

JUNE QUIZ ANSWERS

1. **Ignace Lepp** (1909-1966) – French psychiatrist whose parents were freethinkers and who joined the Communist party at age fifteen; broke with the party in 1937 and eventually became a Roman Catholic priest.

The catalyst in his conversion to Christianity from a firm allegiance to the Communist party was his reading of the novel about St Peter's martyrdom *Quo Vadis* by the Polish novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz. When this led him to read the New Testament he was struck by a vision of the early Church as embodying a quality of life respectful and caring for the dignity of all people that he had hoped he would find in Communism but never did. Above all he was drawn to the person and teaching of Jesus as presented in the Gospels.

4. Edith Stein (1891-1942) –Phenomenologist philosopher who converted to Roman Catholicism and became a Discalced Carmelite nun; declared a saint by John Paul II.

She was born into an observant Jewish family but as a teenager she became agnostic. She was drawn to the Christian faith by reading the life of St Teresa of Avila. While resident in a Dutch convent, in response to the pastoral letter from the Dutch bishops on 26 July 1942, in which they made the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis a central theme, all baptized Catholics of Jewish origin (according to police reports, 244 people) were arrested by the Gestapo on the following Sunday, 2 August 1942. They were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where they were murdered in a gas chamber on 9 August 1942.

5. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) –Nobel Prize-winning dissident author of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *The Gulag Archipelago* who converted to Russian Orthodoxy.

Solzhenitsyn was born into a family that defied the Soviet anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and remained devout members of the Russian Orthodox Church. However, Solzhenitsyn lost his faith in Christianity, became an atheist, and embraced Marxism–Leninism. While serving as a captain in the Red Army during World War II, Solzhenitsyn was arrested and sentenced to eight years in the Gulag and then internal exile for criticizing Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in a private letter. As a result of his experience in prison and the camps, he gradually became an Eastern Orthodox Christian.

8. Francis Collins (b. 1950)– physician-geneticist, noted for his landmark discoveries of disease genes; Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute; former atheist.

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis, recommended to him by a Methodist minister, was a key text in the process of his conversion that had started by hearing the testimonies of patients he visited on the hospital wards. In his 2006 book *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, Collins wrote that scientific discoveries were an "opportunity to worship".

6. Chai Ling (b. 1966)– Chinese student leader of the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989; converted to Christianity in 2009.

7. William J. Murray (b. 1946) – author and son of atheist activist Madalyn Murray O'Hair.

In 1960 William Murray's mother Madalyn, while on a trip to Paris, attempted to immigrate to the Soviet Union but her bid was unsuccessful. On return to the United States, while enrolling her son in a junior high school, she was incensed to see the students praying during class. This prompted her to begin a campaign and initiate a lawsuit against compulsory prayer and Bible study in schools. The Supreme Court heard the case and in 1963 it ruled that mandatory Bible reading in public schools was unconstitutional. William Murray became a Christian in 1980 and was ordained a Baptist minister. His conversion alienated him from his family. Very sadly, in 1995 Murray's daughter Robin, along with his mother Madalyn and his half-brother Jon were kidnapped and murdered. The plot was led by David Roland Waters an ex-convict and a former employee of the American Atheists society who had fired him for theft against the charity.

3. Joy Davidman (1915-1960)- poet and wife of C.S. Lewis.

Joy Davidman was born in New York City and was of Polish-Jewish and Ukrainian-Jewish descent. She was provided with a good education and a secure family life by her immigrant parents. In 1951 Joy wrote: 'I was a well-brought-up, right-thinking child of materialism . . . I was an atheist and the daughter of an atheist.' She was a child prodigy and was enrolled in Hunter College at 15 graduating at 19. In 1935 she received a master's degree from Columbia University after three semesters. She joined the American Communist Party in 1938. Her first marriage to the author William Lindsay Graham broke down and after her husband suffered a nervous breakdown. This led to an experience for Joy in which she said, "for the first time my pride was forced to admit that I was not, after all, the 'master of my fate'. 'All my defenses—all the walls of arrogance and coxsureness and self-love behind which I had hid from God—went down momentarily—and God came in". Both she and her husband started religious studies and in particular they began to read and be influenced by the books of C.S. Lewis.

2. Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966)– British novelist and author of *Brideshead Revisited* who converted to Roman Catholicism from agnosticism.

On 29 September 1930, Waugh was received into the Roman Catholic Church. He lost his faith as a schoolboy at Lancing and had led an irreligious life as an undergraduate at Oxford. In the period leading up to his conversion, Waugh was influenced by his friend Olivia Plunket-Greene, who had converted in 1925 and of whom Waugh later wrote, "She bullied me into the Church". It was she who led him to Father Martin D'Arcy, a Jesuit, who persuaded Waugh "on firm intellectual convictions but little emotion" that "the Christian revelation was genuine". In 1949, Waugh explained that his conversion followed his realization that life was "unintelligible and unendurable without God."

