



## **The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)**

*Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish*

“Working to bring about the fullness of the Kingdom of God”

For over 2,000 years, the Catholic Church has been faithful to the truth of Jesus Christ and His Gospel, which has been revealed by the Holy Spirit. As Christians, we are made members of God's Holy Family through the Sacrament of baptism. We receive grace from God to live a life of faith through reception of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist—the gift of Christ's abiding presence. Strengthened by the Eucharist, we seek to become the hands and feet of Jesus in service to our brothers and sisters in need and working for His Kingdom here on earth.

## **The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)**

The formation and the process for initiation into the Catholic Church is called the “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults”, or the “RCIA”. It is centered around the liturgical calendar of the Church and will help you enter into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which is central to our Faith. The RCIA has several stages and steps, each tailored to foster your relationship with Jesus and learn more about His Church.

## **What Can I Expect In RCIA?**

When people asked Jesus about His way of life, He told them to “come and see” (John 1:38-39). He taught these followers His way of life through stories, teachings, questions and experiences. He gave them opportunities to commit themselves to Him more deeply until they could say with St. Paul, “the life I live now is not my own; Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). The early Church followed Jesus' example, inviting inquirers to “come and see”, teaching them and leading them through stages of commitment to new life in Christ.

This is RCIA, the process of initiation used by Jesus and by the early Church, adapted to meet today's needs.

## Who Should Attend RCIA?

**The Unbaptized** - these are adults or children, who have attained the age of reason, approximately age 7, have discerned God's call to conversion and faith, and are seeking to answer that call. They are called *catechumens*.

**Those Baptized in another Christian Church** - these are men and women who have been baptized and formed in another faith community other than the Catholic Church. These individuals are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. They are called *candidates*.

**Baptized, but uncatechized Catholics** - these are individuals who were baptized as an infant in the Church, but received little or no formal religious education. These men and women and children will be catechized to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist

## The Stages of RCIA:

### Inquiry/Pre-catechumenate

This is the "come and see" stage. You are invited to join others interested in the faith to learn more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church. This is a time for reflection on your own life's journey in light of the Gospel values. It allows for you to ask questions and to learn more about what it means to be a Catholic. This period can take as long as you need, and it assists you to determine if you are ready to make this step. If you choose to continue, you will be formally accepted through the Rite of Acceptance into the order of catechumens or the Rite of Welcoming (for candidates). This rite allows for you to state publicly that you wish to follow Jesus Christ as a member of the Catholic Church.

## Catechumenate

This is a time for formation and growth in the faith, during our sessions and in the liturgy (Sunday Mass). Along with your companions and the faith community you will continue to study, pray upon and learn more about the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Church community prays with and for you as you make this journey of faith.

## Period of Purification & Enlightenment

This period consists of more intense preparation and prayer. It begins with the Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion and ends with the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

## Mystagogy

The fourth stage in the process is mystagogy. While this period formally extends into the 50 days of the Easter season, in reality it is a lifelong process of learning what it means to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ!

## Making the Journey

Becoming a Catholic is a life long journey that begins with our baptism and continues throughout our life. It is a continual saying "Yes" to the Lord. Together we are called to strengthen one another in faith.

*We invite you to learn more and join us in living this great mystery of faith!*

If you are interested in joining us in this journey, contact the parish office at **386-6178**. We meet from **6:45-8:00 p.m.** (**usually twice a month**) for prayer, Scripture reading, and discussion about what it means to be Catholic.