

RCIA JOURNEY EXPERIENCES

By: Karen Civit ~ Convert to the Catholic Faith 2017

Having been a member of another church for about 30 years, I attended regularly and was very involved in many aspects of that church. I attended Bible studies but never seemed to grasp the faith in religion that I was seeking. It seemed that my heart and mind were closed to the true faith. Last year, I watched as my brother who was a year younger than myself pass away from stomach cancer. I saw his suffering which was horrible to watch and I was with him when he passed away. I knew that he was at peace with God; and I thought that there has to be more to life than this. I was missing something but still wasn't sure what it was.

After becoming re-acquainted with an old friend, we often spoke about the Catholic faith and how it has remained steadfast through thousands of years. My family was all baptized Catholic and I always considered myself a Catholic, but I never went through the process of "being a Catholic". Then, a good friend suggested that I go to the RCIA classes because she had gone through them and found it to be a good learning experience. So, I thought what could it hurt? I admit I was nervous at first because I didn't know what to expect.

My first dilemma was locating my baptism certificate. I was embarrassed and frustrated going from one church to another to no avail. One of the instructors told me not to worry. If we can't locate a certificate, Father John can do a "conditional" baptism, much to my relief. God must have known my desire to become a Roman Catholic!

The classes were very interesting. The teachers made it fun and made everyone feel comfortable. I have made new friends and had the experience of going to St. Paul's Cathedral with the group for the Rite of Election with Bishop Zubik. Now I find myself wanting to read the Bible, listening to the history of the Catholic faith and why we believe as we do. I joined in the Christ Life sessions and am finally opening my mind and heart to whatever God chooses in my life.

Finally, since I had never been to an Easter Vigil Mass, I was as anxious and excited as a new bride. I was going to be baptized, confirmed, and able to receive the Holy Eucharist with good friends, new and old. I received gifts from my friends and the church after the Mass; but the greatest gift I received was the Holy Eucharist and becoming a Catholic.

By: Alexa Ponick ~ Convert to the Catholic Faith 2017

In order to grow in faith and to gain more knowledge of the Catholic religion, I chose to go through the RCIA program. My boyfriend/sponsor has been a Catholic his entire life and has been a member of St. Hugh's Church for quite a while now. I began attending church services with him about a year and a half ago and really enjoy attending Mass every Sunday. If I had any questions concerning the Catholic religion, he would usually provide me with all the answers. From the first day I began attending church, Father John made me feel very comfortable as if I belonged to the church even though I was not a Catholic. Eventually, he informed me of the RCIA program and I chose to participate during the 2017/2018 sessions. During my time in the program, many of the remaining questions that I had were answered and explained thoroughly. Not only did I gain further knowledge about the Catholic faith, but I became closer with the teachers of the program and gained new friendships with my fellow classmates. It was a great experience and I would encourage others who may be interested in converting to give it a try.

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By: Kristi Czyzewski ~ Convert to the Catholic Faith 2017

I enrolled in the RCIA program simply because I wanted to learn more about the Catholic faith, as well as preparing to become a member of the Catholic Church. I expected an introduction to the fundamental beliefs of the faith. However, throughout my journey, the instructors explained the practices and teachings of the Catholic Church in a way that we, as candidates, could easily grasp the concepts being discussed as well as how to put those principles into practice in our daily lives. They helped to guide me on my journey of faith and grow spiritually. The support and companionship of my sponsor also played a significant role in the RCIA process.

During these sessions, I was able to build relationships with the other RCIA candidates along our journey and exploration into the Catholic faith. We watched each other grow spiritually over the course of the program. What I longed for the most was the Easter Vigil service where I and the other RCIA candidates were able to celebrate our baptism, confirmation, and first Holy Eucharist. Not only did this have a very special meaning for me, but it was an opportunity for us “new” Catholics to publicly declare our faith before the church community.

This journey of faith will be one that personally lasts a lifetime! Thank you all for your support during this process and God Bless!

By: Ronald Dobish ~ Convert to the Catholic Faith 2017

I would like to thank you for the experience of the RCIA classes. It really means a lot to me to have the opportunity to be a member of St. Hugh Church.

Initially, before starting the classes, I knew that I had always wanted to get closer to God and try to live a better life. As the classes started, I felt overwhelmed knowing that there were many different steps to becoming a Christian in the Catholic faith. I have learned so much from the classes and now have a completely different insight about my religion and God. Although the classes are finished, I realize there is still so much more to learn.

It was an incredible experience going to St. Paul’s Cathedral in Pittsburgh and being able to observe and be a part of all of the different churches in the Diocese coming together within the Catholic faith. The Cathedral is so beautiful and breathtaking.

The Easter Vigil was an amazing experience as well. I have always enjoyed the Easter holidays; however, this year was special to me because I was baptized, confirmed, and received the Holy Eucharist for the first time.

Overall, the entire RCIA classes were a great experience and have taught me so much. The church community made me feel welcomed throughout the entire process. It is truly a privilege and a blessing to be part of the St. Hugh family.

By: Adrian Moniger ~ Convert to the Catholic Faith 2017

I decided to become a Catholic for my family, especially my son. In my heart, I felt it was the right thing to do so that he could grow up having both parents belonging to the same religion. Taking the RCIA classes really helped me to understand the Catholic faith. I was raised as a Christian but I never understood the teachings of the Catholic faith until now. Taking these classes was a very good experience for me.