

Many of you know that I am a Protestant convert to Catholicism.

I grew up in a home that was not crazy religious, but Jesus was always a part of our lives. We said grace at the table, we said our prayers before bed and on most Sundays we went to church.

I say most Sundays because we sometimes went on weekend trips up the coast and missed church or if there was a Sunday game, we skipped church to drive up to Chavez Ravine to watch the Dodgers play.

My recollection was that we were maybe 60/40 on church or not church.

What that meant when I married a Cradle Catholic girl, well, I dragged her down to church most Sundays, but not all and it was 50/50 Catholic Mass or Presbyterian worship service but even with that it might have been no church 2 weeks out of 3.

It was always better to get to the beach early and find a good parking spot.

In my upbringing of salvation by Faith alone, it didn't matter if I missed church, it didn't matter if I dragged someone else down with me, I believed, so I was saved. And in my mistaken belief, Carol believed so she was saved.

Then we started having children, and I have to say, their lack of faith commitment today was their parents fault. Mostly mine.

Children learn more by observation than they ever do by classwork.

But as much as I dragged Carol down from her Catholic background, she never stopped praying for my soul and finally (a whole other long story) I saw the truth of the Catholic Church.

I found that what I had lived was not wrong, was not reality.

When I began to dig deeper I found that I had been misinformed my whole life. Not lied to necessarily, because the preachers, pastors and evangelists who truly believed that what they taught was the truth, because it was what they had been taught.

It occurred to me that I believed what I had been taught because people I believed were in authority told me it was the truth.

That was my belief for 67 Years, before I learned the reality of Christ's teaching.

The truth that Jesus Christ Himself founded the universal Church. **And the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.**

And think of this: Last night the actual founder of His Church on earth was physically and spiritually with us in this room on that altar! He came to be with US! That is reality!

What does He want in exchange?

The last words of Jesus in the book of Mathew, chapter 28 19-20

¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit,

²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Go out from this retreat to your homes, your schools, your friends and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm not saying go home and start spouting scripture on the street corner. Go live your life so that others may see what you have inside you.

Don't be afraid to talk about your beliefs. Let others know the joy that Jesus and His Church give to you.

While there is no record that saint Francis ever said this, it's attributed to him,

"Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words."