

## **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**

### **R.C.I.A.**

#### **Have you ever wondered how a person becomes a member of the Catholic Church?**

Up until about 15 years ago, if an adult was a member of another Faith denomination or had no religious upbringing whatsoever and became interested in becoming a member of the Catholic Church, they would meet with a priest privately for a period of time and then would be quietly baptized or received into the Church when it seemed appropriate. They were called “converts.” In the last two decades the church developed an entirely new ministry for welcoming new members. It is called R.C.I.A.

Nowadays, there are two ways to become a member of the Catholic Church. The first way is for children under the age of seven. They are brought to the church by people who care for them for Baptism. As they participate in the life of the church and its education programs, they receive their First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.

The second way “to become catholic” is geared for people around the age of seven into adulthood. This group prepares to enter the Church through the R.C.I.A. process. This process is based on how people were brought into the Christian community during the first centuries. R.C.I.A. means Rite (rituals) of Christian Initiation of Adults. The church is considering anyone over the age of reason (about age seven) to be included in this group of adults.

And so, we have an R.C.I.A. process here at St. Thomas the Apostle to accommodate all people who might desire to become full members of the Church. Examples of people who qualify include:

a child around seven or older who is connected to the church but has not been baptized.

Someone who is a member of another faith denomination who is feeling called to the Catholic Church

Someone who has been connected to the Catholic Church for a while but has never been baptized

Someone who has been baptized in the Catholic Church but has not received very much religious education or First Eucharist or Confirmation

If you know a young person or adult – even you – who fits one of these descriptions, please consider speaking with Mary Jane Calladio at 203-888-2382 x121.

We ask the prayers and support of the entire parish community as we continue to grow in our ministry of welcoming new members through the R.C.I.A. process.