

# Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

## The RCIA Process

### *Inquiry*

During this time, you are encouraged to ask any questions about Christianity and receive truthful, life-sharing answers from Catholic Christians. The informal discussions during the inquiry period help you link your personal life stories to the Good News as witnessed and lived by the Roman Catholic community.

If you desire to continue the conversion journey within our faith community, you are invited to experience the first major rite of the RCIA process, the Rite of Acceptance. The rite of acceptance marks both your acceptance of the call of Christ and the communities welcoming acceptance of you, typically at Sunday Mass, with a prayer of strengthening for the journey symbolic of both the joys and the costs of Christian discipleship.

### *Catechumenate*

The word catechumenate means "time of serious study". The length of the catechumenate varies according to individual need. You do not travel alone during this period. Sponsors (practicing Catholics) act as spiritual companions, providing personal support, sharing experience of Christian life and helping you feel "at home" with Catholic religious practice.

The catechumenate period ends when you are ready to begin the third period of the journey, the period of purification and enlightenment, which coincides with Lent (a forty day "retreat") each year. Here we celebrate the second major rite of the RCIA process, the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion.

### *Purification and Enlightenment*

This is a time of final preparation for initiation. Joining with the whole church as she enters the Lenten Season, this period is one of prayer, fasting and reflection – a forty day "retreat" for the entire church.

### *Easter Fire!*

You are initiated through the third and consummating rite of the RCIA process, the Sacraments of Initiation, at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday Night. On that night, when light drives out darkness, joyful sounds fill the silence, and we proclaim and renew our resurrection hope as you culminate your long journey to initiation. If you have not been baptized – this is the night you are born again in the waters of Baptism -- then, along with those who are already baptized, you are sealed with the oil of Confirmation and share the bread and wine of the Eucharist as full members of the Roman Catholic community.

### *Mystagogia*

Your Initiation begins the fourth period of the RCIA journey, the mystagogia, which means "living the mysteries". We continue to meet weekly between Easter and Pentecost to explore and confirm the Easter experience. This is the final stage of the RCIA process, but it is in turn the beginning of a pilgrimage of lifelong, continuous conversion in full communion with the Roman Catholic community of Christians.