

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults *The RCIA Process*

--by Vickie Shepherd

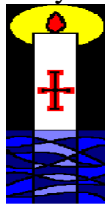
The Rite of Acceptance *The RCIA Process*

“Receive this sign of the cross on your forehead,
It is Christ Himself who strengthens with this
sign of His love, Learn to know and follow Him.”

(from the Rite of Acceptance)

You have now made the decision to move forward in your journey as a catechumen (not baptized) or candidate (baptized Christian or Catholic). The choice to go on marks your “Exodus” from the Inquiry stage into a new way of life. This new life will be an answer to God’s earlier call to follow Him. He is “the doors are opened wide for you to enter the Church”. * You will now be a part of this community, the family of God, for He has called you by name. Your acceptance into this worshipping community is marked by a formal Rite, a step closer to the Easter sacraments to which you will soon be “elected”.

You may be wondering why all the pomp and circumstance to become a member of the Church, but it is a necessary part of your initiation process. This is a part of the Church since the early days when the Christians were persecuted for their faith. We must accept you into our midst and as a community help you to follow in the footsteps of Christ. We do all of this through your sponsor. I will talk more about sponsors and godparents in the next article. The sponsor is a representative of our community and they speak for all of us when they come before the assembled people of God. During this Rite you will be marked with the cross, the sign of Christ’s love for us. You will also receive a cross to wear as your sign that you want to find and follow Jesus. The next part of the Rite is the presentation of the word, you will be asked to “embrace the Word of God”. This action has a twofold meaning, which will be conveyed to those present. First is that you will “embrace” God’s word in the scriptures and make this your way of life from now on. Secondly, it means that you are “embracing Jesus Christ”. In the Gospel of John 1:1-4, the writer tells us about Jesus being the Word; “1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2. He was with God in the beginning. 3. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”



The final part of the Rite of Acceptance is your dismissal from the assembly, you will now be dismissed on a weekly basis until Easter vigil. At the dismissal you will further discuss the Word of God and the homily (sermon). The purpose of dismissal is to help you grow in love and knowledge of God through the scriptures, since you can not join our brothers and sisters in Christ at the Eucharistic table, you will be fed by Gods word. During your dismissal the assembled people continue to pray for you and participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is a prayer of thanksgiving and a celebration of the real presence Jesus Christ, in which we share fully with one another. The paschal mystery, or the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is why we believe we are saved from the darkness which exists in the world today. Through your baptism and confirmation you will be a part of this celebration at Easter. *--Alleluia!*

~ Vickie

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