

THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS



The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)** is the process for becoming a Roman Catholic.

The RCIA is not a program. It is the church's way of ministering sensitively to those who seek membership in the Catholic Church.

RCIA is for Adults:

- who have never been baptized or
- who have been baptized in another Christian tradition or
- for those baptized Catholics who have not received First Eucharist or Confirmation and wish to become full members of the Catholic Church by completing their sacraments.

RCIA is primarily a journey of faith through study and discussion about the Catholic experience. It's a Rite that marks stages along the path to full commitment in the Catholic Church.

There are five (5) stages of the RCIA Program which are listed below.

1. The first stage is the Inquiry Period. This is when participants are given the opportunity to ask questions about our Church, to share stories, and to reflect on the place of God in our lives. Deacon Steve Szmutko holds Inquiry Sessions throughout the summer months until the program starts in the fall.
2. The second stage is the Period of the Catechumenate. This is the stage in which there is a commitment to move forward to full membership in the Catholic Church by attending Mass and spending time reflecting on the Liturgy of the Word.
3. The third stage is the Period of Purification and Enlightenment/Scrutinies. This stage corresponds to the time known in the Catholic Church as Lent, the six-weeks of preparation for Easter. This is the period of prayerful discernment for catechumens and candidates, who are now known as the Elect, as they prepare for the moment of welcome as full members and are established as such by the Sacraments of Initiation.
4. The fourth stage is Celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation (culmination of the Paschal Triduum). The Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated at the Easter Vigil, an extended night-watch of prayer, singing and hearing the Word of God. By the waters of baptism, a person passes into the new life of grace and becomes a full member of the Body of Christ.
5. The fifth stage is the Period of Mystagogy. This stage lasts from Easter Sunday until the completion of the Easter season (fifty days later on Pentecost Sunday and completes the initiation process). During this period of Easter joy new members of the Catholic Church reflect on what they have just gone through and look to the future as to how they can now share in the mission of Christ.

New groups begin meeting in the Fall.

If you or someone you know would like to hear more about the church in a relaxed, non-threatening setting, please call Deacon Steve Szmutko at 609-947-0587.