

Missionary Mom

by Michelle Marciniak



This year I was blessed to be a part of the RCIA program, right from the start. It was truly a blessing. From week to week our group changed, some stayed, some came and went, others tried us out once or twice and decided that this year wasn't their year. And that's okay. Others have done that before and came back and stayed the next year.

Some weeks I think I learned more from our "students" than they did from us. What an inspiration it was to listen to some of them discuss the bible and I could see things that I had read a million times come to life. For them it was new and fresh, and I started understanding scripture that I had heard or read all my life. Seen through the eyes of converts, our Catholic faith is beautiful.

It was also a joy to learn from my missionary brother, Dave Topor. His knowledge of the bible and church history is truly amazing. I often sat at RCIA thinking "wow, I didn't know that!". Fr.

Jack's humor rounded out our evenings and made everyone more comfortable.

One thing I didn't realize I would feel so much, is the honor of being a part of someone's formation in the faith. And there were also moments when I felt like a mother hen, watching over her brood with protective love. Seeing them individually in the parking lot during the week I found myself concerned over their welfare and saying things like, "I'm going to see you in class on Wednesday, right?". I found myself praying for them, rooting for them. At the retreat I saw three of my ladies sitting together in a pew and I was behind them, and I saw them as little girls, sitting in the front row. My three little girls. Their excitement as the weeks grew closer to the Easter Vigil were so sweet and heartwarming to witness. I prayed for their protection. I gave hugs and kisses, prodded and encouraged. Even here, I was a mom. God is good!

At the Easter Vigil I kept popping up out of my seat, making sure this was right, that person was not alone. Finally, my poor husband said, "Maybe you should sit on the end so that you can get up when you need to." My family had been stepped on and over as I clambered in dress and heels to get to the end of the pew. It was a good witness though to my children. Mom was part of a team that brought people not only into the church, but closer to God. They could tell that this was important to mom, and that dad was proud of mom. It was a good feeling all the way around.

As I sat, finally, seeing all of them up on the altar, I had tears of joy in my eyes. I thought about how each was faithful, how they all came to Mass week after week, some of them attending daily Mass as well. And now they could receive Jesus. This was their reward. It strengthened my own love for the Eucharist. I had been a part of something that was bigger than myself. I was really and truly a part of a team that was bringing souls to Christ. How exciting is that!!!

What also thrilled me happened a week later. At our Divine Mercy Mass, most of our new people became Associates. On fire for God and the Catholic church, it was with great excitement that many of them chose to become a part of the Mission's work. Isn't God so good! They were so grateful for what they have received, they now want to share that with others.

Isn't that how it's supposed to work? We have all been given gifts and God wants us to use them. I pray that over the coming months, as the fire goes from inferno to a nice even flame, our new Catholics will depend on Christ, continue to trust in Him, and not ever give up, even when the going gets tough.

I thank God for this opportunity and look forward to next season and what God will bring. Or should I say, who God will bring. No matter, we will welcome one and all to our Wednesday night gatherings and next Easter Vigil, my family is saving me a seat at the end of the pew.

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