

I was a baptised Catholic and at the age of 8 my parents quit going to church, I don't know why. After that point all my experience with going to church was through my grandparents. Let me be perfectly clear here, my parents are very good people and raised me in a morally sound environment. Because of my baptism and the fact that my husband was raised Catholic I was married in the Catholic Church. So at age 32 I had only 2 sacraments of the church. One day when I was at work my grandmother called me to be with her at the hospital (which was across the street from my office). You see my great aunt was passing away, my great aunt Sister Ernestine, a mercy nun. I went to be with my grandmother because she asked me, not because I was particularly close to Sister Ernestine. As I was walking into the room I heard someone mention the rosary, I tried to discretely back out of the room, but my grandma saw me. "Oh there you are, come and join us for the rosary" I can never say no to my grandma, so obediently I went into the room. All I knew about the rosary was that it took forever. I stayed during the rosary and listened, the whole time thinking "I got to get back to work". After the rosary a priest came in and annointed Sister, I didn't know what he was doing, but I stayed and watched. After he left, I left. Soon afterwards my Grandma called me and said she had a gift for me. She gave a small box with instructions wrapped around it. She said, " It's blessed, now learn it". Inside was a rosary, I thanked her and went on my way . I threw it in my purse and forgot about it. Later that week a friend of my husband and I (Rose) called and invited us to go to church with her and her family. She said we're going to Sacred Heart want to go, I thought, how odd, I was baptised at Sacred Heart I haven't been there since I was a little girl. My husband and I, and at that time, our two sons Stefan and Jacob, met Rose and her family at the church. The church was packed and we sat in a side balcony.

All of a sudden I had an extreme sense of what I call "home" that is the only way I can describe it. I could see where my grandpa used to sit in the way back for collection, I remembered getting in trouble for playing with the book clips on the pews, I remembered the smell, I felt at home. The next day I called the church and asked about what I needed to do to finish my sacraments, the lady signed me up for RCIA, but it didn't start for 3 months. I was pregnant with my 3rd son and he was due around that time. Because of the baby and my husband was in residency at the time I made it to about half of the meetings. But by chance I made it to the class on the rosary, the lady teaching the class asked if anyone prayed the rosary, then I remembered I had one in my purse. I pulled it out and showed everyone. Admitting I had no idea how to pray it, and I remembered my grandma telling me to learn it. After that class I started memorizing the prayers and mechanically saying the rosary; it was a real long time before I had it down. Then I started on the meditations and really started to think about these mysteries of Christ and it was all of a sudden I got it , "He died to save me". It dropped to my knees and I felt sorrow and pain for all the times I missed the point. This was way after my Confirmation and RCIA sometimes those classes confused me. It was like God said look your not getting it, here's a gift, The Gift of Faith. And I know that it was through the intercession of Mary that that gift came. The beautiful ending to this story of faith is all the things I didn't know until later. I decided I needed to tell my grandma how her gift of the rosary helped me. I thanked her for buying my rosary for me and having it blessed. She said, "I didn't buy you that rosary, it was Sister Ernestine's, it's from Lourdes, she prayed on it all the time for the family faith." I about lost my breath, Sister Ernestine interceded for me also, the person who couldn't even say the rosary at her death bed,

lowly me!

I'm still on my way, and I thank God for his Son Jesus Christ who redeems the world and to Mary for her constant intercessions on our behalf. We have 5 boys now and I pray the rosary daily, our boys go to Catholic school and I pray one at the least will be a priest. Thank you for your time. Peace be with you.

Jo Vasa