

RCIA: INQUIRY SESSION ONE

INTRODUCTION TO RCIA & TOUR OF THE CHURCH

Week: 3/10/22 - 9/10/22

INTRODUCTION TO RCIA

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a process of conversion whereby participants wishing to embrace the Catholic way of life through the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist enter a period of prayer, study, service, worship, discussion, and faith sharing.

The RCIA process follows the ancient practice adopted by the Church as she accompanies, instructs, nurtures and supports aspirants.

The period of time spent in formation is known as the catechumenate. The term catechumen is applied to the individual undertaking the process and simply means 'one who is learning'. Throughout the process of preparation, the catechumens become immersed in the teachings of Jesus and in the prayer life of the Church. This period of immersion ended with the reception of the sacraments of initiation.

STAGES OF THE RCIA

Inquiry or Pre-Catechumenate

Prior to beginning the RCIA process, an individual comes to some knowledge of Jesus Christ, considers their relationship with Jesus Christ, and is interested in exploring the basic tenets of the Catholic faith in light of their own life experiences. This period is known as the Period of Evangelization and Pre-catechumenate. For some, this process involves a long period of searching, for others, a shorter time. Often, contact with people of faith and a personal faith experience lead people to inquire about membership in the Catholic Church.

Catechumenate

After conversation with a catechist, priest, or spiritual guide, the person, known as an "inquirer," may decide to seek acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. Before the parish community, the inquirer states that he or she wants to become a baptized member of the Catholic Church. The parish assembly affirms this desire, and the inquirer formally becomes a "catechumen." The period of the catechumenate depends on how the person is growing in faith, what questions they encounter along the way, and how God leads them on this journey. During this time the catechumens consider what God is saying to them in the scriptures, what changes in their life they

want to make to respond to God's inspiration, and what membership in the Catholic Church involves.

Purification & Enlightenment

When a catechumen and the parish catechetical team believes the person is ready to make a faith commitment to Jesus in the Catholic Church, the next step is the request for baptism and the celebration of the Rite of Election. This rite includes the enrolment of names of all those seeking baptism at the coming Easter Vigil. On the first Sunday of Lent, the catechumens and their sponsors gather at the cathedral church and the catechumens publicly request baptism. Their names are recorded in a book, and they are now called "the elect." The following days of Lent are the final period of purification and enlightenment leading up to the celebration of initiation at the Easter Vigil. Lent is a period of preparation marked by prayer, study, and spiritual direction for the elect, supported and encouraged by the prayers of the parish community.

Sacraments of Initiation

The third step is the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, which takes place during the Easter Vigil Liturgy on Holy Saturday when the catechumen receives the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. Now the person is a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church. Candidates for full communion (those baptised in another Christian faith, or those baptised in Catholic faith, but never received FHC or Conf, celebrate their Rite of Reception on the Feast of Pentecost.

Mystagogy

After the person is initiated, formation and education continue in the period of the postbaptismal catechesis, which is called "mystagogy." This period continues at least until Pentecost. During the period the newly baptized members reflect on their experiences at the Easter Vigil and continue to learn more about the scriptures, the sacraments, and the teachings of the Catholic Church. In addition, they reflect on how they will serve Christ and help in the church's mission and outreach activities.

Basic Concepts of the RCIA

- Conversion is a process involving both the mind and the heart.
- The RCIA takes place among the community of believers.
- The RCIA follows the flow of the liturgical seasons and its stages are marked by liturgical rites.
- The RCIA process encourages authentic Catholic faith.

PRAYER

“Devote yourselves to prayer” (Col. 4:2)

“Pray without ceasing” (1Thess 5:17)

Prayer is daily communication with God, the Father. It is the first step towards spiritual growth. Prayer is not a formula or a code, but one heart talking to another, expressing our sincere desire to know the heart of God. Prayer is a discipline, much like fasting, meditation, and confession. When we consider how much Jesus depended on prayer, we similarly should cultivate a life prayer so as to remain connected through prayer to God. Candidates are encouraged to foster and nurture daily prayer with the assistance of their catechist, spiritual guide, and the faith community.

Ref. Scripture – Teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)

Luke 11:1

Matthew 14:23

Mark 6:46

Luke 6:12

Mark 1:35

Luke 5:16

Matthew 26:36

Hebrews 5:7

RCIA in Scripture

Acts 8:26-40 – Philip baptises a Eunuch

Evangelisation	8:27-28
Study of God’s Word	8:29-30
Inquiry	8:30
Catechesis	8:31-35
Enlightenment	
Conversion	8:36
Initiation	8:38
Testimony (Living Witness)	8:39

Conversion in Scripture

John 4:1-26 – The Woman at the Well

Intent – Jesus travels to Samaria with intent. He engages with intent – He stops deliberately at the well near the plot of ground Jacob gave to Joseph. Jesus calls the candidate to this moment in their lives with intent, a moment of conversion. 4:3-4, 7

Initiative - Jesus asks the woman for help – will you give me a drink? Candidates take the initiative and ask for assistance in understanding the tenets of the Catholic faith and preparing for initiation. 4:7

Interaction – Faith is something alive and active. Jesus interacts with the Samaritan woman. Personal growth comes through dialogue. The candidates engage with the catechist, fellow catechumens, the faith community at worship. 4:7ff

Invitation – Jesus invites the woman to drink from the spring of water welling up to eternal life. Candidates come to embrace the Catholic faith because of their thirst for Jesus who quenches their thirst. 4:14

Evangelisation – the woman desires the message of eternal life Jesus brings and accepts it is Jesus who grants it. Jesus calls candidates to receive the message of redemption won for them in Jesus and asks for initiation. 4:15

Catechesis – Jesus sits with the woman and through conversation/dialogue opens her mind and heart to the message of eternal life. Catechumens are called to conversion through the message of eternal life. 4:13-14

Impact – The woman went back to the town and shared her encounter with the Messiah – she proclaimed Christ, Jesus. She gave a living testimony of the impact of her encounter with the living Christ. 4:28-30

TOUR OF CHURCH

Church

- (i) Physical place where believers gather in worship
- (ii) A religious community as a whole, or a body or group.

The Greek word ekklesia refers to the general assembly of believers in a particular area and a congregation meeting in a particular house – the “house-church”.

A church is central to the Christian faith, and it is where the community comes together to worship and praise God.

The church is:

- (i) the place of worship for all Christians
- (ii) where the community gathers
- (iii) where works of charity are carried out
- (iv) a place of healing

The church building is more than just the place where Christians gather. The Catechism explains, “visible churches are not simply gathering places but signify and

make visible the Church living in this place, the dwelling of God with men reconciled and united in Christ” (CCC 1180)

The Catechism describes a church as “a house of prayer in which the Eucharist is celebrated and reserved, where the faithful assemble, and where is worshipped the presence of the Son of God our Saviour, offered for us on the sacrificial altar for the help and consolation of the faithful” (CCC 1181). It also instructs that “this house ought to be in good taste and a worthy place of prayer and sacred ceremonial” (1181), and that a church “must also be a space that invites us to the recollection and silent prayer that extend and internalize the great prayer of the Eucharist” (1185). Canon law defines a church simply as “a sacred building designated for divine worship” (CIC 1214).

Entrance

Holy water font – Reminder of Baptism and entrance into the life of grace.

Sign of the Cross

Altar & Sanctuary

Eucharistic sacrifice where the simple offerings of bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ through the act of transubstantiation. The Eucharist is the “source and summit of Christian life”.

During each celebration of Eucharist, the bread and wine are TAKEN, BLESSED, BROKEN, and GIVEN.

Scripture passages referencing the above Eucharistic formula:

Five loaves and two fish – Feeding of Five Thousand	Mt. 14:13-21
Last Supper	Mt. 26:17-30
Road to Emmaus	Lk. 24:13-35
Jesus appears after the Resurrection	Jn. 21:1-13

Presence of the relic of a saint(s) in the altar. It recalls the use of martyr’s tombs as places of Eucharistic celebration.

Tabernacle/Sanctuary Lamp

“I will be with you always” (Mt. 28:20)

Blessed Sacrament reserved.

Baptism Font

First Sacrament of initiation. The gateway to the sacraments.

Ambo/Lectern

Lectionary – sacred texts of the Word of God – alive and active.

Ambry

Oil of Catechumens (Baptism)

Oil of Chrism (Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, Consecration of Church)

Oil of the Sick

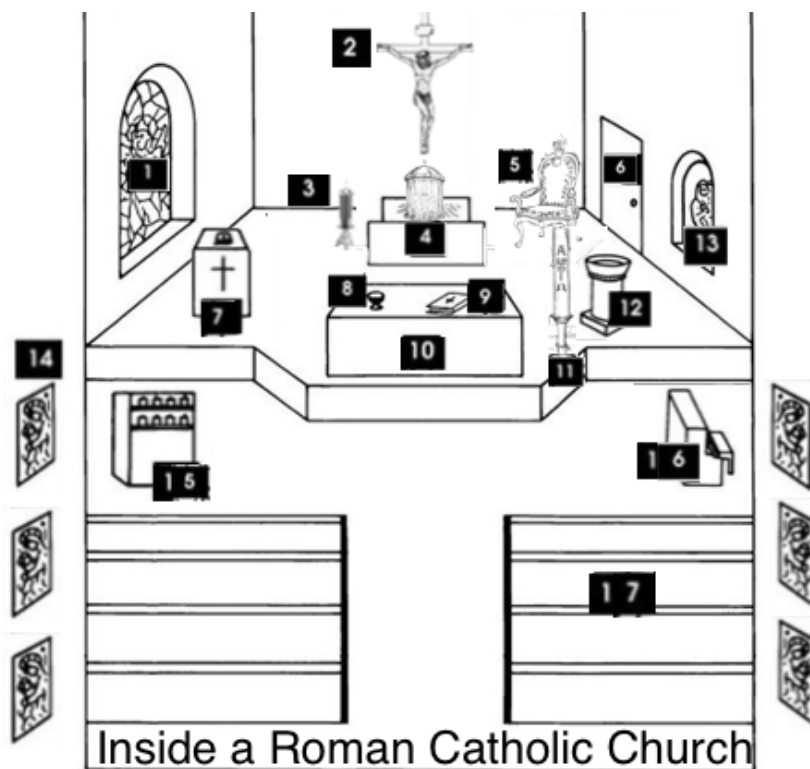
Confessional

(Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation/Penance)

Statues

Votive candles – an act of prayer

Stations of the Cross



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|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Stained glass window | 10. Altar |
| 2. Crucifix | 11. Baptismal candle |
| 3. Sanctuary candle | 12. Baptismal font |
| 4. Tabernacle | 13. Statue of a saint |
| 5. Priest's chair | 14. Stations of the Cross |
| 6. Sacristy | 15. Votive candles |
| 7. Lectern | 16. Piano |
| 8. Chalice | 17. Pews |
| 9. Bible | |

Gestures/Postures during Worship & Prayer

Genuflection

Stand, Kneel, Sit, Bow

Resources:

(CCC # 1210-1284)

(CCC # 1229, 1230)

(CCC # 1275)

<https://chnetwork.org/rcia/>

How do I Become Catholic?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPvhlouj3Pg>

Tour of a Catholic Church

<http://bemydisciples.com/tour-church>

What's Inside a Catholic Church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1ICuNVudW4>

<https://www.osvnews.com/2017/01/08/inside-our-sacred-space/>

GOSPEL READING

Sunday 9/10/22 is the Twenty Eight Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C) and the Gospel reading is Lk. 17:11-19. The text of the reading is below. The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion. The following questions may be helpful: What does this mean to me? How does it make me feel? Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing? What images of God emerge for me? What do I think that God is saying in this text? What impact does this have on my life?

Reader: The Lord be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he travelled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!"

And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests."

As they were going, they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan.

Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.