

Jana's Story

Hi there, Thanks for providing this resource on the Internet! It helps me to feel like I'm doing the right thing. I'm basically a newborn baby in the church, so you'll have to bear with me...

I was baptized in the Presbyterian church (but my parents stopped going regularly when I was small). Spiritual interests seemed to have no place in my home when I was growing up (my parents seemed to be embarrassed and disillusioned about the whole topic?!?), but I did go, from time to time to a few different Protestant churches when I was a preteen and teenager (Pentecostal, United). I did not feel that I wanted to belong to any of them. I have met many Protestants throughout my life that I have respected and cared about (especially, I love my grandma), but I couldn't shake the feeling that there was something missing that the various Protestant churches couldn't fulfill for me. When I was a teenager I had a Catholic friend. Religion wasn't a usual topic of conversation for us and she tended to take her Catholic upbringing for granted, but I secretly envied her. When she used to complain about the youth retreats that her parents made her go to, I used to wish desperately that I could have gone with her. I couldn't admit it yet, though. So now I'm an adult. I will receive my sacraments this Easter (2001).

I wish I'd had the nerve to start this process sooner. Last year, I started to pray to God to direct me to the "correct" church - where he wanted me to go. Now I didn't receive any visions or any obvious signs (I wasn't expecting any), but once again I felt the undeniable urge to seek the Catholic church. I'm not a very outgoing person and I get embarrassed easily (I often have to pray to God to help me subdue my terrible pride), so briefly I considered going to a local Presbyterian church instead. I could go, slip in unnoticed and nobody would have to know my shame about having not grown up Catholic. I could belong without having to do anything - no risk. Once again, I felt a push to go to the Catholic church. I thank God for his perseverance in insisting I go. I don't know why I feel that the Catholic church is the "correct" church, and I don't want to offend anyone else's beliefs, so I'll say that it is "correct" for me.

As I learn more about Catholicism, any doubts and fears I may have had are disappearing. Maybe it's that I have learned that "catholic" means "universal", or that I believe that the Catholic church is the original Christian church. I feel sorrow that the first Protestants left the church in the first place and long for Christian (and world) unity in the original Christian church - the Catholic church. I may be wrong, but I feel that the Protestant churches allow people to easily change serious things about our Christian beliefs when it appeals to them or makes their lives easier. Choosing to join to the Catholic church has forced me to learn and think about important aspects of Catholicism outside of mass (maybe it's just because this is all new to me). I've had to go to great pains to understand about the Holy Spirit, and the Sacrament of communion. I've left behind the Protestant view (that I grew up with) that it's all just symbolism. Faith makes no sense to me if you think of the Holy Spirit as just something symbolic rather than God who

communicates with us. There are many other things that make much more sense to me now. I've had to make an important commitment, by choosing the Catholic church. The really difficult part will be telling family and friends. I pray to God the father, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints to give me the courage to let them all know and follow me in my conversion. Well I guess that's about it.

God Bless,
Jana