



I was born and raised in California and have lived in Los Angeles County, Northern California and South Orange County. My Dad was Jewish and my mother was Catholic, I have one sister 18 years older and two brothers, one 12 years older and one 16 months younger. My older siblings attended Catholic school, my younger brother and I attended public school and CCD.

Every week my mom literally dragged my younger brother and I to church, and I would make every excuse to get out of CCD classes. Amazingly I finished classes through the eighth grade but never received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In 1979 my family moved to South Lake Tahoe as I began my high school years. My life was pretty much filled with everything but my faith. I had a baby daughter when I was sixteen and wasn't involved in much of anything positive. By 1983 I seemed to have matured enough to graduate with a 3.3 grade point average.

In 1984 my family moved back to southern California and I met my husband to be in 1985. We were married in 1986 and he legally adopted my daughter as his own in 1991. Even though we were baptized Catholic we were not practicing.

In my early twenties my mom continued to push me to go back to church and get confirmed and I resisted. Finally in 1991 I was living in Brea and made a call to the local parish St. Angela Merici to inquire about adult Confirmation classes. That year they were not having classes due to some changes with staff, priests and teachers. So I just forgot about it. About a year later there was a message on my machine from the RCIA director at St. Angela Merici and she had my name on a list of individuals interested in Confirmation classes. It was as if God was speaking to me directly, I knew I wanted to reconnect with my faith. I finished the classes and was confirmed in March 1993. The day of my Confirmation my mom said, "Now what are you going to do for the Church?" I answered, "I'm going to join the choir." I have been involved in music ministry ever since.

My dad converted to Catholicism in 2001 at the age of 77. My mom passed away in 2003 but planted the seeds in me and gave it water, I just needed to grow.

Who would have known just six years after my Confirmation I would be working with children and subsequently, in charge of the CCD (now called Faith Formation) program; a program I fought so hard not to attend and now love every aspect of. God knew, and I know He and my mom are smiling (probably laughing) saying, "And she thought she was going to get out of Church and CCD!"

My husband and I had our marriage blessed in 1995 and we are both very involved here at St. Angela's.

*Andrea Draper, Coordinator
Children's Faith Formation*



I was very excited when we decided to use the theme "Come Home" for Lent and I appreciate the opportunity to share with you a little of my own faith journey. I was born into a family of six children, mom was Catholic, dad practiced no faith. As a young child I remember going to church with my brothers and sisters, May altars, saying prayers at night, and starting Catholic school in Ohio.

We moved to California when I was nine and shortly after that I realized my father was an alcoholic and my family was suddenly caught in a downward spiral. For the next several years, until I was 17 when my father died, our family struggled with alcoholism and the shame and fear that come with it.

My mom did her best to keep everything together, even getting all six of us to the Bishop for Confirmation. But the family faith life had become fractured. At a time when you think you would turn to God...I didn't. I stopped attending Eucharist entirely when I was in high school and when I got married it wasn't in the Catholic Church.

When my first daughter was born, though I still was not attending Eucharist, I decided we should have her baptized Catholic. And that's when I suddenly realized... I didn't have any Catholic friends to ask to be godparents. I felt so lost and alone.

Thankfully my mom, still very active in the church, had friends that agreed to be Stephanie's godparents and she was baptized at a Cursillo gathering.

As it turned out the waters of baptism for my daughter were also saving waters for me. It began my journey back to the Church. I realized that the emptiness I had been feeling during those past few years could only be filled with a life in Christ. The seeds of faith that my mom and the nuns had planted, did take root. They just took time to grow. And like the woman at Jacob's well, Jesus knew me, loved me and wanted me back home.

I have been truly blessed. What started a bit shaky has developed into wonderful relationship with Jesus and the Church. I am loved and in love...the conversation at the well continues.

As we continue our Lenten journey I invite you to reflect on where you are in your faith journey...what are you thirsting for? Is there a part of you that remains in the dark and needs to be reconciled? Are you not receiving Eucharist because it has been years since your last confession. Come home to the Lord during our reconciliation service in a couple of weeks.

Why not make this the year to attend all of the services during the Triduum. Holy Thursday's celebration of the Lord's Last Supper, Good Friday's Stations of the Cross. The Easter Vigil, the most beautiful, holy night, so rich in tradition and symbols. Wouldn't it be great to be there when we baptize our newest members and welcome them into the family?

We are blessed at St. Angela Merici because we truly are family. Thank you for letting me share a little bit of my story. And if you are new to our parish ... we, the faith community of St. Angela Merici say, "welcome home".

*Mary Cobb, Coordinator
Adult Faith Formation*