

The Steps in the Process of

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The RCIA is a process of conversion away from sin to a life discipleship, that is, of following the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. By the help of God and through the assistance and guidance of the Catholic Church we will learn what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. This process is marked by distinct stages and celebrations during the year. These are:

1. Inquiry

- a. Also called Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate.
- b. This is a time of curiosity and asking questions. It is a time for finding out more about God's gift of faith and an overview of the teachings of the Catholic Church. During this time you will begin to feel comfortable and at home in the Catholic Church.
- c. Inquiry ends with the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. At this point you become a Catechumen.

2. Catechumenate

- a. This is the longest stage.
- b. This is the time for the nurturing and growth of your faith and conversion to God. Additional attention is given to the study of God's word in the Sacred Scripture.
- c. This stage ends with the Rite of Election celebrated at the Cathedral by the Bishop. At this point you are called the "elect"

3. Purification and Enlightenment

- a. This period typically coincides with Lent (the 40 days of preparation for Easter).
- b. This is a time of intense spiritual preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation.
- c. This time focuses on your conversion.
- d. It is marked by several celebrations:
 - i. Scrutinies are solemnly celebrated on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent. They are intended for your self-searching and repentance. The celebrations seek to uncover and then heal all that is weak or sinful in you. They also bring out and strengthen all that is good and upright. Through these rites the Church takes part in your conversion in a special way by praying for you as you approach the Easter Sacraments.
 - ii. Presentations are celebrated after the 1st and 3rd Scrutinies. You will be presented with the Profession of Faith and the Lord's Prayer. By presenting the Creed, the Church gives you the articles of faith that she professes in the one, true God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. By presenting the Lord's Prayer, the Church teaches you the prayer that Christ gave her when his followers asked him how to pray.
- e. This period comes to an end with celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil.

4. Mystagogy

- a. This is a time of reflection upon what happened during Initiation. This is a time to go deeper into the symbols and meaning of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.
- b. During mystagogy, you will begin to integrate into the parish community and participate more fully in parish life.