

Getting to Know...Holly Thomas and her son, Micheal

By Vic Gideon

“Acceptance.”

That’s why Holly Thomas says she converted to Catholicism as an adult and why she chose Communion of Saints after she gave birth to her son Micheal in 2013, wheeling Micheal into her meeting with previous COS pastor, Father John McNulty.

“Father John told me that they would love me and my family and they were true to their word,” she remembers. “I never looked back.”

Holly brought Micheal home from the hospital to the house where she grew up, on Meadowbrook. But her road to Catholicism was not a straight path: while attending Canterbury, Wiley, and graduating from Cleveland Heights High School in 1992, Holly grew up Baptist, going to Cedar Hill Baptist Church. She had questions, however, after Micheal was born.

“They told me I would not be accepted to heaven by having a child out of wedlock.”

She met with Father John, and Micheal was baptized Catholic with Holly then converting to Catholicism, completing the RCIA program in 2014, before Micheal’s first birthday.

“Every day I know that there are the saints praying for me, I know Mary is praying for me,” she says of the support she feels in Catholicism. “You have to have a strong faith to get through this life. You need a foundation. If I didn’t have my faith, honestly, I don’t know where I’d be right now.”

Micheal went to Kindergarten at COS and currently goes to PSR while in the sixth grade at Roxboro Middle School. Delayed by COVID, Micheal received First Communion on Christmas Day with Father Anthony.

“I promised the Lord that if he made sure that Micheal was born healthy that I would give him to Him (God),” she remembers. “So I make sure I always take him to church and, for Micheal to be accepted and loved on the way he is, now by Father Anthony, is making me know that God heard everything I said.”

Holly has spent her career living her faith, helping people get housing, first with CMHA, then CGI (which assists HUD), and now, since April, working at the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court as the Housing Enforcement Specialist.

“I do love to help people; housing is my passion,” she says. “Housing is not a privilege – it’s a basic human right.”

Recently, Holly has had to rely on her faith again, Micheal and her staying with her mother, Mary Seawright, after Mary received a cancer diagnosis.

“I know that we have to stand on our faith,” Holly says. “But whatever is done, I know it’s God’s will and I’m fine with that.”

Holly and Micheal attend mass at St. Philomena, and Micheal has invited his father – who was raised Catholic – to join them. And Holly’s connection to St. Philomena goes back before Micheal was born. Her mother remarried at the church and it’s where her stepfather had his high funeral mass.

“Micheal has the biggest heart,” Holly says, gushing about her son who turns 12 in April. “Micheal loves to love.”

Meanwhile, she says she and Micheal are getting the spiritual guidance they need at the parish.

“I feel loved,” Holly says.

“I love COS because COS did everything that they promised me they would do in the beginning,” Holly remembers. “They loved me and they loved my son and I love them for that. It is a family that I know that I have, good or bad, rain or shine, and I am committed to being in church every Sunday, long as I can, to give back what the Lord gave to me to share my gifts.”

“From Father John to Father Anthony,” Holly reflects, “I am committed to going COS because it gives me everything that I need to stay on track in this life.”

