

Bulletin Announcements for RCIA

Invitation to participate?

Are you or anyone you know interested in exploring the Catholic Church as your church home? Have you been sitting in the pew next to your Catholic spouse for years wondering what you have to do to become Catholic? Statistics show that most people respond to a personal invitation. So this is that personal invitation and a challenge to all of you who might know someone who fits the categories above invite that person.

Why don't we do it the old way in which the priest did it all?

In the early church the whole community welcomed and evangelized newcomers. The responsibility to catechize was shared by all in the community. Through Vatican Council II we have restored this earlier model of initiation and now rely on the parish community to be catechists, sponsors, leaders and to pray for all.

What is RCIA? (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

RCIA is a process through which adults become members of the Roman Catholic Church. This consists of steps, periods, and rites that make up the model of Christian Initiation as restored in the second Vatican Council.

Parish sponsors

The sponsor is the catechumen/candidate's link to the parish. The sponsor helps the person to be part of the life of the community by introducing her/him to members of the parish and inviting them to parish events. The sponsor does not need to be an expert; he/she is a companion on the journey.

What is the period of Inquiry or Precatechumenate?

Persons seeking to know more about the Catholic Church are invited to learn more about whom we are and what we believe. This time may be long or short depending on the person's experience and background. During this time we will respond to the questions of the inquirers and lead them to share their faith stories.

Children and the catechumenate

Children of catechetical age who have not been baptized are asked to participate in a catechumenate for children. This process will include prayer, instruction, working with peers, and the celebration of rites leading to the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Do we accept Baptism from other faith traditions?

The Catholic Church accepts any baptism in which the minister pours water and baptizes in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Most mainline Christian churches use this formula. Baptism is celebrated once in a person's life time.

What is the catechumenate?

As a person completes the period of inquiry and moves into the period of the catechumenate he/she is welcomed to a time of further learning, prayer, outreach to those in need and further understanding of community.

At this time each candidate/catechumen is given a sponsor who assists them in this time of deeper commitment.

Dismissal

Why do we dismiss catechumens and candidates? Do you invite people to your home and not invite them to the table as you eat? As fully initiated Catholics we participate in Word and Eucharist. The uninitiated are invited to the liturgy of the Word and not to share in the Eucharist – a sign of complete initiation. They are fed by the Word and are dismissed to deepen that sharing.

Rites – Bulletin announcements can be found in *Celebrating the Rites*

The Rite of Acceptance

For the last several weeks, a group of inquirers (people interested in the Catholic Church) have been meeting with the RCIA team here in our parish. During this time, they have explored their own faith journeys and whether the Catholic Church is the place to continue that journey. They have prayed about it and have decided to take the next step. This step involves a liturgical rite: the Rite of Acceptance (for the unbaptized) and the Rite of Welcome (for the baptized). They will "assemble publicly for the first time declaring their intention to the Church and the Church, in turn, accepts them as persons who intend to become its members." (From the RCIA Paragraph 41)

We, the parish, as the Church, have a part in this Rite. We are asked to warmly welcome these catechumens and candidates into our faith family and to support them with our prayers.

This Rite will take place on _____ at the ___ Mass. We ask you to prayerfully and joyously participate in this Rite. Please take the time after Mass to meet and greet these people. They are embarking on a wonderful adventure and you are a part of it. And please keep all of us, catechumens, candidates, parish sponsors, and team, in your prayers.

Rite of Sending

The rite of sending is the parish celebration that sends catechumens and candidates to the cathedral for the rite of election. The rite of sending was developed to allow members of the local community to experience some aspect of the rite of election. It usually coincides with the First Sunday of Lent.

Rite of Election

The rite of election or enrollment of names is the recognition of God's choice to call the catechumens for immediate initiation into the church. This rite usually coincides with the First Sunday of Lent which begins the immediate preparation for the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. The rite will take place at _____ on _____.

Scrutinies

A scrutiny is one of the rites of the RCIA that involves self-searching and repentance. The purpose of the scrutinies is to strengthen the person to overcome temptations and to be strong in choosing what is upright and in following the Gospel.

There are three scrutinies. After the readings and homily at the Liturgy the presider invites the catechumens and the assembly to silent prayer, intercessions for the Elect follows. The presider pronounces the exorcism. The exorcism is addressed to Christ, asking him to drive out the power of evil and replace it with the Holy Spirit. Scrutinies are celebrated on the second, third and fourth Sundays of Lent.

Minor rites

What are the minor rites?

The minor rites are prayer services that usually occur during a Sunday liturgy in the catechumenate period, a weekday Mass after the Scrutinies, or at a Liturgy of the Word. They may include prayers of exorcism, blessing, and/or anointing of the catechumens.

Also included in the minor rites are the presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. A presentation is a ceremony in which the Elect formally receive ancient texts that express our faith, the Creed, and our prayer, the Our Father. The Church lovingly entrusts the Creed to the Elect in order to enlighten them with the sure light of faith and the Our Father to fill them with a deeper realization of the new spirit of adoption by which they will call God their Father.

Vigil

The celebration of the Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday give all of us an opportunity to once again celebrate the Paschal Mystery and to welcome new members who have been journeying with us during this year. On Holy Saturday (names of Catechumens) will celebrate Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Candidates, (names) will celebrate Confirmation and Eucharist as they are welcomed to full communion in the Catholic Church. Join us for this great celebration.

How does the whole community get involved in the RCIA?

Everyone in the Catholic Church shares the responsibility of handing on and faith. Through:

Evangelization: Catholics can share their faith with acquaintances and invite those seeking to experience more. We need to invite people personally and directly.

Catechesis: In casual conversation throughout our day with neighbors, co-workers and strangers we have many opportunities to explain what we believe.

Worship: On many occasions we pray for the catechumens and candidates and model our commitment to worship.

Service: By living our faith in service we give example to the world. By personally inviting catechumens and candidates to our homes, our meetings and our services we integrate them into the Catholic family.

We join as a body of believers to pray and serve. We use what personal gifts we have to welcome challenge and rejoice with catechumens.

What is the difference between a catechumen and a candidate?

Both catechumens and candidates are on a journey, preparing for joining the Catholic Church. The difference between the two is simply put: Baptism. A catechumen has never been baptized. A candidate has been baptized in another Christian community with the pouring of water and the words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." It is important to respect and reverence each Christian Baptism and recognize these separate but often similar journeys.

Annulment

Catholics believe marriage to be a sacrament. By this we mean that the faithful love of husband and wife is a sign of Christ's lasting love for us. Civil laws in our country accept the premise that two married people can terminate their marriage with the approval of the state. The Church believes that if two baptized persons validly marry in the Lord, neither the couple, nor the state, nor the church itself has the authority to dissolve that marriage. In examining a marriage the Church may decide that from the beginning a marriage did not have the essential qualities for a complete and valid marriage. An annulment declares that a marriage did not have all that it takes to be a complete marriage in the Lord. An annulment does not separate what God has joined. It declares that what had been joined was not fully what God intended.

Conversion is turning one's heart, mind, soul and strength toward Christ. Catechumens and candidates experience conversion when they decide to let their faith in Christ lead their lives. It changes their attitudes, their understanding, their prayer and their behavior. Conversion is not a once in a lifetime experience. As we grow and deepen in our journey as a Christian we constantly experience conversion – change of heart, mind, soul and strength.

What is the Period of Purification and Enlightenment?

The Period of Purification and Enlightenment customarily coincides with Lent. It is a period of intense spiritual preparation, consisting of more individual reflection than catechetical instruction for the Elect.

The season of Lent points us all toward Baptism. The community is reminded of a Baptism already received. The Elect is reminded and focused on preparing for a Baptism yet to be received at the Easter Vigil. So both the Elect and the community should take advantage of the season of Lent, or the Period

of Purification and Enlightenment, ".....as a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery." (RCIA 138)

What is a neophyte?

A neophyte is someone who is newly baptized. "Neophyte" comes from Greek words meaning "newly planted" or "young sprouts" and can refer to anyone new at something.

Mystagogia is a Greek term referring to "mysteries". The term mystagogy applies to catechesis following Baptism. It is a period when the newly baptized plum the depths of and reflect on the mysteries they have experienced through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

The period of mystagogy concludes with the celebration of Pentecost- often with a diocesan celebration such as a mass for the neophytes (new members).

Mystagogy can be a lifetime experience for all of us – as we continue to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the "mysteries."

Why does baptism coincide with Easter?

Baptism coincides with Easter to focus us on the connection between Baptism and Easter. In the Incarnation the Word became flesh; Jesus who is God became human. Christ's resurrection from the dead made possible the resurrection of humans. Baptism is our first step. It gives us a share in the kingdom of God. When we celebrate Baptism on Easter, we are reminded of our goal dying and rising with Christ in the Paschal Mystery.

Celebrating Baptism at Easter also has historical significance. In the earliest days of the Church this was the way the sacrament was celebrated. By the fourth century the practice of baptizing on Easter was the norm. Our going back to the roots of the sacrament connects us with the early Church in a unique way.

It was suggested that we do all that we can to make the newly welcomed as visible as possible in the parish. Technology today makes it possible to use digital pictures in the parish bulletin

Personal invitation works best