

“For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb.” Psalm 139:13

My OCIA journey began in a somewhat unexpected way. One way or another, I started reading a Bible I bought off Amazon. I was struck by the Gospels, and the truths contained therein. After a few months of study, and sporadic, spontaneous prayer and discernment, I met with Father Colin and Lynn in late January, already partway through the class and approaching the Easter Vigil. Even though I was joining later than many others, I was received with a most blessed warmth and charity. From that first meeting, and through the Monday night OCIA sessions, I was welcomed into the parish community. This was the first time I have ever interacted with the Church. The Church was no longer something in the abstract, but a place I longed to be part of.

Psalm 139:13 is especially meaningful to me because it speaks of the Lord’s intimate knowledge of each person, that is, we are made in His image. I came seeking and searching, desiring to be closer to the Lord. I knew of the Lord through my own studies, but I was not yet in full communion with His Mystical Body. From the moment of my birth, I realized the Lord had always been present in my life. The love of my parents, and friends, the blessings and gifts I had received, yet not earned, my restless search for meaning. My faith was no longer merely a set of guidelines or ideas, but a call to love and be loved by Him who had formed me. The more I learned, the more I began to see my life not as random or disconnected, but as a journey from death to life, from darkness to light.

During OCIA, I enjoyed learning about the mustard seed of faith I professed in my heart. I had been studying the Scriptures, but I knew very little about the sacraments, the Mass, how we understand divine revelation through Scripture and Tradition, authentically interpreted by the Magisterium. Through OCIA, I came to see the Catholic Church as not merely an institution, but an authentic witness of the

Resurrection, passing the faith down through the ages, all the way to me.

The Easter Vigil was when I received the sacraments and professed my faith in front of the Church. To be received into the Church through baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist was something I had been desiring for a long time since I joined the OCIA class. It was the moment the Lord washed away my sins, and I started a new life, adopted as a son of God through Christ. Through these sacraments, I encountered the Lord. I felt a deep sense of peace, of calm, free from any anxieties. My thanks to Father Steve and Father Colin and all of the OCIA staff for welcoming me, and guiding me to this moment.

My awareness of the Lord, and my faith has continued to grow. I see Him now, as always having been present, in one way or another throughout my life, even though I was too blind to see Him. I see His blessings everywhere in my life, and my faith in Him has helped steady me in times of anxiety, and helped me to remain grateful in calm times.

I am deeply grateful for Father Colin, Lynn, the OCIA team, and everyone who welcomed me with patience and kindness. I am grateful for the faithful, those who have come before me, and those who will come after me. For all of these blessings, these moments, these people, this Church, my life, I am grateful to the Lord, who knew me from the beginning and who continues to guide me. It has been an incredible blessing to be part of OCIA. The Lord who formed me in my mother's womb has also called me and received me into His Church, and I pray that I may continue to follow Him faithfully.

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

Revelation 7:12

-Cody