

# **“Why be Catholic, Dad?”**

*An Introduction to 7-Step Evangelization*

Listen to / download free “Why be Catholic, Dad?” MP3 in English at <http://7step.catholic.org>

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From the book, *The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.:*  
*Science, the Bible and History point to Catholicism (Imprimatur)*  
by [Jerome D. Gilmartin](#)

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Hi, this is Jerome Gilmartin. According to a 2008 Pew Forum report, [one out of every three adult Americans who were raised Catholic have left the Church](#). One reason for this, in this age of the sound bite, is that most Catholics aren’t able to give a sound bite answer to the question, “Why be Catholic?”

You can download that brief, compelling answer – The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic Wallet outline - free at my web site. That web site is [7step.catholic.org](http://7step.catholic.org) – the number 7, no Ws - [7step.catholic.org](http://7step.catholic.org).

“Oh, but I could never invite anyone to become Catholic” you say. O.K. then don’t. But at least download the [printed outline](#) and this short [audio file](#) into your smartphone or laptop.

Let the outline and audio file do the inviting for you. Look, our Church is under siege. It’s all over the news. Certain political and other forces are pushing us to the edge of a cliff. It’s time to take a stand. Christ died to found this one, holy catholic and apostolic Church. Right now He needs each and every one of us to defend it.

And you CCD and RCIA instructors out there; the outline and *The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* have an *Imprimatur!*

Copy the outline and play this audio file for your class before your students are Confirmed! Don’t let them become like deer in the headlights when their friends tease them for being Catholic! And you Newman Club instructors; let the outline and audio file bring new Catholic life to your campus!

You’re about to hear an example of how you can use these 7 simple points to call anyone - including your family and all your social network friends - to Catholicism.

My daughter Joan is about to role-play a college freshman who challenges me on every one of the seven steps except the last. At that point she realizes the importance of being not just a believer; not just a Christian, but a **Catholic**.

**DAD:** And now, Joan, let’s give some detail to these steps.

**JOAN:** O.K. Dad.

**DAD:** Glad to hear you’ll soon be home for Christmas, Joan. How do you like college, now that you’ve almost completed your first semester?

**JOAN:** It’s great, especially my biology and physics classes.

**DAD:** I’m happy to hear that. Will you be coming to Mass with your Mom and me Christmas morning?

**JOAN:** Sure, but - I hate to admit this - I haven’t been to Mass in more than a month.

**DAD:** You haven’t? Why not?

**JOAN:** It started on a Sunday morning after I attended Mass. One of the girls here in my dorm said, “You’re new here. Before long you’ll lose not only your Catholic faith but your belief in God, like I did.”

**DAD:** Did you explain to her why you’re a Catholic?

**JOAN:** No, I don’t think I CAN explain it - I have classmates who were raised in many different religions. Why is it so important to be Catholic?

**DAD:** Well, I’m sure you’re as amazed as I am that I, your ordinary, run of the mill Dad could write a book. But I did, in answer to that very question. The title is [The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic, 2<sup>nd</sup>](#)

[Edition; Science, the Bible and History point to Catholicism.](#) There's a wallet outline of the 7 steps on my web site in 12 languages. Can we take a look at it?

**JOAN:** (Resistant) Dad, I really don't have time for this right now.

**DAD:** I'm sure most of the girls in your dorm can tell you why they believe – or don't believe as they do. Don't you want to be able to do the same?

**JOAN:** O.K., Dad, O.K.

**DAD:** On your smart phone just go to the Internet and key in [7step.catholic.org](http://7step.catholic.org). Use the numeral 7 and no Ws.

**JOAN:** (Pause) O.K., there's the web site. Now what?

**DAD:** Go to the free [wallet outline in English](#). You'll see two sides of the card. The 7 steps are on the front. Footnotes are on the back. Would you read **Step 1**?

**JOAN:** **“Strong scientific evidence points to the intelligent design of the universe.”** Dad, if I give that as an answer on my biology and physics exams next month I'll fail both courses.

**DAD:** That's because you're being taught *censored science*.

**JOAN:** Censored science? How can you say that?

**DAD:** Well, first let me say that it's not the fault of your professors; they can teach only what the law and the courts allow at your secular university. But read the footnote for Step 1 of the outline.

**JOAN:** It says “Blessed by Padre Pio in 1947, Girl born blind has seen normally since, **THOUGH STILL WITHOUT PUPILS**. If not to a benevolent supernatural ‘Designer’ who can suspend the laws of physics, to what does science attribute such miracles?”

**DAD:** Her name is Gemma Di Giorgi. In a [YouTube video interview](#) in 2011 she removes her sunglasses and we see the clouded eyes of a blind person. But Gemma is not blind; she's a smiling 72 year-old woman who looks 10 years younger and sees very well.

And on the Internet there's also the story of [Giovanni Savino](#). In 1949, while doing excavation work, dynamite blew up in his face. His left eye was blinded and his right eye was destroyed. A week or so later the ophthalmologist was stunned when Mr. Savino said something like, “Doctor, I can see you.” The doctor thought it was Savino's imagination; he was blind in his left eye and his right eye was blown out. “Doctor I see you with my right eye.” And the doctor soon realized that Savino was seeing normally with the “bloody pulp” that had been his right eye. The ophthalmologist, an atheist, reportedly became a Catholic after seeing that miracle. The left eye never recovered, but Mr. Savino saw normally through that blown out right eye until his death in 1974, 25 years later. Both of these people attributed their miracles to the intervention of Padre Pio, now Saint Pio of Pietrelcina.

And so we might say:

“Professor, our university invites many speakers to our campus, including atheists who deny the existence of God. Giovanni Savino is dead, but can science deny that Gemma DiGiorgi is living, breathing proof that God really DOES exist?. Can we invite her to come and speak to us; or at least can we show her video in class and discuss it? What's that professor? No? You could lose your job? Rules are rules. I see. Thank you, Professor.”

**JOAN:** That's right, Dad. Our university welcomes speakers who deny the existence of God. But, the way the 1st amendment is interpreted, no one affirming God's existence, like Gemma DiGiorgi, can speak here.

**DAD:** Your University doesn't want to risk a lawsuit. But isn't this a form of censorship?

**JOAN:** I guess it is.

**DAD:** The book [The Language of God](#) was written by Francis S. Collins, Ph.D., former head of the Human Genome Project. Dr. Collins concludes that *the 3 million base-pair human DNA is the language by which God wrote human beings into existence*. Has your professor mentioned that book?

**JOAN:** No, but I see why. Dr. Collins shows that science points clearly to a Creator.

**DAD:** That’s right. And if any of your classmates or professors challenge you on that point, suggest that they read two books: [The Case for a Creator](#), by Lee Strobel, and [What Darwin Didn’t Know, A Doctor Dissects the Theory of Evolution](#), by Geoffrey Simmons, M.D. They won’t challenge you anymore.

**JOAN:** I’m not sure that will convince the girl in my dorm who said she lost her Catholic faith in college. She quotes from [The Blind Watchmaker](#) by Professor Richard Dawkins.

**DAD:** Yes, in *The Blind Watchmaker* Professor Dawkins attributes all miracles to mere chance. As an example he states that, though highly improbable, the hand of a statue would wave if all the molecules lined up just right and then precisely reversed themselves. But the girl in your dorm may be surprised to know that Professor Dawkins has acknowledged the possibility of a Creator. A November 5, 2006 [article in Time Magazine](#) by Dan Cray includes an excerpt from a debate between Dawkins and Dr. Francis S. Collins, who converted from atheism to Christianity at age 27. At the end of that debate Dawkins said something that makes me wonder if he was aware of miracles such as those of Gemma DiGiorgi and Giovanni Savino. Dawkins said, in effect, that if God exists, he’s going to be big and incomprehensible beyond anything any religion has ever claimed.

Suppose the law were changed, Joan, to allow these and many other miracles to be discussed in the public classroom. Do you really think any professor could make a convincing scientific argument against the existence of a Designer-Creator?

**JOAN:** No, I don’t think so. (Pause)

O.K., Dad, I see that there’s a strong case for a Creator-God. But on campus we have students from all over the world. They believe in lots of different gods. What’s so special about Christ and Christianity?

**DAD:** Good question; let’s look at **Step 2** of the outline. **“In all of history, only Jesus manifested the power of the Intelligent Designer-Creator, including power over death, and fulfilled the Messianic prophecies.**

**JOAN:** Are you saying that no other founder of a religion rose from death?

**DAD:** You’ll find resurrection stories on the Internet, especially in mythology. But, other than for Christ, no religion makes a substantive claim of resurrection for its flesh-and blood founder. But check it out. Enter three words on your search engine: “burial-places-religion.” and bring up the [Wikipedia article](#).

**JOAN:** (Pause) Hmmm . . . . I see what you mean. Other than for Jesus, I don’t see any resurrection claim for any founder of a religion. I guess it makes sense to be a Christian. But the Gospel Resurrection accounts were written 2,000 years ago. Why should we believe them now?

**DAD:** Another good question. Let’s look at **Step 3** on that wallet outline. What does it say?

**JOAN:** It says, **“Evidence for the very early origin and authenticity of the Gospels includes writings of the Early Church Fathers and others . . . .”**

**DAD:** Let’s look first at one of the others. In your search engine, enter [“Flavius Josephus” and “Jesus”](#) and tell me what you see.

**JOAN:** It says that Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian born just a few years after Christ’s Resurrection. He writes that Jesus was a doer of wondrous works, that Pilate crucified him and that he appeared alive again the third day as the divine prophets had foretold. That’s amazing. His Jewish parents and relatives probably saw and heard Jesus.

**DAD:** Probably. Now, enter “Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon.” He was a disciple of the martyred Bishop Polycarp who was a disciple of John, the Apostle of Jesus. Let’s look at what Irenaeus wrote about those four Gospels:

[“Matthew issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing](#)

[what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.](#)<sup>1</sup>

And Polycarp affirmed the Resurrection of Jesus four times in a [letter to the Philipians](#).

Do you really think Bishop Irenaeus, as close as he was in time to Jesus Christ through Bishop Polycarp and John the Apostle, would have affirmed all four Gospels as he did unless he knew they were *authentic* accounts of the ministry of Jesus? And this is just the tip of the iceberg of the Early Church Fathers.

**JOAN:** No, I don't. . . , I had no idea the Gospels were backed by this kind of testimony. I see now that it makes sense to be a Christian. But there are lots of different Christian churches. Why should I be Catholic?

**DAD:** Well, don't all Christians base their belief on the Bible?

**JOAN:** Yes, I think they do.

**DAD:** Well, the Bible is foundational for Catholics too. So let's move to **Step 4** of the wallet outline. Would you read it?

**JOAN:** **"Jesus founded one Church, said there would be one flock, one Shepherd and prayed for the unity of all believers."**

**DAD:** Now read the footnote for Step 4.

**JOAN:** Well, after giving biblical chapter and verse for what I just read, it says, "Today more than [33,000 Christian denominations](#) do not agree on *requirements for salvation*." So if Jesus said there would be one flock, with one Shepherd, in one united Church, how can we find that one Church among so many?

**DAD:** Well, if all Christians, including Catholics, are "Bible Christians," shouldn't we all look to the Bible to see to whom the risen Jesus gave authority in the one Church he was founding?

**JOAN:** That sounds like what I see in **Step 5: "Having instituted the Eucharist and given primacy in his Church to Peter, the risen Jesus commissioned the APOSTLES to make disciples of all nations."**

**DAD:** And the footnote includes the last three verses of *Matthew*, the Great Commission of the eleven apostles by the risen Jesus, Judas Iscariot having killed himself. Let me read those words of Jesus: "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them all I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*" [Mt 28:18-20; [RSV-CE](#)]<sup>2</sup>

**JOAN:** O.K., I see that Jesus gave his authority in that one Church to the 11 apostles. But, why should we believe that that Church exists today, two thousand years later?

**DAD:** That brings us to **Step 6**. Would you read it?

**JOAN:** **"The Pope and Catholic bishops today are the spiritual and historical successors of Peter and the other apostles."** But how can we be sure of that?

**DAD:** In saying he would be with the apostles "always," and having said that he would return in glory to judge the living and the dead, Jesus certainly meant that he would grant his authority to the successors those apostles would ordain, and they in turn would ordain, until his triumphant return. Soon the apostles chose Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot. Matthias was with the eleven at Pentecost and before long Paul was welcomed as apostle to the Gentiles. The apostles and their successor bishops continued to ordain successors in turn through the

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<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus; *Against Heresies*; Book III, 1, 1 Christian Classics Ethereal Library. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.ii.html>

<sup>2</sup> "The Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

centuries. In the year 2005, 115 of their successor bishops, Cardinal / Bishops, elected Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger – Pope Benedict XVI, as the 264<sup>th</sup> successor of Peter.

**JOAN:** It sounds like a strong case for Catholicism, Dad; but some of my friends say the original apostolic Church went off the rails. After that Christianity had to be preached by others.

**DAD:** That brings us to **Step 7**, the last one of the outline. Would you read it?

**JOAN:** **“Although denied by Peter, betrayed by Judas Iscariot, abandoned by all apostles but John and scandalized by some of the ordained and consecrated, including a few popes of history, Jesus gave us no biblical ‘escape clause’ to reject the one Church he founded and, through the apostles, promised to be with always.”**

**DAD:** In the Bible we read that Jesus foresaw many things. As God he certainly foresaw the actions of every future Pope, bishop, priest, deacon and religious. If any or all of their actions would be such as to result in Jesus abandoning the one Church he founded, would he have promised to be with that one apostolic Church ALWAYS?

**JOAN:** No, when God gives his word like that I’m sure he keeps it.

**DAD:** Yes, surely he keeps it. And which of the groups who deny the authority of the Catholic Church can make a stronger *biblical* claim for their own authority to form a religion and interpret the Bible? As much as we may respect and admire the fervor of our fellow Christians and those who lead their faith traditions, the answer is none. And now, Joan, if a well-meaning Christian, non-Christian or atheist invites you to give up your Catholic faith and believe as they do, what will you do?

**JOAN:** I’ll give them a Wallet Outline from your website, and play this file for them.

**DAD:** Yes, and let them know that the teaching of the Catholic Church is summarized in the [Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition](#). It’s in every Catholic bookstore and can be read free online.

CCD and other instructors may want the “Why be Catholic, Dad?” script. They’ll find it at Amazon.com / Kindle.

The book, *The 7-Step Reason to be Catholic, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, is available in print through my Web site, [7step.catholic.org](#), through Catholic bookstores, Amazon.com. and soon through Barnes & Noble online. It’s also a Kindle e-book.

Thanks, Joan; you spoke for many with those objections.

**JOAN:** You’re welcome, Dad.

**DAD:** Let me close with this thought. The risen Jesus said to Peter, “Do you love me?” and Peter answered “Yes, Lord you know I love you.” The question Jesus would ask each of us today might be this, “Do you love me enough to do so in the one apostolic Church I founded and promised to be with always?”

On behalf of Joan and me, this is Jerome Gilmartin saying, thanks for listening. God bless!

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