

Down in Camas, my first pastorate, we had a woman who didn't have a car of her own and didn't live near a bus line, so even though she had a great love of the Eucharist, she couldn't come to daily Mass. The one exception was Saturday mornings, when she could borrow her brothers car for the drive. She moved here from the Netherlands, where she converted to Catholicism just a couple of years prior. The impetus for her conversion was very unique.

She had had some weird things happening in her house – the kind that can't be fixed by checking the electrical and mechanical systems. So she consulted the internet, and began to try the suggested remedies. She burned sage. Lit candles. Rang bells. And a few other things. All to no avail. There was one more thing she kept coming across, but as someone who grew up with a resistance to faith, it was something she wouldn't consider until she was out of other options. And so, the last chance (besides ghostbusters) – have your house blessed with Holy Water from a Catholic priest/church. So she looked up the local Catholic church, and made her first trip ever to a church. She walked in and told the priest she needed some water. He was a bit puzzled at first, but after an explanation, he gave her some holy water from the baptismal font and some prayers to pray.

She went home, said the prayers, sprinkled the holy water around her house, and all of the weird things went away. At which point she asked herself: "if their water is this good, what else do they have?" And so she became Catholic.

As we arrive *before* Mass and leave *after*, dipping our fingers into the Holy Water shouldn't be seen as optional, or done haphazardly or while distracted by greeting others. By invisible power, God accomplishes wondrous effects through sacramental signs. Through this water sin was washed away as we rose with Christ in baptism. It marks an end of vice and beginning of virtue. It has the power to sanctify (which includes driving out demons). This is powerful stuff! Make use of this water. Make use of this grace. For yourself. And yes, if needed, for your home and work – that all may be sanctified and made holy. Fr. Randy and I are happy to do house blessings, as well, when able.