

*"Empowered by the Spirit of God we celebrate Jesus' presence in Prayer, Liturgy, Sacrament and Service"*

## **RCIA**

### **The R.C.I.A. is:**

- A time of spiritual growth and conversation.
- A time of renewal for the whole parish
- A process of conversation for those who are becoming Catholics AND for those who already are.

### **How Does One Become a Roman Catholic?**

Some Catholics experienced the process of becoming a Catholic in a very gradual way; baptized as infants, they grew up in Catholic homes, received a religious education and gradually came to share in the sacramental life of the church. But other Catholics came to the church as adults, sometimes already baptized, sometimes having already received a religious formation in one tradition or another. They may have been contacted by a Catholic, but more likely they made the first move by talking to a priest or someone else about the church.

The Church wants to welcome all adults who are interested in the Roman Catholic faith. For those who think they might wish to become Catholic, the Church has the "catechumenate" which is a formal title for the whole [process of preparing adults for initiation into the Church.

### **What is Catechumenate?**

The purpose of the catechumenate is to foster or to deepen one's relationship with Christ and to assist the new Catholic in becoming an active participating member of the Church. It is the structure that involves the teaching and discussion of the good news, prayer and spiritual growth. It encourages direct

contact with members of the local parish community who will share their faith values with the candidates.

The catechumenate also includes various rites that are celebrated along the way to full church membership. These rites reflect the spiritual growth of the candidates and visibly express the community's support for them. Each parish develops its own design for the catechumenate which includes the following stages:

### **I. Period of Evangelization & Inquiry**

During this time the basic gospel message is proclaimed and inquirers are able to reflect upon their own lives in the light of the message of Christianity. It is also a time for questions, finding out more about the church and the value of faith and its prayerful way of life.

### **II. Catechumenate**

Those who profess their faith in Christ Jesus and sincerely desire to enter the church then move to this next phase during which most of the catechesis takes place. With the help of a sponsor and members of the community, the candidate learns of the church as a community of the faithful; their spirit, their work, their mission. Catechumens also learn of the church as human, sinful, ever seeking the Lord.

### **III. Purification & Enlightenment**

At the beginning of Lent, the church calls those who are ready to renew their personal and commitment to Christ and enter into final preparations for the reception of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. This calling takes place formally in the Rite of Election. During Lent the community joins the candidates; the task is to strengthen all that is good and guard against that which is harmful.

#### **IV. Sacraments of Initiation**

Ordinarily the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are celebrated at the Easter Vigil Liturgy, Christians already baptized are formally received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church and received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

#### **V. Mystagogia**

A period of fifty days for Easter to Pentecost is a special time for the newly received to continue their intellectual and spiritual growth and take an active part in the life of the parish community. This is a time for unfolding the meaning of the Easter Sacraments and to realize this as a life long process

#### **Who is the Catechumenate for?**

It is for all adults who wish to join the Roman Catholic Church. Certain parts of the Catechumenate are open to those interested in the church but not ready to make a commitment.

#### **How Can I Help?**

- By giving of your time and yourself to walk the journey as a sponsor.
- By reaching out to those making the journey and for the parish community's own renewal of faith and conversation.

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