

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process whereby the Catholic Church responds to the desire of non-Catholics to learn more and possibly join the Catholic community. The Christian initiation of adults is celebrated by the entire Church, and is one of the principal ways in which the Church continually renews itself. Through the RCIA, Catholics are given the opportunity to reflect on their own Baptismal commitment by giving witness to their faith in Christ who is the head of the Church. Encountering Jesus is the goal of RCIA.

Christian Initiation is a process of conversion to Christ and the love of God proclaimed in the Gospel. This conversion process takes time and cannot be rushed. At Easter, the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are administered and celebrated only after a period of careful preparation for those who have not been baptized.

While Saints Peter and Paul Parish is a large community of 1500 families, the RCIA team members serve to make each individual feel welcome and to answer any questions that might arise. A sponsor is available to provide support for each catechumen or candidate.

Although the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults does involve thorough education in Catholic doctrine and theology, it also seeks to nurture and direct the spiritual life of individuals. It is a process of formation and growth which shapes the faith of individuals in their hearts and their minds. This process takes place by hearing the Word of God and responding to God's Word by sharing life in the parish community and discovering Christ alive in our midst. Instruction in the faith seeks to expose candidates to the truth of the Scriptures and the rich traditions of the Catholic faith. Thus individuals are "transformed in Christ through the renewing of their minds" (Rom. 12:2).

Catechumens and candidates sharing in this process are given an opportunity to discuss questions and express any of their own personal doubts, hopes and aspirations. Each is assigned a sponsor with whom he or she feels comfortable, who helps answer questions and accompanies the catechumen or candidate on this journey. The process of Christian Initiation is divided into stages and each stage is marked by the celebration of liturgical rites in the parish. At Easter, these rites culminate in the

sacraments of initiation through which we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death and resurrection. Baptism incorporates us into Christ and makes us a "new creation by water and the Spirit: (Baptismal Rite). Confirmation makes us more completely in the image of the Lord and fills us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we may bear witness to Christ before the whole world, using our gifts to build up His Body in love. Finally, joined to Jesus at the table of the Eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God so that we may have eternal life (John 6:55). In this way we are each incorporated into the one body of Christ, the Church, and grow in the fullness of God's life and love.

For those who are already baptized Christians of other faith traditions, baptism is not repeated but is replaced with the Rite of Reception into the Catholic Church. There is also an RCIA for children of catechetical age (7 and older). This process is modeled on the process for adults and is for children who have never been baptized or have been baptized in another Christian tradition.

**The RCIA means welcome...
WELCOME EVERYONE! Jesus
welcomes all to share His life at
Saints Peter and Paul Parish.**

If you have thought about becoming Catholic and would like to know more about the process, we urge you to fill out this form and mail it or bring it to the Christian Formation Office or Rectory or drop it in the collection basket, and one of the members of the RCIA team will contact you.

ÿ I would like to become Catholic.

ÿ I would like to know more about becoming Catholic.

Name:

Address:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

RCIA What Is It?

- ♥ A unique process of spiritual growth by which one hears the good news of salvation and draws nearer to God in Christ.
- ♥ Welcomes people of other faiths to explore ours and grow with us in the knowledge of God.
- ♥ Stresses conversion of mind, heart and soul through a special period of preparation, accompanied by the celebration of liturgical rites.
- ♥ Based on the process of making disciples in the early Church.
- ♥ Involves and celebrates the mystery of Christ present in the whole parish community.

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