

THE RCIA PROCESS

The RCIA offers a way to grow in knowledge of Christ and the Catholic faith in company with others on a similar journey.

The RCIA has several distinct stages.

STAGE 1: ENQUIRY

This is a 'getting to know you' stage. As a person expresses interest in the Catholic community, parishioners respond to the enquirer's questions and share something of their own experience of being Catholic. This period involves no formal commitment. It is a time of initial exploration as the enquirer, with the help of the parish community, decides whether or not to undertake the journey towards Baptism in the Catholic Church. If yes, the enquirer enters the next stage – the Catechumenate.

STAGE 2: THE CATECHUMENATE

During this phase, a person becomes more deeply acquainted with the people, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. He/she is no longer called an 'enquirer' but a 'catechumen'. This is the longest period of the initiation process and involves weekly reflections and regular attendance at Sunday liturgies. When ready, the catechumen enters the next stage – the Period of Enlightenment.

STAGE 3: PERIOD OF ENLIGHTENMENT

This is a short period of final preparation before Baptism. It normally coincides with Lent, which is a six-week period of repentance and renewal for Catholics and 'catechumens' alike. The weekly reflections continue, with heightened focus and a number of small ritual steps taking place at this time.

STAGE 4: FULL INITIATION

This is the culmination of the whole process! A Catechumen is welcomed into full membership of Church during the Easter Vigil Mass, receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

For catechumens who are already baptised, the Catholic Church recognises their Baptism and therefore does not re-baptise. Rather, the ceremony involves a solemn profession of faith in the presence of the congregation. The new Catholic then receives the sacrament of Confirmation and is welcomed to the table of the Eucharist. Most often this ceremony is also celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

STAGE 5: PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGY

Even after Baptism, the newly baptised continue to meet for 2–3 weeks to reflect upon and ‘unpack’ the experience of their initiation and all that has happened on their journey of conversion. This period is called Mystagogy (‘reflection on the mysteries’ in Greek) and has a particular focus on the call to mission.

SUPPORT ALONG THE JOURNEY

Becoming a Catholic is a communal experience!

A person preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation is assigned a sponsor, i.e. a parishioner who walks with them on their journey. The sponsor is an encourager and guide. Friends, relatives, parishioners and priests also play a support role in this journey of faith. The whole parish community participates through prayer, worship and various rituals along the way.

A small group of parishioners (the RCIA Team) are entrusted as catechists, mentors and sponsors for those who have approached us. Through their constant support and willingness to share their faith, they are living witnesses of the Good News and of life in Christ.

As the Baptism draws closer, the ‘catechumen’ will be asked to nominate a Godparent.

The RCIA SCHEDULE

Usually the process of preparation involves meetings over a number of months. The group of enquirers, catechists and sponsors meets regularly to share faith, pray, and participate in various activities of the parish community.

At the beginning of Lent each year, those in the group who wish to enter the Catholic Church enter into an intense period of preparation, culminating in the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

REGISTER FOR RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

If you wish to register for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, please complete the RCIA registration form. The Parish office will contact you upon receipt of the completed form.