

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults
The RCIA Process

--by Vickie Shepherd

The Catechumenate Period
The RCIA Process

*“It is love, then, that you should strive for.
Set your hearts on spiritual gifts, especially
The gift of proclaiming God’s message.
” 1 Corinthians 14:1*

Welcome to the “soul” of this Spirit led process!

This is a time when we are led by the Holy Spirit as He moves to enrich our lives in the promises of faith, hope and love in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit led me to the scripture above; it perfectly describes two of the aspects that most people find most appealing in this ministry. (I have to add that this also includes the sponsors and team members!) First of all there is a powerful bond which grows between everyone by the time you reach the Catechumenate period. “It is love...” this is what naturally happens when a group of people meet weekly in the name of the Lord. You grow in love and knowledge of God and of one another, that is a bond that will give you strength as you explore the scriptures and the depth of God’s love for us.

Next we must “set our hearts on spiritual gifts”. Our goal is ultimately to be in communion with our God, the angels, the saints, and all our brothers and sisters through the sacraments, especially the Eucharistic meal. This is where the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ unfolds before us weekly. Therefore our “soul” purpose is to share in the Easter sacraments, especially Holy Communion.

Lastly from this reading “ especially the gift of proclaiming God’s message.” This is an awesome call to each and every baptized person; we must heed this call and spread the Word to those who are in need of hearing it. If indeed we are living our life according to the Word

(remember that Christ is the Word...therefore all that we do essentially flows from our quest to know, please and love our Creator, should occur as naturally as taking our next breath). The works which flow from the Word of God, are a ministry to love and serve the sons and daughters of God. We have come to knowledge of His salvation for us through Jesus' birth, life, suffering, death and rising! By proclaiming this Good news, we share in the mystery of Christ through our baptism and renouncing evil's invasion into our lives.



* The Catechumenate period is and should be a lengthy one. It should (preferably) last about a year or more. Not all parishes have their process set up to accommodate this type of RCIA. During the catechumenate period you will come to mass weekly and become a part of the assembled people of God by participating in the Liturgy of the Word..It is expected that in making yourself a part of the worshipping community, you will participate in parish events. (it is preferable that you come with your sponsor so that you can be introduced to the people of the parish who come to these events). The Holy Spirit by now has lead you to do some sort of community work, as a part of your call to Christian living, whenever possible. In the ideal setting (I don't want to scare you here!) your catechesis would be 2-3 years so that you would experience Jesus' message more fully in the scriptures (through the lectionary,** a book which covers the complete Bible in a 3 year period).

Some of the guidelines the Catechumenate team will follow are specific, and they cover the needs of the people who come to this process searching for a deeper relationship with God, the Catholic Church, and our Christian community of believers. Your experience will be a gradual catechesis which will cover church doctrine, traditions, custom and practices which will be revealed through the Word of God

You must also show a readiness to turn to God in prayer, be a witness to Christ and keep your hopes focused on Him. You must follow the guidance of the Holy 'Spirit and show a sincere love of neighbor. The celebrations of the Word are specifically arranged for your benefit. You will grow in strength with Gods' blessing by being present and active in this process. After the liturgy of the Word, you will be dismissed to further feed your hunger for our Lord, Jesus Christ. This will help you prepare for the time when you will join us at the Lords' table.

Since our life as a Christian is an apostolic call, everyone should learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and witness to people by building up the Church, and by professing your faith.

You will experience many new and different feelings as you grow in love for God. " He has called you by name" and you have answered that call. I pray that you will always continue to answer God's call with a "Yes", and that He will continue to bless you every day of your life!

~ Vickie Shepherd

notes

*According to the RCIA Rite of Christian Initiation Rite book and other resources written on this subject.

** The Lectionary: is a liturgical volume containing Scripture passages to be read during Mass. The readings have a 3-year cycle; the complete story of the Bible is completed in a 3-year period. The cycles are year, A, B, and C. During the Masses for the Catechumenate during the Lenten scrutinies, Cycle A is always used.

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