



My Steps to Catholicism

By Brother Ananda

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I would like to share with you my personal journey to Catholicism.

Here are the three steps involved in my conversion:

- 1. Call to God.*
- 2. Respond to the call.*
- 3. Arise to a new form of existing.*

Call to God

Before I became a Catholic, my wife and I belonged to the Hindu religion. We attended a spiritual school in Washington State not affiliated to any religion.

Despite not being a Catholic, we visited holy places like Lourdes, the Vatican, attended the sermon of Pope Benedict XVI at his vacation retreat. We also visited the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore in South India and later watched the entire process of how Pope Francis was elected.

One of my spiritual experiences was somewhat unusual. I was in the hospital when my father-in-law was dying. I was at the foot of his bed and all the relatives were there too.

In the moment of his last breath, I saw what looked like an orange rectangular tray, about one inch thick and couple of feet long, hovering 3 feet above my father-in-law's chest for about a couple of seconds and then vanished.

The fluorescent light above flickered and at that instant, I felt like I witnessed my father-in-law's spirit leave his body.

The dust returns to earth as it once was and the life breath that is spirit returns to God who gave it. (Ecc 12:7)



When my wife left this earthly plane in June of 2014 while we were living in the state of Washington, I was in a state of sorrow and loneliness my life changed completely.

Quoting Fr. William Rosario, "Conversion is like a U-turn," and my steps towards Catholicism continued.

Looking back now, I believe that I was already starting to search for something more, something that is imperishable, something that would end my loneliness.

Responding to the call

I left Washington State and lived with my son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren in California.

While I was there, I earnestly wanted to attend any Christian Church close by within walking distance, but I did not know whether there was a church nearby.

One fine day, I was outside and saw our garbage truck driver removing our trash. I asked him whether he knew if there was a church nearby.

Lo and behold! He directed me to the Roman Catholic Church OLG (Our Lady of Good Counsel) which was three blocks away from where we lived.

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you I loved you and I dedicated you... (Jeremiah 1:5)

Do not work for the food that perishes... but for the food that endures eternal life (John 4:14)

Despite not being a Catholic or knowing what a Catholic is, I started attending the OLG Church and praying with other parishioners.

Not knowing that I was not allowed to receive the Holy Communion, I followed the congregation and received the body and blood of the Lord Jesus.

*On a Saturday, around 4 p.m., it was confession time at OLG Church and Fr. Jan was there. I confessed to him and said to baptize me right away and I stood up with my arms stretched. I proclaimed at the top of my voice: **“ELI, ELI LAMA SABACHTHANI”** that is **“MY GOD, MY GOD WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME.”***

Fr. Jan was the third priest I approached to baptize me. Then and there, he advised me to attend the RCIA (Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults).

Arising to a new form of existence

I listened to Fr. Jan’s advice. I successfully received the Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance and Holy Eucharist during the Easter Vigil in 2018.

I chose Kieran as my baptismal name because I was inspired by the many extraordinary miracles and tales about St. Kieran The Younger of Clonmacnoise to distinguish him from the 5th-century St. Kieran The Elder who was bishop of Ostrage. He was the son of a carpenter and one of the 12 apostles of Ireland.

Following my baptism, I continued to pray the Rosary, the Divine Mercy chaplet and attend daily Masses regularly and was an active volunteer member of the OLG Church making and repairing rosaries.

I also joined in the pilgrimage to the Holy places in Greece and Turkey, which was the journey taken by St. Paul on his second voyage, and I saw the place where he was imprisoned.

I also went to the place called Ephesus where Mother Mary spent her last days with St. John where assumption of Mary took place. This really amazed me as a new convert.

My zeal to learn more about Catholicism persuaded me to attend the 2019 Cursillo Three-Day weekend #100 at the Holy Redeemer Retreat Center in Oakland California.

My life changed after I became a Cursillista because I understood the Cursillo essence which is based on the love and friendship between myself, Christ and my neighbors.

Now I treat my brothers and sisters in Christ with love, dignity and respect. I attend all of the Cursillo reunion meetings, Ultreya, School of Leaders, and workshops held in the Diocese of Oakland, Regional and National.

My journey is on-going until I leave this earth and join my wife in heaven.

DE COLORES!

