

Profiles: Rediscovery

Dean, 45, from Leeds

Lost touch during teenage years

'I made a decision not to go to Church as a teenager. Years later, I was reading a novel called the "Da Vinci Code" and decided to take a second look. The fact that I've realised Jesus is my Saviour has saved me.'



Cathy, 63, from Chester

Remarried and struggled

'My first marriage wasn't in a Catholic Church, nor was my husband a Christian, so we never went to Church. When I remarried I started going, but someone offended me. It's been a long journey, but since I've come back fully my life has changed for the better.'



Dave, 48, from St Albans

Went off the rails

'At the age of 14, I began to go off the rails and felt very empty. I was trying to find something that would make me feel better and drug addiction and casual relationships became part of my life for many years. My mum's prayers played a big part in my returning to Church. I'm drug-free and have been set free!'



Str Julie, 49, from Southampton

Couldn't see the point

'I didn't understand the point of going to Mass and so spent more time with friends. Years later, through being a Girl Guide leader, I came into contact with people of faith again. I was led home.'



To read more about the stories of the above, please see:

www.comehomeforchristmas.co.uk

This website offers a wide range of articles and links to help people on their journey of faith.

What Next?

Take things at your own pace and in your own way. Many people have been in your shoes and felt as you do now. Here are a few suggestions which might help you to take the first step.



Pray: as you know, faith is a gift from God. Ask for it to be reignited. Prayer at its simplest is talking to God. Feel free to talk to Him now. One prayer you might find useful is the prayer of a man who asked Jesus to cure his son: 'I do have faith... Help me to have more!' (Mark 9: 24)

Get To Know Others: a Catholic is a member of a community. Get to know other Catholics or talk to your Catholic friends. They might take you to a parish event or meeting, or even introduce you to the local priest, if you so wish.

Attend: why not ask one of your Catholic friends to go with you to Church at a time which is convenient to you? It may take several weeks to get used to it. If you attend Mass, do feel free to go up to receive a blessing.

Sacraments: it is healing and life-giving to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving the Eucharist again. There is no need to fear. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a channel through which we receive God's unconditional love and forgiveness.

Information

If you have been a non Church-going Catholic for a long time, it can be very helpful to read about contemporary Catholic beliefs and life. It may appear to you that some things have changed. Free materials are available from the Catholic Enquiry Office. Contact: 'Coming Home', CEO, 114 West Heath Road, London. NW3 7TX. Tel: 020 8458 3316.

Email: info@comehomeforchristmas.co.uk



Local Contact

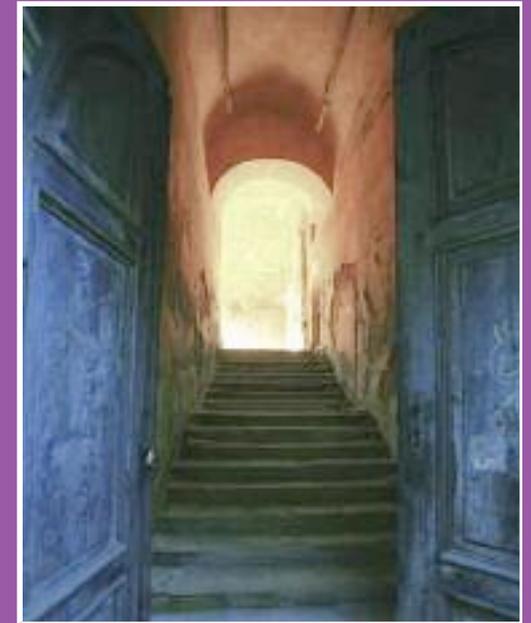
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Catholic Church of
England and Wales

Catholic and have lost touch?



An Invitation and Welcome

'In My Father's house there are many places to live in; otherwise I would have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you.'

Jesus Christ, John 14:2

Welcome

A very warm welcome if you want to explore becoming a more active member of the Catholic community. We are delighted to offer you this free leaflet which we hope you'll find interesting and helpful.



Different Reasons

People drift away from the practice of their faith and perhaps attend Church infrequently, for all kinds of reasons.



Some never really started, because they were baptised or made their first Holy Communion and then no one in their family went at other times.



For others, teenage years may have marked a turning point because the Mass seemed boring and irrelevant.



Sadly, others may have been hurt by something said or done by someone at Church. You may still feel very angry about this.



Maybe some failure or experience in life made you feel unworthy or ashamed. It may have been that deep down you felt that you were doing wrong or that the Church disapproved.



Many suffer the trauma of a marriage breakdown. They may have married again or are in a new relationship.



Some disagree with the Church's teaching, on contraception, sex outside marriage, homosexuality and married / women priests.



Perhaps you just gradually stopped coming for no particular reason and that's that.



Whatever your reasons or situation, we would like to invite you to take a **fresh look** and give it another go. You are a vital part of God's family and would be made very welcome.

Jesus Speaks

Jesus taught that He welcomes back anyone who has drifted away; this is illustrated in the following passages.



'Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears Me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share a meal at that person's side... Let anyone who can hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.'

Book of Revelation 3: 20, 22

'Come back to Me, with all your heart. Don't let fear keep us apart.'

Adapted from the Book of Hosea

It is never too late to start again, no matter how long you have been away. Your local Church would be delighted to welcome you and listen to your story.

Why Come Back?



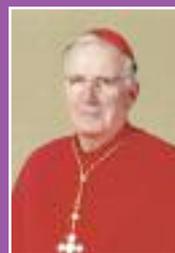
The Church is not just a building, but a living community and family. Through baptism we become cherished sons and daughters of God. None of us are perfect, but we do try to love one another and put into practice the way that Jesus taught us to live.

Over a billion people worldwide find that being part of this community enriches their lives on so many levels: spiritually, socially, intellectually and psychologically. Many testify that their faith and parish involvement fills an inner emptiness and brings a new sense of wholeness. It offers something and someone that money can't buy.

Invitation

'My dear friends, a warm welcome awaits you. At your own pace and in your own time, we'd be interested to hear your story and learn from your experiences. You are an important and much-loved member of the Body of Christ. Come.'

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor



Shame, Anger and Hurt

Some people who drift from the practice of their faith say that they harbour deep-rooted feelings of shame, anger and hurt. The causes of this vary.

We are very sorry if a member of our community has caused you pain in some way and we are happy to listen to your story. Please contact us and we'd be happy to talk. A particular source of healing and peace is the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

The Catholic Church is made up of saints and sinners. We are called to be holy, but are part of a broken family, made up of fragile human beings who are trying to be authentic. The Church always needs renewal. You and your story could help us to become more Christ-like. Your contribution is very valuable, as are your God-given gifts and we are incomplete without them.



The Buts...



But I don't know anyone...

But I am afraid...

But I can't receive Communion...

But I'm not worthy...

But I'm hurt and angry...

Please don't let the 'buts' prevent you from coming back. This could be a turning point moment which marks a new beginning. Feel free to visit your local Church and introduce yourself, or if you're not ready for that, call the number overleaf for a chat.

Prayer

Jesus, send your Holy Spirit into my heart in this moment. I need to experience You afresh and receive Your healing and forgiveness.

Enter my heart now.

Many different memories, emotions and experiences lie hidden there.

Please come with Your light.

Thank you that You are near.

Give me the courage to respond to the invitation which is being given to me.

AMEN.