

Conversion Story Father James Farfaglia

Brief Biography

Father James Farfaglia is the Pastor of St. Helena of the True Cross of Jesus Catholic Church in Corpus Christi, Texas. Originally from Ridgefield, CT., Father has founded and developed apostolates for the Catholic Church in Spain, Italy, Mexico, Canada and throughout the United States. From his website, I have borrowed this conversion story.

My Vocation Story God's Love in My Life by Father James Farfaglia Corpus Christi, Texas

It is only through God's providence that I became a member of the founding class of a new Catholic College in New Hampshire. After having graduated from High School in 1974, I began an exciting adventure at Magdalen College. Four years at Magdalen changed my life forever. I had planned to become a lawyer. I was particularly interested in politics and I had a deep desire to run for public office.

One evening during my Freshman year, I was reading either Plato's Republic or Aristotle's Politics and I was amazed that these authors dealt with a similar situation that confronted our culture; i.e. moral decay and corruption. Both of these great thinkers of the past said that there is no political solution for the collapse of society. The problem was spiritual and man's heart needed to turn to God. I then asked myself a question "Who best can reach man's heart?"

The answer, I said to myself, is a priest. That one intellectual discovery shocked me and placed me on a journey. My spiritual life began to develop for the first time since the innocence of Catholic grade school. Four years of public high school during the 1970's were no help to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

At college, I was exposed to the treasures of our Catholic Faith, four very committed laymen who began the college, diocesan and religious priests who loved their priesthood, and a small group of classmates who became the best friends of my life. One evening in the early part of my sophomore year, after the evening Rosary, I felt a profound urge to stay in the chapel and pray. Everyone left to go and study or socialize, and I was left alone with Jesus. There were no visions, no voices, but the presence of Jesus was so intimate and awesome. I looked at the Tabernacle and I said, "I know that you want something big from me. I don't know what it is. Just tell me and I will do it".

Thirty minutes latter I returned to my room. It just so happened that the next day was a Wednesday. A diocesan priest came on campus on Wednesdays and Sundays for Mass. I was the altar server that morning. At the moment of the consecration when Father elevated the Host, I could feel this tremendous urge that said, "you have to do what he is doing". The outpouring of grace was so powerful that it almost caused me to loose my balance as I was kneeling on the side of the altar.

When I left the chapel, there was no doubt in my mind that God wanted me to be a priest. Initially there was fear. Most especially, the fear of more studies. Studies did not come easy to me. It was always a lot of work. Shortly after these experiences, during that same school year, the freshmen were assigned to give a talk on a saint of their choice for All Saint's Day.

During the special activity where each freshman got up and gave their little talk, one girl gave a short talk on the life of St. John Vianney. I had never heard of the Curé of Ars. She spoke about his difficulty with studies and how he persevered to become a great priest and a great saint. When she finished, I said to myself "If he can do it, so can I". My fears were gone. After graduating college, I went to the seminary. They were years filled with profound happiness and excitement. I was ordained on December 24, 1987, in Rome.