

5 Famous People Who Found Religion before They Died

Though some see deathbed conversions merely as a convenient way of covering one's tracks before leaping into the uncharted territory of death, others believe that people who become religious converts at the end of their lives truly can be sincere in their newfound faith. The five people below, though recognized for things that would be considered less than religious by most, all discovered religion late in their lives, with some even on their deathbeds.

1. Oscar Wilde

Known for his artful wit and notorious imprisonment after being convicted of gross indecency (homosexual activity), this late Victorian era author [converted to Catholicism preceding his death](#) in 1900. Though he was baptized into the Anglican faith in Ireland as an infant, he was baptized again, this time conditionally, into the Catholic Church on his deathbed at the age of 46 in Paris.

2. John Wayne

Described as an ["American icon of masculinity and wit,"](#) "the Duke" is remembered for his decades long Hollywood career and the many cowboy movies in which he starred. However, the memories are not as fond when they surround his heavy drinking or three marriages. Though all three women and all of his children were Catholic, Wayne was not baptized into the Church until two days prior to his death. Interestingly, [according to his grandson,](#) he had regrets surrounding his eleventh hour conversion and wished he would have joined the Church sooner.

3. Jeffrey Dahmer

Arguably the most notorious serial killer (and sex offender)

in modern American history, Dahmer became a Christian while serving out the prison sentence he received for his numerous crimes. [Baptized by local Wisconsin minister Roy Ratcliff](#), Dahmer revived the Christian faith he lost in his childhood before being killed by a fellow inmate at a prison in Portage, Wisconsin, in 1994.

4. Norma McCorvey

Norma McCorvey is better known by her pseudonym, Jane Roe, the plaintiff in the iconic *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court case. Pregnant with her third child in the early '70s, McCorvey failed to conform to any of the social standards of the time by living [below the poverty line as a divorcee, lesbian, and drug and alcohol addict](#). She was [baptized as an Evangelical Christian in 1995, and converted to Catholicism in 1997](#). In addition to converting to Christianity, she also became a staunch anti-abortion advocate until her death in 2017.

5. Gary Cooper

Hollywood star Gary Cooper was [an Episcopalian for the majority of his life until he was baptized into the Catholic Church several years before his death](#). Though he is quite well known for his long acting career, his faith is a much more silent matter. [His daughter attests to the fact that Cooper did not have a "deathbed conversion"; she believes his conversion was natural \(not precipitated by his looming death\) and sincere. Cooper died in 1961 in the presence of his family, doctor, and parish priest.](#)