



September 2011 Newsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



Into Peter's Ark

By Thomas Storck

I was raised in a family that considered churchgoing very important. But we were not theologically orthodox, even by the standards of most Protestant denominations. My father was the cause of this unusual combination, for despite being a skeptic in religion, he always valued the social aspects of church attendance.

So in the small and medium-sized Ohio towns where we lived, my family attended services of various Protestant congregations, and at one point I went to Sunday school at a Methodist church practically next door to us. For a short time my father even conducted his own Sunday services in our home. Then later, when I was about six or seven, we started to attend a Unitarian congregation in a nearby city, whose teachings were more to my father's liking.

When I was about ten, however, we left the Unitarians, I think because of quarreling among the members and the presence of eccentrics among them, such as flying-saucer devotees. We began to attend the Episcopal church instead. My father was attracted by the dignity of the service and the music, by the comparatively intellectual character of the clergy and members, and by the undogmatic emphasis of the Episcopal tradition.

Into Atheism and Theism When I was young, say from about age four to eleven, I

had a vague notion of God. On one occasion, I believe, I equated him with a large piece of farm machinery that was parked near our house. As I approached adolescence I began to wonder whether there was a God or not, but had not the slightest notion of how to find out.

By around the age of thirteen I had concluded that there definitely was not a God, and I considered myself an atheist. During this period I underwent the Episcopal confirmation ceremony. I had had some hesitation about being confirmed, but my father urged me to do so, because of his belief that it was important to belong to some church, even if one did not believe what it taught.

I remember in the tenth grade, during the moment of silent prayer at the beginning of the school day, consciously not praying, indeed attempting to do homework. But the homeroom teacher told me I had at least to sit there and do nothing if I did not want to pray. (This, of course, was in the public schools!)

Then during the next year everything changed. As far as I can remember, this is the sequence of events.

I read something about the Anglican writer C. S. Lewis in some Episcopal publication that my parents received. Though I remember nothing about the article in question, ... continued on page 2

Journeys Home

FEATURED RESOURCES

In each issue of this newsletter we feature resources chosen specifically to aid readers in evangelization. We encourage our members to take advantage of this month's **Evangelization Outreach Package.**

Deep in Scripture Radio Program Special!



Marcus Grodi is joined by Dr. Richard Smith, a former Anglican priest, in this insightful *Deep in Scripture* program that discusses the role of the Church and the papacy. *CD*

Four Witnesses

By Rod Bennett



What was the early Church like? Four ancient Christian writers—four witnesses to early Christianity—have left us an extensive body of documentation on this vital subject, and this book brings their fascinating testimony to life for modern believers. With all the power and drama of a gripping novel, this book is a journey of discovery of ancient and beautiful truths through the lives of four great saints of the early Church—Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus of Lyons. (*Ignatius, 2002*)

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...Journeys Home Continued...

I remember thinking that since Lewis was both a Christian and an intellectual, perhaps I should investigate whether Christianity might actually be true.

Also about this time, my brother gave me a gift certificate for a local bookstore as a Christmas or birthday present. I used it to buy two books, one of them Blessed John Henry Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua*. I don't think I had ever heard of Newman before, but I was attracted by the Latin title, since I was studying Latin in school.

Reading this book naturally put into my mind not only the idea of conversion, but the entire question of our relationship with God and of seeking the truth about his revelation. But the first decisive moment came in a different and unexpected way.

I have implied that, though a skeptic, my father had a great interest in religion. His library of several thousand books included a fairly large religion section. In fact, I think it was the one section for which he bought or acquired more new books than any other.

One day he brought home a book of some meditations by a Protestant minister. I took a look at it, as I usually did with whatever new books he brought home. One of the first meditations in the book was about the existence of God.

It included some simplified versions of the traditional arguments for God's existence. But in my state of knowledge at the time, that was enough for me. I can still see myself at the bottom of the stairway, in front of a glass bookcase, reading this book, with the realization suddenly coming to me that God does indeed exist. It was obviously a stupendous event in my life, even if I did not fully realize its importance then.

Becoming a Christian As significant as this event was, it had not yet made me a Christian, only a theist. Now I was certainly not yet a Christian but simply a theist. I was working part-time after school, and I began shortly after to have discussions with a Protestant woman at work. I told her I believed in God, but not in Jesus Christ as his Son. She told me to pray to God, that He would show me the truth of the matter, and I began to do so.

One stumbling block was that I did not understand the idea of the Incarnation — namely, how God could be both Creator of the world and yet present in it in the flesh. I got the idea from C. S. Lewis, whom I had then begun reading, of a playwright writing himself a part in his own drama. Although obviously this analogy is not a proof of anything, at the time it sufficed for me, and I accepted that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and began to consider myself a Christian. This was around January of 1968.

When I was a baby I had been "baptized" in the Unitarian Church in Brooklyn. But it was impossible to discover what form of words had been used or what the minister's intentions might have been. I realized that I had a duty to be baptized, but I was afraid to ask or do anything about it.

After a few months, however, without even praying (I was too ignorant!), God changed my heart and gave me the courage to approach our Episcopal minister about baptism. As a result I was conditionally baptized in July of 1968 in the presence of my family.

About this time my father acquired another new book on religion, entitled *Liturgy and Worship*, published by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, an organization in the Church of England. This book was a high-church survey of the Anglican liturgy and necessarily included a considerable amount of theology. I read it and, thanks be to God, this work gave a direction to my religious life that ultimately brought me to the true Faith.

From reading this book, I got a sense of the Church of Jesus Christ as a visible, corporate and institutional Body, with a liturgy and sacraments and a faith handed down from our Lord and the Apostles. I never had the common Protestant Bible-only approach to Christianity. As a result, I was put in a position where I could begin to assimilate many Catholic truths.

Besides *Liturgy and Worship*, my father also had several Catholic books in his library, including the *Baltimore Catechism*, Ronald Knox's *The Belief of Catholics*, G. K. Chesterton's *Everlasting Man*, and others. During this time I read Knox, much of the catechism and a bit of Chesterton. These books taught me much Catholic doctrine and helped me think clearly and avoid some of the common errors in religious thought in our culture, such as the notion that religious truth is personal and subjective or that it exists entirely to give us psychological comfort in this world.

Additionally, these books enabled me to avoid misconceptions about what the Catholic Church really taught. I continued to read C. S. Lewis, from whom I learned much, not so much by way of actual doctrine as of an attitude toward religious truth that has always stood me in good stead: Lewis never compromised on the fundamental supernatural outlook essential to any form of Christianity, nor did he allow his reader to forget the ever-present issue of salvation or damnation.

There is no mushy Christianity with Lewis. In addition, he provided me with a sufficient intellectual underpinning for adherence to Christian faith so that I never had any serious intellectual difficulties in college or graduate school.

From the time of my baptism as an Episcopalian until 1976, I lived as an Episcopal layman, attended a college (nominally) affiliated with the Episcopal denomination, was married in the college chapel, and worked as a parish religious education director. I read a considerable amount of high-church Episcopal theology, including the ten-volume series of dogmatic theology written by Dr. Francis J. Hall (1857–1932), sometimes called the Anglican *Summa Theologiae*. From this latter I learned considerable Catholic theology, though in one important matter, as I will relate below, I was seriously misled.

Although for part of this time, especially when I was an undergraduate, I was involved in several pan-Protestant prayer groups with no particular denominational affiliation, I was careful to keep my theological thinking more or less high-church. I never received communion from a minister I did not consider to be in the Apostolic Succession.

Considering the Catholic Church I continued in this situation until I was forced to consider carefully the claims of the Catholic Church because of actions by the Episcopal denomination. Specifically, I was disturbed when the ordination of women as “priests” was authorized ... *continued on page 4*



DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

On EWTN radio with Marcus Grodi & Guests

Airs: Wednesdays @ 2:00 PM ET

Encores: Thursdays @ 1:00 AM ET

Sundays @ 7:00 AM ET

Be sure to check out *Deep in Scripture's* website, deepinscripture.com, where you can:

- **Watch** the program live or anytime afterwards.
- **Join** in a live discussion during each show.
- **Find** more information about the guests and the Scriptures being discussed.
- **Access** archives from previous *Deep in Scripture* shows.

Deep in Scripture Guests

September 7

Dr. Benjamin Alexander*

September 14

Dr. Ray Guarendi*

September 21

TBD*

September 28

Brandon Vogt*



*This schedule is subject to change.



EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME

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

TELEVISION

Mondays 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 at 8:00 PM ET

Encore: Saturdays 7:00 AM ET

September 5

Dr. Benjamin Alexander*
Former Episcopalian

September 12

Dr. Ray Guarendi*
*Revert, former non-denominational
Evangelical*

September 19

Dr. Tim Lau*
The Journey Home in Canada

September 26

Brandon Vogt*
Former Evangelical

**This schedule is subject to change.*



This year *The Journey Home* again goes international to bring you stories of men and women who have come home to the Catholic Church. Be sure to tune in the third Monday of each month to view all-new episodes of *The Journey Home* taped in Canada.

...Journeys Home Continued...

by the General Convention, the governing body of the American Episcopal Church, in the fall of 1976.

Before discussing this issue, however, I should say something about what I thought of the Catholic Church during my ten or so years as an Anglican. Obviously, from the examples of Newman, Knox, and Chesterton, the idea of conversion from Canterbury to Rome was quite familiar to me during all those years. In fact, for many years the Catholic Church had been very attractive to me.

I was a high-church Episcopalian who adhered to the so-called “Branch Theory” of the Church. This is the notion that the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church is made up of three more-or-less coequal branches: the Anglican, the Eastern Orthodox, and the Roman, with at most a primacy of honor given to the Bishop of Rome. Though I considered myself already Catholic, then, many aspects of the Church of Rome and of Catholic life appealed to me.

In a sense, Rome was a temptation to me, a temptation specifically to accede to her without a sufficient intellectual conviction, because of various cultural or populist reasons. I was attracted, for example, to the Catholic Church because she contains such a wonderful mass of humanity, the poor of so many nations, colors and cultures, not just the upper-middle classes of English-speaking countries.

In 1975 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I encountered the externals of Catholic culture for the first time. I immediately fell in love with the Spanish culture, with its buildings, its art, its people, its life. Twentieth-century New Mexico can hardly be called a Catholic culture in its fullness, but enough of the externals of the Faith remain so that it helped to build up in my mind this image of the Catholic Church.

One of the most memorable things I saw was an exhibit at the Museum of New Mexico of colonial religious art from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. Here I saw religious art as a living and popular tradition, for the exhibit included a few paintings done well into this century, pictures depicting answered prayers. One painting, for example, might show someone lying on a sickbed with others praying and perhaps a saint above receiving the petitions. The next panel might show the invalid up and about again.

These were paintings done by or on behalf of families living in New Mexico in the 20th century to commemorate some actual answered prayer. Here was Catholic culture alive and well and part of the lives of ordinary believers.

But something else in Santa Fe, which at the time created perhaps an even bigger impression on me, involved less authentic Catholic art. I mean the rosaries and plastic statues of the Infant Jesus of Prague for sale at the Woolworths on the plaza. Here again was a sign of the matter-of-factness Catholics felt about the Faith.

Though doubtless for Woolworths it was simply a means of making a buck, for one brought up in a Protestant culture it was a revelation. I had never seen anything like it and it delighted me. Here was further evidence — to me, refreshing — that among Catholics religion was not something to be put



in a little box, something separate from life, something so special that it was almost unreal.

No, religion was a part of life. Why? Because God, the Virgin, the angels and the saints, were all as real, and as close to us, as the other things Woolworths sold, such as soap, clothes hangers, or underwear. In *The Belief of Catholics* Ronald Knox speaks of this popular side to Catholic piety:

There is among Catholic saints a familiarity which seems to raise this world to the level of eternity. There is among Catholic sinners a familiarity which seems (to non-Catholic eyes) to degrade eternity to the level of this world. The point is most clearly demonstrated in connection with that attitude toward religious things which we call "reverence." For good or for evil, the ordinary, easygoing Catholic pays far less tribute to this sentiment than a Protestant, or even an agnostic brought up in the atmosphere of Protestantism. No traveler fails to be struck, and perhaps shocked, by the "irreverence" or "naturalness" (call it what you will) that marks the behavior of Catholic children wandering about in church. (From chapter XIII, "The Air Catholics Breathe," online at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CHRIST/BELIEF.txt>)

I found other aspects of Catholic life attractive as well. For example, while a senior in high school, the reading of Richard Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* began a lifelong passion for the social teaching of the Catholic Church. All these things were attracting me to Rome during my years as an Anglican, although I tried to keep the emotional pull of Rome separate from my intellectual considerations about conversion.

Approaching Conversion I don't remember how many times I seriously considered conversion before I actually did convert. But I know there were at least two times, one in the summer of 1972 and the second during the subsequent winter. The first time I talked at some length with a seminarian friend of mine (now a priest of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio) and the second time with a priest resident near my undergraduate college.

This latter priest turned out to be a modernist. His remark that, now that they had successfully demythologized Scripture, they would begin to demythologize dogma, rather put me off. I didn't speak any further to him.

About this same time, during the first semester of my senior year (fall 1972), I wrote a paper for an English history class on the question of the continuity of the Church of England with the pre-Reformation Catholic Church. I remember being shocked when I discovered that those who had assisted Henry VIII in setting up the Church of England regarded ultra-Protestants such as Calvin as their friends and co-religionists. So much for the Branch Theory in the 1540s!

However, my Episcopal professor suggested that instead of looking at the intentions of the Anglican founders, I should look for how much of Catholicism (as he and I understood it) managed to survive the Protestant Revolt, despite what Cranmer and his colleagues may have desired. This ... continued on page 6

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MARCUS GRODI'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

October 1, 2011

Catholics Come Home...How to Keep Your Family Catholic!

Saint Gregory the Great Parish
Hamilton Square, NJ

www.stgregorythegreatchurch.org

NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE



Download and print full-color copies of all previous CHNetwork newsletters from our online archive.

Visit www.chnetwork.org/newsletter-archive.

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 *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.

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...Journeys Home Continued...

satisfied me and helped keep me in the Episcopal denomination for another few years.

The crisis, as I said, came after the General Convention's authorizing of the ordination of women in the fall of 1976. I knew that this was entirely against Christian tradition, and for a short time I even edited and published a little periodical, called *The Newsletter on Women's Ordination*, in opposition to the idea. The Sunday after the Episcopal Church voted to allow it, my wife and I attended Sunday services as usual.

This was almost the last time that I attended an Episcopal church as a worshipper. The following Easter we journeyed to Columbus, Ohio, to attend an Episcopal parish that had rejected General Convention's action, and a few other times in the next year we went to Episcopal churches for special reasons. But my days as an Episcopalian were essentially over.

Many Episcopalians were opposed to what the denomination had done, and almost immediately began organizing breakaway groups. Had there been one convenient to us, we would have joined. We would have also considered attending an Eastern Orthodox parish.

Practically speaking, though, the only parishes of my great Three-Branched Church convenient to us were Roman Catholic, and since I believed that it was our duty to attend the Eucharistic sacrifice, my wife and I began attending Catholic Mass. This didn't make me a Catholic, but it did allow us to learn about natural family planning (the lack of knowledge of which had in part prevented me from more seriously considering Rome in the past). It also caused me to think that perhaps I should seriously investigate the Catholic faith, since (practically speaking) the only.

The Question Is Settled I made the decision to undertake this investigation the following fall when we were living in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. We began instruction at a local Catholic student center, but it was staffed by modernist priests who were later expelled by the bishop from the diocese. However, because of my earlier reading — including some of what I learned from the Episcopalian writer Francis Hall — I was not corrupted by the instruction. In fact, I argued with my instructor, particularly over the teaching in *Humanae Vitae*, which I had come to accept.

I didn't attempt to find a better Catholic parish because I didn't know any existed. I had read so much in the secular press about dissent in the Church that I thought it wasn't worth the trouble to look for one. It wasn't until several months after we became Catholic that we discovered an excellent parish, St. Agnes, not far away from where we lived. And, in fact, a few months after we became Catholics, we left the student center to attend St. Agnes.

Our instruction began in the fall of 1977, but by December I was still completely undecided. Consequently, the priest recommended that we take our Christmas vacation to more seriously consider the matter.

Though I knew that the key to the entire question was the attitude of the early Church toward the Papacy, I actually had read little of the Fathers, except for Augustine's *Confessions*. So, among other things, I did some reading in the Fathers and other early writers, from a book of excerpts of their writings. I was shocked to find the following passages:

For this church [i.e. Rome] has a position of leadership and authority; and therefore every church, that is, the faithful everywhere, must needs agree with the church at Rome; for in her the apostolic tradition has ever been preserved by the faithful from all parts of the world. (St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, iii, I)

The other Apostles were, to be sure, what Peter was, but primacy is given to Peter, and the Church and the throne are shown to be one. (St. Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*)

That Supreme Pontiff, that Bishop of Bishops, issues an edict (Tertullian, *De Pudicitia*, 1)

(I should note that even though this last quote, written when Tertullian had become a schismatic Montanist, was derisive of papal authority, it does witness that in his time — writing in the early third century a.d. — such titles and authority were already claimed for the Bishop of Rome.)

The above quotes surprised me because none of them had been cited by the Anglican writer that I mentioned, Francis Hall. He had been indefatigable in gathering quotations from the Fathers and others on behalf of doctrines and practices that high-church Anglicans accepts, such as the seven sacraments or the Church as a visible corporate body. But on the question of the Bishop of Rome, he had been strangely selective, and therefore misleading. He had quoted only a few odd statements that supported his point of view on Rome.

In any case, reading these quotes was enough for me. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I accepted this fundamental principle of the Catholic faith and thus the entire corpus of Catholic belief.

I still did a little reading after that, but the question was essentially settled. That is, since I now recognized that the true Christian Church was gathered in communion with the successor of Peter, I did not need to debate separately such articles of faith as the infallibility of the pope or Our Lady's Immaculate Conception and Assumption. It was enough to know that those Christians who were grouped in the true Church had authoritatively defined these dogmas.

All this occurred in January of 1978. A few weeks later, on February 12, my wife and I were received into the Holy Catholic Church at Christ the King Chapel.

Looking Back In looking back from my standpoint as a Catholic, I now see that the “Anglo-Catholic” branch theory of the Church is profoundly contrary not just to the Fathers, but to the New Testament itself.

The kind of unity that St. Paul continually appeals to and, in fact, practices, as he travels among the various small congregations of Catholics in Asia Minor and Greece, has nothing in common with the “unity” supposed in the branch theory. Moreover, as others have pointed out, of the three supposed branches of the Church, both the Roman and the Eastern emphatically reject this theory, while among Anglicans, most are indifferent to it, with only a small group of “Anglo-Catholics” accepting it.

... continued on page 8

2011 DEEP IN HISTORY CONFERENCE

Stand Firm On Tradition: *The Role of Sacred Tradition in the Life of the Church*

Oct 21-23, 2011 — Columbus, Ohio

The same Holy Spirit who inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write, inspired the apostles and their successors to preach from generation to generation. Thus, the Word of God is handed down through what the Church calls Sacred Tradition.

What exactly does Sacred Tradition teach us? Why does Tradition hold such authority? And who distinguishes between traditions and Tradition?

At this year's Deep in History Conference, we'll dig into the Old Testament roots of Tradition. We'll discover what the New Testament and Church Fathers teach us about it. We'll see how the legacy of Tradition unfolded through major historical events such as the Reformation and Vatican II. And we'll look at the part it plays in our own lives today.

The Coming Home Network International in partnership with Franciscan University of Steubenville invites you to join us for a weekend that will deepen your knowledge of your Catholic faith, as we get to the heart of Tradition in the Catholic Church.

Speakers

Marcus Grodi (*The Coming Home Network International*), Dr. Scott Hahn (*Franciscan University of Steubenville*), Dr. Theresa Farnan (*USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth*), Mark Shea (*Author and speaker*), Bishop Frederick F. Campbell (*Diocese of Columbus*), Roy Schoeman (*Jewish convert, author, Salvation is From the Jews*), Dr. Paul Thigpen (*Catholic apologist and author*), Dr. Kenneth Howell (*Senior Fellow, St. John Institute of Catholic Thought*), Father Ray Rayland (*Convert from the Episcopal Church*), and Monsignor Frank Lane (*Spiritual Director, Mount St. Mary's Seminary of the West*).

In addition to inspiring talks our weekend will include daily Mass, adoration, confession, and fellowship, and a panel discussion that will be taped for EWTN's *The Journey Home*.

To register:

Call: 800-437-8368

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

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...Journeys Home Continued...

One other point I will mention. Sometimes when people, either Catholics or non-Catholics, ask me what I was before becoming a Catholic, they say something like, "Oh, an Episcopalian; well, that's not very different." And in fact there is something to this. As an Anglican I did believe most of Catholic doctrine.

But there is one thing that is quite different: All Protestants, including "Anglo-Catholics," basically make up their own religion. That is, those Protestants who profess to believe only the Bible can decide for themselves just what the Bible means or how to interpret a difficult passage. And if they choose to follow a particular pastor or evangelist on some disputed point, still, they themselves choose which pastor or evangelist to follow. The decision is in their own hands.

This is true also for high-church Anglicans. Although as an Episcopalian I professed to follow the Fathers of the undivided Church and the traditions common to Rome, Canterbury, and Constantinople, still I decided exactly which dogmas or moral points were universal and thus binding on all Christians. I decided when the testimony of the Fathers was sufficiently unanimous.

Even if I followed an author I thought was sound, it was my decision which author to trust. Despite the fact that I believed I was following an objective authority outside of myself, I essentially made up my own religion. The ultimate source was still within me.

This was no longer true once I became a Catholic and accepted the authority of the Church's Magisterium — and it was the biggest difference I noticed after becoming a Catholic. My reaction to finding the locus of authority outside myself was like my reaction to having cold water thrown over me on a hot day: a bit of a shock, but very refreshing.

I suppose that some people might regard this last statement as evidence that Catholics are glad to abdicate thinking for themselves and like to be told what to believe and do. Any orthodox Catholic knows that this is not true. The refreshment I felt at no longer having to make up my own religion was the refreshment that comes from beginning to learn a bit of humility, as well as from leaving off a job that was never meant to be mine in the first place.

Of course, this does not mean that I denigrate reason. In fact, among Catholics, reason is likely to be esteemed more than among any other group in the world. But true and genuine authority is in no way contrary to reason, but rather its friend and ally. ■



THOMAS STORCK *has written widely on Catholic social teaching, Catholic culture, and related philosophical and theological topics.*

Thomas and his wife, Inez, are members of Holy Family parish in Columbus, Ohio. They have four children and six grandchildren.

FROM PROTESTANT MINISTER TO CATHOLIC PRIEST

What kind of formation does the Church require to make the transition?



By Marcus Grodi

For nearly 18 years, we in the CHNetwork have been dedicated to standing beside Protestant ministers on their journeys home to the Catholic Church. Our goal has been to do all we can to help them come home, and especially to help them find avenues for using their ministerial gifts, training, and experience. This has certainly not always been easy, and frankly we have not always been successful. To those of you whom we may have failed, we deeply apologize — and we still want to do all we can!

Recently I received a copy of the following important document issued by Cardinal William Levada, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). It describes the “Minimum Profile of Formation for Former Protestant Ministers Who Desire to Be Ordained Catholic Priests.”

I’m passing this along, especially for those of you who are clergy on the journey or converts contemplating the possibility of ordination as Catholic priests, but also for the rest of us who are praying for these highly gifted converts whom God is bringing home to the Church. If there are any questions or particular needs concerning this process, please do not hesitate to call us.

Minimum Profile of Formation for Former Protestant Ministers Who Desire to Be Ordained Catholic Priests

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in its task of assisting the bishops of the Church to address the desire of former Protestant ministers who wish to be ordained Catholic priests, has prepared this minimum profile of formation for such candidates to the priesthood.

It is understood that former ministers of Protestant ecclesial communities require particular attention in their formation for Catholic priesthood, particularly as regards those areas of Catholic theology which would be lacking in their previous studies. The bishop, in his care for these candidates, must apply this minimum profile in the light of both the circumstances of the local church

and the needs of the candidate (cf. John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, ch. 5). The study resources listed, while fundamental, are not exhaustive.

Human Formation

Although many former Protestant ministers present themselves as candidates for the Catholic priesthood later in life and in some cases as married persons, the need for human formation is ever present. As the candidate is called in priestly ordination to be the living image of Jesus Christ, due attention to human formation will only assist the candidate in reflecting in his person the humanity of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God.

[Editor’s note: “Human formation” in this sense refers to the development of virtues and personal skills that contribute to human maturity in its moral, psychological, and social dimensions. Just a few examples of such qualities would include humility, prudence, self-control, reliability, accountability, and communication skills.]

Intellectual Formation

PHILOSOPHY The study of philosophy is a crucial stage of intellectual formation for it leads the candidate to a deeper understanding of the human person, founds the dynamic relationship between faith and reason, and provides a vital context for understanding the mysteries of salvation which are the focus of theological studies. When assessing the previous academic preparation of former Protestant ministers, the bishop must evaluate his philosophical preparation to ensure that the candidate receives adequate formation in those areas which may be lacking in that previous preparation. (Resource: John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*)

SACRED SCRIPTURE In addition to a proper focus on Old and New Testament theology and exegesis, former Protestant ministers should receive specific formation in Catholic hermeneutics. Such a formation would not only include an emphasis on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, but also on the ecclesial ... *continued on page 10*

context of the interpretation of sacred Scripture. (Resources: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 80–87, 101–141; Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church”)

DOGMATIC THEOLOGY The intellectual formation of priests is based above all on the study of sacred doctrine. In the case of former Protestant ministers, the bishop must ensure that the study of theology gives particular attention to Christology, ecclesiology, and Mariology. Additionally, the Petrine ministry, apostolic succession, and the theology of the priesthood should be areas of special emphasis. Some references to the Fathers of the Church may be helpful for the candidates. (Resources: *Catechism*, nos. 142–1065; Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus*)

LITURGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY The sacramental ministry of priests continues Christ’s saving work in the Church. It must be kept in mind that Catholic sacramental ministry is altogether different [from] the ministry for which most former Protestant ministers would have been prepared. The bishop should ensure that special attention is given to the theology of the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Church’s life as well as to the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick. (Resources: *Catechism*, nos. 1066–1690; Pope John Paul II, *Misericordia Dei*)

MORAL THEOLOGY As former Protestant ministers will have had some previous preparation in the area of moral theology, this formation should focus on the areas that are distinctive to Catholic moral teaching. An emphasis on the fundamentals of Catholic moral theology and the Church’s understanding of human sexuality as well as the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching will be invaluable in confronting the complex moral issues of the day. (Resources: *Catechism*, nos. 1691–2557; Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae*; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae*)

CANON LAW For former Protestant ministers who seek to become Catholic priests the study of canon law is an area of particular concern in that it is largely without precedent in Protestant ecclesial communities. Special attention should be given to the canons concerning the Petrine ministry and which regulate marriage and the

other sacraments. (Resources: Code of Canon Law, *Sacra Disciplinae Leges*).

Spiritual Formation

Formation in the spiritual life is intimately bound with the intellectual preparation for priesthood. The bishop should ensure that former Protestant ministers receive a formation in Catholic spirituality and devotional practices, with particular attention to Eucharistic devotion and Marian devotion. (Resources: *Catechism*, nos. 2558–2865; Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*; Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*)

Pastoral Formation

The preparation of all candidates for the priesthood has as its object to make them true shepherds after the example of Christ. Pastoral formation allows for the practical application of the mysteries studied in theology. In the case of former Protestant ministers, particular attention should be given to their preparation for the celebration of the sacraments and the direction of souls. (Resources: Congregation for the Clergy, *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*)



Duration

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith requires that former Protestant ministers should undergo a period of no less than three years of formation in Catholic theology. The purpose of this period of time is to give candidates the opportunity for a certain maturation in the Catholic faith that, through reading, coursework, and discussion, candidates will internalize the tradition of the church.

Assessment

In order to assure that a candidate has the requisite *scientia debita* [required knowledge] for ordination to the priesthood, the bishop should provide for an assessment of the candidate in each area of theological study, with particular reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. As an evaluative tool, an assessment or examination of the candidate should ensure that a satisfactory level of academic competency has been attained. ■

Source: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Former Protestant Ministers Who Wish to Become Catholic Priests,” *Origins* 37, no. 3 (2007): 46–47.



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Prayer List

Clergy

■ For Greg, a former Lutheran minister in Connecticut, that he would find employment that would enable him to return to the Catholic Church of his youth.

■ For James, a Southern Baptist minister in Tennessee, that our Lord Jesus would open a path to enable him to fulfill his heart's desire and enter into full communion with the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.

■ For the repose of the soul of Jeff, a United Methodist minister for twenty years and a Catholic Christian the final ten years of his life.

■ For Johanna, a Lutheran minister in Sweden, who has had a lifelong longing to come home to the Catholic Church, that the Holy Spirit would clear away all earthly obstacles that stand in her way.

■ For David, a Wesleyan lay minister in Michigan, that his continued studies and prayer would bear much fruit and guide him into full communion with the See of St. Peter.

■ For Jun, a former Baptist lay minister in the Philippines, that God would grant him a way to use his gifts to strengthen his brothers and sisters through the truths of the Catholic faith.

Laity

■ For Pamela, who was recently received into the Catholic Church and has not encountered welcoming support in her new faith community, that Jesus and Mary would give her the courage to persevere in her new life and give her Catholic friendships.

■ For Kay, that God would grant her the grace to continue in her faith journey despite the pressures she encounters while trying to follow Him.

■ For Mandy, that she and her family would continue experiencing countless blessings in their new life as members of the holy Catholic Church.

■ For Kathleen, as she continues her search for truth.

■ For Helen, who is seeking God's will for her life and learning more about Catholic teachings.

■ For Cathey, that she would find fellowship and support in her faith journey.

■ For a man who was recently received into the Catholic Church, and for his wife, who is still discerning where God is leading her.

■ For James' children and grandchildren to come to know the Lord Jesus.



■ For Martha, as she encounters confusion and lack of orthodox teaching in her local Catholic community.

■ For Ada, as she strives to share the truth of the Catholic Church through her writings.

■ For Keith, who is struggling with addictions, that Jesus would heal him and give him strength to overcome all his trials.

■ For a woman who has no religious background, that she would turn to Christ and become a fervent Catholic in love with Christ in the Eucharist.

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.

We use only first names to preserve privacy.

The Coming Home Network International

PO Box 8290

Zanesville, OH 43702

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

BE INVOLVED!

The Coming Home Network International encourages members to assist in our mission this month to help non-Catholic clergy and laity come home to the Catholic Church in the following ways:

1

Get the September 2011 "Evangelization Outreach Package," specifically designed to provide our members with excellent material to deepen their understanding of the Faith and in turn pass it along to non-Catholic family and friends. For more information, see page 2 of this newsletter.

2

Make reservations or invite someone to attend the upcoming *Deep in History* conference. Go to

www.franciscanconferences.com



3

Share a conversion story from chnetwork.org/converts with a friend.

