

What is RCIA?

RCIA is a journey of faith, a deep conversion to Jesus Christ and His values. During this process, a person is formed in faith by reflecting on God's Word, the Catholic Community's life, liturgy, beliefs, and apostolic works. The RCIA is a total formation process culminating in full membership in the Catholic Church, through the Sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.

Who is it for?

The RCIA is primarily designed for persons seeking Baptism; that is, those not baptized previously. Since baptized Christians from other denominations may also be seeking membership in the Catholic Church, the RCIA process is adapted to their needs as well. The process is also open to baptized Catholics who would like to complete their initiation as Church members, and celebrate the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

What is the process?

The process of full initiation into the Church has four stages, beginning with the Period of Inquiry. This is a time for questions and finding out more about the Church and its life of faith. Not all inquirers decide to enter the Church or to complete their initiation—it is up to the individual.

The Period of Catechumenate begins with the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome. During this period we meet weekly to pray, share scripture and how they relate to one's life, and to discuss church teachings. In addition, participants will attend Sunday liturgies and are sent to further reflect on the Gospel of Jesus in light of their own life experience after the Liturgy of the Word. It is a time to deepen the life of faith and the awareness of God's love for them. A person may find it helpful to extend this period.

The Period of Purification and Enlightenment begins with the First Sunday of Lent. The Rite of Election is celebrated at this time. This period continues the reflection on scripture and one's own life, focusing now upon Lenten themes: liberation from sin, deepening in prayer, works of charity and sacrifice.

Full initiation into the Catholic Church takes place at the Easter Vigil through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Baptized Christians of other denominations are received into full communion with the Catholic Church at this time.

The last stage is the Mystagoga, a fifty day "afterglow" from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, when the new Church members meet several times to reflect further on their understanding of the Easter sacraments, become better integrated into the faith community, and discover how they can participate in the Church Community into which they have been welcomed.

How long does it take?

The process of conversion takes time to mature—different lengths of time for different persons. Therefore, the length of time spent in preparation for the sacraments of initiation will differ from person to person. Most often the Sacraments of initiation are celebrated solemnly at the Easter Vigil the Saturday night before Easter Sunday.

An Invitation:

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic, or are a Catholic desiring to celebrate Eucharist and Confirmation, please contact Rita Sherman - Director of Faith Formation rasherm@creighton.edu at 402-280-3478.