

Rite of Christian Initiation



Of Adults & Children

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children

A PARISH STATEMENT

“The presentation of the Gospel message is not an optional contribution of the Church. It is the duty incumbent by the command of Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved.”

Evangelization in the Modern World -Pope Paul VI

Saint Richard Church is most happy to participate in a process for welcoming new members into the Roman Catholic Church called the “RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS”, OR THE R.C.I.A. In doing so, we enter into a spiritual journey –during which formation in the whole Christian life take place. We believe that the catechumenal process is not the private concern of a few, but is rather synonymous with the Church’s very life. Underlying this process is the conviction that each member of Saint Richard Parish community is gifted for the building up of the church, for each member has a unique gift to contribute to our journey. We, as a parish, are called to bring persons to Christ, and to bring Christ to those who have been touched with the gift of faith.

PRE-CATECHUMENATE

Our Journey to God

Salvation History

The Gift of Scripture

Jesus, the Messiah

Images of the Church

Our Prayer Life

CATECHUMENATE

Rite of Becoming a Catechumen

Anointing of the Sick

Christian Morality 1 & 2

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Ministry: Holy Orders

Religious & Single Life

ENLIGHTENMENT

Rite of Election

Growth & Change in the Church

Scrutinies

Communal Penance Service

Liturgical Year

EASTER VIGIL MASS

STAGES OF THE RCIA

The new Rite of Christian Initiation divides this process into four stages:

PRE-CATECHUMENATE: This is a period of evangelization lasting from a few weeks to many months (here at St. Richard's it will extend from September to Advent). During this period INQUIRERS are invited to ask questions, share their stories, hear the Good News and reflect on the place of God in their lives.

CATECHUMENATE: During this period, extending from many months to a year or more (here at Saint Richard's it will extend from December to the First Sunday of Lent); a time for a complete and elementary catechesis takes place. The CATECHUMEN expresses the desire to become a member of the Church as he or she enters this stage.

ENLIGHTENMENT: This third stage is a period of intense preparation (lasting through Lent) as a time for deeper conversion and prayer. The ELECT will reflect upon paschal mystery and its place in their daily lives.

MYSTAGOGIA: The final stage coincides with the Pascal (Easter) Season and is a time for the NEOPHYTE to reflect upon the "mysteries" of the faith. It is a time of the first sacramental experiences of the newly initiated during a Retreat experience.

LITURGICAL STAGES

The four stages of the RCIA process have their own proper liturgies which take place in the assembly of the community during the Mass. Each of the stages concludes with a Rite which links the stages.

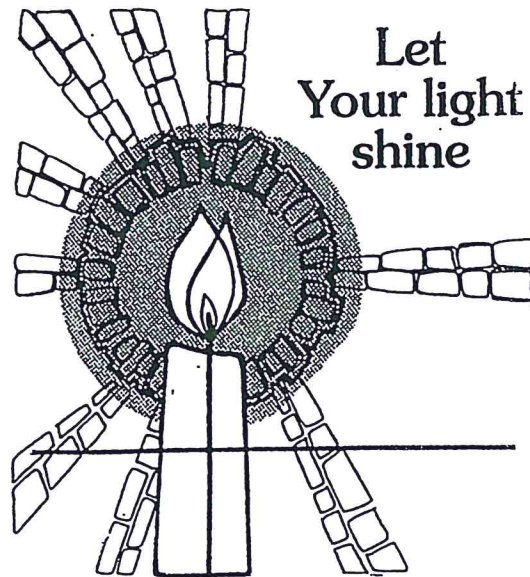
WHERE DID THE RCIA ORIGINATE?

The RCIA is a Rite that dates back to the earliest days of the Church. During Apostolic times (1st & 2nd centuries) individuals shared the Good News and incorporated people into faith communities. During the 2nd to the 5th century, local churches conducted extensive initiation periods. New converts were received into the church only after much study, prayer, and community support. Easter was the great feast to welcome all new members. We have excellent accounts of these catechetical instructions from such authors as St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. Ambrose.

The decline of adult converts, the delay of adult baptism, and the growing practice of infant baptism eventually led to the neglect of serious catechesis. The Middle Ages, the barbarian invasions, and changing social conditions saw the decline of the catechumenate as a formal process. If not for certain missionary efforts, this gift might have been lost forever.

Interest in the catechumenate was revived by the great missionary ventures to Asia, the Americas, and Africa. St. Ignatius of Loyola planned catechumenal communities in India in the 16th century.

Dominican and Augustinian missionaries established catechumens in Mexico and Peru. The famous Cardinal Lavigerie, founder of the White Fathers, is credited with restoring the stages of the RCIA to the missions of Africa—Stages that respect the development of faith, and progress in learning and conversion. Today the Church is asking us to return to the ancient practice, wherein the importance of time, ritual and communal support in the conversion process is emphasized. In 1972 the II Vatican Council called for a modern Catechumenate in the spirit of the ancient Christian traditions. The new RCIA was issued.



God's gift of faith is like a treasure. Once found, few want to give it up! A person of faith wakes up in the morning with a hope that God will be present that day. A person of faith finds comfort and consolation when a family member dies. Unlike a treasure that rots or decays, faith grows in hope and inspires a love which lasts forever.

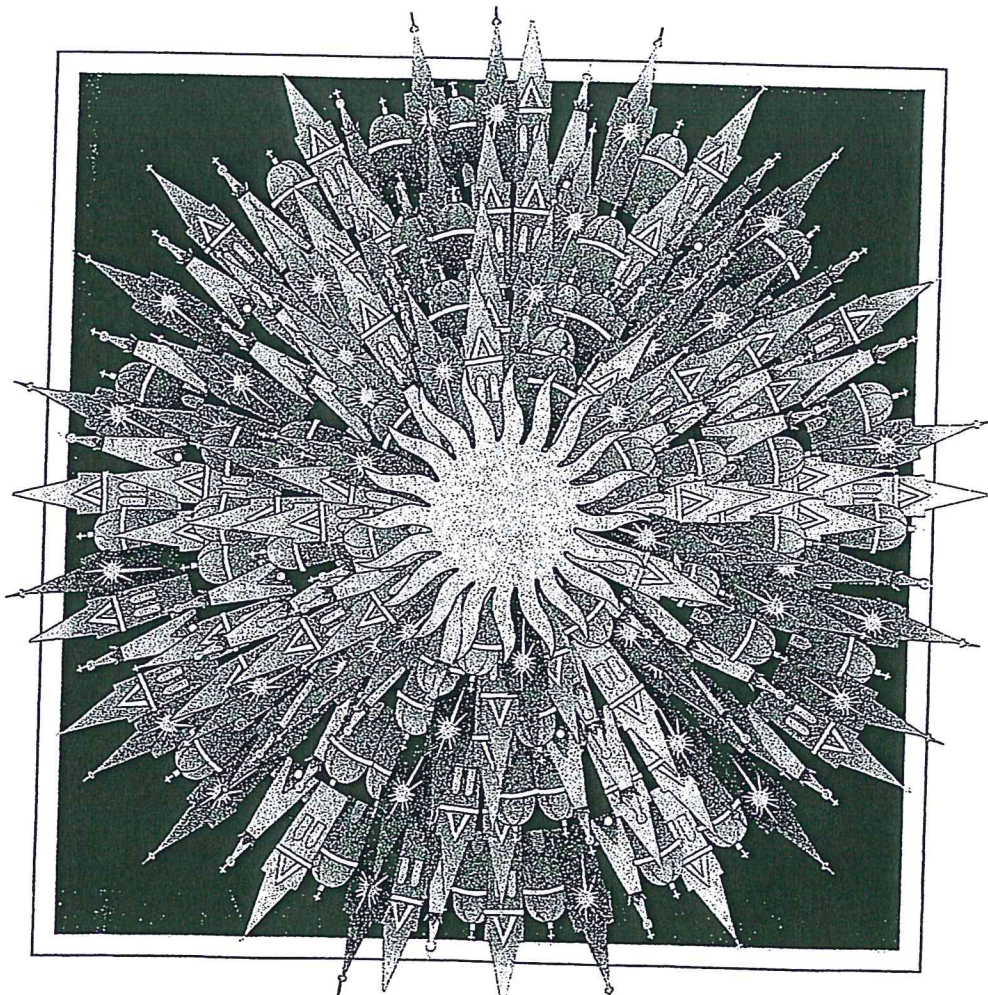
What the RCIA brings out so forcefully is that adult initiation can only really occur in a community which is ready to renaissance itself. The catechumenate is a mutual task on the part of the catechumen and the community. Only a community which is ready to look at itself in terms of the still unexplored and unaccepted implications of its own faith will qualify to be the soil in which the faith life of a new Christian can take root and grow, we at St. Richard hope to be such a community. Initiation then is a gradual journey where our newcomers mature in faith, and our St. Richard Parish Community welcomes these inquirers in an open and loving manner. In the process, it is our community which is renewed by the catechumenate process, because it is our parish community which is challenged to conversion and given new life by the faith of the new believers.

PROCESS –NOT “ANOTHER PROGRAM”

The first essential aspect of the new Rite is that it treats Christian initiation as an on-going process which occurs over time. The catechumenal process is a spiritual journey which varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals involved, and the circumstance of time and place.

CATECHESIS

During the gradual conversion journey it is important to keep in mind that the RCIA is much more than convert classes. It is, as the Rite is called an Initiation. It can never be reduced to a series of classes, since the experience of conversion is essential to its growth process. Remember, faith is a personal relationship with Jesus, not just knowledge of doctrine or the creed. Catechesis, therefore, needs to be understood more as reflection on and experience of that gradual journey of faith, rather than merely assimilating information. The latter does occur, but within the wider context of growing in relationship with Jesus through the RCIA.



**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION
FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN (RCIA / RCIC)**

_____ I am interested in learning more about the process to become a new member into the Catholic faith.

Name: _____

Phone # _____

_____ I know someone who would be interested in the process of becoming a new member into the Catholic faith. We will be happy to contact them.

Name _____

Phone # _____

_____ I am interested in becoming part of the RCIC Team.

Name _____

Phone # _____

**Please bring registration form to the Rectory, drop in the mail slot or place it
in the collection basket.**

**For information please contact
Maureen Coughlin, Pastoral Minister,
at 440-779-7529 or email at PSRdirector@st-richard.org**