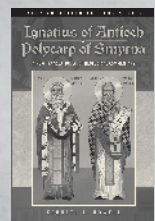
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