



BECOMING A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN!

HEAR JESUS INVITE YOU?

Your decision to look into the Catholic Church is your response to Jesus' invitation to come to know him through this community. Jesus is inviting you into a personal relationship with him.

DESIRE A CHANGE OF HEART?

The process of coming to know Him more deeply usually results in a change of heart, or a conversion in our way of thinking and acting. *Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Our Lady* wishes to help you grow in your faith!

A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?

Our goal is not to fill your mind with *facts* about the Catholic Church: "*Why do Catholics genuflect?*" or "*Why do Catholics pray the Rosary?*"

Our goal is to help you discover the meaning behind the facts and put them in your life. We will support you on your faith journey as you learn what Catholics believe and as your friendship with Jesus grows.

THIS PROCESS IS CALLED: THE RCIA

*THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF
ADULTS*

The RCIA is a process of coming to know Jesus Christ on a more personal level, a process of deeper growth and commitment, a process that continues long after you are initiated into the Catholic Church. Part of the journey is discovering your readiness to make that commitment to Christ in and through the Catholic Church. We will celebrate your journey in faith by celebrating various rituals described below.

1st STAGE: TIME OF INQUIRY

This stage of the *RCIA* is a time of unhurried reflection and discovery, whereby a person begins to search out God's call to enter more fully into the life of the Church. Helping the inquirer in this process are members of our own parish family who form the *RCIA* team.

Team members meet weekly with the inquirers, helping them to discern God's calling through encouragement, prayer, and the sharing of their own faith stories.

2nd STAGE: THE CATECHUMENATE

Once the inquirer decides to enter into the next step in the process which leads to full initiation into the life of the Church, they move into the second stage of their formation via the **Rite of Acceptance**. Now an inquirer is called either a catechumen or a candidate.

- A **CATECHUMEN** is a previously unbaptized person who is seeking membership in the Catholic Church.
- A **CANDIDATE** is a person, baptized in a Christian Tradition and seeks to be received into the Catholic Church through a Profession of Faith and the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

During this time of formation, the faith of the catechumen or candidate is deepened through prayer, reflection and instruction on God's word at weekly Monday meetings.

3rd STAGE: LENT AND TIME OF PURIFICATION LEADING TO THE EASTER VIGIL

The first Sunday of Lent, the **catechumens** and **candidates** at the **Rite of Election** are presented to Archbishop Cardinal Dolan. The period after this rite is a time of purification for the catechumen, the candidate, and indeed for the entire parish community.

The focus is on the call to reform our lives according to the demands of the gospel. At the conclusion of this period, the catechumens and the candidates are initiated into the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil.



- The **Catechumen** receives **all three Sacraments of Initiation**—Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- The **Candidate** enters into **full communion with the Church** through a Profession of Faith and receiving the Holy Eucharist and Confirmation.

4th STAGE: MYSTAGOGY

This is the time set aside to help the new members enter more fully into the mystery celebrated at the Easter Vigil and at every Mass. The Greek word *mystagogy* means "*entering into the mystery.*" This phase, which occurs after Easter, marks a time when those who have become full members of the Church now have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the mystery of the faith.

GODPARENTS

A **GODPARENT** is a person you choose to accompany you in the rituals that will bring you into the Catholic Church (specifically, the *Rite of Election* and the rites of initiation at the Easter Vigil) and who will also accompany you during the period of the *mystagogy*.

- A godparent is chosen on the basis of example, good qualities, and friendship.
- Neither of your parents may act as a godparent.
- A godparent must be a confirmed Catholic, at least sixteen years old, and is living a good Christian life in accordance with the gospel.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A CATHOLIC?

The RCIA is a process and not a program, so the time frame is flexible according to the needs of the individual, preparing to be received into the life of the Church.

For those who are not acquainted with Christian traditions and the Christian way of life, the period of preparation can be a year or even longer. For those more familiar with the Christian tradition, the process may be shorter.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

- If you, a friend, or relative want to become a Catholic, call Fr. Sorgie at 914-961-3643.
- Know someone who never received First Communion or Confirmation, call Fr. Sorgie at 914-961-3643.



**Immaculate
Conception and
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