

Julie Huss -- July 2012 Witness Letter

My name is Julie Huss. My husband, Al, and I have been married almost 22 years. We have three children: Amy, 20, Tonya, 18, and Joe, 16. We've been members of Holy Cross for 34 years. I went to Holy Cross from grades 5-8 and then to Kaukauna High School.

Currently, Al and I are a FOCCUS couple, working with engaged couples. I also cantor, am part of the Visitation Committee and serve as Eucharistic Minister when needed. I've been in the choir, but I'm taking a hiatus because of our involvement in our kids' sports. I was a brownie leader in the past, volunteered at school, was on the Oktoberfest Steering Committee and worked with Elizabeth Ministry, visiting people who had just given birth and also, after we had lost a baby, visiting with people who had suffered loss.

When I was little, my mom made us go to church. We didn't like it but we went because we knew we had to. I went through all the sacraments, just because that's what you did. I really didn't pay attention; I didn't get the "why" we had to do all this. When I went to college, I put my faith on the shelf for a while. Then I met Al. He would always pick me up and take me to Mass. Al always made me go. If it were up to me, I would have slept in.

After I lost our baby, Peter Patrick, when I was five months pregnant, I started to get more into prayer. I was kind of angry with God, wondering why this happened. Shortly after that, Al and I made a marriage encounter. We didn't have problems but, like getting a tune-up on our car, it was like getting a tune-up on our marriage. We really enjoyed it a lot. It was a great tool for us. It gave us the chance to get back to the basics. After losing Peter, we had Joe. When our kids began to go through the sacraments at Holy Cross, I feel like I learned more with them than I did as a child. I was ready to learn.

About 10 years ago, Al and I made a *Cursillo*. That's when my faith exploded. I was hungry to learn everything I could and get immersed in my faith. It's been really good for our family in many respects. We've all come together more, through learning to pray together, even it's just a meal-time prayer. We drag *our* kids to Mass now. They'd all rather sleep in, too, but I'm really trying to explain to them the "whys" behind the "whats," the best I can. Last winter, I was approached to lead the first parish CRHP Retreat (Christ Renews His Parish). I thought, "You know. It's a great thing for our parish, to get to know the people you're sitting next to in the pews, people I've seen for 20 years but never really knew." We all have a story to tell. We all feel like maybe we're so alone. But we're not. We all walk this journey together. And to know that somebody shares that journey with you is so empowering and life-giving. CRHP really helped reinforce everything I knew and wanted to learn. Whether it's going to Mass, going on a retreat, going to reconciliation--everything that we experience helps us grow in our faith. I pull one message out of every homily, and I meditate on that all week. I pray every day that I can be Christ to others and that people can see Christ in me.

Over the years, I've always wanted to be somebody different. I wanted to be shorter, have different physical attributes or be a better this or a better that. I think, through this faith journey, I've realized that God loves me for who I am, not for who I'm trying to be. I shouldn't be jealous of others. That's such a waste of energy. I need to be myself. God loves each of us more than we can imagine. We just have to learn to believe that.

Julie Huss