

My name is Rodney Hipp and I am a Catholic. Not a Catholic by birth, but a Catholic by choice -- MY choice! Here is a brief account of my personal Faith journey.

I was born in Crowley, LA, but moved to New Iberia, LA at the age of one. I lived in New Iberia through college, and it was there I met and married a very special lady, the love of my life, Jane Anne Louviere. I was baptized and raised in the tradition of the Presbyterian Church. Jane was Catholic. Something had to give. All I knew was that I loved Jane.

This was before Vatican II was released to the public so I, being a good Presbyterian, never heard or cared about it. Sometime around May, 1968, I approached one of the local priests, Fr. Richard Green. Father Green and I are about the same age, so we got along very well. Remember, this was before the RCIA program was in place. Fr. Green invited me to a class of young adults who got together to learn more about the Catholic Church. All were Catholic, but me. Well, at the Easter Vigil Mass I was welcomed into the Catholic Church, and Jane and I got married on September 1, 1968.

All was happy ever after, right? We were happy. We had two children, and life went on. However, in my job we had to move around a lot. I was absorbed in work and getting ahead. We moved so often, that one day our oldest child, Francine, asked her mother when we were going to move since we had been in the same location for about 12 months. It was about this time that we realized we were not going to church on a regular basis, only when her parents came to visit.

It came time to move again, so that is how we came to the Jackson area. We have been here forty-four years. We found our church, St. Jude Catholic Church in Pearl. The pastor was a priest from Ireland, a big man by the name of Fr. Peter Quinn. We called him Big Bird. That was a major turning point in my Catholic Faith. The first thing Fr. Quinn did was visit us -- I say us, but I mean Jane. She called me at my office and said, "COME HOME NOW! The priest is here!"

Father Quinn encouraged both Jane and me to attend a Cursillo Retreat. This changed our life forever. This was the time I had a personnel encounter with Christ. Another thing that happened was I met Fr. Gerry Hurley (a young man) who was making the same Cursillo. He and I have been friends ever since.

This is only the beginning of my story. It is not the full thing. You will need to come to RCIA to get the rest of the story.....and to add to your Faith Story!