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Faith Comes by Hearing

BY JOSEPH PRONECHEN

A lighthouse is a simple, functional structure, but it can guide ships to port even in stormy weather. Likewise, **Lighthouse Catholic Media** is a simple, non-profit company, but it can guide Catholics home even in tumultuous times.

Lighthouse's primary work is producing and distributing educational and motivational talks on CD. Its stated mission is to encourage Catholics to "use media as a way to help friends and family discover (or rediscover) the truths of the Catholic faith and come to the fullness of truth."

Since December 2005, this apostolate has provided CD programs to nearly 1,400 parishes across the country and distributed 1.3 million life-changing CDs.

There's no telling how the Holy Spirit will work when someone picks up a CD at a Lighthouse kiosk display in their parish, either for free or a \$3 donation. Results can be dramatic.

Mark Middendorf, the program's original co-founder, tells of the young man who was contemplating suicide when he listened to a Lighthouse CD. He changed his mind — and later entered the seminary.

"If someone says one CD can't make a difference, we have story after story of how God uses it to

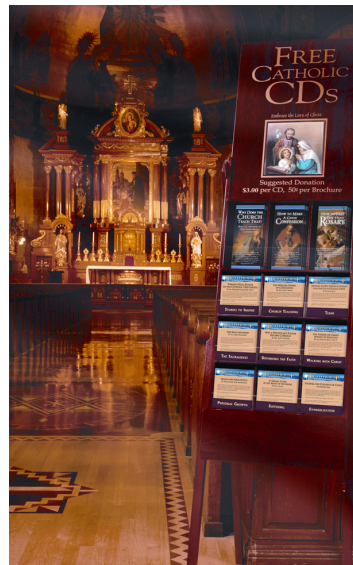


CD MINISTRY. Lighthouse leader Mark Middendorf (l) enjoys the support of many pastors and spiritual directors, including Brother Paschal Kolodziej of Marytown in Libertyville, Ill. At right is a Lighthouse display at work. Photos courtesy Lighthouse Catholic Media

change people's lives," says Middendorf. "It happens on a constant basis."

In fact, it was listening to tapes by Scott Hahn and leading Catholic apologists in order to better understand his faith and explain it to others that inspired Middendorf to share his experience with others. Having found success in the corporate world, he bought loads of tapes and gave them to family, friends and co-workers. Then he put up a display in his parish, St. John Cantius in Chicago.

"After one day all the tapes were gone," he recalls. "I knew there was a hunger."



One tape can have miraculous effects. In Lansing, Mich., Sophia Russell was a Messianic Jew and, as wife of a longtime Protestant pastor, part of several Protestant churches, including two mega-churches. Yet, she recalls, "I still wasn't getting all the answers I was looking for ... I was constantly asking and seeking the truth."

A musician, she missed the traditional Christian hymns that had been set aside by her current church. She recalls how she "snuck into" the back of a Catholic church to hear its music. There on a Lighthouse Media rack, Hahn's "Why Do We Have a Pope" caught her eye.

"I hung on every word and I prayed," says Russell, who was raised in what she describes as "an anti-Catholic home."

She describes Lighthouse CDs as her lifeline and says she may have taken no steps closer to the Church if not for those Lighthouse CDs. "The tapes spoke and explained something in such a clear way I couldn't refute it," she says. Besides, when she couldn't explain her newfound faith and knowledge, she could give a tape to her husband, Edgar, to listen to.

Russell, who now gives the CDs to others too, points out they're an excellent tool because you don't argue with a CD. "It's not intimidating," she says. "And it's a perfect means of evangeliz-

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ing people who are searching but who don't want other people to know they are."

She and Edgar were received into the Church by Father Ben Constantine at St. Peter's Church in Eaton Rapids, Mich., this Pentecost.

Staff writer Joseph Pronechen is based in Trumbull, Connecticut.

INFORMATION

*LighthouseCatholicMedia.com
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