



September 2023 CHNewsletter

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THE COMING HOME NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

Journeys Home

A Oneness Pentecostal Minister Becomes Catholic

By Michael Garcia

I was born into a Catholic family in May of 1953, baptized as a baby, went on to do my confession, received my first Holy Communion, and was confirmed by Bishop Buswell at Our Lady of Guadalupe church, the oldest parish in Colorado. I loved everything about God and the Church. I even saw myself serving as a priest one day, but would eventually dismiss the thought because I wanted to be married and have children. My mother would have us pray the Rosary whenever there was a need, and made sure we went to Mass; but my father was sporadic in attending church and never prayed the Rosary with us, although I knew he loved God.



Formation and Family History

I grew up in Conejos, a small community in southern Colorado, where my ancestors were some of the first settlers to make their homes there. The story is told that, when my great, great grandfather brought the first settlers to the valley, one of the burros refused to go on, and they discovered a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the site, so they began their settlement in that area and built a church to honor her. In another community, one of my great grandfathers donated land to the Catholic Church so that a church and a cemetery could be built. I was told that another

ancestor would spend time by the river praying and reading the Scriptures. Looking back, I am thankful for their faithfulness.

In my teens, I slowly began to drift away from the Church by not receiving Communion and eventually not attending Mass at all. I always seemed to find an excuse for not going. I did manage to go to Christmas Midnight Mass and Easter, along with all the other "C&E Christians." After high school, I entered the United States Navy in November of 1971, and my church attendance eroded even more, but I always felt that God was somehow with me. I do remember going to a Catholic Church once, when I was stationed in Hawaii, and I felt God's presence and experienced the beauty of the Mass with the local people. But I never went to

...Journeys Home Continued...

Confession or Communion. At this time, my older brother was getting involved with a United Pentecostal Church (UPC), and I saw a change in his life. He would talk to us about God whenever we were around him.

While in the Navy, I had a friend who was with a Christian youth group. He talked to me about giving my heart to God. I remember going to bed that night and talking to the Lord, telling him that I was not ready to give my heart to Him. I felt that doing so would make me “miss out on life” at the time, but my plan was that, at some point later on, when I was ready, I would wholeheartedly give my life to God.

Getting into Pentecostal Ministry

When I was discharged from the Navy, in the fall of 1975, I attended college at Adams State in Alamosa, CO, but didn't attend Mass. By this time, my brother, Tom, had moved to Denver and had invited me to a revival at a new UPC church that he and his wife were helping to start. I drove up to visit a service there and was taken with the music and emotional preaching. In the spring of 1976, having finished my college fall semester, I moved to Denver, where I got involved with the UPC. The services had music and a lot of emotion, and since I was somewhat of an emotional person, I was drawn to them.

I had an experience with the Holy Spirit and felt that God was real. I wanted more of Him. Remembering my prayer in Hawaii, this time felt similar. I wanted to sell out completely to God. The UPC preached a “One God” message and that baptism had to be performed using the phrase “in Jesus’ name.” From what I could see with my limited Bible knowledge and church background, I felt they were preaching the truth. I earnestly began to study the Bible and the Oneness doctrine, trying very hard to justify to myself that what I was being taught was the truth. Prayer became a big part of my life, and I became active for the congregation, knocking on doors and inviting people to church.

After a couple of years, I felt a call to preach, and I approached my pastor about going to Bible school, but he felt it was better for me to sit under his leadership and learn from him. I was soon getting invitations to preach at some of the local churches.

Our denomination held a camp meeting once a year, usually in the mountains close to Denver. The tradition behind this meeting dated back to the time when the various Pentecostal organizations would meet in the summer to have fellowship and discuss administrative matters.

It was at one of these camp meetings, in July of 1978, that I met my wife, Susanne, who was from Albuquerque, NM and was a recent convert to Pentecostalism. Her whole family was Catholic, and her father's favorite saint was St. Ann, so all eight of his girls had an Ann in their names. Susanne was in Craig, Colorado, helping her sister with her children, when she joined the Pentecostal Church. I had an opportunity to preach at her church, and there was an instant connection. Within six months, we were married.

We were married on January 1st of 1979 because we wanted to start the year together. Looking back, I can certainly say that bringing us together was by the hand of God. She has been a wonderful partner in this journey of life that we share. We had been in Denver for about a month and half when we took on pastoring a Home Missions church, with about eight individuals, in Walsenburg, Colorado. It was a struggle financially and spiritually. Since it was difficult to find employment, we literally prayed for our food, rent, and gas money, and God always supplied.

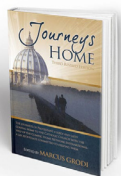
I remember going to a community church fellowship, where all the churches had been invited to participate. I was asked to be the master of ceremonies. The local Catholic priest was invited to speak, and I remember him speaking about the division in the Church in general, and how Protestants kept building new walls to divide the Christian community. It didn't go over well

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

JOURNEYS HOME

EDITED BY MARCUS GRODI

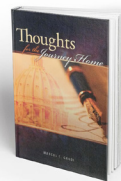
In this book are 30 conversion stories that provide insight, encouragement, and inspiration for those who are thinking about making the same journey and for Catholics born in the faith as well. #2522 • \$12.95



THOUGHTS FOR THE JOURNEY HOME

BY MARCUS GRODI

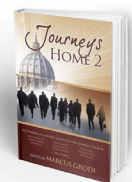
This collection of essays about the challenges and opportunities of conversion is drawn from Marcus Grodi's published columns in The CHNetwork's newsletter and *The Catholic Answer* magazine. #3130 • \$11.95



JOURNEYS HOME 2

EDITED BY MARCUS GRODI

This follow up to Journeys Home gathers together more conversion stories of men and women, clergy and laity, who found themselves drawn to the Catholic Church. #3187 • \$12.95



with the attendees, but it left an indelible mark in my memory. But it was only later that I came to realize just how many new church organizations had sprung up over doctrinal and other issues.

While working with this Home Missions church, I studied all I could about our church's beliefs. One study that I enjoyed immensely was on the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and how God instructed Moses to build an Ark that would contain the two tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments, the pot containing the manna from heaven, and Aaron's rod. To house the Ark and to initiate the worship of the one true God, the Israelites were to build a tabernacle that contained a Holy of Holies, where the Ark was kept. Instructions were given as to how the Levitical priests would perform their duties and minister to the people and how the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the people. Eventually this type of worship was transferred over to Solomon's temple. My study of the Tabernacle would eventually help me to better understand the Catholic Church.

Continuing in Ministry

After about a year and a half, we returned to Denver and our home church, where I assisted the pastor and got involved with the Spanish language ministry. We were in church literally all the time. There was Sunday morning service, Sunday night service, Tuesday night Spanish service, Wednesday night midweek service, Thursday night prayer, Saturday morning visitation and Saturday night Spanish service. The Spanish-speaking folk were a wonderful group of people, and we experienced some powerful services.

It was during this time that my daughter, Kristina, and son, Michael, were born. I was ordained into the UPC at a church camp meeting in the summer of 1984 and continued to minister in the Spanish speaking church and would preach for outside groups whenever invited. We had some (as they say in Pentecostal circles) "mighty moves of God," and there were times when we had awesome deliverance services. We were even involved in a Spanish language radio ministry, called "El Camino de Amor." In 1985, we were told about a church in Alamosa, Colorado that had been started, but the pastor had left. Leaving our home church, the Spanish church and all our friends to pursue that opportunity was indeed difficult, but I felt that we needed to move on from that comfortable situation.

For an entire year, we traveled every weekend from our home in Aurora, Colorado about 250 miles to minister to a small group of people in that assembly. Some of the congregation were former members of a Oneness Apostolic organization that had closed their church. We also had a wonderful opportunity to spend nearly every weekend with my parents, who lived about 30 miles from our new church assignment. However, the traveling back and forth eventually took its toll on me, and we decided to move back to Denver and start a UPC church in one of the suburbs where we lived and worked. Unfortunately, the organization thought it best for us not to start another church,



"Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him: 'Restore us to thyself, O LORD, that we may be restored!'"

*Catechism of the Catholic Church,
Paragraph 1432*

and I began to question my future in the organization. In 1987, we decided to leave the UPC and take some time to think about our journey.

A friend of mine told me about a Oneness Apostolic family church in Denver and arranged for me to speak there. The elder who had started the church requested that I pastor it, and in 1990 I was elected pastor. The congregation had a nice building with a parsonage, whose basement was used for Sunday School. The church had never really participated in communion services, so I took the opportunity to introduce them to the Lord's Supper. When I lifted up the bread to mention the words of the Lord over the bread, I felt a supernatural touch on my head and shoulders, and later on in life I would realize how sacred that moment was.

I remember talking to one of the ministers about how, in the Apostolic church, there was no progression of faith for members. It made me think about the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and how one must prepare for each of them.

After pastoring a couple of years there, I felt that I had done enough, and resigned. We attended an Assembly of God church for a time. They had an early morning prayer time that I enjoyed. We soon left the Assembly of God, and since the Oneness doctrine that we were involved in was unique and different from mainstream Christianity, we started a Non-denominational church named Christ Church in August of 1993. Our intent was to minister to folks that were coming out of the Oneness organizations and had nowhere to go. We found an office complex where there were other churches that had rented space, and we were fortunate to meet a gentleman by the name of Mark, who owned the building. He was very kind and never raised our rates. I found out about a couple of other churches that were Oneness Apostolic, and we would get together with them for camp meetings and fellowship.

A friend of mine hosted a live television show in the morning, where he would pray for people on the air, and there were times when he was not available, so he would ask me to sit in for him. I really enjoyed praying for the callers' needs. As a result, we were able to start a half hour program that would broadcast at five in the morning. Needless to say, we did not get much of an audience, and it didn't last long, but it was an experience.

We had a great group of people, but after a number of years, I began to question the validity and futility of pastoring while also

A Note from Jon Marc



Dear Friends of the CHNetwork,

It has been 30 years—this year—since my father, Marcus, began the The Coming Home Network back in 1993; 30 years of connecting with converts and those on the journey to the Catholic Church; 30 years of assisting pastors and their spouses as they consider making a difficult leap of faith; 30 years of sharing their powerful

conversion stories with the world; 30 years of celebrating this commonality that we in the Coming Home Network all share: being people on a journey of continual conversion to Christ and His Church.

30 years ago, my father had still only very recently brought my family and me into the Catholic Church. At this point he was working full time for the Franciscan University of Steubenville, but continuing to hear about and encounter more and more Protestant pastors—like himself—who had been awakened to the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and made (or were still making) the journey home. It was then, in 1993, that Dad took a number of crucial steps that led to what is now The Coming Home Network. Dad had begun to put together his ideas for what was then called only “The Network,” which was to be a fellowship of clergy converts and inquirers who shared the common bonds of being drawn home to the Catholic Church and of having to leave behind their ministry and profession as a result. “The Network” would be there to stand beside these pastors and their families as they made this difficult transition and would help to support and encourage them as they found a new home in the Catholic Church. While the primary focus would be on assisting these clergy converts, the apostolate would also stand as a network of support and encouragement for lay inquirers and their families as well.

In 1993 my father put together the first newsletter which would, over the years, grow into the publication that you hold in your hands today! In addition, the first official gathering of clergy converts and journeyers was held over the summer that year at the Defending the Faith conference at Franciscan University, as well as the first retreat later that year. Dad continued to collect phone numbers and addresses as the fledgling network grew.

There is of course much more that could be told of the intervening history of the Coming Home Network between 1993 and 2023—much of it is familiar to many long-time readers of this newsletter. But for now, it is enough to recall with gratitude and wonder these humble beginnings of the network that

the Lord worked out through my father’s fidelity and desire to serve the Church and his fellow journeyers, and to note with gratitude and praise that now, 30 years later, the work continues to grow and flourish.

As you know, so many incredible doors have opened over the years allowing the Coming Home Network to share powerful stories of conversion and to be there to stand beside Protestant ministers and laypeople (and of course now so many others—returning Catholics, inquirers from non-Christian religions, and even atheists/agnostics!) as they journey deeper into Christ and His great gift of the Church and Her sacraments. We now have thousands of converts and inquirers who participate in our online community, attend our in-person and digital events, read our newsletters, and receive support, encouragement, and counsel from our Pastoral Care Team. Not only that, but through our continued collaboration with EWTN on the production and broadcast of *The Journey Home* program and through our own original videos and podcasts, we are able to share conversion stories and our unique brand of “narrative apologetics”—not with thousands—but with millions, all over the world.

We are so grateful and humbled to be able to be a part of this work 30 years later. We know that it all began and continues only as the result of God’s grace working in the lives of individual Christians, who hear the call and respond: “Yes Lord. Where you lead me, I will go”. And so we strive to do just that in our own lives as a team—to live in God’s grace and to say yes to His leading in our own continuing journeys of faith—as we strive to carry out this great mission of the Coming Home Network: To share the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and to help others make the journey *home*.

If you yourself are a recent convert or are somewhere along the path of considering becoming Catholic: know of our love for you as a brother and sister in Jesus Christ, our constant prayer for your journey, and our commitment to being here as a network of support and encouragement for you.

And if you are one of the many generous and faithful partners who make this mission possible by your own prayers and financial support: know also of our prayers for you and our gratitude that you have chosen to be our partners in this amazing work.

May we all remain people of the journey with our eyes ever on our Lord Jesus Christ!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Marc Grodi".

JonMarc Grodi, Executive Director

DO YOU HAVE A JOB OPENING AT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Please remember our members when you have a job opening. Often times clergy converts are looking for positions within the Church as well as the private sector. Please email job openings to info@chnetwork.org.



How Did You Discover CHNetwork?

In June of 1993, Marcus Grodi started the apostolate that we now know as The Coming Home Network using the technology available at the time—mostly snail mail, telephone, and word of mouth—to build a community of support and encouragement for those exploring the Catholic Faith.

Thirty years later, the technology may have changed, but the mission remains the same. Through every available form of communication, we're able to connect with and assist those seeking a home in the Catholic Church, and share stories, fellowship, and encouragement together.

We asked some of our CHNetwork members how they originally found out about us, and what it meant to them to discover that they were not alone on their journey. Here's what some of them had to say:

"I was an evangelical pastor thinking maybe I was the first pastor to consider the Catholic Church. I 'googled' pastors who had become Catholic and found the Coming Home Network! Thanks be to God! That was nearly 10 years ago." —Gary W., former Wesleyan minister

"I was in prison at the time. A volunteer in Catholic prison ministry brought some back issues of the CHNewsletter. I had been a Catholic only a few months. I loved reading stories of conversion from Protestant denominations. It affirmed my decision to be Catholic." —Bill B., former Presbyterian

"I wanted to make sure I wasn't the only one 'crazy enough' to consider the Catholic Church. I did a Google search on support with converting, and I stumbled upon The Coming Home Network. It's been such a huge blessing in my life as I've been able to connect, talk and ask questions. I've also made several friends via CHNetwork. This platform and its resources have been instrumental in my conversion." —Amanda B., former Church of Christ

"The Journey Home on EWTN fascinated me—I had come into the Catholic Church in 1972 not knowing any converts and had met few in the decades following. So I watched the episodes when I could afford to have cable, and felt less of an oddball. Then I got a laptop for personal use, and could actually meet people on this forum. I am so grateful for each one of you!" —Susan D., former Presbyterian

"I grew up Evangelical, but after years of frustration at trying to find a church home, I had decided it was finally time to give the Catholic Church—which I'd only really ever read about in books—a legitimate try.

Almost immediately, I discovered *The Journey Home* on Catholic radio, which was a game changer for me. Prior to that point, my entire exploration of the Catholic Faith had been in isolation; it had all consisted of reading books and searching the internet, and I felt like the only Protestant in the world who was considering becoming Catholic. Hearing the stories of others was a huge consolation and source of strength. I was even able to correspond with some CHNetwork members who'd gone to the same college I had, and just that little bit of conversation had a major impact on me feeling like becoming Catholic was something I could actually do."
—Matt Swaim, former Wesleyan

"My husband was in the process of returning to the Catholic Church. Because of that, I thought it would be a good idea to research things, since I left the Church as a teenager due to unanswered questions. I found the CHNetwork forum (it was a bit different than what it is now) and what struck me first was the number of Protestants who had joined the Catholic Church. In the process, I got many of my questions answered and learned a lot from others who shared. After speaking with our local priest, I finally returned Home. Haven't looked back. I am now one of the regular lectors for the Saturday Vigil Mass."
—Celia T., Catholic "revert"

*"I recall when Marcus Grodi first appeared on *Mother Angelica Live* and was invited to start *The Journey Home* television show on EWTN. It was several years later, when my wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and I was at loose ends over losing her that I visited the apostolate's website, looking for something to occupy my mind and heart while my wife was in an institution. At the time, they had a primitive online forum, which I saw was filled with new converts who needed some direction. I began helping, and things took off from there." —David Emery, former Methodist*

When I realized I was being called to explore Catholicism, I decided to check out EWTN. The first thing I saw was *The Journey Home*, and I was riveted! Up to that time, I had no idea other people were making the same connections and had the same questions and frustrations as I did. From then on I was hooked!"
—Catherine R., former Methodist

Thank you for supporting this work for 30 years, and helping us to be a source of inspiration, fellowship, and personal support for people seeking help as they journey toward the Catholic Faith. We'd love to hear your stories too! Please let us know how you've been impacted by contacting us at info@chnetwork.org.

Joyful Journey Updates

Erin R.

When I entered the Church in June of 2020, I was alone and without much hope that that would ever change. But God continued to work miracles, and now my husband and two of our children are also Catholic. We've found a home in the Melkite Catholic Church and are continuing to learn and grow in the fullness of the Faith. God's ways are mysterious, but He is always, ALWAYS good. ■

Elliot P.

I made a decision after Easter—I would “come home” to the Catholic Church. I would become a part of the “One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church” that we confess in the Nicene Creed of 325 a.d. I asked to be confirmed into the Church and it was granted. On the

Corpus Christi weekend of June 10/11, 2023, my sponsor and his wife, along with some friends, came to join me in this celebration. As my priest laid his hands on my shoulder and then on my forehead, my sponsor laid his hand on my other shoulder, and in response of affirmations to his questions, and with his prayerful blessings, I was confirmed. That day I received communion, the body of Christ in the Eucharist for the first time. I experienced a joy and peace that was indicative of my favorite word for my Catholic faith—*beautiful*, divinely so. For all this I willingly give my praise—praise to God the Father, praise to Jesus Christ, praise to the Holy Spirit. ■

Do you have an update on your journey to share with us? Send it to info@chnetwork.org.



RIPPLE EFFECT

by Kathryn Whitaker

“It was quite the sight. My dad had only been Catholic eight years and upon the altar at his funeral Mass there was a bishop and nine priests, one of which was his college fraternity brother! I never dreamed when I joined the Catholic Church as a 22-year-old, just an hour before my wedding rehearsal dinner, that both of my parents would join the Church 16 years later. They always accompanied us for Easter and Christmas Eve Masses and made it a point to be at every sacrament for their (then) six grandchildren. We never pushed it; the invitation was always there.

“The conversions didn’t end there, however. My brother and my brother-in-law’s wife both joined the church shortly

after I converted to Catholicism. With them, there had been more questions, more late nights and more skepticism, but ultimately, we always provided the invitation. The Holy Spirit did the heavy lifting.

“Through all of those conversions, I realized that everyone’s path to the church is unique. I can’t talk someone into joining, but we can continue to invite, answer questions thoughtfully, and fully integrate our faith into our daily life. That’s the joy Jesus describes in the Gospels. When we can remember that a life of faith is always an invitation, just as Jesus held the door open for his own disciples, then the ripple effect continues.”

Kathryn Whitaker will be a guest on The Journey Home on Monday, October 16th. She can be found online at kathrynwhitaker.net

EWTN'S THE JOURNEY HOME on television & radio, hosted by JonMarc Grodi, CHNetwork Executive Director



TELEVISION

Mon. 8PM ET—Encores: Tues. 1AM ET, Thurs. 2PM ET
The Best of The Journey Home: Sat. 6PM ET

RADIO

Mon. 8PM ET—Encores: Sat. 7 AM ET, Sun. 1 AM ET and 5 PM ET
The Best of The Journey Home: Mon.–Fri. 1 AM ET

Monday, September 4

Pat Flynn

*Former Agnostic
Original air date 1/6/2020*

Monday, September 11

Andrea Garrett

*Former Evangelical and
Anglican*

Monday, September 18

Sharon Ripley

Former A.M.E. minister

Monday, September 25

Robert Tunmire

Former agnostic

*Schedule is subject
to change.*

To access the full archive of past *Journey Home* programs go to chnetwork.org/journey-home

COMPASS

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Join **COMPASS** — an ever-growing community of donors who give a monthly gift of \$10-\$100 (or more) to support the CHNetwork as we help to guide men and women who are coming home to the Catholic Church.

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Please contact Ann at 740.450.1175 or via email ann@chnetwork.org if you have any questions or concerns.

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info@chnetwork.org



The Coming Home
Network International

The Coming Home Network was established to help non-Catholic Christians, clergy and laity, to discover the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church and to make the journey home.



James Glaeg

Donor since May, 2014–9 Years

Though from a staunchly Methodist family, I was always a little attracted to Catholicism. Noting this, a college friend once gave me a book called *The Question Box*, filled with reasoned explanations of everything commonly misunderstood about the Faith. I devoured it, quickly garnering from its pages the kernel and thrust of a composite teaching upon which I could build my life.

Two years later, on my 21st birthday with Christmas just a few days away and everybody else in the dormitory gone home for the holidays, I picked up a missal on the table by my chair and began reading a passage familiar to me since childhood, "...And there were shepherds in the same district, living in the fields," to whom the angel appears saying, "I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be to all the people. For today a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord..."

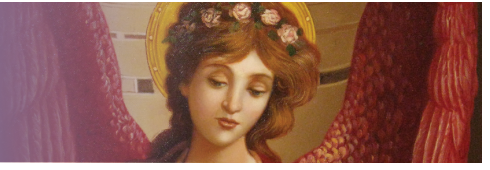
In the stillness of that dorm room, to be sure, I was aware of feeling deeply moved the minute I read those words. But it was only slowly—day by day afterwards—that I realized how infinitely subtler and more still even than one's own private thoughts and feelings is the voice of God. For I was to discover that somehow in that one moment of time as I'd read those few words on the missal page, my heart had been converted to Christ forever.

Soon I entered the Church officially. And almost immediately Vatican II happened—producing its wonderful documents, of course, just as Pope John Paul II would later produce his. But meanwhile the Church's megaphone seemed to fall largely into the hands of questionable supposed "theologians" steered by a worldwide secular media. An ostensible absence of clear moral teaching fell upon the West and in time reached and dispirited me. That crisis consumed much of my later life, but finally—although not until about 2005—I happened to click on *The Journey Home* just in time to see a converted Methodist minister denounce in thrillingly, almost majestically unwavering tones whole communities of supposedly consecrated Catholic religious who'd been uncovered living actively sexual lives. Here was decisive teaching at last! The mere witnessing of it on the tv screen had the effect of snapping my own journey right back on track. And from that moment, my prayer life—flat-lined for 23 years—soared upward again.

Conversion of the individual heart is the lifeblood of humanity's answer to God's call. Please consider how you can help the Coming Home Network fulfill its role in the Church's facing and surviving its crisis of today. ■

James Glaeg has been a monthly COMPASS donor to CHNetwork since May of 2013. To join him with either a one-time or recurring gift, visit chnetwork.org/donate

Prayer List



Clergy

■ **For Jeff, an Episcopal priest** who has been on a journey toward the Catholic Church for a number of years and is exploring the possibility of entering the Catholic priesthood through the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

■ **For Brent, an Evangelical pastor** drawn to the beauty and truth of the Catholic Church and beginning to contemplate the reality that the Holy Spirit is drawing him to leave his pastoral ministry to become Catholic.

■ **For David, an Anglo-Catholic priest** who wants to enter into full communion with the Church but struggles with some of the things taking place in the hierarchy of the Church.

■ **For Paul, an Episcopal priest** who wants to become Catholic and is looking for a teaching position that could support his family should he leave his position in the Episcopal clergy to enter the Church.

■ **For Elijah, a Methodist seminarian** who has begun to contemplate the truth of Catholicism and is in the thick of rethinking his future.

■ **For Gary, a Baptist pastor** who with his wife was welcomed into full communion with the Catholic Church this Easter Vigil, that the Lord may bless them as he has accepted a position developing a program of evangelism for his parish.

■ **For Ken, a Baptist pastor** drawn to the Church and seeking wisdom and guidance on how best to proceed in an environment where very few of those who know him will understand what he is coming to believe.

■ **For Grant, a non-denominational minister** who after some struggle was welcomed into the Catholic Church at

the end of May, that the Lord will bless him as he seeks to lead and care for his family.

■ **For Sergio, a Christian Reformed preacher** who is now attending Mass with his wife and working through many issues, doctrinal, personal, and vocational.

■ **For Drew, an Anglican priest** who finds himself, once again, drawn to the Catholic Church but who continues to have questions that need to be resolved.

■ **For Hunter, a Protestant seminary student** who is quickly becoming convinced that Catholicism is true, that the Lord will help him to navigate his next steps.

■ **For Walter, a former Assemblies of God pastor** who with his wife was welcomed into full communion with the Church Easter Vigil of '22 and who is developing a parish ministry to serve families who have dependents with intellectual disabilities.

Laity

■ **For Martha, a recent Convert**, for good health and discernment regarding treatment for ongoing health issue.

■ **For Heidi, a recent Convert**, for ongoing improved health of her beloved pet Taja. For the conversion and protection of her cousin Nathaniel and her brother Daniel.

■ **For Jaana-Marja, a Revert**, for guidance in finding a faithful priest to help her and her husband as they seek to return to the Church.

■ **For Morgan, a Nazarene**, for perseverance on her journey to the Church.

■ **For Abigail, an Anglican**, for discernment in how to become

integrated into Parish life more fully as she goes through RCIA

■ **For Katherine, an Independent Fundamentalist**, for a greater ability to practice humility, forgiveness and love toward others.

■ **For Alyssa, an Evangelical**, for a receptive heart and comfort as she walks through this journey and that she receives answers to her questions.

■ **For James and his wife who are former Catholics**, that their journey back to the Church would be blessed by the Lord Jesus.

■ **For Blake, a former Unitarian**, that the triune God would draw him back to the fullness of truth in the Catholic Church.

■ **For Eric, a Baptist in Georgia**, that his study of the history of the faith would call him Home to Mother Church.

■ **For Brannon, a Non-denominational Evangelical in California**, that his love for God, truth and the liturgy would draw him to the Holy Eucharist.

■ **For Nigel, a member of the United Church of Canada**, that he would soon receive a positive ruling on his annulment.

■ **For Steve, a Baptist in Arkansas**, that the Holy Spirit would guide him to faithful and uplifting Catholic podcasts.

■ **For a Muslim man in India**, that God would give him the courage and guidance to contact people at a Catholic parish who will guide him to the waters of baptism.

■ **For Jason, a Southern Baptist in North Carolina**, that his study of the holy Scriptures would continue to guide him to the Catholic Church.

■ **For Philip, a member of the Assemblies of God in Ontario**, that our Lord Jesus would grant him the healing that he needs.

HELPING THEM *Home*

An Interview With Longtime CHNetwork Staff Member Jim Anderson

With the notable exception of our founder, Marcus Grodi, nobody has been on staff longer than Jim Anderson, who currently serves as Ministry Membership and Pastoral Care Coordinator for CHNetwork. He joined the staff in May of 2001 (his first task on day one was assembling his own desk!) and has since worked with countless men and women on the journey toward the Catholic Faith, including the crucial work of maintaining long-term relationships with converts to make sure they're continuing to adjust well to life in the Church.

Jim has also been Catholic longer than anyone on staff! He was received into the Church in on July 25th, 1981, the feast of St. James. A former Protestant seminarian himself, Jim's name has been mentioned by numerous Journey Home guests as a help to them on their path into the Church.

In light of our apostolate's 30th anniversary this year, we asked Jim about some of his experiences from working for CHNetwork over the past 22 years:

Q: The Coming Home Network's visibility has risen quite a bit since you first joined the staff; how did you first encounter the work in those early years?

Jim: I attended the Defending the Faith Conference at the Franciscan University of Steubenville in June 1993. At the end of the conference, it was announced that a luncheon was to be held that afternoon, and any current or former non-Catholic clergy or seminarians, professors, etc. were invited to attend. I took up the invitation. It was at that luncheon, hosted by Marcus Grodi, that the founding of what would become known as the Coming Home Network was announced.

Q: Some readers may not realize how international our work is. What's your sense of how many countries our members come from?

Jim: The lion's share of the people who contact us are from the United States. In addition to that, we have been contacted by people seeking the fullness of the Truth from over 70 countries. Recently we were contacted by a Muslim man and his wife in Afghanistan who wish to become Catholic Christians. Because I speak German, I've also been able to correspond with several members from Germany in their own language.



Members of the Hawthorne Dominican community gather to watch Sr. Diana Marie, O.P., one of their order's own, on *The Journey Home*. Sr. Diana Marie is a former Mormon who shared her testimony in June of this year. Find out more about her community at hawthorne-dominicans.org.



Photo: Jim Anderson during his first appearance on *The Journey Home* in October 2001.

Q: You've witnessed so many *Journey Home* recordings—do you have any interesting stories from what it's like to have been behind-the-scenes of them for more than two decades?

Jim: There was the time that Marcus was interviewing a guest and a tornado warning was announced in Irondale, AL. The staff of EWTN evacuated the studio audience and got them to safety. Meanwhile, Marcus and his guest continued with the interview and completed the show. Everyone survived!

There was also the time that the scheduled *Journey Home* guest forgot that he was supposed to fly to Alabama to be on with Marcus. By the time we discovered that no one was going to show up, it was two hours before the beginning of the live broadcast. This gave Marcus the opportunity, with very little preparation, to talk about the Bible verses he never saw as a Protestant pastor. That idea of the "verses I never saw" has come to be one of the major recurring themes in our work.

Q: What has your experience over the years taught you about the challenges our CHNetwork members continue to face after they become Catholic?

Jim: When a person enters into full communion with the Catholic Church, it is one thing to arrive Home, and another to *feel* at home in the Church. Often it takes a bit of time for people to find their place in a parish. They are not used to Catholic culture, especially if it is a large parish. Sometimes they feel very alone, surrounded by people who can seem indifferent to them. Added to this is that very often, spouses, adult children and other friends and family members, who hold onto anti-Catholic beliefs, can make a new Catholic's life very difficult. In addition, clergy who enter the Church many times find themselves unemployed with no means to support their family. We do all that we can to encourage and support them through their time of struggles and transition.

Q: How have your roles changed since you first started with *The Coming Home Network* back in 2001?

Jim: I have worn many hats and have had many titles since I first began working with the Coming Home Network 22 years ago. For many years I screened and scheduled the guests for *The Journey Home*. I also ministered to the non-Catholic clergy who contacted CHNetwork seeking assistance with their journey to the Catholic Church. Most recently, I have the pleasure of assisting all male lay people who contact us who wish to learn about the Catholic faith. I also manage all of the new incoming emails that are sent to our apostolate. In addition, I run the teleprompter when we record episodes of *The Journey Home*.

*We're very grateful for Jim's experience and expertise here at *The Coming Home Network*! And we're thrilled that he's been able to help so many of our members in so many ways over the past two-plus decades.*

working a full time job. The fatigue finally got to me. We closed our church in 2007 and began to attend a large Vineyard church that was near our home, with lively music and positive sermons. My time in the Navy had provided me with a background in computers that opened opportunities for me in computer operations and software engineering, so I always had a career and an income. I worked for various government entities and finally started working for the Federal Government, retiring after thirty years of service.

Moving and Church Shopping

In 2009, my wife and I moved to Indianapolis when my job was transferred there. While in Indianapolis, we visited a number of churches—Reformed, Mennonite, Methodist, and a Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW)—but we finally settled into a megachurch that was part of the Reformed movement. They had three morning services: one for the more traditional folks, that had hymns and a choir, while the other two were more rock and roll oriented.

We attended the early morning traditional service so we could hear the choir and sing the hymns. We were gone a lot on weekends, so we weren't there all the time, but the pastor there took a paid sabbatical, then eventually left. From what I heard, some members of the congregation were not too happy with him, anyway. As a Protestant minister, you are evaluated on your ability to preach a good sermon, and if you don't connect with the people, you can find yourself looking for another job.

Turning Towards Catholicism

While living in Indiana, we took a cruise to Europe, visiting Barcelona, Rome, Athens, Istanbul, Ephesus and Malta. Seeing the Vatican and St. Peter's Basilica was amazing. Walking into that great building and viewing all of the history before us was so captivating that it made me want to become a Catholic right then and there.

In 2012, when I retired, Susanne and I made our way back to Colorado and settled in Pueblo West. We began to attend an Assembly of God church, but searching for something more, we moved to a Church of God fellowship—again finding a great group of people, beautiful music and worship. But still, something was missing in my life.

Years earlier, my wife and I had attended some funerals of our family members who were Catholic, and every time we would leave the church, we both felt something special. One weekend, we took a drive to the Santuario de Chimayo, a Catholic shrine in Chimayo, New Mexico. It is one of the most popular pilgrimage places in the United States. When we entered the chapel, we could feel the beautiful presence of the Holy Spirit. Many miracles have been attributed to the Lord through the Santuario. The visit left a huge impression on us.

Every time we went to a Catholic Mass, I was envious of the people receiving Communion. I began to study about the Catholic Church, and soon I could no longer attend services at the Protestant church we had chosen. Poor Susanne! She loved the worship there, but I could not bring myself to attend. I

explained to her what was taking place in my life, and I think she must have thought to herself, "What is going on with this guy?"

Finally, I asked her to go to Mass with me at a Catholic church, and she accepted. When we went to Mass, I was soaking it all in. From the moment the priest entered the sanctuary until the last benediction was given, I was seeing things in a different light than when I was younger and attending Mass just to satisfy my mom. By this point in my journey, every part of the Mass had taken on a new meaning for me.

I became fascinated with how the early Church formed after the Apostles passed away, and who took over the mantle of St. Peter and kept it moving forward. Reading about the early Church fathers, like Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius and others, made me realize how God used holy men to develop a Church that would last two thousand years. Reading about the heresies that were often unfortunately created by clergy members who were Catholic, and how the Church had to call councils to discuss these various new doctrines and determine what was true and what was false, led me to believe that these men of God were led by the Holy Spirit. Some of these heresies still exist in some form today, but the Church has stood strong against them all.

What I loved about the early Church is that it was not just one man coming up with a doctrine for the Church, but it was a collaborative effort, with bishops from the various regions getting together to discuss and approve the teachings according to what had been handed down to them from the beginning. Also, seeing that the early Church was liturgical in practice, and that we got the Bible from the Catholic Church, completely changed the way I thought about Christianity.



"Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false irenicism, in which the purity of Catholic doctrine suffers loss and its genuine and certain meaning is clouded.

"At the same time, the Catholic faith must be explained more profoundly and precisely, in such a way and in such terms as our separated brethren can also really understand."

Unitatis Redintegratio, 11

...Journeys Home Continued...

For years, I could not let go of the Oneness doctrine and struggled to fit in, because in the UPC we didn't believe in the Trinity, while nearly every Christian denomination outside of the Oneness movement does believe in the Trinity. I began to immerse myself in studying the doctrine of the Trinity, and the more I studied, the more sense it made to me. After reading about the early Church, how they believed in the Trinity, and the importance of the Eucharist, I was ready to make the change. I earnestly prayed that God would lead me and Susanne to the True Church. I remember reading about a professor named Mark McNeil, who was a former UPC minister, and how he managed to study his way into the Catholic Church. I found his story through the Coming Home Network, an apostolate formed by a former Presbyterian minister, Marcus Grodi, who had converted to the Catholic faith. His testimony and that of others helped me to see that it was possible to return to the Church. At this point, Susanne was not quite on board yet, although she would attend Mass with me at various churches.

Returning to the Church

I got in touch with Ken Hensley, a former Baptist minister who is in charge of Pastoral Care at the Coming Home Network. We talked on the phone, and I signed up to receive their monthly newsletter describing different issues and conversions. Honestly, these testimonies were such an inspiration to me that I couldn't help but want to become a Catholic. Ken arranged for a Zoom meeting with folks from different parts of the country. Susanne was impressed with the folks on the meeting. We planned on going to one of the retreats sponsored by CHNetwork, but COVID struck. We then started doing daily devotionals at home, using materials from the Catholic Church.

During this time, I prayed for my wife, knowing that this transition was difficult for her. As the pandemic began to wind down, we still had not attended any church, but just continued to do our private devotionals. I was aching to get back to Mass, but I knew that Susanne needed time to process everything.

One night, we were at dinner with one of Susanne's sisters, who asked where we were going to church. Susanne replied by saying that we were interested in going back to the Catholic Church. It took everyone by surprise—including me—but I realized that she had been trying to be open to the Lord, and He was showing her the way back.

I immediately signed us up for the CHNetwork retreat that was being held in Milford, Ohio in March of 2023. We made a road trip of it and were graciously greeted by some wonderful people at the retreat. Meeting people that were on the same journey as us, along with others who were a few steps ahead of us along the journey, was inspiring. Protestant ministers who had given up their livelihood by leaving their pastorates and joining the Catholic Church made us realize how difficult it was for them, but it was encouraging to us to see that they were willing to do it because of their love for God and the Church. We enjoyed visiting with them and sharing our story. Susanne and I were a bit concerned about Confession, but we had a very wonderful

Monsignor, Jeffrey Steenson, who helped navigate that process for us. We were prayed for by the group before our confession, and the next day, after a lapse of almost fifty years, Susanne and I had the wonderful opportunity to receive the Eucharist. I can't describe the feeling that I had when I realized that I was actually taking the precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We both looked at each other and shed tears of joy. We felt that we were honoring the words of Jesus in John 6:53–58.

That evening, we attended our first Eucharistic Adoration, and it was beautiful. Sitting in silence and meditating on the Eucharist before us provided us a new perspective on being Catholic. The retreat was informative, and just listening to the walks of faith that people were taking was exciting. We made a lot of new friends, people who will always be a part of our lives. Heading home from Milford, Ohio, we located our parish church, St. Paul the Apostle, in Pueblo West. We began attending there and had our marriage blessed by our priest, Father Edmundo Valera.

Leaving the Pentecostal/Apostolic organizations was difficult because of the wonderful people we came to know, love, and appreciate. On the other hand, there is no more searching for truth, no more looking for a church, no more debating various doctrines, no more wandering in the wilderness of confusing beliefs. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn more about the history of the Church—the one that was started by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am grateful for my beautiful wife and best friend, Susanne. She is my true north and is at my side in this journey. Our daughter and son were brought up in the Oneness movement but are no longer associated with it. Our prayers are that, one day, our son and daughter, along with their spouses, our grandchildren, family and friends, will come to understand that our move to the Catholic Church was done with much prayer, study, research, meditation, and sincerity. I feel that we have joined the ranks of a lot of other ministers and lay people who felt the tug of the Holy Spirit and studied their way into the Church. I know that it will be difficult for some of our family and friends to accept our journey. But it is our journey, and we will continue to explore the depth and richness of our Catholic faith. ■

*Michael Garcia attends Mass at St. Paul the Apostle parish in Pueblo West, Colorado. After retiring from the government, he got involved with genealogy and wrote his first book, entitled *Memorias de Mi Familia: Memories of My Family*. He enjoys reading about history, studying the Bible and learning about the early Church. Married to Susanne, they have two grown children, Kristina and Michael, and five granddaughters: Isabela, Ameya, Olivia, Sierra and Luciana. They love going for walks, traveling and camping on their property in southern Colorado.*

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



ARE YOU PLANNING ON ENTERING
The Church
THIS YEAR?

If you are starting OCIA classes this Fall with an eye toward possibly entering the Church next Easter, please let us know so that we can accompany you on your journey!

Remember, whatever the status of your spiritual journey, we'd love to hear an update and answer any questions you might have.

Please reach out to our Pastoral Care Team at info@chnetwork.org