



P.O. Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

The Coming Home Network International Membership Letter

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Now What, Lord?!

by Marcus C. Grodi



Approximately two thousand years ago, a man betrothed to be married received some information that shattered whatever expectations, plans, and dreams he had for his future. This is not very different from the kind of jarring impact that discovering the fullness of the Catholic faith has had on many of our lives.

If this man had been a different sort of man, he might have belittled the worries that so many of us expressed when we discovered that we might lose our jobs and vocations. Scripture tells us, however, that this man was a righteous man, so we can be sure that he has great empathy for the uncertainties that confront clergy converts and their families.

The man I'm talking about, of course, is St. Joseph. Consider his situation. We know few of the details, but let's imagine.

He was betrothed to the woman of his dreams. She was beautiful, pure, and surprisingly holy—compared to the rest of the girls he knew. She seemed to be almost without fault or flaw. And she was his betrothed! What a blessing. What a future!

I picture him being like the young tailor in *Fiddler on the Roof*

who courted and finally won the hand of Teviev's first daughter. He was planning for their future and had his eyes on a new, modern sewing machine. Did Joseph perhaps envision the enlarged carpentry shop he would need to support his future family?

However, all of this was shattered when he found his betrothed "with child." Imagine the questions that went through his mind as she stood with distended stomach before him.

We don't know the order of the events, but should we not presume that Mary had already accepted her marching orders from the angel, and visited her cousin Elizabeth? Now she stood before her beloved several months with child.

We've all heard interpretations about what went through Joseph's mind and eventually motivated his response. Please allow me, if you would, to add another thought to this mix.

In Genesis 3 the First Eve explained to the Lord God what led to her "changed situation". Though often described as "passing the buck," Eve merely explained truthfully what happened: "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate."

What did the Second Eve do? Though movies have interpreted this

with theatrical flair, Scripture does not give her explanation. Should we not presume from Matthew's account that, like the First Eve, she told her beloved exactly what happened? If she believed that "with God nothing will be impossible," then she could surely trust that how Joseph would respond would also be in God's hands.

And how did Joseph respond to Mary's explanation that the child in her womb was "of the Holy Spirit"? How would you or I have responded? Was he disappointed that all of his dreams and plans were shattered? Was he fearful of what his friends and family might think? Was he afraid that this would offend his customers and destroy his business?

Scripture tells us that, "being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, [he] resolved to divorce her quietly." Again, many explanations abound for why he would do this—it would prevent Mary from being stoned, or even allow her to marry

'the true father'. Again, please allow me to add another thought. It's probably safe to assume that at first Joseph, being a just man and believing Mary at her word, didn't know what to do. The Angel who had startled Mary with what would happen to her had not included instructions for Joseph. If the child to be born was not of his seed, but of the very seed of God Almighty, what would you have done?

We could also presume from what is written that Joseph had only her welfare and the larger plans of God in mind, and wanted in his righteousness to be obedient. Is it not also possible, therefore, Joseph, without instruction to the contrary, resolved what he did because he felt that he was far too unworthy to remain betrothed to the woman God had chosen to be the mother of the Messiah?

Joseph was much in the same boat as Abraham—large dreams, but faced with a difficult decision. Kneeling over his only son with the knife poised, he was willing to do whatever God commanded—even if it seemed so pointless.

In the case of Joseph, with only Mary's information and no instruction, he made the best decision he could.

Then the angel appeared confirming Mary's story, and giving Joseph *his* marching orders. Scripture tells us that Joseph "did as the angel of the Lord commanded."

Joseph is a wonderful model to emulate, as well as a powerful intercessor upon whom we can rely. But I encourage you who are on the journey—whose dreams, plans, vocations, and self-understanding have been shattered by discovering the fullness of the Catholic faith—to take heed of and comfort from the experiences of this righteous man of God.

Is it not significant that the Angel did not give Joseph his

instructions for the future until *after* he had resolved how he would respond to the truth of God's plan?

All of us in the *Coming Home Network* can vouch for the constant and more-than-generous care our Lord has given us after we followed through on our resolutions. Yes, for some this has involved hardships, like those faced by Joseph—flights into Egypt and then to Nazareth, no place to stay, less than ideal living situations, dependence upon gifts for sustenance, and even taking a back seat to the more visible purposes of God. But God is so good. What He has for you is always the best, and the *Coming Home Network* is just one of the many ways He can help you on your journey.

Thank you, very much, for your overwhelming response to our end-of-the-year appeal. I promise you that we will be faithful with your generosity, and that, with Joseph and Mary as models, we will do all we can to help those who are following their own fiat in obedience to God.

Sincerely in Christ,



Marcus C. Grodi



Upcoming guests on the Journey Home Program on EWTN, Mondays live at 8 pm EST

Feb. 4 Dr. Tom Howard, former Episcopal, professor and author

Feb. 12 Sr. Constance Walton, former United Methodist minister

Feb. 19 Mr. David Hess, "revert", deacon in the Byzantine Catholic Church

Feb. 26 Dr. Ben Wiker, former United Methodist

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

Tune in for re-airs: (EST)

Tuesdays 10 am

Fridays 1 am

Saturdays 11 pm

"Best of" the Journey Home airs Mondays at 10 am.

Listen to Marcus LIVE! or on demand on the Internet at www.chnetwork.org/ewtn.htm

The Journey Home can also be heard on WEWN shortwave radio and local Catholic radio networks.

Greetings from the Our Director:

by Bob Smeltzer

Dear Friends,

As Marcus stated, I too, would like first and foremost to give you my heart-filled thanks. Your generosity, has been overwhelming!

I'm bursting at the seams, though, to tell you, the kind people who make our work possible, the inside scoop on how this appeal all came about.

Everyone is *most certainly* aware that the appeal letter was indeed worded strongly. Marcus and I struggled for some time with this, wrestling with how to state the facts, without scare tactics, or misrepresentations of any kind. In fact, this entire fund-raising was on the "draft table" until the last conceivable moment. The printer was ready and waiting.

So why, might you ask, would an organization such as ours, with no prior record of such a strong appeal need to resort to such measures? Well, our answer is quite mystifying and enlightening.

Just as Joseph, in the story you just read, was tested, we too had a similar testing. Indeed, what was going to happen to us can be only explained as *divine providence* or *intervention*.

As if all the difficulties of moving our office, hiring a new staff, learning everything from scratch, and doing all of this on a very close budget were not enough, the donations that usually came in were drying up!

We were going from a "shoe-string budget" to almost no budget at all.

I still remember the morning I went into Marcus' office, closed the door (I didn't want to frighten the rest of the staff), and told him that we were missing better than half of what we should have had for the

month. With our present funds almost depleted, I asked him if he had any ideas as to what could be happening. This was all new to me [After all, my background was in running "for-profit" businesses].

We did our best to determine whether anything was missing, but all our avenues led to a dead end. That's when it was decided that we must resort to an emergency appeal. An emergency appeal would have to be done. But what happened next reminded me *who* was involved.

As it would happen, on the very morning the appeal letters were delivered to the post office, we received a little surprise package from the Lord, by way of the very same postal service (how appropriate). This package contained three large envelopes stuffed with donations which had been destined to us in November. It seems that our previous post office was holding them for postage due, **the notice of which was inside one of the packages!**

Now of course, the delay was a result of our own ignorance, but when we received this package we knew the timing was of the Lord.

Why, we asked, would He do this? Could it be that whenever we brought up brilliant ideas at executive meetings—ideas which could vastly improve the scope and thoroughness of this apostolate—we balked, and put them on the back burner?

I guess Jesus said *enough* talking and complaining. He chose to use the proverbial '2 x 4' (as Marcus likes to refer to it) and withheld what bare necessities we were getting, forcing us into swift and forceful action.

When we sat down to ponder our dilemma we were stretched to ex-

amine not only our needs, but our dreams. What, is it that God is calling the *Coming Home Network* to do—if God provided the resources?

Believe me, none of us liked sending out a letter of such desperation but, it had to be done!

So, where are we now? As I stated earlier in this article, your response has in fact been heartwarming! The Lord knew that all we had to do was ask. Maybe, He also knew that we had to ask strongly.

Here are the facts...

Your graciousness has enabled us to get some serious planning underway. Depending on what the next couple of months bring, we will activate programs, which we are now prioritizing based on the projections of our cost analysis verses the flow of continuing donations. Stay tuned for more good news to come. We are excited!

Again, our heartfelt THANKS.

Peace and blessings,

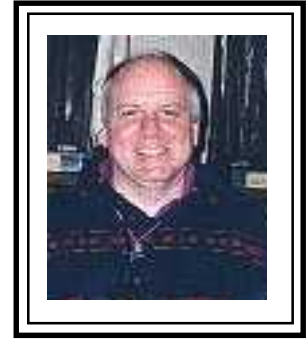
Bob Smeltzer

Remember your donations are tax deductible, and don't forget to check whether your employer offers matching funds.

Loving God and Neighbor:

(Luke 10: 25-37)

by Chis LaRose



slow process some of us go through."

And from Mary,
"Glad that you have not given up hope. The other posts to your email are so wonderfully supportive. This is a great site for learning about the Catholic Church."

And Bob, a Lutheran pastor,
"It's only been the prayers, encouragement, and doctrinal consistency of this list, that have made our conversion possible."

For those on the journey to the Catholic Church, the CHN walks with you as your neighbor, ready to lend a helping hand. In the words of a Helper (Jackie):

"Remember the journey you are on is just that, a journey. It is a process, a love process. It may feel like a tidal wave, carrying you where it may; sometimes it may feel like the arms of Jesus Himself are wrapped around you in love and caring. Catholicism is so simple, yet so deep. It has been said a mouse can wade in it, but an elephant can swim in it."

Joyfully in Christ Jesus,
Chris LaRose
1-800-398-0937
larose@chnetwork.org

What proceeds from God must be given back to Him in the form of love for all our fellow travelers on our earthly way. [*Light in the Darkness - Elisabeth Leseur*]

As Christians, we are all familiar with the two greatest commandments of Jesus and the parable of the good samaritan. Loving God with all our heart, soul, strength, mind, and neighbor as ourselves. The *Coming Home Network (CHN)* exists to help fulfill these commandments.

Just as the Samaritan neighbor was moved with compassion (suffering with), to care for the man in need, so we who have received graces from God, must serve another on the journey home. (1 Peter 4:10). As he is lifted up, the CHN gives support and encouragement through our volunteer *Helpers* and *Web Discussions Groups*.

Recently, Brad, a Protestant pastor on the journey into the Church, was given a one month notice on his position when his senior pastor learned of Brad's leanings. (Please pray for Brad, he still needs a job.)

He phoned me, and our network went into action. Brad and his wife hadn't even talked to a priest, had no parish, and no local support. But he received assistance from his CHN Helper (Mark), another CHN member in a neighboring parish, an associate of his, and prayers from many. Brad has now left his pastorate, is meeting with a wonderful priest, has a parish home, and both

he and his wife are in RCIA. Their plan is to enter the Church this Easter. All of this in about one month's time! **Praise God from whom all blessings flow.**

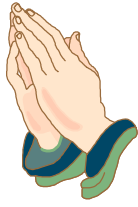
As moderator of our very popular web (email) discussion list, I can testify to the many, many stories of folks being aided along the way, by our list members.

Judy, who had been away for ten years, wanted to return, found our website list, and asked how. With some encouragement and just plain 'ole friendliness, she found a welcoming parish, made a good confession, and is back to the Eucharist. Also, with our loving help, she will be confirmed when her daughter receives first communion later this year.

The list also provides doctrinal and apologetic instruction with a flavor of insight and understanding. Many Catholic doctrines, like the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, are mysteries of faith, beyond what can be said. But one never knows.

Here's what Marion said:

"I just read the posts about the Real Presence and salvation, and about some of the doubts many of us have... This is something I also struggle with, but... I need to share this! I just felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, and now I am wondering, is the Holy Spirit working on my heart, because this is the most powerful feeling I have had!! This list is so informative, loving, and non-judgemental on the



Please pray for...

- ✦ Brad, a Protestant minister, who was fired from his pastorate, when the senior minister discovered he was inquiring into the Catholic Church.
- ✦ Pete H., an Australian Lutheran pastor, who is on his journey.
- ✦ Diana the wife of one of our *Helpers*, who has cancer.
- ✦ Eugene, a non-denominational pastor & missionary in Uganda, who is seeking the truth of the Church.
- ✦ Gene who is exploring the Catholic faith.
- ✦ Loraine, a missionary student, in Jerusalem, who wants to be Catholic and is discerning a Carmelite vocation.
- ✦ Brian, 16, who has decided to convert but does not have his parents' support.
- ✦ Bob W., a former Lutheran pastor, who is in RCIA with his wife, hoping to come in this Easter.
- ✦ Shintanga, a former Pentecostal minister, and his wife, who are both on the journey.
- ✦ Fr. Bob, an Episcopal priest, who wants to convert and possibly become a priest.

- ✦ Marijanna, a convert, asks our prayers to guide her in her vocation as a sister. She is currently investigating which order to join.

In every newsletter we include timely prayer concerns from the membership. Keep in mind that the requests for prayer are new in each issue. Please pray at least one hour each month before the Blessed Sacrament for the needs in general and specific of the CHN network, its members, and supporters. Submit all prayer requests and answers to:

*CHN Prayer List
PO Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702*

*or
prayers@chnetwork.org*

We will use only first names to protect anonymity.

- ✦ Bob, a recent convert who is questioning his conversion; that he will find someone in his life to help guide and direct him.
- ✦ Mike, the son of one of our inquirers, who was seriously injured in a car accident.
- ✦ Constance, a Protestant, for her conversion process.

- ✦ Samuel, 19, whose father has involved him in satanism. He asks that we pray for him to have the strength to stand against his father and to continue his effort to live with his Catholic mother.
- ✦ Chuck, a United Methodist pastor, whose wife threatens to leave him if he converts. He asks us to pray for him to continue on his journey and receive support from others so that he doesn't feel that he is alone. And in addition, for his wife to open her mind and heart to the Catholic Church.
- ✦ Bill, a revert, asks that he successfully continue on his journey home.
- ✦ James, an Episcopal priest who has wanted to convert for some time. That he find a job in northern California so he can support his family while he begins the conversion process.

- ✦ Mary, 16 years old, and all other teenagers who are struggling with their faith. That they work through their doubts and rebellion and see the richness of the Catholic Church.
- ✦ A brother on the journey who has been given an ultimatum that he must commit indefinitely to his Protestant church or be taken from his church office.

Bulletin Board

NEW CHNETWORK LOCATION

Since the move to Zanesville we've noticed some delay in getting our mail. To help us receive our mail in a timely fashion **please use our new address** so the mail doesn't have to be forwarded from our old office. Thanks so much!

The Coming Home Network
PO Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

You might want to note our phone number. It is
1-800-664-5110.

THE CHN WEBSITE

If you haven't already done so, please visit our website at www.chnetwork.org. You'll be able to subscribe to our email discussion list, check out the job listings from all across the country, see who are upcoming guests on Marcus' Journey Home Program, read conversion stories, purchase resources and more!

We need Volunteers

Do you have web site design knowledge? If so we need you! We're looking for volunteers to give us design assistance for our web page. We also need ideas to improve our web page content. If you have ideas or would like to help with web page design please call Bob at 1-800-664-5110 or email: rjsmeltzer@chnetwork.org

Do you have a Job Opening?

Please remember our members when you have a job opening. Often times clergy converts are looking for positions within the church as well as the private sector. Please email job openings to debbiel@chnetwork.org so we can post them on our website.

ROOTS OF THE REFORMATION

It has come to our attention that a small number of people have received misprinted copies of *Roots of the Reformation*. Please let us know, and we'll replace it free.

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE AT SEA

If you'd like a different type of Catholic conference, here's your chance. Mark your calendars for the fall "Catholic Conference at Sea" cruise in August 2001. (As of this printing the specific date hasn't been set.) This cruise to Alaska will include Mass, lectures, seminars, group prayer sessions including the rosary and more. Call 1-888-343-8181 or email: pbaker@bonvoyageltd.com for more information.

VIDEOS OF PAST JOURNEY HOME EPISODES

Over the years many have asked how to get videos of past Journey Home episodes. If the program was aired less than three months ago please contact EWTN at 205-795-5777. If aired more than three months ago, just contact us here at The Coming Home Network at 1-800-664-5110 or PO Box 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702-8290. Videos are \$18.00.

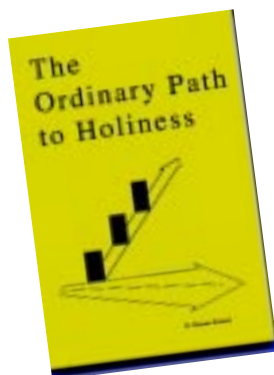
THE HELPERS NETWORK

This is the core of our apostolate, comprised of CHN member volunteers who: provide support, answer questions, offer encouragement and prayer, and when necessary, ongoing contact with inquirers to the Catholic faith. Our Helpers' Director, Mr. Chris LaRose, matches people based on faith, life, and if required, geographical locations.

If you need help on the journey home, or would like to be a Helper, contact Chris by phone at 1-800-398-0937 or by email, larose@chnetwork.org

Coming Home Resources

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL:



This work provides the guide of traditional Catholic spirituality, tested and proven in the crucible of saints, over many centuries. The human soul develops, and grows, in a similar way to other aspects of a human person: we grow physically, we grow emotionally, and we grow intellectually in stages. So also, our spiritual life develops in stages, three stages: the beginning, or purgative stage; the proficient, or illuminative stage; the perfect, or unitive stage.

R. Thomas Richard, Ph.D., a "revert" to his childhood Catholic faith, served as a Protestant pastor and missionary. After his return to the Catholic faith, he earned graduate degrees in Catholic theology and ministry. He began lay ministry as a director of religious education, and served several years as Director of Ministry Formation for the diocese of Norwich. He has recently begun ministry at the evangelization and renewal center, St. Edmund's Retreat in Mystic, Connecticut.

"Many converts struggle in the transition from their previous spiritualities into the sometimes debilitating width, depth, breadth, and height of Catholic mystical spirituality. Where does one begin? I believe that this is the best summary of basic Catholic spirituality I have found yet, and therefore is a great place to begin."

Marcus G.

This month all donations of \$35.00 or more will receive this book free. (The regular price is \$7.50.)

Response Form for CHResources

BOOKS	Inc. postage	Quantity	Totals
Path to Rome	\$17.00		
Roots of Reform	\$4.00		
Surprised by Truth 2	\$17.00		
Journeys Home	\$15.00		
Mary of Nazareth	\$12.00		
95 Reasons	\$9.00		
Ord.Path to Holiness	\$7.50		
CCC tabs	\$4.00		
Reading Guides	\$0.50		
CHJournals	Inc. postage	Quantity	Totals
Mary	\$3.00 -- 1-5		
Authority	\$2.75 -- 6+		
Eucharist	"		
Sola Scrip.	"		
Salv/Just	"		
Total Resources			<input type="text"/>

Bookstores: 40% discount. Preferably pre-paid.

Supporting Member: Annual donation of \$25 or more receive Journals and Newsletters

Date: _____

Additional Donation to
the work of the CHNetwork: \$ _____

Check this box for free copy of "Ordinary
Path to Holiness" (with \$35 donation)

Total Resources: \$ _____

Total Donation: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

Method of donation: Check Cash
 Visa Mastercard Discover

CC#: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____/____

Mail to: CHNetwork
PO Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

See inside!



New
CHRResource
for the
Journey Home

The Coming Home Network
PO Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

Address Correction Requested

The Coming Home Network International is a non-profit, lay apostolate.