

What are the steps of RCIA?

- ◆ Prior to beginning the RCIA process, an individual comes to some knowledge of Jesus Christ, considers his or her relationship with Jesus Christ and is usually attracted in some way to the Catholic Church. This period is known as the **Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate**. For some, this process involves a long period of searching; for others, a shorter time. Often, contact with people of faith and a personal faith experience lead people to inquire about the Catholic Church. After a conversation with a priest, or RCIA director, the person, known as an "inquirer," may seek acceptance into the **Order of Catechumens, through the Rite of Acceptance**. During this Rite, the inquirer stands amidst the parish community and states that he or she wants to become a baptized member of the Catholic Church. The parish assembly affirms this desire and the inquirer becomes a "catechumen."
- ◆ The period of the catechumenate can last for as long as several years or for a shorter time. It depends on how the person is growing in faith, what questions they encounter along the way, and how God leads them on this journey. During this time, the catechumens consider what God is saying to them in the Scriptures, what changes in their life they need to make to respond to God's inspiration, and what Baptism in the Catholic Church means. When a catechumen and the priest and the parish team working with him or her believes the person is ready to make a faith commitment to Jesus in the Catholic Church, the next step is the request for baptism and the celebration of the **Rite of Election**. Even before the catechumens are baptized, they have a special relationship to the Church.



- ◆ The Rite of Election includes the enrollment of names of all those seeking baptism at the coming Easter Vigil. Typically, on the first Sunday of Lent, the catechumens, their sponsors and families gather at the cathedral church. The catechumens publicly express their desire for baptism to the diocesan bishop. Their names are recorded in a book and they are called "the elect."
- ◆ The days of Lent are the final period of **purification and enlightenment** leading up to the Easter Vigil. Lent is a period of preparation marked by prayer, study, and spiritual direction for the elect, and prayers for them by the parish communities. The Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation takes place during the Easter Vigil Liturgy on Holy Saturday when the catechumen receives **the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist**. Now the person is fully initiated into the Catholic Church.
- ◆ After the person is initiated, formation and education continue in the period of the post baptismal catechesis, which is called "**mystagogy**." This period continues at least until Pentecost. During the period the newly baptized members reflect on their experiences at the Easter Vigil and continue to learn more about the Scriptures, the Sacraments, and the teachings of the Catholic Church. In addition they reflect on how they will serve Christ and help in the Church's mission and outreach activities.

From Rite of Initiation of Adults—RCIA -USCCB.org



Do you want to learn more about the Catholic Church? Wondering how to join? Read on.....



*Rite of
Christian
Initiation
of Adults*

St. Gertrude Parish

PO Box 599

Mora, NM

575-387-2336

stgertrudes.aa@gmail.com

<https://www.stgertrudesmora.org>

What is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a process for those seeking to become Catholic, for those inquiring about Catholicism, or for those baptized Catholics who want to renew or deepen their understanding of Catholicism. As *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* states, RCIA is 'a gradual process that takes place with the community of the faithful.' **St. Gertrude's Parish RCIA meets on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the RCIA room located in the Pastoral Center/Parish Office.**



RCIA involves the entire parish, reflecting the Second Vatican Council's emphasis that all of the baptized are to be concerned with the initiation of the non-baptized.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults states that the process is 'suited to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church and the circumstances of time and place.' Restored by the Second Vatican Council, RCIA follows the ancient tradition of the Church in helping those seeking a deeper relationship with Christ to break from the surrounding culture and develop a new Christian life. RCIA provides Christian support and preparation for those entering into the mysteries of Christ.



What are the steps or stages of the process of joining the Church? Participants in RCIA pass through steps or stages that help them in their continuing and deepening conversion to Christian life. Each step or stage involves rites, liturgical celebrations, prayer, and/or blessings. Participants are prepared to celebrate the initiation sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

What do some of the RCIA terms mean?

- ◆ *Candidate*—a baptized Christian seeking full communion with the Church.
- ◆ *Catechumen*—one who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil.
- ◆ *Elect*—catechumens who celebrate the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent. The Rite of Election signifies their being chosen for the sacraments of initiation.
- ◆ *Inquirer*—one seeking to learn more about Catholicism.
- ◆ *Mystagogy*—a period of post-baptismal catechesis.



For more information, contact the Parish Office at 575-387-2336 or Deacon Clarence.