

Lori Knowles-Jimenez's Eucharistic Conversion

I had been a Protestant all my life, but at the age of 53, I met the man who I eventually married. He was a cradle Catholic which made me want to know more about the Catholic faith so I signed up for RCIA in the Fall of 2011. I had many questions because as a Protestant, I had been told that there were many errant teachings in the Catholic church. A friend sent me a book called "Rome Sweet Home" by Scott Hahn which is the story and struggles of a Presbyterian Minister who was being led by God to become Catholic, and it had a huge impact on me. One of Catholic doctrines I struggled with was the doctrine of Transubstantiation – when Christ becomes fully present in the bread and the wine in the Eucharist during Mass. For me as a Protestant, the meaning of taking communion was just symbolic of Christ's death on the cross – to remember his sacrifice for me on the cross. I remember struggling to try and make it meaningful – but I always felt like I was missing something.

Father Tom pointed out this verse to me to explain the doctrine of Transubstantiation: John 6: 52-55 "Later in this verse, it says that after this teaching, many people following him walked away because this teaching was too hard for them to accept. Fr. Tom asked me this question: If Christ was just talking symbolically, did he tell them to come back? That they misunderstood the intent? No, He



let them leave. This had a huge impact on me. I also learned that the early Christians believed in the REAL PRESENCE of Christ in the Eucharist for almost 1500 years before the reformation. I was never taught this but remember being told to look at the example of the early Christians as ideal examples of being Christ followers.... The light came on.

At some point during RCIA, the Holy Spirit convicted me and I knew I HAD TO BECOME CATHOLIC! Otherwise, I would miss out on this amazing experience. **John 6:56 "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."**

I wanted to personally experience this miracle of Christ becoming flesh –and to receive the Lord Jesus Christ at every Mass into my whole being. As unworthy as I am, He

desires to give himself to me in this way, and asks in return, for me to continually give myself and my life, to Him. Something very Holy and miraculous happens during this exchange, when we approach receiving The Eucharist in the right way.

I have learned that I need to truly examine my heart and refrain from the Eucharist if there is unconfessed serious sin in my life. I also learned that serious sin is repetitive sin that is interfering with my relationship with God, and by doing so without confession and true repentance, then I am receiving the Eucharist in an unworthy manner. (1 Cor 11:27-29).

For me, to "discern the body" is to approach the Eucharist at each Mass with focused reverence and awe – worshipful and grateful to share in his death and resurrection, knowing he desires to unite Himself with me, calling me to a deeper union and awareness of His life.

During Mass, I found myself thanking God for leading me to be a part of the Catholic Church so I could participate in this holy and precious sacrament!

Never in a million years would I have guessed that I would become Catholic, but what a blessing it has been in my life! Spending an hour each week in Eucharistic Adoration has had a huge impact on my life and has helped me to grow closer to our Lord, which has deepened my faith.