

Rick's Story

so here's my conversion story in a nutshell--the actual telling of it takes about an hour and a half because there's a lot of detail left out here..fasten your seat belt

before i proposed to my wife, i told her under no condition would i sign anything saying the kids would have to be raised Catholic---since we were in austin in the early 70's (a liberal hotbed), the priest told us the Church just required that the children would be raised in a Christian home...well, i was ok with that but found out later that wasn't how it was supposed to be---i should have had to sign a document...God does have His ways, doesn't He? as it worked out, we never had kids so it was a moot point---God in His infinite wisdom knew had we had children, i feel sure i would never have converted to Catholicism and as it turned out i would much rather be a Catholic with no children than a protestant with children---funny how that worked out...

anyway, i was raised a baptist, accepted Christ as my personal Lord and Savior and was baptized a child of God at 9 years old...seemed like a good thing to do at the time, however it obviously didn't take---stayed in the baptist church until i entered college, then let it all slide...typical,huh?married my wife in the Catholic Church (had to otherwise the marriage would not have been valid---) good thing i did not know that at the time otherwise i would have objected to that too

as a married couple, we never went to church...my wife only went when she was with her mother and the only time i set foot in a church was when i wanted to play fast pitch softball, so joined a church to play on their team---even rededicated my life to Christ while a member there---obviously didn't take---softball went away and i drifted away again...my prayer life consisted of every 4-6 months or so, while in bed before sleep,to send a prayer up just to remind God that i was still around , loved Him , and knew He loved me...real deep stuff!

around early 1996, a good friend of mine told me he had been diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer--he was 41 at the time--we started spending quite a bit of time together and he shared with me a lot of things about his faith---when you are staring your mortality in the face, you tend to want to get closer to God here on earth in the hope that you be allowed to be with Him in Heaven and bob was certainly intent on working out his salvation...i remember one day i came home from playing pool with him and remarked to my wife i thought bob was trying to convert me to be a Catholic---of course that would never happen!!

previous to that,(a year or two) my wife's mom had sent a statue of the Blessed Mother--the Rosa Mystica to us---and i was adamant i didn't want to see it around the house so it rested out of the way in our junk room with all the other stuff we were storing. my mother-in-law (who lives with

us now) also sent a tape from maxkol communications called "prophecy and the new times" a 78 minute documentary about people who had allegedly received messages from the Virgin Mary or Jesus or both---well i watched that and was intrigued--talked to bob about it and found out a lot more about this strange phenomena---found out about medjugorje--a place in communist yugoslavia where the Blessed Mother had allegedly been appearing to 6 children daily since 1981--well i read a book about it by wayne weible, a protestant who had converted to Catholicism as a result of what he discovered about medjugorje---

well the end result of all that was i was pretty convinced the Lord would be coming in glory soon and i was nowhere near where i wanted to be as far as my relationship with Him, so i knew i needed to do something and fast... a couple weeks before i was to go to huntsville alabama for the national bowling tournament i had a dream where i was sure i saw Mary and She was walking away from me...no matter what i did, no matter how much i yelled at Her to stop, i could not catch up with Her---i told my wife about it and she thought i was just hearing the Rosary being prayed on tv and it invaded my subconscious and that's where it came from---my mother-in-law had a different take on it--she said Mary wanted me to follow Her...made complete sense to me

the day i left for huntsville (march 12, 1997), i told Mary i would make a deal with Her...i was willing to change and "get right with the Lord" if She would just take me where i was supposed to be...to prove to Her i was willing to change, i made a sacrifice---i was always very vain about my hair (really dumb--if you saw it, you'd know why) but i told Her to prove i was acting in good faith, i would just comb it straight back and be done with it--let it fall where it may---in huntsville i was looking for a place to get my pictures developed that i had taken at the Ave Maria Grotto in cullman alabama where i had stopped along the way...as i was cruising around, i encountered a statue of Christ in what i thought was a park---turned out it was a cemetery with no headstones, just markers on the ground---it was awesome!!! His arms were outstretched as if to beckon anyone who was willing to come to Him--each time i was there, i tried to take a picture but it was always the last picture on the roll--this happened twice--so on sunday morning (march 16) i went out for the last time to get a picture i knew would develop properly--decided to get on my knees to shoot up at the statue to get a better perspective --- well while on my knees in front of that statue, i had a conversion experience that was undescrivable---i spent i don't know how long in front of that statue just pouring my heart out to Jesus---well if you humble yourself before the Lord and turn everything over to Him by making Him Lord of your life, good things start to happen---i spent the next week with my parents trying to explain a few things to them--they were not very receptive...

on the way home, i had some very interesting and unusual things (supernatural) happen to me...when i got home, i had another extremely unusual thing happen (supernatural in nature), turned around and went back to my parents(prayed my first Rosary ever--all 15 decades along the way) on the 23rd (one week after my conversion) and was granted one of the most unbelievable graces a human being could receive while on this earth--the next day on my way to atlanta, a baptist hymnal i just happened to have purchased on friday was instrumental in another unbelievable thing that happened to me...well by now i am pretty

overwhelmed but extremely convinced that the reason these things happened was 1)because i asked for Mary's intercession and She did what She always does best--to lead Her children back to Her Son and 2)because i was ready to surrender myself to the Lord, and really mean it this time--jeremiah 29 says it best 12 And you shall call upon me, and you shall go. and you shall pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You shall seek me, and shall find me: when you shall seek me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found by you, saith the Lord.

well not only did i re-establish a relationship with my God and my Savior but i found that wonderful person in heaven always willing to intercede for us to Her Son, who loves us all, because we are all Her children, our Blessed Mother Mary.

when it came time to find a church home, where else could i go but the Catholic Church (there were other indicators along the way i didn't mention (for sake of brevity LOL!) . i got into the rcia program at the church where i had one of my "experiences" and was brought into full communion with the Church that Jesus instituted on this earth in april of 1998... i made my first confession, received my Lord , truly present , Body,Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Holy Eucharist,and was confirmed in the period of a week...THANKS BE TO GOD! , and thank you Blessed Mother, for making it all possible.

you see , i had no problems with anything about the Church due to the experiences i had---i knew it was the Church i was to be in, so accepting all the Church taught and believed in just came naturally through a wonderful grace from God... when you are able to emulate the Blessed Mother in complete abandonment to the will of the Father,Son,and Holy Spirit, the rest is easy...

just a couple of asides--because of my conversion, my wife came back to the Church and made her first confession in 25 years. THANKS BE TO GOD! sadly, bob did not get to see me come into the Church, as he passed away on december 21st,1997 but i know he was cheering me on the whole way fom his new vantage point. my life , for the past 6 years has been nothing but wonderful--better than i could ever have imagined---makes me want to kick myself in the butt for all those wasted years---my prayer life has increased exponentially---i usually average 2-3 hours a day in communication with the Lord in one fashion or another---words just can't describe the fullness and richness of my life now...and i am just so thankful that i am home, where the Lord wants me to be, hopefully still striving each and every day to do His will and not mine.