

# How Do I Become a Catholic?

## *The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*

*We walk as companions on a journey...*

### **What is the RCIA?**

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is a process through which adults become full members of the Roman Catholic Church. The RCIA is based on a life-long faith formation model. There are several stages involved in the process beginning with a period of inquiry to find out more about Catholicism. As individuals are ready, the parish celebrates certain rites (rituals) that signify the end of one stage and the beginning of another.

### **Who are Candidates for RCIA?**

- Adults who have never been baptized in any Christian faith.
- Adults who were baptized in another Christian tradition and who are now thinking of becoming Catholic.
- Adults who were baptized as Catholics but have not received the sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation.

### **What if I have never belonged to or been baptized in another faith?**

There are many reasons you may be considering Catholicism. Perhaps your spouse, fiancé, or another friend has encouraged you to consider Catholicism. Or there may be other reasons you have been searching. In some way, God is calling you into a deeper relationship. We welcome you and any questions you may have about the Catholic faith. If you decided you want to be baptized Catholic, we will accompany you through the stages of the RCIA process.

### **What if I belong to another Christian tradition?**

You may find God calling you to explore a different spiritual path at this point in your life. The decision to change faith traditions should involve a deep spiritual commitment and should not be made lightly. Please know that we deeply respect other religions. If you have been baptized in another Christian tradition, we honor your baptism; you will not be baptized again. If you decide to make the Catholic Church your spiritual home, you will be receiving the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation as a part of the Roman Catholic church.

### **What kind of commitment is involved?**

We ask that you be honestly committed to deepening your own faith life. As a participant in the RCIA process, the time commitment involves weekly sessions that are a combination of learning, prayer and community. As you enter the deeper stages of the process, participation in Sunday liturgies is also expected. If you decide to discontinue the process at any time, we will respect your decision.

## **When and where do the RCIA sessions take place?**

Starting at the end of September, we will begin on **Thursday evenings** for one and a half hours in the Church. the RCIA process finds its apex at the celebration of the Easter Vigil. After the Easter Vigil, we will gather a few more times, ending in mid to late April.

## **What do I need to bring? What else will be expected of me?**

Bring an open heart and mind. The RCIA is a process of learning to live our call to be disciples of Jesus in the context of the Catholic Church. We will be studying and praying with Scripture and learning about the Catholic Faith. But the RCIA process is more than learning facts and history: it is conversion. Conversion is a lifelong process - not a single moment or a change of religion. Conversion is growing in our relationship with God.

## **THE GIFT OF GOD'S LOVE Do I need a sponsor?**

A parish sponsor is someone who is a dedicated practicing Catholic who will walk the journey of conversion with you. The sponsor, however, is not the candidate/catechumen's spouse. Perhaps you already have someone in mind. If so, please let us know. If not, we will provide a sponsor for you. Please keep in mind that the sponsor is expected to be at all of the gatherings from August through May.

*Fully initiated Catholics who would like to sponsor adults in the RCIA process, please complete the form on our web page or contact Marvin Bushman, [dre2@stthereselevelandtn.org](mailto:dre2@stthereselevelandtn.org)*

## **How do I get started in the RCIA Process?**

The process begins with a personal interview to determine how we can best serve your needs. Please contact *Marvin Bushman*, [dre2@stthereselevelandtn.org](mailto:dre2@stthereselevelandtn.org), or phone the parish office at 423-476-8123.