

My Journey from Protestant to Roman Catholicism

By: Edward (Ed) Boothe Jr.

I was born in the Fall of 1974 into a Protestant family, with one sibling that has strong religious beliefs, sound morals and discipline. My family attended Church every Sunday. My sister, and I attended youth group regularly along with a weekly Church service on Wednesdays with other Church activities throughout the week occasionally. I remember our Church being a close-knit family and the members would do anything for you in a time of need. If you had a family fall ill or die the Church would come together to relieve the stress that goes along with that, such as picking up the kids for Church, providing meals, grocery shopping or a simple phone call to inquire how the family is doing. My parents were insistent upon my sister and I being raised going to church and being an active participant.

When I was about twelve years old my mother enrolled me into Catechism, where you start your journey to become an adult in the Church. I fondly remember this time in my life as I loved our pastor, he was a kind and gentle person but firm when he needed to be. His family was a lot like mine, his kids were about my age and we went to school together. I specifically remember being taught how to read the Bible and how to locate different books in the Bible. I do not want to paint the picture we were memorizing books in the Bible because I believe this is one of the biggest impressions my pastor impressed upon me. Memorization is short term and we wanted God to be everlasting in our minds, hearts, and soul. He wanted us to remember what he taught us and the importance of what we were taught. Once I completed Catechism and became an adult in the Church, around the age of thirteen, I was able to partake in Holy Communion and I could not wait. I had spent the better part of a year learning God's teaching and solidifying my own religious beliefs and morals. This was a big day, Easter Sunday, and I was able to partake in Holy Communion for this first time. On that Easter Sunday, I received Holy Communion and felt like I was on top of the world and felt like Jesus was with me and I could accomplish anything. As I got older, I continued to go to church and participate in other Church activities on a regular basis and continued to grow in my Faith.

In the summer of 1990, my father retired from the military and like most military veterans he was seeking a job in the private sector and we ended up moving. I started my sophomore year of high school in a totally different state where I had to make new friends and I had to insert myself into a new life not personally but spiritually. Again, we found a new Church to go to where my family and I attended regularly, however, something was different this time. I could not pinpoint the exact difference.

A couple years later I graduated high school and started college where my opportunities to attend Church were still there, however, I made the personal decision to attend when I could and when convenient and not able to participate in Holy Communion as much as I would have liked or needed. Even though I did not attend and participate in Church as much as I should have during that time of my life, I would think about God and all that my pastor had taught me on a regular basis including reading Bible verses when I had some down time, or I was not busy studying. While in college, I met my wife of twenty-three years, we graduated college in 1998 and started our life together.

During the time my wife and I were in college, I would attend Church with her, she is Roman Catholic. As you may know or can imagine, being Protestant and being raised in a Protestant Church and family, attending the Roman Catholic Mass for the first time I was lost, and I did not feel like my spiritual needs were being met. I did not give up, I continued to go to Church with my wife and my own family and continued to learn about the Catholic Faith. Through my learnings of the Catholic Faith, while attending

Mass with my wife and children for almost ten years my desire to continue learning and wanting to be closer to God grew stronger each day.

In the Spring of 2011, I had been thinking about and praying to God about joining the Roman Catholic Church and wondering if this would be the right choice for me. On a warm day in April of 2011, I was preparing to attend a school advisory council meeting at St. Mary's of the Snows Roman Catholic Church, the school my children attended at the time, and as I was driving to Church for this meeting, I thought to myself if I would ever get the answer to my question, whether I should convert to Catholicism. It's important to point out that as soon as the thought entered my head at the time it was gone... When I arrived at the Church for my meeting, I parked my car and as soon as I entered the Church the principal greeted me and asked how my day was going, a general greeting, nothing special. My response to him was "I am good, but I feel like I need to do something different." I have no earthly idea why I responded with that specific answer; however, he was interested in why I responded that way and asked me what I meant. Our conversation continued and I told him I had been thinking about converting to Catholicism but had not quite made up my mind. As a result of our conversation, he introduced me to his wife, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) coordinator for our parish, who happened to be there for their RCIA meeting that night.

Once the introduction was made, I had a brief conversation with the RCIA coordinator and decided I would start RCIA the following week to explore the opportunity and start my journey to convert to Catholicism. I continued RCIA and completed my conversion to the Roman Catholic Faith. On April 7, 2012 I attended Easter Vigil with my family to participate in Mass for the very first time as one Roman Catholic family. This was a special day; I was a full member of a Church family and could receive the Holy Eucharist. On that night as I received the Eucharist, I knew without a doubt that I was receiving the Body and Blood of our Precious Lord, Jesus Christ. This was a feeling and belief that I had never experienced, and I know now, without a doubt, that every time I receive the Body and Blood during Mass, I am receiving the Real Body and Blood of our Precious Lord, Jesus Christ.

Your brother in Christ,

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Son-in-law of Judy Bortel