

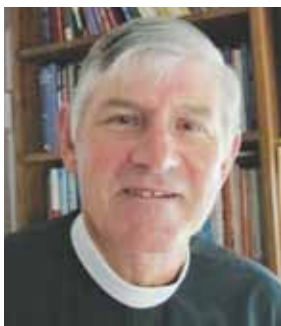


September 2013 Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

"Towards Unity" By Fr. Jurgen Liias.....	1
EWTN's <i>The Journey Home</i> Schedule.....	2
"Illogical Logic" By Marcus Grodi.....	3
Get Involved!.....	8

THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL



Towards Unity

By Fr. Jurgen Liias

In a small Lutheran church located in the Black Forest Region of post-war Germany, I received the Sacrament of Baptism as an infant in 1948. My parents, displaced due to the Second World War, applied for emigration and, in the winter of 1951-52, with my younger brother and me, arrived in the United States and were settled into a displaced person camp in Massachusetts. Months later we were taken into the rectory of St. John's Episcopal Church in Charlestown, MA. An old bachelor priest, the Rev. Wolcott Cutler, had filled his large, five-story home with refugees. Though most stayed briefly, we lived in that rectory for the next 10 years. We became caretakers of the building, and my father the sexton at the church.

Mr. Cutler (as he was called — a deeply committed low churchman, he would have been offended to be called Father Cutler) was an extraordinary saintly pastor, who, though from a rich Boston Brahmin family, had devoted his entire ordained ministry to inner city work among the poor. He was seen as the pastor of all of Charlestown, though 90% of the community was Irish Catholic. He was a zealous activist for peace and justice. Mr. Cutler had a profound influence on me as a child; my mother used to tell me that even as a small boy I said that I wanted to be like Mr. Cutler when I grew up. The call to ordained ministry was present as far back as I can consciously remember. Childhood games often included playing church, myself as the priest distributing communion.

Eventually, Mr. Cutler retired and a new priest with a wife and children arrived and we were required to leave the rectory. My parents, through intense and diligent work, were able to fulfill the American dream and purchase their own home nearby. The new priest, Fr. Kelly, was a high churchman; and in Sunday School he instructed us that we were not Protestants but Catholics — not Roman Catholics, but Anglo-catholics. This was the best news I had ever heard. After being verbally and physically bullied in our largely-Catholic neighborhood for being "Protestants and Nazis," it turned out I was Catholic, too!

St. John's Episcopal Church was the center of my life. Besides being a refuge where we as immigrants were accepted and loved, it also was the formative spiritual community of my childhood and adolescence. We had a boys' choir and a church Boy Scout Troop. In high school we had a very active Young People's Fellowship, because of which I had my first preaching opportunity on Youth Sunday. Seminarians from the Episcopal Theological School provided youth leadership, and one in particular, Fr. James Hagen, solidified my vocation. As a senior in high school I met with my bishop, the Rt. Rev. Anson Stokes. "Jurgen you'll make a wonderful priest; now when you go to college, don't major in religion. You'll get plenty of that in Seminary." He shook my hand and I was a postulant!

"Journeys Home" is continued on page 2 ➤

Journeys Home

...Journeys Home Continued...

College and Seminary

In 1965, I went off to college. I had been recruited by Harvard College but accepted a full scholarship to Amherst when my mother informed me Harvard meant living at home! My secondary education had been at the Boston Latin School. Six years of Latin and three years of Greek in high school and an interest in archaeology and psychology directed me to choose Classics as my major. The greatest providence of college was meeting Gloria Gehshan, a lady from Smith College, on the very first day of freshman year. She would become my wife. We have been together most of our 64 years of life.

This was the turbulent 60s and the days of student revolution. I joined the Students for a Democratic Society, the premier New Left organization and was very engaged in organizing teach-ins, demonstrations, and marches against the Vietnam War. This activism for peace and justice was for me an expression of my faith and Christians like Merton, the Berrigans, Dorothy Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. were my heroes. The underside of this era was also part of my life: sexual promiscuity, drugs, growing cynicism. By the time I arrived at seminary in 1969, the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, I was burned out and I found myself in a deep depression.

Spirituality had not been a very significant part of my Christian life, but my depression created a quest for inner resources. Dabbling in Eastern religions and New Age philosophies, Jungian psychology became my new “religion.” In my last year of seminary I interned at an Episcopal church, under a priest who himself was an avid disciple of Jung and who had an interest in Spiritual Healing. Having been well indoctrinated with a biblical hermeneutic of Bultmanian demythologization, in which all the healing miracles of Jesus had been discarded, I was not sure what these folk at the parish thought they were doing, but I

dutifully participated. Though a senior in seminary, I had never participated in a Bible study or prayer group before — much less a healing service — but these Wednesday morning gatherings became utterly transformational. For the first time I began to “experience” the reality of God and the power of prayer.

My Conversion as a Young Priest

As I began my curacy as a deacon in 1972, I continued my explorations in the Holy Spirit. The charismatic movement was emerging in the Episcopal Church. *9 o'clock in the Morning* by Bennett, *Gathered for Power* by Pulkingham, and *Miracle in Darien* by Fullam were narrations of priests and parishes totally transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit. “Spiritual Renewal” was the new buzzword in the church; Cursillo, Faith Alive, Marriage Encounter, the Charismatic Movement — all were efforts to bring new life to the church in the face of what was beginning to become evident: decline and decrease in the Episcopal Church. I was drawn to these movements, not just for the church’s sake, but for the sake of my own very thirsty soul.

In this quest, the Lord provided a spiritual mentor, an older woman named Elizabeth Price. She asked me: “Would you like to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?” This was an essential and pervasive theme of the charismatic renewal: that the apostolic experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was available today and was the rightful promised inheritance of every believer. My response was rather passive: “Well, why not?” She prayed over me on a number of occasions but nothing happened. Then in June 1974, in the living room of the home of some Baptist evangelists who were friends of Elizabeth, while being prayed over with the laying on of hands, the heavens opened and the Spirit of God gave me a supernatural vision of the Blood of Christ.

“Journeys Home” is continued on page 5 ➡

EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME on television and radio, hosted by Marcus Grodi, president of CHNetwork



TELEVISION

Mondays at 8 PM ET — Encores: Tuesdays 1 AM ET, Fridays 1 PM ET

The Best of the Journey Home: Monday-Thursday 1 PM ET

RADIO

Mondays at 8:00 PM ET — Encores: Saturdays 7 AM ET, Sundays 1 AM ET

The Best of the Journey Home: Monday-Thursday 12 AM ET

September 2

Daniel Burke*

Convert from Judaism

September 9

Paulette Adams*

*Former Christian Church
Disciples of Christ minister*

September 16

*The Journey Home
International*

September 23

Leighton Drake*

Former Agnostic

September 30

Fr. David Poecking*

Former Presbyterian

*Schedule is subject to change.



Illogical Logic

By Marcus Grodi

There is a television commercial, selling a certain satellite service, that uses a tongue-in-cheek form of illogical chain logic. The writers presume we know not to take their logic seriously, but they also presume that the humor of it will leave us with a positive view of their product.

The logic goes something like this:

1. (Not having their product) might leave one feeling empty.
2. Feeling empty makes one want to feel full.
3. Wanting to feel full makes one eat too much.
4. Eating too much makes one burst out of one's clothing.
5. Bursting out of one's clothing leaves one naked.
6. Standing naked in the street leads to getting arrested.
7. Getting arrested for standing naked puts one in jail.
8. Being put in jail for standing naked gives one a strange reputation with the other cellmates.
9. If you don't want to have a strange reputation with the other cellmates, then you need to buy their product.

It's easy to follow the humor of this illogical logic, but it's not always humorous when this kind of logic is used to interpret Scripture. For example, consider the following flow of logic in an article posted online entitled "A Defense of *Sola Scriptura*" (<http://www.equip.org/articles/a-defense-of-sola-scriptura>).

The first question the authors address is, "Does the Bible Teach *Sola Scriptura*?" and here is their logic:

1. Two points must be made concerning whether the Bible teaches *sola Scriptura*. First, as Catholic scholars themselves recognize, it is not necessary that the Bible explicitly and formally teach *sola Scriptura* in order for this doctrine to be true.
2. Many Christian teachings are a necessary logical deduction of what is clearly taught in the Bible (e.g., the Trinity).
3. Likewise, it is possible that *sola Scriptura* could be a necessary logical deduction from what is taught in Scripture.
4. Second, the Bible does teach implicitly and logically, if not formally and explicitly, that the Bible alone is the only infallible basis for faith and practice. This it does in a number of ways.
5. One, the fact that Scripture, without tradition, is said to be "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*) and thus by it believers are "competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17, emphasis added) supports the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*.
6. This flies in the face of the Catholic claim that the Bible is formally insufficient without the aid of tradition.
7. St. Paul declares that the God-breathed writings are sufficient.
8. And contrary to some Catholic apologists, limiting this to only the Old Testament will not help the Catholic cause for two reasons: first, the New Testament is also called "Scripture" (2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Tim 5:18; cf. Lk 10:7); second, it is inconsistent to argue that God-breathed writings in the Old Testament are sufficient, but the inspired writings of the New Testament are not.

Though their logic sounds like it works, it's more like the illogical logic in that commercial. (I can't point fingers, because this is the exact logic I used when I was a Presbyterian minister to defend *sola Scriptura*.) Allow me to respond point by point:

1 "Two points must be made concerning whether the Bible teaches *sola Scriptura*. First, as Catholic scholars themselves recognize, it is not necessary that the Bible explicitly and formally teach *sola Scriptura* in order for this doctrine to be true."

Since no "Catholic scholar" of repute has ever taught *sola Scriptura* or said exactly what the authors claim, then they give an assumption that totally sidesteps the very question they are trying to prove. What does *sola Scriptura* mean except that the Bible *alone* is the one trustworthy foundation for what is true? If this is true, why shouldn't it necessarily be found in Scripture? Their argument begins by claiming that some un-named Catholic scholars say that *sola Scriptura* doesn't have to be in Scripture. How does this prove anything? As in the logic of the commercial, the entire flow of the argument stalls where it starts.

2 "Many Christian teachings are a necessary logical deduction of what is clearly taught in the Bible (e.g., the Trinity)."

The authors believe they are providing evidence for their previous step, but it only shows their dependence upon the very assumption they are trying to prove. Belief in the Trinity is not merely a "necessary logical deduction of what is clearly taught in the Bible"—this, rather, is the presumption of *sola Scriptura* folk who have no other foundation upon which to base their belief in the Trinity. The foundation for Christian belief in the Trinity has more to do with the authority of Sacred Tradition, as the bishops of the Church gathered at the Council of Nicea to discern what was the true Tradition as passed down from the churches of the Apostles. The Scriptural witness was a portion of that Sacred Tradition, but the very heretics the Council Fathers were fighting against were the *sola Scriptura* representatives of their day, who were using the logic of self-interpretation from the proof-texting of Scripture to propose a wide variety of heretical understandings of the relationship between God the Father, Jesus our Lord, and the Holy Spirit—precisely because the Trinity is not so "clearly taught in the Bible." To understand the conclusion of the Trinity as a "necessary logical deduction" betrays a presupposition of *sola Scriptura* as the grid for interpreting the early Church, which is a form of circular logic, rather than examining the actual facts of doctrinal history.

3 "Likewise, it is possible that *sola Scriptura* could be a necessary logical deduction from what is taught in Scripture."

Since the logic of step 2 was flawed, then the "likewise" of step 3 is unfounded. Interestingly, notice that the authors sheepishly did not claim that *sola Scriptura* *is* a "necessary logical deduction from what is taught in Scripture." Rather, they said "it is possible that [it] could be." Why so hesitant to make their case?

4 "Second, the Bible does teach implicitly and logically, if not formally and explicitly, that the Bible alone is the only infallible basis for faith and practice. This it does in a number of ways."

"Illogical Logic" is continued on page 4 ➡

The authors now press forward, presuming they have sufficiently demonstrated that the belief that “the Bible alone is the only infallible basis for faith and practice” does not have to be “explicitly and formally taught” within this “only infallible” source of truth. Without suggesting an alternate authority for this belief, they move to prove that the Bible does in fact teach this! I learned, from having lived for nearly 40 years in the *sola Scriptural* camp, how dangerously easy it is to conclude almost anything “*implicitly and logically, if not formally and explicitly*” from Scripture. One can put together almost any three verses and make the Bible say whatever you want it to say. Why are there more than 30,000 separate Christian traditions/denominations in America, all teaching different theologies that they each believe are taught “*implicitly and logically, if not formally and explicitly*” in Scripture? Because the Bible alone, apart from Sacred Tradition and the teaching authority of the Church, was never intended to be the one “pillar and bulwark of the truth.” Rather, Scripture says that the Church is that (see 1 Tim 3:15).

5 “One, the fact that Scripture, without tradition, is said to be “God-breathed” (*theopneustos*) and thus by it believers are “competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17, emphasis added) supports the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*.”

In essence, the authors are assuming as true the very thing the authors are trying to prove. Let me begin by actually quoting the passage: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (NKJV). Note first that St. Paul does not say that ONLY Scripture is “God-breathed,” let alone does he clarify what he means by “God-breathed.” Nor does he say that the term “Scripture” that he uses is equivalent to what we mean 2000 years later by the term “Bible,” a collection of books written over a thousand years by several dozen different authors, and which were not canonically defined until late in the 4th century by a group of Catholic bishops gathered in council. What Paul meant by “Scripture” he explains in the preceding verse, the “sacred writings” which Timothy had “been acquainted ... from childhood ... which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). This could only have been what we have come to call the Old Testament, since most, if not all, of the New Testament books had not been written when Timothy was a child, especially given that Paul was in the very process of writing one of them.

6 “This flies in the face of the Catholic claim that the Bible is formally insufficient without the aid of tradition.”

To say that this argument consequently “flies in the face of the Catholic claim ...” is quite a leap, because it is, essentially, an illogical conclusion from a previously insufficiently proven conclusion based upon a series of unproven assumptions. Once again, it rings of the illogical logic of the commercial.

7 “St. Paul declares that the God-breathed writings are sufficient.”

Here the authors impose their own conclusions upon St. Paul. If St. Paul was implying that the books Timothy had known

since childhood (i.e., the OT) were sufficient (i.e., OT only) “for salvation,” then why was the NT eventually added, or why was the Ethiopian Eunuch unable to understand the truth of the Gospel from reading the OT *alone* (Acts 8:27f)? My argument here is hardly sufficient to address all their assumptions, except to say that their proof-texting of inadequately defined terms does not necessarily “support the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*,” as they claim in Step 5—unless one first presumes this doctrine and then interprets the Scriptures based upon this presumption.

8 “And contrary to some Catholic apologists, limiting this to only the Old Testament will not help the Catholic cause for two reasons: first, the New Testament is also called “Scripture” (2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Tim 5:18; cf. Lk 10:7); second, it is inconsistent to argue that God-breathed writings in the Old Testament are sufficient, but the inspired writings of the New Testament are not.”

First, the author’s bold assertion that “the New Testament is also called ‘Scripture,’” backed by their two proof-texts, is about as clearly proven as the last statement in the commercial’s logic: “If you don’t want to have a strange reputation with the other cellmates, then you need to buy their product.” The majority of faithful Protestant and Catholic theologians do not make the reverse extrapolation that what St. Peter says in 2 Pet 3:15-16 and what St. Paul said in 1 Tim 5:18 proves, therefore, that the entire New Testament is called “Scripture.” It may be that St. Peter was viewing St. Paul’s “letters” as somehow equivalent to “the rest of the Scriptures,” but this involves reading a lot into this nebulous statement. What did St. Peter mean by “the rest of the Scriptures”? Since most Protestant and Catholic scholars agree that the early Church writers read and quoted from the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament, and since this included those “Apocryphal books” which Catholics include in the Bible, but Protestants don’t, does this imply that the authors also include these “Apocryphal books” in “the rest of Scripture”?

Second, *why* is it “inconsistent to argue that God-breathed writings in the OT are sufficient, but the inspired writings of the NT are not”? That is the point: Who has the authority to determine and declare that the NT writings are inspired, or that the entire Bible collection of books is inspired? I believe they are inspired based upon the authority of the Church who, guided by the Holy Spirit, defined the canon of Scripture to include the NT books. *The canon of Scripture was not a part of the books themselves, but essentially a part of Sacred Tradition.* The only reason the statement might seem “inconsistent” is because there is no necessary direct connect between the inspiration of the OT and/or the NT. We believe they are “inspired” because of the authority of the Church.

I trust that the authors of this article are good, faithful, Bible-believing, Christian brothers, and for that I rejoice and pray for their continual conversion in union with Christ. Unfortunately, however, their conclusions are based too much upon circular logic, beginning with the very assumption they are trying to prove. Why? Because, like the commercial, dare I say it: they want the people who trust in their authority to buy their product. Such is the danger of illogical logic. ■

Twenty Years and Still Reaching Out!

By Marcus Grodi



For 20-years, the Coming Home Network International has been focusing on helping “non-Catholic clergy come home to the Church.” By God’s grace and your generous partnership, we have been able to do not only this, but also help many, many non-Catholic laity as well as life-long Catholics learn more about the Catholic Faith. In these 20 years, nearly 50,000 people, many of them Catholics, have contacted us and become partners in our work, and to our entire membership we have mailed nearly two million newsletters and distributed over 300,000 resources!

From the beginning, we have understood that, in our outreach to non-Catholic Christians, we are not here to “push, pull, or prod” anyone into the Church, or to speak down to anyone, but always from beside. As Catholics, we believe that authentic ongoing conversion normally involves becoming, through Baptism, and remaining, by grace through faith in love, a faithful member of Christ’s Mystical Body, the Church, and we believe that this is essentially our mission: to speak this truth about Jesus and His Church in love.

From the beginning, our stated goal has been “to assist the Catholic Church in fulfilling its mission of evangelization and its call for Christian unity, as proclaimed by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, “That They May Be One” (*Ut Unum Sint*).” In a sense, the CHNetwork exists to take Blessed JPII and this document very seriously: to flesh it out and put it into practice.

In this encyclical, Blessed John Paul carefully explained the Church’s charitable view toward our separated brethren and how our primary evangelistic goal is to tell them, love them, encourage them, and pray for them. Our outreach to non-Catholic Christians is not driven by a triumphalistic fear of their loss of heaven due to their separation from the Church, but rather a recognition of their brotherhood by Baptism, of God’s current love for them, and our responsibility to proclaim, in every way we can, the fullness of the Church in love.

Twenty years ago, our work began in response to the needs of non-Catholic clergy, and this has always been a focus of our work. Simply, like the blind beggar who, after being healed, can no longer beg, there are many for whom conversion causes a dramatic change in their lives. In our work, we have called these people Primaries.

Over these 20 years, over 2,200 Primaries have contacted us, around half of whom have converted, while the rest remain “on the journey.” For over 15 years, we have been

contacted by 2 to 5 new Primaries every week. On the surface, this all is quite impressive, but compared to the 165 million non-Catholic Christians in America—550,000 of whom are ministers!—this small but steady stream indicates that there is much to be done!

This does, however, re-emphasize our primary task which is to tell, to stand beside, to pray for, to love, and all in the context of recognizing that God is very actively working in the lives and ministries of our separated brethren, calling them to faith, and sometimes calling them to make the radical journey home to the Catholic Church. Our task is to be here to help those who believe they are being called home, especially for those whose conversion causes radical upheaval in their lives.

There is, however, another interesting angle to all this that I’d like you to consider: As *Ut Unum Sint* declares, “the unity of all divided humanity is the will of God.” Therefore, what might be God’s strategy to accomplish this? What, for example, is the best way to reach those 165,000,000 non-Catholic Christians in America? Who are the best people to break through their prejudices and help them discover the beauty as well as the necessity of Catholicism? I would suggest, generally, not Catholic popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, or religious, or Catholic writers, or even Catholic television and radio personalities (!), though of course the Holy Spirit has used all of these to open the hearts of some. Nor do I think very many Protestants are convinced by the views of their Protestant leaders and theologians involved in intercommunion dialogue with Catholics leaders and theologians.

I do think the second best people to reach non-Catholic Christians are their Catholic lay friends and family, but as we all know, this is not easy.

This is why I believe the best people to reach your average Joe-in-the-pew Protestant are their own pastors, whom they have learned to trust, and this may be precisely what God is doing, awakening Protestant ministers to the Catholic Faith! God may be awakening them so that they can awaken their congregations! But once non-Catholic ministers resign and convert, we know from experience that they generally lose whatever witness God had given them with these people, for after conversion they become suspect and rejected.

We certainly can’t know whether this is God’s strategy, and so we do not discourage or refuse to honor anyone’s desire to convert, based upon the convictions of their conscience. However, we do believe that God is calling us

“Twenty Years...” is continued on page B ➤

to see each minister who comes to us, not merely as an individual, but as the “tip of an iceberg”: behind each minister who comes to us are dozens, maybe hundreds, maybe thousands of non-Catholic Christians whom God may be trying to reach through the graces He has given to each minister! We, therefore, encourage each inquirer to consider whether whatever truth they have learned about the Catholic Church, by the gift of grace, is not for just them personally but for them to give away to the people whom God has already called them to serve.

We believe our work is particularly encouraged by a statement made by Saint James in his epistle: “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone **turns** him **back**, let him know that he who **turns** a sinner from the error of his way will save a (or his) soul from death and cover a multitude of sins” (5:19,20 NKJV).

In our work, certainly the end goal is to help our separated brethren come fully home to the Church. But recognizing this as a patient process that happens in God’s timing, every way we can help them turn from sin—and in some instances non-Catholics may not fully realize how some of their choices are mortal sins—we help save their souls from death. The Church says that non-Catholic Christians are not held guilty by God for their separation from the Church, but due to their private interpretations of Scripture, they may have dulled their consciences to sinful acts for which they may indeed be held accountable. In the process of our work, we may not always **bring** someone fully home, but this doesn’t stop our work: every way in which we can help **turn** them from sin, may in the end help save their souls from death.

So this is what we are and what we do: The CHNetwork is an evangelization apostolate modeled after the words of Blessed JPII. We are here to tell, and to stand patiently beside anyone who comes to us, especially non-Catholic clergy, for further help in dealing with the needs of their ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ and His Church.

Given the intentionally small size of our staff, as well as the unique gifts God has given us in our personnel, it is important that we have a clear and simple understanding and expectation of our work together. We also want to make sure we are being good and faithful stewards of the funds God has provided for our use through you, our generous partners in this work.

This being said, the following is the basic outline of our **Outreach**:

1. Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Church: More specifically, how do we reach out to non-Catholic Christians, helping them become inquirers into the Catholic Faith, and, if they desire, to become members of the CHNetwork?

- EWTN’s the **Journey Home** program (Most of our members come to us from watching the Journey Home. Though our staff now fully produces this program, it is still EWTN’s program and we are greatly privileged to help them with this outreach.)

- **Internet** (Our website, social networking, plus YouTube, etc.)
- **CHResources** (They buy or are given one of our books, booklets, tapes, CDs, etc.)
- **Deep In Scripture** (They hear us on radio or Youtube, etc.)
- **CHNetwork Live** (We have not started this yet, but hopefully we will someday.)
- **Members giving away CHNewsletters** (The CHNewsletter is our primary means of outreach, and we have always encouraged members to be evangelizers with the newsletter as well as CHResources.)
- **Speaking** (This is often the first time people hear about us.)
- **Non-CHNetwork sources** (They become interested in the faith through the multitude of other Catholic apostolates and then come to us for further help.)

2. Respond — How we go the second mile with those who contact us:

- **Internet/ email/ phone/ letter** (this is how they contact us for help)
- **One-Year FREE NEWSLETTER membership** (We presently offer every person who contacts us, Catholic or non, the opportunity to receive the newsletter for one year free. Then a minimum annual donation of \$35 extends this membership.)
- **For those who contact us for help, whether clergy, laity, or even life-long Catholics**, we follow a “3/6/12” month response process, but the key is that we always leave the initiative in the hands of the inquirer: We recognize, especially in the light of *Ut Unum Sint*, that we do not presume on the will of God for anyone; we are here to tell, and to stand beside, not to push, pull, or prod them into the Church. Once we have responded and answered their inquiry, we have placed the ball back in their court, yet we prayerfully allow the Holy Spirit to guide them as He wills.
- **For all those still on the journey, or who have informed us that they believe God is calling them, at least for now, to remain where they are**, we continue in prayerful partnership with them, giving them the CHNewsletter as long as they want it, helping them discover ways to share what they have learned about the Catholic Faith with those to whom God has called them to witness. ■

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Please go to www.chnetwork.org/resources to see current job listings. Or, if you know of an employment opportunity, please e-mail the job description to maryp@chnetwork.org.

FEATURED RESOURCES

A Convert Looks Back at the Church of England

— Fr. Ray Ryland



In this talk from the 2006 Deep in History conference, former Anglican clergy Fr. Ray Ryland reflects upon his time in the Church of England and his conversion to Catholicism. Over a lifetime, Fr. Ryland noticed several themes within Christianity: continuity, the need for authority, and the desire for truth, which ultimately brought him home to Christ's Church.

Evangelical Is Not Enough — By Thomas Howard



In this deeply moving narrative, Thomas Howard describes his pilgrimage from Evangelicalism to liturgical Christianity. He describes Evangelicalism with great sympathy and then examines more formal, liturgical worship with the freshness of someone discovering for the first time what his soul had always hungered for. Non-Catholics will gain an appreciation of the formal and liturgical side of Catholicism. Catholics will see with fresh eyes the beauty of their tradition. Worship, prayer, the Blessed Virgin, the Mass, and the liturgical year are taken one after the other, and what may have seemed routine and repetitive suddenly comes to life under the enchanting wand of Howard's beautiful prose. This book traces Howard's soul-searching and shows why he believes the practices of the liturgical Church are an invaluable aid for any Christian's spiritual life.

\$35

For a donation of \$35, receive the *A Convert Looks Back at the Church of England* CD.

\$50

For a donation of \$50, receive *Evangelical Is Not Enough*.

\$75

For a donation of \$75, receive the *A Convert Looks Back at the Church of England* CD and *Evangelical Is Not Enough*.

— THESE PREMIUMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY —

SUPPORT CHNETWORK

For your convenience, CHNetwork is able to automatically deduct monthly donations directly from your credit card, checking, or savings account. If you would like to set up an automatic monthly donation, please go to chnetwork.org/donate/ 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 if you have any questions or concerns.

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Bank routing number (9-digit number)

Account number

☐ Credit card

Card number

Expiration date

☐ Visa

☐ MasterCard

☐ Discover

☐ AmericanExpress

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.

NEWSLETTER DONATION

Our monthly CHNewsletter is our primary means of outreach and communication. We request a yearly, tax-deductible gift of \$35 or more to receive the newsletter and be a supporting member of the CHNetwork. These donations support all aspects of our small non-profit apostolate. Thank you for your support!

Prayer List



Clergy

■ For a United Methodist minister in North Carolina, that the Holy Spirit may guide and direct his discernment on how and when he should proceed to full communion with the Catholic Church.

■ For Tony, a former Christian Church minister, that our Lord Jesus would guide him to be able to accept the fullness of the Catholic Faith with a clear conscience.

■ For Michael, a Presbyterian minister in Indiana, that, as he continues to deepen his relationship with our Lord through the Liturgy of the Hours, God would grace him with an insatiable hunger for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

■ For the wife of a Baptist minister in Iowa, that the Holy Spirit would show her the path she is to follow and that her husband would be open and understanding to her new-found Catholic Faith.

■ For Robert, a United Methodist minister in California, that the clear positions of the Catholic Church on life, marriage, family, and sexuality would continue to guide his conscience home to the the ancient Church of the Apostles and Prophets.

■ For an Anglican priest in Texas, that his deep desire for full Catholic unity would ultimately bring him into full-communion with Pope Francis, the successor of the Rock, St. Peter.

■ For a Lutheran minister in Tennessee, that she continue deepening her prayer life and draw closer to Christ in the Eucharist.

■ For David, a Church of God minister, that as he prays and studies the Holy Bible and the teachings of the Catholic faith he would come to realize that the Catholic Church is the true Bible Church.

■ For a Pentecostal minister in Sweden, that our Lord Jesus Christ would enable him to surmount all obstacles that he may believe are in the way of his becoming a Catholic Christian.

Laity

■ For all the members of the CHNetwork who are planning to begin RCIA, that the Holy Spirit guide their journey and open their hearts to the fullness of the Catholic Faith.

■ For Jim, that he finds the answers to his many questions and experiences a deepening in his faith life.

■ For Don, a friend of one of our members, to return to the Catholic Faith of his childhood.

■ For Michele, to be freed from the obstacles that prevent her from pursuing her desire to be Catholic.

■ For a woman who is planning on beginning RCIA in the fall but is concerned about sharing the news with her family and people at her church.

■ For a person on the journey, that he finds healing and comfort through the intercession of Our Lady.

■ For Mark, that he not be discouraged and continue to go deeper in his faith walk.

■ For Tara, who is torn between her interest in the Catholic Church and the challenges that seem to come whenever she pursues becoming Catholic.

■ For Tracy as she reads and studies the Scriptures and works through her questions about the Catholic Faith.

■ For Jodi, that her lingering questions and concerns be answered as she lives her new life as a Catholic.

■ For a lady who is very drawn to the Catholic Church but doesn't know how to tell her husband she would like to convert.

■ For Deanne who wants to return to the Catholic Church but is discouraged since no Catholics in her area are reaching out to her.

■ For Nicola who is reading and learning more about the Catholic Church while planning on beginning RCIA in the fall.

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.

Please also pray for the Coming Home Network International's staff and Board of Directors.

President/Founder, Marcus Grodi (former Presbyterian pastor)

Chaplain, Fr. Ray Ryland (former Anglican priest)

Chief Operating Officer, Kevin Lowry (former Presbyterian)

Resident Theologian, Dr. Kenneth Howell (former Presbyterian pastor)

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...Journeys Home Continued...

► “Journeys Home” continued from page 2

From that point everything began to change: my spirituality — my prayer became alive, real, and personal; my theology — I began a decided move away from liberalism toward biblical orthodoxy; my preaching — I began to preach Christ crucified; my ministry — the power and experience of the Holy Spirit was central.

My charismatic conversion, however, also produced problems. “Evangelism is a dirty word in the Episcopal church!” my rector asserted at my proposal to start an evangelism committee. I felt a sense that it was time for a new call. After a few disappointing rector searches, I was called to be the rector of St. Paul’s, in Malden, Massachusetts. It was a small dying elderly urban congregation; my youth was the major qualification of their call.

My work as an Anglican Priest

St. Paul’s was a wonderful adventure for the next 14 years of my life. The parish had a remarkable transformation. There were all the outward indicators of growth: membership, attendance, staff, income, program; but more importantly, we became the dwelling place of the living God and a mission center of living water (Ezekiel 47): conversions, healings, deliverances, deep worship, ministry to the poor. We became known as the “Charismatic” Episcopal Church. We introduced literally thousands of folk around New England to a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit through weekly healing services, preaching and teaching missions at other churches, and regular “Renewal” conferences hosted at St. Paul’s.

During this time, God was planting the seeds of my conversion to Catholicism. I began the discipline of being a penitent. My first confessor was a monk of the Episcopal community of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Fr. Carleton Jones. Our monthly meetings introduced me to Anglo-catholic worship and spirituality. My many years of spiritual direction with Carleton ended abruptly with his sudden announcement that he was becoming a Roman Catholic. I remember vividly the words of the letter he sent to me explaining his decision: “I have come to the conclusion that the Unity of the church is not finally something to be strived for but rather a gift already from the Lord to his church in the Petrine office.”

Radical feminism is a powerful lobby in the Diocese of Massachusetts. At one diocesan meeting, a priest and seminary professor declared abortion to be a sacrament. Thus, I felt called to be a voice for the sanctity of life and organized a chapter of National Organization of Episcopalians for Life (NOEL). My reputation as a charismatic left me somewhat on the fringes of the clergy as an eccentric; but my pro-life activism drew bitter anger and rejection from many of my colleagues. The abortion crisis, however, posed for me even a larger question: How could the moral compass of the church be so profoundly broken?

Towards the end of the 80s, I sensed that my time at St. Paul’s was ending. After being rejected by the few possible prospects

in the greater Boston area, I began earnestly to seek the Lord. On the Eve of the Epiphany, 1990, while reading a book *The New Catholics*, a collection of testimonies of converts to Catholicism, I received a clear word from God that I was to be a Catholic. In obedience to that word, I actually began exploring the Pastoral Provision. I met a number of times with a Franciscan priest to explore the Catholic Faith. I also met with Fr. Andrew Mead, the rector of the Anglo-catholic Church of the Advent. Strangely the Holy Spirit seemed to say, “Not yet!” But the conversations with Fr. Mead produced an invitation to serve with him at the Advent.

Immersion in the deep, rich world of Anglo-Catholic worship and spirituality, far from being alien to my charismatic tendencies, was a profoundly charismatic experience. I was introduced to Keble, Pusey, and Newman, to Benson and Grafton, to the Triduum, the Veneration of the Cross, Benediction, the Angelus, and daily Mass. I remained at the Advent seven years, but again I sensed God was calling me elsewhere. Was it time to go to Rome? Again, God seemed to say, “Not yet!”

In Holy Week of 1997, I received an invitation to become rector of Christ Church Hamilton. Christ Church had been the premier Evangelical Episcopal church of the diocese. It had experienced a wonderful renewal in the late 70s and 80s and began to draw in many faculty and students from Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell seminary. But the last decade had been a disastrous time of conflict and diminishment and, at the request of the Vestry, the bishop removed the rector. The parish had become a small, financially stressed, demoralized, depressed group living in the memories of past glory.

Newly equipped with all my Anglo-catholic experience and paraphernalia (Eucharistic vestments, bells, incense), I went to Christ Church. Almost instantly, God renewed the church, liturgically, spiritually, and politically. Attendance doubled the first year and tripled the next, as did the budget. The staff and ministry of the parish were rebuilt; missionary work was revitalized. Seminarians came in droves and many were ordained (some have even journeyed on to Roman and Orthodox orders). A vision that had animated my ministry, a vision of a church — fully evangelical, fully charismatic — came to fruition at Christ Church.

But alas, even as we thrived, the din of the political turmoil of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion loomed. I constantly posed the question to the lay and clerical leadership of the church: What is God calling Christ Church to be and do in the midst of this crisis? One answer to that question came in the developments of what would become the Anglican Church of North America. A significant group of parishioners thought this was the direction we should go. Another large group, equally faithful and orthodox, were convinced that steadfast witness within the Episcopal Church was God’s plan. Each sought my opinion. My theological preferences were with the former;

“Journeys Home” is continued on page 6 ►

...Journeys Home Continued...

my catholic sensibilities (against schism) were with the latter. I proposed that we accept both directions as authentically led by the Holy Spirit and plan a future of two sister parishes, one a new church plant of the ACNA and the other a continuing Episcopal church at Christ Church. The two sister parishes would continue in mutual affection, prayer, and where possible shared ministry — a witness of reconciliation and charity over against the bloodbath of lawsuits and depositions going on in the denomination.

The Vestry adopted this vision for the future. We set a timetable for the next 12 months and invited each member of the parish to discern prayerfully God's specific will for them. We developed the appropriate planning and organizational structures for building of the two new future congregations. I made it clear that I did not believe God was calling me to one congregation or the other. My call was to see through the birth of these two new churches.

This very crisis in the Episcopal Church had been raising questions of ecclesiology, authority, discerning truth, the doctrine of marriage, etc. I became more convinced that as rich and wonderful the Anglican heritage was, it did not contain the spiritual DNA to resolve this crisis. As good a home as the Episcopal church had been for me since childhood and as joyful and satisfying a ministry as I had had within her, my intention was to retire from active ministry in the Episcopal Church and then explore admission into the Catholic Church. But again God said, "Not yet!"

I rejoice that through God's grace I have had a very honest, respectful, and mutually affectionate relationship with my Episcopal bishop, the Rt. Rev. Tom Shaw. Although he approved the parish partition plan, at a private meeting, it was made clear to me that I would not be allowed to remain an Episcopal priest and be involved in the Anglican Church of North America — "You have to choose!"

I finished my work at Christ Church over the next six months. In 2009, I preached and celebrated my last liturgies as rector of Christ Church. The final Eucharist included the Vestries of both congregations mutually affirming and blessing one another. On the following Sunday, October 4, the Feast of St. Francis, I preached and celebrated my first liturgy as rector of Christ the Redeemer Anglican (CTR). I was inspired by the Lord's words to Francis from the San Damiano crucifix: "Go and repair my church which as you see is in ruins!"

The last three years as rector of CTR were the most joyous and fulfilling of my 40 years in ordained ministry. Roughly 250 folk joined me in the exodus from the Episcopal Church; another 150 new folk have since joined. God's provision has been bountiful. But from the beginning I also knew that this was to be for me a brief assignment; I felt called to be the Founding rector and then invite CRT to search for their first new rector. In early January of 2012, the parish had successfully called their new

rector. Concurrently, the US Anglican Ordinariate was established. At last I heard the Lord say, "Now is the time!"

This last year I gathered together CTR parishioners to explore, under the brilliant tutelage of Dr. Thomas Howard, the meaning of the invitation of Pope Benedict in *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. For ten weeks we asked: "What does the Catholic Church really teach?" A convert from Fundamentalism and Anglicanism, Dr. Howard was able to instruct us both biblically and cogently about those subjects most troublesome to Evangelical Protestants: Marian dogma and devotion, the primacy of Peter, the infallibility of the Pope, the veneration and intercession of saints, the doctrine of purgatory, prayer for the dead, etc. A second ten-week study program was focused on Anglican-Catholic Ecumenical Conversations and initiatives. I led twelve individuals forward to personally respond to the Pope's invitation to Anglicans and to come into full communion with the See of Rome through the Ordinariate.

Though I might have journeyed earlier to Rome in my own personal history, this was a collective historic moment for the beginning of the fulfillment of the vision of the reunion of Rome and Canterbury. That was the dream of our tractarian fathers, that was the explicit goal of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey at the launching of the ARCIC dialogues, this was an implicit hope in the bold ecumenical theology of Pope John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint* and his re-envisioning of a papacy for the whole church. I am humbled to be invited by God to be a small part of this historic work. At noon on August 15, 2012, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, after 40 years, I officially resigned my Anglican Priestly Orders; at 6 p.m. of that day I was confirmed and received into the Catholic Church. In February 2013, I received word that I had been approved for ordination in the Catholic Church. In fact, I was Pope Benedict's last rescript.

Why Catholicism?

Since announcing my decision to become a Catholic and to seek ordination through the Anglican Ordinariate, I have had many an inquiry from folk wondering, "Why?"

My first reason is that this decision is an act of obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Though a long personal journey of twenty-five years or more, I would add that as personal as it is, it is not just a private or uniquely individual call, not simply a private denominational predilection.

Over the years I have read innumerable books, have had many searching conversations, watched hours of EWTN, listened to many testimonies and teachings — all of which have contributed to the decision to become a Catholic. But above all it has been a deep, constant magnetic pull of the Holy Spirit to come to the center of the Church. It is this deep intuitive sense each time I enter a Catholic church or religious community that I am in *the* Church, not *a* church. We speak in evangelical circles when a person of the Jewish faith becomes a Christian that they have become a "completed Jew." To become

...Journeys Home Continued...

a Catholic is for me to become a “completed Christian.” As I have already previously articulated, the driving vision of my ministry has been to build a church that was “fully catholic, fully evangelical, and fully charismatic.” I have come to the conviction that one cannot be “fully catholic” apart from communion with the See of Peter. For that matter one cannot be “fully evangelical” or “fully charismatic” apart from the rich and deep historical meaning of those words in the fullness of the Catholic Church. As has been said to me on a number of occasions by wise and mature Catholic friends, you need leave nothing behind of any Christian tradition that is of true gospel value. All of it comes only to fullness. To become a Catholic is to receive from my Lord His last providential gift from the cross: “Behold thy Mother.”

There is in the Christian life a force of gravity, which draws the believer ever deeper into union with Christ. That union is not only a private mystical union — though it is that — but a deepening union with the mystical body of Christ, the Church. It is a dogmatic principle of the Catholic Church that “this Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, *subsists* in the Catholic Church” (*Lumen Gentium*). If this is true, then this gravitational pull of Christ’s Spirit is universally active, drawing all humanity to Christ the Head and to the fullness of His saving grace, which He mediates through His Body the Church. John Henry Newman, an Anglican convert to Rome, insightfully quipped that there was no steady state between atheism and Catholicism! In the human soul there is always that spiritual battle between the centrifugal forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil drawing us away from the love of God, and the centripetal dynamic of the Holy Spirit pulling us ever deeper into the love of God. There is *aggravitas* to the Catholic Church, to the See of Peter, that is I believe a true and objective charism intended by Christ to draw His followers into union with Him in the fellowship of the Catholic Church.

That of course already displays the second reason for my decision: theological. The great divide between the churches of the Reformation and the Catholic Church is in the domain of ecclesiology: What is the church? In the Protestant world, Anglicanism has sought to maintain a catholic ecclesiology: organic, universal, and apostolic. Bishops, creeds, sacraments, and conciliarism have been maintained as integral pieces of Anglican ecclesiology, papal primacy alone being set aside. Within that catholic structure, Anglicanism has also asserted a principle of theological freedom and diversity. One *may* believe in spiritual regeneration in baptism but one *may not*. One *may* believe in the real presence in the eucharist but one *may not*. One *may* believe in the authority of Scripture, but one *may not*. One *may* believe in the sanctity of marriage but one *may not*. For much of my life as an Anglican, that freedom was a pleasant gift, but increasingly it had become a source of distress and a profound impediment to my priestly work as a pastor and preacher. How could I proclaim

from the pulpit what the Bible teaches or Christianity asserts, when my bishop says quite the opposite? How could I advise a person in the confessional when the priest in the neighboring parish would advise the opposite? My authority as a teacher and confessor needed to be based on something other than my own best opinion.

Flannery O’Connor spoke of the glorious freedom she experienced in being delivered from the “tyranny of her intellect.” *Credo ut intelligam!* That has become my experience. It is the paradox of true intellectual freedom by submission to “the Church’s teaching.” It is a glorious freedom, not only in the mind’s love for God, but in the vocation of priest in the theological and spiritual formation of disciples of Jesus. Thus, this theological conversion is not first of all a conversion to the peculiar Catholic beliefs that my inquirers challenge me about: “What about Mary?” “What about purgatory?” “What about contraception?” Rather it is a conversion to the faithfulness of Christ’s gift to the Church of an authentic authority to bind and to loose. At its deepest it is a question of pneumatology even more than ecclesiology. How does the Spirit of Truth actually function in the Church? Whatever complexities and seeming incongruities may be discerned, the Magisterium is at minimum a reasonable and practicable answer to the question of truth that is trustworthy. At best it is what the Church proclaims, the provision by Christ to His people of the gift of unerring guidance.

Finally and perhaps most urgently, my decision to become a Catholic is driven by our Lord’s high priestly prayer, “May they be one, that the world might believe.” The unity of the Church has been for me a primary and constant imperative of following Jesus. The unity of the Church is not only an imperative for the internal life of God’s people but an essential dimension of her evangelical mission. There is no greater scandal and impediment to the conversion of the world to the love of Christ than her divisions. Pope Benedict established the Anglican Ordinariate both as a concrete instrument to begin to organically heal the divisions of the Reformation and as an essential strategy for the sake of “the new Evangelization.” As an Anglican, I have received this as a gracious invitation to reconciliation. I can find no valid faithful reason to decline. ■



After 40 years as an Episcopal priest, Jurgen Liias became a Catholic in August 2012. In April 2013 he was ordained a Catholic priest through the Anglican Ordinariate. A community of about 25 other former Anglicans have joined him in forming the parish of St. Gregory the Great of the US Anglican Ordinariate in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts.

BLOG

Please visit www.chnetwork.org/blog to comment on and discuss this story!

The Coming Home Network International

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GET INVOLVED!

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

1

To go www.chresources.com to browse and order numerous resources perfect for sharing with friends and family who might be open to learning more about the Catholic Faith.



2

Consider passing this newsletter along to someone who hasn't yet heard of the Coming Home Network International.



3

Pray for Marcus Grodi and the rest of the CHNetwork's staff as we respond to the needs of those who contact us for support on their faith journey.

