

Boost-A-Month Club

March 2018

Glenmary Home Missioners

Baptist deacon converts, feels at home in Church

It all started when he was flipping through the channels. Bypassing cartoons, comedies and infomercials, he saw Mother Angelica and the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration reciting the Holy Rosary on EWTN.

"I felt drawn to it," said Michael Slover, a Maynardville, Tenn., resident preparing to enter the Catholic Church in Glenmary's St. Teresa of Kolkata mission on March 31. "I can't explain how I felt. I just knew that I should be there. I asked, 'God is this what you are trying to direct me to?'"



Michael Slover

But Michael's is not an average conversion story. Formerly a deacon in the Baptist church, he always felt called to Catholicism. He told his mother at a young age that he wanted to be a priest or a monk.

"My mother looked at me kinda weird, because no one we knew was Catholic," Michael said. "But she has always supported me. She told me I should do whatever God was calling me to do."

At the age of 10, he dedicated himself to serving God, praying during his spare time, teaching Sunday School and eventually becoming a deacon. But after a falling out with his pastor, Michael felt lost. He continued to pray, but he wanted something more.

Enter Mother Angelica. At that point, Michael knew he wanted to visit a Catholic church, but like many mission residents, Michael did not have a Catholic church close by. The nearest was in Knoxville, Tenn., which was over an hour away — not walking distance for Michael, who did not have a car and cared full time for his aging and ailing parents.

But he felt the Lord was paving the path to conversion. Michael wanted to pray with Mother Angelica, but did not have a rosary. After asking God for help, he walked into a local store and saw a \$1 rosary that was made in the Holy Land.

Next, he needed a Catholic Bible — an approved translation containing the seven books often left out of Protestant

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Dawn of a new day for candidates

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who lived in a land of gloom, a light has shone."

Isaiah 9:1

This Scripture passage accurately reflects this month's BAM story. For candidates and catechumens like Michael Slover, entering the Catholic Church and learning about the faith is an epiphany. Their whole lives, they were searching for the spiritual home that they found once they connected with the church.

It is a monumental and moving experience to witness many of these people, who hunger for God's love and mercy, be baptized, make their First Communion and confirm their commitment to the Catholic Church.

However, conversion stories like Michael's would be impossible without donors like you. For many years, he yearned to join the faith, but he did not have access to a church.

You are the great light for the people in our missions. Through your generosity, you allow Glenmary to blaze trails in unchurched territories like East Tennessee, serving as a beacon for lapsed Catholics to return home and for those interested in the faith to join our fold.

For the non-Catholics in the communities we serve, your gifts illuminate the loving mercy of God by helping those in their time of need with food, shelter and clothing.

Thank you for your ongoing support and for helping Glenmary radiate God's presence throughout our missions. I wish you and your family a joyous Easter.



Yours in Christ,

Chet

Father Chet Artysiewicz
President

➔ At Mass, 'I feel the love and peace, and I feel accepted'



PHOTOS/CASSIE MAGNOTTA

Maynardville, Tenn., resident Michael Slover prays the Holy Rosary in St. Teresa of Kolkata mission. Michael is preparing to enter the Catholic Church at Easter. Formerly a Baptist deacon, he feels more at peace in the Catholic Church.

Bibles — but no local bookstores had one.

“While I was inside searching the shelves, my mother called me outside and said, ‘Look what I found on top of the free pile,’” Michael said. It was the Catholic Bible he prayed for.

Lastly, he needed a church where he could worship. Again, God answered. Michael and his family moved across the street from Maynardville’s St. Teresa of Kolkata storefront mission. After a few months, his uncle told him about St. Teresa.

“That is saying a lot, because most of my family are ‘holy roller’ Baptists, and they are against me becoming Catholic,” Michael said. “My uncle thinks I will convert back, but he doesn’t realize God directed me to this. He

wanted me to become Catholic.”

One day, Michael ventured up the hill from his home to worship in the small church. There, he ran into Father Steve Pawelk, pastor of St. Teresa.

“He told me, ‘I am Catholic,’” Father Steve said. “He had just decided to be Catholic. He had been reading the Bible and, in his heart, he was ready to be Catholic.”

Father Steve enrolled Michael in the RCIA program, where Michael is studying Catholicism and learning to be a sacristan. He reads the Bible on his own and enjoys coming to Mass.

“That is one of the things that is so nice about the missions, there is less structure, which can be intimidating (to those unfamiliar to Catholicism),” Father Steve said. “People are moved by the Holy Spirit and called to be Catholic. One woman told us when we arrived that she was just waiting for someone to let her be Catholic. She was waiting on a priest to come. We can see the Spirit working in our mission, and a great example of that is Michael, who has found a home with us and will soon be confirmed and make his First Communion.”

Though Michael is nervous for the Easter Vigil, where he will fully enter into the faith, he is excited to not only become Catholic but to become an official member of St. Teresa.

“From my first Mass, I felt at home here,” Michael said. “I felt at peace. I have been in a lot of churches, but I have never felt that before. When I am at St. Teresa, I feel the love and peace, and I feel accepted.”

Michael has invited his family to church many times and has begun educating them about Catholicism. He gave his brother a Catholic Bible and has disputed misconceptions that Catholics worship Mary and statues. He hopes his family will attend the Easter Vigil, so they can experience the love he feels at Mass.

Michael is one of several RCIA candidates in Glenmary’s missions preparing to enter the Church on Easter.

BAM

Spotlight

This month, the BAM Spotlight is on you and all BAM members as a thank you for your ongoing support of Glenmary’s home mission ministry. “As we look to the future, we will continue counting on the faithful, generous and dependable ‘BAM-ers’ who help keep our missions and ministries up and running,” said Father Don Tranel, director of development.

Will you step into the Spotlight? If you are willing to share your story, please contact Molly Williamson at (513) 881-7491 or mwilliamson@glenmary.org.