

Session I, Part A: What to expect in RCIA

RCIA, 7 October 2018

“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.” (Acts 2:42-43)

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.” (General Directory for Catechesis, 80)

The **RCIA Team** has a very important role to play in each stage of your spiritual journey as you begin the process of learning about the Catholic faith and possibly entering the Church at the Easter Vigil. Should you choose to continue your journey in a few weeks through participating in the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance and Welcoming, our role will be even more critical as we further prepare you through formal study or “catechesis.” This catechesis will:

1. PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FAITH

In RCIA, participants are introduced to not only doctrine but, more importantly, a *Person*. Knowledge of the Catholic faith includes not only the intellectual component, but also the pastoral, the human, and the spiritual. Most RCIA programs focus solely on the intellectual component often to the detriment of the other three which are equally as important. Our program strives to promote an *encounter* with Christ through a variety of means. This encounter can facilitate *conversion* which in turn can lead to *transformation* in a life lived, and what follows is typically a desire to learn about this Person of whom you have encountered. Learning only rarely facilitates this transformation.

2. PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEANING OF THE LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS

All sacramental and ministerial life in the Church is oriented toward the Eucharist, the source and summit of our Catholic faith (CCC 1324). Everything we do stems from and leads back to the Eucharist but it begins with Baptism. As you journey toward the Easter Vigil, you will be continually invited to reflect upon how the sacraments you are preparing to receive will commission you for a life of discipleship.

3. PROMOTE AND MODEL MORAL FORMATION IN JESUS CHRIST

Catechesis also forms us to live Christ’s teachings in our everyday lives. This means bringing God’s love into the world in both our private life and in the public arena. We also form and inspire people to make a public witness which can simply be through our actions. What we do and how we live says more about what we believe than anything we can ever say. Living the Christian life is not simply about refraining from sin but is more about *pursuing* the virtuous.

4. TEACH THE CHRISTIAN HOW TO PRAY WITH CHRIST

Jesus teaches us how to pray with him. His whole public life—his preaching, ministry to the poor, and death and resurrection—can be seen as an offering of prayer to his Father. We can model his witness by grounding our service to others in prayer through a variety of forms, the first and most important of which is the Mass.

5. PREPARE THE CHRISTIAN TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY and PROMOTE A MISSIONARY SPIRIT THAT PREPARES THE FAITHFUL TO BE PRESENT AS CHRISTIANS IN SOCIETY, and

6. PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Jesus taught his disciples to “love one another as I have loved you” (JN 13:34). This means bringing his love to our families, communities, country, and world. Knowledge of our faith includes not only understanding Catholic doctrine but also understanding Catholic social teaching rooted in Scripture and Tradition. We believe we encounter Christ not only within the walls of the assembled faithful but also outside those walls in the surrounding community and along the suffering peripheries. Catechesis will help the faithful understand how Catholics fulfill our vocation in the world and will be supported through outreach activities that will help bring to life our Catholic social teaching.

(from “The Six Tasks of Catechesis,” The National Directory for Catechesis. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. USCCB, April 26, 2005.)

Session I, Part B: Overview of Prayer

“My soul longs for you, O God” (Psalm 42:2)

“You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” (“Confessions,” Book I.1. Saint Augustine)

“Neither theological knowledge nor social action alone is enough to keep us in love with Christ unless both are preceded by a personal encounter with Him. I have found that it takes some time to catch fire in prayer...

We become like that which we gaze upon...”

(“Treasure in Clay,” Archbishop Fulton Sheen, 1993)

Today’s discussion points:

- What is prayer? Why pray?
- Encountering God in prayer
- The link between prayer and belief