

Becoming Catholic *at Holy Spirit*

RCIA: Rite of Christian Initial of Adults

INTRODUCTION

New members are welcomed into the Christian community through The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (commonly known as RCIA). The RCIA is the normal way in which adults become full, active and participating members of the Catholic Church and it is based on the historic tradition of preparation and formation used by the ancient Christians.

RCIA involves the whole parish – in prayer and community as the Rites are celebrated; in catechesis, through catechists (clergy and lay) teaching the doctrines of our Catholic Faith; in companionship, through parishioners journeying in faith with the inquirers; and by other specific ministries.

New members enter the community in stages, which correspond to a person's journey of faith. Generally speaking, there are four periods of inquiry and growth in becoming a fully-initiated Catholic:

Pre-Catechumenate – Catechumenate – Purification/Enlightenment – Mystagogia

The Church attempts to meet individuals where they are. Persons interested in becoming Catholic move from one step to the other as they are ready. This readiness is determined by the individual in discernment with the RCIA Director.

The main intent of RCIA is toward the unbaptized. However, it is adapted to include those baptized in another faith expression who wish to join the Catholic Church. This is one of the main reasons why length of time may vary from one individual to another.

Through the process, Holy Spirit parish will assign a parishioner each participant in RCIA to accompany, assist, and encourage them.

You do not have to commit to becoming Catholic in order to attend class.

PRE-CATECHUMENATE

Inquirers will meet weekly to attempt to answer questions, share faith stories from the Scriptures, and share personal faith journeys. Each session will last from 7:00 – 9:00 PM.

When the inquirers discern they are ready, they will move to the Catechumenate through the celebration of either the Rite of Acceptance (for the unbaptized) or the Rite of On-Going Conversion (for the baptized), celebrated with the parish community.

CATECHUMENATE

During this period, catechumens (unbaptized) or candidates (baptized) study and ponder more deeply the Word of God and the teachings of the Catholic Church. This time provides them with an opportunity to explore Church doctrine and practices with particular emphasis on the Sacraments of the Church.

PURIFICATION - ENLIGHTENMENT

Those catechumens or candidates who are ready for the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil are called to celebrate the **Rite of Election** by the Bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg at St. Patrick Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent. This celebration is preceded by the **Rite of Sending Forth** by the parish community.

The Rite of Election moves catechumens (unbaptized), now called the elect, and the candidates (baptized), into that immediate preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation through a time of spiritual retreat.

The entire universal Church accompanies the elect and candidates during the Lenten season through prayer, example and encouragement, and the parish community prays publicly for and with them as they continue to prepare themselves more fully for the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Minor Rites: Presentation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, are celebrated with the elect and candidates at the weekly meetings.

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are celebrated at the Easter Vigil, welcoming the unbaptized into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Those already previously baptized make a profession of faith in the Catholic Church and receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, welcoming them into the full communion of the Church.

MYSTAGOGIA

After the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, the elect (those previously unbaptized) are now known as neophytes. They, as well as newly-initiated (those previously baptized who have now made a profession of faith in the Catholic Church), enter more deeply into a reflection of the Catholic Faith they will continue to celebrate throughout their lives. The formal period of Mystagoga for the neophytes and the newly-initiated ends with the celebration of Pentecost, fifty days after Easter, but truly continues for the rest of their lives.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

If you are interested in joining RCIA or if you just want to learn more about it, please fill out the form below and bring it to Holy Spirit church. You can deliver it to the office, to Father Anthony, or put it in the basket at Mass.

*Meetings will be Wednesdays, 7:15 - 9:00 PM,
You will also be invited to attend Mass together on several Sundays.*

Application for RCIA at Holy Spirit parish, Palmyra

Name and Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Additional information you think we should know: