

## Adam's Story

This is the story of how I came to the Catholic Faith. To begin, I grew up most of my younger years as a troubled teen. I was in a special behavior self contained class since 6th grade. I spent a lot of my younger years getting into fights, police involvement and drugs and alcohol usage. My sister was involved in a rival gang where I grew up, so I tried following her footsteps to be popular, and follow a destructive life that leads to prison or death. In 6th grade I wasn't a big believer in the Father Almighty, but anytime I passed any Church I always felt something. I had the deepest respect for religious people, but I kept my distance. One night, in 6th grade I felt so despaired because everything was going wrong for me, I was struggling with school, rival gangs and staying alive for the most part, so I prayed for God to take me away from all life. I spent a lot of time running from the police, being held for shoplifting, and causing a lot of damage in my city. As soon as 9th grade rolled by, I was settling down and grasping with a new life since we moved to a very preppie and higher-class town. I wasn't used to the lifestyle here, the teenagers were more preppie and jock like, and the ones who thought they were tough. I wanted to show them differently very bad. In 9th grade I was dealing with a lot of anger problems, a lot of buildup from moving, family, and losing all my friends. It caused me to misbehave in school that got me arrested in 9th grade. My life was falling apart by then, now I was involved with a new set of teens as friends. Nothing like the gang bangers and wrongful people I kicked it with, but they were close enough to me feeling closer to as stoners. I was still alone though, I now had few friends, but we weren't close or nothing. So I started attending a Protestant Church down the street from me in 10th grade. I found some peace when I went and got involved with some other youth my age. I started reading the Bible, but overtime I started falling again and overtime I would only attend every few months or so. I never really enjoyed the protestant worship services though. It felt more like a concert than a peaceful time to praise God. I never liked to dance and wave my arms in the air, and I always felt very strange at Protestant services.

So, I was back to struggling in 10th grade. I was sent to a special out-of-school program for those who can't maintain in a regular class off and on throughout the year. Every time I got in a fistfight or in any trouble, I got sent back to this program. But 10th grade wasn't so bad, perhaps this was the time I started to change my morals. So 11th grade came by, I was given the privilege to attend a regular high school again, but in a special program called KITE. I was not allowed to have regular classes but I was allowed to go out to lunch with the regular students, which ended to be a huge mistake. I was being stupid again in 11th grade, started smoking marijuana and drinking again (after quitting for 5 months or so), running across the football field with security behind me, or pat searches in front of all your peers weekly like old times again. In 11th grade, I was thrown out of school again for breaking a teachers arm in a fistfight with another student. This was accidental; I loved the teacher. So, I was sent back to the off-campus program where I would grow closer to a new teacher. I could never have graduated from H.S. without this teacher. I was becoming very depressed. I felt I was a curse and nothing mattered. No matter how hard I tried, things would never work for me. I started attending Protestant Churches again, but this time. I was on a journey to find the right one for me. I was skeptical against Catholics; I was one of those ignorant ones who thought, they are Mary worshipers! Boy, was I wrong! My mother

is Catholic, but she doesn't practice, though she did support me. I would ask Protestants what they thought of the Catholic Church expecting a reason to try them out, but I always got negative input.

I went to a Catholic Church one day with my stepbrother, and the second I walked into the door I never felt so absorbed with the Holy Spirit in my life. It was a feeling very new to me, and the peace and presence of Christ I felt very closely. I knew this was where I needed to be. But my experience to get involved started off bad. I asked after the Mass how to become Catholic, how to learn and no one would answer me. I was given an appointment with the youth director but he was no help, he explained to me about the Church, but could never give me an explanation how to get involved. He even told me it's too late to get involved in youth group, and for me to wait a year. I was kind of upset with this Church, it wasn't what I expected. So I went to another Catholic Church and again after Mass I asked the Priest How do I become Catholic? he said for me to make an appointment with him, and he walked off. Not even a welcoming smile. So, now I am wondering if all Catholics are this rude, and if they even care about bringing people to the Faith, the one true Holy Church. I then gave up.

Later on in the year, the summer of 11th grade, I attended a passion play called Jesus of Nazareth. I absolutely loved it. I spent \$110 or so seeing it over and over. I was given an invitation to attend a very huge protestant church and was given directions how to get there. That night I prayed to God to lead me to his Church and to let me belong somewhere. The next morning I woke up, I got dressed and left the house early to find this Protestant Church I was given directions to. I had the directions in my hand, as I was driving on this back road, the sign that my eyes read showed me it was the road I turn on, but it wasn't. As I drove down the wrong road, I came to a Catholic Church sitting in the back of the woods hidden, I didn't catch the name of it, but the statue of Mary above it burned into my memory. It was a very tiny Parish, so peaceful looking. So I turned around and as I retraced back to where I took the wrong turn, the sign said different, it was the wrong road indeed. I ended up finding my way to the protestant church, which again I couldn't enjoy, because again, it felt like a concert like the others did, respectfully speaking.

All week long, the image of that parish I ran into and stayed in my mind, so the next week, on Saturday night, I decided to find that Parish. I searched the internet all night, trying to find the street since I had no name of it. I ended up finding directions and I drove out the next morning. I was welcomed as I walked in with greetings and that peaceful Holy presence of Christ as you make your way through the aisle of pews. After Mass, I shook the priest's hand and went on my way. When I got home, I read the Church bulletin and called the number on the front, it was the number to Sister Catherine. I asked her how do I become Catholic. She was nice, she says RCIA is starting, but since I am 17 (at the time) it's better I wait a year and join the youth group starting up in a couple of weeks. I was disappointed but happy I was able to start youth group. The next Sunday I went to Mass, and Father John, a Nigerian Priest, shook my hand after Mass again. I asked him How do I become Catholic? since the Sister's answer wasn't good enough for me. He immediately said, Come, tonight RCIA begins, and you are most welcome! I told

him Sister Catherine told me to wait a year, but he said don't worry, I'll talk to her .

From there on I started a new journey through RCIA. I went to Mass alone every Sunday, but I loved every bit of it. Towards the end of RCIA I was struggling in school again, and missed 3 weeks or so worth of classes, and Father John got upset with me. So I called him one night as he expressed to me how I would have to start over again in a year, and I told him to give me another chance. I cried when I got off the phone. So Father John gave me another chance and I canceled my trip to Mexico so I can make the rest of the classes and catch up. I was baptized after the 7 months of class, from there on I changed my life and gave up my bad habits. I was very much involved with the Church, I had a strong relationship with God and in school I was offered a chance to attend regular H.S. again, but I decided not to and I stayed in the special program and graduated from H.S. with honors with the rest of the regular students.

My journey wasn't easy; most of my old friends are either dead, locked up or struggling still. My prayer in 6th grade was to be delivered from this life into a better, it took nearly 6 years for it to be answered, but God brought me out of a path to nowhere to His Holy Catholic Church. I learned a lot from my past and I made many mistakes that will haunt me. But God came through and opened my eyes to a new beginning and to a Priest I will hold dear forever in friendship.

God Bless.

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**Luke 10:25-37**  
**The Good Samaritan**

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live." 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, 34 and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

### ***Luke 15:11-32***

#### **The Prodigal Son**

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons; 12 and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. 14 And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. 15 So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.'" 20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; 23 and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; 24 for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. 25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' 28 But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29 but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

### ***Luke 15:3-10***

#### **The Lost Sheep & The Lost Coin**

3 So he told them this parable: 4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. 8 "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost.' 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

**Luke 5:27-32 (Matthew 9:12; Mark 2:17)**

**The Doctors and The Sick**

27 After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." 28 And he left everything, and rose and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at table with them. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."