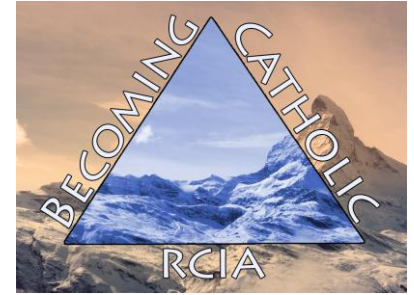


The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

RCIA is a process by which people (12 years and older) become full members of the Roman Catholic Church. Full membership in the Catholic Church involves a total formation process which culminates in the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. It involves a journey of faith and conversion through which a person is introduced to church belief, life, liturgy and apostolic work. RCIC is for those who are 12 to 18 years old.



For Whom is it Intended?

RCIA is designed primarily for those desiring Baptism. Since baptized Christians from other denominations may be seeking membership in the Catholic Church, the RCIA process is adapted to their needs as well. The RCIA process is also open to baptized Catholics who would like to complete their initiation as members of the Church and are seeking Confirmation and to those who are not Catholic and wish to know more about the faith in order to raise their children Catholic.

How Does it Operate?

The process of full initiation into the church has five stages, beginning with the Period of Inquiry. This is the time for questions, finding out more about the Church and the life of faith. Normally it lasts for 8-10 weeks but may be extended as long as an individual desires. Not all inquirers decide to enter the Church or to complete their initiation. This is entirely up to the individual.

The Period of Catechumenate follows. Candidates for initiation who wish Baptism, full communion with the Church or Confirmation will use this time to deepen their life of faith and to continue to discover the power of God's love for them. It is a time to listen and reflect on the gospel of Jesus in the light of one's own life history.

The Period of Purification and Enlightenment begins on the first Sunday of Lent. It is a continuation of the reflection of scripture of one's own life. The focus now is on Lenten themes. Candidates will be encouraged to grow in prayer, works of charity and sacrifice. They are normally chosen to be admitted to full initiation at Easter at the Rite of Election.

Full Initiation into the Catholic Church takes place at the Easter Vigil through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Christians of other denominations already baptized are received into full communion with the Catholic Church at this time. Candidates for Confirmation only will be confirmed shortly after Easter.

The last stage is the Mystagogia, a time of 50 days from Easter to Pentecost when the new church members will become better integrated into the community of faith, will reflect further on their understanding of the Easter sacraments and discover how they can participate in the apostolate of the Church into which they have been newly welcomed.

How Long Does it Take?

Since the process of conversion is unique to each individual, the length of time spent in preparation for the Easter sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) will differ for each person. Normally it will run for one year. It could go longer according to a person's desires and needs.

The sacraments of initiation are ordinarily celebrated only once a year at Easter Vigil Mass. A special date will be set for adult baptized Catholics seeking Confirmation only.