



## May 2013 Newsletter

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

EWTN's <i>The Journey Home</i> Schedule .....	3
Defending the Faith Conference .....	5
"Praying Without Ceasing" by Marcus Grodi .....	6
Support the Network .....	7

# THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



## A Catholic Seed Sewn

By Vicki Hassessian

My story begins in a naval hospital in Pittsburgh, California, where I was born to an 18-year-old girl and her 19-year-old husband. Both of my parents were raised in the Nazarene church. They met at Pasadena Nazarene College, married, and soon thereafter my father signed up for the Navy. After a few months he was sent to Korea in 1952. I was born in October of that year. Eighteen months later, my father returned from his assignment overseas and we settled in his hometown of El Paso, Texas, where he found work at the railroad. My parents were believers and we attended the Nazarene church close to our house, but they were only nominal Christians at the time. I remember no Bible in the house, no prayers, no music. I do remember that my mother used to turn on the TV to do her daily workouts with Jack LaLanne, and just before he came on, there was a show with a man wearing a cap, a large cross on a chain, and he wore a cape that he threw around as he talked. His eyes burned into the camera! Later I would learn that his name was Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

A brother came along when I was four and, as I was soon turning five, my mother decided that I should start kindergarten. The closest one she could find happened to be in a Catholic school, so she signed me up with the instruction to the sisters that I could participate in everything except that I should not be required to learn the

"Hail Mary." Little did my parents know that every day the class would say the Hail Mary together. Though I was not required to say it, it was seared into my memory. I never forgot it.

I also never forgot my wonderful teacher, Sister Vincent de Paul. She was kind, loving, and gentle with all of us children! She would sing, play games with us, pray with us, and when we got too noisy, she would hold up a straight pin and tell the class that if they became very, very quiet, she would drop the pin and see if we could hear it hit the floor. It worked every time! She wore a full, black habit with a white wimple. I loved her and wanted to be just like her! I also had a deep love for Mary, the mother of Jesus. We were often told stories of her and the baby Jesus. Every day after school, the only thing I wanted to do was to play Mary and baby Jesus. I would throw a scarf over my head for a veil, wrap up my teddy bear in a blanket, and set up all my other stuffed animals to watch and be amazed at the sight! My mother was so exasperated with me!

### A Family Revival

In 1958, we moved to Pasadena, California, where my father attempted to complete his college education. We lived across the street from the college and were within walking distance to the Nazarene church. My parents began to grow in their spiritual lives and ... *continued on page 2*

*Journeys Home*

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

it began to show at home as we had Bible stories and music! When my mother found that she was pregnant with my sister, we moved to a larger home and my father dropped out of college to pursue a career with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. It meant long hours of work. We didn't see him much for quite a few years. We lived in a neighborhood with few children and my days were filled with solitude. I learned to spend much time in my room with books as my friends.

It was during this time that I had a vivid dream. I was eight or nine at the time, and in my dream I was walking down the sidewalk toward my house. Suddenly I looked up, and there was Jesus with arms outstretched as if welcoming me home! He looked just like He did in children's picture books, and he was even wearing a long, white robe! He looked so kind and He had a gentle smile on His face. When I woke up, I realized how real that dream seemed. I would tuck it away in my memory and think of that dream many times during my life as it brought great comfort to me.

When I was twelve, my parents decided to leave the Nazarene church for various reasons and we began to attend a Congregational church whose pastor was excellent! It was through this church that my family really began to grow in the Lord. My parents became members of the adult Sunday school class and my brother, sister, and I became active in the excellent youth programs there. Scripture memorization was encouraged at every grade level, and by the time a child reached the 7th grade, his or her mind was filled with Scripture. The junior high and high school programs were excellent, teaching us and encouraging us to have a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus. In high school, I became a leader with junior high school girls, and my relationship with the Lord was intimate and growing. During these years I had a great desire to dedicate myself totally to God. Often I would tell my mother that if I was Catholic I would have been a nun. She would always chide me and tell me not to talk that way.

Catholicism was not discussed much in our home. The few things I heard were all negative: that Catholic families were so large because that is the only way that they could get their church to grow, purgatory was a place that Catholics made up so that they could support their doctrine, Catholics always thought the Pope was a physical descendant of Peter, Catholics worshipped idols (Mary being the biggest one), and a few others I cannot remember. Overall, Catholicism was a negative subject in our home. Yet, when I saw a sister or priest, my heart quickened! I loved driving by the beautiful Catholic churches in our town, and I still wanted to be a nun!

My college years began at Pasadena City College. They were filled with illness and pain. The first year I came down with a bad case of mononucleosis and had to drop out for

half the year. The second year my parents were having relationship problems and things were hard at home. I tried to concentrate in school but it was difficult. Soon I dropped out and worked, trying to save money to continue school the next year. During this time, I did not make the wisest decisions and experimented in areas that I knew were sinful. I felt separated from God, yet instinctively I knew He was pursuing me. I loved Him, yet I was floundering, lonely, and afraid.

For three years I struggled. During the most difficult times, I would spend my lunch hour sitting in the sanctuary of St. Phillips, the beautiful Catholic church across the street from the college. It was so quiet, and people came to sit and pray. I wondered then what was so wrong with the Catholic Faith. They seemed so devout, but I dared not learn too much as my parents would be extremely upset. Finally, in His wonderful grace and mercy, God gave me the strength to return to faithfulness in Him.

In going through the books at a bookstore one day in the 1970s, I happened upon a book that had been written about a nun named Mother Teresa. I was intrigued, bought the book and took it home to read. About halfway through I realized she was saying a prayer to Mary, proof to me that Catholics did worship Mary. I shut the book and threw it away, yet I was still intrigued. What would make a woman like her do the things she was doing? It could only be the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit that could give her the strength to do all the work she did. Did her Church, the Catholic Church, teach her these things? Where did she learn all that she knew? Did God approve of the Catholic Church?

I returned to school and needed to decide on a field of study as I was close to getting my degree. Becoming a missionary seemed like the most logical thing to do with my life, so I decided to major in sociology and go to the mission field. I did not realize then that in a few months, I would meet my wonderful husband!

Four months after getting to know Gary, we were married on Valentine's Day. His father was a pastor in the Armenian Congregational Church and his mother was a retired nurse. Gary had been raised in the church and we started life as a happy couple. A year later a daughter was born, and then a son joined our family. There was not much money and life was difficult, but God cared for us in various, special ways. He gave Gary a wonderful job, with an even more wonderful boss, and life became easier. We raised our children in the same church in which I had grown up and it still had the excellent Sunday school classes, memory work assignments, and great music.

### Finding a Church that Taught the Truth

In 1988, my parents moved to Arizona. Gary had been looking for an opportunity to move us out of the smog and

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

enormity of the Los Angeles area, and when the opportunity came, we moved to Arizona too. We spent much time trying to find a church that we felt comfortable with. It was then that I began to truly pay attention to sermons and realized there were some things that they were saying that I felt didn't agree with Scripture, such as "once saved, always saved," "faith alone," and "Scripture alone." This was new to me! In our previous church, the sermons were based on Scripture and there was not much emphasis on these subjects. Baptisms were offered in two ways: immersion or sprinkling. Much of the music was classical and beautiful. Communion was holy and reverent. Suddenly we were not only being introduced to theology and doctrinal issues, but to new church music, new church attitudes and change that I was uncomfortable with. I was becoming more aware of what was being taught and finding in my own Bible reading that I did not agree. I didn't feel that I could say anything to anyone because, after all, I was Protestant and shouldn't disagree with Protestant teachings. Then I began to learn that different Protestant churches even disagreed with each other! How was one to know who was right?

First we settled on a Baptist church but soon were told through one of the sermons that as Christians we should not have to ask God for forgiveness of our sin because as Christians we were already forgiven. We looked for another church and found one we thought we were comfortable with, but soon after getting settled the weekly rant was, "Once saved, always saved," and, "Salvation is by faith alone! Don't let anyone tell you that works have anything to do with it!" "Then why is there so much written in Scripture concerning works?" I thought.

My husband was called back to California to help care for his ailing parents and wanted the rest of the family to stay in Arizona since the children were still in school. The kids wanted to go to Calvary Chapel, and so for a number of years I attended with them, and my husband also attended when he came home. Most of the time the sermons were conservative and to the point. However, the pastor was an ex-Catholic and quite critical of Catholics as a whole. I always felt uncomfortable when he would make his negative comments and wondered at his anger toward the Catholic Church. Then one day he was preaching on John 3:5 and made this statement, "The water that is mentioned in this passage is the amniotic fluid that is present when one is born." *What?* As I read that passage again, it was obvious to me that it was talking about baptismal water. Of course I didn't have a degree in theology, nor was I a doctrinal apologist, so maybe I was wrong, but I felt very uncomfortable. Was this truth? Who was speaking the truth? Would I have to search my whole life for a church that taught truth?

After my husband's parents both passed away, he took care of the estate, retired, and returned home. While attending church with us for a few months, he became uncomfortable, and expressed a desire to look for another church. Our son had heard of another vibrant church, so we attended and enjoyed it. It wanted to be regarded as a nondenominational church, but we knew its roots were Baptist based and the books in the narthex (John Calvin, Calvinism, etc.) hinted that they were essentially Baptist. We became active in the food ministry and enjoyed the leadership and teachings since the pastor stayed away from controversial subjects, but there was still something in me that wasn't comfortable. ... continued on page 4

### 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

#### May 6

David Currie\*  
Former Baptist

#### May 13

Russell Ford\*  
Former Southern Baptist

#### May 20

*The Journey Home International*

#### May 27

Pat Ermi\*  
Former Southern Baptist

\*Schedule is subject to change.

## ...Journeys Home Continued...

I didn't know what it was, so I continued to shove it down and tried to forget about it.

### A Catholic Saint?

I made an arrangement to speak to the assistant pastor about some ideas I had about serving women, orphans, and the poor. When I arrived at the appointed time, I was told that he was running late in a staff meeting and was asked to wait for him in the library. I was delighted as I love to read, so I started looking through the books and reading snippets of each one. One of the books I picked up was titled *St. Augustine*. I started to read the back of the book and then suddenly turned it back over to the front and read the title again, slowly. *St. Augustine?* Saint? Since when? He was a father of the Protestant church, or so I thought. I checked out the book and devoured it in two days. I cannot tell you how much I was shaken to the core! It was then that I began to realize I did not know as much as I had thought about church history, and I wondered about all the other great men of the church and their religious affiliation, such as Jerome, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Ignatius. I'd often heard their names thrown around when someone was giving a sermon, or when listening to someone tell of their studies while in a Protestant seminary. One by one I began to research their backgrounds and found they were all Catholics! Before this I had not realized that prior to Martin Luther there had been only one Church, the Catholic Church. My heart quickened at this discovery, but at the same time I felt a mounting fear in my heart. I realized that there was much I did not know, and that there was much study that I would have to do.

### Channel Surfing Home

It was also during this time that our daughter asked me to watch our baby granddaughter once a week for two hours. Of course I jumped at the chance to be with little newborn Hannah. While she slept, I surfed the satellite channels looking for something decent to watch. One day, I happened upon a channel called EWTN. Since I had never heard of that channel and it was close to another religious channel that I had on our TV, I decided to wait through the channel break and see what it was. A show called *The Journey Home* was coming on and I quickly realized it was a Catholic channel. Intrigued, I continued to listen as the host interviewed a woman who was a former Baptist. I was curious to hear her story. By the end of the hour I was so encouraged that my weekly babysitting time was spent listening to story after story, more encouraged by each one that I heard.

To learn truth became a passion, almost a consuming activity. The more I read the more I learned, and the more I learned the more I realized how Catholic my thinking had been all these many years! I decided to attend a Mass at the

Catholic church closest to my home. Just before Mass started, an announcement was made that an RCIA class would be starting up in the next few weeks for all those who wanted to learn more about the Catholic Church. After Mass I spoke to the person who made the announcement and he kindly encouraged me to look into it. I did not. I was scared to death!

I continued to attend Mass for the next few weeks but intentionally let the first two classes of RCIA pass by. On the third week, I approached one of the priests after Mass and asked if it was too late to join the RCIA class. He said it wasn't and that they would be glad to have me. Fiddlesticks! I gathered my courage and attended the fourth class. There was a large statue of Mary and another of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the RCIA room. "Idols!" I thought. "Another confirmation that this was probably not the right thing for me to do." Then the instructor asked us to form small groups and share why we were there. When it was my turn, I promptly said that I didn't know and that the idols in the room made me very nervous. No one chided me, but looked at me with great compassion, smiled, and continued on with the next person. I began to relax and by the end of the evening I wanted to learn more. I did not feel threatened to return as I learned that I would not be forced to come into the Catholic Church if I didn't want to. But a major hurdle remained: telling my husband that I was learning more about the Catholic Church.

After much prayer, I sat down with my husband that week and decided that if he was in any way against my attending RCIA or Mass I would stop. He listened to me as I shared my heart, and then quietly said, "You must do what you feel called to do. I will not be joining you, as I will never become Catholic, but if that is what you want, then do it." Given the green light, I plunged in with both feet, reading, studying, arguing with myself and the staff (I think I exhausted them!), and learning all that I could so, when the time came time, I could make an educated decision. Many were the walks I took, arguing with God and myself, tears rolling down my cheeks. I did not understand this draw to the Catholic Church, but neither could I extinguish the flame of desire in my heart to know and understand truth!

### Back to Mary

Some of my hurdles were communication with the saints and purgatory, but I struggled with the concept of Mary most of all. Studying commentaries on Hebrews 12:1 helped me to understand that we indeed could ask the saints to intercede for us. My understanding of purgatory came while reading Dr. Scott Hahn's book *Signs of Life: 40 Catholic Customs and Their Biblical Roots*, but no matter what I read or how much I prayed ... continued on page 5

## A Pilgrimage to Catholic England

By Jim Anderson



As many of the readers of the CHNetwork newsletter may know, for most of 2012 I was living in Fulda, Germany conducting research and taking photographs of the historic sites of major events of the Protestant Reformation. A major motivating aspect of this project was to gain a better understanding of the preparations that are currently underway amongst our separated brethren in Germany for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inception of the German Reformation coming in 2017. At we get closer to that event I am sure you will be reading more.

While in Germany, Marcus Grodi asked if I might make a journey across the Channel to take photographs to illustrate a five-hour interview and virtual pilgrimage he made with our good friend Joanna Bogle on the English Reformation and the Catholic Martyrs of that period. In order to peek your interest and whet your appetite for the soon to be published DVD interview of Marcus and Joanna, I want to share some of the highlights of my own pilgrimage to England. I discovered that, though modern England is secular in many ways, her roots are deeply and solidly Catholic.



Great Hall of Westminster

When I visited London, I had the opportunity to visit the Great Hall of Westminster, the oldest part of the houses of Parliament and the site of the trial and condemnation of St. Thomas More, chancellor of England, under Henry VIII, on July 1, 1535. In a wonderful working of God's providence, in September 2010, Pope Benedict XVI addressed the English Parliament in the very same hall.



St. Thomas More memorial

On the west side of London one finds the memorial of the site of Tyburn Tree, near Hyde Park. Between 1535 and 1681, 105 Catholic Christians, such as St. Edmund Campion, were witnesses to their faith in Christ



Tyburn Tree memorial

and His Church by being executed as traitors to the Crown. In 1642, Venerable Edward Morgan, a Catholic priest about to be hung, drawn, and quartered, was reproved by an Anglican minister on the scaffold for being so cheerful. The martyr replied "Why should anyone be offended at my going to heaven cheerfully? For God loves a cheerful giver." Today, a stone's throw from this place of torture and death stands the Convent of the Tyburn Nuns, who continue the witness of the Catholic Faith through their love, prayer, and continual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament of our Lord Jesus.



Convent of the Tyburn Nuns

In the far north of the county of York, are found the ruins of Jervaulx Abbey, established in 1156 by the Order of Cistercians. At its height, Jervaulx was the center of Christian life and society for the people of this part of England. The ancient abbey was closed and its lands and property were confiscated by King Henry VIII in 1537. The last abbot of Jervaulx, Adam Sedbar, was hung, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, on June 2, 1537, on charges that "he did conspire to deprive the King of his title of Supreme Head of the English Church."



Jervaulx Abbey

A few miles south of Jervaulx, we find the home of another valiant martyr to the Catholic faith, St. Margaret Clitherow, in the city of York, in the area of the



Shrine of St. Margaret Clitherow

... continued on page B



Shambles, York

town known as the Shambles. Margaret was a convert to the Catholic Church, having been baptized into the Church of England. After becoming a Catholic, at age 18, with the support of her Anglican husband, she catechized children, hosted priests who celebrated Mass in her home, and also hid and helped them escape when pursued by agents of

Queen Elizabeth I. In 1586, she was arrested and charged for the crime of harboring Catholic priests. Refusing to plead to the case so as to protect her children from being forced to testify, she was laid out upon a sharp rock, a door was put on top of her and slowly loaded with an immense weight of rocks and stones (the small sharp rock would break her back when the heavy rocks were laid on top of her). It took fifteen minutes for her to die. Her last words were, “Jesu! Jesu! Jesu! Have mercy on me!” Today, you can visit her home, which is preserved as a shrine to this brave woman.

Glastonbury, in the far southwestern part of England, in Somerset, is the site of such great history that it merges into the tales of legend. Glastonbury Abbey was founded by King Centwine, of Wessex about 680. The Abbey grew

to be one of the largest and most important monasteries in all of England. It was said that St. Joseph of Arimathea brought the Holy Grail to Glastonbury. In 1191, graves believed to have been those of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere were discovered in the Abbey. Also found in

the grave was a lead cross inscribed in Latin, “Here lies buried the renowned King Arthur in the Isle of Avalon.” Glastonbury Abbey was deserted after September 1539, when it was closed on the orders of Thomas Cromwell and its goods and lands confiscated by King Henry. The last Abbot of Glastonbury, Blessed Richard Whiting, was executed, on November 15, 1539, on top of Glastonbury Tor, a large hill overlooking the city.

Maybe in a future newsletter, I’ll share more of my pilgrimage to Catholic England with you, but you’ll see more of the pictures I took when Marcus’ interview with Joanna Bogle is released. ■



Glastonbury Abbey

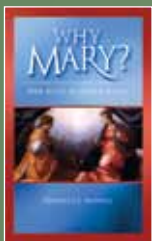


Glastonbury Tor

## Member-Specific FEATURED RESOURCES

### Why Mary? Her Role in God’s Plan

— Dr. Kenneth Howell



While all Christians – and even people of other faiths – agree that Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ, her role beyond this is not as clear.

In the booklet *Why Mary?*, you will come to understand why it is our Christian duty to venerate Mary as both the first Christian and the Mother of our Savior.

From Mary’s perpetual virginity to her bodily Assumption into heaven, this guide will provide you with explanations – drawn from Scripture and Church Tradition – of the four Marian Dogmas, as well as Mary’s role as spiritual Mother of the world.

\$35

For a donation of \$35, receive *Why Mary?*.

\$50

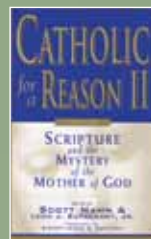
For a donation of \$50, receive *Catholic for a Reason II*.

\$75

For a donation of \$75, receive *Why Mary?* and *Catholic for a Reason II*.

### Catholic for a Reason II: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mother of God

— Edited by Scott Hahn & Leon Suprenant



*Catholic for a Reason II* explores the mystery of Mary, the Mother of God and is a moving tribute and a convincing testimony that demolishes common misconceptions about Catholic teaching on the Virgin Mary. You’ll learn why the Catholic Church teaches that Mary was

immaculately conceived, remained always a virgin, and was assumed body and soul into heaven.

— THESE PREMIUMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY —

# Laity on their way home

by Mary Clare Pieczynski

The Coming Home Network International has always been dedicated to non-Catholic clergy who are on the journey to the Catholic Church and the unique challenges they encounter in conversion. We are, also, contacted by numerous Protestant men and women who, while not in positions of ministry in their denominations, need assistance as they feel drawn towards the Catholic Church. I am privileged through my work with the CHNetwork to journey with these individuals and look to provide them with support in their faith journeys. We are here to listen to their concerns, help answer their questions, and often we connect those on the journey with a “helper” whom we feel is well suited to mentor them one on one. With their permission, I have included a few short snippets from e-mails I have received from recent converts to give you an inside glimpse at the work of the CHNetwork as we assist not only Protestant ministers but also laity who are exploring the claims of the Catholic Church.

**FROM RICHARD:** I look back and see how in Pentecostal theology, my heart was ablaze with a zeal for Jesus and yet very little substance in teaching and orthodoxy...having come to the Catholic church, I have found that both intellect/reason and zeal/passion are at work in me, as if a beautiful symphony is happening! ... I find myself loving my separated brothers and sisters more - appreciating what they DO have and praying for them to see the full-

ness of what they are missing. It is a truly wondrous time of discovery in my life right now! ... Thank you so much for your ministry! The Coming Home Network is a site I visited often and drew encouragement from many of the stories there! The newsletters are a welcomed email I look forward to each month!!

**FROM SARAH:** I love being Catholic, and my husband and I are continuing to get more involved in our parish. Currently I volunteer with our youth ministry, participate in the young adult ministry and spiritual direction, and am hoping to get involved with teaching RCIA next year...I will continue to pray for CHNetwork and all those on their journey to the Catholic Church.

**FROM AMY:** Although there have been some strained conversations and relationships due to my decision to join the Church, I have no doubt that this is exactly where I belong. I have been so enriched - words are not adequate...I have been encouraged by the stories in the Coming Home newsletters. So often they have arrived with stories that so closely match aspects that I have gone or am going through, proving to be so helpful in normalizing my own experience...your ministry is so important. I want you to be encouraged by the fruit that I have seen in my own life - directly attributed to your early support when I felt most alone in this process. Thank you so much! ■

## SUPPORT THE 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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Address line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Checking account or  Savings account

Bank routing number (9-digit number) \_\_\_\_\_

Account number \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Visa

MasterCard

Discover

AmericanExpress

# Prayer List



## Clergy

■ For John in Illinois, who was received into the Church at Easter 2012, as he seeks employment after finishing a Master's degree this month.

■ For a Baptist minister in Pennsylvania, that his questions about the teachings of the Catholic Faith would lead him to a deeper understanding of God's truth and his Church.

■ For James, a Presbyterian lay minister in Texas, that the Lord would guide him to a good job so that he may enter the Catholic Church.

■ For a member and his family who is concluding his pastoral ministry this month and moving his family to Nebraska to look for employment to support his family.

■ For Dan, a Baptist minister in Pennsylvania, that our Lord Jesus would grant him the grace of see and accept the fullness of the truth in the Catholic Church no matter the consequences.

■ For Mark, a Pentecostal minister in Mississippi, that God would guide him to a good Catholic parish with an excellent RCIA program.

■ For a Lutheran minister in Tennessee, that, as she devours the Catechism of the Catholic Church and other books, a hunger for our Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist would bring her into full-communion with the Chair of St. Peter.

■ For Andrew, an Anabaptist lay minister in Canada, that the Holy Spirit would grant him the grace to overcome his concerns about the social stigma of becoming a Catholic.

■ For Scott, a former Pentecostal lay minister in Louisiana, that as he prays and reads, the Holy Spirit would guide him home to the Catholic Church.

## Laitiy

■ For Doug, that our Lord in the Eucharist draw him back towards the Catholic Faith of the early Fathers and the richness of the Eucharistic banquet.

■ For Andrea, that she comes to experience the fullness of the Faith found within the holy, Catholic Church.

■ For Eric and his wife as they experience the new joy of life as Catholic Christians.

■ For Lisa, that her perseverance in following God's leading bring her to a deeper understanding and peace about Catholic teaching.

■ For a woman who is having a difficult time understanding and accepting the Catholic teaching on moral issues.

■ For Becky, that her search for answers lead her closer to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

■ For Christina as she encounters disapproval from her family in response to her faith journey.

■ For Timothy, that he find convincing answers to his questions about Catholic teaching.

■ For Benjamin, that God continue drawing him towards the Catholic Church and the richness of the deposit of faith.

■ For Alex, that he find good, local support in his faith journey.

■ For Ed, that in this month dedicated to Mary he come to understand her role in the life of faith.

■ For Michelle, as she listens to Jesus' call and considers returning to the Church of her youth.

■ For Kerry, that her desire to follow Christ and join His Church bring her joy in this difficult time and reconciliation in her marriage.

■ For all those who entered the Catholic Church at Easter this year, may God grant them happiness as Catholics and bless them during this time of mystagogy in the Easter season.

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)

**Director of Pastoral Care and 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...

... continued from page 4

to understand the Church's teaching about Mary, I remained unconvinced.

One day, I saw someone set a bouquet of flowers in front of our Lady's statue in church. After Mass, I rushed home to write to Priscilla, the mentor I had been given by the Coming Home Network, that I had witnessed proof that the Church allowed the worship of Mary! She wrote back and gently asked me, "Vicki, would it be worshipping your mother if you put flowers on her grave? Aren't you just saying to her that you remember her and that you love her?" I knew she was right. I brought Mary my first bouquet a few days later, set it in front of her statue, and wept. I finally understood that the statues were not idols, but they were like the pictures I have on the wall. They remind us to emulate them as they point the way to Jesus. The saints were my family.

The straw that broke the camel's back occurred a few weeks later. I was continuing to attend Protestant services with my husband on Saturday nights. The pastor was talking about the fact that, as Christians, we need to love each other. He closed his sermon with these words: "Suppose I am the new pastor at your church. You come to my house for a visit. We're all seated in the living room and you say to me, 'We just love you pastor! Your sermons are wonderful, your children are fantastic, and we even love your dog! But your wife...we really don't care for her too much.' How do you think I would feel about you then? Wouldn't it be difficult for me to treat you with Christian love if I knew that you hated my wife?" At that moment I began to cry because for the first time I could understand how Jesus must feel when we speak ill of or treat His mother with contempt, with rudeness, with indifference. From that day I have embraced our Lady as my own. My love for her continues to grow, and my devotion deepens every day.

### Help to Take the Final Step

A month before my confirmation, I began to get cold feet. I worried that what I was thinking about doing would be nothing but a disappointment to God, whom I loved above all else. Suddenly, all that I had read and studied seemed to

be suspended in mid-air, and I was not sure about what I wanted to do. A great fear came over me, and rather than make God happy, I felt that I was about to make Him angry. I didn't know what to do.

A few evenings later, I was watching "The Journey Home." His guest had been a Brethren minister and he had come into the Church a while before. While listening to his testimony, I learned that he had gone through many of the thoughts and fears that I had. I decided to write him and share how I was feeling and what I was thinking. His response was exactly what I needed to hear to give me the courage to move forward. I have never looked back! I came into the Church at the Easter Vigil of 2008. Finally, I feel that I have come home! My cup overflows!

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen" ■



VICKI HASSESIAN is a busy wife, mother, and grandmother to 6 beautiful grandchildren. She has previously been honored to serve in her parish as lector and extraordinary minister, and for 3 years served on the RCIA team. She is currently serving as sacristan and is a member of the Altar Society. The Lord continues to bless her family as in 2012 their adult son came into the Church on Easter Vigil, and joyfully for the past year and a half her husband has been attending Sunday morning Mass with her!

### BLOG

Please visit [www.chnetwork.org/blog](http://www.chnetwork.org/blog) to comment on and discuss this story!

### RECENT CONVERT?

If you have been received into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil please notify us so we can update our records. Please e-mail Jim at [jim@chnetwork.org](mailto:jim@chnetwork.org) if you are a former Protestant minister or Mary Clare at [maryp@chnetwork.org](mailto:maryp@chnetwork.org) if you are a lay person who has become Catholic. We look forward to hearing from you!

### DEFENDING THE FAITH CONFERENCE



The Coming Home Network International invites our members to join us for a social Friday evening, July 26, at the Defending the Faith conference in Steubenville, OH. For more information on the conference, held July 26-28, 2013, or to register please go to [www.franciscanconferences.com](http://www.franciscanconferences.com) or call 800-437-8368.

## CHNETWORK CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

This year, 2013, marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Coming Home Network International. To commemorate this event, in the coming months we will be featuring material from some of our earliest newsletters in an effort to give our membership a glimpse into our past.



# Praying Without Ceasing

by Marcus Grodi

**FROM THE ARCHIVES** This article was originally published in the March 2004 newsletter.

As a convert to Catholicism after forty years of an active Protestant faith walk, I struggled with my prayers to Mary and other saints, primarily because I had become centrally loyal to praying to Jesus. Other than in worship or public religious ceremonies, I rarely prayed to the Father or the Holy Spirit. My prayers were “to the Father through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.” But in private, it was always Jesus and me. Praying to Mary and other saints seemed disloyal—at least that’s what that nagging accusatory inner voice kept harping.

I learned, that asking Mary and the saints for intercessory help is valid and extremely efficacious, but this didn’t prevent me from becoming at times hopelessly distracted while repeating decades of the Hail Mary.

A simple mental focus helps me grow spiritually in praying the Hail Mary, even when repeated over and over during the recitation of the rosary. I think of the Hail Mary as divided into basically two parts, one of veneration and the other of petition. First, in my mind’s eye—after I’ve positioned myself directly before God in the Lord’s Prayer, the past, present, and future surrendered into His care—I envision Mary standing beside Jesus, affectionately with Him and drawing my attention to Him. Part one has three stanzas, and it also helps to recognize as you’re praying that each phrase concludes by drawing our attention to Jesus: “...Lord ...Jesus ...God.”

## Part One: The veneration of Jesus’ mother and my mother by adoption:

“Hail Mary, full of grace the LORD is with thee;

Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, JESUS;

Holy Mary, Mother of GOD...”

## Part Two: Our humble petition for her intercession with her Son:

“...pray for us sinners [strike breast], now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

## The Glory Be

This ties it all together, leading us to re-confess in adoration our love for God. Following the example of our traditional Latin and Eastern Rite brothers and sisters, I like to

cross myself and bow slightly every time I address the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## The Jesus Prayer

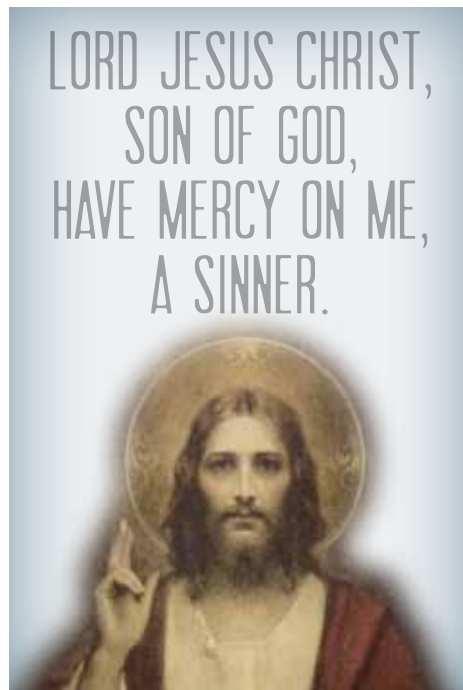
This ancient prayer is the main stay of Eastern Rite Catholics, though it also has a rich heritage in our Western Latin Rite. I am particularly drawn to this prayer because of the scriptural emphasis on the name of Jesus. Consider only a sample of the hundreds of references: “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.” John 14:13,14

“In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, He will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16:23,24

“And His name, by faith in His name, has made this man strong whom you see and know...” Acts 3:16

“...always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.” Ephesians 5:20

... continued on page 7



“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:17

“...yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let Him glorify God.” 1 Peter 4:16

I have found this prayer especially powerful to help pray without ceasing while walking or even milking! It sets a rhythm for both work and prayer.

I guarantee few of you (if any) who still milk a cow twice daily by hand will find this prayer a lifesaver in transforming what is sometimes a drudgery into a peaceful, rhythmic, contemplative stillness with the Lord in the barn that “flies” by effortlessly!

I hope these hints from a novice are at least a little helpful. But most importantly, as brothers and sisters in Christ, let's pray without ceasing for the Church, Her leaders, priests, deacons, religious, bishops, especially our Holy Father, the work of the Coming Home Network, and of course each other. ■



Visit [www.chresources.com](http://www.chresources.com) or call 740-450-1175 for these and other great resources to learn more about the Catholic Faith.

## 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)

## 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.

## UNSOLICITED MAIL

The CHNetwork 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 CHNetwork 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.

## 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 © 2013 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).

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Please go to [www.chnetwork.org/resources](http://www.chnetwork.org/resources) to see current job listings. Or, if you know of an employment opportunity that you would like posted for the CHNetwork membership, please e-mail the job description to [maryp@chnetwork.org](mailto:maryp@chnetwork.org).

## KEEP IN TOUCH

The CHNetwork would like to keep in touch with you via e-mail. Please go to [www.chnetwork.org/update](http://www.chnetwork.org/update) to ensure the CHNetwork has your e-mail address on file. We especially ask non-Catholic clergy and converts to provide us with your e-mail to allow us to keep in contact.

**The Coming Home Network International**

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702-8290

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



2013 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Coming Home Network International. Please keep our work in your prayers for we believe that our apostolate to help Protestant clergy and laity come home to the Catholic Church is more needed than ever.