



## **RCIA**

### **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**

St. Mary Catholic Church  
Laurinburg, North Carolina

This is the most important “Journey of Faith” that you will ever experience, and we welcome you to the exploration of the rich heritage of the Catholic faith. The following summary is from the “Journey of Faith” overview to help give you an overview of what you will be exploring with us as we study together.

#### **AN OVERVIEW OF RCIA**

For early Christians, the decision to follow Christ as a believer was a very serious decision. Alienation from family and extreme persecution often was the price to be paid, and the formation process itself took three or more years. During that time frame the Catechumen was expected to live the Christian life in all aspects of morality and upright behavior, and the Church encouraged their faith and celebrated each step with the Catechumens on their journey.

During the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity became tolerated and finally acceptable to the emperors, and persecution became less widespread. The Council of Trent (1556) published the first Roman Catechism, which became the reference source for “convert classes”. After 1945 the ancient process of faith formation was reestablished and was strengthened in 1972 when the Second Vatican Council established the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

#### **THE PROCESS OF RCIA**

The term “catechumenate” refers to the steps involved in developing your faith, and it is celebrated and sanctified by various liturgical rites that mark your progress, culminating in your full, joyful membership in the Catholic Church. There are two types of participants in RCIA: catechumens (those preparing for baptism) and candidates (those who are already baptized but preparing for full membership in the Catholic Church, by their profession of faith and celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation).

There are four phases:

1. Inquiry/precatechumenate ending in the Rite of Acceptance;
2. The Catechumenate, which concludes with the Rite of Election during Mass in the local parish and the recognition by the Bishop or his representative at a deanery celebration on the same day. Each catechumen and candidate will receive a sponsor who serves as a model of Christian life who will help and support you on your journey.
3. The Period of Purification and Enlightenment occurring during Lent, when the Rite of Scrutinies are celebrated at the Sunday Mass. These are prayers of the Church, asking almighty God for the healing, conversion and reconciliation of those preparing for the Easter Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion, administered at the Solemn Easter Vigil Mass – a joyful day for all the Church, as we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ!
4. Mystagogy, the 50 days from Easter to Pentecost, focusing on the Christian life, prayer and moral living.

After the inquiry phase, the Catechumen/Candidate receives prayer support from a selected sponsor who acts as a companion and model of faith. Sponsors are selected for the Catechumen and the name of a Saint is chosen for Baptism and/or Confirmation, who will be a model of sanctity and holiness.

### **THE RCIA PROCESS AND THE COMMUNITY**

A Catechumen and a Candidate are an inspiration and blessing to the Catholic members of the Church, and are a sign of renewal and a reminder of our Catholic roots, our rich heritage in the Bible, and the Tradition handed down from the 12 apostles and their successors. Each new member in the Catholic Church helps us to revisit our own journey to faith, an opportunity to share our experiences with others, and grow into a richer and more mature relationship with God and with others. When expressed through the life of the parish, the RCIA helps inspire a continuing conversion process in the life of the entire community, so that together all the members reflect more brilliantly the glorious image of God in our midst.

May God bless you richly as you travel this glorious “Journey of Faith”

If you know of anyone who might be interested in learning about our Catholic faith or who has expressed interest in becoming Catholic, please contact the parish office with their name and address. Fr. Saxon will send them a personal invitation to the R.C.I.A. program.

**2016-2017 Classes will be on Sundays beginning:**

**Sunday, September 18, 2016 following mass**