



# A Promise Kept

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When I was growing up, religion was never a topic discussed or explored much in my family. Even though my mom was raised Catholic, my dad had never taken faith in any religion. To avoid any disagreement on this matter, my parents decided to raise my brother and me “spiritually”, meaning that we were taught to believe in an unspecified higher power above us.

Despite the absence of religious teaching in her growing up, my grandma was led by God to be baptized in her 20’s. She had since worked relentlessly for God through community service and bringing her family and friends to church. Respecting to my dad’s neutral religious viewpoint, she, however, did not impose the teaching of Catholicism on my brother and me, as she did on our cousins. But, it did not stop her from teaching us the words of God through her actions. For as long as I could remember, she was always so genuinely kind, caring, and generous to everyone she met, just as Jesus Christ once said unto us:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

It was not until the summer I turned 18 years old that I started going to church. It was the summer of 2001 that my grandparents came to Canada for their regular two-month visit with us. I knew they missed going to church, so I offered to drive them to church every Saturday (for Mass in Mandarin). Initially, it was a simple gesture to make my grandparents happy; nonetheless it turned out to be God’s plan to bring me to His flock. Week after week, God’s teaching began to take root in my mind though not yet in my heart. I, then, made a promise to my

grandma that I would one day prove myself and be fully accepted into the Catholic Church through baptism. She smiled and said, “As long as you have God in your heart, you will always be blessed.”

Sadly, my grandma passed away in 2005. I, suddenly, lost my guardian angel to guide me through life and through my journey to find faith. It was more than I could bear, but I did not allow myself to forget my promise to her. With the strength God gave me, I continued to go to church either with my mom or by myself.

More than a decade later on a random September day, something came over me. A voice told me to pick up the phone and call the church. So, I did. Next thing I knew, I was in the RCIA class, meeting a group of wonderful new friends and learn about God. Eight months after, I travelled back to Taiwan and received the sacraments of initiation on March 30, 2013, in the Cathedral very dear to my grandma. It was a night more memorable than anything I ever encountered, witnessed by my grandma, my mom, and many of my grandma’s friends in church. I, quite literally, was given a new life, with which I felt nothing but, hope, love, and peace. It was then I truly realized what God meant when he said, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee.” (Jeremiah 1:4-5) I might not have been raised Catholic, but God’s will leads me back to Him.

Years after, I have finally kept my promise to my grandma, and now I can even say that God’s teaching has not only taken root in my mind but also my heart. Given a new life and new responsibilities as a Christian, I now have to work even harder than ever to learn and know more about God. With strong faith and knowledge, I can then pass on the gift that my grandma left me – a chance to find the way back to God.

