

## Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

### Guide to the RCIA

#### **What is a Sacrament?**

*Sacrament* is the word we Christians use to talk about a moment when we experience the presence or action of God in a powerful or special way. The Catholic Church recognizes *seven* moments in particular, when we experience God like this. They are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (Sacraments of Initiation), Marriage and Holy Orders (Sacraments of Vocation), and Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick (Sacraments of Healing). We also believe that these Sacrament were instituted, or established by Jesus.

#### **Why do I go through a program like this to be Baptized/make my First Communion/make my Confirmation?**

Just as time for reflection is needed before making a decision about a career, where to live, who to marry, or any other big, life changing event, so too you need time to reflect on perhaps the biggest decision of your life: how God is calling you to know him, and how and with whom you will spend your life (and perhaps all eternity) worshipping and serving. The intent of the RCIA program is to provide you with the structure, environment, and people you need to assist you in this process of reflection and discernment. The next several months give you the chance to get to know us (the Catholic Church) including how we understand God (God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Spirit), how we worship him, the life he calls us to (including what he asks of us), our moral teachings, our Scripture and Tradition, and our hope for the future.

#### **What is discernment, anyway?**

You may not realize it, but before making any important decision, you go through a period of time (which may range from a period of a few seconds to many years), during which you gather information, talk with other people, weigh your options, imagine yourself making one choice or the other, etc. This is known as *discernment*. In addition to these at the center of discernment about whether or not to enter the Catholic Church, or receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, is *listening*: listening to God, and trying to respond to His call in your life; listening to your experiences and how they might reveal God's presence or grace in your life; and listening to others who may be able to help you recognize the movement of God in your life.

### **What is the role of the team?**

RCIA is a ministry of the parish. The team is made up of St. Adalbert and St. Casimir parishioners and the Pastoral team who assist the coordinator in making the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults happen here at the parish. They do this: through their hospitality, by sharing their own stories of the Christian life with you, and by being available to you if you have a question or would like to reflect on your journey with someone one on one.

### **What is the role of the sponsors?**

The sponsors are personal friends or parishioners who support you in the RCIA process, and seek to be available to you as you journey toward full initiation in the Catholic Church. They will be the ones who present you (at Easter for any or all of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) should you discern to receive these sacraments). To be of assistance to you, the sponsors will be attending some of the class sessions with you. We encourage you to ask a friend (who is a practicing Catholic) or a parishioner from St. Casimir or St. Adalbert (rather than a spouse or a parent) to serve as your sponsor. If you don't know of anyone to serve in this role there are many parishioners who are more than willing to do so, and the team will be happy to ask for you.

### **What do I have to do?**

In order for you to get the most out of this process and to express before God and the Church your sincere desire to be fully initiated in the Catholic Church and so grow in your relationship to God and one another, RCIA participants are asked to"

- attend all the sessions (every Sunday morning from 10:30- 12:00)
- attend special functions of the RCIA
- attend Mass every weekend
- prepare for the next session (by doing the reading assignment, etc.)
- honestly engage the process of faith-sharing, discernment, etc.
- be patient with yourself and one another
- pray for yourself and one another that together you may know and understand what God is calling you to.