

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS

The Rite of Christian Initiation, or as it is commonly called the RCIA, is the process by which those who feel a stirring in their hearts, may explore the beliefs and practices of Catholics as they search for truth and meaning in their lives. The RCIA is basically designed to provide for unbaptised persons. However, it is easily adapted for those who are already baptised into another faith. During this journey of faith, candidates will experience the support of a small faith group in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. All questions are valued and honoured as the group helps to find the answers together. A sponsor is chosen for each candidate as a personal guide and companion.

At the end of each stage of preparation there are special celebrations where the candidates are welcomed, accepted and elected and initiated into the faith community of Catholic Church.

HOW IT WORKS

TO BEGIN

There are fortnightly meetings of Inquiry (during school terms). This is a time for your initial questioning and getting to know a little of what Catholics are on about.

THEN

It is a time for a decision. For those who wish to continue the journey there will be a Liturgical Celebration and faith sharing continues. You will also begin to experience the life of Catholics and come to know our feelings of the God's Presence and how it effects our lives.

SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO EASTER.

It is time for another decision whether to continue or not. Those who continue are elected by the Bishop to enter the next stage of more intense preparation and prayer. Many candidates at this stage feel unworthy. But God has called them, Jesus has loved them and the Holy Spirit has guided them to this stage and will continue to accompany them throughout their lives. So the question during this stage is not "*Do I know everything? Am I worthy*" but "*Can I celebrate my faith in the Catholic Church?*" There is never any pressure for candidates to take this step.

EASTER.

Those who decide to become followers of Jesus in the Catholic Church are fully initiated through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. At Easter baptised Christians are accepted into the Church, confirmed and receive the Eucharist. We acknowledge and honour your original Baptism.

EASTER TO PENTECOST

This is a time to name and explore further the Sacramental experience of Easter, and life from within the Catholic community. On Pentecost Sunday the new Catholics are "sent out" to continue their new life in the world as emissaries of Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- Are you interested in the Catholic faith?
- Do you wonder what makes Catholics tick?
- Are you married to a Catholic, have Catholic children and want to know more about their faith?
- Are you looking for a Church community to call your own?
- Do you feel there is something missing in your life?
- Are most of your friends Catholic and you have often wondered *why*?
- Have you had an experience in your life that made you think, "I'd better find out more about this."

If any of these questions ring a bell for you it may mean that the Holy Spirit is already at work in your life, and will continue to open your heart and guide you to discover God's plan for you. Your missing ingredient for living could be Jesus and His Sacraments

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FROM PREVIOUS CANDIDATES

It's amazing. All these things you do.... They take care of the whole person. (Bob)

I know that when I am here the Holy Spirit is in that room. And when I go, I know that the Holy Spirit goes with me. I always feel so peaceful. (Eve)

It doesn't matter what kind of a morning I've had. When I come through that door I always feel at peace. (Jodie)

I learnt a new word tonight. It's something I've always believed but I've never had a name for it. It's the Communion of Saints. (Colleen)

Before, I never had time to pray and yet now, I'm so aware of God that I find myself praying all the time. (Samantha)

It's the best thing I've ever done. It's right up there with giving birth. (Kris)

Going to Mass is a beautiful experience. I feel as if it is Holy Time and is filling my life with High Octane fuel. (Jason)