

RCIA Terms

Bishop: The local leader and shepherd of a diocese (numerous parishes in a designated area) of the Church who is entrusted with the care of the spiritual lives of Catholics.

Candidate: One who is already baptized in another Christian faith who is now preparing to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. At the time of reception into the Church, he/she will make a profession of faith, be confirmed and receive Eucharist.

Catechist: Those persons chosen to present the teachings of the Church and to facilitate the sharing of the faith after prayerful preparation and study.

Catechumen: One who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Catechumenate: Second stage of the order of Christian Initiation of adults which involves more intense preparation in word, worship, community life, and apostolic works.

Dismissal: Those in RCIA are dismissed from the Sunday assembly after the homily to further study and reflect on the scriptures proclaimed at Mass.

Easter Season: A period of 7 weeks beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the feast of Pentecost.

Elect: The name given to catechumens who celebrate the Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent signifying their being chosen for the initiation sacraments.

Inquirers: Those who participate in the pre-catechumenate of a parish. They are “inquiring” in the Christianity in the Catholic Tradition.

Lent: A six week period extending from Ash Wednesday to sundown on Holy Thursday. It is a retreat time in preparation for the Easter Triduum.

Mystagogy: The final period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which is from Easter to Pentecost.

Neophyte: One who is initiated at the Easter Vigil. The term comes from the Greek word meaning new plant, as in a new sprout on a limb/branch.

Pre-Catechumenate (Inquiry): The first period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which is the initial introduction of an inquirer into the Christian way of life in the Catholic Tradition.

Presentations: During the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, the elect are presented with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer through special rites.

Purification and Enlightenment: This is the third period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which usually coincides with the Lenten season. It is the final period of preparation for initiation at the Easter Vigil.

Rite: A ceremony/ritual of prayer.

Rite of Call to Continuing Conversion: Coincides with the Rite of Election, but is the rite for candidates, the already baptized.

Rite of Election: Presided over by the Bishop, the rite inaugurates the final period of preparation before initiation. It is the bridge between the catechumenate and the purification and enlightenment.

Rite of Scrutiny and Penitential Rite: Prayers for the Elect and candidates celebrated during the Lenten season.

Sponsor: A co-traveler on this faith journey. The sponsor acts as a personal link between the candidate/catechumen and the parish.