

Youngeun (Rosaria) and Junwoong (Alvaro): From Korea to Rome To Be Baptized by the Pope

They met friends who frequent centers of Opus Dei in Korea, and were attracted to the faith little by little. At the Easter Vigil in St. Peter's Basilica on Saturday night, they will be received into the Catholic Church. These are their stories.

03/29/2024

Youngeun (Rosaria): "I want to work for others"

Hello, my name is Youngeun Choi and I live in Seoul, South Korea. Right now I'm studying Urban Sociology at Seoul University.

As a sociologist, what I like the most is talking to many people, listening to different opinions, and then expressing them in short texts to organize my thoughts on my own.

It is difficult to summarize people's dreams and aspirations because they change over time. But I want to talk with many people and share different opinions. I want to work together with others and for others, instead of working alone.

I have a close friend who is a devout believer. I think I naturally became interested in the faith because of her. Following my friend, I started participating in a Catholic club at

university, went to church, and learned many new things. She will be my godmother when I'm baptized, and I am very grateful to her.

My family is not religious, but I was touched by their support when I told them I was going to be baptized. In particular, my mother showed interest in Catholicism and said that she liked it because it gave her a strong sense of God's presence. They found where the cathedral in my hometown was and supported me. Then my doubts sort of disappeared, and I decided to be baptized without delay.

I still don't know much about faith, but I like the saying: "Love your neighbor as yourself." I also thought I wanted to have a big heart like Jesus and to love and care for others as much as myself. I also want to learn more. Thank you for praying for me!

Junwoong (Alvaro): "Jesus' infinite love surprised me"

My name is An Junwoong, and I will be baptized with the name Alvaro during the upcoming Easter Vigil in the presence of the Pope. I am from Korea, but I have lived in China for 19 years, ever since I was one year old, before moving back to Korea. Right now I'm pursuing a Ph.D. in computer architecture, after having studied electrical engineering.

Thinking about the future, I want to become someone who proposes optimized computer architectures for data centers, using my expertise in my field. But what I would most like is to be a good father.

I met the faith like this: I lived in China for 19 years. The country is very shut off to religion, so I had no experience of religious life. Ten years ago, when I moved to Korea to go to university and met Ji-hwan, my faith

and approach to religion began to change gradually. I saw his sincere and upright way of life and I wanted to follow in his footsteps.

I visited the Opus Dei center to experience its culture and kept going there from time to time. Every quarter, on a Friday after finishing my classes at university, we would go on two-day overnight volunteer trips, with the religious from Kkottongnae. Three years ago, during a retreat, I participated in a Mass for the first time and deepened my desire for the gift of faith.

Over the years, I have seen how Catholics and my friends from the center love others. I always wondered how I could love others, and now I know how. I started catechism classes at Myeong-dong Cathedral. The most impressive truth I learned during my catechesis (preparation for baptism) is the

infinite love of Jesus. The fact that He would save just one lost sheep and never stopped loving, to the point of death, resurrection, and his ascension to heaven was the most surprising truth for me.

Thanks to the UNIV trip, I will have the opportunity to be baptized by the Pope during this year's Easter Vigil Mass, with the baptismal name of Alvaro. I can't imagine what the ceremony will be like. I've watched the video of the 2023 Easter Vigil on YouTube about five times, but it still doesn't seem real to me. Thinking about it makes me realize how well God treats me. I am a little nervous, and I know that, yes, I will make mistakes.

At the get-together we had on Wednesday with other St. Raphael boys, they applauded a lot for me. Now I feel the responsibility to

return that love to the Church by
being a good Christian.

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(07/23/2025)