



May 2009 Newsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



A Child of Abraham Becomes a Catholic Priest

— by Fr. Jonathan Toborowsky —

Many times, over the course of my nearly eleven years of priesthood, I have been asked to “give my vocation story.” But this is both the first time I have ever “given my story” to a crowd of fellow converts to the Catholic faith, and also the first time I’ve put my story “finger to keyboard.”

My father’s side of the family is Jewish, emigrating from eastern Europe a few generations before him. They lived in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, a town that had a significant Jewish population up until the late 20th century. My mother’s side of the family is Roman Catholic, having Slovak and Irish roots (with even a bit of Native American as well). They lived in the New Jersey towns of Port Reading and Carteret, two towns alongside each other, both just a few miles from Perth Amboy. Both sides of the family were, shall we say, non-practicing in their respective faiths. My father’s family was the Jewish equivalent of the “Christmas and Easter Catholics”; Synagogue attendance happened on the high holy days and on the anniversaries of relatives’ deaths. My mother’s side of the family had another familiar story: When my grandfather was dying in the early 1960s, the

parish priest would not visit him because of his refusal to do some repair work on the church. My grandmother’s faith was sufficient to forgive the priest and continue going to Mass; her children were not as forgiving, and stopped going to church.

My parents were married in 1965, with the marriage being performed by a Rabbi. I was born in 1967 and named Jonathan Samuel Toborowsky. A truly biblical name, as a cloistered Poor Clare pen pal often reminds me, but in all honesty there were less lofty reasons behind it. “Jonathan” was for John, my mother’s father who had died in 1965, and “Samuel” for my father’s uncle, who had also recently passed away (Jewish cultural tradition said that you do not name children after living relatives). When I was eight days old, a Rabbi brought me into the covenant of Abraham through circumcision. My mother was an operating room nurse at a local hospital, while my father was a police officer who would soon resign from the Department to buy a local bar. As a priest I can honestly say that nothing, no class in the seminary or summer parish assignment, prepared me better for hearing confessions than ...continued on page 2

Journeys Home

FEATURED RESOURCES

CHNI's monthly newsletter is featuring resources that we believe will specifically aid our members in evangelization. The resources we feature are materials that CHNI uses to distribute to those on the journey to the Catholic Church.

Home at Last

Edited by Rosalind Moss

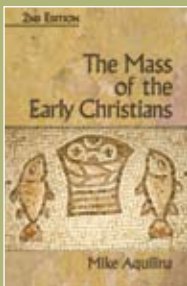


These 11 converts can help you become a better Catholic! They each took a different path, but each one led to Rome. Now walk with them and rediscover the timeless truths of the Catholic faith,

have your faith energized by their experiences, and weep tears of joy as they find themselves *Home at Last!*

The Mass of the Early Christians

By Mike Aquilina



In *The Mass of the Early Christians* one learns about the Church's most ancient Eucharistic beliefs and practices. Using the words of the early Christians, Aquilina traces the Mass' history from Jesus' lifetime

through the fourth century. Discover how the Mass stood at the center of the Church's life, evident in the Scriptures as well as the earliest Christian sermons, letters, artwork, tombstones, and architecture.

➤ **Receive either book with any donation of \$35.00 or more!**

➤ **Receive both books with any donation of \$50.00 or more!**

Please visit
www.chresources.com
for closeout prices on selected books while supplies last.

...Journeys Home Continued...

my years listening to people bare their souls to me as a bartender at the Flat Iron Tavern.

When I was four years old, I began nursery school at Hillel Academy, a Jewish school in Perth Amboy. Hillel was very much like the Catholic schools I've known through my years, with two obvious exceptions: First, our religion classes dealt with the Old Testament; Second, we learned how to speak, write, and read Hebrew. I have a vivid memory of being in the fifth grade, going student by student, each one of us reading a verse in Hebrew and then spontaneously translating it into English (with the help of our teacher if need be). Though the years have dulled my translation ability, I can still read and write the letters, something which came in handy in Scripture classes in the seminary.

The first event I can point to which, I would now say, led to becoming a Catholic (and eventually a priest) happened when I was five years old and my parents divorced. I don't remember much about it. Following the divorce, my mother and I went to live with my grandmother. I think myself fortunate, when compared to other divorce stories I've heard thought the years, that I always had regular contact with my father throughout my life. Yes, my parents lived apart, but I never doubted that they both loved me very much.

Here's where I came under the influence of my Catholic grandmother. With my mother working an early shift at the hospital, it was my Catholic

grandmother who woke me up each morning, made me breakfast, and drove her Jewish grandson to a Jewish school, all before going to work herself at the information desk of the same hospital where my mother worked. When my grandmother went to Mass during the week or on Sundays (and my mother needed a rest), she'd bring me along. This was my first experience of Mass, and as a Jewish boy of seven or eight years old, I tried my best to make sense of it all by substituting the Jesus and Mary I heard of at Mass with the Abraham and Sarah I heard of in school. At home, my grandmother's Catholic faith also was apparent. My

most familiar image of her, the one I first think of when I think of her, is the image of her sitting in a chair in her bedroom (the bedroom adorned with statues, holy pictures, and palms from years past) with a rosary in her hands and worn out prayer books handily nearby on the top of her radiator. Though I can't vouch for what she asked God for in her prayers, I can honestly say that never once in my life did she ever try in any way to get me to become a Catholic, even as a small child when she would have had an easy go of it. I

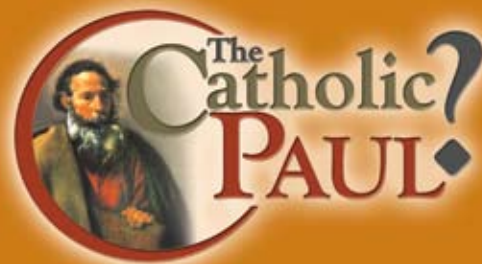
“ This was my first experience of Mass, and as a Jewish boy of seven or eight years old... ”

wonder if, in those years when she carted her Jewish grandson to Mass, she could have ever imagined that one day she would attend his first Mass as a priest?

I grew up a pretty normal child, a little geeky and introverted, but normal nonetheless. When Hillel Academy closed after fifth grade, my education shifted to my local public elementary school, junior high, and then high school (I love telling people that my first time as a Catholic school student was as a seminarian!). When I was nine, I joined the Cub Scouts. This began, through my years of involvement in Scouting, the routine of spending one night each week in the basement of a Catholic Church (who sponsored the Cub Scout Pack and Boy Scout Troop) until I was about twenty-five. My years in scouting also meant that I met local kids, Catholic kids who lived much closer to me than the kids I went to school with in Hillel Academy. As kids, our friendship spread beyond scouts into everyday life, and many was the times I attended Mass with them (by now I was used to it) or even waited in the sacristy while they served a wedding or funeral Mass, so that we could play immediately afterwards. At about the same time my Catholic friends were receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, I began lessons with a Rabbi to make my Bar Mitzvah. Again, my father and his side of the family were not especially observant Jews; this was simply something I was expected to do.

By 1988, following a few years of post-high school wandering, I began work in local government, working in the Mayor's Office of the Township of Woodbridge. I was the Confidential Aide to the Mayor, meaning I kept him on schedule, escorted guests in and out of the office and around Town Hall, wrote speeches, handled complaints, got him where he needed to be, told him what he needed to know, etc. The job was basically an extension of the work I had begun doing on a volunteer basis during his campaign for office the previous fall. This was my first full time, "grown up" job, and it meant that I had all the trappings of fulltime work: an office, and medical, dental, and prescription plans (all of this whilst many of my high school contemporaries were still in college). What it meant was that, for the first time in my life, I began thinking of the "big picture": What do I want to do with my life? Who am I? What do I believe?

It was about the time I began asking myself these questions that I started attending daily Mass at the local parish, St. Anthony's Church. Why did I start going to Mass? Today, as a priest I would say that it was God's prompting, an action of the Holy Spirit. But back then I thought the reason was familiarity. I had been going to Mass there since I was seven, and thanks to scouting, I'd spent plenty of time in this building (more than I ever did in a synagogue). By June of 1989 I made an appointment with the pastor of St. Anthony, to ask how I could become a Roman Catholic. He explained to me that the parish was about to have the annual carnival, and that we'd meet after the carnival ended. At the end of the carnival, however, he had a heart attack (something I hoped was more about the carnival and not so much about my desire for conversion). A friend offered to take me to the pastor at a neighboring parish, so I went to meet this priest. ...continued on page 4



THE CATHOLIC PAUL? CONFERENCE

May 16th, 2009

Conference Registration Rates

Single.....	\$65.00
Married couple.....	\$110.00
Group.....	\$55.00
<i>(To qualify for group rates, you must book ten or more at a single time.)</i>	
Religious.....	\$50.00
Meal Plan (lunch & dinner).....	\$50.00

Location—Hilton Easton

614-414-5000

Conference Room Rate \$165.99

Contact Information

Sharon Coen
sharon@chnetwork.org
740-450-1175

www.thecatholicpaul.com



NEWSLETTER COPIES



CHNI encourages members to make copies of the newsletter and distribute to friends, family, church groups etc. We do ask that copies of the newsletter not be sold. CHNI and the authors reserve all rights and permissions.



EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME

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

TELEVISION

Mondays **Live** at 8:00 PM EST
Encores: Tuesdays 1:00 & 10:00 AM EST
Wednesdays 1:00 PM EST
Saturdays 11:00 PM EST

RADIO

Mondays **Live** at 8:00 PM EST
Encores: Wednesdays 2:00 PM EST
Saturdays 7:00 AM EST

May 4

Rob Rodgers*
Former Anglican

May 11

Clyde Pearce*
Former Mormon bishop

May 18

Scandinavian Pre-tape*

May 25

August D. Accetta*
Convert from Secularism

**This schedule is subject to change*



...Journeys Home Continued...

Surprisingly, this was the same priest who, years earlier, saw me as a young boy hanging around his sacristy, waiting for my friends to finish serving at weddings or funerals. This first meeting began a weekly tradition for me and him; each Monday night from January until my Baptism in September of 1990, I would go to his rectory office and we'd talk about the Catholic faith for an hour. At the time, the priesthood was not on my mind. In my own discernment, I believed that God wanted me to become a Catholic layman, presumably someday with a wife, a family, and a career in government.

Back at St. Anthony's, another pastor had taken over for the priest who had the heart attack, and here's where the road took another significant turn in my life. The new priest was closer to my age, energetic, and obviously enthusiastic in his vocation. After regularly seeing me at daily Mass, he asked if I'd be a Lector one day each week. A few months later, I was asked to help distribute Holy Communion. A while after that, I was helping with the youth group (which he had recently begun), and other assorted things around the parish. This is when I began to ask a totally different question: "Where is this all leading, Lord?" I began to think the preposterous question of whether God could be calling me to be a Catholic priest. Not knowing many priests, I went to speak with the priest who brought me into the Church. I wondered whether this was a legitimate calling, or whether I was feeling some zeal that all new converts experience. He told me he thought it was for real; that I was mature enough to know it, if this vocational call was just fueled on emotions. With that in mind, I knew that if I was going to have this question answered in my mind, it would have to be dealt with in more concrete terms. This led to a conversation with the pastor of St. Anthony's, as well as a conversation with the Bishop of my diocese, which led to the diocese's vocations office. The rest, shall we say, is history. ■



Fr. Jonathan (Jay) Toborowsky was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Metuchen (New Jersey) in 1998. A native of Port Reading, NJ, Fr. Jay is a convert from Judaism and was baptized in 1990. He attended Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies and Philosophy, and Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, where he earned a Masters of Divinity and a Masters of Arts Degree in Theology (specializing in Church History). In his diocese, he has served as Associate Vocations Director, hosted a weekly radio show from 2003-08, and serves on committees such as the Presbyteral Council and the Commission for Historical Records. He is co-author of the book, "John Paul II for Dummies", and has written for Homiletic and Pastoral Review. He answers online faith questions for both the EWTN website's "Catholic Q&A" and the "Ask a Priest" section of Ave Maria Singles website. He will be a guest on The Journey Home on June 8, 2009.



Live Radio program with Marcus Grodi & Guests

Wednesdays **LIVE** at 9:00 PM EST
Encores: Sundays @ 7 AM EST

Following our Holy Father's call to rediscover the inspiration of St. Paul and his writings, our *Deep in Scripture* live radio programs will be featuring guests discussing their favorite verses from St. Paul.

The live broadcast of the program has moved to **WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 9 PM EST**. Marcus Grodi and his guest will be taking your calls (800-664-5110) and emails about the evening's text from St. Paul.

Go to www.deepinscripture.com for more information.

MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

June 26 & 27, 2009

The 2009 Greenville, SC Marian Conference
Peace Center for the Performing Arts
www.greenvillemarianconference.org
865-255-5646

July 31-August 2, 2009

Defending the Faith
Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH
www.franciscanconferences.com
740-283-6314 / 800-437-8368
Join *CHN* at our mixer Friday at 10 pm!

August 28-29, 2009

Faith Matters Conference "Living Your Catholic Faith"
Polk County Convention Center: Des Moines, IA
Admission: Adult \$50, Couple \$90, Family \$125, Youth 30-under \$30
All are welcome, go to: www.kwky.com

September 18-19, 2009

Fire at the Beach Conference
Diocese of Charleston
St. Francis by the Sea Church
Hilton Head, SC
www.catholic-doc.org/
cathy@catholic-doc.org
psmith@catholic-doc.org

October 6-16, 2009

Catholic Answers' Cruise— Witnesses to the Faith throughout the Centuries: saints, martyrs, scholars, statesmen, and even art and culture.
10-Day Western Mediterranean Cruise

Among the other speakers will be Karl Keating, president of *Catholic Answers*, and Christopher Check, vice president of *The Rockford Institute*.

The Holland America Line ship will sail from Rome. We'll visit Florence, Monaco, Barcelona, Mallorca, Tunis/Carthage, Palermo, and Naples/Herculaneum.

There will be instructive talks aboard the ship and exciting excursions on shore.

For complete details, please visit www.catholicanswerscruise.com, or call 1-800-707-1634.



THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTL'

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Dr. Charles Feicht (*revert from Evangelicalism*)



Saint Paul

As you receive this May CHNewsletter, the year of Saint Paul will be winding to a close. Everywhere we've turned in the Church during this past year, at the encouragement of Pope Benedict XVI, the life and teachings of Saint Paul have been lifted up for our spiritual enrichment.

But just in case this year has too quickly passed you by, the *Coming Home Network International*, in partnership with the *Saint Paul Center*, is sponsoring our first one-day spring conference, entitled "THE CATHOLIC PAUL?". It will be presented at the usual location in Columbus, the Easton Hilton, on this coming May 16, and the team of speakers we've gathered is stupendous! You'll really want to come if you can!

But why the theme, "The Catholic Paul?". Frankly, the idea came from Dr. Scott Hahn himself in a phone conversation, for it seems that, given all the year's themes surrounding Saint Paul, this is the most definitive question that arises in the minds of our non-Catholic friends and family when they hear of us Catholics celebrating a year of Saint Paul.

Before I considered the Catholic faith, I certainly presumed that the Apostle Paul was NOT a Catholic! I would not have claimed that he was a Protestant, because I recognized that Protestantism was an historical development, in what I believed was a necessary reaction against a Roman Church that had strayed far from Paul's true theology. My childhood Lutheran roots taught me that the key verse to understanding all of Saint Paul was Romans 1:16-17: "*For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'*" From this I believed that Paul's theology centered around the idea that we are not saved through any righteousness of our own, which we may have acquired through our efforts or works, but rather we are saved by the righteousness of God that we receive solely by faith as a free gift and which covers our sinful unrighteousness. With this key, all the rest of the writings of Paul, in fact all the rest of the Bible, was interpreted—if a particular verse didn't quite fit, then it needed to be interpreted, and realigned in the light of this key.

Later after my adult "reconversion" and subsequent years in seminary, I became an ordained evangelically-minded, Calvinistic minister (first, Congregational and then Presbyterian). Built on my Lutheran background, my new Calvinism even more emphasized the Sovereignty of God and the depravity of man, and this again placed a major spin on the theology of Paul. I learned, believed, and then taught that, especially in the Letter of Romans, we find two Plans of Salvation: Plan A & Plan

B. Plan A described how people were saved before the Cross—through works of the Law, through obedient living. But because we could not on our own, irremediably hindered by the depravity of our will, sufficiently live holy and perfect lives, we could not be saved. Through His merciful love however, God sent his Son, etc., (i.e., John 3:16), kicking into gear Plan B: through our faith in Jesus Christ, and this alone apart from any works, we receive as a gift the righteousness of God: we are then saved, not by anything we have ever done, but because upon our death, God's is blinded to our impurities by the imputed covering of Christ's righteous and welcomes us into His Kingdom.

This I believed was Paul's **Gospel**, and essentially read this into every instance when he used the word "**Gospel**," over 75 times in his letters. For example: "*But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the **gospel** of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24). "*For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*" (Rom 1:16). "*For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the **gospel**, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power*" (1 Cor 1:17). "*For I would have you know, brethren, that the **gospel** which was preached by me is not man's **gospel***" (Gal 1:11). "*In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the **gospel** of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*" (Eph 1:13). "*Only let your manner of life be worthy of the **gospel** of Christ...*" (Phil 1:27), etc..

But is this "Plan A: Plan B" grid, in fact, the one true expression of what Saint Paul called "my **gospel**" (i.e., "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my **gospel**..." (2 Tim 2:8)), for I knew many Bible-believing Christians who radically disagreed with this particular slant on the **gospel**.

And what did Paul mean when he said the following to the Christians at Philippi: "...thankful for your partnership in the **gospel** from the first day until now" (1:5); "*And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the **gospel**, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only*" (4:15)? In what way had the **gospel** been inaugurated when he left Macedonia?

In time, however, it was this cacophony of interpretations of what was essential to the **gospel** that helped open my heart to the truth and fullness of the Catholic faith. I don't have time to develop this here (one good reason to come to the conference), but for Saint Paul, the **gospel** was not merely some carefully circumscribed Plan B, though it includes the truth of Jesus Christ and his redemptive death on the cross; it was

not a precise set of standards, though it includes morals, ethics, and the “obedience of faith”; it was not a list of rites and devotions, though it consists of membership through baptism in the Body of Christ—the Church—which includes discipline, structure, and authoritative worship, and it was not limited to one privileged group of people,

but—and this was what “began” when he left Macedonia—it is for every single person. No, St. Paul’s gospel includes all of these and more, but it does not consist of these. Rather, St. Paul’s gospel is a lifestyle of surrender, obedience, and even suffering, for which he said, “Imitate me.” —Sincerely In Christ, Marcus Grodi ■

Prayer List

Clergy

■ For Michael, a former Calvary Chapel missionary in Colorado, that the Holy Spirit may guide him as he discerns a vocation as a Catholic deacon.

■ For Mark, a Lutheran minister in Virginia, that his wife may become open to the Catholic faith and that the Holy Spirit would guide the annulment process of his previous marriage.

■ For Scott, a former Episcopal priest in Nebraska, that God would clear a path for him to follow with conviction of conscience into the holy Catholic Church.

■ For Matt, a Lutheran minister in Delaware, that he may find gainful employment in which he may use his God given gifts and talents so that he and his family may enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

■ For Harold, an Episcopal priest in New Mexico, that the Holy Spirit would anoint, enlighten, and guide him on his journey in God’s love.

■ For an Eastern Orthodox archbishop, that God would guide his heart and mind as he discerns Jesus’ call to the fullness of the apostolic faith in union with the See of St. Peter.

■ For Joshua, a Pentecostal missionary in South Africa, that he and his wife would be guided by God to good Catholic friends who will effectively witness the fullness of the faith of Jesus Christ.

■ For Michael, a United Methodist minister in Virginia, that as he studies and prays for God’s guidance, God would open the door and welcome him into the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in the holy Mass.

■ For Rick, a former Lutheran minister in Ohio, that the Spirit of God would dispel all apprehension and fear, granting him the peace of Jesus which passes all understanding.

■ For a Lutheran minister in New York, that the Lord Jesus would give him the wisdom, courage, and strength to return to the holy Catholic Church of his youth.

■ For Daniel, a former Baptist seminarian in Cleveland, that the Blessed Virgin Mary would intercede for him at the Throne of Grace asking God for the all the grace he needs to come into full communion with the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

Laitly

■ For Patrick and his recovery from his heart attack.

■ For Michael and his intentions.

■ For Caroline and her cancer treatment.

■ For all within the *Helpers Network*.

■ For the success of the *Catholic Paul* conference on May 16.

■ For Diane and her battle with cancer.



■ For Sherry and her personal struggles.

■ For Evelyn’s family’s return to the Catholic Church.

■ For Edward who was recently diagnosed with cancer.

■ For Father Henry in his surgery and expedited healing.

■ For a baby who is in need of a heart transplant.

■ For Olive that God may grant her healing.

■ For Patrick and his recovery after a heart attack.

■ For Bishop Campbell and his health.

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 in general and specific of the *CHNetwork*, its members, and supporters.

Please submit all prayer requests & answers to:

CHN Prayer List

P. O. Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

You may also email your prayer requests to:

prayers@chnetwork.org

We use only first names to preserve anonymity.

The Coming Home Network International

P.O. Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

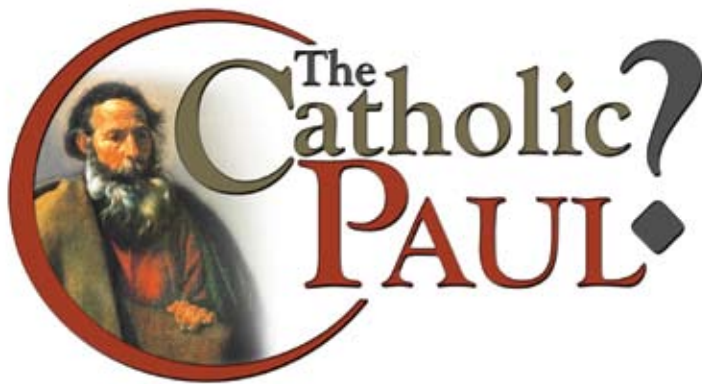
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Marcus Grodi & Dr. Scott Hahn

— along with —

**The Coming Home Network International &
The Saint Paul Center for Biblical Theology**

— present —



Saturday - May 16th, 2009 - Hilton Easton - Columbus, OH

SCHEDULE

9:00 The Catholic Paul—*Dr. Scott Hahn*

10:15 Paul through Jewish Eyes—
Dr. Jeff Marrow

11:45 Mass

1:00 Lunch

2:15 Saint Paul and the Mystical
Life—*Dr. Mary Healy*

3:15 The Mystery of Redemptive
Suffering—*Jeff Cavins*

4:30 Dinner

5:45 The Pauline Texts: Conversion
through The Verses I Never
Saw—*Marcus Grodi*

6:45 Romanism to Rome—
Father Mitch Pacwa

7:45 Closing—*Marcus Grodi*



For more information contact:

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1.800.664.5110

www.chnetwork.org

www.thecatholicpaul.com