

TIME TO REFLECT

EASTERTIDE 2022



One of the most compelling things about faith is the witness of faith by sharing what it means in an ordinary person's life.

For that reason, I am pleased to be able to share the reflections of those who have been Received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church this Easter.

I hope you will find them both credible and inspiring.

FIRST STORY OF FAITH

My journey of faith began just over 12 months ago and this Easter was my confirmation into the Catholic Church. It was an incredibly special day.

As a baby, I was baptised in the Anglian church but it had never been a place I consistently visited, nor had I ever had the burning desire to visit. Why was that? I'm not so sure.

At the end of 2018 I met Steve. His father Derek is an altar server and long time parishioner of St Chads. His late Mother (Angela) and his father actually got married at St Chads many years ago. Steve attended a Catholic school, but in his adult life he drifted away from attending church and embracing life as a practicing Catholic.

When Steve first took me to St Chads in the summer of 2019 I remember being struck by its beauty. But, I'll be honest, I wasn't able to follow or properly understand the mass and was more interested in where we were going next, Tenby to enjoy the beach on a rare sunny day!

In April 2021 Steve proposed to me and this was definitely a changing point. I knew that I didn't need to become Catholic, but after many conversations with my brother (who became Catholic after meeting his wife) and seeing the incredible positive impact it had on his life, I decided to commit myself to at least trying to attend church regularly.

After attending a number of Sunday masses in sequence, I started to really enjoy it. The best way to describe it is that it became the calm and peace in an otherwise busy week. I was then introduced to Father Tim to start marriage preparation, and it was at this point that I asked if he could help me understand Catholicism and help prepare me to become a fully-fledged Catholic at Easter time. From this moment on we would meet on a regular basis to discuss all things faith and marriage.



The proposal, my brother, Derek, my mother (who grew up in a big Catholic family and is committed to prayer), Father Tim and Steve are all people who have influenced and encouraged my journey of faith.

There are so many great things that my journey of faith and my involvement at St Chads has given me so far, here's a few examples:

- I have been a long-term anxiety sufferer, but in the last year, my anxiety has reduced so much I no longer need to take medication

- I work in recruitment and my colleagues have noticed and commented on how my performance keeps getting better and better! (Some might say it's a coincidence but I think otherwise)

- I feel like however hard life can feel at times, The church is a place of comfort

- I finally have a sense of belonging

- Being a part of the church is very rewarding; whether it's reading at Sunday mass or inspiring the children at St Chads School by speaking to them about my former career as a GB Athlete.

-I have never felt so grateful for what I have

The last year has been wonderful and I am looking forward to getting married at St Chad's Cathedral at the beginning of June. I'm also greatly looking forward to embracing this next chapter in my journey of faith.

SECOND STORY OF FAITH

Receiving the Sacraments felt very special, I also felt part of a very special moment for others too. The whole Mass was beautiful, at times I felt overwhelmed with emotions (good emotions), I felt connected to all the words and it was like time did not exist for a moment as when mass ended I had no idea what the time was or how long mass was on for. Fr Tim explained what receiving the sacraments would look like and it was as expected but more. Following the Mass, I felt refreshed and new like a new life for me was beginning and since then I have felt the same.



From a child I went to a Catholic school, I received my Communion and my Nan has always been a parishioner of the church so I was always around it in some way. I lost sight of my faith once I started secondary school and it wasn't til I fell pregnant with my son and me and my nan became so much closer I thought let me go to church with her one Sunday as she always goes by herself and I want to share this with her. I simply wanted to share the moment with my nan without any thoughts of finding my path in faith again. After the first Mass I really liked how I felt after and during and I could see what my nan sees and I realised I wanted to renew my faith. During my pregnancy and after, my faith continues I believe it has changed me and my world.

For my son I look forward to sharing my faith with him, I will on occasion bring him to church with me and every night we say a pray 'Our Father I come to say, thank you for your love today. Thank you for my family and all the friends you bring to me. Guard me in the dark of night and in the morning send your light. Amen'

Since my journey my mom has found her own journey of faith, I am not sure that is to do with my journey but its beautiful to see. Me and my nan are closer than ever and I am so glad I can share my faith with her and her with me.



THIRD STORY OF FAITH

Hello there, I hope you all had an enjoyable Easter. Mine really has been quite special.

I have always enjoyed Easter and felt it was a time to celebrate and reflect.

I began to experience more and enjoy in 1997 when I met Jane, who is now my wife. She was Catholic and attended church regularly, and as such I would go along to, as a non Catholic.

As the years passed we married and had 2 wonderful daughters who we have brought up as Catholic. As with everyone life has its ups and downs and challenges, and for a time I knew I was lacking something in life. Fast forward to the end of 2021 when I realised the strength I needed was in fact God. I wanted to become Catholic. I spoke to Fr Tim, and with his incredible support and guidance and that of Fr Mario and also my family, I was recieved into the Catholic Church on Easter Saturday

- I feel so honoured, and found my first confession and first Holy Communion both uplifting and powerful. My faith journey has being incredible and I would love to share more of it, so if you have enjoyed reading this, look out for me at mass and feel free to chat.

Many thanks to Archbishop Bernard, Fr Tim and all at St Chads also to my wife and children, my dad and my sponsor Elizabeth.