

Steve: Here is my conversion story. Not as dramatic or inspirational as many others. My conversion was more a true conversion. I wasn't much of a Christian before I converted I just went through the motions as a Baptist to make my father happy. Joining the Church changed my entire life.

Dave Burchette's Story

In late 1975 while stationed at Little Rock AFB, AR after a long night drinking and carousing my good friend invited to me to attend Mass with him. I thought this was rather ironic at the time because just the day before I was telling him that he was going to die and burn in hell because he was Catholic. (I did remember some of ultra-conservative Southern Baptist teachings.) Suffering from a bad hangover and not having much to do, I decided I clean up and go with him. After all he was my best friend. So along I went. I had never attended Catholic services before so this was a real first. In fact the last time I was at any religious service before this was while in basic training and then I went to get out of details.

As we entered the Military Chapel on Little Rock AFB the first thing I noticed was the Holy water font. My friend dipped his finger in it and made the sign of the cross. Spoon my friend, told me I needed to do that too. "Why" I asked? He replied "It is good for you. Here let me show you how." I honestly felt kind of stupid as he took my hand dipped a finger in it and made the sign of the cross on me.

After that we walked to our pew and sat down. Spoon pulled out the kneeler and knelt to pray. I just sat there and looked around. It was very quiet. There was a 'presence' in the room. I wasn't sure what it was but I could feel it. Soon with his prayers finished Spoon handed me a missalette. He opened and set it up with the prayers, creed, profession of faith, and readings for that Sunday. "Here, you will need this." He said.

As we sat there quietly I felt a "breath" of cold air on my neck. At first I thought it was the air-conditioning but we weren't close to a vent. After the third time it happened I turn around knowing someone was behind me playing a mean trick. No one was behind us. The entire pew was empty. Mass started and I found myself following along and paying attention. But I still felt this presence and the coldness on my neck. When Spoon went up to receive communion I just sat there watching. My thoughts were that this was a much nicer way to celebrate the Lord's Supper than I had seen and participated in back home in North Carolina.

When Spoon returned to the pew he pulled out the kneeler and knelt to pray. And for some reason I knelt too. I prayed. When finished I made the sign of the cross. It was almost as if I had no control over what I was doing. And the "chill" on my neck was now a coldness on my shoulders. Not a painful cold but very similar like someone breathing on you in a crowd. And I still had not identified the presence I was feeling.

As Mass ended I genuflected and made the sign of the cross when I got out of the pew. This time when we got the water font I dipped my fingers in it and made the sign of the cross. As we were walking out of the Chapel I heard a voice in my head that said "This is how I want you to pay your respects to me."

I asked Spoon if I could attend with him more often. He said yes and I did. But this very hard headed Southern Baptist was converted very quickly. This was only a start. I guess I was afraid of what my very anti-catholic family would say and really didn't want to break my father's heart by telling him I was even going to a Catholic church.

When I got stationed at Clark AB in the Philippines in 1977 I met the most wonderful Filipina. We dated and got married in 1978. My wife was Catholic. She asked that we got to Mass when I was at home and not deployed. She slowly but surely taught me about the Catholic faith.

Finally while stationed at Hurlburt Field in Florida she convinced me to talk to a priest about converting. It was 1981. With all my travels and temporary duty assignments combined with what seemed like an annual rotation of priests I was finally able to finish my conversion in 1988 when we had returned back to the Philippines