



OCIA FORMERLY RCIA



LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*



Since it is the Lenten season, it also means that we have adults amongst us wishing to become Catholic. For those who have been around a while, the process we used went by the initials RCIA – which means Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. In recent years, the process became known as OCIA – meaning, Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. Getting beyond all these letters, let us explore what this process is all about and see that we, as parishioners, can take part.

Folks come to be interested in being Catholic through many avenues. Sometimes it is through their spouse, sometimes through friends, or sometimes an individual searches many different forms of religion on their own. What matters most is the interest and desire to be a Catholic. The timetable involves a period of inquiry, hearing about the faith and personal faith experiences of others that lead a person to seek acceptance and be welcomed, desiring to become a member of the Catholic Church. People who are unbaptized are given the title Catechumen, and people who have been baptized in another Christian tradition and wish to become Catholic are known as Candidates. Both are warmly welcome by the parish congregation which affirms their desire and wish to be Catholic.

During this time, they explore and discern many aspects of the Catholic faith. These people are also guided by a sponsor who can assist in helping them with their questions. This period leads to the Rite of Acceptance. At this time, they make a formal commitment to grow in faith. For those needing Baptism, as well as those already baptized, this next period covers basic Catholic teachings, prayer, and the life of the parish to name a few areas. They are asked to attend Sunday Mass, just staying for the Liturgy of the Word and being dismissed to further understand and discuss what they heard. By being present at Mass, the parish community gets to know them and pray for them during their journey.

We will continue with this journey in the next column. In the meantime, please pray for those men and women of our parish who have embraced wishing to become Catholic this Easter.

Have a safe, blessed, and prayerful week ahead!