

Bob's Story

My conversion story starts at the cradle. I was baptised and later got Confirmed. During this time, and for a couple of more years, I was pretty much a nominal Catholic, who knew little about his faith, due to poor catechesis. I was pretty much limited to going to Mass every Sunday, and I knew not what was going on.

At age 15, I read a pamphlet about Fatima. This pamphlet had information about the end of the world, Jesus coming to judge the living and the dead, and eternal Hellfire for those who sinned. That's it, I gotta save my immortal soul from Hellfire, and fast! I threw myself into praying the rosary, because the pamphlet said that Mary would help me get saved by Jesus Christ. After a few weeks of praying the rosary, I got the subjective feeling that it was enough and went back to my nominal Catholic ways.

By age 20, I had become a pretty liberal guy. I was very politically correct only because I was afraid of being railed against by the politically correct types on campus. Seeing all the immorality, scumminess, and scandalous behavior of the people in the world, I eventually became cynical, thinking that the world was made up of evil people, and all people are scummy.

That attitude began to change when I read an article about a small town called Rolfe, Iowa, which was advertising to encourage people to come live there (and even giving away money and land to do so.) Living in Chicago, I knew that my city, cared little about its citizens. Whether I lived or died did not make a difference to the city of Chicago, but to this small town, people actually were important. The crime rate in this town was so low, that people would routinely park their cars, with the engine running, with munchkins in the back seat. Nobody would do that in Chicago, that is tantamount to announcing publicly "Attention all car thieves, please steal my car!"

There was something that kept the people from stealing, rioting, murdering, and doing other scummy things, but what was it? I did some very rudimentary research, and found out it had something to do with the values the people held. At this point, I did not make the connection to my faith yet, but God had other plans!

I became a Rush Limbaugh style conservative. I liked listening to talk radio, and listened to Rush. Eventually I got tired of his show, but I did not know why - maybe it is because of all the politics - with scummy politicians the norm, I knew politics was not the answer. I discovered the Dr. Laura Schlessinger show and loved it! I still listen to it from time to time. She railed against the selfishness of modern society on a daily basis, and preached morality, and dispensed moral advice. One day at Mass, the Gospel reading had the words of Jesus Christ which said "Then said

Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) Those words really resonated with me - even Jesus Christ railed against selfishness!

I had to get closer to God, and turn away from selfishness. But how? I read the Bible twice, from cover to cover, and still did not have the answer. I was still pretty much a Sunday Morning Catholic, but God would soon change that. Seeing a billboard about Catholic Family Radio, I decided to listen, and I am glad! My favorite show soon became Catholic Answers Live, and I learned so much about my faith - I even read the Catholic Answers website, and other apologetics websites. I started to get on fire for the faith, since now I could answer objections that I could not answer before. Praise God!

I devoured Catholic apologetics books, and even bought many of them for my personal collection. I cut my apologetical teeth on Yahoo! Chat, and I was successful at defending the faith. Though not perfect, I did some good there. It was wonderful answering questions that I previously could not answer before. I planted many seeds, and even brought the good news of Jesus Christ's forgiveness to someone who thought she was never going to be forgiven (though some priest giving her bad information).

As a newbie Catholic apologist, I moved on to the Catholic-Convert message board. I've got a long way to go before I become the next Karl Keating, so I'll continue the study of my faith. I uncovered a Pearl of Great Price that I used to take for granted, in my Catholic Faith. Praise Jesus for founding the Catholic Church!

A piece of advice to those who want to defend the Catholic faith: do NOT do it to convert others. Your job is to plant the seeds, and let the Holy Spirit do the gardening. Your goal, as an apologist, is to help others understand why we believe the things we do, and do the things we do. Conversion is in the job description of the Holy Spirit, and not for apologists.

There is more. In my spiritual life, I've had many good things happen to me. I can personally testify to the power of God's grace! Through his abundant grace, God has helped me overcome many sinful attitudes, and sins. I am not walking on water yet, or having a halo over my head, but I have made great progress, which I could not have done without the power of God's grace. God's grace truly is infinite! I am not the light, but I am glad to point to the Light.

But wait, my story is not over yet. God is not done with me yet. To be continued :)

Yours in Christ,
Bob, A.K.A. BobCatholic

