



## July 2011 Newsletter

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# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## All Roads Lead to Rome

By Derek Caudill

My conversion to the Catholic faith came a little earlier in life than it comes for most converts. I was received into the Church as a high school senior, at the Easter vigil, 2009, after serving as an evangelist for a nondenominational congregation for a short time.

I grew up in Cleveland, Georgia, a small town in the mountainous northern part of the state where Catholics tend to be few and far between. I attended the public schools there. My family was not churchgoing throughout most of my early years.

My father was raised Methodist and my mother nondenominational, but their religion didn't play much of a role in our family life after my younger sister and I were born. As a result, I grew up knowing only a skeleton of Christian faith and practice: that I should acknowledge the existence of heaven and hell, say my nightly prayers, and intellectually believe in Jesus of Nazareth. That was about it. I was not baptized as a child.

Please note that I don't mean to criticize my family in any resentful sort of way. God has given me so many good things through them. I am only stating the facts, which are necessary

for this to be an honest conversion story that provides an appropriate outline of my life.

Religious discussion was minimal in my household. Little did we speak of God unless someone was sick, had died, or had committed a terrible sin on television. Then I might hear (mainly from my mother, whose own mother was a nondenominational pastor) some words about damnation and judgment, along with encouragements not to be an evil person. In the way of solid, perpetual, love-based faith, however, we had little.

### Exploring Non-Christian Traditions

I was about twelve, or maybe slightly younger, when I began to wonder about the meaning of life. I was having what some have called an "existential crisis." So I would read my Bible alone from time to time, usually when I was bored or distressed, to find out more about the larger picture of the universe, and to give myself some comfort.

It was around this age that I began to take an interest in non-Christian worldviews. Having never been rooted in a strong faith to begin with, I found it easy to buy into the modern relativist propaganda that ... continued on page 2

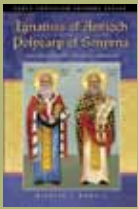
*Journeys Home*

## FEATURED RESOURCES

In each monthly newsletter we feature resources chosen specifically to aid our members in evangelization. We encourage our members to take advantage of this month's **Evangelization Outreach Package**, which contains resources focused on the early years of the Church.

### Ignatius of Antioch & Polycarp of Smyrna: A New Translation and Theological Commentary

By Dr. Kenneth J. Howell



This first volume in the Early Christian Fathers Series offers a new translation, with commentary, of the writings of Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna, two of the greatest leaders of the

Christian Church in the first half of the second century A.D. Their combined works provide a unique window on the faith, life, and practice of the early Christians. Careful reading of these writings demonstrates the unique place that the early Fathers of the Church hold in establishing the foundations of the historic Christian faith. Their relevance for contemporary ecumenical discussions is beyond dispute. (*CHResources*, 2009)

### Deep in Scripture Radio Program Special!



Fr. Ray Ryland and Dr. Kenneth Howell join Marcus Grodi in this *Deep in Scripture* program as they discuss the origins of the Bible and the importance of Sacred Tradition in the life of the early Church. This program is accompanied by study notes.

➤ **For a donation of \$35 receive a *Deep in Scripture* CD.**

➤ **For a donation of \$50 receive *Ignatius of Antioch & Polycarp of Smyrna*.**

➤ **For a donation of \$75 receive a *Deep in Scripture* CD and *Ignatius of Antioch & Polycarp of Smyrna*.**

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

insists all religions deserve just as much honor as Christianity. So I looked into Buddhism and Shintoism, to name a couple, because I practiced karate and was interested in nature and Japanese culture as a boy. I was also intrigued by ancient Egyptian religion, more because I found it mysterious and old than because I thought it seemed true.

At one point, I remember thanking the *kami*, the ancient Japanese nature gods, for something that happened to me. I let my mind wonder among worldviews to decide its own truth, based merely on what was appealing to me at the time.

Even so, I quickly got over this infatuation with foreign religions as an adolescent. I decided that Christianity was either the most comfortable or the most plausible religion to me, or a combination of the two. I think I read my Bible a little more frequently during this time.

Nevertheless, whatever faith I had was still weak and only in my back pocket, so to speak. I was living in the moral dumps. I still did whatever I wanted — both good and bad. My sins were many, even though, if I had been asked, I would have presumed to call myself Christian. At the time, I hardly knew what that name meant.

After I had started playing football at age fifteen, pride and vanity reared their ugly heads in my heart as never before. My old friends weren't cool enough; I didn't want to be seen with them. At this point I wanted social acceptance, and I developed the typical vices of an adolescent in search of pleasure.

It didn't take me long, however, to discern that it was impossible for these things ever to satisfy the longing in my soul. I consider this a great grace from the Lord Jesus, because so many people I know continue to chase these pleasures without realizing their emptiness and turning away from their pursuit. Why God chose me to be enlightened in this way, I don't know. I know I didn't deserve it any more than others. But I thank Him for it and will understand His mysterious plan someday.

At age sixteen, tired of selfishly looking for honor from peers that seemed never fully to come, tired of attempting immoral behaviors that Providence

“

... it was impossible for these things ever to satisfy the longing in my soul. I consider this a great grace from the Lord Jesus, because so many people I know continue to chase these pleasures without realizing their emptiness ...

”

prevented and that I knew wouldn't have really pleased me anyway, and tired of being suspected by friends' parents as the bad kid, I finally came to a new frontier in my life.

## Conversion and Baptism

I'd had a good friend from middle school who was the holiest and most sensible peer I had at the time. We "went way back," as they say. He was my closest friend, and my only true friend, really; the other football players and the popular girls were only acquaintances and tools I wanted to use to make myself feel good.

This friend let me borrow a novel based on the Evangelical notion of the "rapture," and I was fascinated by it. After finishing the book, I was moved to consider my mortal fate a little more seriously. This development still didn't totally do the trick, but it set me thinking, so it was yet another step on the way to where God was taking me.

In the summer of 2007, around the Fourth of July, I had a conversion experience. I'm pretty sure I was sitting in front of our family computer, and I must have been reading something about Christianity. (If anyone ever tells you that fire must fall from the sky and etch every detail of the conversion moment in your memory forever, they're being too sentimental.) I bowed my head and prayed what the fundamentalists call a "sinner's prayer": basically, a prayer of contrition, repentance, and acceptance of Jesus.

I was so emotionally stirred by this experience that I instantly wrote a blog, perhaps a bit self-righteous, on my Myspace page about how Derek Caudill was changing his life, and that everyone else should do the same before it's too late. Though I had prayed for forgiveness and promised devotion to God a few times before, this was my most authentic conversion moment. At that time, God planted a seed of zeal in my heart (whether or not I've always managed it correctly) to be like an Elijah or a St. Paul, and the internet blog was my first evangelistic outlet.

A high school girl, entering the eleventh grade, instantly contacted me on the computer and invited me to worship with her. She attended a very small, nondenominational, Evangelical, fundamentalist, holy-rolling storefront congregation in town. This setting hearkened back to the style of religion my mother was raised around, and about which I had grown up hearing good things. So I decided to visit.

On the first visit, I knew I liked it. The preacher was passionate and friendly, and the congregation's general interpretation of the Bible more or less appeared to mesh with mine. I became good friends with the girl and quite involved in this church.

After a short time, I was also able to persuade my family to go with me. We became regular attendees, and my life was on a much better track than it had ever been before. But God wasn't done with my growth quite yet.

I was baptized in this congregation a few months after I began attending, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Like most fundamentalist Christians, we didn't believe ... *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

Sundays @ 7:00 AM ET

Be sure to check out *Deep in Scripture's* website, [deepinscripture.com](http://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.

### July *Deep in Scripture* Guests

#### July 6

Fr. Patrick Rohen

#### July 13

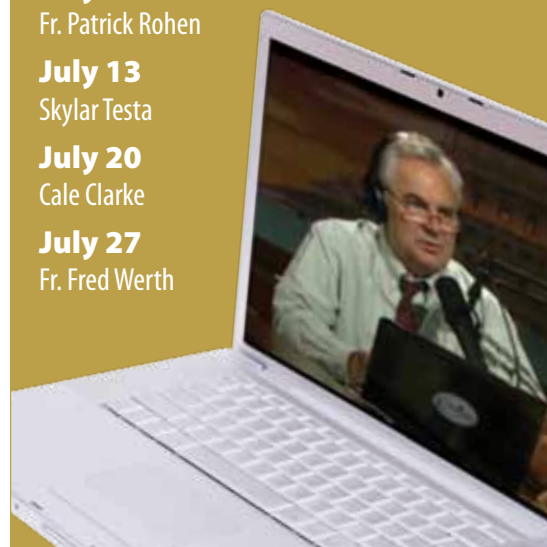
Skylar Testa

#### July 20

Cale Clarke

#### July 27

Fr. Fred Werth



*\*This schedule is subject to change.*





## EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME

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

### 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

### July 4

Fr. Patrick Rohen\*

*Former Fundamentalist pastor*

### July 11

Skylar Testa\*

*Former non-denominational Christian*

### July 18

Cale Clarke\*

*The Journey Home in Canada*

### July 25

Fr. Fred Werth\*

*Former Presbyterian*

*\*This schedule is subject to change.*



This year *The Journey Home* again goes international to bring you stories of men and women who have come home to the Catholic Church. Be sure to tune in the third Monday of each month to view all-new episodes of *The Journey Home* taped in Canada.

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

Baptism was a sacrament with real power in itself; we thought it was only a symbol. Nevertheless, God made sure that I was validly baptized, and blessed through it, on that day.

### “Called to Preach”

Even before I was baptized, I felt that I was “called to preach.” In many nondenominational and other Protestant churches, this is a way of saying that God has privately and invisibly “ordained” a person for pulpit preaching and ministry. A few weeks after declaring this conviction to the pastors (there were two, a husband and wife), I was granted a paper certificate of ministry, which licensed me as an evangelist.

While an evangelist of this congregation, I preached in several other churches, on retreats, and on the local radio station. I was also studying Sacred Scripture and learning more about the gospel. I eventually came to consider myself an up-and-coming pastor. I wanted to go to college for theology and lead my own congregation.

The funny thing was that the more I read the Bible, the more I began to disagree with my former assumptions and with the doctrines of this congregation. I was resolved that, if I ever had a congregation of my “own,” I would run it exactly according to the guidelines set by St. Paul and the other authors of the New Testament. This is when God began to nudge the Catholic Church more obviously into my life.

My theology changed numerous times and in various ways while I was acting as a preacher. I believed, as a fundamentalist with no Sacred Tradition or Magisterium to help me, that I was given this book from God as the only basis of my religion, and that it was my job to beg the Holy Spirit to simply help me “figure it out.” Needless to say, this strategy became frustrating and confusing.

I went from dispensationalist fundamentalism (the sort of stuff John Hagee preaches on television) to the “once saved, always saved” doctrine. Then I rejected this position after studying certain scriptural passages that seemed to say otherwise. I went from believing in my congregation’s style of laying on hands and “baptism in the Holy Spirit” to believing that every “saved” person has an equal participation in the Spirit.

My faith was constantly changing in a tumultuous manner, depending on how I saw Scripture on a given day, or how I was impressed by a new “preacher” I heard.

Deep down, I knew there had to be one ideal faith that Jesus desired all Christians to follow — not a vague scattering of denominations and little congregations that, plainly and honestly, did not believe the same religion. The “Jesuses” they followed were all different, and it’s not an exaggeration to say I hated that confused situation.

I resolved myself to find the true apostolic faith and conform “my” future congregation to it. Reading the Book of Acts and the New Testament epistles was my principal exercise in figuring out what the early Church was like and, therefore, how Christ wanted His body to operate. Eventually, I

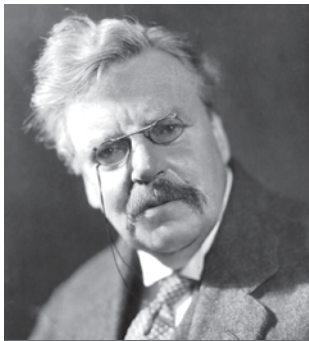


branched out and started studying Church history outside of the Bible. This study led to a huge revelation for me.

## Encountering the Catholic Tradition

Before I go deeper into describing the multifaceted influence that the Catholic faith had on me when I started studying it, I have to make an essential observation: There was no one “main” doctrine or aspect of the Catholic Church that attracted me more than the others. Instead, I suffered more of a simultaneous onslaught from every detail of historical Catholic faith.

I can't point to any single part of the Church that attracted me most; the Whole was beautiful and impressed me consistently. This leaves no doubt in my mind that the Spirit led me to her; and once I was at her gate, the



G. K. Chesterton

armies of history (the virtuous saints, the most reasonable philosophical arguments I'd ever known, the otherworldly Gothic architecture, the gorgeous and explosive pipe organs, the prudently organized authority, the splendidly devoted devotions, the public miracles like that of Lanciano, and so much more) assailed me at once and took me captive.

G. K. Chesterton has described my Catholic conversion in better terms than I ever could in his profound book *Orthodoxy*:

It is very hard for a man to defend anything of which he is entirely convinced. It is comparatively easy when he is only partially convinced. He is partially convinced because he has found this or that proof of the thing, and he can expound it. But a man is not really convinced of a philosophic theory when he finds that something proves it. He is only really convinced when he finds that everything proves it. And the more converging reasons he finds pointing to this conviction, the more bewildered he is if asked suddenly to sum them up. Thus, if one asked an ordinary intelligent man, on the spur of the moment, “Why do you prefer civilization to savagery?” he would look wildly round at object after object, and would only be able to answer vaguely, “Why, there is that bookcase ... and the coals in the coal-scuttle ... and pianos ... and policemen.” The whole case for civilization is that the case for it is complex. It has done so many things. But that very multiplicity of proof which ought to make reply overwhelming makes reply impossible. ... All roads lead to Rome; which is one reason why many people never get there. (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1994, pp. 87–88)

This is the predicament in which I find myself when trying to explain what convinced me to become Catholic. Quite simply, ... *continued on page 6*

## SUPPORTING CHNI JUST GOT EASIER!

For your convenience, CHNI 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 complete the form below and mail to:

### CHNI

Attention: Ann Moore

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.

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

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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 \_\_\_\_\_



## MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

### July 23-24, 2011

**EWTN Family Celebration**  
Birmingham, AL  
[www.ewtn.com/familycelebration](http://www.ewtn.com/familycelebration)  
205-271-2989

### July 29-31, 2011

**Defending the Faith**  
Steubenville, OH  
[www.franciscanconferences.com](http://www.franciscanconferences.com)  
800-437-8368

### August 5-7, 2011

**International Bible Conference**  
Catholic Scripture Study  
Charlotte, NC  
[www.cssconference.com](http://www.cssconference.com)  
[conference@cssprogram.net](mailto:conference@cssprogram.net)  
877-228-7830

### August 20, 2011

**"We Walk by Faith Not by Sight"**  
Women of Faith, Women of Action Conference  
Oklahoma City, OK  
405-306-5187  
[thomaschrisL@sbcglobal.net](mailto:thomaschrisL@sbcglobal.net)



## ...Journeys Home Continued...

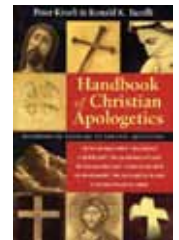
it was everything in the universe. There was no dogma about the Eucharist, nor testimony of any single saint, that served as the solitary reason for my newly-found love of the Church. No one thing did the best job of converting me; it all appealed to me greatly, from top to bottom.

Nevertheless, I'll still do my best to recount just a few of the things that were instrumental in my coming home to Mother Church.

A fellow evangelist and good friend, the son of the pastors of my previous congregation, had a friend who was Catholic. I didn't get to know him very well, but a couple of times I got into semi-debates with him on theological issues. Having studied very little Church history outside of the Bible, I didn't have much ammunition to bring when he said, for example, that Peter was the first Pope. I didn't have any arguments in my arsenal to contradict this claim, so I started studying the Catholic faith sporadically for apologetical purposes.

Within this same time frame, while I was still a junior in high school, I had a beloved Spanish teacher who was what some people would call a "Renaissance man." He was a passionate intellectual on all counts and knew a little bit about everything. He also kept a Bible on his desk in the public school, which is no small matter nowadays.

We started conversing casually about God when he saw me reading my own Bible in class one day, and we developed a friendship from there. He eventually lent me a copy of *The Handbook of Christian Apologetics* by Peter Kreeft (IVP Academic, 1994), which had an enormous influence on my opinion of the Catholic faith. (This writer also introduced me to St. Justin Martyr, whom I would later take as my patron saint at Confirmation and First Communion.)



## Opening Up to the Church

I should note my rather low opinion of the Catholic Church in general before I took an interest in her. Let's just say that what I said and felt about her was less than flattering. I was suspicious of authority and ritual, a suspicion that obviously didn't come from the Bible, but rather from my environment. I considered the veneration of Mary, the invocation of saints, the devotion to physical relics and icons, and a few other Catholic practices to be pure inventions of Satan.

Parroting what I had heard from other uneducated fundamentalists, I called these things remnants from paganism that had somehow corrupted pure Christianity. Nevertheless, reading the reasonable and virtuous words of Kreeft, whom I knew to be Catholic, changed my opinion of Catholics for the better. *If the Catholic Church can produce such a good and wise man, I thought, then perhaps it's not so bad.*

As I read the *Handbook* over my summer vacation in 2008, my spirit gradually opened itself to traditional Christianity. I noticed that Kreeft often quoted men by the names of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and G. K. Chesterton — all Catholic — and every time they made a heck of a



## UNSOLICITED MAIL

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



lot of sense. I began to get a feel for objective theological “soundness,” that standard expressed by that beautiful term, “orthodoxy”: the Greek root of which means simply “straight thinking.”

I began to see the biblical compatibility with, and even the Christian necessity for, such devotions as praying to our brothers in heaven and gathering for Holy Communion. And all the time, the consistency, holiness, and apostolic connections of the Catholic Church gave me a pervading warm and secure feeling, as if, by going there, I would be going home.

It was shortly after my discovery of these attitudes in myself that I began seriously researching the Catholic Church, to see whether it was legitimate. Instantly I was struck powerfully by the claim that she is the one, true Body of Christ. Some might view this claim as a turn-off; for me, however, it was an extremely consoling idea.

I knew already, as an amateur Bible scholar, that there must be “one Lord, *one faith*, and one baptism” (Eph 4:5, emphasis added), and that Jesus had prayed for us that we might be one, even as He and the Father are one (see Jn 17: 22). I knew there was one Church that had to have persisted through the ages, carrying the Truth as Christ carried His cross, or else the whole Bible and all of Christianity was a hoax.

I knew this based on a single phrase from my Lord: “On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Mt 16:18). Clear, logical implications come with this statement, as surely as wetness comes with water.

First, there is a thing called the “Church” that Jesus founded and named.

Second, He promised it would not be corrupted. Therefore, if every Christian denomination has been polluted with human or demonic error over the ages, and now we are to simply “get by” with what we have, then Jesus lied. If there is no Church remaining that teaches pure Truth, then the gates of hell have prevailed. I would not accept that conclusion, because I knew conclusively from other evidence that my Lord was not a sham.

Now my simple task was to decide whether there were any better candidate in the Christian denominational world for the original church than the Catholic Church. I found absolutely none. Having studied a little history by then, I realized that every other sect was founded later. Every heresy is born of man, but the Catholic Church was born of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The subject of apostolic succession influenced me powerfully here. I knew from Scripture that orthodox church structure demanded that the spiritual power of the bishop, priest (or presbyter), or deacon had to be passed down by laying on of hands and ordination from a bishop such as St. Paul. Learning that the Catholic Church has this connection still today, but the Protestant communions do not, was another big step for me toward embracing the Catholic Church as God’s messenger. ... continued on page 8



## THE SPOUSES NETWORK

### Are you the spouse of a clergy person interested in becoming Catholic?

The *Spouses Network* aids and provides fellowship for the spouses of clergy on the journey to the Catholic Church as well as those who are new Catholics. Through the *Spouses Network*, spouses of clergy who have embraced the Catholic faith provide one-on-one assistance to clergy spouses who are still on the journey or have recently become Catholic. In this way they offer a source of friendship, support, and increased love of Jesus Christ and His Church.

If you feel called to be part of the *Spouses Network*, whether as the spouse of a clergy person who has made the journey home and would like to assist someone, or as a spouse of a minister who is either on the journey or a new Catholic, we invite you to contact CHNI to assist us in the development of this network.

For more information, please contact Mary Clare Piecynski by e-mail at [maryp@chnetwork.org](mailto:maryp@chnetwork.org) or by phone at 740-450-1175 ext. 105.

We ask all members of *The Coming Home Network International* please to keep the *Spouses Network* in your prayers as we seek to answer the needs of those spouses of clergy on the journey home and those who are new converts.

## NEWSLETTER COPIES

CHNI 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 © 2011 by *The Coming Home Network International*. All rights reserved.

# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

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## ...Journeys Home Continued...

### Entering the Church

Once I had settled these points, and had come to terms with all other major dogmas and doctrines of the Faith (all of which were perfectly supported by Sacred Scripture), I decided to enter the Rite of Initiation for Christian Adults (RCIA) at St. Mark Parish in Clarkesville, Georgia. I had a Catholic acquaintance in high school with whom I'd played football, and I'd been attending Mass with him for a few months. All of this developed very quickly throughout the fall and winter of 2008.

Through RCIA I grew in understanding, and my love and desire for the Eucharist gradually intensified. On Easter of 2009 I was confirmed and received my Lord, whom I had done my best to serve since my initial Christian conversion, in His real and sacramental Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. I'll always be thankful and acknowledge that this was truly one of the greatest days of my life.

Clearly, my conversion was mostly a work of Scripture study and historical study, although I'm sure God also gave me pieces of evidence from an infinity of other sources. I didn't spend time with many Catholics talking about the beliefs of the Church. But knowing better now, I highly recommend doing so, along with prayer and private study, to any non-Catholic who is interested in learning about the Faith.

I regret to say that my family did not agree with my conversion. Over time, my father has come to accept it, and he appears to me to be moving nearer to orthodoxy as he studies Scripture and walks closer with Jesus. My mother still firmly rejects the Church, and persists in holding many of the beliefs about Catholics that I once held. The rest of my family has also expressed no desire to embrace the Catholic faith, so at this writing I'm the only Catholic that I know of among all my family members. Please pray with me for them, that God will grace them with seeing what I've seen. And please pray for me that I'll stay steadfast in the beautiful and true Faith that I've found. ■

“ ... my conversion was mostly a work of Scripture study and historical study ... ”



DEREK CAUDILL will be attending Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, in the fall, where he plans to major in theology. After graduation he hopes to earn an advanced degree in the same field so he can teach and write.



# Prayer List



## Clergy

■ For a professor at an Assemblies of God college, that God would guide him into the Catholic Church without endangering his career or his marriage.

■ For Nancy, a United Methodist chaplain in Florida, that the Holy Spirit would continue to draw her more deeply into the heart of the Catholic faith.

■ For a Lutheran minister in Ontario, Canada, that our Lord Jesus would guide his steps into full communion with the one, holy, apostolic Catholic Church.

■ For Richard, a nondenominational minister in Kenya, that as he learns more of the true teachings of the Catholic Church, God would grant him the graces to become a Catholic Christian.

■ For David, an Evangelical minister in London, Ontario, that he would embrace the fullness of the truth found only in the Catholic Church founded by Jesus.

■ For a Baptist minister in Georgia, that he would continue to learn all that God is offering him through the complete teachings of the prophets, Apostles and the ancient Fathers of the Church.

■ For Billy, an Evangelical seminarian in Illinois, that as the last vestiges of his arguments against the papacy crumble, he would discern the voice of the Holy Spirit calling him home.

■ For Brian, a Presbyterian minister in Colorado, that he would soon be able to receive our Lord Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist.

■ For an Anglican minister in Arizona, that God would grant him a way to return soon to the Catholic Church of his youth.

■ For Sean, a former nondenominational minister in Tennessee, that the Holy Spirit would grant his family the grace of unity in Christ's holy Catholic Church.

## Laity

■ For Grant, that God would help him in his struggles as he examines the Catholic faith.

■ For the wife of a CHNetwork member, that she would have understanding as he looks deeper into the Catholic Church.

■ For Steve and his family as they discern their road home to the Catholic Church.

■ For Heather and her husband, whose non-Catholic family is opposing their conversion.

■ For Chris, who was recently diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension.

■ For Riley, who has recently entered the Catholic Church, that the Holy Spirit would immerse him in grace as he experiences the truth and joy of being a member of Holy Mother Church.

■ For Kay, who is seeking direction from the Lord in her Christian journey, that she would find the answers and clarity she desires.

■ For Dora, that her love for the Church and for sharing her faith would yield abundant fruit in due season.

■ For the repose of the soul of Charles, father of David Griffey, and that David and his family would encounter solace in the knowledge of God's everlasting love and mercy.

■ For Dale, who is suffering from skin cancer that has metastasized, that she would experience God's love in a powerful way.

■ For Allen, that his new life as a Catholic Christian will be a source of blessing for him and for his wife, who is still struggling with Allen's conversion.

■ For Brian and a Muslim he is assisting, that the God of Abraham will guide their dialog.

■ For Brad, who continues to experience difficulties that prevent him from entering the Catholic Church, that Jesus would soon give him a way to become a Catholic Christian.

■ For Tina, who is suffering from abdominal cancer and is in extreme pain, and for her sister Dora, who is distressed about Tina's illness.

■ For Jared and Kerry as Jared seeks new employment, for Kerry as she adjusts to life as a Catholic, and for their family as they grieve the loss of their stillborn daughter.

■ For Jean's family, that God would continue the good work He has begun in them.

■ For Susan, that her enthusiasm for her new Catholic faith would lead her family to a better understanding of the truths taught by the Catholic Church.

■ For Debbie, who is suffering chronic pain throughout her body from fibromyalgia, that Our Lord would heal her.

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 CHNI 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.



By Paul Thigpen, Ph.D.

# Tips

## for Reading *Christian Classics*

Perhaps the most common thread running through conversion stories is the convincing weight of historical evidence for the claims of the Catholic Church. Blessed John Henry Newman's oft-quoted line has proven true over and over again: "To be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant."

Often it's the primary historical texts that play such an important role in conversion — that is, sources that are closest in time to the person, event, period, or idea being studied. Since that's the case, seekers of truth about the Catholic Church often find themselves having to read and ponder texts from long ago: the epistles of the Apostolic Fathers; the philosophical volumes of St. Thomas Aquinas; the documents of the Council of Trent; the encyclicals of nineteenth-century popes.

Meanwhile, even cradle Catholics and long-term converts find that the writings of earlier generations constitute a magnificent garden, offering fertile soil for spiritual growth. What works of our contemporaries can match the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, the *Dialogues* of St. Catherine of Siena, the mystical treatises of St. Teresa of Avila, the *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Frances de Sales?

The celebrated Anglican author C. S. Lewis once wrote an introduction to an English translation of St. Athanasius' fourth-century treatise *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* ("On the Incarnation of the Word of God"). There he recommended that today's readers should delve often into the books of the past:

It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to every three new ones. ("Introduction," *On the Incarnation*, Macmillan, 1946, p. xiii.)

Countless Christians who have benefited from Lewis' remarkably perceptive writings know that his reading habits in this regard rewarded him handsomely. Even so, anyone who has ventured into the literature of previous ages knows how difficult it can sometimes be to understand a text from long ago. So here are a few tips for those who would take Lewis' advice to heart.

### Practical Tips

# 1

Many of the Christian classics are available in several translations. When possible, avoid older translations that unnecessarily mimic the antique "thees" and "thous" of the King James Version of the Bible. Try comparing several translations to gain a better sense of the different possible meanings of the text and a better appreciation of the challenges of translation. Meanwhile, one translation may be more helpful to you in some passages while another translation is more useful in others.

# 2

Most classic texts are published with an introduction by the editor or translator. Resist the temptation to skip over this essay — it usually provides important historical context to help you understand both the text and its author.

As you read the introduction, get a sense of the setting of the text. When and where was it written? Within what kind of culture was it produced? What literary genre does the work represent (treatise, commentary, journal, sermon, correspondence, and so on)? Within which particular Christian tradition did the author stand? What historical circumstances prompted this writing? What audience was the author addressing? Who were the author's likely opponents or critics? What issues were most likely uppermost in the author's mind?

To gain further insight into the context, you might want to read a little more about the historical setting or the author by consulting such works as *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (online at [www.newadvent.org/cathen/](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/)) or *OSV's Encyclopedia of Church History*, rev. ed., Matthew Bunson, ed. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2004).

### 3

Since you're likely to encounter new vocabulary as you read, have a good dictionary on hand, and use it. If you're looking up an unfamiliar term from an older translation, note any definitions listed as "archaic" or "obsolete" — these may be the very definitions you should apply. These older meanings should also be considered when you run across a familiar term used in an unfamiliar way.

### 4

Keep in mind that some common theological terms can have different meanings or emphases when used by different Christian traditions. This was in fact one of the problems that complicated the Christological controversies of the early Church: The Greek theologians of the East and the Latin theologians of the West interpreted several critical terms in quite different ways.

Instead of assuming that a writer means the same thing you do by a certain term, read the text carefully to find out what exactly the author does mean by that term. As far as possible, let the text itself define the term. *A Catholic Dictionary*, edited by Donald Atwater (TAN reprint, 1997), provides brief but helpful definitions of theological terms in the Catholic tradition — and much more besides.

### 5

Contemporary American English tends toward simple grammatical constructions and short sentences and paragraphs. Older texts may thus seem complex or long-winded by comparison. Try breaking up long sentences and paragraphs into smaller units as you read. Clarify the meaning of each unit, then connect it to other units. Pause frequently, several times within a long paragraph if necessary, and ask yourself the meaning of what you have just read before you go on.

### 6

Read the editor's notes and commentary. As with the introduction, you may be tempted to skip these, especially if you have to turn to the back of the book to find them. But you should at least skim the notes for useful information. If you own the book, add your own notes in the margins to help you summarize, clarify, and question what you read.

### 7

Expect your habits of thinking to be challenged. As Lewis pointed out:

Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books. ("Introduction," p. xiii.)

One advantage of reading older texts, then, is that the fundamental assumptions of an earlier generation are often different from our own. Each historical period has its distinctive blind spots, so reading across periods can be illuminating.

### 8

Finally, try reading classics from a wide variety of historical periods, cultures, and genres. Take a closer look at the sources least familiar to you. The insight you need most may come from the most unexpected place!

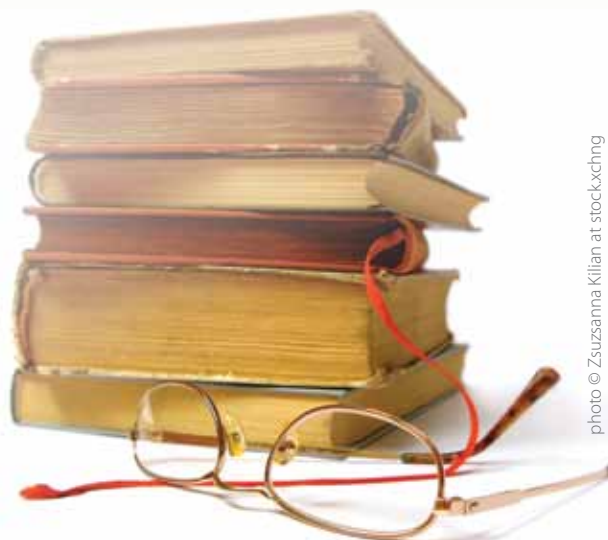


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**The Coming Home Network International**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

# BE INVOLVED!

*The Coming Home Network International* encourages members to assist in our mission this month to help non-Catholic clergy and laity come home to the Catholic Church in the following ways:

1

Get the July 2011 "Evangelization Outreach Package," specifically designed to provide our members with excellent material to deepen their understanding of the faith and in turn pass it along to non-Catholic family and friends.

For more information, see page 2 of this newsletter.

2

Check out our website  
**[www.chnetwork.org](http://www.chnetwork.org)**



It has a brand-new look and is a great resource to share with those interested in learning more about the Catholic Church.

3

Spend an hour this month praying for the needs of the *Coming Home Network International*, especially non-Catholic clergy who are considering the claims of the Catholic Church.

