

7 LESSONS ABOUT CONVERSION

A few things I learned in the process of going from lifelong atheism to orthodox Catholicism

by Jennifer Fulwiler
ConversionDiary.com
conversiondiary@gmail.com

- 1. Conversion happens on God's timetables.**
- 2. The more humble and open you are, the more God can get through.**
- 3. The Church has the answers; you just need to look for them.**
- 4. The Sacraments help.**
- 5. Spiritual attack is real.**
- 6. Learn to trust.**
- 7. It's all worth it.**

RECOMMENDED READING

He Leadeth Me by Walter Ciszek

Part adventure story, part spiritual memoir, this is the stunning true story of a priest who went to Russia during World War II to minister to the people there and ended up falsely convicted as a spy and sent to five years of solitary confinement, followed by over a decade in a Siberian death camp. Fr. Ciszek's reflections on what it means to truly live God's will are fascinating. A life-changing book.

Orthodoxy by G.K. Chesterton

G.K. Chesterton's masterpiece and spiritual autobiography in which he describes how he came to love orthodox Catholic Christianity. His flowery, poetic writing style makes the book somewhat difficult to get through at times, but his points are thought-provoking and beautifully conveyed.

Four Witnesses by Rod Bennett

Bennett weaves the original writings of Christians living in the first couple of centuries after Christ with vivid descriptions of the time and places in which they live. This book makes you feel like you're walking right alongside the first followers of Christ.

Rome Sweet Home by Scott and Kimberly Hahn

Scott and Kimberly Hahn lovingly tell the story of how they went from being militantly anti-Catholic to whole-heartedly embracing the Catholic Church, including the very difficult "dark night of the soul" that Kimberly went through when Scott first converted.

The Shadow of His Wings by Gereon Goldmann

If this book doesn't inspire you to trust in Providence, nothing will. Along the same lines of *He Leadeth Me*, it's the page-turning memoir of a priest who was drafted into the SS by the Nazi regime in World War II. His tales of God's hand throughout his tumultuous life are as inspiring as they are fascinating.

Catholicism for Dummies by Rev. John Trigilio and Rev. Kenneth Brighenti

An excellent overview of the Catholic Church, its history and its teachings.

By What Authority?: An Evangelical Discovers Catholic Tradition by Mark Shea

Mark Shea recounts the research and thinking that led him from Evangelical Protestantism to the Catholic Church, explaining his ideas respectfully without portraying other Christian faiths negatively.

Contraception: Why Not? by Dr. Janet Smith

This is a talk, not a book, but you can easily find it online by Googling the title and author. In it, Janet Smith makes a compelling case against artificial contraception.

Swear to God: The Promise and Power of the Sacraments by Scott Hahn

Hahn shares how he once regarded sacraments as 'boring,' but...in reading the works of the Church fathers, he came to see the sacraments as signs of God's covenant with humanity and thus more than mere rituals. When Catholics receive them, he writes, they make a covenant with God that has weighty implications. (Review by Publishers Weekly)

The Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis

Only the Bible has been more influential as a source of Christian devotional reading than this book. Written by the Augustinian monk Thomas à Kempis between 1420 and 1427, it contains clear instructions for renouncing worldly vanities and locating eternal truths. No book has more explicitly and movingly described the Christian ideal. (Review by Publishers Weekly)

To Know Christ Jesus by F.J. Sheed

This modern spiritual classic helps readers know Christ as he actually lived among us, interacted with all the various people he encountered from his infancy to his passion and death – the God-man who was like us in all things except sin. Sheed has tried especially to see Our Lord in his effect upon others – seeing how they saw him, trying to see why they saw him so. (Publisher's description)

Journey to Easter by Pope Benedict XVI

This is an excellent one to keep in your list for Lenten reading. The text is based on reflections from a retreat that then-Cardinal Ratzinger hosted for Pope John Paul II, and will challenge and inspire you to take your relationship with the Lord to the next level.

Also, you can find my pro-life conversion story at:

www.conversiondiary.com/2008/01/how-i-became-pro-life.html