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This Month:

What's Your Name?
Your Catholic Heritage
Spinning A Better Web

The Coming Home Network International Membership Letter

What's Your Name?

Have you seen that television ad for the CD entitled *Country Classics*? You know, the one with all those good ol' story songs like *Big Bad John*, *Old Rivers*, *Wulverton Mountain*, *Harper Valley PTA*, and *The Battle of New Orleans*?

Well, our boys were given the CD for Christmas and have now listened to it at least four bazillion times. (I've not decided yet whether the giver was trying to widen our boys' musical appreciation or merely to drive my wife and me batty.) All three boys, especially six-year-old Richard, now know the words of every tune, and a day doesn't go by when we don't hear about a gator getting his behind "powdered" before he "lost his mind." (Don't ask—just order the CD.)

The boys get a particular charge, though, from that infamous song by Johnny Cash, "A Boy Named Sue." You know it, of course. A "no good" father abandons his family and leaves his son only an empty bottle of booze and the name Sue, which certainly didn't win the boy any popularity contests or the title of "most likely to succeed."

As the song draws to a close—after the reunited father and son have beaten each other to a pulp and the father has explained the altruistic motives behind his cruel gift of the name—you think the son, with grateful tears, is about to promise to do the same thing someday for his boy. But what does he say? "And if I ever have a son, I'm going to name him ... Bill, or Joe, or Sam, anything but *Sue!*"

The boys get a kick out of this and wax melodramatic whenever they recite it.

Now, granted, this Country Classics CD probably doesn't rank very high as a resource for instilling good Catholic culture. In fact, the only song with any Catholic leanings on the CD is the pseudo-Mexican song about Maria's Cantina ...

However, it struck me that each of us, as Catholic Americans, may feel at times like boys named Sue. It would certainly be easier to live our faith, to practice its disciplines, and to obey its standards if everyone around us were also Catholic Christians. If no one in our neighborhoods, our families, or at work believed that a woman has the right to an abortion or to birth control, or that an individual has the right to decide for himself what the Bible means and truth is, or especially that the Pope is the antichrist and the Church, the whore of Babylon—if no one around us believed these things, life would be a lot easier. But this isn't the world in which our *good* heavenly Father has called us to live.

He has given us each a name that, to many people's ears, is "fighting words"—and the only reason we aren't publicly and brutally ridiculed the way Catholics once were in this country is that, sadly, indifference has won the day: We are

surrounded by people who believe that it really doesn't matter which church you belong to, as long as you love Jesus, or live a good life, or just keep your nose out of other people's business.

On a related issue, I'm wondering whether any of you, in the process of your journeys home, have taken the time to study your family's spiritual heritage? Tracing back through your parents' genealogies, how long has your family *name* been out of the Church?

Before coming into the Church, I was only minimally aware of the ancestry of either of my parents. Then I realized how important it is for us to lift up our family members—dead and alive—to God in prayer. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* emphasizes this responsibility:

Communion with the dead. "In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and 'because it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' she offers her suffrages for them."¹ Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective.²

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This belief is founded in Scripture (which has been conveniently expurgated in the Protestant canon):

And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.³

All Catholics have great reason to pray for our deceased ancestors, but particularly those of us from families who have long been out of the Church. I've now learned a lot about my ancestry (thanks to the expert help of our Assistant Director, Jim—see his article on page XX). For example, we learned not only that our name was originally "Grondin" and of French Canadian lineage, but also that we were Catholics up until my great-grandfather left the Church. All the way back into the sixteenth century in a walled city named Brouage in France, the Grondins were Catholics; but for the last three generations, as far as I know, none of us have been Catholics—and, therefore, none of us have been praying for our deceased family members. Now Marilyn and I know a lot about all our family lines, and we're attempting to be diligent in praying specifically for our deceased loved ones—recognizing that our conversions were not only for ourselves but also for our entire families.

What is your name? As I looked back at my Catholic ancestry, I discovered that there were many situations in which my ancestors must have faced ridicule, maybe even violent persecution, for bearing the name "Catholic." (The 1812 battle between the American forces under General Hull and the British forces in Sandwich, Ontario, was fought in my French Catholic ancestors' backyard!) I wonder whether the Americanization of our name had anything to do with appearing less French, and less Catholic?

I've yet to discover all the reasons my grandfather left the Church. But I wonder whether the situation was anything like the one in "A Boy Named Sue": Was he tired of fighting the battles that come from having the name "Catholic"? And did he decide that his

children would have any other name but that?

Shakespeare once said, "What's in a name? that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." This is true for many things, but I believe that our name as "Catholic," given to us by millions of faithful men and women, connected as a great chain of witnesses back to the apostles and to Jesus himself, is a name worth all the ridicule it might bring in this world of ignorance, prejudice, and indifference. Please pray for our *CHNetwork* members still on the journey who are in the midst of facing the many ramifications of accepting this name.

In His Name,

Marcus C. Grodi
President / Executive Director

(Endnotes)

¹ *Lumen Gentium 50*

² *CCC, 958*

³ *2 Macc 12:45, Vulgate.*



**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 are matched with 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 CHN by phone at (740) 450-1175 or by email, helpers@chnetwork.org



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

Guest Schedule

***March 4-
Dr. Richard Cross***

***March 11-
Joni Seith***

***March 18-
Paul Jernberg***

***March 25-
No Show - Holy Week***

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***

Or listen on the internet at
www.ewtn.com

Do You Know Who Your Ancestors Were?

If you're from a Protestant background, you may be unaware of having any Catholic ancestors. But rest assured that you have them. Most people of European descent can be certain that nearly all their ancestors before 1517 were Catholic Christians.

My last known ancestor to be baptized Catholic was John Joy, who was born in 1770 and raised in St. Mary's County, Maryland. As was the case with many pioneers who moved west, by the time of his death (in 1856, in Muskingum County, Ohio), Joy had become a Methodist. But some time between his lifetime and mine, my family's Catholic heritage had been forgotten. We knew nothing of the Joy family's migration from Protestant England in 1654 to the Catholic colony of Maryland so they could remain faithful to the Catholic Church.

Do you know your family's Catholic history? If not, I'm willing to help you try to discover your Catholic past. With your donation of \$50.00 to the Coming Home Network, I can assist you in exploring your family history and heritage. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about your ancestors who are also your elder brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.



Jim Anderson
Assistant Director
The Coming Home Network
jim@chnetwork.org



Spinning A New Web



The Coming Home Network's website has been growing rapidly. This has caused frequent changes in the layout and approach to the way we do things. The future looks bright, but is also accompanied by growing pains. Some changes are essential to the future growth of the website. Recently we switched the way we handle discussion groups, consolidating many areas of the site, and adding many new services.

The new system is the web based forum. It encompasses areas of the former e-mail discussion group. Also it brings in many areas of the site to further improve them. One of the major problems for our site has been our job posting area. It has now been moved under the forums umbrella. This new format will take about 5% of the previous time to upkeep. The forums allow people who sign up to subscribe to areas of interest. For instance job postings that are posted to the site will be automatically e-mailed to those who wish to subscribe to it. Also that person may wish to subscribe to any one or all areas that the forum covers. These include topics on the individual sacraments, Mary, suggested reading list, prayer request, *sola scriptura*, authority, and many other areas of faith and the Church. For topics not covered there is a general chat area to post anything that doesn't fall under a pre-assigned topic.

Other improvements include the ability to e-mail others without knowing anymore than their username. This will keep things anonymous for users who are trying to discern the faith, who wish to have contact with others that have, or are currently going through similar situations.

This is just a small portion of the growing face of The Coming Home Network's website. There are many new and exciting changes coming soon. So please feel free to come join our growing on-line family at www.chnetwork.org. We will be happy to hear from you. If you have any comments, questions, or ideas for the site, e-mail me at webmaster@chnetwork.org.

God Bless,
Stephen Smeltzer
CHN Webmaster

CHN Clergy Convert Members



CHN Laity Convert Members



CHN General Membership

