

**John Proffitt**  
**August 2012 Witness Letter**

My name is John Proffitt. I am married to Laurel (she refers to us as Laurel and Hardy). We've been married five-and-a-half years and have lived in Kaukauna for almost five. I have three children and five grandchildren who live in Kansas. Laurel has a daughter who lives in Florida.

We have been members at Holy Cross since living here, and Miss Kim seemed to think I could multi-task, so I became a lector, cantor/choir member and extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. Unfortunately, the company I work for lost the contract we were working, and the new contract does not allow me to know from week to week what my days off will be, so I am back on the sidelines.

I grew up in a Catholic home, went to Catholic school, but in high school decided to rebel. I rebelled off and on well into my adult years. In fact, I would say that it has only been in the last seven years or so that I have really begun to live my faith, and frustrating as it can be when you see yourself failing again and again, it has really been a blessing. Spending hours in a truck with the luxury of listening to EWTN radio has helped, as well as the hours of reading good Catholic apologetics (*books on defending the Catholic faith*) to teach me what I missed as a youngster, young adult, and mid-lifer for one reason or another.

For me, the Eucharist has become the centrality of my faith. I just celebrated my uncle's 50<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary, and I was blessed to deliver a toast on his role as "father" in our large German Catholic family and the larger church family he served.

I observed that at each Mass, the priest – our *father* – leads us in a prayer of repentance, preaches to us the Word of God, and then consecrates the bread and wine. He stands in *persona Christi* – *in the person of Christ*, offering to the Father His transubstantiated Body and Blood, the only acceptable sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. And then he offers to each of us the same Body and Blood, so that Jesus himself can come to live in our bodies. The priest then sends each of us out into the world. After receiving Christ we, too, get to stand at the cross, offering our own lives in service to the One who saves us – to go out and *see Christ* in others – and to *be Christ* to others in need. I certainly have not perfected my end of what Eucharist is meant to be, but I'm trying to do it better each day.

Our ability to participate in the liturgy is impossible without our priests. My uncle has always been important in my life and will continue to be. But I belong to a local parish here at Holy Cross, and I am grateful for the service Father Tom provides here for this family. Having known a few priests over my 60 years, I can say without hesitation that Father Tom's devotion and enthusiasm for his parish is outstanding, and I have yet to come away from a homily without being catechized in a new way or challenged to improve the way I respond to the gospel. I am grateful to be a member of this parish – it is a fine family to belong to!

***John Proffitt***