



Diocese of Fargo
Our Stories of Faith

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Liz Chandler's Story

My name is Liz Chandler and my husband Doran and I moved to Valley City, ND in 1992. We have two children, Brian and Megan and four wonderful grandchildren. I was raised as a cradle Catholic while Doran was raised in the Methodist church. Our lives together started at a young age as we were high school sweethearts. We both agree that God has always been guiding us throughout our life. There have been wonderful times (children, grandchildren) and some not so wonderful times (alcoholism, deaths). Trusting in God's plan for us hasn't always been easy. Through our faith we are coming to realize that *everything* happens for a reason – in God's time.

I raised our children in the Catholic faith but Doran's struggle with alcoholism kept him from joining us. I took our children to Mass as I felt it was expected of me. I was Catholic



and I felt guilty if I did not go. I had not developed an internal or personal relationship with Jesus. Our children did receive their Sacraments but had a poor example of being involved with their Church, faith and God. Both our children are involved in their faiths which I am sorry to say is not Catholic – we were poor examples. To this day, we continue to pray for our children to

return to the Catholic faith but we love them right where God has put them. About the time that our children were getting ready to leave home, I asked Doran if he would start coming to church with me as I was not looking forward to going to Mass by myself. Doran took the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) from Sister Dorothy and joined the Catholic Church but it was for the wrong reason – he did it for me and not because he had fallen in love with Jesus and His Church. God was still at work, regardless of the reason!

Doran and I spent the next nine years going to Mass together but that was all we were doing; we didn't pray together, read the bible, or go to confession. We were both in a spiritual desert. You see we knew about God but we didn't *know* God. Neither one of us had a personal relationship with Jesus. We just did the things our Catholic faith required of us and some of them not so well! We went to work, raised our family, and trudged through life with very little peace and joy. We became distant with each other and kind of did our own thing. I think we both shared the feeling of emptiness and knew there had to be something better. Doran was going to AA but always came home complaining about how it was a wife-haters' club as a lot of the members were going through nasty divorces. His attendance at AA meetings became sporadic and I knew he needed the fellowship. Then God said 'enough is enough!'

Doran always said there was one guy at AA that talked about God and he so enjoyed what he had to say. That man invited Doran to a men's Cursillo weekend in 2005. The Holy Spirit was working through that man's invitation. I made a women's Cursillo weekend a couple weeks after Doran and our lives have been changing ever since. The changes have been gradual but always for the better as we now walk this journey together.

Our Cursillo weekend was an encounter with Christ. Through our Cursillo experiences we came to know Jesus in a very *personal* way. His love, mercy and joy is beyond compare!

Our hearts were set on fire and since then the Lord is healing us and strengthening our marriage through the Sacraments of Holy Mother Church. God has led us to a greater involvement in our faith community and shown us how to use the gifts we were given to be Christ for others – to love as He calls us to love. Through our involvement in our parish and in Cursillo, God has blessed us with many wonderful friends in Christ. Our lives now revolve around family and these friends who are also striving to know and serve the Lord. We gather weekly with our friends in Christ to pray and share how God is working in our lives. God has called us out of our comfort zones to be witness to the love that He has for all of us. Through His call to be witness for Him we have learned how much we trust and need him. We now go to Mass to give praise and thanksgiving for the many blessings God has given us, and to receive Jesus' very Body and Blood which strengthens us in all ways.



*Doran and Liz Chandler
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