

### **RCIA - (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)**

The RCIA is for anyone who is thinking about joining the Catholic Church. This includes people who were never baptized and those who have been baptized in other Christian churches. It includes people who have grown up with religious instruction as well as people who have had no religious upbringing. RCIA is also for those who have been baptized as Catholics but did not complete their initiation with First Communion and/or Confirmation. In other words, an RCIA group can be a wonderful mix of people.

The heart of RCIA is more than just preparing for membership in the Church. It is ultimately about developing a deeper love for Christ through the Scriptures, through the Church's Tradition and especially through the sacraments, the real signs of His presence in our world.

The heart of the process involves weekly sessions that begin in September and run until just after Easter. These gatherings consist of those who are inquiring about the faith (catechumens), their sponsors and the RCIA team members (catechists). The first several sessions make up the Period of Inquiry. During this time we present a general overview of living a life of faith. It is an opportunity to voice questions and concerns, an opportunity to inquire. No commitment needs to be made at this time.

Those who decide to continue in the RCIA after the initial period of inquiry are then received into the Order of Catechumens. As a catechumen you are accepted into the Church community as someone who is intent on learning more about the faith as you prepare for full acceptance into the Church. The Catechumenate, as this phase is called, proceeds for approximately twelve weeks. The preparation you receive during this time makes you familiar with the doctrines, theology and teachings of the Church.

Following these sessions we enter into the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, which coincides with the season of Lent. This is a time when we look more deeply at ourselves to discover what things might keep us from loving God with all our hearts. You begin this phase

by participating in the Rite of Election , at which time you publicly express your intention to move forward to full reception into the Church. The RCIA during this Lenten season is marked by a spirit of penance and prayer.

It is at this time that final preparations are made for your initiation at the Easter Vigil celebration, which is the culmination of the entire RCIA process. On this holiest of all nights you are joyfully received into the Catholic Church as full members through the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and/or Confirmation. This event occurs at the celebration of Easter Vigil because it is the most glorious event of the entire Church year. It expresses our faith in the saving mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a mystery into which we are all baptized and out of which we live our lives.

*Classes will begin in September. If you or anyone you know would like to join or receive information about RCIA, please call the church office at 822-3367.*