

ST. PIUS X CATHOLIC CHURCH



BECOMING CATHOLIC...

For further information contact:

St. Pius X Parish Office
6666 Spanish Fort Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70124-4324
504•282•3332



R.C.I.A.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Becoming a Catholic

Most Catholics were born and baptized as infants into the Catholic Christian community. They grew up in Catholic families and came to share in the full sacramental life of the Church through the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. If you are a baptized Christian of another tradition or an unbaptized adult and want to become a Catholic, you may do so through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

What is RCIA?

The RCIA is not the same as instruction classes were some years ago in the Church. It is still relatively new to us, but its roots reach back into the 3rd and 4th centuries of the Church. The goal of the RCIA is to foster or deepen your conversion in the community of the Church to Jesus Christ and the kingdom he proclaims. It includes sponsorship by Catholics in the local parish, prayer, worship, learning the gospel and traditions of the Church, and direct contact with the community. The RCIA is a spiritual renewal, not only for those seeking to become Catholics, but also for the welcoming community.

Who is the RCIA for?

- Any adult not yet baptized who wishes to become Catholic.
- Any adult baptized in another Christian church who wishes to become Catholic.
- Any baptized Catholic who, after a time of inactivity in the Church, wishes to rededicate him or herself as a Catholic.
- Any adult baptized Catholic, who has not yet celebrated Eucharist and/or Confirmation and wishes to do so.

The Shape of the RCIA

The RCIA is a spiritual journey. This journey is divided into five distinct stages.

- **Inquiry Period:** A non-committal opportunity for you to ask questions about the Catholic Church, its traditions, and its beliefs. It is a time of crossroads in a person's religious life, of decision whether you want to move to the next stage.

This inquiry period will last for a few meetings, once a week. Once your questions have been answered, if you wish to begin the process of becoming a Catholic, you then enter the Catechumenate group.

- **Catechumenate:** A period of apprenticeship in Catholic living during which you learn and grow through lessons, liturgy and scripture. With the help of a sponsor and members of the parish, you experience the Church as a community of the faithful: its spirit, work, prayer, creed and mission.

The Catechumenate stage can last from six months to two years depending upon you. This stage is a stepping stone for the final preparations of becoming a Catholic.

- **Period of Purification & Enlightenment:** This coincides with the season of Lent and involves the final preparations for being initiated into Catholicism at Easter by deepening commitments to the Lord and praying for the removal of any obstacles to spiritual growth.

The Purification period lasts about six weeks.

- **The Sacraments of Initiation:** In the most elaborate and joyous celebration of the Church year at Easter you receive the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist). If you are already baptized you are received into full communion with the Church through the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist. The entire community of the faithful will joyfully welcome you and join in a renewal of their own baptismal vows.
- **Mystagogia:** The Easter season is a festive one for the Church. As a new Catholic you will penetrate the deeper meaning of the Easter sacraments and begin thinking about how you may share in the mission of the Church through service. It is, finally, a reminder to you that conversion is a life-long process.

The entire RCIA process can last from one to three years depending upon your needs.