



## March 2014 Newsletter

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# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## God Closed a Window and Opened a Door

By Kathryn E. Stuart

Reflecting on my life, I recognize God’s hand leading me through the times of joy and sorrow. I can now trace the turns in the road that led me to the best thing that happened to me in my life: coming home to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

### Deep roots

In December 1939 when I was six months old, I was baptized in St. John’s Evangelical and Reformed Church in Coshocton, Ohio. On the documents that hung in one of the Sunday School rooms were the names of some of my relatives who had been instrumental in bringing the congregation to our town. Before that, other ancestors were listed as charter members of the denomination in the rural areas where they settled after immigrating to this country in the mid 1800s. In 1942, my parents divorced and my mother and I moved in with my grandmother. It was Sunday School and church every Sunday except in the case of illness or very bad weather, since we did not have a car. Learning the Bible stories, singing, and spending time with other children, many of whom were our extended family members, was a bright spot in my week. Afterward, a covered-dish dinner was a bit like a family reunion with grandparents, aunts and uncles, great aunts and uncles, and cousins — first, second, and third! It was a comfortable place to be.

### Drawn by His Presence

However, my parents’ divorce left a deep wound in my heart, because I idolized my father; he had

been my best buddy and, after the divorce, I rarely saw him. My tenacious little heart wouldn’t give up and almost every Saturday I would sit on the front steps and look down East Elm Street watching for him to come to take us home. It was a hurt that never went away and one that I cried over when I was alone. I thought I had done something wrong that made Daddy leave me.

The children in the neighborhood would go to the Kiddy Show downtown on most Saturdays. We always took a shortcut through the churchyard of Sacred Heart Catholic Parish. I felt drawn to this unfamiliar church on the hill more than to my own. One day, I made an excuse on our way home, left the other children, went back to Sacred Heart, and entered the church.

The huge, seemingly ancient, double wooden door closed behind me and shut out the sun; I was standing in a dimly lit vestibule. A bit frightened at first, I slowly made my way into the sanctuary and knelt down in the back pew. I had Catholic friends, but knew nothing of their beliefs and practices. Moved by the quiet beauty, I cried and told God how hurt I was; He was the only one I trusted my pain to. *“Journeys Home” is continued on page 2* ➤

Journeys Home

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

At home, I would kneel down at the window in my bedroom and said to God, “You’ll have to be my Father.”

But that day, in that Catholic church, I found something that never occurred at my window: kneeling in that dim sanctuary, I recall being vividly aware of a Presence. The Presence had a kind and compassionate personality and somehow I knew that the personality was a strong, but gentle, male. I felt that this personality was emanating from the area where the mysterious red light was hanging in the dark church. That Presence was so real and so reassuring that it drew me back through that big door Saturday after Saturday.

After having suffered from rheumatic fever that summer, I came back to the huge, thick, wooden door, but I was too weak to push it open. Tears began to fall, and I panicked, thinking I couldn’t get in. I can still recall how fast my anxious heart was beating that afternoon. Finally, I pushed the door with all my might and it opened. After that day, I was afraid to go back.

However, I sought that Presence all throughout my life. As a teenager, I went to the youth group at our church and would steal away upstairs and sit in the sanctuary trying to find that Presence. He wasn’t there. Once when Mother and I went to a wedding at the big Methodist church, I wandered away from the reception and went back upstairs and sat in the pew, hoping to find what I had found at Sacred Heart. He wasn’t there, either.

### The need for truth

Our Calvinist Evangelical and Reformed denomination merged with others and became the United Church of Christ.

For a couple of years I taught an adult Sunday school class; I wanted to simply use the Bible as my curriculum, but I was told I needed to follow the church teaching somewhat. I didn’t know what that meant — we were Protestants — didn’t everyone believe the same thing? I sincerely tried but found that I couldn’t teach the Bible through the Calvinist and Zwinglian lenses of our denomination. They just didn’t fit together. I found that one had to twist the Scriptures, take verses from here and attach them to others in order to make the Bible say what I was supposed to teach. I wasn’t comfortable with that.

“ I found that one had to twist the Scriptures, take verses from here and attach them to others in order to make the Bible say what I was supposed to teach. ”

A turning point in my life came on a Sunday in October of 1979 when I found myself on the patio crying and praying. If God is God, I thought, then there is *His truth* and men need to conform to it, not the other way around! Something was dreadfully wrong. I remember asking the Lord if I was supposed to believe that the Holy Spirit was not doing His job; I couldn’t begin to believe that. I told the Lord that Sunday afternoon that, from that moment on, I wanted *His truth* and nothing but His truth. But, to take up the question of Pontius Pilate, what was the truth? The ongoing question in my mind was, “Where is the truth? The ongoing question in my mind was, “Where is the church—the Church?” The only answer I got from Protestantism was, “The church is invisible.” I didn’t argue, but it wasn’t an answer I could reconcile with Scripture. Was Jesus’ prayer for unity unheeded and unanswered? What of the biblical witness that the unity of the faithful would be the thing that draws others to the Church?

That very week, I went to the library and picked up my first two books *“Journeys Home” is continued on page 5* ➤

## EWTN’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

#### March 3

Gary Michuta  
*Lifelong Catholic, author*

#### March 10

Jamie Richardson\*  
*Former Baptist*

#### March 17

Brantley Millegan\*  
*Former Non-Denominational*

#### March 24

Timothy Putnam\*  
*Former United Methodist*

#### March 31

Fr. Dennis Garrou\*  
*Former Bible Church/Anglican*

\*Schedule is subject to change.

# Being “Deep In Scripture”

By Marcus Grodi



“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built.” (Lk 6:46-48)

After a two year hiatus, EWTN has invited us to once again produce our *Deep In Scripture* radio program. The goal behind the program has always been to demonstrate why it is important to interpret Scripture within the context of the Church. As is emphasized in the Vatican II document, *Dei Verbum*, “Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written.”<sup>1</sup>

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (111-114) goes on to explain what this requires:

- 1** Be especially attentive “to the content and unity of the whole Scripture.”
- 2** Read the Scripture within “the living Tradition of the whole Church.” According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church’s heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God’s Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (“...according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church”).
- 3** Be attentive to the analogy of faith.<sup>3</sup> By “analogy of faith” we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation.

In the *Deep in Scripture* program, my guests and I share how and why we have come to discover that *sola Scriptura* is not a trustworthy means of discerning the fullness of God’s words. Certainly those following the assumptions of *sola Scriptura*, asking the Holy Spirit to guide them, can end up with orthodox interpretations. The evidence all around us, however, of thousands of sincere Christians who can’t agree on the meaning of Scripture suggests that *sola Scriptura* and private interpretation are not trustworthy.

The verse I quoted at the beginning of this article is an example. The simple summary of this promise from Christ is that if we “come...hear...and do” His words, our life is built upon a firm, trustworthy foundation. But what does it mean to “come...hear...and do” His words? Some claim that this entire process is summed up in the invitation to “accept the Lord Jesus as your personal savior.” Once this mental and heart-felt “act of faith” is completed, one is “saved,” and can rest the remainder of one’s life in the assurance of salvation. Any further idea of “doing” anything is discounted as a form of “works righteousness.”

There are a myriad of other interpretations that delineate what it means to “come” to Jesus, to “hear” His words, and then to respond in obedience, many of which are distinctly unique to particular Christian traditions. Some are sacramental, some are not; some require membership in a church, others do not; some believe this is a one time event, others a life-long process; some believe this requires some physical act before a gathering of believers, others believe this need be nothing more than a private surrender. And between all these extremes are an unlimited combination of often contradictory convictions.

<sup>1</sup> DV 12§3

<sup>2</sup> *Origin, Hom. in Lev. 5,5: PG 12, 454D*

<sup>3</sup> *Cf. Rom 12:6*

...*sola Scriptura* is not a trustworthy means of discerning the fullness of God’s words...



...and between all these extremes are an unlimited combination of often contradictory convictions.

...the bottom line centers on determining what constitutes His “words.” Are these only what we have in Scripture, or what has also been passed down from Jesus to His hand-chosen Apostles as the Apostolic Deposit of Faith?

To me, the bottom line centers on determining what constitutes His “words.” Are these limited to what we have in Scripture, or what has also been passed down from Jesus to His hand-chosen Apostles as the Apostolic Deposit of Faith? As the *Catechism* teaches (81, 82):

“*Sacred Scripture* is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>4</sup>

“And [Holy] *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching.”<sup>5</sup>

As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, “does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.”<sup>6</sup>

To truncate the “words” of Jesus to only those found in Scripture is to truncate our faith, and to invite the possibility of setting ourselves — and those we teach — to building a house “on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great” (Lk 6:49). Rather, being “[m]indful of Christ’s words to His apostles: ‘He who hears you, hears me,’<sup>7</sup> the faithful” are to “receive with docility the teachings and directives”<sup>8</sup> of the Church. Then we can have the true assurance of knowing what it means to “come...hear...and do” His words, and of having the graces we need to follow these words of our Lord. ■

4 DV 9.

5 DV 9.

6 DV 9.

7 Lk 10:16; cf. LG 20.

8 CCC, 87.



# DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

The **Deep in Scripture** program will  
air **Saturdays** at 11:00am ET and  
**Sundays** at 2:00pm ET on EWTN Radio Two.

Please visit our website [deepinscripture.com](http://deepinscripture.com) for live feed, archived programs, and further information. You may also go to [ewtn.com/radio](http://ewtn.com/radio) to listen to programming or call your local radio station for airtimes in your area.

## A Lenten Journey

By Brother Rex Anthony Norris

The holy season of Lent is approaching — or may already be underway — as you read this article. Lent: that 40 day period (excluding Sundays) leading up to the celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death. Traditionally these 40 days are a time when holy Mother Church calls her children throughout the world to an intensification of the usual disciplines of the Christian life: prayer, fasting and alms-giving. What follows are several examples of how we might intensify the spiritual discipline of prayer during this Lenten season and beyond.

### Mass:

During the Lenten season most Catholic parishes increase the number of opportunities to celebrate Mass during the week. Some parishes add one additional Mass per week; some parishes add several. The parish I attend adds a total of seven additional Masses each week! Consider attending Mass as often as you can during the Lenten season.

If you are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church you are still welcome to attend Mass; with the exception of receiving the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, you are welcome to participate fully in every other way.

Every one of us can make it our special intention during the Lenten season to pray for the reunion of the Church, East and West, and for the return of all the separated sisters and brothers of the various sects and ecclesial communities to return to full unity for which Our Blessed Lord prayed, "may they all be one."

### Liturgy of the Hours (LOTH):

Ordained ministers of the Church and those in consecrated life are obligated to pray daily the Liturgy of the Hours, the official prayer of the Church. Many lay men and women also pray the LOTH.

If you are interested in praying the LOTH and have access to the internet, there are several reliable versions of the LOTH available online. The websites [ibreviary.org/en](http://ibreviary.org/en), [universalis.com](http://universalis.com), and [divineoffice.org](http://divineoffice.org) are all helpful tools to guide you in praying the LOTH.

### Lectio Divina (Divine Reading):

A way of reading sacred Scripture that has developed in the Church over the centuries is known as *Lectio Divina*. Through *Lectio Divina* we are invited to engage with the Scriptures in such a way that by God's grace we are transformed ever more deeply by the Word into His image and likeness.

Here is one form of *Lectio Divina* I learned as a young man in my formation in consecrated life (we called it Contemplative Bible Study). Use it as illustrated or adapt it in whatever way the Spirit leads you.

1 Choose a passage from Scripture. Some people use one of the daily Mass readings; many people use the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday Mass.

.....

2 Open with prayer. The prayer I most often begin with is a prayer for discernment by St. Francis of Assisi. "Most High and Glorious God, bring light to the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, certain hope and perfect charity. Lord, give me insight and wisdom that I might always discern your holy and true will. Amen."

.....

3 Read the chosen Scripture passage slowly, out loud if possible, so you can actually hear the Word of the Lord. As you read the passage be very attentive to the words you are reading. When the words of Scripture are proclaimed, the Lord Himself is speaking. As the Church's instructions for the reading of the Scriptures at Mass tell us, "*When the Scriptures are read...God himself is speaking to his people and Christ, present in his own word, is proclaiming the Gospel.*"<sup>1</sup>

(If you are in a group: Read the passage loud enough for all to hear.)

.....

4 After you have read the passage sit in silence for a few minutes (five or more). As you sit silently before the Word of God, ask yourself what word or phrase the Holy Spirit brought to your attention in the reading? Slowly repeat that word or phrase several times. Don't analyze the word(s) or yourself. Simply repeat the word or phrase several times.

(If you are in a group: Rather than repeating the word phrase several times, go around the room and allow each person to share his or her word or phrase without commentary from the individual or other people in the group.)

.....

5 Read the passage slowly a second time. Again as you read the passage be attentive to the words you are reading. The Word speaks to us through the words of sacred Scripture. At the end of the reading sit silently for a few minutes (five or more). As you sit silently, humbly before the Word of God, what word or phrase did the Holy Spirit bring to your attention this time? Perhaps it is the same word or phrase; perhaps it is an altogether different word or phrase.

<sup>1</sup> From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 29.



## SUPPORT CHNETWORK

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

### CHNetwork

Attention: Ann Moore  
PO Box 8290  
Zanesville, OH 43702

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

### Your information

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## 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.

## NEWSLETTER DONATION

The CHNewsletter is our primary means of outreach and communication. We request a yearly tax-deductible gift in the amount of \$35 or more to continue receiving the newsletter and remain a supporting member of the CHNetwork. These donations support all aspects of our small non-profit apostolate. Thank you for your support!

## CHNETWORK MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Coming Home Network International (CHNetwork) is to help inquiring clergy as well as laity of other traditions to return home and then be at home in the Catholic Church. To learn more about our work, please go to [www.chnetwork.org](http://www.chnetwork.org).

## NEWSLETTER COPIES

CHNetwork encourages members to make copies of the newsletter and distribute to family, friends, and church groups. We do ask that copies of the newsletter not be sold. Unless otherwise indicated, the contents of this newsletter are Copyright © 2014 by the Coming Home Network International. All rights reserved. Back issues of the newsletter can be accessed online at [www.chnetwork.org/newsletter-archive](http://www.chnetwork.org/newsletter-archive).

## FORUM!

Check out CHNetwork's online forum. The forum is a wonderful place to connect with other CHNetwork members, ask questions about the Catholic Faith, and browse through archived discussions on a wide variety of topics related to the Catholic Church. Go to <http://forum.chnetwork.org>.

## TAX LETTERS

If you need a record of your 2013 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 Church of God minister in Georgia, that he and his wife may be able to journey together to the Catholic Church.
- For Todd, a Non-denominational minister in California, that the Holy Spirit would grant him the grace to overcome the doctrinal difficulties that impair his journey home.
- For a Church of Christ minister in Alabama, that our Lord Jesus would guide him to the richness of the Catholic Faith and fill what he feels is now lacking.
- For Mike, a Pentecostal minister in Michigan, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ would guide him to the Catholic Faith of his youth.
- For an Eastern Orthodox priest in Albania, that he may be guided to full-communication with the successor of St. Peter in Rome.
- For a United Methodist minister in Texas, that God would give her a hunger to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
- For Wesley, a Non-denominational missionary in Scotland, that as he studies and prays, God would guide his steps home to the Catholic Church.

■ For a Christian & Missionary Alliance minister in Florida, that through his many commitments he may find good Catholic friends and enough time to learn the joys of the fullness of the Catholic Faith.

## Laity

- For Simon, who is experiencing difficulties and struggles on account of a family situation, that Jesus gives him the strength to bear this cross.
- For Pam, a recent convert, that the Holy Spirit will guide her steps and discernment as she looks to go deeper in her Catholic Faith and pursues continuing education.
- For Allen, that his family will come to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the Catholic Faith.
- For Patti, that the obstacles preventing her from coming into full communion with the Catholic Church be resolved.
- For Ron, that the discouragement he is experiencing gives way to a fresh enthusiasm as he continues on his journey towards the Catholic Church.
- For Christie, that she find the answers to her questions and continue her journey towards the Catholic Church.
- For Emily, that as she continues searching and learning more about the Catholic Church that the Holy Spirit will guide her heart and mind into all truth.
- For Carol, that the Lord direct her journey as she draws closer to Him.
- For Terry, as she looks into the Catholic Church without her husband sharing her interest.
- For Ian, as he begins pursuing his faith journey again and connects further with his local parish.
- For James, an agnostic, that he be touched by God's grace and come to belief.
- For a woman in Australia, that she find local Catholic contacts and support to assist her in her faith journey.
- For Joe that the Holy Spirit will guide his decisions as he strives to draw closer to Christ and His Church.

In every issue we include timely prayer concerns from the membership. All members are encouraged to pray at least one hour each month before the Blessed Sacrament for the needs, both general and specific, of the *CHNetwork* and its members and supporters.

Please submit all prayer requests and answers to *CHNetwork Prayer List*, PO Box 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702 or email prayer requests to [prayers@chnetwork.org](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)

**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 Pieczynski

**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...

► “*Journeys Home*” continued from page 2 on the Reformation — an old book simply called *John Calvin* and another general book on the Reformation. This began a personal study of the Reformation that lasted from October 1979 to January of 2011 and evolved into a long study of the works of Luther. For thirty-two years I persisted in my study that included 55 of the 63 volumes of the Erlangen Editions of *Luther’s Works*, some of Jaroslav Pelikan, and most of the romanticized versions on the Reformation.

In 1981, I turned my Sunday School class over to another because, through my studies, I had found a series of self-willed opinions thrust up in the face of the Catholic Church. I found that Luther’s novel inventions were decisively the “traditions of men” into which the Bible must be made to fit. I began to get a glimpse of why I couldn’t make the Bible fit the doctrines of my denomination.

I could no longer in good conscience call myself a Protestant and my mother and I walked out the door of St. John’s United Church of Christ.

### Sola fide

By “faith alone” was one of those doctrines on which Protestantism either stands or falls. I learned that Luther literally added the German word *allein* (“alone,” or *sola* in Latin) to Romans 3:28 in his translation of the New Testament. Paul states, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the Law.” Luther’s translation read, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith *alone* without the works of the Law.” The Catholic Church sent Luther a message saying it was not acceptable to add the word “alone” to holy Scripture. In Luther’s answer, which you can read in its entirety in Luther’s *Open Letter on Translating*, he states, “You can go back and tell your papist that a papist and an ass are the same thing.” He then wrote that, no, the word alone was not in the original; and, yes, he *did* add it where it was not. He went on to say that “I, Dr. Luther, will it and my will is as good as the Thomists,” including a diatribe about having to add “alone” to make it say what *he* wanted it to say and that “I, Dr. Luther, am a doctor above all the papal doctors.”

That was a huge eye-opener. When I related it to other Protestants they often laughed and thought it was funny that Luther was so feisty. I quit talking and kept studying. I searched for the biblical basis of *sola fide* and I found nothing. The only place the Bible states the words “by faith alone” is in James 2:24, in which James says, “You see then how that by works a man is justified and *not* by faith alone.”

Luther went on to radically pit faith against works and to even say that works are sinful because through them one would be attempting to earn salvation. Because Luther’s teaching contradicted what was clearly stated in the Letter of Saint James, Luther said that it was an “Epistle of Straw with nothing of the Gospel in it.” He was opposed by other Reformers and finally said that he cared not what others did about the Book of James,

but “I will not have it in my Bible.” He threw out seven books of the Old Testament on the same grounds. So much for *sola Scriptura*! Luther never actually put *sola Scriptura* into distinct words, but intimated it in a hundred ways. It bothered me that we, as Protestants, were holding others and ourselves to “the Bible alone” when the Bible doesn’t even teach “the Bible *alone*.”

For a time I was angry; I’d believed those who taught me “by faith alone,” “by Scripture alone,” a “symbolic Lord’s Supper,” etc. (our denomination followed Zwingli who held the lowest doctrine on Holy Communion — pure symbolism). I could find no one to talk to who had delved into anything beyond a biography of Luther. Even minister friends of mine had never dug into the origins of their doctrines. When I tried to encourage it, I was branded as a troublemaker and ignored.

An Episcopal priest friend of mine brushed me off saying, “There had to be *something* good come out of the Reformation.”

He was a new priest at St. Paul’s Continuing Episcopal Church in Coshocton and he and his family became our best friends. They helped me through some very hard times in my life and I finally had someone to talk to about the deeper and richer things of God. The priest was a Scripture scholar par excellence (my mother insisted there was no better preacher).

My years in the Episcopal Church were years of growth spiritually, but there was still that longing for what I had experienced as a child — the presence of the Lord. It was a quiet need that I concluded finally would be satisfied only in heaven. But in this world it manifested itself in a continual frustration to study more — and more and more. I really wanted to know the truth.

### The truth I had known without knowing

Decades passed, and I was having some kind of spells for which the doctors didn’t have an answer; it was taking less and less to wear me out. *“Journeys Home” is continued on page 6* ►

## MARCUS GRODI’S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

**March 8, 2014**

Catholic Men’s Fellowship of the Diocese of Youngstown

St. Thomas Aquinas High School

Louisville, OH

cmfdoy.org

**April 5, 2014**

EWTN’s Family Celebration

Chandos Pattison Auditorium, Surrey, BC Canada

205-271-2989

viewer@ewtn.com

In October 1991, I caught my foot on a piece of carpet and catapulted across the hall. I fell headlong into a wall, pulling ligaments and muscles in my neck, injuring my right shoulder, and popping out my back in three places. A couple of months later, one doctor finally listened to me when I said that there was no feeling in my left leg. It was a worker's comp case and it was a big struggle to get anyone to take me seriously. I ended up with lots of pain, stiffness, and muscle spasms.

I was housebound for a while and right around that time my cable television company added the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) to its lineup. I began to watch EWTN and listen to Mother Angelica as she talked about "offering up" pain and suffering to the Lord. It was an immense help that seemed providential. I watched all day, every day while I was recuperating. After I went back to work, I videotaped six hours a day of the programming and watched it in the evening. The more I heard of the teachings of the Catholic Church, the more I knew I was hearing the truth I had sought for so many years. Scripture was falling into place.

One day, Mother Angelica and a guest were talking about the Eucharist. As they explicated the Catholic teaching regarding the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, my ears perked up. I became engrossed in what they were saying — it seemed as though they were talking to me. Part of the way through the discussion, a realization dawned on me that hit me with the impact of a velvet sledgehammer. My mind ran back to Sacred Heart Church that summer I was nine, and suddenly I knew that the experience had been real — it had been Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament that I had "known." Stunned and in awe, I exclaimed, "Oh, my God" — a prayer and exclamation rolled into one.

I began to put together in my mind the reasons why I had never found the Presence in any Protestant church, although I looked for it always and everywhere. Watching TV that day, I heard with my ears the truth that Jesus was present in the Catholic Eucharist — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity — but I realized that it was a truth I had known without knowing, for all those forty-four years. Finally, John 6 made sense in a way it had never made sense before. It was ironic to me that the "Bible believers" I had studied with took this chapter figuratively, and the Catholic Church (which I had been taught did not follow the Bible) took it literally. I found it refreshing. Although, through my studies I had already become so disgusted with what I learned about the Reformation, it had never occurred to me to *convert* to Catholicism. I had never known anyone who had converted! Yet, somewhere

in the very depths of me, I seemed to know that the Catholic Church was not just another denomination into which I could "church hop." Converting would be a big deal.

## 1 Corinthians 11

The discovery of the truth about the Holy Eucharist was the push that launched me into yet another study. I went to Luther. I read a letter that Luther had written to a friend in which he said that he had heard a very learned man say that perhaps it would be better if Jesus just came into and was present along with the bread and wine. He stated, "I liked that better." And so he invented the concept of consubstantiation (literally, "with"-substantiation). That was too much for Calvin and he came up

with receptionism — what you believe is what you get — "the divine gift" is manifested through the believer's faith alone. Zwingli, who many denominations seem to follow today, said that the Lord's Supper was purely symbolic. I saw in the changing doctrine of the Protestant communion the warning St. Paul had given regarding those who would be "holding the form of religion but denying the power of it" (2 Tim 3:5).

I was interested to see how Luther formed his beliefs about Holy Communion, as taught from his *Small Catechism*:

*What is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

*Where is this written?*

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul.

Notice that Luther leaves out John 6 and in his writings he states that John 6 has nothing to do with Holy Communion but is about believing the Word (by faith alone). In order to substantiate his claim, Luther uses the Scripture of St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 11:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

“My mind ran back to Sacred Heart Church that summer I was nine, and suddenly I knew that the experience had been real — it had been Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament that I had “known.”



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## ...Journeys Home Continued...

However, Luther truncated this Scripture passage. What Luther did not include in his catechism on the Eucharist were the verses *immediately following* the previous quotation from 1 Corinthians 11:

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

The portion he excluded is fundamentally important and the Catholic Church rightly includes its teaching. Luther used Scripture in a dishonest way to form Protestant beliefs and practices on the Eucharist (what a strange way to uphold *sola Scriptura*).

### Towards His Real Presence

Upon learning about the truth of the Eucharist, I was intrigued: just what else does the Catholic Church believe and teach? By the summer of 1992, I was deep into the study of Catholicism. I wasn't alone in my study; my eighty-nine-year-old mother and our Episcopal priest and his wife were studying with me. We spent our Sunday evenings tearing apart every Catholic teaching and holding it up to a scriptural analysis. We were surprised that the Bible "fit" as written into the doctrines of the Catholic Church. It passed every test!

After what had been thirteen years of personal study of the Catholic Church, I had come to the conclusion that I could never go back into any form of Protestantism.

In September of 1992, I began RCIA classes. By that time, RCIA was just a formality, because our Sunday study group had examined and re-examined every Catholic doctrine, and we were all in agreement: the Catholic Church had the fullness of Christian truth! At Easter Vigil 1993 I came into the Church — I came home! I had the feeling that I had finally made an honest woman of myself.

My mother would have converted, but she was ill and frail; she was Catholic at heart and prayed the rosary faithfully twice a day until the end of her life in December 1993. I had the privilege of traveling to Florida to attend the ordination of my former Episcopal priest, Fr. Grover Tipton, into the Catholic priesthood in September of 1994.

I have never had a doubt that the Lord orchestrated my conversion; I believe it began when my father left and I committed myself to seeking out my heavenly Father. I believe that it was the Lord who led me to enter Sacred Heart Church to pray. Finally, I know it was Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament, who met me there when I was nine years old and brokenhearted. I believe God knew that His presence which I had tasted would turn into a life-long pursuit until I finally found what my soul truly longed for all those years.

No one can ever tell me that Jesus is not truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, because He let me experience it decades before I even knew the doctrine existed! Although I knew and loved the Lord for many years, I have come to know and love Him in deeper and richer ways in His Church — in the sacraments; in His word; in a deeper spirituality; but particularly in receiving Him, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. I love Scripture in new and deeper ways.

On my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in June 2010, I became an Oblate Novice of St. Benedict in association with St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. On September 1, 2011 my sisters took me to Latrobe where we stayed for three days and where I made my final profession and was confirmed as a full Oblate of St. Vincent. I took the name Sister Grace Marie, since, it has all been, from start to finish, God's grace, grace, grace!

I think of what Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity said when she was asked, "Are you sometimes homesick for heaven?" She answered, "I am sometimes homesick for heaven, but apart from the Beatific Vision, I have everything here that I will have in heaven." ■



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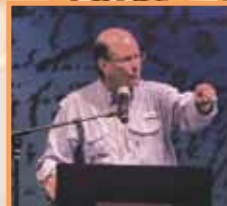
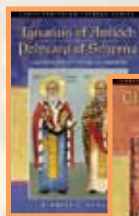


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