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From age 4-17, I was forcibly taken to Pentecostal churches with my mother, where the folks were just a hair shy of the type of “holy rollers” who would be inclined to handle snakes and drink quinine, just to prove that God would protect them.

At age 16, I started dating who is now still my princess bride since I was 19. SHE had been raised from age three in a United Methodist Church. I went with her, and it was very tame compared to the church I had been attending, and since I was growing out of my parents' control, my mother was content as long as I went somewhere to church each week. Therefore I became a member of the UMC.

From 1988 through June of 1992, I was in the military, but was injured in line-of-duty, and ended up being retired from active duty at age 22.

From 1992-2001, I worked in the civilian sector, but didn't attend church very often at all until about I guess it was 2007. During that period of time in the UMC, I explored a felt call to ordained ministry in their candidacy program. I discerned it was not for me. Later, I began attending their “Lay Ministry Academy.” Due to having a third absence, which was justified by the 32+ staples in me from a surgery, I was dismissed from that academy. However, I had become very involved in, and at, the local church.

While I was heavily involved there, I saw many, many things that illuminated how “political” that particular church operates. I detested most of it, and tried to change what I could, but had little to no luck in doing so.

There was a pastoral change, and many of the members we had known very well for a very long time, left. We ended up leaving as well, and went to a UMC closer to home for around eighteen months. After that, my wife decided she wanted to go back to her original church, where we were married, and where our kids were baptized and confirmed.

The thing about this that ended up causing us to leave again was the new pastor lady. She behaved more like a CEO than a minister. And, her sermons were much more like lectures and financial begging than ministry. I tried to get involved again, and did teach a Sunday school “Disciple” class about halfway through the guide book, but things were just not good there.

It became very clear to me that the church was headed yet further south one Sunday when, for new members' baptisms, a “tub” type thing was placed where the altar used to be and people were dunked in it, and it became an entertainment sort of service for the majority of the people in the service that day.

In addition, there was a Sunday school teacher guy who is gay, and he had a clique of followers who would go to his class, but rarely attend the worship services. I had a serious issue with that as well.

So, my wife and I started looking for another church. After a few Sundays, we went to one where one of my childhood friends had invited us. They had a set of drums on a rolling platform, and the electric guitars and bass were so loud that it literally hurt my ears, and I am only 46, AND have hearing loss, so it had to be WAY too loud to do that.

We came home after that service, disgusted not only by the entertainment style of “worship,” but also because the pastor spent an entire hour after his sermon essentially begging for, and trying to guilt

people into, helping with the kids from toddlers through High School age. It was very difficult to sit through, but since we are the polite sort of people, we waited until it was all over before we nearly raced for the door to get away.

After that, we came home and headed upstairs for our usual Sunday relax and watch TV time. While lying there, in between conversations, I was praying.

Like a ton of bricks had hit me on the head, I suddenly turned to my wife and told her, “Why don't we just convert to Catholicism,” and me having no idea how to go about it.

My wife's grandmother was Catholic, but when she married a Protestant, she started going to his church, otherwise my wife would have already have been Catholic, and that may have very well excluded me from dating her to begin with.

Anyway, it took me some time to convince her I was serious about converting, but two days later, I managed to get her to locate and contact our local Catholic Church, which is fortunately located less than three miles from our home.

She was told on the phone that RCIA classes would be in their second session that very week. We were able to start at the third class one week later.

Now think about this: Until I was 17, it was preached straight from a fist banging pulpit that Jesus was going to come back, I better be ready or I'd burn, etc., and that Catholics were ALL going to hell. I even used to make very rude remarks about the Pope saying different things that were broadcasted on television, personally insulting him with very disparaging language and remarks.

But now, here I suddenly am in a class to convert to the Church that I had always been told was heretical and that every one was going to burn in hell fire for eternity. Also, “they” worshipped Mary, had idols in the Church, and varying other incorrect statements about our Mother Church.

The really cool thing is, I totally adored the very first class session, and by the end of our RCIA classes, we had both gotten to the point that we looked forward to Thursday evenings and were always excited to go to those classes.

Come Easter Vigil of 2015, we became members of the One, Holy and Apostolic Church. Easter vigil service was the most sacred, holy, spiritually touching time I have ever experienced in my entire life, even though I grew up with older ladies “up at the altar” being anointed and supposedly being “slain in the Spirit, speaking in tongues,” etc. et al. Seems like if all that stuff were real, some of it would have touched me at SOME point before last year. It did not.

I could not be happier than I am now to be a Catholic man, a Knight of Columbus, and a guy who is experiencing spiritual peace for the first time in his 46 year life.

Also, although I had already read the Bible (KJV, NASB, NIV) probably over 30 times as a Protestant, I am now almost finished reading the NABRe, while following along in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary. I've read about half of the writings of the Church Fathers at newadvent.org, along with every catechism from Aquinas to modern day, miscellaneous other Catholic books, and hours upon hours of apologetics videos on YouTube.

I am so pleased to be being enlightened as to the TRUE Church history that I previously did not even know existed as well. Right now I am still in the “neophyte” stage, and realize there is much I have to learn, and more to learn than I have years to absorb. But that is fine! I'm the happiest man I have EVER been. I feel, finally, that I actually belong where I go to Church, and am also more sure that I can achieve eternal life with God than I ever was.

Catholicism Rocks and I love it!!

Also, I would like to express my thanks to Steve Ray for his YouTube video about the Rock, Chair, and keys. That one was extremely helpful to me, and it also directed me to catholicconvert.com. I try to stay active in the message boards, and have been able to gain free learning resource links on the web as well.

I have always been “into” academics, and all this learning really excites me. Further, I feel like I was wearing a spiritual blindfold my entire life, right up until the very first RCIA class, when the knot started being untied, through Easter Vigil 2015 when the whole blindfold was removed, and I still see the brightest light of God that I could ever imagine possible.

May God keep, bless, and protect all of my Catholic brothers and sisters around this world, and please realize there are a multitude of people out there who are wearing the blindfold that I was. Thankfully, it appears that God Himself led me to have mine removed, but there are a multitude of people “out there” in this world who are in the same blinded state I was in.

Please do not be afraid to share this wonderful faith, and everything involved in it! I wish a Catholic had talked to me years ago who would have had the ability to educate me enough to see that I was definitely in the wrong churches.