



The Trials of a Catholic Warrior

The Early Years

My story begins with my parents. I was raised in the Midwest close to Kansas City, Missouri. My Mother had been raised in the Pentecostal Holiness tradition and my Father was raised in the RLDS



(Mormon) tradition. My parents first attempted to find common ground in religion as my Mother investigated Mormonism. This did not go far, but one positive result came from it. Mormonism taught my

Mother the doctrine of authority. She was raised an anti-Catholic and this did not agree with her spirituality. My Mother experienced many things that could only be answered later with her discovery of the truth presented by Catholicism. My Father was not a strong member of the RLDS but our background in the family was. Our family heritage going back 4 generations participated in the creation of the RLDS founded in Independence Mo. (It should be noted: when I was preparing to go to Iraq before the first Gulf War, my Father was concerned for me as this was suppose to be the “Mother of all wars” as Hussein called it. My Father opened up to me saddened by the fact that I was a Catholic and not a Mormon. I told him that my being Catholic was not a matter of chance, but conviction. I stated several reasons why, but I certainly didn’t want to create a problem here and told him that I loved him). In the early 1960’s, my parents divorced when I was between 6-7 years old. That was a tough time for me and I remember the arguing that went on. By this time, my Mother was introduced to the Catholic Church and decided to send me to Catholic school. I was baptized at the age of 4 years old and that officially began my journey home. In those early days, the most I remember about church was my Father. He would attend Mass with Mom, and I would

get a good spanking for playing with the kneelers. I still remember that



quite well! After my parents divorced, I never saw my Father but maybe once or twice a year. I was not a great student growing up as sports dominated my interest. I was a C-B student and that was o.k. with me. I spent a lot of time on the basketball courts playing one on one or any combination you can think of. I played a lot of ball growing up in the Little League program in Blue Springs Mo. That was some of the best years of my life. I had some good coaches and youth leaders that were very good with us. I went to a Catholic School in Blue Springs Mo. called “St. John Le Lande”. I played on the youth sports teams, basketball and flag football. I also participated in track. I still have some of the ribbons we won participating in those events. I am thankful for the Priests and the volunteers who were outstanding role models for all of us. I credited them by their example, that I never have been drunk in my life, smoked cigarettes, or done any drugs. I never had sex with anyone until after I met my first wife at age 22. I have tried to

honor their example by doing some of the same things with my children and their teams growing up. I really remember the nuns who taught most of the classes and ran the school. Sr. Bernadette was that typical nun that many remember; she whacked me countless times with a ruler. I remember walking into class from recess laughing and she slapped my smile right off my face. That was our relationship. Most of the nuns were great teachers and really did give us good examples. I loved the habits they wore. I thought it was like being in the military. In the early years, there was not a lot of talk about sex except for jokes that were said on the ball diamond or on the basketball court. Relatives used to sit and drink laughing and joking about it, but I personally knew nothing about it. I was very naive about it. I never got into that kind of thing at all. I was good at pranks and things like that, but never “bad” jokes. To this day, I do not sing sick cadences or approve of secular music that is immoral. My understanding of the subject at that time was very limited. My mother was married twice after my Father’s divorce. I remember both men very well. Nick Burris was a good guy who was a carpenter, he had two daughters, and we lived in a fine house in Blue Springs Mo. That didn’t last very long, maybe a couple of years or so.



Henry was the Indian, half Potowonami and half Kickapoo. He died in Oct of 1998. (I was stationed in Korea at the time). This marriage lasted over thirty years proving that this relationship endured a lot more than the others. There were the fights, the threats, the cheating, and yes, the Alcohol. But a couple of things became significant for my Mother. She began to practice her faith. It took her a long time to get through her divorces and remarriages, but finally, the Church did allow her to come to the sacraments. The earlier marriages were annulled. We would attend Powwow's and rodeos and camp out around them. Henry had many relatives that lived on the Reservation in Horton Kansas. I became exposed to a whole new world. One evening in 1968, Henry and my Mother were involved in a near fatal automobile accident. They were hit broadside by another vehicle that had run a stop sign and hit the passenger door. That was where my Mother was

sitting and she took most of the impact. She had her back broken in two places and had to be immobilized for many months. During this time, I was placed with my Aunt Terry who lived near Stockton Mo.



I lived with my Aunt for nearly two years. I was first introduced to public school there at Stockton and was able to play football and basketball. My Aunt had a large farm with a lot of hogs and cattle. I began taking care of chores and farm work and helped my Aunt and uncle a lot. I learned a lot. I had a cousin who was big with weight lifting and football. Stockton was very competitive and I was able to see my cousin do well. He was years older than me. He was closer to the age of my older brother (David) who was also a high school standout with football and wrestling. My brother and cousin both were two guys I looked up to on the ball field.



At that time David was serving in Viet Nam. During this time, I hardly remember anything about the practice of my Catholic faith. Our relatives were not Catholic and didn't really practice anything.



Eventually, I was returned to my Mother as she was able to resume her life. I went back to the Catholic School where I had been going up until the accident. It was great to resume my friendships and plan for the upcoming sports that we always did. During all this time, I never had a real girl friend, nor did I ever do anything that would lead to that. I was seriously naïve about girls. I was interested in them but didn't know how to express myself and I feared rejection. Sports dominated my life. I was around people who did speak of their relationships and the girls and the sex. That would just make me more curious, but I never had the opportunity and I avoided those situations. I didn't think any girl would find interest in me at this time. Being raised and taught in a

Catholic School with some of the great examples I was given, I realized that sex was wrong out side of marriage. So I thank God for protecting me from all that as I grew up. But, I was still under the influence of the culture. I think it is very sad the way our culture has continued to go down the wrong path with all the music, movies, and loose living. It's everywhere. I would dream and hope for a meaningful relationship, but my self-confidence and the opportunities never materialized throughout high school. Most of the girls would make jokes about me so I never got close to any of them. Sports continued to be my release and security. Henry and my Mother bought a farm in south central Missouri near Stockton.



We were just a few miles from where my Aunt Terry lived. This was tough for me because I was leaving my friends and the people I knew and loved in Blue Springs for good. We moved into a small town called Humansville. I went to public school there beginning with the 9th grade. This was not like Catholic School at all! The environment was much different. It was very difficult to be accepted there. I was under a lot of

harrassment and sports were the only thing that helped me through all that. It wasn't until my junior year that things began to get better for me. During this period, my faith was there, but it wasn't strong. The Sunday morning battles were what Church we were going to. I wanted to go to Stockton where they had donuts and fellowship after Mass, and my Mother wanted to go to Humansville because it was closer. I guess, in time, we just quit going for awhile.



I became quite the hay hauler and during the summers, that's what I did. It was certainly an opportunity to build character! It built me up from being a skinny, scrawny little kid into a well conditioned fighting machine. It helped me develop a solid work ethic. I would take two rows and throw them on the flatbed of the truck and hurl bails of hay over 8 rows high. I would throw them over the truck just for sport! I never had time for girls. We lived about 7 miles out of town and Henry

worked at Lake City near Independence Mo, so we didn't have a car during the week as he would travel back and forth. In order for me to play sports for the high school, I had to walk or run from the school (7



miles). That is what I did for more than two years. After practice and games, I would walk home. This was out in the boondocks! Out there, we had no street lights and cars. I would sometimes outrun wild dogs, jump over snakes, or move around those things best left alone (skunks)! It was mostly dirt roads. This was another opportunity for character building. I would run home in the rain, snow, ice, and heat. I became a good cross country runner doing this. I remember after one basketball game, it was about 10:00 or after, it was 10 degrees, and the roads were slick with snow and ice. The coach crept up behind me as I was about to leave town. He looked at me and said he couldn't let me do it, let me walk home in this. I remember his face and how he just shook his head. I was quite thankful. There were the times when it would get scary walking in the pitch black of the night and you hear this barking and

growling running at you. I learned how to run fast and throw rocks accurately when had too!



School dances and proms were a challenge, but I always got by. I would dance all the dances primarily for the exercise. I would be fascinated with the girls, but I was never involved with any of them. The one girl I did like was very popular and always had a boyfriend so I never had an opportunity. My confidence in that department never improved and so I never dated in high school. I will say, when my Mother did have a car, I would meet her in the local pub where I became the greatest shuffle board player in the whole region. The problem with this was when my Mother would go there; we would end up being there until closing. That was a serious problem. Fortunately, when she began to practice her Catholic faith, that lifestyle changed drastically! I really became indifferent about my faith, but I was pleased with how my Mother was

able to change her life. It began to slowly have an impact on my own life. I simply did not know the questions to ask let alone the answers to find. Our home life had been rocky because of the marriages, and the moving around. My Mother's health would bother her. She had a lot of headaches because of the treatments for her back. I remember her



scooting from one plant to another when she would be out in the garden. She suffered a great deal for a long time. I had developed a strong sense of dedication for anything I tried to tackle. I felt there was always a hard right even though there may be an easy wrong. Through my sports philosophy, I felt that my best defense was a good offense. So if I felt strongly about something, I put what I had into it. My Mother began to feel that I would have made a great lawyer. That was something I never gave any thought to. I would try to fix problems as they came at me. When I was a sophomore, Henry bought a horse we called Thunder. She was a beautiful quarter-horse, very friendly and great with kids. We would ride her for fun, plus also to help us with our livestock. Thunder became very useful when cows would get out of the



fence and we had to get them in. My brother and I spent a lot of time fixing fence. I would chop wood in the forest primarily for firewood, but also to build my arms for baseball. I developed a powerful swing that helped me build my strength. During all this time, I never developed bad language or the habit of cussing. I'm thankful for that too! I was certainly around it quite a bit. Regarding my Catholic faith during the early years, there is not a lot to speak of other than the fact my Mother laid the found Alter boy, and I received Baptism, Confession, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. You might say that I had a typical Catholic upbringing, but it was altered due to divorce and apathy. The Catholic School did little to prepare me against Fundamental, Evangelical Protestantism. At the time I didn't know what all this was. I'm not sure if I really understood what a Protestant was. All that would soon change. I can say that up to this point, I had no sex life and I was very naïve about it. I was extremely curious about it because of what others had said in jokes, music, and the movies.

Because of what my Mother went through, and other people that I knew, I did believe that marriage was forever. My high school years would be summed up with being nominated high School All-American in basketball. We had a decent team for a small school.



I would shoot free throws during study hall and the most I ever hit in a row was 144 straight! I played baseball for our high school but wasn't able to play tackle football because our school didn't offer it. That was not cool at all! I grew up listening to Johnny Cash and could relate to his music. Johnny would be someone that gave me a lot to think about. I received an album from someone every birthday and Christmas.

During my senior year, I got an old 1965 one ton Chevy truck with a flatbed that was a 4 speed on the floor. I would have to push it down a hill to jump start it, but we got around in it. There were many good times and there were many times that were not so good, but continued



to grow from everything we experienced. I knew that in college, I wanted to continue in sports. I wanted to play pro-baseball and I was going to do the best I could to make this dream come true.

The College Years

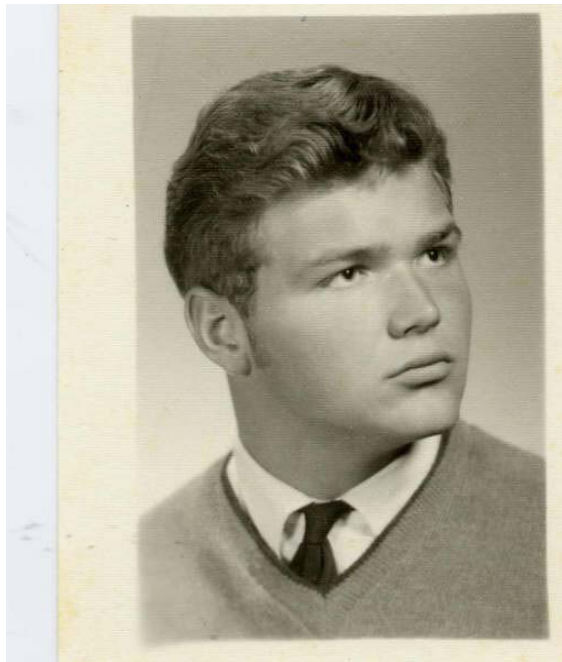
I graduated high School May 1976. I was accepted to go to a College near Branson Missouri called the “School of the Ozarks”. I would work part time to finish my education through the School system. I kissed Mom goodbye, said bye to my little brother, and my step-dad, Henry drove me to the college. I arrived there early that June! I was very excited when I arrived at the School of the Ozarks. The first place that I went to was the gym. The bleachers and seats was a lot like Southwest Baptist in Bolivar. I remember looking at the indoor swimming pool and the strong smell of chlorine. I wanted to check it all out! I went to the ball diamond to see where I hoped I would be playing

the next few years. It was great! I also looked at the Campus Chapel and the Museum. These places were excellent. The campus organization advertised themselves as “nondenominational” meaning that all denominations were welcome. I would later discover that they were really Presbyterian but respectful to the other groups. The school had rules concerning chapel. We were all expected to make a certain amount of their services and convo’s. That’s how it all began. I quickly got dressed out for basketball and went to the gym and began playing ball. After about 3-4 hours shooting hoops, and playing 3 on 3, I went to my room and met my roommates. These guys would be my roommates for nearly three years. I did not have a car, but I was always able to find someone who would be going to Branson to find something to do. Branson Missouri in the middle to late 1970’s had not yet reached the boom that she would receive in later years. There was only the one lane street that went through the town and traffic was not the best. The area was very beautiful! Point Lookout, a part of the College Campus, is a huge bluff and cliff over looking the lake. I would be assigned as a janitor working in the dorm where we lived. That’s what I would be going to earn my college education. That’s what I did for most of the semester. I played summer baseball for the College

which participated in a small semi-pro league. The Coach would use this opportunity to keep the ball players in shape during the off-season. My biggest highlight this summer was when I was playing left field. There was a power hit that went way over my head and I was able to make an over the back catch as I ran for it. It was caught and reported by Ned Reynolds of KY-3 TV in Springfield Mo. That is one play I wish I could have recorded from the TV Station. That season, I nearly had a 500 batting average! I felt very good about myself and in what I was doing. I was in great shape and I made the baseball team. Every Friday evening there would be a dance. I usually went to these because I could meet new people, have some fun dancing (great exercise), and just to get out of the dorm. At this point, I didn't have any relationships with any of the girls. I guess that old confidence problem never got any better. Girls would dance with me, but that is a far cry different from going with me. I never pressed the issue. No girl would really seriously contemplate going with me. Plus, I was very naïve about them and I guess it showed. By this time, I was clearly a "nominal Catholic" as I didn't go to Mass or talk about it. My roommates didn't know I had a Catholic background for a couple of years. (I think it's important to state here that this situation was not the church's fault, it was my fault.

It was not my Mother's fault, it was my fault). This fault would eventually lead to some serious lack of wisdom on my part. I believe that if I had been active in my faith, I would not have been so gullible.

Not long after I started college, it was early July. I received a call from the Chaplain that I needed to come and see him. I was informed that my brother David had died. I remember the funeral and how my Mother played the piano with her close relatives around her. It was a very solemn time. David died on July 4th 1976.



The motive of his death was never found. It is believed that he was robbed as he was on his way home from his girlfriends birthday party. He was not seen alive after that. David was found three days later hanging in the forest with the signs of a struggle and his money missing.

I still pray that he was ready to meet God. A thousand people will die each day not knowing that this is their last day.

One day, as a friend of mine and I were about to go play basketball, we were stopped by a girl looking to play tennis with someone. She had recognized my friend and asked him if he would like to play. He said no, but offered me as an alternative instead. It didn't matter to me and so I decided to play tennis. The significance of the tennis played that day would not be known or felt immediately. It would take years to understand the ramifications of what turned out from this event. The tennis we played probably lasted little more than an hour. Afterwards, I went to the gym and played basketball with my friends. Nothing significant occurred during that day that would lead anyone to think anything about it. My Catholic faith began to decline as I never participated with anything Catholic. I began to go to the collage chapel with my friends because we were all required to make a number of them. I remember we use to like to go to chapel because they offered grape juice for communion. We liked the cracker that they used. It wasn't really spiritual to me. It was symbolic to them and I couldn't relate that at all. I didn't regard any religious value to it. I was completely wrong in the way I acted about that. That carried over

to my Catholic identity. It was non-existent. My roommates, teammates, and friends didn't know I had a Catholic background. I didn't speak about it. My drive was to play baseball. I would run with thirty-pound weights, run stairs, and hit the weight room. I was the only student in memory that got an A in weight lifting using the clean and jerk method. I put up over 220 pounds over my head while only weighing in at about 170 pounds. I would train with some of the juniors and seniors who had been at the college for a while. They were great with helping me; I remember our shortstop taking me to the racquetball court and drilling me with chasing the ball off the wall. It was great hand and glove control. I would practice swinging the bat and developed a better eye. This was my routine. Every now and then, the girl who played tennis with me would come on campus looking for someone to run with. If she didn't find anyone, she would check to see if I was available. I would find a message on the board where she had wanted to do something. If I was available, I didn't mind jogging, as I would be there a lot on most Fridays. From very early on, some of my friends warned me about her because she was a partier. She was wild at parties. I never went to those kinds of events and I never gave it all much thought. If she came on post looking for me to run with

her, I saw no harm in that. One morning as I was about to eat breakfast at the dining hall, I began to read the morning news flash. It headlined a story of a kidnapping that took place the night before. As I read it I discovered that the person kidnapped was my uncle Phillip. My uncle had just bought me a \$60.00 baseball glove and given me a ride back to college after a short visit home. I immediately went to the library to find the story in all the local newspapers. It became one of the largest manhunts in the history of Southern Missouri. There were roadblocks everywhere, mounted police, helicopters flying about. Some local teenagers had been doing small time robberies to buy drugs and they plotted in a nearby field to rob my Aunt Terry and Uncle Phillip. When they knocked on the door, Uncle Phillip opened the door and they forced their way in the house with guns. They took my uncle's cane and began to beat him with it. When he would scream, they would tease him to beg for mercy. When he would they beat him more. My Aunt Terry was tied to the bed and raped by all four of the criminals. Finally, she escaped about 4:00 in the morning and that's when they decided to take Uncle Phillip. The police looked for them for three days When they captured one of the suspects. He took the police where Uncle Phillip had been killed. They had shot him several times with

high powered rifles at point blank in the legs, they cut him with knives, then finally set him on fire where he died. This was horrible. I went home shortly after that and saw the house where it had been ransacked. It looked as if grenades had been thrown in every room. All the suspects were captured and in jail. I wanted quick revenge! I had a couple of good friends that boxed and encouraged me to box along with them in Springfield Missouri. I had never boxed before, but was up for the challenge. As it ended up, they lost their matches and I won mine. It was a unique experience! After that I received a visitor looking for me who happened to be an armature champion in Boxing. He was from Florida. He had been to the fights and watched my matches. He wanted to invite me to go to Florida with him and train three nights a week for a hundred dollars a night. I declined because I still had hopes playing in the big leagues. I remember he came to my room as I was lifting weights. We had a room full of friends cheering me on as I was cranking 185 lbs clean and jerk 25 times. I never saw him again after that. I was most honored when the track coach tried to enlist me to join his cross country team. After a five mile run with a thirty pound weight vest, he would approach me every time he saw me. My love was baseball and the sports conflicted. My first year at college was filled

with sports and enthusiasm. I really had great room mates. We would talk all the time about anything and everything. Sometimes they would ask me about the girl who would come to see me once in a while. I never had much to say about her in the beginning. She would come by when she had the time, but maybe once every two weeks or so. She would sometimes come and see me if she was troubled about something and felt like talking. She never spoke to me about her lifestyle as I believe she was ashamed about that. On one occasion, as we were playing racquetball, She sat down in the middle of the court and began to cry. She began to talk of suicide. She said that she wanted to kill herself and that she had been praying to God for someone to lead her to the true faith, the true church. She indicated that she wanted to be faithful to God. At the time I was not practicing my faith, even though I was not living recklessly. I thought maybe if I were to become more involved with her I could help her. I asked her if she would like to go to a movie. "The Shaggy DA" was playing and I would like to go see it. That was our first movie that we went to see. I took her to see "Star Wars" and "Rocky" when those movies came to Branson. I would sometimes go to the Baptist church with her as she did try to get back to her roots. She didn't like to talk about religion with me, but she did begin wanting to

go. I was indifferent about religion and had not been to Mass the whole time I was at college. This girl began to come to some of our games to watch us play. My friends were noticing that I was spending time with her and I began to hear the rumors. I didn't worry about it because I was not serious about her. I didn't know how to be. I do think I had been a positive person for her and encouraged her to go back to school which she ultimately did. One night she invited me to come to her trailer to eat stake, mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, and pumpkin pie. That was difficult for me to refuse. I noticed the trailer was small but decent. She fixed it all and we shared some good interesting talk about school, her work, and about Branson. I stretched out on her bed as we continued to talk. She didn't have a lot of room and that was the most comfortable. I felt like I could fall asleep! She then surprised me as she laid down next to me casual like. I continued to talk about baseball when she kissed me. I didn't know what to do at all. Then everything began to fall apart. All the rumors about her came to mind, all the curiousness I had began to surface. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. She began to make out with me and I basically followed her lead. At one point, she became upset with herself, or appeared to, And acted like she didn't want to do this, but then decided

to so that I would “gain some experience”! I must say that I had never experienced anything like that in my life. I remember afterwards feeling that I had really committed a mortal sin. In reality, I did. I felt the only way to make it up to God was to follow up with it and pursue her. For her, I was just another guy. I found out later that she had seduced another guy just a few days before, but I came back. I have heard that what we put in are minds can affect our hearts. If you hear bad language, bad jokes, bad scenes in movies, or bad lyrics, this can affect your outlook. I had not trained myself against this kind of temptation. I was not ready to withstand it. I realize now that I was responding to someone who gave me some attention, and I didn’t have the strength like Joseph had when his Masters wife tried to seduce him. I willingly fell. Needless to say, our relationship did change from here on out. Because I had fallen once, it was easy to fall again. She invited me to go with her to meet her parents. They were very nice and hospitable towards me. I do remember how she yelled at them, especially her mother. They didn’t have a great relationship. I would talk to her about that, but when they got together, it was a free for all (When I would take her home, she would always yell at her parents. I tried to bridge a way of communication between them. I believe I ended

up becoming an escape for her from her parents, and the environment she had been associated with. This became a source of “responsibility” I assumed upon myself). She continued to take advantage of me, and that was fine to me. That’s the way it was. She would always talk down to me afterwards and tell me she didn’t know why she was doing this. I always tried to stay positive. She kept coming back. (As I look back, I believe Brenda went into this relationship out of loneliness on her part. She wanted to leave behind the lifestyle she was living and she felt that I was her only alternative at the time). During these years of college, I failed this challenge because I was weak in faith. I was lukewarm about any commitment to Christ. I remember blaming God for my own mistakes, on and off the ball field. (Jesus warns, “I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot or cold, I will spit you out of my mouth ‘Revelation 3:15-16). I began to feel that my road to redemption was to make this relationship right by taking her as a wife. I felt that was the right thing to do. I did not use wisdom in choosing the “suitable partner”. It was lust on my part and loneliness on hers. What remained constant was her put downs of me. I had lots of confidence in myself and I thought that I could change

her opinions and actions. I didn't see the warning signs. Plus, I was busy with maintaining my grades and goals. (Brenda would always tell me she never like me but would always come back). She told me that her friends advised her against me. This only made me try harder to be more competitive as I refused to think there was anything wrong with me. This relationship became an issue of prestige for me. I was on the baseball team, college student, and now had a "girl friend". I felt secure in my status. She even informed me that if I wasn't at least a certain size on my anatomy, she would have nothing to do with me. I guess that is why she had difficulty with men, she was searching for the golden calf! Through this, I slowly began to turn back to God. I became resolved to pursue a marriage that would right my biggest mistake (what a mistake that logic was)! I was going to church with Brenda as I didn't think it mattered, after all, it was all for the same God, that was how I felt. I called my Mother and told her that I was thinking about becoming a Baptist. She didn't yell at me and I didn't hear thunder, trumpets or anything like that. My Mother simply asked me to check out a retreat before I made a decision. I didn't realize then the punch she had with this retreat. I said, "Sure Mom"! I didn't know, but my Mother had begun working with this group that produced these

“retreats”! It was called “Cursillo” and I made my “Cursillo” in Carthage Missouri in the fall of 1978. This retreat would change my life forever. I was placed At St. Josephs table and from there, I had the time of my life. I learned about my faith and the foundations where it came from. I spiritually went to confession for the first time. I was a jock who had lost his way home and had found it. I felt so high that I told the priest in the confessional that I loved him. I didn’t even care what anyone else thought. I was touched with all the prayers that people were offering on our behalf. My Mother slept on the floor for three nights for my soul. I found that out later on when I read the letter she sent in for our intentions. At the end of the retreat, I was given the chance to speak in front of everybody and their friends in how this “retreat” had affected me. I told them that I thanked my Mother for giving me the foundation of my faith. That through her, I was where I am today and I pledged to honor her by learning more about this great faith of ours! I didn’t know Mom was out in the crowd and I surprised her greatly with my remarks. She stood up and thanked God and felt humbled by what I said. It was a Kodak moment! I came back to college enlightened and I made Immediate changes. I began to go to Mass every Sunday, and freely talk openly about my faith. It is

important to note that I was still indifferent about religion in that it didn't matter to me what religion another person was. I was just happy with my own faith. My room mates were shocked that I had a Catholic background. They began to show me their concerns with Catholicism. This was news to me as they were introducing comic books and all kinds of "anti-Catholic propaganda. In the beginning, I was not equipped to handle this. I didn't have a big brother, a Scott Hahn, or Jeff Cavins to explain any of this to me. I had to fight this battle myself. My last year in college I studied more in religion than any of my classes. It became a struggle. I would be at baseball practice and there would be five guys waiting for me to talk with me with their King James bibles. I was being told that all I need was a "personal relationship" with God, that all I needed to be was "Born Again"! I was told that I needed to be "saved" and this could not be done through any earthly institution. To them it was not a religion, but a relationship. I could be in the dining hall and I would have guys gather around me to talk about their faiths and why the Catholic church was in error. My room mates would invite people over to our room to debate with me which always would go late at night. I was in trouble and knew it. If the Catholic Church was the "whore of Babylon", and the Pope the "anti-christ", then I had to really

investigate this through. Brenda was not happy that I was going back to the Catholic Church. She was raised Baptist, and never considered the Catholic Church before. To her, it was kind of like living in another country or something. One semester, there was a class about the Catholic Faith offered by a local Parish in Branson Missouri. Brenda decided to go with me at 6:00 A.M. to investigate the Catholic Faith. This led her to become “interested” in the Catholic Church. She began talking to an exchange student from Mexico and he taught her the basics of the faith. Brenda seemed interested in learning about the Church, if it helped her find peace. She spoke with the local Pastor, Father Brath, who decided that she should attend a class that he sponsored through one of his teachers. This was the first time that I ever met a Catholic who felt it was ok to dissent from official Catholic teaching. This lady was a convert from the Assemblies of God and held to some interesting positions. She felt that artificial birth control was ok which led to a debate in one of her sessions. I couldn't help myself as I explained that the Catholic Church had no power to change the natural law of God. This led to a debate on the authority of the Church. I thought that I was representing what the Church taught and found myself in opposition to those who were assigned to teach it. I was not

invited to come back! Brenda was Baptized by Father Brath just days before we both went to Chicago to see Pope John Paul II. We went with the Diocese of Springfield who sponsored several buses for his pilgrimage.



(I believe that Brenda deceived me on her conversion to the Catholic Faith. I do not believe that she ever intended to keep it. I believe that in the beginning, she did this for me thinking that I would not be interested in her if she didn't follow me into the Catholic Faith. I was trying to right the wrong that I had committed by being unfaithful to God. I contemplated to pursue marriage with a sense of "responsibility")! I was in the same condition that Brenda was in as my confidence with girls was what it has always been. In high school, I did love a girl, but never had the chance to tell her and I did fear rejection. I never had those kinds of feelings for Brenda. I just accepted this as fact and the only way to go. I knew that Brenda was with me because

she had a poor self image. I would ask friends of mine to compliment her at dances, and I tried to guard her feelings. I was afraid if she left me, I would be alone again. So I continued to go down this road. I thought in time, we would develop into that “love” that I was searching for. What I didn’t know was her true mind which she never shared with me; her true feelings because she knew where I was going in the faith. I was studying probably at least 2 hours a day on the Catholic Church and the various “Protestant” denominations. I began to take issue with my room mates who had introduced the “Jack Chick” comic books. I began to see that if the Catholic Church was the True Faith established by Christ, then she had full and complete authority from Jesus it’s founder. That would mean that those who practiced “Protestantism” grew out of those traditions founded upon men who abandoned the Catholic faith. I became convinced through study that this was the truth. Then I simply began to understand that those people who were attacking the Catholic Church were inadvertently attacking Christ Himself. We had hours of endless debate until finally after 3 years, one of my room mates decided he needed a change. I agreed based on his decision. I always look upon him with thankfulness and kindness because he was able to help me find the truth. I began to

dream dreams that were so real that concerned the Second Coming of Christ, I was wondering what was going on. They were so real and powerful to me. One particular dream had the greatest impact on me. After a major debate in the room where I took on a number of those attacking the Catholic Church, I went to bed troubled. I slept hard, but I dreamed that God's Church, the Catholic Church, was dead. I felt much despair, and sadness I began to cry. I felt that the Church was in ruins and that Christ was shedding tears for His Body, the Church. I never felt such anguish, I cried so much that I woke up out of my sleep totally wet from crying. My pillow, the bed, and the blankets were all wet. I sat up as it took me a couple of minutes to realize it was a dream. I recalled my Confirmation that took place in Blue Springs Mo on September 23, 1968 by Bishop Sullivan. I renewed my vows and told the Lord that I will be a soldier for Him. I will not betray Him and leave the Church even when people around me do. I will do my best to remain loyal and stand for Him. A promise that I have tried to keep since 1978. My last year with "The School of the Ozarks", I was leading ball but I began to realize that I was getting older as a Senior in College and the chances of me playing pro-baseball was non-existent. I was basically playing out my time. For every great ball player who makes it

professionally, there are a thousand striving to get there. I simply didn't have the connections. I had one room mate that stuck with me until I left college. He would sit in on the debates and basically gave me an account of how well I had done. This was great because I needed some encouragement. After more than three years, my room mate began to open up to me for the first time that he was a homosexual. I had people ask me about it before, but I never knew, nor did I judge him with it. He had feared me because he knew I was a jock and that I was openly against this lifestyle. He began to explain to me how he had been sexually assaulted by an uncle when he was twelve years old. I did not condemn him, but actually felt compassion for him. He was raised a Protestant and was interested in the Catholic Church out of curiosity from the debates. I told him that we all need forgiveness, and he could find it also. I also told him he needed to forgive his uncle. We would continue to study Christianity together and I was there to see him Baptized into the Catholic Church. Last I had heard about him, he had married and had two children. There was a Convo that I attended one evening that was very important for me. The college had sponsored in a group who sang "Christian Rock" music called "Bethlehem"! They were great. That was the best concert that I had seen up to that time

and it was really powerful. I felt that my spirit was going to leave my body as I was supercharged! I went to speak with members of the band and they began to tell me of their born again experience. I didn't speak about the Catholic faith with them but began to sense a feeling like they would not be favorable to the Faith. I think they would have considered it "religion" and not a "relationship". I was also introduced to another Christian called "Petra"! They are my favorite group of all time! At that time I became introduced to a Christian Comedian "Mike Warnke" who was great. His tapes "Hey Doc" and "Mike Warnke Live" were classics. I understand that recently, a few years ago, he may have made certain untrue statements about his testimonies, but I still love him and hope he finds roots in his Catholic faith! During my Senior year in college, my Mother's annulments went through and she was able to receive the Sacraments. I became her Sponsor in Confirmation. What an honor and privilege! Something unique happened at this event. In the early part of the Mass, I developed a migraine headache and realized that I was in for some serious pain. I would always suffer when I got a migraine. The only way I was able to get rid of them was to try and sleep it off. I could go 24 hours bed-ridden and in pain. When I placed my right hand on my Mother's right shoulder, and when the

priest anointed her with oil, I felt the headache vanish! I was totally shocked as this never happened before! It was unbelievable! That was a true sign for me of the validity of the Sacrament. Another thing occurred for my Mother. At the end of a particular Mass, Father Bill asked for anyone who had been sick to come up. Along with 12 other people, Mom went up for the Anointing of the sick. (It say in James 5:13-15, “Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven”.) She said she experienced warmth throughout her body and that from that time on she never had any problems with her back (due to the car accident of 1968). Up to that time, she had spent countless dollars on treatments that didn’t work, she had severe headaches because of the treatments given. I remember when she would have to scoot from plant to plant, she was now able to run, walk, and bend over. This greatly affected my own journey as I was developing into the “Catholic Defender”! Despite all these signs that I was receiving, His revelation, miracles, and

conversions, I was still in a bad relationship. I made the decision to right the wrongs I had committed and ask Brenda to marry me. I felt it was the best thing to do. I thought that we would be able to grow in the Lord. (That would become my biggest mistake as Brenda didn't love me either). I asked her to marry me and she eventually said yes. After I left college, she got pregnant and that solidified the need for the marriage.

The Marriage

With this decision, it marks the end of an era. I ended my baseball career, I stopped college, and began to find work in Harrison Arkansas. After the pilgrimage to Chicago, I moved to Harrison Arkansas and began working at a Pepsi plant. It was different. I also rented a small apartment down town in a small duplex. One day there was a young man who moved next to me. I befriended him and invited him in to talk. I found out that he was running away from home as he was having problems with his parents. I was able to talk him into going back home and work things out. His parents were very thankful to me and invited me to stay with them for free. I was asked to help out with the chores. That was an easy decision as it helped me save money! I

found out that they were members of the Church of Christ. They asked me what denomination I was and I told them I was Catholic! They said the Catholic Church was very old, that it went back to Constantine. That their Church was established by Christ himself. That led to a series of friendly debates as I maintained the Catholic Church was from Christ, that St. Peter was the first Pope and that John Paul II was the 264th successor of St. Peter. They were very nice people and I was glad to have helped them with their son. I found out that the Church of Christ had been founded in the early 1820's by Alexander Campbell, his brother, and a friend named Barton Stone. They were formally members of the Calvinist, or Presbyterian church. Different groups would emerge from them called "The Disciples of Christ", the "First Christian Church", and the "United Church of Christ"! While I was living there, I was reading from the King James version of the bible and happened to read Matthew 6:7 which said, "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words". When I read that I felt my heart stopped! I recalled the Rosary and how that is "repetition"! Just the way this was worded disturbed me. I began to look at that and recalled how certain people attacked the use of the Rosary. I could see where they were

getting that from. I then took the same text and looked at what the New American Bible said. I found it interesting that the Catholic version said, “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words”. The Catholic Version I believe is more accurate. I think King James and his advisors and interpreters had an agenda as he was King Henry VIII’s grandson. I began to discover things like this as I grew in the faith! Brenda and I went to Mass in Harrison Arkansas. Father Micek, a truly gifted priest, he was very faithful and a good leader. We were coming from a college environment, we thought the Church was very weak. Nobody sang and it seemed that the prayers were old, it didn’t seem to come from the heart. I was wrong for judging in this way, I went to Father and told him that I have heard 10 Protestants sing louder than this entire congregation. Boy, did I have to repent of my attitude. We moved there into that community and found it very much alive. You can’t always judge a book by it’s cover! Fr. Micek would eventually baptize all three of my boys. He always celebrated the Mass with such a devotion with complete integrity. He loved the Lord and served Him well! I recall a story he told me about an elderly woman who came to see him for instructions for the faith. Father was just beginning his priestly

ministry working in a mission field in northern Arkansas. The woman wanted baptism but was still undergoing instruction when she went into a coma. After five days, a daughter of the woman called Father Micek who responded quickly to the scene. Father conducted baptism and the Anointing of the Sick. As soon as he completed the Sacrament, the old Woman quickly came out of her coma, sat up in bed and praised God and thanked Father for what he had done. Father was totally beside himself as this was his first conversion. This story meant a great deal to me because it reinforces the Catholic foundation Christ gave his Church. Jack Chick (an anti-Catholic), had put out an anti-Catholic comic book series called “Alberto” that depicts the priesthood in a false light. Chick makes the claim that a priest cannot help a sinner at the time of death. I also remember the healing my mother received when She received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick! We did speak to the priest about marriage and we were married on May 31, 1980. It was a beautiful ceremony. We had a guest sing some music from Carry Landry. The singer did great. Everything I thought went well. What I didn’t know was that Brenda had contemplated ending the marriage before it began, and that she considered getting an abortion. I was not privy to this until much later. Brenda’s mother had disclosed this

day after the wedding, Brenda told me never to say “I love you” to her which I thought was interesting. By this time I was working at Mass Merchandisers, a factory warehouse that trucked items across the country. I would come home from work and find Brenda laying down with Nathan and she would proceed to tell me she didn’t know why she married me. I would hear this over and over. Brenda would always remind me how she hated me during our time at college. I would hear that over and over as well. After Mass, she never spoke with anyone. She hated for me to talk to people after Mass. I thought she was being shy, but actually she was exhibiting a form of passive resistance. Something that I would see her perfect as the marriage moved forward. While working at Mass Merchandisers, I pulled a hand jack 20 miles and threw hundreds of pallets a day working for the receiving department. I was so good at that they wanted to keep me there. I began praying the Rosary daily beginning with the first mystery between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. After a ten minute break I would pray the second mystery between 9:10 till 10:30. I would pray the third mystery from 1040 until lunch at 12:00. At 12:30 I began the fourth mystery until 14:00. Then I would finish the Rosary with the fifth mystery at 15:00 when it was time to go home. I would pray the decade and then

reflect on each mystery as it applied to me. I could tell that this was helping me grow in my walk with Christ. It helped me understand Mary too! To put it simply, this solidified my faith. I worked there for over 5 years! I took the brunt of the Catholic jokes during breaks, most of them good natured. There were the daily debates and challenges that developed. One lady working the floor once told me that the Catholic Church was headed by the Mafia, I responded that the Protestants were headed by the KKK. She happened to be the wife of the Grand Dragon, the head Chaplain of the KKK (nationally). That was wild. She didn't like my response, but I thought it was very appropriate. I would speak to her on numerous occasions. I spoke with her husband whom I opposed. There is a place in Harrison where they have a bat cave holding many books and pamphlets promoting the "Arian race" and Hitler. I was flabbergasted to have seen this. The Lord gave us a great gift with the birth of our first son, Nathan (17 November 1980). It was a cold evening as there were snow flurries. I had been working on a rosary made from woodchucks I put together. This rosary stood about 6 foot tall in length Brenda went into labor and we rushed to the hospital. I was a proud Father. I named him Nathan Aaron Hartley in honor of the Lord's anointed prophet and the brother of Moses. I tried

to lead by example wanting to be the best Father and teacher for him.



When Nathan was about 15 months old, I received another dream that had a major impact on me. I dreamed that we were swimming with some friends at a creek. We were diving off rocks into the water and having a great time. I noticed Nathan along the creek bed on the other side of the creek. As I was about to dive in I noticed a water snake swimming towards Nathan. I jumped into the water swimming as fast as I could towards Nathan to save him from the snake. My heart was beating hard and loud. As I reached out for the snake, it was about to strike Nathan and I woke up just at that moment. I sat up in the bed all wet from sweat. It took me a couple of minutes to realize this was only a dream. I took a few deep breaths and thanked God it was only a dream. As I thought about it for a while, I began to see that the devil is after my

children. I began to pray the prayer to St. Michael and I have used this prayer routinely for over 24 years. From that time on, I tried to take spiritual warfare seriously. I saw a need to do something within the parish for the youth and I organized a softball team that was very successful. We had a number of young people that participated and it gave them an opportunity to do something fun. I also organized a league. This was made up of different church's and it was good that we represented the Catholic Church. I was able to help bridge good communication between the Church and the many Protestant groups who ordinarily condemn Catholics. We were able to gain respect from them and I felt this was good. On October 24, 1983 our son Joshua Steven Hartley was born. It was a difficult labor and a quick drive to Berryville Arkansas to the Hospital. When we arrived, Brenda was already wanting to start pushing. The Nursing staff was in the middle of transferring Brenda from a gurney to a bed when Joshua began to arrive earlier than planned. Brenda was caught between both beds with Joshua ready to see the world. But it wasn't long before Joshua was having problems getting his shoulder through the birth canal. There was a little tension developing among the staff when I reached into my back pocket and grabbed my prayer book that had the prayer to St.

Gerald (Patron of difficult deliveries). As soon as I looked at it and began to pray, Joshua came out with no other problems. I just breathed a sigh of relief and said “Thank you Lord, and you too, St. Gerald!

I must recall here that at no time was there ever any fellowship between Brenda and me. She refused to discuss it! I thought it was because she was shy. She continued to hide her feelings about Christianity. I continued to move forward. I had a great friend who also worked at Mass Merchandisers and together we put together a presentation speaking against secular rock music. We put in hundreds of hours developing this presentation using sound exerts, album covers, video exerts, and interviews from the major periodicals like Rolling Stone Magazine. We went to church’s, schools, and colleges. I was voted “Knight of the Year” from our local council largely due to this effort. We went to see Bishop McDonald in Little Rock Arkansas who approved of what we were doing. He said he preferred for his flock to listen to Christian groups instead of the message of sex, drugs, and violence. We also had an interview with John Michael Talbot at “Little Portions” near Eureka Springs Arkansas. I gave him some of the material we were using and he sent me a beautiful letter. He felt we were doing a good service, but he encouraged me to keep my focus and

motivation in the right place. People in the past have had good causes, but became misdirected. That when I quote someone, not to do it just to make a point, but to really love them. I have always tried to take his wisdom to heart!

One Sunday morning before Mass, a strange visitor knocked on our door and claimed he was from Israel. He said that he was specifically from Jerusalem. I felt honored that somebody from there would suddenly drop by to see me. He was a member of the Church of Christ and told me he had heard about me from members of a local congregation. I had been talking to someone at work that was a member of the Church of Christ so I felt I knew where this was going. I told the visitor I had only 30 minutes because we were getting ready for Mass. The stranger wanted to sell me the idea that the Catholic Church was a cult and that I should consider his church. I spent the rest of 25 minutes explaining why the Catholic Church was not a cult as he termed it and that it is the True Faith handed down historically from the apostles. I continued my argument by giving detail of how the Catholic Church is the Church of the New Testament. It began outside Jerusalem as Our Lord Ascended into Heaven. The Apostles were instructed by Our Lord to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would come to them. Some would say this is our first Novena. The visitor left

and I felt thankful to God for such an opportunity! I joined the Knights of Columbus, and was voted in as the Community Activities Chairman. I was very active in fighting pornography and abortion. We orchestrated marches against abortion and we were successful in getting porno off the shelves. We inspired a lot of debate in the local news papers. I once had a lady who came to me in tears as she discovered her husband hid porno in their house and was trying to get her to act it out. She brought me the porno to destroy. I would respond to letters to the Editors in the local newspaper. On one occasion I responded to the debate concerning Christmas. A lady called in on a local radio program and the announcer wished her a “Merry Christmas”. She was not happy about it and told the announcer that if he wanted to join the Catholic Church in worshipping a false Christ, he could do so. She didn’t recognize Christmas. I responded that Pope Telephorus began the 8th successor of St. Peter. I received a phone call the next day informing me that if I wanted to be Catholic I could move elsewhere. I thought that was great! They didn’t want to debate the issue, but display their hatred for Catholics! I wanted to be an instrument for the Lord. I would have people all the time question and challenge me about the Faith! I spent countless hours with people at their homes,

parking lots, work, anywhere that people cared to discuss it. I had several people ask me to sponsor them for their confirmations and baptisms. I felt like I was a first base coach sending people towards second base where the priest from third base could send them home! I would develop "Fact Sheets" that I put together to hand out to those who were interested:

(The issue that most separates Catholics from Protestants is the question of authority. Is the Catholic Church authentic? Is it truly the faith that Jesus established? Are the Protestants correct in rebelling against it? The name 'Protestant' is derived from the 16th century reformers who broke away from the Catholic faith. A study of history is vital to discovering the truth. Who was right and who was wrong? Religious tradition is simply the record of how people handed down the faith through the generations. Apostolic succession is the authority beginning with Jesus and His apostles by which the sacrament called 'Holy Orders' was instituted. For 2000 years the Catholic Church as taught with authority through 'Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture.'

Protestants do not recognize Sacred Tradition because they reject tradition. They see tradition from two primary perspectives. Firstly, they state that the 'traditions of men' have no foundation of truth in which to

live because they recognize no divine establishment. Secondly, they see tradition in the same light as how Jesus saw the Pharisees. Jesus stated, "The scribes and Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses, therefore do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but do not practice."

Protestants attempt to tie the Catholic tradition of Old Testament authority. From the Catholic position, the scripture itself is born out of the Sacred Tradition handed down from the apostles. It is the word of God divinely inspired! Second Thessalonians 2:15 states, "Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours".

For almost four centuries, oral tradition was the authority by which Christians lived. From 33 A.D. to 396 A.D., hundreds of writings were utilized by the Christian communities and accepted as authentic writings on the faith. Then, at the conclusion of the Council of Hippo (393-396 A.D.), the canon (divinely inspired) writings were separated from the others, and the result was what we now call the New Testament. The

Catholic Church was the authority that put the Bible together. This is an historical fact. Just as the Holy Spirit wrote the scripture through inspired authors, the Holy Spirit used the Church to compile the Bible. Now the

Holy Spirit uses the Catholic Church to maintain the Bible, and to teach the Bible.

A lot of the attacks Protestants will make with their interpretation of scripture were not issues in 396 A.D. Not everything the Church believes was explicitly written down in the Bible (John 21:24-25). The faith has been handed down by apostolic authority. The scripture does give the basis for the living tradition handed down by the Church Fathers. Matthew 16:8-18, 19 states, and I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” The Protestant will attempt to gloss this passage over by rejecting the idea that Christ conferred anything significant upon Peter. They maintain that the ‘Rock’ refers to what Peter answered; “You are the Christ . . .” While agreeing that Jesus is the Rock, Catholics maintain that Peter’s new name was very significant. His name was originally Simon, son of Jonah, or Bar Jonah; ‘Simon’ meant ‘the winds that flow through the weeds.’ Jesus changed Simon’s name to ‘Peter’ meaning the ‘rock.’ Jesus is clearly establishing authority upon Simon Peter. Jesus gives the keys to the kingdom to Peter, and the power

to bind and loose on earth. This authority and power was not given to just every Joe Shmuck. It was given to Simon Peter. Jesus, as "Son of David", fulfills the promises God made to King David. The "office" Christ establishes in St. Peter, supersedes that office of the household of David (Isaiah 22:22). Daniel 7:13-14 reveals that when the "Son of Man" enters the clouds of glory, He receives dominion, glory, and Kingship. As King, Christ then dispenses His Keys as he promised he would (Matthew 16:19). Do not think that this authority and power would end with Peter's death, or any of the other apostles as well. According to Acts 14:22,23, "They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, 'it is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.' They appointed presbyters for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they put their faith".

When ever the Lord would change the name of someone, this was always significant. Firstly, in Genesis 17:5, He changed Abram's name to 'Abraham,' as part of God's covenant making Abraham the 'Father' of a host of nations. Secondly, in Genesis 35:10, God changed Jacob's name to Israel and stated, "I am God almighty, be fruitful and multiply. A nation indeed an assembly of nations shall stem from you." Thirdly, He

changed Simon, Bar Jona, to Peter, the rock. I believe the Catholic Church makes the most sense, especially when you hear Protestants tell you from the TV set that the church and its teachings are not important. No wonder Protestants have branched to over 25,000 different denominations. They take the keys and the power to loose and bind as an individual thing. Then, they give the Holy Spirit credit for their personal positions. This is not apostolic or even biblical. The apostles and the Bible reflect a great concern for those who would oppose their authority and teach doctrine other than the Church. Galatians 1:7-9 states, "But there are some who are disturbing you and wish to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, and now I say again, if anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one you received, let that one be accursed!" In 2 Peter 3:16, Peter warns, "Speaking of these (referring to Paul's letters), in them there are some things hard to understand that the ignorant and the unstable distort to their own destruction, just as they do the other scriptures." Peter, the first pope, also states, "Know this first of all that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather

human beings moved by the Holy Sprit who spoke under the influence of God (2 Peter 20, 21).” This is a warning to those who would attempt to change things, which they do to their own ruin.

All Protestant churches have men as their founders, men who broke away from the Catholic church, or those who founded churches much later as the Protestant movement deteriorated. These churches (whom the Catholic Church may respect) were man-made, and clearly in violation to the scripture and the teachings of the apostles. The ‘human beings’ Peter speaks of begin with the apostles and all those who through their words believe in Jesus (John 17:20, 21). A true Christian does not have to recognize the authority, or any ministers produced, of a church founded in 1917 in Arkansas. We are obligated to follow that authority which Jesus established upon this ‘Rock’ the church of the apostles. John Paul II is the 264th successor of Peter. This succession is significant! Bishops, priests, theologians, and anyone else may have a lot to say, but if it does not coincide with the teaching magisterial of the Church and through this body, it just does not carry any weight.)

My relationship with my ex-wife was non-existent. It's not like we grew apart as we held nothing in common, I would come home from work only to hear her exclaim how much she hated me. The first ten

years of the marriage I endured that kind of verbal abuse. She would always tell me that I was immature in collage and that she didn't like me. There was no communication, fellowship, or the expression of love. She would exercise sex as a weapon. If by any chance she was in a good mood, I would wonder what she was wanting. Most of the time she would spark arguments for the purpose of breaking any romantic mood I would be hoping for. There was great frustration as we were unequally yoked. In October 1984, after working at Mass Merchandisers for nearly 5 years, I decided to join the Army. At age 28, I was still in great shape and I felt there was a better future. I left Harrison Arkansas on 7 February, 1985 for Basic Training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. I looked in the back seat of the car and marveled over my two sons Nathan and Joshua. It was difficult holding back the tears leaving them for Basic and AIT Training. I left with a sense of pride for what I was going to do, but it broke my heart leaving my boys.



Basic Training and AIT

On the bus ride from Harrison Arkansas to Little Rock, I memorized the Code of Conduct. I wanted to start out my new career with the right motivation. I remember staying at the hotel waiting for the plane taking us to Ft. Jackson South Carolina for Basic Training (Boot Camp). The only thing I recall from this short stay in Little Rock was that some applicants had hookers come to their rooms. I was not one of beginning, I felt it was important to be faithful to God. By being faithful to God first, I would be faithful to my wife. This would be important to note because this was my position throughout my military career. I would have many schools and field problems where infidelity was rampant. I tried to be a soldier for Christ first and a good example for those who were away from home for the first time. Basic raining started out just like you see in the movies. We were herded on the “cattle trucks” and we were quickly placed into platoons. I never will forget my drill instructors. Their names are etched into my brain forever. That’s about all I can say about that! I quickly got a nickname as the troops called me “Padre” because I was strong in my faith. I encouraged everyone to go to church, especially if they were Catholic. It worked good for awhile, but some of them were tempted to run off

with female soldiers who were staying at nearby barracks. Late at night



they would find places to get together. I never did that and I tried to encourage others to follow my example for the Lord's sake. On one occasion, we were shown a video of how Russian soldiers trained. At the end of the video, we were invited by the Drill Sergeant to ask questions about the video. After a number of troops had asked a question, I raised my hand up to make a statement. The Drill Sergeant gave me permission to speak and I stood up and said, " Drill Sergeant, we have been watching how our counterparts train. One major reason why I prefer this uniform that I'm wearing now is because these Russian soldiers do not mind taking clubs and beating old men, women, and children because they are hiding in a barn somewhere trying to worship God. These people have to worship God in secret. Then there was an immediate round of applause that followed my statement which surprised the Drill Sergeant. He was taken back with what I had said

with the response I got. For about 20-30 seconds this went on until he got his composure and gave that look. At that point everyone was again sitting at attention. That was an awesome moment. I remember on an occasion, one of the Drill Sergeants reacted to a question one day asking, "Who do you think that I am, Jesus Christ"? I asked permission to speak and told the Drill Sergeant that I know Jesus personally, and as His representative, I might be able to help him out. I freaked the Drill Sergeant out and ended up doing push ups. I maintained a high degree of enthusiasm and a certain genuine concern to learn that I went through Basic Training without any problems. One day I received a letter from my wife informing me that she had taken Joshua to see the doctor. He had developed some kind of an ear infection. I was told that the doctor diagnosed permanent hearing damage as a result of this infection. I felt terrible and wanted to call home. I was finally granted to call home about 2100 hrs that evening. Brenda informed me that Joshua had been to the doctor that day for a recheck and found there were no problems. The previous diagnosis was wrong, at least there was no answer the doctor gave for Joshua's improved condition. I went back to the barracks thankful for the good news that Joshua's hearing was fine. Then I remembered that I still had my prayer to do that I had

been saying for several years. These prayers were reportedly given to St. Bridget in the 15th century by Our Lord to honor the wounds of His Passion. According to the pamphlet, Our Lord promised that He would protect the five senses down to the 4th generation for those who honored His wounds by praying this devotion. It was then that I put Joshua's healing in connection to Our Lord's promise. I claimed the promise and thanked the Lord for His favor!

I sacrificed a great deal for my family, as I really missed my boys. I knew they were taken care of as Brenda was staying with her parents. Her relationship with her parents seemed to have improved by this time. Everyday was a new challenge as we passed every part of Basic Training. The road marches, the field exercises, the mind games were all challenges that we had to meet. I passed my Physical Training Test despite having a painful right knee. It had swollen considerably due to the low crawling exercises we were doing. I was scene by a doctor and had 60 cc's of fluid drained out of my knee.



I felt honored at the end of Basic Training because my platoon wanted me to say a closing prayer before we left. Our Drill Sergeants were very respectful to me and both of them came and visited me while I was in the hospital for my knee. They were true American patriots and I thanked them for what they had done for me.

AIT

I shipped from Ft. Jackson to Ft. Sam Houston near San Antonio TX to do my MOS Training as I am a Medic. I chose an MOS I felt most comfortable. This was truly amazing because I grew up hating doctors and needles. Now, I am being trained to use them. I remember the priest who said Mass every Sunday at the Chapel. He was a great speaker. On Sundays, we were allowed to participate in church functions and I became very involved with the parish. This environment was different from Basic Training. We still had Drill Sergeants, but things were much more relaxed. We spend much of our time studying for our lessons. There was a lot of pressure to study. One day as we were standing in platoon formation, the Platoon Sergeant came up to me and looked at me for a few moments and told me he was

seeing that I was going to do something great. He didn't know what, but he had that feeling. I tried to be the best I could be. I really enjoyed the softball as we were given the opportunity to compete with the other companies. We were first place! I would witness to some of the troops listening to Mike Warnke's tapes "Hey Doc" and "Mike Warnke Live"! We would be rolling on the floor laughing. Those are classic tapes! My time at AIT went quick and I longed to get home. At last, School was completed and we were given our first duty assignments. I was going to Ft. Stewart GA. I was going home for a short leave and then fly to Georgia to Hinesville.

Ft. Stewart GA

I reported to my first duty assignment in the spring of 1985. I was attached with the 1st Support Unit, 24th Mechanized Infantry. I was in a medical company which supported other units in the field. My first night there, my roommate took me around the post to show me where the gym was and other places to go. While standing on a sidewalk next to the gym, a group of black guys walked towards us yelling obscenities at us. I didn't pay them much attention as they called us "white trash"

and “honkies”. One of them hit me in the mouth as they taunted us. It totally surprised me. He knocked my hat right off my head. I had a bloody lip but kept my cool. They taunted and threatened us some more. They laughed at me because I had a bloody lip. It became a tense moment. They challenged my roommate wanting to fight him. They used vulgar and vile language at us. As the night went on, other people began to gather and wanted us to win the fight. There was a crowd that gathered who recognized these individuals as trouble makers. When it was all said and done, I walked through the crowd and went up to the one who punched me in the mouth and told him, “I forgive you in the name of Jesus Christ” and reached out to shake his hand. With the crowd looking on he shook my hand and I left the scene.

I was assigned with the Ambulance section and had a track vehicle. This was great experience for me. I learned a lot as we trained with this equipment. I immediately found a place off post and found a double wide trailer that would support my family. I took leave and brought my family across country by U-Haul to Ft. Stewart. It was great to be a family again and to be with my boys. Brenda began to throw hints of concern when she started having issues with the rosary. I didn’t think it was serious as I didn’t force her to do anything she didn’t

want to do. She didn't like me speaking to friends after Mass. This was a normal routine and I was use to that. I didn't see anything different because of it. I just thought she was shy.

My faith continued to grow as I began teaching CCD at St. Stephens in Hinesville Ga. I was teaching the fifth grade and this was rewarding to me. I loved it! I also conducted seminars on Rock Music for the Church there as well as for a Catholic School in Savannah GA. This was before a group of middle school students. That was really awesome! I also conducted the presentation at the Recreation Center on Ft. Stewart. It was well attended by soldiers and their families. There were a lot of single soldiers there and I was treated well by the crowd. I had a question and answer session afterwards and the Catholic Priest (Father Norton) was of great help and support. Father Norton would become very special to me. I became a Lay Eucharistic Minister for our unit so that when we were in the field, and without a priest, I could distribute Holy Communion. We often went to Ft. Irvin California to conduct desert training for thirty days at a time. I would have the Blessed Sacrament with me the whole time. I felt like David dancing before the Ark. I had Jesus Christ in person with me. I will always treasure this gift.



I met a couple of guys in my unit that became very special to me. Bernie Kaputs was from Philadelphia who would discuss the Catholic faith with me. He was raised Calvinist, but was not practicing it. He was interested in the Rock Seminars I was conducting and wanted to help me prepare for them. Our unit was being deployed to Ft. Irwin when Bernie stayed back a couple of more days as he was received into the Catholic Church! He found me asleep near my vehicle when he gave me the Good news. Boy didn't that wake me up in a hurry! The Other friend was our NBC NCO. He would love to debate Me and ask questions. He liked science so I approached him with science. Our Lady of Guadeloupe was interesting as well as the Shroud of Turin. I spoke about Eucharistic Miracles such as from Lanchiano Italy where a

miracle took place in the seven hundreds. I would present anything I could find that had a scientific study connected to it. Lourdes France was another point I was able to make with him.

On 10 April 1986, there was a terrible tragic accident when a Black Hawk helicopter collided with a Chinook doing midnight infrared maneuvering. As medics, we were the first on the scene. We had to wade through knee deep mixture of highly flammable jet fuel and swamp water to get to the crash site and recover the eight soldiers. As we found the soldiers in the wreckage and carried them out of the swamp, I continued to pray the “Hail Mary” for them. I could only hope that these individuals were ready to meet God.

16 May 1986 was another great day in the life of the Catholic Defender! Our son Jason Michael Hartley was born at Ft. Stewart GA. I named him partly in honor of John Michael Talbot, whom I greatly respect, but in honor of St. Michael the Archangel. Brenda and I drove from Ft. Stewart GA. to Harrison Arkansas soon after Jason was born and had Jason baptized by Father Micek. What an honor it was for us to have Fr. Micek to baptize all three of my boys!

I would serve only one year at Ft. Stewart, but I received so much and done so much that I will never forget the service we completed

there. I was promoted to Specialist (E-4) within the year while I was there. I was blest to see a couple of conversions to the Catholic Faith. My next assignment would take me to Germany.

Germany

After nearly a year stationed at Ft. Stewart Georgia, I was again being transferred and leaving my family. This time I looked at my three sons in the back seat. This was difficult for me. I knew that they would soon follow me to Germany, but we didn't know how long. I left for Germany in October 1986. The flight was about 12 hours it seemed and I felt the jet lag by the time I arrived. I reported to the replacement center in Frankfurt Germany. This is where I received my orders to Swienfurt Germany. I was placed in another Support Medical Company, 1st Support Battalion on Conn Barracks. I would be assigned with the Ambulance Platoon almost exactly like my former unit at Ft. Stewart. I was again in the track pack! I was quickly assigned a track and it wasn't long before I was working in the motor pool. After we would get off work, I would try to get out and see the area. There was a fellowship center that soldiers were encouraged to participate called "Hospitality House". They would offer fun and games with good food.

Then have a bible study. Some of the organizers thought I would be a good recruit, a potential prospect because they saw me do the sign of the cross. I always do the sign of the cross when I pray. I didn't think anything of it. But some of the people attending this fellowship were former Catholics and they began to approach me with questions. I answered their questions to such a degree that the leadership was concerned I might cause a few of them to return to the Catholic Faith. This would be my intent as it says in James 5:19-20 "My brothers, if anyone among you should stray from the truth and someone bring him back, he should know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins". It wasn't long before the organizers found that I was not a potential customer. I simply tried to defend the faith when it was attacked or explain the faith when I was asked questions. Jude 3 states, "Beloved, although I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel a need to write to encourage you to contend for the faith that was once for all handed down to the holy ones". 1 Peter 3:15 says in part, "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope..." If I knew that a person was a former Catholic, I would try to find out why

they fell away. In my Platoon there was such a person. He had not been to Mass for 15 years. He was of Italian decent. He was a squad leader and I put in his squad. I became the source and blunt of a lot of his jokes and that was ok. I had been around that for along time. I knew that I began to have a positive effect when one of the NCO's in my platoon was thinking about divorce. I encouraged him to look at the roots of his faith. He was raised a Catholic as he was a Hispanic. By the time he would PCS back to the States, he was working to save his marriage. It would not be that easy for my Squad Leader. One morning at formation, I came in line as I normally did and was greeting people around me to include my Squad Leader. I said good morning and he responded saying to me not to ever speak to him again. I said no problem and began to talk to someone on the other side of me. About 30 minutes after formation, our First Sergeant called me into his office and informed me that I needed to see my Platoon Leader and so I went to see what was up. My Squad Leader was sitting in the office and I was asked to sit in with him. Earlier that morning he was notified that he had shown positive on his recent HIV test. There were a number of requirements that had to be met to include a retest and counseling's that had to take place in Wurtzberg which was about a 30-45 minute

trip. He wanted me to be the person to escort him around. I gladly volunteered as this would be very secretive. I took the opportunity to try and reach him for the Lord. I tried to be cool about it and not pushy. I encouraged him to go to Confession, to go to Mass. I tried to be a good example for him. He wanted me to know that he wasn't a homosexual, but he thought he could have picked this illness up from a night on the town in Frankfort with a prostitute. I did not judge him and tried to be a source for him to feel confident to be around with. Getting him to go near a church was not easy. The first time I talked him into looking at a church on the way back from Wurtzburg, he began to shake uncontrollably at the door. I opened it up to walk in and he could not bring himself to go in. He began to cry and felt God would not forgive him for his past. He was married at the time and his wife was left in the States. I told him God would forgive him if only he would ask. I would encourage him to go to Confession until he left a few months later. He would make that Confession and he would go back to Mass. I encouraged him to stay with it when he got back. I told him to be honest with his wife. That would be that last I would see him. I pray that he is well in the sight of the Lord!

I was quickly blessed with the arrival of my family to

Germany. I was able to get a place near the Concern that I worked called "Askren Manors". This would be where we would live for nearly three years. I was happy to have my three sons. Nathan was old enough now to place in Tee Ball, basketball, and soccer. Joshua would play towards the end of my enlistment. I helped coach with the teams. One of the boys on Nathan's Coach pitch teams was also in my CCD class. He was preparing for his first Holy Communion as I was instructing this class that year. One day after he disrupted the class, I called him on it. I asked him why he felt he always felt that he needed to be disruptive in class. What he said penetrated my heart, he said he parents after a ball game and informed them how I thought their son was doing in CCD. I tried to encourage them to come to the games and make it a family occasion. I didn't let them know what I was told, but tried to be a good example for them and to encourage them to be active in the son's projects. They did react positively to what I said and after a few weeks, there were no more apparent issues. I was trying to be the best Father and husband I could possibly be. There was no fellowship between Brenda and me and I yearned for it. The more I dug deep into the faith, the farther apart it seemed we went. For her, sex was a responsibility, not an act of love. I would never know what that kind of

love would be like as I would envy friends of mine who had strong Catholic wives. I thought Brenda was shy, I was not aware of her true feelings.

One day, I received some very bad news from home (Harrison Arkansas). One of the teenagers that I became associated with and whom I sponsored for Confirmation had committed suicide. His mother wrote me informing us that he went out into the barn and hung a rope over a rafter and hung himself. That was rather difficult for me. I joined the Army hoping to improve our standard of life. I did write him on two or three occasions encouraging him to be a strong witness for the faith. I never expected to hear anything like this. Only God knows the heart of a person, and I can only pray that he is ok. The Christian group Petra has a song called "For Annie" that encourages me to never give up on people. When you're at Mass, we do not always know what the person next to you might be going through. We got to tell them that Jesus does care and that He can lighten their load; help them in their time of need. May God have mercy on us. If we are open to spending time with these kids, some of them will respond positively to your kindness. During our field problems and motor pool, I continued to perform very well. I was given a lateral promotion to

Corporal. I was now an NCO with my first Squad. After nearly two years in two different units, I was leader of the Track Pack! I was someone that my Commands loved when it came to going to the field. I could set up and tear down a GP small or medium and help set up a defensive position. Camouflage was always a challenge, but we always set up well after arriving to new sites. Those all night operations were always a challenge. When we were set up, the war games were always fun. We would always look to steal the guide arm from the opposing unit. I remember staying up 72 hours straight because I was having so much fun capturing opposing soldiers. One thing about being in the field, people were more than willing to be philosophers. I was able to witness the Faith daily with those we met. It was great.

I received a new soldier in my Squad who would become very important to me. He was drawn to me because of my apparent love for God. He was confused because I was Catholic. He thought that this situation was a contradiction. One night he and a friend of his, who had left the Hospitality House, came to visit me. Their first question concerned why we call our priest “Father” when Jesus told his followers found in Matthew 23:9 not to call no man Father? I responded that Jesus was referring to titles that people wore as a badge of honor. I

explained that the Church is very much like a family. It is referred to as the “household of God” (1 Timothy 3:15). St. Paul referred to himself as a Father over his flock (1 Corinthians 4:15) and Jesus himself had referred to Abraham as “Father” Abraham (Luke 16:30). I presented several arguments which did make sense to them. The next issue concerned Confession, which I responded:

(The question has been asked, “Why do Catholics need to go to a priest instead of Jesus, since He is the mediator between God and man.” We go to confession in obedience to Jesus’ command that gave this authority to his apostles. This transfer of authority came after His resurrection and is recorded as follows, “on the evening of that first day of the week, even though the disciples had locked the doors of the place where they were for fear of the Jews...Jesus came and stood before them ‘Peace be with you,’ he said. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. At the sight of the Lord, the disciples rejoiced. ‘Peace be with you,’ he said again. ‘As the Father has sent me so I send you.’... He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.’” The Council of Trent (1556) defined the power to forgive sins in verse 23 as the same power exercised in the sacrament of penance. This power could have only

reached our present age through apostolic succession where the apostles ordained successors and broadened the faith throughout the world. St. Paul gives special consideration to this sacrament with the means to instruct his listeners its importance. He states, "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this IS from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting TO US the message of reconciliation. So WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, as if GOD WERE APPEALING THROUGH US. We implore you on BEHALF OF CHRIST, BE RECONCILED TO GOD (2 COR 5 Vs 17-20). St. Paul then invites us, "Working together, then, WE APPEAL TO YOU NOT TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN". Some thoughts; from the Webster's New World Dictionary, AMBASSADOR is 1. The highest-ranking diplomatic representative appointed by one country or government...(when you recognize the Church as the Kingdom of God on earth, this definition easily fits the mark). 2. A special representative, is one on a special diplomatic mission. 3. An official agent with a special mission (Christ appointed his Apostles to carry out this "special

mission"). BEHALF is defined as, "ME, in phrase on (mi) behalf, on (my side). I speak in his behalf, on behalf of speaking for; representing (This is exactly what the priest does)! This sacramental authority Jesus gives his apostles should not be confused with the moral obligation to forgive seventy times seven. In the great sacrament, Jesus chooses to forgive in the action of his ministers. Just as God may heal someone through a minister, he established the priesthood for the purpose of spiritual healing. The Council of Constantinople (553) declared that John 20:22 meant that the spirit was truly not merely symbolic. This action recalls Genesis 2:7 where God breathed life into Adam and gave him the natural spirit of life force. St. John announces that the life-source for supernatural life is given, which is the seal of the Holy Spirit. The confessional, then, is not of man-made origin, but is a God-breathed action of the Holy Spirit. It has come down the ages through the church that Jesus built. When you go to confession to the local priest, a bishop ordained him. The bishop himself was ordained by a previous bishop and the transfer of authority can be traced all the way back to the apostles. People who do not understand the Church often challenge its concepts by stating that a given teaching was invented on such and such a date. The 'invention' dates, however, usually coincide with councils that met for the

purpose of clarifying any teaching that was being misunderstood or challenged in some way. In the case of confession, some try to say that the church invented the teaching of confession in the 4th century. But, it preceded the 4th and earlier centuries, and was part of what Jesus commands when he states in the gospel of Matthew, “Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you.” The apostles are to teach the world not merely one doctrine, such as the doctrine of resurrection, but all doctrines pronounced by Jesus. In deed, His historical teaching and the entire gospel the Catholic Church has safeguarded message. Jesus mised the Catholic Church that the gates of hell would not prevail against it, that he would be with us until the end of the age, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and remains with us until Jesus returns. His church has his promise, his protection, and his seal. It is up to each person to be faithful or fall. We call this free will. In the meantime, Jesus truly waits for us in the sacrament of confession).

My super troop would come by very often as we would go to different churches in the area. I would explain the statues, the pictures, and the tradition. Around the unit, we became known as “Batman and Robin” for God. We would team up together to represent Christ to our

unit. Our barracks was a difficult place to stay because of the infidelity going on there. I spent hundreds of hours discussing the faith with him and he would eventually be baptized into the Catholic faith early April 1988! I was visiting some of my troops living in the Barracks one evening when a soldier comes walking into the room where we were conversing. He was acting kind of strange and suspicious. He acted confused as he didn't seem to make any sense, then he left the room and went back to his room. We kind of looked at each other and felt that something wasn't right about that situation. We went to check on the man who was acting so strange. After about 15 minutes, we discovered that he had overdosed on Tylenol 325 mg. He had taken a whole bottle. He might have had a beer on top of that which is not good at all. We took him to the hospital where he was admitted. Tylenol and alcohol do not mix! Not even when taken as prescribed. The Man ended up being taken to Wurtzburg Hospital where he worked to recover. I thought the situation was a clear case of where a person was crying out for help and

didn't intend to really kill himself. His coming into our room was an act to get somebody's attention. Still, you must take all these situations seriously! Later, I would work more closely with this person and found out he had been out of the Church for a number of years. After a couple of months, he was on fire for the Lord. With many people, all it takes is an invitation! May God bless him and make him whole for by His stripes, he was healed!

There was another soldier who was Catholic that thought we were both unreal. At least until his girlfriend whom he was going to marry became a fundamentalist Protestant Evangelical. Then he came to us for help. Then we became a powerful trio!

During one of our field operations, we were on a 30 day rotation at Grafenburg where we were supporting live fire ranges. I had my entire track vehicles located at different ranges and I was at range 301, a helicopter range. We stayed there for a week rotation. While we were there, I maintained communication with the tower who ensured that safety procedures were being followed. One day, a Captain ran towards

the back of the track looking for a medic. I was sitting in the track studying some material and responded to the cry for help. I grabbed my trusty old M-5 Aid Bag and ran to the scene. A German National who worked for the Government, had collapsed in the shed with chest pain. He could not understand English and I could not understand German. I asked a series of questions through an interpreter. I first wanted to know how long he had chest pain. I was asking this as I was checking his blood pressure and pulse. He said that he had been working when he developed severe chest pain. I observed that his blood pressure was very high and that his pulse was racing. I asked him if he had been seen by a doctor before for chest pain. He responded “no”. I asked if he had ever had chest pain before and he replied, “yes” when he would be working. He said that he never felt he needed a doctor before as the pain would subside with rest. I asked him how long he had had these kinds of episodes and he responded “two years”. I then believed this man was suffering from unstable angina pectoris. I believed that he had been dealing with angina pectoris but never been diagnosed. I believed that he was about to have a major heart attack. I strongly encouraged him to go to the hospital. He didn’t want to go, but I pleaded with the interpreter to tell him it is necessary that he goes to

the hospital. After a couple of minutes, we took him to the hospital. When he got to the emergency room, he developed a full blown heart attack. I was later informed he would not have survived if he had not been right where he was. I saved his life simply by knowing the vital signs and some practical information. The next day, I had a four star General land at our site by helicopter to congratulate me on saving a life. About two hours later, a two star General landed by helicopter and awarded me the impact Arcom award. As the General was flying away from our site, I radioed my troops of what had just transpired. One of my soldiers was in the back of his track standing up with the back opened displaying total disbelief. As he looked up, the General was hovering above their track and gave a smile and a salute to my soldier who stared in great disbelief and awe. It wasn't long after that the Command heard our conversation over the radio and was wanting to know what happened. It was my great day of fame. This was too awesome! I would have another one star General visit my site. I had Colonels, Majors, Captains wanting to take a picture with me next to our track. This was an amazing thing. I was even told that they considered putting my picture on Uesuer Magaizine because this was great press fostering good will between the American and German

peoples. I was greatly honored for doing something so simple. My job!

One day, while we were still at Graf, someone had distributed some anti-Catholic material to my troops. They in turn presented this to me. I couldn't believe it. I went over all of it and hoped to meet this guy. That evening I was preparing to enter the shower when this guy appears and wants to confront me. I was more than willing to comply. He was a Baptist deacon and felt that Catholics were not saved nor could ever be as long as they remained Catholic. His first major issue concerned Baptism. I approached the question like this:

(Baptism is one of the seven sacraments Jesus established. It grew out of the Old Testament cleansing of impurities Ezekiel 36:25). John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, began to baptize people, calling for repentance. Regarding the coming Messiah, he told the crowds, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming.... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16) Jesus prepared the apostles through three years of teaching and enlightening them to the truth of scripture, during which time He opened their eyes to His commandments. Jesus told them, "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

(Matthew 28:19-20)

*Baptism has always been an important sacrament. St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, spoke to the Jews who were celebrating Passover. They had arrived from all over the Roman Empire. The Holy Spirit moved people to accept Jesus the crucified through the words of St. Peter. He said to them, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38,39) It is clear St. Peter taught that baptism washed away sins. St. Peter makes this clearer as he writes, "For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison (purgatory), who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. **THIS PREFIGURED BAPTISM, WHICH SAVES YOU NOW.** It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3 Vs 18-21)".*

The Catholic Church teaches that baptism takes away all sin, original sin

in the case of children and actual sin of those old enough to understand the concept of sin. St. Paul described baptism this way; “we were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” This baptism could not be only a symbol! Christ was not raised symbolically! (Romans 6:4) St. Paul could tell you from experience what this meant. He had persecuted the faith and was on the road to Damascus to hunt down Christians when Jesus appears to him asking, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” St. Paul ends up with the priest Ananias who states, “Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me to you on the way by which you came, that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately things like scales fell from his eyes and his sight was restored. He got up and was baptized....” (Acts 9:17-19)

The early church saw the faithful as “one body and one spirit, as you were called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.” (Ephesians 4:5-6). The Church as always tried to echo Jesus as he states, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit. (John 3:5). About baptism our Lord warns, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized

will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15,16). There are two authorized methods for water baptism. Immersion is when the believer is taken and submerged fully under water. Pouring is when water is poured to flow out and run across the head of the recipient. In both cases the water must be flowing. It is valid if the person administering baptism repeats the words; "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The effect of baptism is that the Holy Spirit infuses sanctifying grace, which leaves an indelible mark on the soul. A priest or deacon administers baptism only once usually. However, in emergency, anyone can baptize. A doctor can baptize in critical conditions. President John F. Kennedy once honored a woman for baptizing a person who had been attacked by a shark and was approaching death. The victim had been studying the faith before this accident took place.

There are three kinds of baptism. The most common form is water baptism. Usually a candidate studies the faith through the RCIA program. This instruction helps give the candidate preparation and the opportunity to say 'yes' to our Lord. Another type of baptism is related to the water. It is called baptism of desire. The classical case of baptism of desire is the good thief on the cross (Luke 23: 42,43). The shark attack victim

described earlier would be placed in this category, had he not been baptized. These individuals desire salvation and baptism. The third type of baptism is called the baptism of blood. It is a martyr's death. Only the Lord knows how many have died for His namesake.

Division first arose in England concerning baptism. During the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, two Lutherans, Thomas Munzer and Nicholas Storch, founded the Anabaptist movement in 1605. They began to rebaptize their adult followers because they rejected infant baptism. Much of the protestant movement treats baptism as a symbol, and renounces its necessity. It has become a public witness the individual makes before the community. The practice of infant baptism began during apostolic times. In the book of Acts, the households of Cornelius and Jason were all baptized. About the year 250 A.D., the Church, during a council, addressed the question concerning the baptism of infants. Should infants be baptized on the eighth day after birth, or could it be any day? The point took issue with baptism replacing circumcision, as was the Old Testament Law. This was done on the eighth day! To baptize on the eighth day recognized the need for baptism in the New Testament. The Church favored any day to be appropriate but stressed the importance to baptize soon as possible. The Catholic Church recognizes the value of

symbolism in baptism, but, she maintains the function of grace and the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38, 39).

We debated for over two hours before we went in for the shower. Then we debated in the shower for another 30 minutes. I answered his issues and went on the attack. This went on for another hour or so after the shower. The next day the Battalion Chaplain came to me wondering what I had done to the young man. He said that I had rocked this guy's world. I had taken what he thought was concrete evidence and totally blew him away. My purpose was to explain the truth to him so he would not go on continuing spreading falsehoods. I felt that if he was willing to dish it out, he should be able to receive it back in full measure. St. Paul states, "...I may hear news of you, that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind struggling together for the faith of the gospel, not intimidated in any way by your opponents".(Philippians 1:27-28).

I would soon be promoted to Sergeant as I was able to get the points I needed for promotion. I continued to score 292 and above on my Physical Training tests. I was still in good shape for an over 30 guy. I worked to improve the readiness and proficiency of the track pack. During a cold winter, it had ice and snow on the roads, I was TC of our



track and was sitting in the back sitting in the wind. We were trying to make a trip down a large hill when the track became like a sled. My driver lost control of the vehicle as we began to move across the highway. We edged toward the other side of the road and began to turn over when we were saved by a tree. All we could do was to brace ourselves. If the track had turned over, we would have plummeted to our death falling down a gorge at least a hundred feet. When we were fully stopped the track was off the entire right side and the roof of the track had hit the tree. We had a fake casualty who was riding in the back on a litter who came out from the back throwing up as he thought his life was over. I thanked God for the tree! I would soon receive another soldier who would have a great impact on me. She was a Catholic Hispanic with Cuban roots. She was a cultural Catholic and not that strong in her faith. We began to be a witness for her and tried to encourage her to be a faith filled Catholic. I began to share with her

articles I had written to the news papers when I was still in Arkansas. She had a rosary from her Grandmother, I encouraged her to pray it. At one point, she became part of the problem with living in the barracks as a single female. She would get pregnant and have an abortion. It was tough, as I tried to be a brother for her. All I could do was to pray for her. I think in the end, it paid off as finally, she came back around and began to want our support again and she got her life cleaned up. She went to confession and began going back to Mass. When I left to go back to the States, she had a good husband and was fully practicing the faith. I'm glad it worked out for her and thank God for His work in her!

One morning after serving a 24 hour duty, I was home preparing to take a shower when somebody knocked on the door. Brenda had already taken the boys shopping so I answered the door. These two ladies stood there and asked me if I would be willing to talk to them about the "Kingdom". I immediately knew who they were and allowed them to enter through the door. I was at first listening to them being polite and respectful. The lead lady then noticed that I had Catholic things all around the house. She asked me if we were Catholic. I said that we are. That's when she began to tell me that her partner use to be

a Catholic until she saw the light. That's when I went on the offensive and explained that the Catholic Church is the faith from the Apostles. I informed them that Charles Taze Russell was their founder in the 1870's. He had been raised a Calvinist who developed a fear of hell. I went on until after two hours they were looking for a way out. Brenda gave them one as she returned home from her shopping. I did enjoy the opportunity. I know that the fallen away Catholic was listening intently to the discussion and was the reason why the leading lady wanted to get her out of there. I was reaching her.

In October 1987, Henry passed away of heart failure. He had been with Mom for over 30 years. I was not able to go to the funeral, but I felt sorry for Mom. She would now be alone. He served admirably in the Navy during World War II and had three ships sunk that he was serving on. He was full blooded Indian and a good guy. May God grant him eternal life and may he rest in peace.



I was at Medjugoria up on one of the sites that Mary is reportedly to have appeared. In 1933, the people of the village erected this huge cross on top of this hill, more like a small mountain. I was conversing with some friends of mine when I was called to intervene with a situation that was occurring. A lady was excitedly praising God as she discovered her rosary had turned to gold. This visitor from Texas was close to her openly displaying skepticism.



I went over to the lady and asked her about the rosary. She said she was a 5th grade teacher from Indiana and was on pilgrimage here. She reached into her pocket to pray the rosary and discovered that her rosary was gold. She said she had this rosary for 20 years. I looked at it and sure enough, it was gold. I looked at our skeptic and noticed he had a picture of of our Lady of Guadeloupe. I explained to him the miracle of the Tilma. After about ten minutes, his eyes got real big and he was ready to go to the other sites in the area. I next met our skeptic the following morning during Mass when everyone was greeting peace and he was two pews behind me. I reached out to greet him peace and the love in his eyes and the manner in which he pulled me over towards him told me he was no longer a skeptic!

One morning as we were conversing around together, a couple of guys were walking towards us from the Church (St. James) and they were rather excited about their rosaries. They had identical rosaries, until, while they were in Church, one of them turns gold. They were more than happy to talk to us about it! I had my trusty Panasonic M5 video

camera and took pictures and the testimony of the two men and their rosaries. Several of us were excited and I began to explain the example I found with the 5th grade teacher from Indiana. It was a spiritual high you might say!

As we were discussing this, I became very interested about our group. How many of you have checked your rosaries lately. Everyone pulled out a rosary and the Lord was giving us a miracle right before us. I'm so thankful that I happened to have my video camera running as I was able to capture a rosary transform from silver to gold as it was happening.



The two people who were holding the rosary were actually trembling as

I was videoing the scene. We all walked down the street as did the two men before us, praising the name of the Lord and the work He is doing!

During Reforger 1988, the soldier who converted to the Catholic Church, Robin of the famed duo, approached me with news from home as he arrived to the field one day later after I did. He was giving me four fingers and I couldn't make out what he was trying to say. Finally, he informed me that Brenda was pregnant with our fourth child. I was high as a kite. Brenda would give birth to our daughter whom I named "Petra Marie Hartley." I chose Petra, in honor of the occasion when Jesus changed the name of Simon to Peter and Marie in honor of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She was born on 25 May 1989. I love all my children and am thankful for them. Petra was born with the umbilical cord twice wrapped around her neck. The doctor had to quickly cut and tie off the umbilical cord as Petra was cyanotic. Again, thank you St. Gerald! The doctor did a real good job, and Petra is a great blessing.

Brenda and I were basically existing together trying to work out our family. At this time she was going to Mass, but as always, hated for me to talk with my friends. She didn't participate with us in any functions. She used Natural Family Planning, but to her advantage.

Intimate encounters were rare and she always wanted to get it over with quickly. She was never interested in me. All our children were conceived by accident, which in no way diminishes our love for them. We did not share the same vision for them as I would soon find out. After three years, I was given orders for Ft. Campbell KY.



Germany was a great opportunity for me. I was given two promotions, gained a daughter, had great experiences with the people, and I continued to grow in my faith. My two older boys were getting old enough to remember their stay and began playing sports. Jason and Petra would do that later. I tried to be a good representative to Europe

for the American People. I take seriously my charge to represent my country with pride, and integrity.

BACK TO THE USA

Germany had been a great adventure of faith. I experienced the people, visited some great churches, and saw many wonderful things. The flight back to the United States seemed long and weary. Before we got on the plane

there was a bomb threat. It took hours before we were able to board the plane. I wondered what drastic changes we would see in the United States after being three years in Europe. Would home really be home or would it have become so progressive that we wouldn't recognize it. I was on 30 days leave before I was to report to Ft. Sam Houston TX (San Antonio) for BNCOC. I wanted to drive by Ft. Campbell, KY to check this place out as I was going to be stationed there. While we were there I was able to get my family on the list for post housing. They were able to move on post while I was away at school.

At Ft. Sam Houston, I was glad to see the Priest who had been there 5 years before when I was there for AIT. I really enjoyed

participating with the choir as this was a release from my normal studies. There was good fellowship and I enjoyed Father's Sunday meetings over contemporary issues. This was sometimes mindful of CNN's Crossfire and I loved it. Some of my fellow classmates would challenge me. They would question me on the Catholic Faith. Some of them were interested in what the Catholic Church felt about being "Born Again". This was much like college when I was challenge on this issue. I felt better prepared to address thequestion. This is what I would say:

One of the most popular, widely asked questions is 'Are you born again?' People refer to the 'being born again' experience. Others call it their 'reality.' Nicodemus told Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him." "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." What did Jesus mean when he made this statement? For one thing, a change of heart must occur. Any individual who experiences being born from above will manifest certain signs. The first sign will be repentance. We must recognize our sinfulness and renounce all sin, and our need for the Savior Jesus Christ. This cannot, however, be a once in a lifetime

experience, but a new, and continual way of life.

Jesus established the sacrament of confession for this reason. Faith is a journey and it requires growth. Nicodemus goes on to ask, “How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother’s womb and be born again?” Jesus then says, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit.”

St. John the Baptist foretold his followers that the one who comes after him would “baptize you with fire and the Holy Spirit.” At the news of Jesus public ministry, St. John says, “He must increase, while I decrease.” The overall increase of Jesus (thoughts, actions, intentions, etc...) in a person’s life is one elemental sign of the born again experience. Jesus states, “No one can come to the Father unless you do the will of the Father. We must seek to do his will.”

Some Pentecostals maintain that a person cannot be born again without speaking in tongues, an outward sign of the Holy Spirit. This position has brought dissension among them. Pope Gregory the Great (604 A. D.) in his encyclical Homiliae in Evanfelia, Hom 29.4 observed that such charismatic signs decreased after the first days of the Catholic

faith. Pope John XXIII is reported to have prayed for those gifts of the early church to aid in these final days. A charismatic renewal was sparked in the 1980's and continues through today.

The Holy Spirit, beginning with the 'born again' experience, guides and directs each individual believer. On the corporate level, however, the Holy Spirit has guided and directed the Catholic Church since the first Pentecost. For some 2000 years, the Holy Spirit has handed down the teachings of Christ through apostolic succession. The Holy Spirit has guided apostolic authority with infallibility despite our sinfulness. The Holy Spirit has utilized the Church in writing the New Testament, by putting the scripture together at the Council of Hippo (393 - 396 A. D.). The Holy Spirit has guided the great councils of the church beginning with the Council of Jerusalem continuing the '60s to the Second Vatican Council.

The Holy Spirit touches people through the sacraments, particularly baptism and confirmation. The Holy Spirit is present and participates in the life of Christians on every level, from public and elaborate liturgies to private, closet prayer. It has always been manifested through the church, its ministers, and people.

The evidence of being born again is our living the teaching of

Christ. Baptism and confirmation cannot be subtracted from the born again experience due to the Holy Spirit's working within communities and individuals in relation to the sacraments.

When you are asked whether you've been born again, let your life demonstrate the results of being born again. This is putting 'yes' into action. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength (fortitude), knowledge, faith, healing, mighty deeds, prophecy, discernment of spirits, varieties of tongues, and interpretation of tongues (I Cor 12: 4-10).

One of the major themes of the Holy Spirit is the importance of loyalty to the Catholic faith. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is faithfulness! The gifts of the Holy Spirit reflect faithfulness which I consider a key sign of the "Born Again" experience. How can you say you follow Christ and yet deny His teachings? That never made sense to me.

In fact, St. Paul speaks to 'branded consciences' as a sign of deception in the end times. St. Peter wants to caution about "abandoning the straight road, they have gone astray, following the road of Balaam." He wants you to

beware, "Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (I Peter 5:8)." Are you truly born again? Show them by your example and live this life of faith through his grace."

I was able to get some people's attention with arguments like this. Finally, the our months of School was successful and I was on my way back home!

Ft. Campbell KY is very beautiful. It is right on the Tennessee/Kentucky state line between Clarksville TN and Hopkinsville Ky. The Post Office happens to be on the Kentucky side and so it is post marked "Kentucky". I was soon placed in the 20th Replacement Center where I in processed in with the Base. I quickly learned that I was going to the 3rd Brigade Rakkasans (HHC 3/187 Infantry). I was in the field my first 17 out of 21 months with the Rakkasans. I was in Panama, Ft. Irwin, and the "back 40".



I served as a Eucharistic Minister in the field. That was something I had been able to do throughout my military career. What a true blessing! I would also serve at Soldiers Chapel where I helped with RCIA and CCD. The religious coordinator, Rita Payne, have been a shining light and a cornerstone for the Catholic Church at Ft. Campbell. She has been a good friend! She has been there for several years and most of the Catholic Priests in the Army have met her at one time or another! We worked together for the institutional Church. I also was instrumental with helping single soldiers with bible studies. Brenda began to read the bible (The Catholic version) every morning as a devotion. I was hopeful about that thinking we could finally find some common ground. She would always attack me and my family. She would always remind me how she thought I was nothing when we dated. That she only went with me because she was lonely and had self-esteem problems. We had no relationship! Brenda would tell me she hated Germany, she hated Ft. Campbell, and she hid the fact that she hated the Catholic Church. I didn't know that yet, as I thought she was shy about faith. I did have hopes that her interest in the bible would bring her around. I began to praise her for her interest in the bible, as I was not aware of things to come. Then Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

We trained a great deal for this deployment. Especially against chemical attack and heat related injuries. Prior to this deployment, we were given block leave and so I went home to see my mother. She had several of our family members there. It was good to see them all. It really stormed there and because of the flooding my Dad was unable to come and see us. I spoke to him on the phone and talked about these issues:

The Mormon teachings are derived from four sets of scriptures they recognize as "divinely inspired", the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These writings along with the Bible are the foundation to their faith. The Mormon teachings began officially on April 6, 1830, after Joseph Smith claimed to have had visions of God the Father and Jesus Christ. He claimed they told him the "true church" was not on the face of the earth.

From age 14 he claimed supernatural occurrences would come to him.

Eventually, he claimed to have found golden plated through the help of an angel called "Moroni." Eleven other men testified they had seen the golden

plates "by the gift and power of God" and published the Book of Mormon.

From Fayette, New York, the Mormons moved to Kirkland, Ohio in 1831.

Here ex-Campbellite Sidney Rigdon and part of his congregation became Mormon adding strength to the new group. By 1839 the Mormons were fleeing Kirkland and moved up the Mississippi River settling at Commerce, Illinois, which they renamed "Nauvoo."

The practice of polygamy began by the 1840's and continued until 1890 when the president Wilford Woodruff issued a manifesto overturning this lifestyle . Still, a small group defied the threat of ex-communication. Black men were never ordained to their priesthood despite the fact they all "worthy males" at the age of 12 received such ordination. This policy was reversed in 1978, when the President stated that ordination would be granted "without regard for race or color."

Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were assassinated in 1844 while serving at Illinois Carthage Prison. Joseph Smith III, only 11 years old at the time, was challenged by individuals like Lyman Wright, James J. Strang, and

William Bickerton, that led to more than 20 different splinter groups.

In 1860, when Joseph Smith III decided to accept leadership of the largest branch of dissidents, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (RLDS), was established making its headquarters at Independence, Missouri. The majority of Mormons led by Brigham Young, who was head of the "twelve" since 1847, traveled and stayed at Salt Lake City, Utah.

Eventually, more than 300 settlements stretched from California to Colorado, from Mexico to Canada. The Mormons, like the Catholic Church, is hierarchical and authoritarian. At the top of this hierarchy is the president referred to as "The Prophet." The president and his two counselors regularly meet in conjunction with the "Council of Apostles." (there are 12 Apostles) New apostles are chosen by the "apostles" themselves.

When the president dies, the senior "apostle" becomes the next president.

Local groups called Wards, headed by a Bishop and two counselors. Above the Wards are Stakes, a collection of several wards, very similar to our

"Parishes" and "Dioceses."

Four generations ago, a lot of my Father's family background were involved with the establishment of the R.L.D.S. at Independence, Missouri. Before going to Saudi Arabia, my Father calls me concerned about the potential of war. He began to lament the fact that I was the first eldest son in four generations not practicing Mormonism.

I responded that my being Catholic was a matter of conviction, not chance. I told him that there is only one God in three persons, not three distinct persons, but one in substance and nature. Similar to h₂O(water) which can be used as liquid, steam or ice. That Jesus is the second part of the Blessed Trinity, truly God and truly man. Mormons reject the divinity of Jesus. I also reject that God the Father was once a human being now living on a planet called "Kalob." We can never be this equal nor will we ever own a universe. Mormons believe if they live the commandments of God to the full, attain the status of godhood in future aeons. In short, they believe they can become God. They believe in prenatal existence of human souls to include that Jesus and

Satan were once brothers. This I totally reject.

Mormons also believe that Jesus is the incarnation of St. Michael the

Archangel. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that he sent his only

begotten son so that who ever believes in him shall not perish, but have

everlasting life." I then told my father that I do not believe in what Mormons

call the "Great Schism" that indicates the destruction of the true faith.

I believe in "Apostolic Succession", where Jesus confers authority upon the

Apostles (Matthew 28:16-20), and they appoint successors (Titus 1:5-11). I do

not believe the true church was ever lost as Jesus promised his protection

(Matthew 16:18), and his continued presence until the end of the age (Matthew

28:20).

It is important for Catholics to understand this because some of us have being

susceptible to Mormon missionaries that periodically will come calling on you.

St. Paul instructs us to test the spirit and warns us not to follow even an angel

from heaven with a gospel different from that handed down from the Apostles

(Galatians 1:7-9). Pope John Paul II is the 264th successor of St. Peter. This

authority did not begin in 1830, nor 1917. It began in approximately A.D. 33.

Leaving my family again for Saudi Arabia was a difficult thing. I will always remember my boys in the back of the van saying goodbye. We didn't know if this was the last time I would see them. My Daughter (Petra) was still in her car seat not much aware of what was happening. Leaving my children was always difficult for me.



Saudi Arabia was hot! 130 degrees in the shade. We flew into King Fahd Airport and was given a reality check. F-15's guided us into the airport and we were able to see 40,000 empty body bags stacked near the runway. This was not a typical deployment, this was Desert

Shield. The line drawn in the sand. This became an incredible opportunity to witness for Christ. I was able to share the faith with soldiers in the Saudi desert. I was able to speak with both Officers and soldiers alike as they would come and see me. I remember the Motor Pool Chief who didn't think we were going to make it home. He had not been to Mass in years. I was teaching soldiers how to pray the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, and read the bible. That was very important to me. One day, our Chaplain had a death in his immediate family and had to return to the States. He was replaced with a Catholic Priest! We had Mass everyday in the desert! What a blessing from God! There were only a few priests in theatre and we had one with us in our Aid Station! I loved it! We would walk around the camp praying the Rosary together. I will always treasure those times. I know that some of our soldiers were not as happy with this situation because they were continuously reminded not to use their foul speech. I loved it all! I was sitting in my foxhole when mail arrived and I received a letter from Brenda informing me that she had decided to home school our children. That seemed odd to me as I read it. She was concerned about the bullies and the fights in the schools. With all the soldiers gone from Ft. Campbell, there were some problems in the schools. I went to Catholic

School growing up, so I felt as long as our children would get a good Catholic education, I was supportive of this. I knew I would keep my children involved with sports so I was not concerned about the social issues. I remember one night we were all in MOPP 4 preparing to move out and advance up to the Iraqi border. We had been listening to the Raiders/Bills game. The Bills trounced the Raiders something like 50 to 3. It was really lopsided. Being a Kansas City Chief fan, I loved it until we had to board the bus. As we were loading the bus, some scuds were fired above us. You could actually see them in the night sky. They looked like flying stars! Then a Patriot rocket hit one of the scuds right over our position. It brightened up the whole sky above us. We hit the deck for cover. No scud found it's mark and we were able to fly to our destination. That was a very tense moment.

Desert Shield was simply that, we kept Hussein in check. We deployed some place near the border for 30 days only to return to "Tent City" for a break.



During one such deployment, a large number of our battalion developed dysentery.

Our Battalion Commander caught the disease and had to be held at the Aid Station for several IV's. I was 66 out of 67 first time IV sticks during this crucial time. For some reason, I had kept a count and I'm glad I did. We were always transporting someone by ambulance to a field hospital because of severe symptoms. In times past this problem would have been serious. Many combat casualties were taken out due to environmental injuries rather than war injuries. Preventive Medicine has saved many lives and has placed many more quickly back on the field of action.

I was the only member of the Battalion Aid Station that did not catch the disease. I thanked the Lord for this favor! Late at night, while keeping radio watch in the BAS, I would pray the Rosary. I had my trusty New American Version of the Catholic Bible, which has great pictures. Using my flashlight, those pictures would seem to come to life, as I would meditate on them. We were always working on our defensive positions, digging in, filling sand bags, and training for war. I did pushups and setups, worked out with a sledgehammer, and tried to keep myself in some kind of shape. I remember CPT Johnson



(Battalion Trans) was a I did pushups and setups, worked out with a sledgehammer, and tried to keep myself in some kind of shape. I remember CPT Johnson (Battalion Trans) was a PT stud, he boasted of doing 600 pushups in one day. Because I couldn't let an officer boast of a record, the next day I did 700 pushups and that was never topped!

When we would be camped out somewhere in the Saudi Desert, we would have all our camouflage nets up, the latrine screen set up, and a makeshift shower point. Sometimes helicopters would fly low carrying water breivets and other supplies. When they did, the nets and tents would come to life. I remember one time when a helicopter flew low like that, our Brigade Commander happened to be in the area. With the storm that followed, everyone dove for cover. I remember the Brigade Commander running out of the tent screaming and pointing to the pilot to land that bird now. The pilot looked down at the commander pausing and waiting. The Commander was really upset and was able to communicate to the pilot he had better land the helicopter. We never had that problem again. Sometimes we would have sand storms that would cause the tent to come to life. The sand would be so thick you couldn't see a foot in front of you. We always had something going on that would be interesting! One night in Tent

City, we were awakened by the loud noise of plane engines. They were in the airport idling and you could hear them for miles. This night officially began the Air War. We were no longer Desert Shield, but now Desert Storm. Hussein failed to leave Kuwait and when he missed his deadline, President Bush was ready to go. Each day, we kept up with the news. We were flying over 2200 sorties a day hitting targets and weakening Hessians defenses. Our air power quickly took control over the skies and I was thankful that we were not hit like our Iraqi counterparts were. To this day I'm thankful for the Air Force. Our helicopters were another great advantage in hitting our enemy. By the time the ground war started, the Iraqi's were practically ready to give up.

Just before the ground war, on the eve of the greatest Air Assault mission, we were preparing to move out when Mass was being offered for us. I participated with the Mass and found myself before TV cameras when leaving the camouflaged tent. I was given an opportunity to answer questions and it was great to have that opportunity. I was seen on all the major news stations. I was placed in the CNN's documentary on the Gulf War narrated by Bernard Shaw, who introduced me with his answered prayer on the eve of battle! We flew

over 4 Iraqi Divisions who fortunately were bogged down by severe rain. We flew low and fast. At Ft. Campbell, we had trained extensively using Black hawk helicopters flying low just above the trees. Here, there were no trees. It was like a straight shot. This wasn't a joy ride like a roller coaster, this was the real deal. We jumped out of the helicopters and into the mud in the Euphrates river valley. We quickly set up fighting positions until we were able to set up our Battalion Aid Station. I was on the advance party so we mapped out our position and maintained it until the main force arrived. There was limited action as we routed any Iraqi troops in the area. The different Companies within the Battalion surrounded us. Fortunately, we took no casualties and our wounded were very light. Turmoil was all around us. One mayor in a nearby town was hung because he supported Hussein, while in another nearby town, the mayor was hung because he was against Hussein. We were receiving civilians trying to seek refuge or needing some kind of medical attention. We received one prisoner of war who came to the BAS walking with a limp. He was a driver for an Iraqi officer. We thought he might have been wounded but it turns out he had polio as a child. His right leg was only a bone. So much for Hussein's "Million man army". One day, BBC broadcasted to the

world that there were no American soldiers left in Iraq. We were sitting at the northern most inward position in the Iraqi theatre. That was a wild feeling. On March 6th, it rained, the wind was really up and it was miserable. My foxhole had been swamped, all my things were wet, and it was cool. My poncho was just popping. Water was standing everywhere around us. There was not a dry place to be found. We had already taken down the sick call tent, as we were getting ready to move. It would be hours before we would leave the area and head for camp Cobra, which was still in Iraq. I just sat on an MRE box and waited it out. On a lighter note, after the ground war was called off and we had won the war, our Battalion Sergeant Major went throughout the Battalion informing everyone that we had to conduct police call (clean up the area around us before we left Iraq!) That just struck us all as odd!

Back in Tent City, the news finally came that we were going home! We had to wash all our vehicles and this was not a touch over, I mean they had to be clean. The anticipation of going home was difficult for us, especially if you were placed on rear detachment. They had to stay until the entire Brigade was gone. I will always remember the long hours, Tent City, the people I served with for those eight months over

there. I am thankful for our Country and for what we had accomplished! While we were in Saudi Arabia, I missed my children. They had grown up a lot since I was last home. The trip home was difficult. We stopped in Rome for an hour to fuel up the plane. I could see the Dome of the Vatican from my window. I wish we could have been able to have visited the Vatican, but we were unable to leave the plane. Finally, as we flew into Ft. Campbell, we could hear the cheers from the crowds of people. That was exciting. We felt like heroes! I was very happy to see my children. Nathan and Joshua had grown a lot and Jason was just getting old enough to get a feel for what was going on. My Daughter Petra was still in a car seat and Brenda held her in her arms. That was a great coming home experience!

Not long after I returned from Iraq, Brenda became pregnant. I was happy to hear that we had another child on the way, but something was different. Brenda wanted an abortion. I was appalled and reminded her about the Catholic Church's teaching is on abortion. Then she prayed that God would take the life of the child. After 3 months, Brenda had a miscarriage and the child was dead. I looked at this as a spiritual abortion. Brenda then wanted to have her tubes tied and I explained what the Catholic Church taught on that issue. I

invited a Catholic priest to come and visit us to help explain the issue as well. Brenda was not happy with either of our explanations. She used Natural Family Planning not because of the Catholic Church, but for her own purpose. She constantly used sex as a weapon. She used NFP to indicate the days she was fertile and the other days she would start arguments to ruin any chance of an encounter. This went on for years. The problem really went all the way back to the beginning of the marriage. I put 100% into my children. Since Nathan was 5 years old, he had been Involved in sports. He was really cute playing soccer, basketball, and tee ball! Joshua and Jason followed right behind! I helped coach their teams. I was with them at night throwing the football and wrestling with them. Every afternoon someone had a practice and every weekend they all had games. I had them involved with the Youth Activities Center and they played all year-round. My schedule was busy, but I made time for my children! I was not the typical father who spent an average of 7 seconds a day with his kids! They were my life! At night, we would watch movies, or find something else to do.



After coming in from a major field exercise, the local newspaper had printed a challenge to the Catholic Priest in Clarksville TN. A man wanted to challenge the Priest during Mass or at the Church. Father did respond in the local newspaper and it went back and forth for a few weeks. I called the local newspaper and was able to get the name of the man who was issuing such a challenge. I called him up to take him up on his challenge. We agreed that we would meet at his home in Clarksville TN on a Sunday evening. On the night of the debate, I put on my tennis shoes, blue jeans, and my prized black tee-shirt with the praying hand on the front with a rosary draped in the hands. I grabbed my trusty New American Bible and took off to the challenge. I arrived at the designated location and I pulled into a large driveway. This was a huge place, the guy was rich! I went to the door and rang the

bell when a lady invited me in. The place was gorgeous and huge. The furniture was expensive. The lights were dimmed as I was led down a corridor towards the kitchen. I walked around the table towards the other side where a chair was placed for me. The man was sitting on the opposite side of the table. The table was covered with several books and magazines that were well marked with yellow stickies. I was awed by the whole site. I sat down in my designated chair across from the guy, placed my New American down in front of me, folded my arms, and was ready to go! The debate lasted 4 hours and I demolished every point that he raised. The letters to the editor ceased! The issues covered I can relate on other threads as that would be considerably lengthy for this thread!

One day as I was working in the TMC at Ft. Campbell, a young man came into the waiting area looking for me. I was in the pharmacy pulling medication for a patient when I hear this challenge. I did not know this man, yet he came in from no where looking for me. He wanted to challenge me on Mary. I asked him if he could wait a few minutes, and I would take him to his car and with his bible, show him that Mary was his mother! He was anxious about that and so, when I had the opportunity, I took him out to his car and used his bible and

showed him that Mary was his mother (Rev 12:17). I patched that point along with the crucifixion scene in the Gospel of John. I then went to Genesis 3:15 and back to Rev 12. I then went to Luke and then Psalms 45:10. I then looked at the tradition of the Church and then some interesting miracles of Mary (Fatima, Lourdes, the Miraculous Medal.....). After a few minutes, the young man was coming to Mass with me the following Sunday and we became good friends! He walked away with a different point of view!

We always prayed before our meals as a family and I would always lead with the Sign of the Cross and end the prayer with the Sign of the Cross. I led them in prayers, songs and hymns, bible readings, and the Rosary. I always prayed over them at night as they laid in bed. I generally would recite the Nicene Creed, the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Glory Be. Then I would pray prayers from the heart with the concerns and issues of the time. I ensured that they were at Mass every Sunday and Holy Day. I would routinely ask them questions about the faith. They loved it! Nathan, " How many books are there in the New Testament?" " 27 books dad!" "Joshua, What year did the Catholic Church first put the bible together?" " Dad, 393!" " What Council was it Jason?" " Um Dad, I forgot!" Nathan would take a crack at it, "Um

Dad, wasn't that the Council of Hippo?" " Correct! You got it!" I would ask them hundreds of questions about the faith because I wanted to prepare them for I knew they would be challenged with someday. I wanted to make it fun for them and I wanted them to feel a sense of accomplishment. I enjoyed playing sports for our Battalion and Company Softball, basketball, and flag football teams. As a Rakkasan, we won the Ft. Campbell Division Title three times. Two championship titles in softball and one in Football in a four-year period. Before one Division Tournament, the Rakkasans were in the field. The ball team was allowed to come in from the field early in order to play the tournament. Our Sergeant Major was a big fan!

The night we came in, LTC Petraeus was accidentally shot in the chest during a live fire training exercise. I would have been the medic involved in saving his life had we not returned early for the softball tournament. One of my soldiers whom I trained to treat sucking chest wound injuries was on the scene. The bullet went just above the nametag just over his right fifth rib. It nicked his right lung. He was treated with an occlusive dressing, given an IV, and then taken out by helicopter. Three weeks later he was doing pushups in the hospital. LTC Petraeus is a true leader and I will always value his leadership to

me! Iron Rakkasan! While I served with the Rakkasans, in a five year assignment, I had served as the B Company Senior Line Medic, C Company Senior Line Medic, the Evacuation NCOIC, the Battalion Aid Station NCOIC and finally as the Platoon Sergeant. I had performed just about every conceivable mission while I was stationed there.

I was invited to give a talk in Clarksville TN at the Church of the Immaculate Conception. I entitled the talk “This Woman” as it related to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. During the talk, two teenage girls walk in from the street not affiliated with the study group. They were simply interested in what was going on and was looking for something to do. My two older sons, Nathan and Joshua were present and so that worked out well. My talk was based from the bible and my personal experience:

This woman was first made known to us in the story of man’s fall. She was referred to as ‘woman’ by God, recorded in Genesis 3:15, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers.” This woman is also revealed in Revelation 12:1 as “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars.” This woman was referred to as the virgin that would bring the redeemer into the world (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus spoke to her from the cross and said, “Woman, behold your son.” She subsequently remained in the

care of Saint John as his ‘mother.’ From the apostles to the fathers, this woman became known as ‘mother of the church.’ Who is this woman that all generations shall call her blessed (Psalms 45:18, Luke 1:48)? This woman is Mary, whose heart would be pierced by a sword (Luke 2:35); early church fathers called her the ‘queen of heaven’ (Psalms 45 vs. 10).

The church gives special honor to this woman who was chosen by the Father, for the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Some people have become confused about this woman and the honor given her. Some say she is worshipped as a goddess, others call her an idol who has no power, a replacement for the Roman goddess Diana. Others simply regard this woman as a ‘good woman.’

So, this woman, who should be a source of unity for Christians, has become a most controversial figure. Is this what Jesus would want? Luke 1:46 records Mary as saying her “soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior.” To challenge this woman is to challenge the church itself, and the one who established it. What is it that some people can’t accept about this woman?

Let’s take a look at the church’s teaching. One of the titles by which this woman is invoked is ‘mediatrix.’ This title, according to Vatican Council II (’62 - ’65), ‘neither takes away from nor adds anything

to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one mediator.’ What the title ‘mediatrix’ truly conveys is that this woman, through her own free will, chose to become the mother of the promised one. (See Luke 1:26-38.) Her role in redemption began with her ‘yes’ to God, and so she became the vehicle in which the Son was sent from heaven (John 3:16). This woman’s obedience and faith allowed the door to be opened for you and me. She was chosen for God’s plan, and she followed it as called. She is honored as ‘model of the church,’ ‘daughter of Zion,’ ‘the new Eve,’ ‘ark of the new covenant.’ The Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. taught that this woman is “in virtue of the incarnation, truly theotokos, Mother of God.”

The church teaches that God had prepared this woman for the purpose of bringing Jesus into the world, and at the moment of her beginning of existence, God protected her from original sin. This is called ‘The Immaculate Conception.’ Pope Pius IX solemnly defined the Immaculate Conception in 1854, making her the first fruits of her Divine Son’s redemption. Our Protestant friends will quickly remind you of Romans 3:23, “all have sinned and are deprived of the Glory of God.” This is true. Mankind fell from grace and became separated from God. However, God’s plan was to send the mediator who would restore life and salvation to mankind making the glory of God attainable through Jesus’

death and resurrection. This woman needed the messiah as does everyone else who ever lived, and it is only through God's grace and protection that this woman could handle the responsibilities that came with the job.

What is the basic message of this woman? She tells us in John 2:5 to "do whatever He tells you." This woman has echoed this statement many times through the centuries at various times and places (Guadalupe, Mexico, 1531; Paris, France, 1830; Lourdes, France, 1850; Fatima, Portugal, 1917; possibly Medjugorje). I have personally been to Medjugorje and witnessed 12 rosaries change from silver color to gold. One of them I caught on video as it changed to gold. Gold is a symbol that reminds us we should come to God, seeking Him with a pure heart. Golden rosaries may be a reminder of the heavenly kingdom and the streets of gold.

Acts 2:17-19 states "it will come to pass in the last days, God says, I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh, your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Indeed, upon the servants and my handmaids, I will pour out my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below."

I will honor this woman with her most known prayer, "Hail, Mary,

full of grace, the Lord is with you (Luke 1:28), blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus (Luke 1:42), Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, (Rev 8:3), and at the hour our death. Amen!

I began to lead the group in the Rosary when a lady began to get very excited. Everyone stopped to see what was going on as she was reacting to her rosary changing to gold. That became a source of excitement to us all. I was glad that my boys were present as this would be hard to explain if you were not there. I resumed leading the Rosary when a second lady began to express excitement. This time, we all were alert of what was happening. This ladies rosary turned to gold, one that she had for several years. It was the most incredible thing. Every time we met in prayer, she always had that rosary and we always retold the story. I was wondering if we were going to get through with the prayer itself! The two teenage girls were able to witness a miracle and they left very excited about the situation!

I received DA Orders to report to the Meddac at Ft. Campbell, KY June 1994. This was a PCS move, yet I didn't have to go anywhere! Meddac is another command on post. It was great for me because I

didn't have to move my family. I began working in the Emergency Room. This was a great opportunity to conduct medical procedures that you never see in a Battalion Aid Station. As a Rakkasan, I rarely was home in the middle of the morning so I never picked up the mail. My new hours were from 11:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M. This was harder when we had to be at physical training at 06:00 in the morning and had to be at work at 10:45 later that morning. It would also be a challenge when you had to go to the range and fire your weapon. These are new challenges that you meet when you work in the Emergency Room. It has to be covered 24 hours a day. One morning before I went to work, I checked the mailbox. I didn't think anything about it, I just wanted to check it before I went to work. I discovered anti-Catholic material that was addressed to Brenda. I was puzzled by this and asked her about it. I was amazed to find that Brenda had been communicating with anti-Catholics for some time. I remember Brenda asked me questions from time to time, but I never suspected anything. Once she asked me if I knew which Pope was "Pontiface Maximus. I told her there was no pope with that name or title. I even showed her the history of all the Popes right from an encyclopedia. Brenda seemed confused with that. What I discovered in looking through the material was, they were

claiming that the Emperor Constantine was the first Pope and that he established the “Roman Catholic Church”. Oh, that I utterly protested and defended that Christ alone founded the Catholic Church, that Peter was his first “Prime Minister” and that the Bishops of Rome began with Peter. I insisted that John Paul II is the 264th successor to Peter! Brenda began to believe that the Pope was the “Anti-Christ” and that the Catholic Church was the “Whore of Babylon”. I was very indignant over this. Brenda attacked me verbally and daily because I was Catholic. She maintained that the Catholic Church became a “father” figure for me and that I should not place a “church” on the same level as God Himself. We were clearly unequally yoked! I discovered that Brenda had used some of her home schooling curriculum that was published with anti-Catholic teachings and beliefs. This infuriated me. I now understood what the “Trojan Horse” symbolized in my own home. Brenda challenged me openly in front of stances. the children. I tried to explain it lovingly, but Brenda did not care to discuss it at all. She took her heretical stance and would not allow any rebuttal. If she could not defend a point; she would attack my family or me in a personal way. This would infuriate me. Brenda began to renounce the Catholic Faith openly and refused to pray with us, to read the bible with

us (she threw away her Catholic bible that I had bought her a few years before). Our home became a war zone. On more than one occasion I was home alone watching EWTN or a tape with single soldiers when Brenda would come home with the children or some of her friends. She would tell me to turn off what we were watching because it was offensive to them. I had no peace or freedom within my own home. I continued to be involved with my children, but I knew that things would never be the same. I began leading bible studies at Clarksville TN Catholic Church (Immaculate Conception) on Tuesday evenings and Charismatic Catholic prayer services on Sunday evenings. I also became involved with a community group represented by several denominations that opposed pornography. I was a leader within that group representing the Catholic community. We would be responsible for Saturdays to ensure that nobody from our side of the line did anything wrong or illegal. We also ensured that we had a presence with signs against pornography. I was not ashamed to stand in front of this porno store holding a sign that read, "Pornography destroys". I was out there just about everyday supporting the cause. I became the center of debate at Austin Peay University because I took videos of their patrons entering the store. The porno storeowners hated me because of

that camera. People would pull into their parking lot but refused to have their picture taken. We loved it, but they didn't. The College had an open debate on pornography and the community was invited. The Camera became a point of interest on both sides! As long as I was within my rights, not on their property, I was not breaking any law having my camera! I would stand out there with that sign right across the street from the porno store in the rain, thunderstorms, lightening and the 100-degree heat. People drove by honking for us because they supported what we were doing. We had some success through this effort as laws were passed preventing such stores to be built within 2,000 ft of a park, school, or church. That was good legislation and hopefully it helped keep porno out of the hands of some children! At home things continued to deteriorate as Brenda became more hostile to the Catholic Faith. Her hostility for me became more apparent as I represented the Catholic Faith. She began to openly oppose people who were coming to me for help. She attacked them verbally in our home and needless to say, none of my friends felt welcome. On one occasion, a friend of mine from another unit had been in an automobile accident. His car was totaled and he needed some help. He came to me for help and Brenda sent him away telling him that he was unwelcome there.

When I was informed of the situation, I was furious with Brenda. I couldn't believe that she could do that. I began writing "fact sheets" for single soldiers because when they arrive at Ft. Campbell KY, they come through the 20th replacement center and from there receive orders to their unit. Many of these soldiers are far away from home for the first time and are vulnerable to the various church groups that are out there looking for new members. They particularly look for Catholics because they don't see Catholics as saved, and they want to convert them. I began to answer all the questions that our soldiers were being challenged with and putting it down on paper. This helped a lot of them! These "fact sheets" are still being used there. I continued to be involved with the Children with their sports and religion. Petra, my Daughter, began to play soccer, basketball, and tee ball. Petra was also quite the fundraiser. If our unit was going to have a fundraiser, Petra was in on it! She helped out with car washes, selling magazines, candies, anything that raised funds for our unit. Petra also helped the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the American Cancer Society. I was in the Emergency Room about a year and then was assigned as the NCOIC of Troop Medical Clinic #3. This clinic supported the Rakkasans so I was very much at home there. I was off after 3:30 in the

afternoon, which made it possible for me to keep up my heavy schedule for my kids! I began to address some of Brenda's issues personally because I feel that every falsehood unchallenged becomes somebody's reality. One day one of her friends challenged me asking:

"As a Protestant and a true Christian, I can not see how you Catholics worship the Pope? He is just an individual like everyone else"!

I responded this:

"You raise an issue where great misunderstanding and misrepresentation have been handed down sine the time of Martin Luther 16th century. When Luther first left the Church, he justified his exodus with calling the Catholic Church the "Roman Catholic Church". This was intended to be an insult and attack on the papacy who Luther called "the antichrist". Modern day Protestants like Tony Alamo and Jack Chick have worked hard to keep this rhetoric alive. Groups like the Seventh Day Adventists teach that the Catholic Church is the "Whore of Babylon" and that the Pope is the antichrist. They actually believe the tiria that the popes have worn has "666" written on it. One of the titles of the Pope is "Servant of the Servants of God". These people take the Latin translation to equal 666. Another statement these people will proclaim is that we worship the pope. I'm afraid you have been influenced by this propaganda. I would

get really into the heart of the question and give detailed answer. I would continue, “the Papacy began with Jesus who established Simon, son of Bar-Jona, supreme authority in the Church. Pope John Paul II is the 264th successor of St. Peter. Throughout the Church’s history, there have been times when men have attempted to take over the papacy. Emperors and rulers tried to control or dominate the papacy to further their own ambitions. In some cases, they appointed “anti-popes” to support them. An anti-pope is a man who has been improperly elected as pope. He sets himself up in opposition to the Pope who has been regularly chosen in accordance with Canon Law. The first anti-pope was Hippolytus (217 A.D.) and the last anti-pope was Felix V (1440-1449). In all there have been 27 anti-popes none of which are listed in the history of the popes. Hippolytus may have later become the true pope, but not during the time when he challenged the papacy as an anti-pope! I would continue, as the need would take me! Brenda began to follow several teachings that were against the Catholic Church. Several groups would try and use her to get to me. I actually debated anti-Catholics at a Billy Graham crusade in Nashville. Brenda sidled up to them hoping they would affect me. Brenda didn't realize that such groups I had debated since college. I knew many of their arguments. I specifically wrote a response to the Seventh Day

Adventist:

As I looked at the question about Mary, I was thanking God for the opportunity to explain the truth of the Catholic Church. It is always a privilege to share God's truth with people who are genuinely searching the truth. In response to the idea that the bible reflects Jesus as the only intercessor, this is error. The bible does not refer to Jesus as the "Sole Intercessor". St. Paul teaches "First of all then, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions (intercessors), and thanksgiving be offered for everyone, for kings and all in authority..." St John also teaching, "And if we know that he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, we know that what we have asked him for is ours. If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life". St. James adds, "The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful". In the book of Hebrews, it states, "Pray for us, for we are confident that we have a clear conscience, wishing to act rightly in every respect".

The sacred author to the book of Hebrews makes the presumptive point of intercession from the saints in heaven by giving us the faith chapter. Heb. Chapter 11 is called the "faith chapter", which gives a history of the saints from the Old Testament. Hebrews 12 Vs 1 follows with, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid

ourselves of every burden and sin...".

Jesus himself solemnly confirms a warning stating, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father (Matt 18 Vs 10)". Jesus states that leading children into sin, "it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and drowned in the depths of the sea". I personally do not want that kind of witness against me on the day of judgment. Rather, I prefer the saints prayer of support. St. John clearly reveals heavenly intercession stating, "Another angel came and stood at the Alter, holding a gold censer. He was given a great quantity of incense to offer, along with the prayers of all the holy ones, on the gold alter that was before the throne (Rev 8 Vs 3)". This Alter is pictured in heaven, not an earthly one. This is in the "third" level of heaven that St Paul reveals in 2 Cor 12 Vs 2. St. John's text continues, "The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the hand of the angel". Revelation Chapter 4 gives a glimpse of heavenly worship. You have the 24 elders with gold crowns on their heads. You have the four living creatures exclaiming, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come". Plus you have the whole heavenly host of angels and saints around the

throne. This is certainly confirming the belief that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God of the living, not the dead. From the Apostles Creed, we profess the communion of saints. "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins...". This is part of that tradition of 2 Thess 2 Vs 15 born out of the scriptures. Much of the Sacred Scripture discusses this wonderful power of prayer! Mary, the saints, and all of us are intercessors, and should be understood in this light. This power of prayer stems from the fact that Jesus is the Mediator between God and man. This is where the confusion is coming from. Some people have misunderstood the teaching of the Church, and misrepresent the Church. They speak as if they are an authority on the Church. This is where many non-practicing Catholics are wrong. We do NOT worship Mary! Bishop Sheen once said that," there might be 100 people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church. But there are millions who oppose what they think the Church is". Hence all the confusion. The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) and others have put out seminars and booklets depicting the Catholic Church as the "WHORE OF BABYLON" and the Pope as the "Anti-Christ". This can be traced to the 16th century Protestant reformers who sought to destroy the Catholic Church. They failed miserably because

they then put themselves in direct opposition to God Himself. To the question “Who is the Anti-Christ” they say, “The bible says he (Anti-Christ) is alive today”. This is to get their prospective followers to understand that the Anti-Christ has been revealed and they (SDA) know who it is. In reality, has this Anti-Christ truly been revealed? Is he alive today? Maybe, maybe not, there are many signs that would prelude the arrival of the Anti-Christ. Jesus told his apostles, “See that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name saying, I am the Messiah and they will deceive many”. Around the world today, there are 5,600 “messiahs” with a following of 40,000,000. The Pope certainly does NOT refer to himself as a “messiah”. These Protestant friends of ours greatly mistake who the Pope is. He has several titles, which denotes his office; Vicar of Christ, Servant of the Servants of God, The Shoes of a Fisher of Men, The Chief Stewart, and Christ’s Prime Minister, all of which depicts the Biblical language of his office. St. Peter was the first Bishop of Rome crucified upside down on a cross at Vatican Hill in 67 A. D. John Paul II is the 264th successor to Peter. Some of our friends mistakenly depict the Catholic Church as the “Harlot” believing that the Church is an apostate church. Let’s examine who this whore really would be. The Old Testament at times refers to the nation of Israel as a whore (Ezekiel

Chapter 23). The Prophet Hosea's wife, Gomer, the adulteress, symbolized faithless Israel. Israel's infidelity took the form of idolatry. So when Israel was in sin, they could be overcome by foreign nations (Judith 5 vs. 17-18). The "Whore of Babylon" is specifically found in the 17th chapter of Revelation. St. John speaks of a great harlot who has committed fornication with the nations. She is covered by blasphemous names identified with the devil. She was drunk with the blood of the saints. Can this "harlot" be the Catholic Church? No it can't. The 13th book of Revelation identifies the First beast (the Anti-Christ) and Second Beast (the False Prophet). It clearly states there will be an event that will lead many non-Christians to this "First Beast". This Second Beast will be identified with "two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon". This False Prophet will perform great "miracles" by authority given through the Anti-Christ. The horns of a lamb identify with Christ, but yet he spoke like a devil. This will deceive many people into following this Anti-Christ. This leads to the apostasy St. Paul speaks to in 2 Thessalonians 2 vs. 3-8. Those people who have abandoned the Catholic Church make up this "whore"! It will not be the faithful adherence to the faith, but the rejection of it that will bring on the terrible tribulation. Jesus warns us not to be misled. Any group of Christians not in union with the Catholic

Church are subject to false doctrines and are mislead, more on this later. Jesus also said, “You will hear of wars and reports of wars...Nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom”. This certainly appears true in our own century. We have seen more bloodshed in this century, 1 out of 4 Christian martyrs have been killed in this time period. Jesus then states, “there will be famines and earthquakes from place to place”. There are over 26,000,000 men, women, and children suffering from starvation due to drought in East Africa alone. Earthquakes that measured 6.5 on the richter scale between 1900 and 1969 there were 48 such earthquakes. Between July 1990 and October 1992, almost a three-year period, there were 133 such earthquakes. A 2300% increase! Jesus then states, “All these are the beginning of the labor pains”. These signs suggest a possibility that the end of the age could be near. However, this time period has not arrived yet! The Anti-Christ would not be revealed until the time of his presence. St. Paul answered the concerns of Catholics of his time (we were called the Way 33-37, Nazarene 37-42, Christian 42 till present, and Catholic 67 till present) who worried about the Second Coming of Jesus stating, “do not be shaken out of your minds suddenly, or be alarmed either by a “spirit”, or by an oral statement, or by a letter allegedly from us to the effect that the day of the Lord is at hand. Let no

one deceive you in any way. For unless the apostasy comes first and the Lawless One is revealed, the one doomed to perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god and object of worship, so as to seat himself in the Temple of God, claiming that he is a god". This scripture certainly speaks of an Apostasy prior to the coming of the Anti-Christ. During the reign of this Anti-Christ, Jesus states, "then they will hand you over to persecution, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name". Today there are over 26 countries that persecute Christians, and several more that are straying away from their Judeo-Christian roots. This includes the United States. Is this preparing the foundation to this Anti-Christ? If so, still, the Anti-Christ has not been revealed. St. John writes, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that the Anti-Christ have appeared. This we know this is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of our number; if they had been, they would have remained with us. Their desertion shows that none of them was our number". This defection from the faith implies that these "FALSE PROPHETS" will deceive many creating the foundation for THE "False Prophet that will cause the world to worship the "BEAST", the Anti-Christ. St. John states, "Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon (Satan), with seven heads and ten horns, and on

its head were seven diadems. It's tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth". According to the Old Testament Prophet Daniel, he states that the "stars" signify teachers (Daniel 12 Vs 3-4). St. John implies that a third of the teachers will defect during those times! Who are these teachers? Jesus built the Church on the foundation of the Apostles; the 20th century successors are the continued line of bishops ordained in direct succession. Is this a depiction of disobedience by bishops to the Pope? Very possible! St. Paul writes "Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the last times some will turn away from the "faith" by paying attention to deceitful spirits and demonic instructions, through the hypocrisy of liars with branded consciences". Obviously there will be a defection from the Catholic Church in the last times. Not counting the Protestant revolt, which was more political as it was over religion, many did defect from the faith. This shook the Church to its very foundation!

However, the Catholic Church more than recovered for today 75% of Christianity still profess the faith of the Apostles. There are over 17 million fallen away Catholics in the United States. This is more people as a group than the largest Protestant Church in America. Sometimes the most Anti-Catholic group was former Catholics! Yes, we see millions of converts due to the RCIA program, but our loss is tragic. Jesus reaches

out to each one as a lone sheep! I believe we can identify with the Scripture and its implication as a sign of apostasy in our midst. Lets take a look at the SDA for comparison for a moment, they were established in 1863 near Battle Creek Michigan. This group is a leading opponent to the Catholic Church. In 1960 there were 400,000 SDA members. Today they number over 7,000,000. Where is this Apostasy? They have increased 500%. And where are they zeroing in for converts? You've guest it, Catholics. There are a lot of groups out there preying on the ignorance of people with a warm smile and a handshake. We need to do better in educating our young people warning them of all this sheep stealing going on. A question posed by the SDA asks, "It is not possible to understand last-day prophecies unless you have correctly identified the Anti-Christ". They want to establish in your minds that the Catholic Church was man made. They want you to identify the Church with the "HARLOT" of Revelation chapter 17. Jesus established the Catholic Faith in 33 A. D. John Paul II is the 264th successor of St. Peter. This is an historical fact! Of this faith Jesus divinely established, he promised the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16 Vs 18), that he would be with us until the end of this age (Matthew 28 Vs 20), and that the Holy Spirit gives life to the Church until Jesus returns (John 14 Vs15-26). Those who

imply that the Pope is the Anti-Christ reject this authority. Let's take a look at their argument for a second. Daniel chapter seven depicts four world kingdoms with their representations. The kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. A beast which ten horns appear on its head represents the Roman Empire. These ten horns represent ten kingdoms that will emerge from the basis of the old Roman Empire. Three horns are rooted up. From the SDA perspective, these ten horns were the Visigoths, Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Alemani, Burgundians, Lombards, Suevi, Heruli, Ostrogoths, and the Vandals. The SDA believe the last three kingdoms listed were "rooted up" by the Catholic Church. To respond to this, my first point is simple. These various peoples could not be those depicted by Daniel for the end days. Daniel chapter 12 Vs 4 states, "As for you, Daniel, keep secret the message and seal the book until the end time; many shall fall away (Apostasy) and evil shall increase". The conclusion here is obvious; the information in Daniel's book would be "sealed" until the last days. The situations with the tribes listed above took place over 1500 years ago. These were certainly not the "last day" as time continues on. Plus key prophetic events had not taken place yet, more on that later. I want to take a closer look at the ten horns, what does this really mean. We must back up to Daniel 2 Vs 41-44. King

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which Daniel was able to reveal. It was a huge statue representing the world kingdoms of the future. The ten horns are revealed in this dream as the ten toes of this statue. The feet were a mixture of iron and clay. Because Rome was depicted as the legs of iron, the feet naturally becomes the extension. St. John writes (Rev. 17 Vs 9-10), "Here is a clue for one who has wisdom. The seven heads represent seven hills upon which the woman sits. They also represent seven kings: five have fallen, one still lives, and the last has not yet come...". The five fallen kingdoms were Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The kingdom that was in power during the time of Jesus was the Roman Empire. There is one final kingdom that is to come that will arise from the old Roman Empire. This organization is where the Anti-Christ will emerge. Obviously, this kingdom must preexist the Anti-Christ. I believe it is more likely that the clue given by St. John and from Daniel's revelation that this future Kingdom has been organized. In 1948, the organization most likely depicted by Daniel finally materialized. The European Community now referees to the European Union (EU) began with Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxemburg. In 1957, Italy, France, and Germany joined the EU. THE TREATY OF ROME ratified these! In 1973 England, Ireland, and Denmark joined the EU. Then in 1981

Greece became the tenth nation to follow into the EU. This makes up our ten horns and much more. The earlier tribes thought to be the ten horns, never went worldwide. The Anti-Christ will have world dominion when he does arrive. Brussels Belgium is where the executive branch headquarters are located. Parliament is located in Luxembourg. The EU is working for a United States of Europe that will resemble the United States of America! They already have a European currency. Each country will forfeit national security for the sake of Europe as a whole. This is a Federation that has already begun to go worldwide. This organization when the Anti-Christ comes will go worldwide. In January 1995, Austria became the 13th nation. The “rooted up” kings (horns) will be a political compromise of national sovereignty for EU goals that will be in control of the Anti-Christ. These become the catalysts that will finally usher in the “NEW WORLD ORDER”. Groups like the Trilateral Commission have been working towards a one-world government. From the book “THE LAST DICTATOR”, it describes the world set into ten regions: (1) The United States, Canada, and Mexico (2) Western Europe (3) The Japan Islands (4) Australia and New Zealand (5) Eastern Europe (6) Latin America (7) North Africa and the Middle East (8) Main Africa (9) South and South East Asia and (10) Central Asia. Reflecting on this book, Pope John Paul

II warns, “by the end of this decade (2,000), we will live under the first one-world government that ever existed in the society of nations, the one-world government is inevitable. Pope Benedict XV (1922) stated about this one-world government, “This State will vanquish all national loyalties. If these ideas are put into practice there will inevitably follow a reign of unheard of terror”. No other century have we seen this push for this one-world government? Revelation chapter 13 states, “Fascinated, the whole world followed after the Beast because of his healing from a mortal wound”. The whole world will be led to worship the Anti-Christ. The SDA and others who believe the Pope is the Anti-Christ confuse Christ’s command to GO to all nations with His truth, and this tribulation period and reign of Anti-Christ. From Daniel’s writings, can we find a glimpse of the Catholic Church? Daniel 2 Vs 34 states, “while you looked at the statue, a stone which was hewn from a mountain without a hand being put to it, struck it’s iron and tile feet, breaking them in pieces”. Jesus refers to himself as “the stone, which the builders rejected, has become the cornerstone (Luke 20 Vs 17)”. Daniel continues Vs 44, “In the life time of those kings, the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and put an end to them, and it shall

stand forever”. The Catholic Church survived the Roman Empire which fell in 476 AD. The Church has survived through 2000 years of history despite all Satan’s tricks. Jesus established the Church giving it His protection (Matt 16 Vs 18), His promise (Matt 28 Vs 20), and His seal (John 14 Vs 15-26).

Let’s take a look at what the SDA claimed uprooted, the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals. These were barbarians who lived in northern Germany. In 406 they crossed the Rhine River and attacked the cities of Gaul and the Romans in Spain. By 439 they had won all Roman North Africa including Carthage. These people were fanatical Arians who rejected the Divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity. They harshly persecuted the Catholic Church where they took power. In 455, they captured Rome and pillaged the city. Belisarius, a Byzantine General who served under the Roman Emperor Justinian, finally overthrew the Vandal Kingdom in the 530’s. It was not the power of the Pope or the Church that won the day, it was the civil authority! The defeat of the Barbarians were an answer to prayer as the Vandals and their partners were cruel and ruthless. Concerning the final empire that is to come, St. John reveals, “It forced all the people, small and great, rich or poor, free and slave, to be given a stamped image on their right hands or their foreheads, so that no

one could buy or sell except one who had the stamped image of the beast's name or the number that stood for it's name". Despite the cruelty of past tribulations, nothing compares to what awaits us in the final showdown. The technology of the computer age makes everyone totally accessible to whomever in power requires. In Utah, there is a computer refereed as the "beast" that has the ability to run 2200 bits of information per second for every human being living today! With satellite capability, our very own privacy is at risk, even now! When this Anti-Christ does appear on the scene, much of the technology will be available.

Jesus states, "When you see the desolating abomination spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the Holy Place, then those in Judea must flee to the mountains... Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days". This sets the stage for the next point. The Holy Place refereed to by Jesus was the Temple in Jerusalem. In the final days, this temple will be rebuilt and the Anti-Christ will blaspheme the name of God and call himself god (2 Thess chapter 2). On May 14, 1948, the Nation of Israel was established. After 2500 years, the Jews finally have self-rule. This fulfilled Amos 9 Vs 15. Jews from all over the world returned to Palestine. They came from 120 nations speaking 83 languages. In 1989, many thousands of Jews from Russia left for

Palestine fulfilling Jeremiah 3 Vs 18. If you were to take a ruler and trace directly north of Jerusalem, you would line through Moscow. Pope Pius XII announced to the world on Easter Sunday 1957 in front of a large crowd at Vatican City that the capture of Jerusalem would be one of the last major prophecies in the bible to be fulfilled. Jerusalem would no longer be in the hand of the Gentiles, but the Jews (Luke 21 Vs 25). The State of Israel and it's capital (Jerusalem) must be in place so the Temple can be rebuilt, and so the Anti-Christ could make his blasphemous boasts in this temple. For those who believe that the Pope is the Ant-Christ, here is a fundamental truth to consider. The Anti-Christ must have Jewish roots. He can not be a Gentile because the Jews will not except a Gentile as their "Messiah"! This Jew could not be Christian because the Jews reject Jesus as their Messiah. The Anti-Christ will deceive the Jews who are currently awaiting a messiah. Jesus warns the Jews stating, "You do not except me, but you will follow the one who comes after me". Pope Pius XII died in 1957 so he didn't see the reality he spoke of. In 1967, Israel reclaims Jerusalem as a result of the Six-Day War. All this coinciding with the establishment of the EU makes things very interesting to follow. I hope this may help anyone who wonders where some of the attacks on the Church are based. The above describes the difference

between Catholics and Protestants on who the Pope is, but there are a few other issues to address. The SDA have created what they call nine identifiers they proclaim points to the Anti-Christ. Other hard-core Protestants will concur amen. With that in mind, I want to respond so that people searching for His TRUTH, can be better informed. The SDA's first point: They believe the Church began in the 530's and forced the three kings (horns) to collapse. The Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ around the year 33 AD. The writings of the Old Testament foretold it. Read the Psalms, how the name of God will be worshiped and praised by all nations. The seed of Abraham as outlined in Geneses. The Protestant worldview on the other hand is very sectional to individual locations. The Assembly of God for example, was founded in 1917 from Arkansas. Their headquarters is in Springfield Missouri, and three-fourths of their following is in the Bible belt. They are not universal nor are any of the other groups. The Catholic Church alone celebrates this world unity in every nation. Remember Daniel's prophecy, "In the life time of those kings the God of Heaven will set up a KINGDOM that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people". This will be a universal kingdom encompassing every nation. Peter went to Rome because it was the center of the Roman civilization and the persecution

was the worst. By 530 AD, their had been over 50 Popes in direct line! The first 34 popes were all martyrs up to the fourth century. The second point they declare: "It would have a man at its head who speaks for it". Will the Jews except a female messiah? I don't think so. There are many organizations and countries that are headed by men. It is hard sometimes to take this seriously. The third point: "It would pluck up or uproot three kingdoms". The Barbarians the SDA are thinking about were subdued by a civil authority, the Church was in hiding from these groups because of their cruel persecution of Christians. This took place 1500 years ago. This is a Reformation argument that most Protestants today have long since dropped. The fourth point: "It would be diverse or different from the other kingdoms". The SDA want to describe the Vatican as "diverse" because our kingdom really is not of this world. The Vatican truly would be Jesus' royal embassy and the earth it's mission field. This should not be confused with the deception of the Anti-Christ and his world conquest. The Anti-Christ will appear to be a man of peace; however; his kingdom will be exposed through New Age teaching. The more you see Christian values deteriorate world wide, the more you see the Ten Commandments ignored. It was the Catholic Church that built the Judeo-Christian culture that society has been rebelling from. All these

non-Catholic groups had no influence prior to their existence! These are but a few churches for examples; The Lutheran Church 1517, The Church of England 1534, the Presbyterian 1560, Episcopalian 17th century, Congregationalist 1582, Methodist 1744, Unitarian 1774, Mormon 1829, Baptist 1605, Dutch Reformed 1628, SDA 1863, The Church of Christ 1820, Jehovah's Witness 1879, and many more. The Catholic Church was not man made, but God made almost 2000 years ago.

The fifth point: "It would emerge from the fourth kingdom of iron-The Pagan Roman Empire". The SDA believes that "Pontifex Maximus" was the first pope. This was a title used by the Roman Emperor Constantine. He was not a pope, he was the first Catholic Head of State. The current Pope in Constantine's time was Sylvester I! The SDA wants you to believe that Constantine was the first pope, but that the Catholic Church was founded in " 538". Constantine ruled 306-37. How can Constantine be pope in 306, but his apostate church created in 538? Can we say Oops? Constantine became a convert to the faith. The real Anti-Christ will head the EU, the real Revived Roman Empire. The sixth point: "God's people would be given into his hand for a time and times and the dividing of time". The SDA imply that the Catholic Faith began in 538 AD and then died in 1798 when Napoleon of France hijacked the Pope to France. They

want to tie 1260 days (biblical language) to 1260 years so you can see a resurrected papacy. From the 12th Chapter of Revelation, St. John referees to 1260 days when the woman was taken by God and protected by Him from the dragon. This would be more in line to Mary's Assumption into Heaven than to the Arian Barbarians to Napoleon. The seventh point: "The rule of the papacy began in 538 AD". The SDA has a purpose in mind for this date. The current Pope in 538 was Pope Vigilius. He was the 59th successor of St. Peter! The SDA misunderstands the notion of papal authority. In 755 AD the popes were given lands called Papal States that measured about the size of New Hampshire. In 1860 these Papal States became subject to Victor Emmanuel II, King of Italy. Then an independent Papal State was created in 1929 called "Vatican City". If you wanted to use a date that the pope was given land, this was 755, not 538! The Papal rule continues this very day. A spiritual rule that governs more than a billion people. One out of six living persons today profess the faith of the Apostles. From the Vandal to Napoleon, I think its interesting to note that both forces were barbaric and cruel to the Church. Napoleon wasn't the first Emperor who tried to steal God's authority by force. Emperors and rulers tried to control or influence the papacy to further their own ambitions. In some cases, they appointed antipopes to

support them. An antipope is a man who has been improperly elected as pope. He sets himself up in opposition to the pope who has been regularly chosen in accordance with canon law. The first antipope was Hippolytus (217 AD) and the last antipope was Felix V (1440-1449). In all there have been 27 antipopes none of which are listed in the history of the popes. It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that in the final days prior to the Second Coming of Jesus, there will be a final antipope. He is the infamous False Prophet who will defect from the Catholic Church and cause the apostasy St. Paul warns of. Rev. 13 Vs 11 states, "it had two horns like a lamb but spoken like a dragon". This False Prophet will be false because of his defection, not his adherence to the faith. The papacy itself has Jesus' protection and has survived all attacks since 33 AD. The Eight point: "The papacy further undermines Jesus by setting up a system of confession to an earthly priest, thus by passing Jesus...". The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a stumbling block to most Non-Catholics. St. Paul writes in his second letter to the Corinthians "We have the ministry of reconciliation". This is the heart of the New Covenant that the Church preaches repentance throughout the whole world. When we go to confession, we do so in obedience to the WILL of Jesus. St. John states, "On the evening of that first day of the week (SUNDAY), even though the

disciples had locked the doors of the place where they were for fear of the Jews.... Jesus came and stood before them, Peace be with you, He said. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. At the sight of the Lord the Disciples rejoiced. Peace be with you, he said again. As the Father has sent me so I send you. Then he breathed on them and said. Receive the Holy Spirit, if you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven, if you hold them bound, they are held bound". Through this great Sacrament, Jesus gives His Apostles the ministry of Reconciliation. This authority should not be confused with the moral obligation to forgive "seventy times seven". St. James 5 Vs 13 states, "Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the priest of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be FORGIVEN". St. James further states, "Therefore, confess YOUR SINS to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed". In this great sacrament, Jesus chooses to forgive in the action of His ministers. He calls his priest's to work as intercessors representing the whole Church in the body of Christ! Just as God may heal someone through a pastor,

Jesus established through His Apostles, the priesthood for the purpose of spiritual healing. The confessional is not of man made origin, but ordained by Jesus, an action of the Holy Spirit. Beginning with the New Testament, this has come down the ages through the Church that Jesus built. When you go to confession to the local priest, a bishop ordained him. The bishop was ordained by a previous bishop that can be traced all the way back to the Apostles. You cannot say that in the forth century the Church invented this teaching, for it supersedes the 4th century, 3rd, 2nd and first century. It was part of what Jesus commanded teaching, "Teach them to carry out everything I commanded you". The Apostles are to teach the world not merely the doctrine of the Resurrection but the historical teaching of Jesus as well. This contains the entire Gospel message that has been safeguarded by the Catholic Church for nearly 2000 years! Many Protestants must demonize this to build themselves up. In truth Jesus established the Catholic Church as the authority. The Webster's II dictionary describes safeguard as "One that SERVES as a guard or protection". Control has the definition, "to exercise authority or influence over". Both aspects are gifts to the Church so that orthodoxy (right praise) can be maintained. Today there are so many man made churches (30,000 variations of Protestants), that it would be difficult to

sort out the truth without Jesus' gift of infallibility to the Catholic Church.

Some groups quote Luke 5 Vs 21, and "Then the Scribes and Pharisees began to ask themselves, who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who but God alone can forgive sins". They did not recognize Jesus own authority. Jesus asks what is easier; to tell this man your sins are forgiven or pick up his mat and walk. Jesus astounded the crowd when the man picked up his mat and walked. Jesus states, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". When I read John 20 Vs 23 I find that Jesus did instruct his Apostles to "FORGIVE MEN'S SINS, AND HOLD THEM BOUND". This is an authority commanded by Christ! It's Jesus who forgives in the action (obedience) of his ministers. The question is, "do you believe in Jesus, and does he have the power to forgive sins"? Yes he does! Can he use his Church, Yes he can! He has commanded it.

Several groups will quote John 10 Vs 33; "The Jews wanted to stone Jesus because Jesus refereed to himself as one with the Father". They called this blasphemy. What they want you to believe is that the Pope refers to himself as God. They want to sell to you that the Pope is the Anti-

Christ. They want to tie this in with St. Paul's warning of the Anti-Christ. The first time a Pope was in a Jewish house of worship, they (Peter) were ordered to refrain speaking the name of Jesus (Acts 4 Vs 15-17). What they misunderstand are quotes like, "We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty". This is not calling us God, this is only implying that we have his authority (Matt 28 Vs 16-20). St. Paul states that we are ambassadors of Christ! The Catholic Faith is the religion of Jesus Christ! Obviously, those who teach it, represent him, who commissioned us to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. We are the light of the world and the salt of the earth! When a person becomes a Catholic, they do not convert to the Pope, they convert to Jesus! The Pope, bishops, saints, Mary, sacraments, scriptures, and grace are important, as Jesus is important. Jesus established his Church and loves it as his new bride. Another question some groups will challenge us concerns the Ten Commandments. Martin Luther changed the second and third commandments. The SDA states, "Every reformer, without exception, spoke of the papacy as Anti-Christ". Well naturally those who were deceived and fell from the truth as they did, would say that. This is no surprise, however, it's sad that these old arguments still reach the uninformed. Luther changed the second Commandment from, "You shall

not take the name of the Lord in vain", to "You shall not worship graven images". This was part of their justification for their apostasy. Exodus 25 and 1 Kings 6, God instructs the Jews to put Angels on the Ark of the Covenant and in the Temple Solomon built. God does not break his own command. Think about the first Commandment, "I am the Lord your God, You shall not have strange gods before me". The Jews and Christians have believed Exodus 20 Vs 4-6 as part of Vs 2-3. That's why you see this part of scripture as one paragraph! When you say, "I am the Lord your God, you shall not have any strange gods before me", this includes the rest of the paragraph! Naturally we are not to worship art, pictures, statues, the sky, the stars, the sun, the moon, and anything God has created in the heavens and on the earth. Let me answer their false assumption on "graven image". This must be seen in the context and spirit it was written. The inspiration God intended and expects His Church to be faithful to. The nations surrounding the Israelites worshiped idols made by men, fashioned false gods, and adored objects which is against the first Commandment and explained by Exodus 20 Vs 4-6. Do you see how this works? The Philistines worshiped a half man, half fish idol they called "Dagon" which Samson destroyed in their temple (Judges 16 Vs 23-31). This clearly breaks the first Commandment. The

Catholic Church teaches that God so loved the world that he sent his only son into the world. He paid our debt! With this in mind, God will not deceive us. We cannot deceive God. We contend that God was alluding to the false god's worshiped by men and the idols that represented them. A crucifix that depicts the death of the Lord on a cross simply is a reminder. These reminders reflect what is already in the heart, and the truth it represents. Like the angels on the Ark and in the Holy of Holies in the Temple, sacred objects are used to enhance the worship of the unseen God. In choosing the extreme Protestant version, you must follow through and destroy your pictures or a painting of the oceans, lakes, streams mountains, or even your family and friends. Anything God created you could not recreate. This comes back to Martin Luther. Who gave him permission to change the Ten Commandments? What Christians had believed in practice for 1500 years, will not change after 2000 years. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do you think first century Catholics sinned because they painted crosses, loaves of bread, fish, Jesus as shepherd, Mary, and other holy objects found on the walls of ancient catacombs? The SDA and other small minorities attack the Catholic Church for changing the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday. This is the center of their doctrine and the heart of all their attacks on the

Catholic Faith. Remember Pontifex Maximus? Constantine, with his conversion to Jesus, naturally gave the Church freedom. No longer did we hold Mass in the catacombs, no longer did we have to celebrate the "breaking of bread" at odd times in the darkness because the Romans persecuted the Church. We would have to hold Mass 0200 in the morning to worship God, if you could get to it. Constantine did not establish Sunday as the day, he merely made it exessable for the Christians because this was their day of worship. St. Justin the Martyr writes (149), "On the day which is called SUNDAY, we have a common assembly... The Eucharistic elements are distributed and consumed". With Constantine's Edict of Milan, he gave Christians freedom. We were able to come out and practice our faith openly. The Apostles began this celebration on Sunday and this carried on through out the first three centuries. I find it interesting that this issue became an issue in 1863 with the establishment of the SDA. The SDA and all the others have enjoyed the freedom they inherited because of the millions of Catholics that died with the hope that one day Christians could live in freedom. With the conversion of the Roman Empire, this led to the foundation of Judeo-Christian ethics as the base of new nations. Eventually, the United States was born with these fundamental rights! Today, we are seeing a massive rebellion from these

principles that is reviving the old paganism of Rome (another sign). The SDA and others accuse the Catholic Church for "changing the feast days and the laws". This resurgence of paganism has done more to change our feast days and laws. Since we have seen Europe and America abandon biblical values, chaos results. We have seen Christmas and Easter reduced to secular vacations. Christmas is refereed to in public school as "winter break", In Kentucky, federal employees were ordered not to say "merry Christmas" because this was "politically incorrect". Easter is refereed to as "spring break" instead of "Holy Week". I remember in the 1970's businesses could not open on Sunday because it was against the law. Now no one regards anything special about "The Lord's Day", at least in public. Christian values are under assault, our country has changed laws permitting abortion, homosexuality, divorce, pornography, and our society reflects this tragically. In the United States everyday there are 40,000 new cases of sexually transmitted diseases, 5,000 abortions, every 70 seconds a suicide, rape and murder are the norm. Homosexuality is becoming more tolerated which is an abomination before God. The list goes on and on. Witchcraft and the occult are on the rise. Heaven help us! It is interesting to note that the Catholic Church is leading the fight against this tide of evil everywhere! Where are all those who hate the

Church in all this? Again, they are taking advantage of the freedom the Catholic Church, and others, are fighting for. The spirit of Anti-Christ appears to be here. When this man of lawlessness does appear the Anti-Church and the Judas Complex (apostasy) will already have established the foundation (EU). The SDA concludes, "No other organization could possibly fit these nine points". They have devised this whole plan to gain converts with the intent to lead "the Elect" into apostasy. I wish not to attack their sincerity, but it's important that the truth must be revealed. They have created a man made diversion to "create" divine establishment for their particular interpretation that began in 1863. We, as Catholics, don't need to create a huge massive study against Protestants. St. Paul did this in three verses! St. Paul states, "I am amazed that you are so quickly forsaking the one who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel (not that there is another). But there are some who are disturbing you and wish to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from Heaven should preach to you a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, and now I say again, If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than the one that you received, let that one be accursed (Galatians 1 Vs 6-9)! The Gospel of Christ must be over 1900 years old tied to the foundation of the Apostles.

One created by men in 1863 by men (or any other date for that matter) should concern you. To say the papacy is the Anti-Christ is to say that St. Peter is the Anti-Christ, I don't think so. The SDA ask this question, "Are you willing to follow where Jesus leads, even though it may be painful"? Well, are they? Once they realize the Catholic Church as the "pillar and foundation of truth (1Timothy 3 Vs 15)"! When will they answer their own question? Probably when the real Anti-Christ truly does appear on the scene. This would be tragic, but "come Lord Jesus, come, Amen"! The Catholic Church considers the last days to be at hand since the death of Christ. However, concerning the signs that are everywhere, the Pope reminds us, "do not be afraid". We are to live each day as potentially the day of His return. No one knows the actual day or the hour, but we have the signs to watch for. Also, we need to be ready because we are not promised tomorrow.

Some of my greatest memories is serving as an adult instructor for the Priest. Our Parish Priest lived at another town within another Parish. He would support us on Sundays and Holy Days. I was appointed by him to act as teacher for a number of adults who wanted to join the Catholic Faith. This wasn't RCIA and so they did not go through the scrutinies of RCIA. Father did work with them to check on

their progress and things went well.

We were celebrating Mass at a Bingo Hall until the Parish Hall was built. That took awhile so we were in a bingo hall for many months. That was unique, but a Parish developed. We went from a hundred people to nearly 500 people in a two year time period. I would meet people at their homes and I have to tell you that the food was totally awesome. I would look forward to the meals they were so good. The people were very interested and interactive. I used the Catechism of the Catholic Church as my field manual and my trusty New American Bible as my sword!

I am so thankful for the opportunities the Lord gave me to teach His faith. I can never repay Him for His kind acts through His people. May God be glorified in what we say and do!

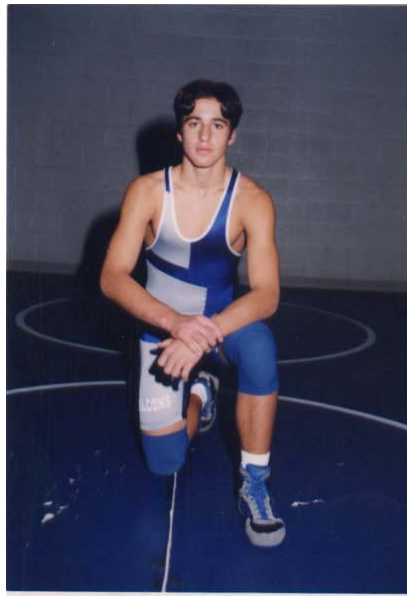
I would soon get orders from DA back for Division. I would again be ordered to Ft. Campbell, KY with the 194th MP's Company. When I got there, the medics were being utilized as clerks. I had a lot of work to do! I developed a sick call area to see our soldiers before they went to Troop Medical Clinic #2. I established sick call procedures using a poolroom to screen patients. Using the medical algorithm we were able

to cut the sick call rate between 30-40%. That was a major improvement for the Battalion, as they would get their soldiers back much quicker. Self-care protocols made it quick and easy and our Commander loved it! I was able to get all the medical records and all the shots within the Battalion caught up and ensured medical readiness for the battalion. I established a Combat Life Savers Course that we opened up for the Battalion making it easier for them to maintain their certification and training. Not long after I had reported with the 194th MP's Company, I went to the Brigade Headquarters of the Rakkasans to check on my MSM award when I ran into a soldier I had spoken with in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. He was of my unit and we would meet at my foxhole to talk about the Catholic Church. He told me that he remembered some of our discussions and decided to join the Catholic Faith. I asked him how he was doing when he told me that he was preparing to go to noonday Mass. He was now a Catholic! That was really awesome news to me. He thanked me for leading him to the Faith! I would have people ask me questions all the time. I don't always remember everyone that I've witnessed to and so it feels great to have someone come back and thank me. I recognize that it is the Holy Spirit who does the work; sometimes He used me despite my many

weaknesses. On Christmas Eve, 1997, after Midnight Mass (Soldiers Chapel at Ft. Campbell KY), I was up near the front of the church talking with some of my friends. I began to feel eyes drilling holes in my back as I felt someone was watching me. It was a strong feeling and I noticed two men looking on from the back pew at the back of the church. I ignored them as if they were not there as I continued to talk with friends. After a few minutes, some of us began to walk down the aisle to leave when one of the two men stopped me and asked if I would speak with them. I didn't know them nor had I ever seen them before, but I sat down in the pew in front of them to speak with them. They began asking me questions about the Church. They were asking me about the Bible, church history, values and moral. I began to answer their questions. After about an hour the Chaplains Assistants wanted to kick us out so they can go home. It was nearly 2:00 in the morning. They wanted to continue so we met in the parking lot. This went on until 6:00 in the morning. I told them that I needed to get home because my children will be getting up and ready for our family gift exchange. The two men asked if we could meet later in the day. I said, yes, but when I was able to do so. I met with them again for another 5 hours that afternoon. I ended up speaking with them five days in a row for 4-

5 hours at a time. Finally, they had to catch a bus back to Atlanta Georgia. I don't know how or why they picked me out of a crowd nor why they were so interested in what I had to say. They asked me hundreds of questions! I later learned that they had been homosexual lovers and that they decided to go straight. I was informed that they had decided to return to the Church! I also was informed that one of them had been diagnosed with AIDS and was accepting responsibility for his actions. I was further informed that this same individual went to a Catholic Charismatic prayer service and members laid hands on him. He explained that he received warmth throughout his body. He has since, tested negative on his HIV test. That's after having a positive test and a confirmation test! People would seek me out to video their weddings, parents would look for me for their children's weddings. I considered that a high honor! One such event, we were at the banquet celebration where there was great food, music and activities for everyone. Jose, one of my friends enjoying the events, suddenly collapsed. I had just sat with her as we ate, but when she moved to see someone, she fell down unconscious. I began to make an assessment on her and found she was totally unconscious. I called for somebody to call 911 and tried to treat her for shock and make her comfortable. The

Ambulance arrived quickly and we took Jose to Blanchfield Hospital. She was taken to the Emergency Room and diagnosed to have suffered a brain embolism. They flew her quickly to Nashville at Vanderbilt Hospital. I was informed that she was brain dead by some of the staff in the Emergency Room. I knew the doctor very well as I had worked with him for years. Jose was kept alive on life support for weeks. People prayed for her and visited her during that time. The priest gave her the Anointing of the sick and she fully recovered! Jose is a living testament of the miracles God can do! Nathan began high school at Ft. Campbell. He was no longer home schooled and he was very glad of



that. He was very active in the sports program at Ft. Campbell. He wrestled 4 years (went State twice) he played football all 4 years, ran

track, cross-country. I was at all his events. Joshua and Jason began enjoying soccer and didn't play much football. They all kept up with baseball and basketball through the Taylor Youth Activities. By this time Petra was just as involved. I began to take them to local Christian rock concerts in the area. I took them to see Audio Adrenaline and other top-notch groups that came to Nashville. Nathan became interested enough that I bought him a steel guitar and he practiced day and night! I received orders from DA for another assignment. This assignment would be the hardest that I had ever had to do. I was on my way to Korea. I would be away from home for one year. That was not easy for me, as I needed to be around my children in these most crucial years. Uncle Sam called and I had to go. It was tough leaving my children in this situation. I knew Brenda would take advantage of my being away for a year. I arrived in Korea in February 98. This was a



very stressful assignment. I was stationed at Camp Hovey about 12 Miles from the DNZ, close to the 38th Parallel. I was placed with an

artillery unit. I quickly became active in fixing several problems that I inherited. The Combat Life Saver program was in poor shape, so I reorganized it. We organized a Combat Life Saver program I modeled like I did with the 194th M.P.'s at Ft. Campbell. Our first class graduated 50 soldiers within the Battalion. The Battalion Commander participated in the Graduation ceremony giving an Army Achievement Medal to the soldier with the highest scores on their practical exercises and written exams. I also had to redo all the Combat Life Saver bags as they were not well maintained or stocked. A large number of them were not accounted for and so I had to ensure that I had ordered plenty for the Battalion. In Korea, we were in the field constantly. They actually had civilians camping out there with us so we could buy pictures and food. That was really different to me. I became very involved with the Catholic Community at Camp Hovey and I served as the Battalion Lay Eucharistic Minister when we were in the field. I served at Mass as an Alter server every Mass. What an honor! I was involved with Father helping him organize an RCIA program where we would meet on Tuesday evenings. This was great support for me. I was always witnessing for the faith when the opportunity arose! After 3 months we had a new Battalion Chaplain transfer into our unit. He

became very important to me. We would support each other a great deal. He was an Episcopalian Minister and I would have fun with him. I would challenge him asking him why he stayed in a “halfway house”. Why did he prefer being a “liberal” Catholic! We would have many respectful discussions in the field and back at Camp Hovey. As the Battalion LEM, I would go with him whenever there was a service in the field. I brought the Eucharist for the Catholics in the field. That was where the division was felt the most as we would separate during the communion portion of the service. One night, as there was a convoy, one of our APC’s (Track 113’s) went off of a bridge and plunged into a river. There were five casualties in the back of the track. It was a sad time and I obtained permission to advertise a Rosary service for them in conjunction with the military funeral. I organized the Service picking out music, scripture, and the mysteries. I asked the Chaplain if he would say a few words at this service. He did and the soldiers were lifted up in the prayer. This Service would be a life changing experience for the Chaplain! About six months after I returned home (back in the USA), I received a call from my old Battalion Chaplain and he called me to thank me personally for leading him to Mary. As a Protestant, he never knew Mary. Later that year (June 2000) his wife and family were

received into the Catholic faith! He remained serving as a Protestant Minister until his military commitment was fulfilled and he was finally received into the Catholic Faith in 2003! He has since been actively seeking permission to serve the Catholic Community as a Catholic Priest! May God grant him this great gift! Still in Korea, I rarely heard from Brenda, she rarely communicated w/ me. In October 1998, I was promoted to SFC. With that promotion, I lost my food rations so I had to pay for my own meals now. I could make a can of chili last three days because all monies were sent home. I went from 235 pounds to 186 pounds (weight I had not seen in over 12 years). I sacrificed a great deal for my family so they would have what they needed. When I called home, Brenda was never glad to hear from me. I would ask her to encourage the Children with their prayers and she refused, telling me she would not participate with anything pagan. This was totally excruciating for me. I sent home a 90-120 minute tape a month for the children, hoping that through that they would get some meat and potatoes and hang in there, but Brenda's weight of influence eventually had it's effect. Camp Hovey/Camp Casey was closely connected. If you needed to go somewhere, you had to catch a bus that ran every hour. On Wednesday evenings I went to a bible study with some friends. It

was right off post and it was interesting to see Korea where the local natives are. Their culture is strange to me. I could not bring myself to eat dog, nor go to the clubs where the nightlife wasn't my cup of tea. We would be in the field quite often and it always seemed to rain. During a field exercise in August 1998, there was a terrible monsoon. The field exercise was called short due to the massive flooding. It flooded everything. Camp Casey/Hovey was decimated. I had paid for a ticket home for mid tour when the Command canceled all leaves. My First SGT and Company XO told me I needed to get out while I still could. I went out in the back of a jeep past the gate guards and made it to the bus station. I was lucky as I was able to get out before they closed the road from Camp Casey to Soul. The water was rising and it was raining hard. The plane took off as scheduled and I did make it home. Nathan was learning to play the guitar and creating his own material. It was sounding very good. Petra was singing a song that they put together. That was a proud moment. Jason was interested in playing an instrument and I thought he would have fun playing drums. I was able to get a cheap set of drums from Sears. Jason played those drums for hours. Nathan would play his guitar while Jason played drums and Petra sang. I thought it was cool how we were forming our own little

band. Nathan was still preparing for his senior year in High School and I hated missing his last year of football and wrestling. I wanted to be there for that, but I had to go back to Korea for 6 more months. Joshua and Jason were not playing at the Youth Activities Center anymore. Brenda did not give them the chance to play. Petra was not playing sports and I was concerned about what was happening. I wasn't there long enough to get things turned back around. Brenda became more and more hostile to the Catholic Faith. She became more hostile to me because I did not yield. The Children still went to Mass with me, but it wasn't the same with there mother rebelling as she was. Brenda and I never was close, we only had mutual interests in our children. I was the only one who participated with the children as they grew up in all their events. And when I was deployed to Korea, Brenda effectively turned the children away from the sports seen. She got them involved with home school friends and they developed friendships with some of these people. She began taking them to a non-denominational fellowship in Clarksville TN. My children were getting indoctrinated there and they became involved with their youth groups. From Korea, there was not much I could do about it. I would send tapes hoping to keep them interested in the truths of the Catholic Faith. They would go to Mass on

Sunday, but all their fun was on Wednesday's evenings when they went to the youth group. Jason began to play drums for the youth group while Nathan played guitar. In Korea, I continued to help Father with serving at the Mass and helping with RCIA. I sponsored one soldier who asked me and he was received into the Catholic Faith before we left Korea. I continued to witness for the faith with those who challenged the faith. There were those who attacked the Church believing that we worshipped idles and the saints. That is always an issue with people who do not know what the Church really says and does (insert fact sheet here). In January 1999, I received an early school date for ANCOC. This is a Senior NCO Course and it was important for me to attend. I would be gone from home another two months but at least I was back in the States. I was back in San Antonio for another School! Unfortunately, the Priest that served there was no longer there and I missed him. I was able to serve the Priest there as a LEM during our field exercise. It was a service that was composed by a friend of mine and myself. SFC whatchadoddle and I would team up together and helped each other study for our tests. He was a fallen away Catholic practicing the Seventh Day Adventist religion. He was not use to a Catholic defending the faith like I did. His wife was Protestant and I

think that is the strongest reason he went where he was going. It's hard to see the truth of religion from eyes that are not clearly able to see! With graduation and ANCOC behind me, I was now back at Ft. Campbell. I was back home with my family. I missed my children, yet things were different. No longer were we involved in sports. Nathan was still finishing with cross-country and I did go to his meets, Joshua was playing soccer for the High School and I would go to his games. Joshua is a good soccer player. He is quick and agile. He developed strong legs. I

would take him to the high school football field to see how he could kick a football. I was shocked to see him kicking 45-50 yard field goals as consistently as he did. I wish I could have worked with him before to keep his interest up. He didn't desire to play football, but I think he simply wanted to spend time with dad. His Soccer Coach talked to me one day asking me if I had noticed anything different with Joshua. He had asked the Coach if he ever wondered what it would be like to kill yourself. I felt taken back by that, but I wasn't home long enough to see anything that would lead me to think anything wrong. I do know Joshua hated school. I don't know if his earlier home schooling was the problem, or if going back to high school became the

problem. It was a concern that bothered me. I asked Joshua how he was doing and he told me he was fine. I began to watch him a bit closer.

It was may 2002, I was participating with the American Cancer Society. The Walk for life has been something that we have participated in for years. We always try to win the most lapse categories. Our team us made up of mostly former military and myself. Petra also participates! This year I was privileged to meet a teammate who was 56 years old. He had cancer and was having a tough time of it. We would camp out next to the track at the Stadium of Champions in Hopkinsville Ky. We would be up all night and we ran all night. While waiting to run, we would sit and talk of old times. This particular teammate could barely walk, he had to use a walker. I was so awed that he wanted to take his turn around the track. He took three trips around the track!

I was able to speak with him and discovered that he and his wife were converts to the Catholic Faith! They were formerly with the Assembly of God. What a testimony and how much they loved their faith! Even with such pain they were happy and filled with hope. Since that night, I got to know them better.

One day his wife called me to notify that he was in the hospital to let me know. I went to see him and I could tell the cancer was taking it's toll. He wanted me to know that he was ready for when the Lord would take him. I hope that I could exhibit that kind of strength when the Lord wants to call me home! Praise God for those who pick up their cross and follow Him.

My daughter Petra recalls:

yeah that fun...I also remember, the Pentecostal bus stopping across the street to always pick up this one kid. and me being 11 at the time..(I'm almost 16 now) and I had this idea that I could go out there and talk to them about the Catholic Church. I remember walking out there to them, and saying "The Catholic Church is better than yours!!" and they would hurry along. one day (after saying that every time I saw them, which was nearly everyday I think) I told this guy to wait for me to get my dad so he could debate him, I said "Hold on, let me go get my dad" and I ran in the house, got dad, and dad came outside, and they were gone! Every time after that they always sped off in a school bus, I remember after that there visits near my house were shorter and shorter. It was so funny though.

The beginning of the end

This next period becomes one of the hardest times of my life. Brenda's open hostility towards the Catholic Religion and me never eased up. The tension was so thick you could cut it with a knife. Brenda always attacked my integrity, my honesty, and my person. She would always attack my family and remind me how much she hated me. Every night when I would go to bed, Brenda would already be there and when she knew I was in there, she would always turn her back on me. I'm thankful for my friends that supported me. I resumed helping out the Bible Study at Clarksville TN and the Charismatic prayer meetings on Sunday Evenings. I also began helping Father David at St. Michael's Catholic Church with RCIA. On Fridays we were doing something. I was bringing my 52-inch TV to the Church on Saturdays to show Christian movies after Mass. We would have food, drinks, and a movie or some religious show. It was great and parishioners were becoming regulars. Father David was interested in Nathan and Jason because he wanted to start a youth

group. This never panned out as my boys were too hitched with the youth group at the non-denominational fellowship. This Fellowship bought out a movie theatre and used it for their services. The Youth group was given a wing of it's own and it was really cool. It had a stage set; two giant TV's a sound system, surround sound. It was a cool place to go. I tried to follow along ensuring them that as long as this was supplemental to their Catholic Faith, I would be supportive. To reemerge back into their lives, I began taking them to the Recreation Center and sign out a music room where they had drums and Nathan could practice his guitar. They were doing this every Thursday evening. Petra and Joshua would come, but not as much. Joshua was more interested in playing computer games. Petra was interested in being with her dad. We did this for several months. Nathan and Jason became quite good. Nathan was invited by some friends that went to their fellowship down town to join them in a band. I would become involved because Nathan would need to have a ride. It was fun to participate. I was able to arrange for a couple of practices nearby post at a friends place. We were able to set up our equipment in a house not being used. It was great for them to play and not worry about neighbors. I had something going on just about every night with all the

bible studies, music practices, and ball games that my unit was playing. Saturdays I was at Mass and the movie, Sundays (Mass), the Charismatic prayer meeting, Mondays, RCIA at St. Michaels, Tuesday night Bible Study, Wednesday night youth group with the boys, Thursday night at the Recreation Center, Friday night practice with Nathan's group,



(Lent: Mass and Stations of the Cross). I was involved every night somewhere doing something. Brenda closed herself all the more. I bought a computer for the children to help them with their school. I began to use it on a Catholic Website (Catholicity). I became involved with defending the Catholic Faith on the Internet. I wanted to do this to prevent arguing in front of the children when at home. It was difficult to speak of Jesus at home without an argument or something. I always prayed over the food and so Brenda no longer had a family meal. By

the time I got home from work, the children would have already eaten.

I would most of the time get something at Burger King or Taco Bell.

Billy Graham was doing a crusade in Nashville TN sometime in late 1999 or early 2000. I was interested to check out the event as I have always respected Billy Graham. Plus, we were interested in many of the groups that was going to play before Billy Graham was to come on. DC Talk was just one of the bands that played that night. Earlier that day, when we arrived, I noticed that there were people protesting Billy Graham telling people that they would go to hell if they hear him. I was deeply curious as to why they were saying this. The bases for this protest was because Billy had said some kind words for Cardinal O'Conner from New York. These protesters I learned were bitterly anti_Catholic!

Can you guess what the Catholic Defender did? Yes, I spent the better part of 4 hours debating these people. Every time they stopped to talk with someone, I was there to set the record strait. I earned 21 condemnations that day! They hated me with a passion. The protesters would move from one corner to another wanting to get rid of me. I tagged along!

I had so much fun that I decided to come back the next night! This time

I wore my Black Tee-shirt with the praying hands and a rosary draped around the hands. I wore a large crucifix that was displayed prominently on my chest! I brought my daughter Petra, who was on fire to witness for the faith. When it was all said and done, I spent almost 8 hours debating them and challenging them when they tried to talk to people.

They would yell, "Do you know that Catholics worship Mary" and I would be there to say, "no we don't"!! I will always cherish the memory of my daughter wanting to take a stand for Christ defending His Church. Petra, at age 11 earned three condemnations that very evening. She is a warrior for the Lord as her Confirmation name implies, St. Joan of Ark!

I was assigned to the Maddac and I was NCOIC of the White Clinic. This was great experience as I was in charge of several civilians. I worked closely with the Head Nurse (Kathy Finnegan). My time and energy was consumed for my family and the battles at home. Soldiers Chapel Catholic Community every year would have a Parish Picnic. I was asked to supply the music every year. I would bring out the TV, sound system, and the Christian Rock. went well all those years. One year, 2000, I brought a live band (Gilead) who met at a March For Jesus

event in Clarksville TN, to the Parish Picnic. It was a great success. The Priest honored Gilead who gave them certificates for their participation. They were from Dixon TN. and I began to take my boys to Gilead's practices. This became the new thing to do on Tuesday evenings. I let the Bible study go with someone else for a while. Gilead is a Christian group composed of two Fathers and two sons. I was very impressed with their zeal to music and their dedication. They were not Catholic, but they were very respectful and their music supported Catholic teaching. This became a great influence for Nathan and Jason. On Thursday evening practice, they had another friend begin to practice with us. I called the group "Final Hour" which became the name of our band. We began to play concerts in the area. I placed



them in the Recreation Center's Battle of the Band competitions and we

always won a First or second place trophy. I was a proud Father/manager. We were playing downtown Clarksville on the street, and opening up at different church events. I was asked to supply the music again for the Parish at the next Parish Picnic. I wanted to get Gilead but they were unavailable so I decided to get “Final Hour” to play.

This would be great because I was trying to find a Catholic event that they could play to show that Catholics can be cool as their Protestant counterparts. The boys were happy to do this and we set up for the occasion. As they began to sing, one of the ladies sitting out in the picnic tables began to make a fuss at us. I was totally surprised. This was a new lady who never participated here before. We were a three-piece band at this time and one of our members was Protestant. This was his first exposure to anything Catholic. It was not good. This woman got all over them. I was infuriated. We had many people come to us wanting us to play but because this woman protested and made a stink of herself, we were asked to not play. It's like playing on your home court only to be booed by the home crowd. These were still children, Nathan was 19, Jason was 14, and our other member was 16. They would not want to play at a Catholic function again. I have not

participated with Soldiers Chapel Parish Picnics again. One positive thing happened as a result of this Picnic Fiasco, we found a new band member who joined the band. His family was solid Catholics and they liked their son playing in a Catholic Band. Our Protestant member left the band when this happened. He had severe problems with what happened. I wrote a complaint to the Catholic Pastor and never really received a response. I kept trying and never gave up. Rita Payne invited them to help out at Mass on Saturdays. Nathan was not interested, but Jason did play back up drums for a while. The Catholic Community was introducing a youth group on post-called "Lifeteen". It is a well-known organization fostering young people to embrace the faith. The organizers were very interested with Nathan and Jason and invited us to come to a meeting. They wanted to hear Nathan and Jason perform. I set it all up and when they began to play, Rita came in and closed it down saying they did not have permission from Father to play. She didn't know that I had already received that permission. But Rita was in charge of the building and the boys had to quit. This again, left a bad taste in the boy's mouth. It's like I was not getting support from my Catholic Community in helping our young people find a place in the Church.

This was not good especially when they were the center of attention at Protestant functions. Jason was being taught by one of the best teachers in the area. He had been playing at this youth group for nearly a year. Nathan was there enjoying and participating every Wednesday evening. Final Hour added one more person to the band, a female friend of Nathan's who went to another church. We continued to practice and I would schedule more practices to increase the tightness of the band. They became very popular at the Recreation Center. Every week we played a gig someplace. I did get a Catholic event on the schedule, it was at Immaculate Conception in Clarksville TN. It was the multicultural Picnic they hosted every year. We were slotted to play 30 minutes representing the youth culture. This went well, but the boys blew the speakers and the stage system was not very well managed. It was not our PA system. To this point, the children were going to Mass with me on Sundays, and I was participating with them in all these other events. As Final Hour Manager, I was finding places to play anywhere I could get. It's great when you can get a Catholic band to play at an Assemblies of God church and rock them out! During the summer, I began scheduling practices at the Ft. Campbell Parade Field. That was cool. You could hear them practice all around. I would invite

other bands in

the local area and we would have a good time. Petra began to sing less, but really

enjoyed the mosh pit and the social life following the band, mostly being with her dad. Nathan began to date a girl from the Fellowship at Brenda's church. This was not easy. Missy was not Catholic and resisted it. She began to inspire Nathan to scream more when he sang. This became a problem. Jason didn't like Nathan's screaming any more than I did. He cooled it but only for a while. Nathan began going to Brenda's church with his girl friend and go to Mass at Soldiers Chapel at 12:30 on Sunday. I was going to Mass at St. Michaels with Joshua, Jason, and Petra at 10:30 and then quickly going to Mass at Soldiers for Nathan. I knew I was losing when Nathan began to sound like his mother. Finally, one Sunday, I was lecturing and I noticed Nathan was not at Mass. He was now 20 years old, and he had missed his first Mass. I had taken him to Mass one week old and ensured he was at Mass all his life. I was choked up; I read the first reading second and the second reading first. Father later told me that nobody knew the difference. Nathan was no longer considering himself a Catholic. On one occasion, Father David came by to see Nathan and Jason. Nathan

was upstairs with Missy and refused to come down to see Father. Brenda began to challenge Father about the Catholic Faith. He soon left amazed at how I could have been in this situation for so long. It was for the sake of my children that I stayed in this situation. This went on for a few months and it broke my heart. I had the band record at a local studio. They had a great time. I sent a few of our songs to a Catholic studio in Florida. They responded that they thought a couple of our songs could do very well on the CCM charts. They were a band themselves who played for the Pope and millions of people. I saw them on “Life on the Rock” with Jeff Cavens and had called them up. Nathan protested because the studio was Catholic and he felt they were “weak”. About this time another event happened. I was instructing CCD for St. Michaels and would pick Jason and Joshua up for Mass after CCD. They refused to go to CCD since they had already been confirmed. They saw it as boring. One Sunday, Jason was not there to pick up. Joshua told me that Jason went with Brenda to her church. I felt my family crumbling. It was turning against what I had raised it to be. My little Jason was now no longer going to Mass. This broke my heart. At Mass, I would cry because Nathan and Jason were no longer there. When I see other younger children running around, I remember

that Nathan and Jason use to be there. Now they were formerly not practicing the faith. I began placing bible notes on the refrigerator and the door reminding them it was important not to break the commandments. Brenda had been successful in subverting the Catholic Faith. There was not much I could do but to love them and pray for their return. This made it difficult at home. There was not much of a home life. Even Petra, my Daughter came to the point that she told me she didn't know what she was. I put my foot down. Petra was no longer going to go to the Protestant youth services. That did help a lot as I got her involved in other things. She helped me raise money for the American Cancer Society. Joshua and Petra were going to Mass with me and Nathan and Jason were going with their mother. Jason wrote a paper in school how his youth pastor was his hero. It was no longer dad, but a youth pastor theologically in opposition to his dad. I was not able to pray over my boys again as their open dissent was now made manifest. I tried to keep active with them through the band, but they didn't want to be identified as a Catholic Band anymore. In February 2000, The Diocese of Owensboro KY sponsored a "youth 2000" weekend highlighted by music and great teachers across the country. I wanted to take my boys (Petra was too young at this time) and Brenda

opposed it. She felt that I was trying to bring the boys back to the Catholic Faith. She didn't want that to happen. As their Father, I felt that I had the right to take my boys. Jason was undecided but displayed interest. Brenda began to laugh at me and she gloated about how she was able to undo our family roots. The more she laughed, the angrier I became. At that moment, everything came to a head. All of those years of her rejection and rebellion, her lack of compassion, love, respect, and denial. I wanted her gone. I wanted her back in Arkansas.

I said that if I can't take my boys to Youth 2000 then I'm not going. Brenda laughed all the more. She was enjoying this. Joshua began to plead that we should go. Then after much arguing, he told me he had seriously contemplated suicide 5 times because of the bitterness in our home. That hit me like a brick. I knew this marriage was finished now, for the sake of my children. Not two days before, there was a Ft. Campbell student that killed himself.

That went very deep with me. I told Brenda I wanted a divorce. That was the end of that. Brenda laughed at me. She did not take me seriously. I spoke to the Hospital Chaplain and he wanted to talk to Brenda and myself together. I arranged a meeting. I put together five

pages, listing my concerns with Brenda. She could not, nor did she attempt, to answer any of my issues. The Chaplain disturbed me, as the session became a debate between us about a Catholic/Protestant mixed marriage. She had intended to end my military career! Brenda then told me that if I wanted to come back to her, I would have to accept their, (Nathan and Jason's) apostasy. I could not live under that situation. Brenda felt that she had me accross a barrel and did not expect my resolve to be so sudden.

I moved out and into a small place off post at a nearby apartment. It was rustic as slaves use to stay there. At work, friends knew something was going on. My boss supported me, she had seen how Brenda was before and was glad to see me make this move. Actually, I had five different priests ask me how I had lasted so long in that relationship. Mrs. finnegan was concerned for my mental state as she hoped I would be ok. I would be walking in the hall of the hospital and friends would recognize something was bad wrong. I would be emotional, as I would start crying in my office thinking of my children. I would be driving my vehicle to work and hear a song and I would start crying. This was the toughest thing I ever had to do. At every Mass I would cry because Nathan and Jason were not there. I would pick

Petra and Joshua up to take them to Mass. I spent a lot of time with Petra, as she would help us at car washes and fundraisers. She loved playing cards and watching movies.

Working in the Blanchfield Hospital, I would regularly have AOD Duty. I was in charge of the hospital until the Commander and crew would come to work the following day. I began talking to a beautiful woman working as a nurse in the Emergency Room. I first saw her sitting taking a break outside the Ambulance department and I introduced myself telling her that the staff in the EC told me that she was looking for a husband. That surprised this special lady and she looked at me like I was a boob! I began taking her to instructions at St. Michaels Catholic church for RCIA and eventually became her sponsor.



I met GiGi in May 2000 and from the beginning, we always got

along. I did invite her to take instructions for the Catholic Church and she was very happy to do so. She had worked at a Catholic Hospital in Birmingham Alabama as a Head PEDS Nurse. This introduced her to Catholics and her interest in the Church was stimulated through her acquaintances.

I became a source of information for GiGi and we really began to enjoy each others company. Since I was separated from Brenda and I knew the divorce was in the end stage, I began to ask her out for coffee. She worked in the Blanchfield Hospital Emergency Room where we would eat lunch together. I was happy to be with her and she helped me immeasurably to cope with the loss of my children. Brenda told Petra that if she brought anything Catholic home with her, she would destroy it. Brenda banned the Catholic TV station so Petra could not watch it. Brenda also would not take Petra to Mass. I would come and get Petra and take her to Mass. It was a terrible feud. Thank God for GiGi as she helped me cope with all of the problems. My son's apostasy was very difficult. At Mass, I still cry as I see all the children running around and that use to be my children. Now that they are older, I know what a Trojan horse can do and that is what Brenda was. When Petra was confirmed into the Catholic Church, Brenda refused to go support

her. She let her leave the house in blue jeans. The neighbor took Petra to the Church so she would have a ride. Brenda was upset with the neighbor because she actually went to the confirmation to support Petra. I was not allowed by my Command to leave for the occasion. Petra took the name “St. Joan of Arc” which is appropriate as she is living in a war zone. When the divorce was final, I began to prepare to remarry GiGi as she did accept my ring. We both understood the importance of working through the annulment process. I had several priests and friends who felt that I had a strong case and so I moved to have an annulment originally through the Nashville Diocese. Fr. David, our priest from the Owensboro Diocese was glad to put in for my annulment.



September 11, 2000 became a life changing experience. That changed everything for all of us. I was driving listening to the radio when the news came on that the World Trade Center had been hit by a plane. It was smoking intensely. Then another plane hit the other tower. All ideas of an accident were put away with the news. The Pentagon was hit; there was another plane that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. We were under attack. The next few days were very intense around the country and Ft. Campbell. It was very intense. Security was at an all time high. I decided to marry GiGi and hope for the annulment as I expected to move out into Division and prepare to go on the offensive. I wanted GiGi to have access to the army installation with an ID Card. We decided to marry on 29 October 2000. I have been happily married ever since. Not a day goes by that we do not tell each other that we love one another. We have been hit with deployments in the family, financial issues, just about anything but the kitchen sink. We have continued to grow despite all of it. The hardest issue is dealing with the annulments and looking to resolve the difficulty.



It was July 2004. We received a new employee transferred from Latin America. Jim was actually from Alabama, but married someone south of the border and was working for the military in the Islands. We became friends as he is a Kansas City Chief fan! Finally, his wife and two sons arrived to join him here in New Orleans. I had talked with Jim about Church. He was raised Catholic, but his family had been inactive for a good while. I encouraged him to come to Mass on the Naval Base where we go. I invited him to come to our Bible study on Friday nights.

His two sons were baptized, but had not received any other Sacrament, so I encouraged him to place them in our CCD program. The oldest one is old enough to attend the Confirmation Class. I was invited to go to his house for a barbeque and I was able to talk about the faith. Jim's wife had been influenced by the Seventh Day Adventist and I made it a point to work towards bringing them home. After a couple of months, Jim and his family began to come to Mass and

the Bible study. Their oldest son is in my Confirmation class and he is preparing to be Confirmed by the Bishop of the Archdiocese of the Military. He is coming for our Confirmation Class, what an honor!!! Jim and his family have been going strong now for 3 months and have returned back to the Sacraments. This is a great year of favor from the Lord. People are coming home! Are there any other stories of the prodigal coming home!

Thanksgiving 2003, I was at home (near Humansville Mo) when my Mother began to experience a shift in her health. Her breathing became labored and I called for the ambulance to pick her up. She was taken to Osceola hospital not far away. My wife is a registered nurse and I have acted as an NCOIC of an Army hospital so we were very aware of what was going on. My Mother was suffering from COPD and mild congestive heart failure. Congestive heart failure develops with a lot of COPD patients.

My Mothers oxygen count was 89 which are very low. Normal rates are between 96-100. COPD patients routinely go down to 93-94. While we were there, we asked the staff to conduct an EKG and other tests to check her heart, which is standard procedure with such patients. My wife and I had to leave and return to New Orleans as I am currently

stationed there serving at the Military Enlistment Processing Station. I am in the Army.

We became aware that my Mother suffered a mild heart attack, yet they failed to conduct tests for that after 24 hours from the time she arrived there. I was already back at work when I received word from my brother that our Mother was in a coma. I immediately went to the Catholic web site (www.catholicconvert.com) sponsored by Steve Ray (A Catholic Convert). Prayers were quick and the response was swift. Mother was to recover, but her heart would not function well, she would always be on pain medication, and heart medication.

About October 2004, I was introduced to the Fr. Seelos Shrine in New Orleans. I began to search for it and planned to take my Mothers petition there. I met great people serving there helping pilgrims praying with them and giving them tours of the Shrine. Anthony became a great inspiration for me as he prayed with me for my mother. I would return there on a number of occasions continuing my petition for my mother.

On 29 December 2004, I received a Red Cross message informing me that my Mother was dying. I was informed that she had been calling for me that day wanting to see me, crying for me. My command would not

allow me to go home until after the following work day. I was told that my Mother's mental status was declining. She was speaking with those on the other side as if nobody else was in the room.

Hospice came to her place and took a look at her and found that her systolic rate was under 50. Normal is between 100-140. Her joints were swelling due to the fluid draining in them, her eyes were glazing over, she had not eaten anything in 4 days, she had been bed ridden for 4 day, she could not get up. She had to wear a diaper and had to be cleaned. She was not able to take her medication. Her breathing had become labored and raspy.

I was able to catch a plane home at 1500 hours 30 December 2004. I arrived at home about 2200 hours that evening. I wore my dress B uniform in honor of my Mother for the flight and was still wearing them when I arrived. Mother was very much as described. She appeared uncomfortable and in pain. They had cool wet rags applied to her face to give her some relief. Her breathing was labored and she was not looking well. I sat there not sure what to do or even think. Finally, family members left the room leaving my brother and me alone with Mom.

Randy my brother began to sing a Johnny Cash country western

song. Our Mother had no reaction to that, but it did break the ice. I began to sing Immaculate Mary. As I got to the Ava Maria part, Mom began to recognize me and began to sing with me. This encouraged me to sing more. I sang hymns for a good 30 minutes as she began to come out of it.

The following morning, Father Bill, a priest from our youth, came to see Mom and administer the Sacrament of the anointing of the sick. I was surprised that Father would invoke the name of Father Seelos. By this time, Mom had already become more alert and knew who everyone was.

Later that day, Mom was able to get up and go to the rest room. She was able to sit at the table and talk to us; she was eating chicken, chilidogs, and pizza. She was able to take her medications and all seemed well. Two days later, she was anointed by another priest from another Parish and so she received a great blessing.

Today is 19 March 2005, the feast of St. Joseph the worker, and she is still going strong. Hospice and others have been scratching their heads while I quote James 5:13! Mom is sounding better today than she has sounded the past few years. Whether the Lord gives Mon another day, another week, month, or years, we did receive our Christmas

miracle!

This past Monday night, I was invited to a prayer meeting by Danny Abramowicz, a former professional football player. He was featured on EWTN's Bookmark! I have to tell you all that if you ever get the chance to come to New Orleans, on Monday evenings, check out the men's group at St. Clement of Rome Church right outside of New Orleans.

I met a young man there, Randy, who will be received into the Catholic Church this coming Saturday night. What a blessing it was to hear his testimony. The Catholic Defender had such a great time there that he plans to go back in the near future! If you get the chance to hear Alex Jones testimony, I think you would really enjoy it!

This past March (2005) I was at Best Buy looking to see if I could get my printer fixed. I was not given any hope, so I browsed amongst the Christian CD's to look for something I liked. While I was there, I met this one guy who came to look around. I found out he was a

Nondenominational with a Baptist background. We spoke about the music and could identify with much of it.

Then this couple came down and began to browse along and I started to talk casual with the lady. She stated that they were nondenominational with a Baptist background. I quickly began to feel outnumbered but never intimidated! They began to talk about the bible and I joined right in!

After a few minutes, the subject of the Catholic Church came up! They didn't realize that I was one. I began to explain the Catholic bible, where it came from and why I think it is the right one. I caught the couple by surprise. They mysteriously began to ask me questions about exorcisms. I was only too happy to explain it. That's when I found out that they both had been in the practice of witchcraft. They were trying to find Christ when they met me.

As I spoke with them, the husband began to complain of burning sensations running down his spine. He says this happens when he tries

to speak about God. When I was speaking about the Catholic Church, he began to weath in pain. They did not want me to leave. We decided to go to McDonalds and talk more about it. So, we left Best Buy and went to McDonalds where I ordered Two double cheese burgers, fries, and a large coke! We sat down and began to talk about the Faith.

At that time a lady who identified herself as a Catholic Charismatic, heard me talking about the Catholic faith. She got excited and wanted to join in with us. We are talking about the faith and everything went well. The couple decided to look at the Catholic Faith and they are now going to our Friday night Bible study. They independently made appointments with the priest! Can I say "YES", thank you God!

To give an update about Mom's situation. Her right leg is dead from the foot up to the midshin. It has remained the same for almost two weeks. We have left taking the leg off to Mom as it is her decision.

Tonight she has made the choice to have it taken off.

I have maintained a third class relic of Father Seelos (a rosary) just

above the site where it is black on the shin. I started that one week ago. I recall that in the year 2,000 my son Nathan was sitting at a red light waiting for it to turn green when a drunk driver ran between 70-90 miles per hour into the back of our van. The impact caused the rear view mirror to come off the windshield. I had a rosary on the mirror which flew off with the mirror. Under inspection, I discovered that the damage from the collision did not go beyond where the rosary landed and Nathan had no injuries. Well, at this point the damage to Mom's leg has not moved beyond the rosary. Just our way of keeping prayer first and foremost. Praise God for His goodness! Sepsis has not set in and we are blessed!

I was walking down town Humansville population 832 today when I walked into a store that I had never seen there before. One of the gentlemen I struck up a conversation with happened to be a former superintendent of the public school in Humansville. He was involved in a

major battle with the ACLU who was seeking to take out the Ten Commandments out of the School. The Superintendent was fired by the School for his position and I think they didn't have the backbone to stand up to the ACLU.

As I listened to him I recalled this story as it did get national attention. I noticed he had a crucifix on his wall and thanked him for his respect to the Catholic Faith. That's when I was informed that he was a "former Catholic". Being the Catholic Defender, I went instantly on the move. There were four other people sitting at a table near by as I began my public defense for the Faith. I spoke for an hour before I had to run.

GiGi and Petra was looking for me by this time.



As I was leaving, the former Superintendent asked me if I could come back, he really wanted to talk to me about the Catholic Faith. I know that I touched his heart! I said that I would be back tonight with the Alex Jones conversion tape and I would be glad to answer any questions

he or anyone else might have. Please pray for them and also please keep my Mother in prayer as her struggle continues! God bless!

Petra and I arrived approximately 1845. Mr. Gregory Thompson, the former Superintendent at Humansville High School (Missouri) near Springfield, was glad to see us. He was about to begin a study on Methamphetamine. This is an outreach to help people on drugs. Because of my medical background and my study on secular rock music, I was able to contribute to the class.

After the class, Mr. Thompson and another person from this group watched the Alex Jones video. I was able to answer some questions when a lady named Donna explained she had just converted to the Assemblies of God from the Baptist church. Because of my testimony and Mr. Jones's video, she was wanting to know how to become Catholic! Internally I'm saying "Yes"! I will continue to follow through with this opportunity.

Finally, Mr. Thompson and I was able to speak as he told me his

story. He showed great courage to take the stand he took. Ultimately, he was told he could not pray in school around the students. He could not have a cross on his wall in his office nor a bible on his desk. The school board had no backbone to stand up against the ACLU. The parent who brought the charge against the Ten Commandments in the school was given \$40,000 to make this an issue. I consider this blood money as it is intended to disrobe our country of it's Christian roots.

Then the most important part of the discussion became his next issue he wanted to speak about. He was raised Catholic but had not been faithful to Mass. He had been participating with a number of the community churches to raise attention and support. I informed him that he needed to make the Mass the center of his life and to be faithful to the

Catholic Church. It's great to work with other denominations on projects, but he needs to remember where home is. He was convinced that the Lord sent me there today and I do not believe in accidents, so I

am asking you to pray for him that he will take all that I told him and return to full participation in the Catholic Church! God bless you all!

Gregory Thompson was with us today as we had a Communion service for Mom! It was awesome! We have been praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet and that really gives peace to Mom! Please keep the prayers coming! Thank you all! God Bless!

I was able to share with Mr. Thompson the importance of the Mass:

Have you ever listened to the radio or watched television and heard some

minister invite you to a Bible-believing church?

When they say this, they may in effect be saying, “Catholics are not Bible believers because they depend on human tradition and precepts. Come join us where you can really get into the word.”

In response, former Catholics will be shouting, “Amen, brother,” and lukewarm Catholics will say, “Really? Wow, let’s check it out!” If they really

understood the mass, they would realize, “Hey, the Catholic church is the

most Bible-believing church on any street corner.”

When I’ve invited Protestant friends to mass, they are astonished to find

that the songs, prayers, and scripture are so based on the foundation of Jesus

Christ. He is the very core, the center of each mass.

The mass is divided into two basic parts: the liturgy of the word, and the liturgy of the Eucharist. The mass begins with the entrance song, and the procession of the crucifix followed by the altar servers.

The lector boldly carries the word of God with respect and reverence. The

priest follows at the rear of the formation.

The celebrant will then greet the altar. The altar, once consecrated, represents the ‘most sacred’ and ‘whatever touches it will be sacred’ (Exodus

29:37)

It is a holy thing about to be celebrated. Hebrews 13:15 states, “Through

him then let us continually offer God a sacrifice of praise that is, the fruit

of

lips that confess this name.”

The celebrant after assuming his position behind the altar usually in front

of his chair will preside over the liturgy of the word.

He greets the people, and all prepare to enter God’s presence by a common confession of unworthiness.

I Corinthians 11: 27-29 states, “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the Body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.”

We must recognize that we are sinners and need his help (I Timothy 1:15). The priest may combine the Kyrie Eleison (Lord, Have Mercy) prayer

to conclude the penitential rite. On Sundays which do not occur within the season of Lent or Advent, Catholics will sing or pray together ‘The Glory to

God in the Highest,' a song of praise and composite of truths sung by the angels on the first Christmas night.

So, this far into the mass, we haven't yet got to the word of God, but we have participated with ancient traditions so infused with scripture that it represents Biblical Christianity with the highest respect.

After the "Glory to God in the Highest," the celebrant collects the prayers

of the assembly. St. Paul states in I Timothy 2:8, "It is my wish, then, that in

every place the men should pray, lifting up Holy hands, without anger or argument." Together, we bring our needs and desires. The prayers are short, but pointed and forceful.

The scriptural reading now begins. The first reading usually is taken from the Old Testament. This reading usually correlates with the Gospel message from the New Testament. After the Old Testament reading is concluded, we have one of the Responsorial Psalms.

This is an antiphonal arrangement of a psalm intended to be a

meditation

on the word of God. This is either sung or recited alternately by the lector (the singer), and the congregation.

Then we read a New Testament passage, such as 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, “Al

l scripture is inspired by God, and useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God

may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he had the Old Testament scripture in mind. It is right that we also keep the Old Testament and honor it.

The next reading is called “The Epistle,” and it’s always taken from the New Testament. It gives instruction for the Christian community to live the Christian life.

After the four Gospels, the New Testament begins with the book of Acts written by St. Luke as an historical record of the early church.

The next 13 books, from Romans to Philemon, and ordered according to

length from longest to shortest, are letters written by St. Paul. After Paul's writings, comes the book of Hebrews.

The scholars at the council of Hippo (convened from A. D. 393-396 for the purpose of establishing the books of the Bible) were not sure that Paul wrote Hebrews, so they placed it after the rest of his writings.

After Hebrews comes the books called "The Catholic letters," because they were written to the whole church, not just to a certain church or individual. These books are James, Peter 1 and 2, John 1, 2, and 3, Jude, and Revelation, written by Saint John.

The more you are involved with the order of the mass, the more biblical you find it. After the epistle, all stand for the 'Alleluia,' and verse in preparation for the Gospel. During the season of Lent, the 'Alleluia,' is not sung; instead, a Gospel acclamation is used.

The celebrant proclaims the Gospel. The Gospel books are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Gospel and the previous scripture reading are

arranged on a three year cycle so that once every three years the entire Bible

is proclaimed.

At the reading of the Gospel, the entire congregation stands to hear intently the words of Jesus Christ. Once the Gospel message is announced, we respond by making a sign of the cross on our forehead, mouth, and heart.

This sign means ‘My mind believes the truth, my lips speak the truth, and

my heart loves the truth.’

By this time, your Protestant friend has really flipped out. He hasn’t seen

so much Bible utilized and proclaimed at one time. He is beginning to

wonder, “They say this is not a Bible-believing church.” That’s when I grab

the young person on the shoulder and tell them, “Yeah, and you haven’t

heard the half of it yet; take a seat.”

After the Gospel, the Homily is given which the priest uses to show practical application of the Gospel message. It’s preaching time! It pays to

be

attentive just to make sure the priest knows his ‘p’s’ and ‘q’s.’

After the sermon is pronounced,, the Nicene Creed is repeated by all the

faithful. The creed is a profession of our faith, and a composite of truths that we Catholics have maintained since the apostles. Hebrews 4:14 states,

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the Heavens, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast to our profession of faith.”

The Nicene Creed is an expansion of the Apostles Creed. The Nicene creed was composed at the council of Nicea in 325 A.D., reaffirmed at the Council of Constantinople in the same century.

The last act in this biblical-inspired drama is the petitions of the prayer of

the faithful. We simply ask God for mercy and help in whatever the needs may be. This ends the Liturgy of the Word!

After the word of God has been proclaimed, the Eucharistic celebration of

the Mass begins with the offertory procession.

The tithing (money) and gifts of bread and wine are brought to the Altar

as a sign of the offering of our lives in union with Christ to the heavenly

Father. Usually a song or hymn is sung.

Jesus tells this story about tithing. "A poor widow also came and put in

two small coins worth a few cents." Calling His disciples to Himself, He said

to them; "Amen I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other

contributors to the treasury. For they all contributed from the surplus

wealth, but she from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole

livelihood (Mark 12:41-44)."

We shall offer ourselves totally, not from a monetary (though one should

give what they can), but of oneself.

Let our offering not be like Cain's, but more like Abel's. a sacrifice

pleasing to God (Genesis 4:4-5).

The offering begins as the priest prepares the gift of bread and wine

that

will become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ, also known

as the "Eucharist".

Modeled after the Jewish prayers, the priest proclaims, "Blessed are you

Lord God of all creation, through your goodness we have this bread to offer

which will become the Bread of Life."

The next phase is the preparation of the gifts. Having prepared the gift of

bread, the priest now prepares the gift of wine that will be changed into the blood of Christ.

This chalice becomes the vessel that will help us enact the everlasting Covenant that will be shed for all of us. As the wine is offered by the priest, so we offer ourselves. We ask God to share in His divine nature, just as Christ shared in our human nature.

As water became one with wine, in like manner we would wish to be

united with Christ.

*The celebrant washes his hands. This practice is a priestly cleaning.
The*

*Old Testament prefigures the New Testament. Exodus 29:1-2 states; "This
is*

the rite you shall perform in consecrating them as priest... with fine wheat

*flour make unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers
spread*

*with oil... Aaron and his sons, the priests of the Levi's. You shall also
bring*

to the entrance of the meeting tent, and there wash them with water."

*This washing of hands by the priest is symbolic of purification of the
soul.*

Then the priest may approach the great sacrifice without blemish.

*This is followed by a prayer that the sacrifice will be acceptable to God.
I*

*Peter 2:5 states, "You too are living stone, built as an edifice of spirit, into
a*

*holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through
Jesus*

Christ."

The washing of hands is followed by prayer over the gifts, the most important of the offering prayers.

There are primarily four Eucharistic prayers used by canon law:

Eucharistic Prayer III is the most common used. Eucharistic Prayer I is used usually read during Christmas Mass, and special occasions.

It is during this consecration that the bread and wine are consecrated and

the communities highest attention and adoration is given. It is tradition that

the bells ring at the word of Jesus, "This is my body" at the elevation! Then

again with "Do this in memory of me".

During the middle ages, at the moment of the consecration, the tower bells would ring alerting the country side what was happening in the church

Farmers would stop, reflect and pray.

The Angelus, a popular devotion, was common at this time. Jesus renews

for us His redemptive sacrifice. He does not suffer or die. This was offered only one!

Before us, Jesus makes present and active among us the power of His life, death, and resurrection.

As a form of prayer, some of the canons go back to the second century. As

the priest elevates the host and then the chalice, Jesus is truly present under

both species.

We can unify ourselves with Jesus, the one true mediation between God and individual. He offers Himself to the Father on our behalf.

The next phase is called, "The Intercessions"! Here the universal prayers

for the church, communion with the saints, for all of us, for the needs, and for the deceased.

These petitions are joined in the remembrance of the passion, death, and

resurrection and the Lord's second coming that is celebrated in the Eucharist (Luke 22:19).

The Eucharistic prayer is climaxed with the Doxology, and the great amen. The priest celebrates the host and the cup proclaiming, "Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father forever and ever".

The Fathers of the Church considered the "Amen" as important for the laity as the words of consecration are for the priest. It is our acknowledgement to the truth of what is taking place.

The Lord's prayer is from the earliest times, the "table prayer" of the Christians. For during this prayer we pray for our daily bread, our Eucharistic bread and it's fruits.

The next phase is the breaking of the bread. This is the oldest name given to the assembly/service used in the book of Acts of the New Testament. This

was a sign that all, though many, were one loaf, one bread, and one Body

o

Christ.

During the breaking of the bread, the Angus Des is sung or recited, which

is the "Lamb of God" prayer.

The priest then holds the particle of the Eucharistic bread and uses the words spoken by St. John the Baptist. Older versions of the text says,

"Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who takes away the sins of the world."

Today it begins, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the

world. Happy are those who are called to His supper."

Just like the centurion so long ago, we respond, "Lord I am not worthy to

receive you, but only the word and I shall be healed.

The communion procession, we as a community share in the body and blood of the Lord, communion with Him and each other.

This is a far greater fulfillment than the Manna given to the Israelites

in

the desert (John 6:25-51).

The Eucharist is a Latin word meaning "Thanksgiving"! We are called to

receive this gift and take this gift within us, to the whole world.

We are given the final blessing and like the great commission gave the disciples, we are sent to go into the streets, the work place, the homes, to witness and share Christ to everyone we meet. Indeed, Jesus calls us to teach

the Gospels to the ends of the earth.

Thank you so much! This past week has been difficult. Last Wed I

reported that Mom's rosary turned gold. That was discovered as we were

singing "Be not Afraid" when Mom was in a period of despair. That very

evening she decided to have her leg amputated. It was her only chance

of living as her right foot was black with gangrene.

The next day I had the ambulance come and take her to Bolivar Hospital (CMA) where they discovered she was already suffering from sepsis shock. Her blood pressure went down to 45/15. Her pulse began to rise between 150 and 200. That kept going up and down. Her White blood count was above 21,000, more than half of what it was suppose to be.

We were informed that Mom needed to be moved to Cox Medical Center in Springfield where they had better equipment to run tests that were needed. Mom was taken by ambulance to Springfield nearly 45 minutes away.

The Cox Medical Staff were quick to set Mom up for the operation as the Doctors previewed her charts. He came back with a grime outlook as Mom was already in the midst of Sepsis shock. It was taking the leg off now or die. Mom's Congestive Heart Failure and COPD made it very difficult for the Doctors.

As they took Mom into the operating room, I went to the Hospital

chapel and began the rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. That took me

almost an hour meaning that I should know something within the hour.

The Doctor found me pacing back and forth and told me that Mom did great and was doing fine. Talk about praise, I was very happy! The Doctor said it was the hand of God. I asked him if he was a praying man and he said he was Catholic! I then showed him the rosary and he was very interested in that. We talked for a good ten minutes on how great God is and what he can do.

I want to thank all of you for your prayer support. When I left the hospital yesterday morning Mom's color was back, her BP was 122/71 and her pulse was 78. She was still having pain with the surgery, but it was better, she was on morphine. God is so good!



