I struggle daily with my conversion in so many ways. It has been an extremely challenging journey coming back to Christ and into the Catholic Church on so many levels.

And to have to now pick a confirmation name – no pressure – to pick the right name, who will it be? Will it be the right one? I want the name I pick to have longevity, so that my confirmation name (the Saint or Saints that it represents) will continue to inspire me throughout my life.

Early in the RCIA program when I began to contemplate what name to pick for my confirmation name, I looked through quite a few books and websites for names. I really wanted to pick a name of a saint who was alive in Jesus’ time - someone who was actually there. Initially I was inspired by St. Luke as he was supposedly very close to Mary and was an artist. It was said that She allowed him to paint her portrait - which was rumored to be the “black Madon-
na” of Poland. That was intriguing to me – as I am an artist – a creative person. But, for some reason I was prodded to continue looking.

The name Veronica soon stood out. I thought about the fact that she is named in the Station of the Cross, but she is not named in the Bible. And in my research there is some debate whether that was her real name. But symbolically for me, she represents someone who saw Jesus’ suffering and His torment from all of the humans around him. She was a nobody in the crowd but, she was moved with courage to help Jesus when nobody else would. She offered Him her veil to wipe his bloody, battered and beaten face — an incredibly inspiring gesture of compassion.

I cannot imagine how the people of that time could have stood by and cold-heartedly watch this horrifying, barbaric ordeal. But she was not afraid to step out and to help Him. We don’t know anything else about this woman. She is sometimes identified with the woman who had the issue of blood and was cured. She is thought to have cured the Emperor Tiberius with the veil, after which, she gave it to Pope St. Clement. The name Veronica means “true icon.” According to Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich, St. Veronica’s actual name was Seraphia. After I found out about the fact that she was not named in the Bible – I thought that was even better that she was nameless – that her gesture was more than her “I” … she was less, He was more.

After I thought about this as a confirmation name, my painting teacher – who has an awesome blog about her work — happened to do a post about Veronica on her website. There are no coincidences. She did not know that was the confirmation name I was going to pick.

Here is an excerpt from her painting blog about Veronica:

*Icon-painters follow a very strict (and relatively modern) protocol, but there is a small class of them for which no human agency is claimed: the Acheiropoieta, or “Icons Made Without Hands.” These are always images of either the Virgin Mary or Jesus. They are said to have come into existence miraculously or during the life of Christ.*

*There are more of these than you might suppose. In Orthodoxy, the most famous are the Image of Edessa and the Hodegetria. In Catholicism, they include the Shroud of Turin and the Virgin of Guadalupe, which sprang into existence in 1531 in Mexico.*

*Among these should be counted a relic that went missing in the 17th century. In its day, it was one of the most famous wonders of the Christian world, a symbol for the Corporal Works of Mercy. This is the Veronica, a strip of linen veil on which a compassionate bystander wiped Jesus’ face on his way to the Cross.*
The name Veronica is a conflation of Latin vera (true) and icon (image). It originally referred to the veil itself, but over time was applied to the nameless woman who held it.

I sat with just having the name Veronica for a while, but continued to pray about it and to be open to the Holy Spirit’s inspiration. Of course, I thought that Mary would be the ultimate name to want to emulate in one’s life. She is strength, beauty, grace and compassion. One day when I was praying a Hail Mary, the word “grace” became so clear and strong to me – “full of grace” I thought that “grace” be an excellent name … as grace is a gift from God and Mary was full of it and I need so much grace in my life. So I asked whether a virtue could be used for a confirmation name. But since it must be a Saint - I kept looking.

I have been doing a series of 15 prayers of St. Bridget since July 6, 2013. You are to do this devotion for 365 days and I have been committed to this task. I researched her story and I considered her name, as she had been married, then devoted her life to Christ – contemplated how many scourges Christ had been given. He appeared to her and taught her these prayers – that if recited over a year would equal the number of scourges He endured. She was a Christian mystic, started convents and also lobbied hard to get the Holy See back to Rome in her time – an amazing woman. But for some reason, her name didn’t seem to resonate with me although her prayers have been with me daily for quite some time.

But to my surprise, the name Faustina came to me this week. I had gone to the adoration chapel on Saturday. I had an hour before I had to be someplace and I stopped in. I picked up a booklet on the Stations of the Cross and it had included writings from St. Faustina Kowalska. I had started to read her biography a year ago, but never finished it. But the first time I was taught the Divine Mercy Prayer, there was an instant connection to this devotion. It is a very powerful prayer. Well, her writings in relation to the Stations of the Cross connected with me on a very deep level. And at that moment in the chapel, it came to me that I should also choose her name. She was a mystic, devoted to Christ. She was ridiculed and thought crazy at first until they had her undergo psychiatric evaluation. It was written in the research that I found on her that no one around her knew all that she suffered during her life – except for her confessor. And the diary that she wrote throughout her life is an inspiration and testimony of her faith.

For me, I have lived a lot of my life leading and giving direction to others. A position that I know has created false pride and arrogance in my life. But through my conversion, my studies about Mary, about Sister Faustina and rediscovering God’s word – and His word becoming alive to me, I have discovered the beauty in not having all the answers – and many times - no answer – but to wait for God’s answer. I have discovered a really amazing grace – and that is peace and strength that comes through one’s silence. Keeping restraint by not having to get the last word.
I have worked on giving up my ego - which taught me that I didn't have to be in the limelight, or get the credit. This has been very hard for me, but it has been a blessing in many ways— It is how Christian writings say you need to “die to oneself.” This has given me a totally different perspective on the world and has opened my eyes to how much of our world today is centered around “I” – we idolize ourselves. When the “I” is taken out of my thoughts in a situation, peace is revealed in the midst of chaos and I am grateful to God for this gift.

The other aspect is silence. It is a powerful protection against people who want to attack you, or have power over a situation in so many situations, home, work, school or even just driving down the road. I have discovered silence and am amazed at some miraculous outcomes. So much of my life in the past has contributing to all the noise pollution around us.

Silence goes hand-in-hand with letting go of “I” ...

So, by Veronica’s courage to step out and leave her ego to show compassion to Christ and by Sister Faustina’s strength in silence and a life dedicated to showing mercy to others. Both of these women have qualities that I hope to continue to aspire to as a confirmed Catholic.

Veronica Faustina is my desired confirmation name.

And so it is ☀