

# The Conversion of a Catholic Nun

By Patricia Graverson

## A Nun's Journey to True Salvation

I was born in the hills of West Virginia. As a child I attended the Methodist Church. At the age of 20 a Catholic girlfriend, who had been converted by a priest to the Roman Catholic Church, introduced me to the priest. I took instruction from this priest for six months during which time our class studied the catechism, attended Mass, made Novenas together, and had long discussions about Catholic dogma. We did not read the Bible even once. I was so hungry for some sort of contact with God that I was soon thoroughly indoctrinated. At the end of the instruction period, I was "baptized" in the Roman Catholic Church, May 8, 1956. I added the name of "Therese" to my given name at my baptism. My mother, stepfather and sister all followed my example and were "baptized" in the Catholic Church. We were all given the second sacrament of Confirmation a short time later. After my "baptism," I attended Mass daily and made every Novena and spiritual pilgrimage humanly possible. I wanted to fully dedicate myself to the Lord's service and I felt the best way to do this would be to enter a convent and become a nun. I visited several convents and talked with a lot of nuns, but I could not really make up my mind which one to enter.

Then I heard about some nuns in Wheeling, West Virginia, near my home: "The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge of St. John Eudes" (their founder). They were more commonly called "Good Shepherd Sisters." These were semi-contemplative nuns who said the office of the Blessed Virgin Mary daily, who did penance and prayed for souls, but who also did some active work. I had seriously considered entering one of the very strict contemplative orders, such as the Carmelites or the Poor Clares. But these Good Shepherd Nuns also ran a home for teen-age delinquent girls and younger orphans and abandoned girls. This work touched my heart. In January of 1956 I entered their convent as a postulant. My postulancy was reasonably happy and uneventful. In August of 1956 my clothing ceremony took place, and I was given the habit of the order. Two years later I made my Simple Vows, which were binding for three years: poverty, chastity and obedience, together with a fourth vow peculiar to this order of nuns: zeal for souls.

Over the years I became troubled as I observed more of Catholic doctrine and practice: the high reverence of Mary as revealed in litanies calling Mary the "Mother of God" and "Co-Redemptrix of the Human Race." "God" was seldom thanked for answering prayer or granting favors. . . only Mary. I was troubled about the lack of "zeal for souls," one of the vows taken by all who entered this order. Rather, there was selfishness and self-indulgence in spite of the vow of poverty. I questioned the priest's right to give absolution from sin, purgatory, papal infallibility, the teachings of mortal and venial sin, the loss of sanctifying grace, etc. Somehow I realized that these could not be of God.

I could not be a hypocrite, or continue to practice or believe what my conscience told me was wrong. After much soul-searching I formally asked the Pope in Rome for a dispensation from my vows. After

waiting three months and suffering unimaginable torment, I walked out of the convent without a dispensation. (Since that time, the priest who “converted” me has left the Roman Catholic Church, the convent I entered has “gone out of business,” and the Cathedral where I was “baptized” has been abandoned.)

Over the years I did research into Yoga, witchcraft, astrology, reincarnation, E.S.P., I Ching, and Tarot. I was near despair and atheism. If anybody asked, I called myself an agnostic.

In July, 1971, I was scheduled for a major operation. I had postponed it over five years, as I feared the possibility of dying in surgery. But now I was sick and tired of the world as I knew it. I cared not if there was a hereafter or a God. I thought, “Well, I’ll find out soon enough.”

Soon things really started to go wrong. Four deaths occurred in my family within three months. I was married, and we faced real financial difficulties. The second floor of our home was gutted by fire. My stepfather became gravely ill, and was given six months to live. My husband Paul, daughter Sonja (then 2 1/2), son Jon (then 8 1/2), and I had moved to Laurence Harbor, New Jersey. God sent someone with a Bible in her hand to talk to me. I listened. God had my attention. Jon had attended a Good News Bible Club at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Jedele, members of the Bible Baptist Church of Laurence Harbor. James Saxton, a graduate of Tennessee Temple, was the pastor. Our son had been converted to Christ! He was assured of his salvation as he trusted fully and completely in the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross for the remission of his sins, without merit, works, sacraments, or sacramentals. He realized the truth of Ephesians 2:8-9... "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Excited over what had just happened to him, Jon ran home to tell us of his salvation.

We attended the services at Bible Baptist Church, with our children, as the guests of our new Christian friends, the Jedeles. Pastor Saxton preached a sermon from the Word of God. He gave an invitation to be converted to the true Christ, to trust Him alone as all-sufficient Saviour and Lord, to acknowledge Him publicly even as Peter and the Apostles exhorted the thousands to do as recorded in Acts Chapter 2. I left my seat and walked forward on December 12, 1971. I asked Jesus Christ to be my Saviour and Lord, to take control of my life. Praise the Lord, my husband, son, and I have all experienced the truth of Christ’s words to Nicodemus. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN”—John 3:7. Not the false “new birth” of Roman Catholic water baptism, not the “born-again” of witchcraft and reincarnation, but the genuine New Birth of the Holy Spirit acting on the agency of the cleansing power of the Word of God, (God’s spiritual water). God gives Himself to the converted person. He is everlasting Life, the New Man within—Romans 6:23.

As a baby emerges from its mother’s womb at the hour of birth, into the light of this material world, so I have been born again, and have emerged from the womb of darkness into the light of Christ. Now I know how Paul felt when he said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”—Phillipians 1:21. There can be no greater thrill in this life than to actually realize that you have been born again! My desire now is to tell others of this experience that changes ones eternal destination from hell to heaven.

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”—Romans 5:8. “For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved”—Romans 10:13. “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”—Romans 3:24.

*Readers of this tract are invited to be converted to the true Christ of the Bible. Then unite with a Christ-centered, Bible-teaching, missionary-minded, Evangelical, evangelistic, separated, Fundamental, Protestant, New Testament, Christian church in your community. If you do not know of one, write to us and we will help you find one.*