

## My Spiritual Journey By Saroun Va

There have been many life changing events for me in my 30 plus years on this Earth: Graduating from college, getting married, buying my first house, having my first child and most recently joining OCIA at St. Stephen's Catholic Church. All of these have been very gratifying. Many would ask why I would hold joining OCIA in the same regard as having my first child and the answer is easy; it has been a spiritual awakening and somewhat of a new birth for myself.

Growing up Buddhist, I wasn't exposed very much to the Christian Church. There were a handful of times when I would go to Sunday school or youth group with friends, but nothing on a regular basis, but just enough to peak my interest. It wasn't until I met my wife, who is a "cradle catholic", when I began going to church on a regular basis. But still, we were only doing the Easter and Christmas Eve masses. This is when I began seeing the power of the church, but still you can say I was in the dark.

In March of '07, my wife and I decided to baptize our son, Lucas, Catholic. So we went and met with the coordinator at St. Stephens. At that time, I was presented with an opportunity for myself to become Catholic and wanting to set an example for my son; I agreed to give it a chance. When my wife had told her mom, she said her prayers had been answered. So, within a couple of weeks started attending St. Stephens and the OCIA program here. It did not take long for me to see that this was for me and what I was doing was "the right thing" to do. The OCIA staff and congregation here at St. Stephen's are amazing. Everyone has been very kind and all of the ministries here at church are very lively and energetic. It made the decision very easy.

As I had mentioned, going through OCIA has been a spiritual awakening for me. It has helped me to see the light and understand what my responsibilities are. The classes not only help to build a solid foundation by understanding the basics, it also helps to understand many of the readings given on Sunday by breaking open the word. Many of these sessions have helped me to see God in my life. In the past situations where God has been present went unnoticed, but now something as easy as opening the Bible to a perfect scripture I can see the Holy Spirit present in my life.

On Jan. 12th I will be Baptized, Confirmed, and receive my first communion. It has been 10 month process, but well worth the journey. At the beginning of OCIA, I would have said that this was the finish line, but as I've gone through the classes, it's easy for me to see that this is just the start and that my occupation that God has for me is just beginning.