



Diocese of Fargo  
*Our Stories of Faith*

For the complete series  
visit [www.fargodiocese.org/storiesoffaith](http://www.fargodiocese.org/storiesoffaith)

*Carrie Michaelson - Searching for the Truth*



What is the meaning of life, and what is our purpose? These are questions I've asked myself since early childhood. It wasn't till I got much older that I realized every person is born with a yearning to know the "secrets" of life, the why's, the how's, and the what for's. This deep seeded desire to "know" became overwhelming by the time I reached the age of 12.

My childhood had been surrounded with alcoholism, filled with verbal and physical abuse, poverty, family dysfunctions of many various types, and was devoid of religion or religious faith. My family lived in much, much darkness, sorrow, despair and suffering. Though this may sound horrible, I count the experiences as blessings, as it is through these experiences that my search for The Truth began.

At 12, after much begging and pleading, I was given permission and the necessary funds to attend a Southern Baptist bible camp in West Virginia where my family lived. This experience had a deep, abiding and profound effect on me. I came to believe in Jesus, to know that Jesus loved me no matter what, even if it seemed no one in the world loved me, and to desire to love Him in return. The joy and peace that accompanied my experience cannot be described in words, but I can tell you that it changed my life forever. I knew there was a God, I knew Jesus was His Son who came to save us, and I KNEW that profound love and joy, like none on earth, that comes when you welcome Jesus into your life.

As I grew older, into my teens, I got lost in alcohol, drugs and promiscuity. Then at 17, as a single mother living on my own raising a baby girl, I started trying to "re-connect" to God again. I desperately wanted to receive the same spiritual consolations I had received at 12. In my quest for Truth, I began attending churches of various Christian denominations including Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, non-denominational Evangelical, and at one point even held home bible study sessions in the faith of Jehovah's witness. I was growing more confused by the day,

and one by one I kept leaving each church. I felt in my heart, thanks be to God, that each one did not hold or teach the “full truth” that comes from God, so where could I find it? In my disappointment, I left all churches and started seeking, once again, worldly comforts.

At the age of 19, I married an Army Sergeant who was Buddhist by birth. He held and practiced no religious faith to speak of, and in fact expressed the sentiment that religion was only for the “troubled” and “weak”. The marriage lasted until my daughters were 10 & 16, and during its duration, our home was basically “religion free”.

My best friend and confidant, my mother, died at the age of 49. A year later, 2 more tragedies struck. My grandmother died of sorrow over my mother’s death, and I became a divorcee. In my attempt to understand life, suffering and death, I got involved with New Age in various forms. New age is very deceptive, in that it uses bits and pieces of truth, incorporated into lies, to make them more believable. If one doesn’t safeguard themselves with keen discernment and biblical knowledge, it is oh so very easy to be misled down the path of New Age, which is known by many different names.

I had become an alcoholic by the time I had reached my early 20’s, and although I had quit drinking at least 5 years prior to my divorce, I still held onto my marijuana addiction. At the time of my divorce, my 16 year old daughter was going through her own

version of life’s hell, and my youngest, 10, preferred to stay with her father most of the time. So, by the age of 32, I was completely alone and had lost EVERYTHING that ever meant anything to me, and I began to occasionally drink, once again.

The desire to know God again, to experience His love and mercy, grew stronger than ever in my heart. Surely the Truth must be somewhere, but where? Surely the God that I knew existed must have a true and faithful Church on earth who knew Him, and served Him faithfully, but where? It was at this time that I obtained a job working for a Catholic non-profit organization. My office was in the basement of the Cathedral office. I heard the church bells ringing every day at noon, inviting & nudging me, ever so gently, to Holy mass and to God. And so my journey to the true Church of Christ began.

The homilies made sense, the teachings faithful to the Word of God. Then the final hook, I was invited to a religious pilgrimage with my Catholic boss that changed my life forever. October 1998, Medjugorje, Croatia, I received a personal visit from the Blessed Mother herself. Nothing fancy, no audible words, no visual apparitions. Just Mary and me on a mountainside, where I “experienced” the love she and her Son has for me. I cried tears of joy, experienced love like I have never known. My heart was filled to the point of exploding; my body grew weak in the presence of such beautiful holiness. It was impossible to move, or utter a word

from my mouth. It was like time had frozen. I could only “feel” the love being given to me. In those few seconds of sheer peace, overwhelming love and joy, I was also given the assurance that the Catholic Church was Her Son’s true Church, and that I was invited to share in the Feast.

I returned to my home, with an eagerness to learn all I could about the Catholic faith, to join Christ’s church, and to be with the Mother who loves me more than anyone else ever had. I continued to work in the basement of the Cathedral, I continued to attend mass at noon on the weekdays when possible. I cried at every Holy Communion because I was not yet able to receive my Lord, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. How deeply I yearned for complete union with Him.

Being a person of logic and reason, I deeply researched the Catholic faith, not to decide whether or not it was Christ’s Church, because I already knew in my heart that it was, but rather to understand the basis for its faith and teachings. The more I learned, the more enlightened was my mind. For the first

time, everything made sense. Everything about life made sense, and for the first time, I knew where I was supposed to be, and Who I was supposed to be with, and for what purpose my life had been given.

Sin can weigh the soul and spirit down like an anchor, preventing it from reaching the light and heights that God desires for the soul. The Sacrament of Confession, where Jesus is truly present in the priest, freed me from my anguish and guilt. I knew God had truly forgiven me, that He desired mercy for me, and that I could come back as often as needed for the same healing, mercy and forgiveness.

The day of my confirmation was the best day of my life, bar none. Someone in the parish told me I was “glowing”, literally. I know I felt like I was floating on a cloud of happiness. My journey for truth had been fulfilled; my long, dry search in the desert had

ended with the Water of Life, found only in the Catholic Church. My heart cried out to my Lord Jesus in tears of joy, “I’m home my love, my heart, my Lord, I’m home.”



*2007 Carrie Michaelson  
St. Mary Cathedral  
Fargo, ND*