

# Drawing Towards the Eucharist: An Open Letter from a Lay Person Who Came Home

Dear Brothers & Sisters In Christ:

Thanks to the patient love and mercy of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, I find myself in the current position of being able to share with you my growing love for the Eucharist.

## **Some Background on my Prodigal Life:**

It was in the Fall of 2003, the morning of October 29th to be exact, that God in His infinite mercy and love answered the prayerful outpouring of my soul for Divine guidance. Prior to this beginning conversion of my heart, I was a cradle Catholic who received all the Sacraments of Initiation as a child. However, upon entering adulthood I drifted away from the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church established by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Though I knew within the deepest recesses of my soul that God did (and does) indeed exist, my conscience was poorly formed. So with insecurities abounding, I drifted into the world seeking consolation and acceptance from the created Universe. As you can imagine, many of my decisions were in violation of God's Love and Desire for me. Yes, there were many times I made decisions that led to decent works of love and charity. This internal desire to serve was the one reflection impressed upon my soul as a youth. It became a never-ending awareness that I should serve my fellow man. This seed was nurtured in my youth by my beloved Mother who daily exemplified this greatest of virtues to her children. Unfortunately, it was during my journey through life that I lived as if there was no God and as if I was master of my life. Looking back I can see the many times in my life that God continued to call me into a relationship with His Son. Yet even though there were a few times I drew close, ultimately I chose to seek a Truth in which I could reason with my mind and measure with my senses. Thus I succeeded in turning my heart completely to stone...rejecting God's gift of Faith, which propels us into a deep and loving relationship with the Absolute and Supreme Truth which is fully manifest in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It would take many heartaches and disastrous decisions that hurt all involved before I

would begin to "see the light" of God's infinite love for me. This glimmer of hope began the moment I met my incredible wife, Michelle. Knowing our hearts I am certain He guided us towards one another. But there was a lot more work to be done within me... with us...for we continued to enjoy all that the world provided without prudence or thanksgiving. Christ was still only a fleeting thought at Christmas and Easter. Thus we were on a collision course with reality; the fruits of a life lived without submission, recognition, thanksgiving, or devotion to the Creator, the Uncreated Being, the Savior of our souls, and the infallible Helper of all.

It was when this reality hit me that I finally lifted up my voice to God on the misty morning of October 29th, 2003, imploring His Divine Intervention and Guidance. I was on my usual morning drive to work. For the first time a deep awareness set within me that I truly cannot make it on my own; that I needed the power of the Most High to carry me through this life...and save me from myself. That very morning God answered my prayer in a very real and direct way. I was so deep in my vocal prayer to God that I drove five miles off my normal route and did not become aware of my surroundings until I drove into a small village I had never been too. The "Welcome to Holloway" startled me back to the present. I reoriented my self, got back on track, and arrived at work some time later.

Arriving to my desk I fired up my computer. This is when God answered my prayer...by email. You see at that time I have been working in the same corporate office for 16 years. In all those years, I never knew there was a Christian bible study taking place. But there on my computer screen was the email that would lead me on my road of daily conversion to Christ. At 7:52am I received the following email:

*"Work Bible Study 10/29/03. Good Morning: Bible study today from 12 to 1:00p.m. in Room J2140. We will have a short bible study lesson on fellowship with discussion and prayer. Hope to see you there."*

I did not recognize the name of the sender though I did recognize some of the names in the distribution. I was dumbstruck. The very morning I poured my heart out to God I received an email at work, the likes of which I had never received in my previous 16

years. So I decided to show up at the study. It turned out that the email was sent to me in error. The email was actually meant for a person with a slightly similar name. (Or was it?) But it came to me as a merciful response from God. This was the beginning of my coming Home to the faith of my youth.

Since then, Michelle and I have both come Home to our Catholic faith. One of the first things I was inspired to do was to seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation, more than once. Our lives continue to be transformed. Yes, we are penitent sinners on our own pilgrim journey to the holiness that Christ intends for us and for all people.

### **From Hardness of Heart to a Faith Filled Heart:**

Last February, during the Year of the Eucharist, Michelle and I woke up one morning to the realization that we each experienced a dream during the night. Michelle dreamed of entering into what seemed to be a large waiting room with hundreds of people filling the seats. Michelle indicated that in her dream she felt as if the whole place centered upon and was filled by Holiness. There were many openings on either side of this large waiting room. Everyone in the main chamber seemed to be just waiting. Michelle indicated that everyone seemed to be dressed nicely, she herself being in a dress, which is unusual if you know her! As she walked towards a seat that she knew was meant for her, people could suddenly come into view as she passed by. At one point a gentleman stopped near her indicating that he was looking for his son. Shortly there after the man found his son and they made their way.

While Michelle was having her dream of the Holy waiting room, I distinctly remember in my dream only this: Two men before me whom I somehow knew was Jesus on the left and Peter on the right. Neither spoke yet I just knew who they were. Even though it seemed to me that neither Jesus nor Peter spoke, I did hear the words: "It was because of the hardness of ... heart." I don't remember if it was "your heart" or "their heart." And that was it. Whether the dreams have any meaning I do not know.

That following weekend I had the beautiful experience of a Cursillo weekend

([www.cursillo.org](http://www.cursillo.org)). It was during this weekend that for the first time in my life I spent time on my knees in prayer before my Lord & Savior Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

It was also during this Cursillo weekend that the spiritual director gave us all a copy of the Apostolic Letter of our beloved Pope John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, introducing the Year of the Eucharist. Around 11:00pm that night I read the letter while listening to some truly beautiful and moving contemporary music from a gifted Catholic Christian singer, song writer, and musician who turned out to be living within the same diocese as I. The opening paragraph of John Paul II's Apostolic letter made my heart skip a beat or two as my breath was taken away. It read:

*"Stay with us, Lord, for it is almost evening" (cf. Lk 24:29). This was the insistent invitation that the two disciples journeying to Emmaus on the evening of the day of the resurrection addressed to the Wayfarer who had accompanied them on their journey. Weighed down with sadness, they never imagined that this stranger was none other than their Master, risen from the dead. Yet they felt their hearts burning within them (cf. v. 32) as he spoke to them and "explained" the Scriptures. **The light of the Word unlocked the hardness of their hearts and "opened their eyes"** (cf. v. 31). Amid the shadows of the passing day and the darkness that clouded their spirit, the Wayfarer brought a ray of light which rekindled their hope and led their hearts to yearn for the fullness of light. **"Stay with us", they pleaded. And he agreed. Soon afterwards, Jesus' face would disappear, yet the Master would "stay" with them, hidden in the "breaking of the bread" which had opened their eyes to recognize him.**"*

The words "hardness of their hearts" jumped out at me in a very loud way which helped me to understand the brief but memorable dream I had. Was Michelle dreaming of people in Purgatory while I was dreaming of the words "because of the hardness of their hearts?" How many Catholics are experiencing a crisis of Faith?

Since coming Home to my Catholic faith, I have prayed for increasing Faith in the Real Presence. (This is coming from a man who years ago once questioned God's existence to

make a point and who challenged with incredulity his mother when she explained the Catholic belief in the Real Presence.) Now years later I truly believe that Christ is answering my prayer for increasing Faith. Now I truly believe in the Real Presence of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ within the Eucharist. I truly believe that each and every day real miracles are occurring in the Daily and Sunday Masses held around the world. I believe in the eternal Sacrifice during the Liturgy of the Eucharist that unites Heaven and Earth, past, present, and future into one miraculous moment. I believe that through Apostolic succession and Holy Orders our Catholic Bishops and Priests have the unique privilege of being sacramentally used by our Lord and His Holy Spirit for the bringing of the Real Presence of Christ (Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity) to all the faithful; daily providing for us a unique opportunity to be spiritually nourished and united with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and with one another through Holy Communion in His Mystical Body. I believe this only through the gift of Faith! And I place full obedience and trust in Christ and His Church who has the infallible protection of the Holy Spirit to guide us in Faith and Morals.

I feel within me that my heart has truly softened as I let go and let God. I now know that it is through the gifts of Faith **and** Reason that we can ever come to know, love, and serve the Lord in the intimate and personal way He desires for all of us. And to help increase our Faith, our Eternal Savior has given His Church a powerful gift to help us on our pilgrim journey towards holiness and salvation...He gave us Himself... fully present in the Eucharist... until He comes again.

Earlier this year I told a fellow believer about how I had come Home to my Catholic faith. She humbly pointed me to Jeremiah 29:13 in the Scriptures, which reads:

*"When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart".*

This became the first bible verse (outside of John 3:16) that I have memorized with joy. I am now seeking Christ, the Word Made Flesh, in the Eucharist and look forward to each and every Mass with joy and anticipation...and awe for the awesome power of God. And I continue to pray for increasing Faith... and the strength and humility to submit to His

Will.

**My Appeal to All Catholics:**

During this the Year of the Eucharist, I am humbly asking all Catholics in the United States and around the world to unite with me and one another in celebrating the unique gift and mystery our Lord has given to us in the Sacrament which is truly the heart beat of the Church. My appeal is this:

**That during the last week of the Year of the Eucharist all Catholics attend a Daily Mass each day and receive Holy Communion.**

In conjunction with this, we should all seek the graces provided for us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation sometime during the prior week so we can approach our Lord in the Eucharist with hearts truly prepared to receive such a powerful gift from God. We must also act in union with our Magisterium and the Teachings and Guidelines of our Church. Those who are not prepared to receive Holy Communion for any reason can attend Daily Mass that week and join us in Spiritual Communion. Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist can take Holy Communion each day to those who are homebound or otherwise confined.

I understand that attending Daily Mass for each day of this last week will be challenging for many. Work schedules may need to be modified that week. Our normal routine may need to be altered. But I believe that for many of us, it can be done!

St. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:16:

*"In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all (the) flaming arrows of the evil one."*

My brothers and sisters in Christ, we are truly in the middle of a great spiritual battle. The Evil One desires our souls for damnation...eternity away from the presence and love of

God. Christ desires our salvation... eternity in the presence and love of God. Receiving Our Lord daily through Holy Communion is a powerful way we can "hold faith as our shield", is it not? We must not let our hearts become hardened to Faith. We must let Christ "open our eyes" by receiving the "light of the Word" from the One Who is the Word...receiving and uniting with our Savior in Holy Communion.

I was once a foolish Catholic who could not get past Reason to Faith for many years. I relied on what I could only detect with my senses. But Christ never gave up on me, praise be the name of the Lord.

Let us unite during the last week of the Year of the Eucharist in the Mystical Union to which we are all called.

Let our union in Faith be a testimony to the world that His One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is grateful for the gift and mystery of the Eucharist, the heart beat of his Church.

Let our union in Faith show the world how grateful we are to our previous Pope, John Paul the Great, for giving us the Year of the Eucharist.

Let our union in Faith be a testimony to the world how we are united to the current Vicar of Christ, Pope Benedict XVI.

We have time to prepare our parishes and ourselves. I pray you will discuss this with your family, your friends, your parishioners, and your clergy.

Let's all of us pray for increasing Faith!

Yours in Christ,

Robert Burke

Adrian, MI

Robandmitzi@tc3net.com

