

Good evening, and thank you for letting me take a few moments to share how I came to the faith, and why I remain. My name is Julia Forneris, and my family and I came to St. Mary's right around the time our oldest started at the school.

I am not what I've heard termed a "cradle Catholic," although I am married to one, which is why many might assume I converted. My calling to the Church actually came the summer before I met my husband, Matt. I was touring one of the many old cathedrals in The Netherlands. It happened that this particular cathedral was holding a Latin Mass. Of the many native languages spoken there among the visitors, I can almost guarantee that Latin was not among them. Nevertheless, every attendant knew every prayer, every song, when to stand and when to kneel. No matter their country of origin or spoken language, I realized that the common language bringing them all together was the voice of God.

I came home and soon after began the RCIA process right around the time I met my husband. He actually was my sponsor, which everyone seemed to think was a terrible idea since we'd just started dating. 15 years later, it seemed to have worked out pretty well, and our faith is the foundation of our marriage and family. I love that it started with the Church.

That is why I came to believe. As it happens, we change as we get a little bit older. As a mother of three now, I worry daily about them. I want them to be happy, I want them to be healthy and I desperately want them to be safe. Every month, something seems to happen in this world where we worry even more. There's a quote from Mr. Rogers that has been circulating for the past few years with some frequency, and I've latched onto it as a way of conversing with my children. The quote is this: "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" I tell my children now....that is Christ. He is the helper and He is within the people helping. Two of my girls are St. Mary's students. I want my children to see God in every aspect of their lives, because He is there -- at school, at home, at work, and even in the very long lines at the grocery store. I believe because my greatest hope is that they grow to see Christ everywhere, the way that I see Christ in them.

Thank you.