



September 2010 Newsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



My Canterbury Trail to Rome

by Taylor Marshall

When I was eight years old, my best friend informed me that I would be going to hell since I had not yet been baptized. My best friend had been raised in a devout Missouri Synod Lutheran home, and he knew well enough that he belonged to Christ through baptism. I, on the other hand, had not been raised in any Christian tradition, nor had I been baptized. It seemed, then, that I would not be saved, nor could I be saved. Baptism remained for me something mysterious and unattainable.

My family was not Christian but was generally virtuous. My mother forbade certain shows and movies as inappropriate for little ones. Lying and stealing were condemned and traditional values upheld.

Nevertheless, religion was lacking. My maternal grandfather had abandoned his childhood Lutheran faith when the pastor publicly rebuked him regarding his tithe. My maternal grandmother had left her childhood Catholic faith when she witnessed a priest scold a pregnant friend who turned to the Church for help with a baby conceived out of wedlock. My paternal grandfather had died while my father was a boy, and as a result, my father did not receive any religious education.

As a result, both my parents had been spiritual orphans. As my Lutheran friend observed, then,

I had not been baptized and was heading toward eternal damnation.

Salvation Through Scripture

All this changed when I was twelve years old. I received a baseball autograph from the catcher of the Texas Rangers, Darryl Porter. He had signed his name and written under it: "Rom 10:9."

I was eager to discover his secret message for me. When I found out that this codeword was a Bible verse, I searched for a Bible. After some time, I found Romans chapter 10, verse 9, and my heart filled with joy as I read these words:

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

At last, I thought, I've discovered a way to be saved!

Immediately I said aloud, "Jesus is Lord" (since the Scriptures instructed "with your mouth"). I uttered my first prayer to God, confessing that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. I didn't know what these words meant, but I knew that I wanted to be saved and that I'd discovered a way of salvation without the apparent prerequisite of baptism.

Soon I was eager to learn more about Christianity, so I began to ask questions about "religion." I wanted to know about Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Catholics. I discovered the meaning behind holidays like Christmas and Easter. ...continued on page 2

Journeys Home

FEATURED RESOURCES

Mary of Nazareth

By Dr. Kenneth Howell



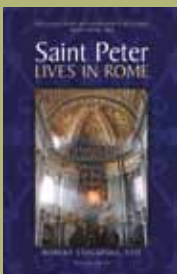
How can Christians who have been separated by centuries of misunderstanding and mistrust find unity in their faith? Dr. Kenneth Howell believes that one of the greatest obstacles to Christian unity has been

Mary, the Mother of Jesus. No woman in history has been so honored in some human hearts while being so ignored by others.

For this reason, no genuine unity can exist among Christians while ignoring the central role played by Jesus' mother in the history of salvation. *Mary of Nazareth* will lead you through the relevant Scriptures about Mary and help you understand how intimately bound to one another Jesus and Mary are.

Saint Peter Lives in Rome: Explaining the Misunderstood Ministry of the Papacy

By Robert Stackpole, S.T.D.



What exactly is the basis for the Catholic Church's belief in the role of the pope? What does the Catholic Church mean when it teaches that the pope is Christ's vicar on earth? And what does this teaching mean for Christians of other faith traditions?

Robert Stackpole addresses these and other thought-provoking questions in *Saint Peter Lives in Rome*, which has been re-released in this expanded and revised edition. Dr. Stackpole presents new evidence of support from the early Christian era for the papacy and even includes a timeline showing important dates in the early story of the Petrine primacy. Readers will be fascinated by this study, which clears away misunderstandings about the papacy and clarifies its foundations in Scripture and early Church history.

...Journeys Home Continued...

Before long our whole family was attending services together at the nearby church, a Methodist congregation. During this time I felt that God was calling me to become a pastor.

One day a well-meaning evangelical Protestant camp counselor told me that I must read the Holy Scriptures every day, because the Antichrist would soon arrive and confiscate every copy of the Holy Bible remaining on earth! In these days of tribulation, he explained, the only Scriptures we would possess would be those we hid in our hearts through memorization. As a sixteen-year-old looking for spiritual direction, I took his admonition seriously. In the next two years, I read the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation three times consecutively.

In time I discovered that there were "liberal" and "conservative" churches. As it was explained to me, "liberal" churches follow reason, and "conservative" churches follow Scripture. I certainly wanted to be one of the faithful Christians who followed Scripture.

I visited a charismatic congregation and was impressed by their so-called "altar call." At the end of every sermon, the pastor would ask all present to close their eyes and bow their heads. He next addressed those who were not Christians or who needed to recommit their lives to Christ. Then he would call them forward.

These penitents often cried while the music roared. I found this all very impressive. But after about three months, I noticed that the same people "got saved" week after week. The routine increasingly appeared formulaic. I desired something deeper.

John Paul II: The Antichrist?

When I later attended Texas A&M University, I majored in philosophy and minored in Greek and Latin. I gave up on the charismatics and looked for something more. There I encountered a "Bible Church" and was delighted to find a congregation that was biblical, conservative, and balanced. I became involved in Campus Crusade for Christ, went on a summer missionary trip to China, and always tried to share my faith with those who did not know Christ.

During this time I became fiercely anti-Catholic and convinced that Catholics were not "saved." Whenever I asked a Catholic whether he knew Jesus Christ as his "personal Lord and Savior," I received only blank stares or stuttered replies. From my evangelical Protestant point of view, Catholics wore crucifixes, but they did not know the crucified Lord personally.

As I learned more about Catholics, I found that they were seemingly obsessed with the "Eucharist" (a new term for me). I soon discovered, to my horror, that they worshiped the Eucharist as if it were Christ Himself! I also learned that they were united in their love and appreciation for "Pope John Paul the Second."

My knowledge of the Catholic faith at that point consisted only of these three facts: 1) Catholics do not know what "faith in Christ means." 2) Catholics worship bread. 3) Catholics love Pope John Paul II.

Like the once-Anglican John Henry Cardinal Newman, I jumped to the conclusion that the Catholic Church was the Beast of the Apocalypse and that the Pope was the Antichrist. My thinking went like this: "If the Pope loves Jesus Christ, then he would certainly teach his people to have faith in Christ — to love Him always and to draw near to Him — not to worship bread nor ignore the Scriptures."

My mind was made up. I agreed with a remark the Puritan writer Richard Baxter once made: "If the pope be not anti-Christ, he hath the ill-luck to appear so much like him." Here, I thought, was a man who fit the description of the Devil's allies in the Apocalypse.

He wore gold and jewels, and he surrounded himself with men donning scarlet and purple (see Rev 17:4). Crowds hailed him. He addressed the United Nations. Presidents and prime ministers visited him and kissed his ring. He held up bread to be worshipped. For me, John Paul II had to be the Antichrist.

Faith and Reason Come Together

Having established that the Catholic Church is "antichristian," I soon discovered a theological system that would further confirm my suspicions about it. Among my evangelical friends were those who favored "Reformed" theology. These men often met together to discuss John Calvin and others in the Reformed theological tradition.

I purchased my own copy of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and began to read. For the first time in my life, I discovered a system of Christianity that claimed to be intellectually coherent *and* faithful to Scripture. I had initially believed that faith stood contrary to reason, just as "conservative Christianity" stood contrary to "liberal Christianity." At last, I learned that faith and reason complement one another — that faith perfects reason. The Reformed version of Protestantism was conservative, anti-Catholic, and intellectually satisfying for me as I sought to find my way through college as a philosophy major.

As I read Calvin and other Reformed theologians, I discovered four things. First, I learned that sacraments are important. Calvin seemed to take the sacraments more seriously than I presumed possible. He made a strong case for infant baptism and weekly communion. Although Calvin's understanding of the sacraments was seriously erroneous in many ways, I discerned through reading him that the sacraments are the divinely appointed means of grace.

Second, I came to see how God ordered the history of human redemption *covenantally*. Salvation history was important, and the New Testament stood in continuity with the Old Testament. Having rejected dispensationalism, I began to read the Old Testament in light of the New.

Third, I discovered the fathers of the Church, especially Augustine, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose. Their teaching opened up many new doors of understanding for me.

Finally, I concluded that Catholic teaching was even worse than I had previously imagined. The Protestant Reformers revealed further "Romanist errors" regarding justification, authority, Eucharistic sacrifice, and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Despite my acquired prejudice against "Romanism," my introduction to the Church fathers eventually led me to read them in their own words. As I read the Fathers, I discovered that they were liturgical, and that the Eucharist held the central place in their worship. I also observed the ancient threefold hierarchy of bishop, priest, and deacon — which in turn led to an appreciation for apostolic succession.

I still held to the traditional Protestant distinctions of "justification by faith alone" and "Scripture alone." But I was becoming progressively sacramental. I enrolled in the nation's foremost Reformed seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. If the faculty of Westminster could not cure ...continued on page 4



MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

September 11, 2010

Parish Events — Saint Alphonsus Liguori
Catholic Church

1870 W. Oak Street, Zionsville, IN 46077

(317) 873-2885 www.chnetwork.org/events.html

September 12, 2010

Parish Events — Saint Mary's Catholic Church

82 East William Street, Delaware, OH 43015

(740) 362-3733 www.chnetwork.org/events.html

September 25, 2010

The Stations of the Cross Catholic Radio,
Fundraising Event

Boston, MA (716) 839-6117

October 9-10, 2010

EWTN Family Celebration

Canton, OH www.ewtn.com 205-271-2989

October 22-24, 2010

How Firm a Foundation

www.hfaf2010.com 740-450-1175

November 5-6, 2010

YB Catholic Conference

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish

8 Atkinson Depot Road, Plaistow, NH 03865
603-382-8324

November 28, 2010

Annunciation Radio

Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church

510 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky, OH 44870
pcbobbler@gmail.com

EMPLOYMENT HELP

Do you know of an employment opening that might be a good fit for a member of *The Coming Home Network*? CHNI maintains an online listing of job openings to assist former Protestant clergy seeking employment. Current job postings are available online at www.chnetwork.org/forum/jobs. If you know about an employment opportunity you want us to include, please email the job description and contact information to maryp@chnetwork.org or mail it to CHNI, Attn: Job Openings, POB 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702.



EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME

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

TELEVISION

Mondays **LIVE** at 8:00 PM ET

Encores: Tuesdays 1:00 & 9:00 AM ET

Thursdays 2:00 PM ET

Saturdays 11:00 PM ET

RADIO

Mondays **LIVE** at 8:00 PM ET

Encore: Saturdays 7:00 AM ET

September 6

Dr. Scott and Kimberly Hahn*

Former Presbyterians

September 13

Open-line with with Bruce Sullivan*

Former Church of Christ pastor

September 20

*The Journey Home in Scandinavia**

September 27

Father Carl Beekman*

Former Methodist

**This schedule is subject to change*



...Journeys Home Continued...

me of my growing appreciation for the sacraments, I would do the “reasonable” thing: I would follow the road to Canterbury and become an Anglican!

Becoming an Anglican Priest

At this time I met my wife, Joy. She had been raised Baptist but had also become a “sacramental Presbyterian.” We were both members of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

On our first date she mentioned the Eucharist. On the second date, she brought up apostolic succession. I was convinced that she was the woman for me!

Here was a beautiful college girl asking the same questions that I had been asking. A year later, we were engaged.

Westminster Seminary was a wonderful place for us, and we grew in our faith. Yet it became increasingly clear to us that Reformed and Presbyterian churches were too “Protestant” for us and that the Catholic Church was, well, too “Catholic.” So we followed the *via media* and became Anglicans.

I felt an initial joy and excitement as I began to pray the Divine Office throughout the day, attend daily Communion, and receive spiritual direction from an elderly Episcopal priest. Our first child, Gabriel, was baptized in the Anglican tradition. Before long we were in seminary again — this time at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Wisconsin.

Nashotah House bears a reputation as the “Anglo-Catholic” seminary of the Episcopal Church. “Anglo-Catholicism” refers to a movement within Anglicanism that leans toward a more Catholic understanding of the Anglican tradition, especially the Anglican priesthood. My Episcopal bishop explained to me that he was satisfied with my theological education, but that he wanted me to become more Catholic liturgically and devotionally. He desired for me to learn how to chant, baptize a baby, celebrate funerals, cense an altar, and hear confessions. I was to become not merely a “minister” but a “priest.”

Now that I no longer maintained that the Catholic Church was entirely evil, I began to experience what some have called “Catholic angst.” In other words, now that I was enthusiastically adopting more and more of the Catholic tradition, I began to feel some anxiety as I felt drawn in some ways to the Catholic Church. As G.K. Chesterton once observed, “The moment men cease to pull against the Catholic Church, they feel a tug towards it.”

My time at Nashotah House exposed me to Catholic piety in a tangible way. The *Angelus* bells were rung morning, noon, and evening. We prayed and chanted the cycle of the Breviary from our hand-carved choir stalls — stalls similar to those found in medieval monasteries.

I wore a black cassock every day to prayers and classes, and I removed it only after the seminary celebrated Vespers toward the end of the day. Priests were available for confessions. The Anglican Eucharist was celebrated every morning — sometimes with the priest facing *ad orientem* as in the old Latin Mass. Eucharistic adoration was encouraged.

On some days I would wander off into the woods in my cassock, read devotional literature, and pray in silence. I often read works by St. Basil the Great and Saint Gregory Nazianzus during these times. Now I look back on those days as essential preparation for what would eventually become a difficult and rocky time.



The Pope Is Dead!

On April 2, 2005, I heard the news that Pope John Paul II had died. As I came into our home, my wife could tell that something was wrong. I recited, almost as if I were speaking in tongues, “*Papa mortuus est*,” which in Latin means, “The Pope is dead.”

She and I began to cry. Although I had once labeled John Paul II as the “Antichrist,” I now revered him as a father. It was as though my father had died, and I had never known him. Everyone else at the seminary as well knew that a great man had died.

Deeply moved by the passing of John Paul II, my wife and I decided that we would attend Holy Mass at the local Catholic parish to show our respects to the Pope and perhaps hear a moving homily in tribute to the man people were already calling “John Paul the Great.” The following Sunday, we arrived at a modern-looking building and entered for Mass.

As it turned out, the Catholic priest said precious little about John Paul II. Instead, he spoke about how St. Peter was not the true author of either 1 Peter or 2 Peter. Moreover, during the consecration prayer he had people come forward and stand around the altar with him. The priest proceeded to recite a Eucharistic prayer that he had composed — a prayer that rhymed. I remember the words at the consecration going something like this:

“On the night before he was *dead*,

Jesus took into his hands *bread*.”

Joy and I were horrified. Not only was this terrible poetry, it seemed sacrilegious and contrary to the life and message of John Paul II — a message of perfect obedience to Christ. We loved the Catholic John Paul II. We were not ready for this local Catholic parish with its liberal priests and hokey rhymes.

A Rabbi Points Me to Rome

A few weeks later, I was ordained as an Anglican deacon. Soon afterward I was ordained to the Anglican priesthood. It was a time of great joy and excitement.

I was assigned to be the curate at Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church in downtown Fort Worth, Texas. I felt perfectly fulfilled as I began to preach, celebrate the sacraments, and exercise pastoral care. I was especially excited one day to make my first hospital visit as a clergyman.

The pastor of the parish gave me the name of a woman who was about to receive an operation at the local hospital and asked me to visit her. Little did I know that by the end of that day, I would have had a conversation with a rabbi that would set my entire life going in a new direction.

I drove to the hospital, and with a prayer book under my arm, I obtained my “clergy parking” tags, washed my hands, and went upstairs to the waiting room. It was packed with people waiting for their loved ones to return from surgery. I went to the desk, smiled at the receptionist, and said, “My name is Father Taylor Marshall and I’m here to see Joanna Smith before she goes into surgery.”

The receptionist’s fingernails stopped clicking on the keyboard. “Great. You can just go on back there and see her.”

I turned around and saw the two swinging medical doors.

“Through there?”

“Yes, Father. Just go on in. Mrs. Smith is already with the anesthesiologist.”

...continued on page 6

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CHNI

Attention: Ann Moore

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

Please contact Ann at 740-450-1175 or ann@chnetwork.org if you have any questions or concerns.

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2010 DEEP IN HISTORY REGISTRATION

How Firm A Foundation: Authority Through the Scriptures

Oct 22-24, 2010

Easton Hilton - Columbus, Ohio

To register, please complete this form and mail to:

CHNI Conference Registration

PO Box 8290

Zanesville OH 43702

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or by calling **740-450-1175**

...Journeys Home Continued...

It was clear that she believed that I had done this before, but it was my first time. As I came to the doors, I pushed the button and they swung open. I walked forward and they closed behind me. I entered into a large room with eight beds. A nurse smiled at me.

"Pardon me. Can I help you?"

"Yes, I'm here to see Joanna Smith."

"She's over there in bed #1. The anesthesiologist has already been here. She's probably already asleep."

"That's okay," I said. "I'd still like to pray for her."

The nurse had no problems with this proposal and left me alone in the room.

I walked over to bed #1 and saw a woman already fast asleep in her hospital gown. I opened my copy of the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer*, where a gold ribbon marked the section entitled "The Order for the Visitation of the Sick." I then gently laid my right hand on the arm of the sleeping woman.

Her eyes flung open with an expression of fright. "Who are you?" she said. The anesthesia had not yet begun its work.

I was just as startled. I pulled my hand away from her arm. "Excuse me. My name is Father Taylor. I'm here to pray with you before you go into surgery."

She took one look at my clerical collar and cried out, "But I'm Jewish!"

"Oh, I'm sorry. I must have the wrong bed. I was looking for someone named Joanna Smith."

"That's me. I am Joanna Smith." She obviously had no idea why a Christian minister was bending over her bed with a prayer book in his hand.

I paused and thought to myself: *Is this some sort of joke that older priests play on new priests? The pastor sends me off on my first hospital call with all sorts of sound advice, but neglects to tell me that the lady is Jewish!* I collected myself.

"Well, would you like me to pray for you before you go into surgery?" I asked.

"Oh, I would love that. Thank you so much."

I placed my right hand once again on her arm and prayed that she might be kept safe during her procedure. I left her with some words of comfort as her eyes became heavy and she fell asleep.

When I returned into the waiting room, I saw a bearded rabbi. So the priest (that's me) walked up to the rabbi and said, "Are you here to see Joanna Smith?"

The rabbi answered, "Yes. As a matter of fact I am."

"Go through those doors and follow the hallway to the left. Bed #1. She's about to go under for surgery."

Looking into the perplexed eyes of the rabbi, I could see what he was thinking: *Why does this priest know all this about Joanna?* He thanked me and disappeared behind the automated doors with a push of a button.

Just after that, I recognized someone in the waiting room. It was Mr. Smith from St. Andrew's. Now I understood why I had been sent to pray with a Jewish woman: She was married to an Episcopalian.

Up until now, I hadn't known that his wife was Jewish. He was nervous about her surgery, and we talked for a while until the rabbi returned to the waiting room. Mr. Smith introduced us to one another, and I recall a brief conversation with the rabbi about liturgy and the importance of chant.

Then the rabbi asked Mr. Smith a very unusual question. "What is the Hebrew name of Joanna's mother?"



The husband thought about it for a moment. “Gee, I don’t know. Why do you ask?”

“Well, I was going to ask Joanna the name of her mother, but she was already asleep by the time I found her.”

“Why would you need to know her mother’s name?” her husband asked.

The rabbi explained, “We Jews believe that if someone is suffering and we invoke his or her mother’s name in prayer, then God will be more merciful in granting your intercession for that person.”

My first reaction was to dismiss the statement as superstition. However, as I let the rabbi’s answer sink into my soul, I realized the profundity of his belief. This rabbi believed that God was especially merciful when a mother was invoked for the sake of her child.

As an Anglican priest trained in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, I had a budding devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and I immediately realized the implications. I believed that Mary was important, because she was truly the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and therefore the Mother of God. God had chosen this human woman to be the pure virginal vessel of His Incarnate Son.

If Jews believed that invoking the mother of someone caused God to be more gracious in answering an intercession, then wouldn’t the name of Mary be worth invoking? Didn’t her Son, Jesus Christ, become the Suffering Servant in order to redeem us?

Even more, Mary wasn’t just any ordinary mother. She was the only person ever created who could speak to God the Father and refer to “our Son.”

That’s when it hit me. Catholic devotion to Mary is not only based on sound Christological arguments. Marian piety is not only Patristic. The Church reveres and invokes the Blessed Mother because it inherited the Jewish custom of showing profound reverence for the spiritual role of the mother of a family.

Here was a surprising confirmation that Catholic customs are rooted in a Jewish understanding of God and His People. I began to study Catholic traditions in light of the Old Testament and found that the hermeneutic of continuity (recently expressed in Pope Benedict XVI’s book *Jesus of Nazareth*) unveils an authentic Christianity that is distinctly Catholic.

My Canterbury Trail to Rome

Joy and I decided to fly to Rome before we did anything drastic. While in Rome, we had the opportunity to attend Holy Mass with Pope Benedict XVI. I stood there in Saint Peter’s Basilica in my Anglican cassock — knowing that I could not go forward and receive the Holy Eucharist. Everything in my soul desired to be in communion with Pope Benedict XVI. In that moment, I knew that I was in schism and out of communion with Christ’s divinely instituted Church.

The next day I met Monsignor James Conley, who immediately introduced me to William Cardinal Baum. While the Cardinal sat with me alone in his apartment overlooking St. Peter’s Square, he began to question me about a number of doctrines: sacraments, Mary, the Eucharist, the priesthood, the Church, the liturgy, and more. At the end of this inquisition, he closed his eyes and let out a deep sigh.

“My son,” he said to me, “you are a Catholic. It is time for you to come home.”

He encouraged me and prayed with me. He even gave me a rosary that had once belonged to Pope Benedict XVI. We prayed together in his ...continued on page 8

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE



On EWTN radio with Marcus Grodi & Guests

Wednesdays **LIVE** at 2:00 PM ET

Encores: Wednesdays @ 9:00 PM ET

Sundays @ 7:00 AM ET

For more information and a link to watch the program LIVE online go to www.deepinscripture.com

Deep in Scripture Guests for September:

September 1

Patty Bonds*

September 22

Dr. Robert Stackpole*

September 8

Gary Michuta*

September 29

Dr. David Anders*

September 15

Paul and Carol Quist*

**This schedule is subject to change*

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UNSOLICITED MAIL

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

THE COMING HOME NETWORK INT'L

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www.chnetwork.org

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...Journeys Home Continued...

private chapel before the Holy Eucharist — the Lord Jesus Christ. My path was now clear. I would become a Catholic no matter how much it would hurt, no matter how much it would cost.

When we returned home from Rome, I immediately went to see Bishop Kevin Vann of the Catholic diocese of Fort Worth. He received me warmly and became my true father in Christ. Three months later, I renounced the priestly ministry that I had received in the Episcopal Church in preparation for entering the Catholic Church.

The Episcopal Church possessed many ancient Christian practices. But I came to see that the Anglican schism of the sixteenth century, and the Protestant Reformation in general, did not reflect the original trajectory of the New Testament. Primarily, I saw that the Church is the Body of Christ and the temple of the people of God.

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel were not free to create a “new Israel” or form a new denomination of “Reformed Israelites.” No matter how corrupt the priests and kings of Judah might have become, the covenant of God remained in effect. I saw that the Reformation was generally a rejection of a united, visible Church — a notion taken for granted in the Book of Acts and especially in the writings of St. Paul.

Bishop Vann received our family into full communion with the Catholic Church on May 23, 2006. It was of course difficult for me to lay down the clerical collar. Nevertheless, I became a Catholic because I realized that unlike the Catholic Church, the Episcopal denomination could not trace its doctrine, liturgy, customs, and morality back to origins with a first-century rabbi named Jesus who roamed the Holy Land with a band of Jewish disciples.

As a Catholic Christian, I can now say with the Apostle Paul (who was once Rabbi Saul) that I “share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all” (Rom 4:16).

When I recall how the Holy Spirit worked in my heart long ago, when I uttered a meager prayer based on a baseball autograph, I cannot help but wonder at the Divine Mercy of God. He is calling us all to Himself, and He uses a variety of means.

I still recite Romans 10:9 and say with my mouth, “Jesus is Lord.” However, now I am able to confess this mystery while I stand upon “the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). ■



Taylor Marshall was an Episcopal priest in Fort Worth, Texas, before being received with his wife into the Catholic Church on May 23, 2006. He is currently a Ph.D. student in Philosophy at the University of Dallas and is the author of The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of Catholic Christianity (St. John Press, 2009) and The Catholic Perspective on Paul (Fall 2010). Visit his blog, Canterbury Tales, at www.taylormarshall.com. Taylor has been a guest on both The Journey Home and Deep in Scripture. Copies of the Journey Home program featuring Taylor can be purchased from EWTN's religious catalog department at 800-854-6316 item #235. To hear the archived program on Deep in Scripture please go to www.deepinscripture.com.

Prayer List



Clergy

■ For Gwynne, an Episcopal minister in the Midwest, that she will return home to the Catholic Church and receive the full measure of God's love and grace.

■ For Stephen, a Presbyterian minister in Florida, that the Holy Spirit will guide his research and lead him on the path to full communion with the one, holy Church.

■ For Thomas, an Episcopal minister in New Jersey, that God will answer his prayer for discernment and that the Holy Spirit will make it clearer for him to decide.

■ For John, a Missouri Synod Lutheran lay minister, that the Lord Jesus will help him find his place in the Catholic Church and that God will open his wife's heart to embrace the fullness of His truth.

■ For an Episcopal seminarian in South Carolina, that God will comfort him in his fears about the future as he discovers that he is being called to be a Catholic.

■ For David, an Episcopal minister in Maryland, that God will guide and speed the process and soon bring the day when he and the people of his parish may celebrate the one holy Eucharist in full communion with the successor of St. Peter.

■ For Joe, a Pentecostal minister in Texas, that the Holy Spirit of God will guide his and his wife's studies and help them to formulate the questions they need to discover the riches of the depths of Catholic truth.

■ For Stephen, a former Episcopal minister in Texas, that as he and his family enter the Church in a new city and state, their Catholic brothers and sisters will support them and make them feel truly at home.

■ For a Church of God minister in North Carolina, that Jesus will enable him to satisfy his hunger for the Catholic faith when he receives Him in the Holy Eucharist.

■ For Joseph, a Presbyterian minister in South Carolina, that he will discover that God's true vocation for him and his family is to be Catholic Christians.

■ For an Assemblies of God youth minister in Florida, that his time of reading and prayer will bear the fruit of full communion with the ancient and original Church founded by our Lord Jesus Christ.

■ For a Southern Baptist minister from Alabama, that he will find full employment as he begins the process of entering the Catholic Church.

Lay

■ For Michelle, Michael, and Megan to be receptive to God's will in every area of their lives and that God will continue guiding their decisions and protecting them from every evil influence.

■ For Ken, that Jesus will lovingly draw him to the richness that is contained in the Catholic faith.

■ For John and his family, that they will experience God's abundant grace and guidance in their lives.

■ For the repose of Reverend Patrick's soul; may the angels bring his soul into paradise.

■ For Dan, that all obstacles to his case for an annulment be speedily rectified.

■ For Lisa; may the saints and angels pray her back into the arms of the Body of Christ.

■ For the repose of Simone's soul; may she rest in eternal peace.

■ For the needs of Joseph and his family.

■ For Angela's financial and legal difficulties.

■ For Ronald, that he will experience improved health and healing from pain.

■ For Chris, that he will experience healing and recovery from his injury.

■ For Olive, that Jesus will surround her with His love and peace during this time of transition.

■ For Brian, that God's angels will protect him as he is deployed to Afghanistan.

■ For Jay to experience and come to a deep understanding of God's love for him.

■ For Macey, that she will become a daughter of God through baptism.

■ For Rolf, that God will remove all difficulties barring his reception into the Catholic Church and help his family understand his desire to become a Catholic Christian.

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 CHN Prayer List, P.O. Box 8290, Zanesville, OH 43702. Or e-mail prayer requests to prayers@chnetwork.org.

We use only first names to preserve privacy.

Are You Saved?

By Paul Thigpen, Ph.D.

The Coming Home Network International has been blessed to have two very gifted scholars associated with our work. Both have been members of the Board for several years, but more recently they are serving in staff positions. Dr. Kenneth Howell, a former Presbyterian minister and seminary professor, has served for several years as our part-time Theological Advisor. Dr. Paul Thigpen, a former Evangelical Pastor and most recently Professor of Sacred Theology at Southern Catholic College, is now our fulltime Director of *CHResources*. Paul is essentially the Senior Editor for all our publications, including this monthly *CHNewsletter*.

Because of their expertise in theology and Church history, I've invited them to submit articles for upcoming *CHNewsletters*. In this issue, Dr. Thigpen addresses a central issue raised by this month's conversion story: Are Catholics "saved"?

— Sincerely in Christ, Marcus Grodi



Frank Cadogan Cowper—*St. Agnes in Prison Receiving from Heaven the 'Shining White Garment' (1905)*

"Are you saved?"

That's a question often heard from well-meaning Christians who want to help others know Jesus Christ. As Catholics whose faith is centered in Him, we can appreciate their good intentions and admire their willingness to talk about God.

Even so, many Catholics may have trouble understanding what their question is really all about. What exactly do people mean when they talk of being already "saved"?

Christians with this query often view salvation as a past event that took place when they made a confession of faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Many of them also believe that this act of faith now guarantees them a place in heaven, no matter what they may do for the rest of their lives. They will never have to face the punishment of hell for their sins.

The teaching of the Catholic Church helps us understand that this is actually a mistaken notion of salvation. Jesus Christ came to give us much more than a kind of eternal fire insurance policy. Salvation in the fullest sense is an ongoing process that won't be complete until after we die. And in the meantime, it's still possible to turn away again from God.

When someone asks us, then, whether we're "saved," perhaps the best short answer is this: "Well, I'm doing what the Apostle Paul tells us to do in the Bible: I'm 'working out' my salvation day by day" (see Phil 2:12).

If we want to follow up on that statement, we can assure the inquirer that we do in fact have faith in Jesus Christ, that we recognize Him as our Savior and Lord, and that our goal is to be counted one day among the saints in heaven.

But why end the discussion there? If you want to take it a step farther, try this approach. Say, "Now I have a question for you: We both know that Jesus saves us *from* sin. But what are we saved *for*?"

This query shifts the focus of the conversation. Exploring the answer together can help the other person grasp more fully and accurately what it actually means to be saved.

What Is Salvation?

According to the Catholic understanding of salvation, rooted in Scripture, we aren't just saved *from* sin. We're saved *for* eternal life with God.

Why did God create us in the first place? He made us in certain ways like Himself, able to think and choose, so we could be sons and daughters who live in friendship with Him. God created us for Himself, for nothing less than to know, love, serve and enjoy Him — now and forever.

Through sin, however, we've rebelled against God and rejected His friendship. As a result, His likeness in us has been marred, and we've separated ourselves from Him. Since He's the Source of all that's good, such separation can lead only to misery in both this life and the next.

Because God loved us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from such a terrible fate. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus offer us, through the forgiveness of our sins, escape from eternal punishment.

But that's not all. He also reconciles us to God, opening the door to a full restoration of our friendship with Him.

In this way, Jesus begins the process of a complete renewal of God's likeness in us, a healing of the brokenness that comes from sin. So salvation isn't just a way to avoid hell, nor is it just a past event.

On the contrary: Salvation in its fullness is God's new creation. To save us, He remakes us in His likeness — a lifelong process requiring our cooperation — so that we can once again think and love as He thinks and loves. This process finds its completion only in heaven, where eternal life is enjoyed in perfect harmony with Him.

Those who are joined there with God forever in the deepest possible communion of love will achieve their greatest destiny. They will fulfill their deepest longing. They will become what they were made to be.

Shipwreck Survivors

Consider this analogy.

We're like the survivors of a shipwreck in a storm out in mid-ocean. We've been rescued from drowning and welcomed onboard the ship we call the Church. That ship is now taking us to a safe harbor — our home in heaven with God.

But we're not home yet.

You could say, then, that we've been "saved" in the sense of being rescued and taken aboard a safe vessel. But we can't really speak of being "saved" in the full sense until we reach our destination. We must humbly admit that we haven't yet arrived at final perfection.

Meanwhile, we also must recognize the sobering possibility that — God forbid — we could choose someday to jump overboard again.

Salvation isn't guaranteed just because of something we've done in the past. We continue to have a free will, which is part of God's likeness in us. So we still have the ability to turn away from God again.

It's a chilling possibility. But it shouldn't make us perpetually worried that we'll be damned despite our best efforts to grow in grace. We can be confident that God desires our salvation, and He's faithful to help us. If we're tempted to forsake Him, He'll grant us the power to resist that temptation.

Even so, the choice is still ours.

In fact, we make choices every day that draw us closer to God or lead us farther away from Him. That's why simply believing in Jesus isn't enough. Friendship with God, like friendship of any kind, is more than just getting acquainted. It involves making a series of choices to love, over the long term, so that a committed relationship grows.

Faith is useless, then, without good works. God must have our active cooperation, because both our mind and our will — the full likeness of God — must be renewed if we're to be saved in the end.

If you talk over these points with Christian friends who ask whether you're saved, you could open up for them a whole new way of thinking. Be sure to show them where this understanding of salvation is found in Scripture, using the biblical texts noted in the sidebar on this page.

What if the conversation ends before they are convinced? Even then, the time you've spent thinking about what salvation really means can deepen your faith and bring you closer to God. ■

What the Bible Says About Salvation

Christians who ask others, "Are you saved?" are usually adept at quoting the Bible to support their views. Here are some biblical texts you might point out to them that will challenge their thinking and show how Catholic teaching on this subject is rooted in Scripture. (Italicized emphasis has been added.)

■ Salvation is an ongoing process.

"In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials . . . *as you attain the goal of [your] faith, the salvation of your souls*" (1 Pt 1:6, 9 NAB).

"*Work out your own salvation* with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12).

"Like newborn infants, long for pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may *grow up to salvation*" (1 Pt 2:2).

■ Salvation is not guaranteed by faith alone.

"What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? *Can his faith save him?* . . . So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. . . . You see that a man is justified by works and *not by faith alone*" (Jas 2:14, 17, 24).

"Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but *he who does the will of my Father in heaven*" (Mt 7:21).

■ Salvation is not guaranteed through a single act of faith made in the past.

"Now I am reminding you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you indeed received and in which you also stand. Through it you are also *being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain*" (1 Cor 15:1–2 NAB).

"For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, *and then have fallen away*, to bring them to repentance again, since they are recrucifying the Son of God for themselves and holding him up to contempt" (Heb 6:4–6 NAB).

"Most men's love will grow cold. But *he who endures to the end will be saved*" (Mt 24:12–13).

■ Salvation is not complete in this life.

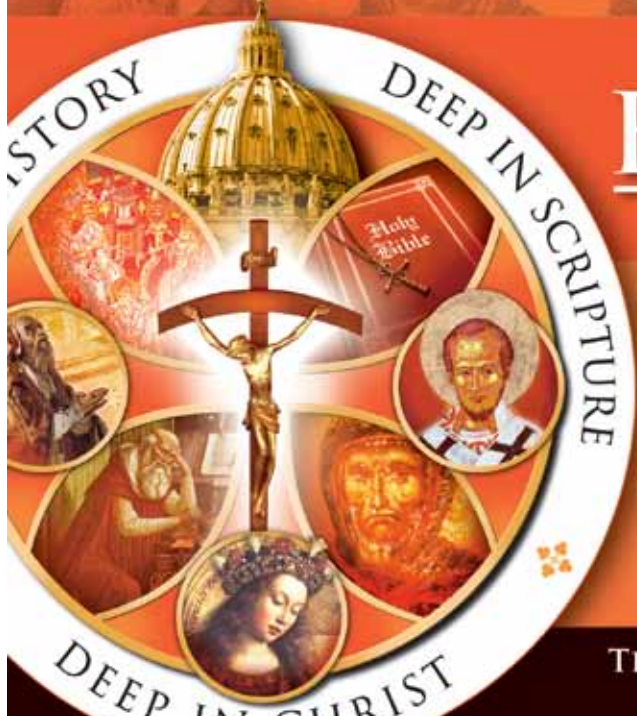
"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, *kept in heaven for you who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1 Pt 1:3, 6).

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