

# **RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION (RCIA)**

**The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process for adults to become full members of the Roman Catholic Church. It can be looked at as the Church's "formation program" for new members. In the early church, the initiation process could have taken up to three years. Here, it is usually an eight-month period.**

**However, this process is your personal spiritual journey. Time should never be a factor. This period of September to April or May is only a formal period. You have the freedom to say that you want a longer period to discern.**

**During the course of this journey of prayer, education, and discernment, \* Catechumens and \*\* Candidates participate in a number of classes and ritual ceremonies in which the Catholic community gradually acknowledges their progression to full membership. These ceremonies include:**

- **Rite of Acceptance and Welcoming**
- **Rite of Election**
- **(3) Scrutiny Rituals**
- **Presentations of the Creed and of the Our Father**

**Full initiation culminates or concludes at the joyous Easter Vigil celebration on Saturday night before Easter Sunday. Depending on one's previous sacraments received, here is where one either receives the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.**

**\* A catechumen is a person who has never been baptized and therefore will receive all (3) sacraments at one time on Easter vigil.**

**\*\* A candidate is one who has been baptized in a non-Catholic Christian faith and needs to complete Eucharist (i.e. Holy Communion), Reconciliation (i.e. Confession) and Confirmation. If this person is a former catholic who had received First Holy Communion and Reconciliation, then they will only need to receive Confirmation.**

**The schedule of meeting days and times, along with the topics to be discussed, are on the schedule give to you.**

## **Other information about RCIA**

- **Each catechumen and candidate will need a Catholic sponsor. A sponsor is one who will journey with you during this formation period. The sponsor's first responsibility is to pray for his/her catechumen and or candidate. A sponsor also serves as a link to and from the local faith community.**
- **A sponsor can be a practicing and fully sacramentally initiated Catholic who is a fiancé, spouse or friend. Sponsors are expected to attend Sunday morning sessions and a possible retreat.**
- **If a sponsor of yours lives in another state, then you need to set up times to communicate with them. If they cannot attend the Easter vigil ceremony, then we will help you get a local person to stand in for your sponsor as a proxy.**
- **What is the charge for RCIA? There is no cost. RCIA is an important component of the church's mandate to spread the Gospel message.**
- **Sometimes, because of business, personal travel, military schedules, illness, people find themselves unable to attend a Sunday morning session. We may have to conduct TBA make-up sessions for those individuals.**
- **In one of Jesus' final discourses or talks in Matthew's Gospel, he defines aiding the needy as an element necessary for "inheriting the Kingdom" of heaven. We, therefore, invite RCIA candidates and catechumens to give some time to performing some act of charity for the least of our brothers and sisters. Helping and serving the needy has always been the work of the Catholic Church. This will be a TBA event.**

**We thank you for inquiring about the Catholic Church. We pray that your journey will be a joyful one.**