

A Story of Transformed Lives from St. Patrick Parish

From: Jim Griffin



I have a good life. I'm very grateful for my parents and how I was raised. I'm very grateful for my wife, my 4 sons and the life we have been fortunate enough to live. Despite this gratitude I continued to feel like there was more to this life. There was a void. There was one relationship I really hadn't spent time trying to develop. That relationship was with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

I'm a practicing Catholic. I went to Immaculate Conception grammar school in Chicago and Notre Dame High School for Boys in Niles, IL. There have been moments, throughout my life, where I have felt that connection with God. On a Kairos retreat in high school, attending mass on a Navy ship in the ocean while in the Marines, and other times. I can recall these moments clearly, but they have been too few and far between after 48 years on this earth.

Something was still missing, and as I approached Lent this past year, I had an idea of what I wanted to change about myself, and my relationship with God was one of those things. Well, it so happens, not by accident I'm sure, that St. Patrick was conducting an Alpha course during this time. I had attended an Alpha course a couple years ago, but I'm not sure I was ready to take my relationship with Jesus to the next level at that time. I needed to really participate and not just attend.

So, I made the commitment to attend and participate in Alpha in an effort to build a stronger relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

It may be cliché, but it is true. You get out of Alpha what you put into it. There was something about it being in Zoom and in the comfort of my home that made me feel more open to share. There was something about the team leading the main group and small groups that encouraged me to stay engaged. There was something about the content that really resonated with me. You put all those things together and it was just what I needed to help fill that void and grow my relationship with Christ. It was the RIGHT message at the RIGHT time of my life.

3 Alpha discussions really made an impact on me this year.

1. **The Holy Spirit:** The power of the Holy Spirit and the impact in your life when you feel the Holy Spirit's presence. The Holy Spirit gives us the "freedom to break the habits that keep us spiritually bound."

2. **Daily Prayer:** How important it is to have a daily conversation with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit through prayer. When I pray coincidences happen, when I don't they don't. It is important to keep prayer simple, honest, and ongoing for it to make a difference. Prayer is that time to stay focused on what will lead you to live a life of joyful hope while awaiting the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

3. **My Church:** St. Patrick is my church, my community, my home. Actively attending church is a great way to stay connected to Christ, reflect on the previous week, and focus on what you want to do better the next week.

We moved here 4 years ago, and I am so blessed and grateful to have settled in Yorkville and to be a part of St. Pat's. Fr. Matt has been an inspiration. Not only is he engaging and continues to keep the congregation focused on making church matter, but he also goes out of his way to care for his parishioners by delivering cookies to moms in the neighborhood and coming to my home to bless my parents on their 50th wedding anniversary during COVID.

Moving to Yorkville allowed me to find St. Pat's and finding St. Pat's helped me realize I wanted to grow my relationship with Jesus. Because St. Pat's offered Alpha, I have been able to see how a relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will help fill that void so many of us feel. So, participate in Alpha and see what it can do for you.

