

RCIA

Right of  
Christian  
Initiation  
of Adults



# R.C.I.A.

## The Rite of Christian Initiation of Addults

The *RCIA* is a four step process that supports and encourages the faith journey of all of us. It is designed to welcome and accompany those seeking to become members of the Catholic Church.

The process focuses primarily on faith development rather than on a mastery of church doctrine.

The first phase of the process is called the *Inquiry* stage or *Precatechumenate*. It is designed to answer the questions of the *Inquirers* and to provide instruction on the basic teachings of the Catholic Church. The *Presentation of the Bible*, when each *inquirer is presented with a copy of the Catholic bible*, is an important part of this phase.

The *Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens* marks the end of the *Precatechumenate* and the beginning of the second phase — the *Catechumenate*. At this time the *Inquirers* state their desire to continue on this journey. A member of the faith community is appointed as a *Sponsor* for each *Inquirer* while the entire faith community accepts the responsibility of supporting them by prayer. During this period those who are unbaptized are called *Catechumens* and those already Baptized are called *Candidates for full Communion*. *Catechumens and Candidates* join the community for the Liturgy of the Word. After the Homily they are dismissed with their catechist to continue breaking open the Word and applying it to their lives. Sponsors and the rest of the team join them after Mass to continue the sharing.

When the *Catechumens* and *Candidates* discern that they are ready to make a formal request for the *Sacraments of Initiation*, they are prepared for the *Rite of Election*. On the first Sunday of Lent, at the Mass which they all attend, the *Rite of Sending to the Bishop* is held. At this ceremony each *Sponsor* must declare his/her candidate ready for the *Rite of Election*. The *Catechumens* and *Candidates* must respond to the call and each declare his/her intention by signing the *Book of the Elect*. On Sunday afternoon the *Catechumens, Candidates, Sponsors, Team and parish Clergy* go to the Cathedral. There the *Bishop* calls each *Catechumen (to be called Elect)* to make a public declaration of intent and desire to receive the *Easter Sacraments*. *Candidates*, also, state their intention to become full members of the Church through *Eucharist* and *Confirmation*. Lent is the time of intense preparation for all. There is a special rite on each Sunday of Lent. At the *Easter Vigil* the *Elect* are *Baptized, Confirmed* and receive *Eucharist* and the *Candidates*, after making a profession of Faith, receive *Confirmation* and Eucharist.

*Easter* is not the end but only the *Beginning!* The fourth phase, *Mystagogy*, is a lifelong part of the process. The newly received Catholics (*Neophytes*) are invited to participate fully in the life of the Church by participating in social outreach programs, scripture study and faith sharing groups, and various forms of ministry.

The *RCIA* process can be fruitful only to the extent that every member of the parish is involved. There are many levels of participation: prayer, visiting and providing snacks at weekly meetings, providing receptions after major rites, greeting and welcoming at Mass, or by being a team member or sponsor. If you think you are called to help in any way please call S. Judy at the Pastoral Center. (225-869-5751)