

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING CATHOLIC?

Then check out St. Pius's RCIA!

What is RCIA?

It is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is the term the Roman Catholic Church uses for the process of welcoming adults into the Church.

What are my obligations?

There is no obligation on the part of anyone to "join the church." There is no cost. You do not need to bring a sponsor. You only need the desire to learn more about the Catholic faith. What happens next is up to you!

What is the shape of the RCIA process?

The RCIA begins in mid-September and concludes in early May. During this time we meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. The RCIA is broken into four periods:

The First Stage: The Period of Inquiry: This first stage of the RCIA is a time of reflection and discovery, whereby a person begins to search out God's call to enter more fully into the life of the Church. Helping the inquirer in this process are members of our own parish family who form the RCIA team. Team members meet weekly with the inquirers, helping them to discern God's calling through prayer, encouragement and the sharing of their own faith stories. The basics of the Catholic Christian faith are presented during this time.

The Second Stage: The Catechumenate. Once the inquirer decides to enter into the process which will lead to full initiation into the life of the Church, they move into the next stage of their formation through the Rite of Acceptance. In this stage, an inquirer is now called either a catechumen (one who has never been baptized) or a candidate (a person baptized in another Christian denomination.) During this period of formation, the faith of the catechumen or candidate is deepened through prayer and reflection upon God's word at weekly Sunday meetings. We gather at one of the Sunday liturgies and then we are dismissed after the homily in order to further reflect upon the word of God. We will continue to meet on Wednesday evenings in order to grow in our knowledge of the faith. During this time, both catechumens and candidates are given the assistance of a sponsor, a member of the parish community who is committed to help them in the process of becoming a full member of the Church.

The Third Stage: Period of Lenten purification leading to the Easter Vigil: Near the time of the first Sunday of Lent, the catechumens and candidates are presented to the Bishop in the Rite of Election. From this point, catechumens are now called "elect." The period which follows this rite is one of purification for the catechumen, the candidate, and indeed for the entire parish community. We are all called to reform our lives according to the demands of the gospel. At the conclusion of this period, the elect and the candidates are initiated into the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil. For the elect, this means the reception of all three sacraments of initiation--Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. For

the candidates, it means full reception into the Church through Eucharist and Confirmation.

The Fourth Stage: Mystagogy: The Greek word mystagogy means "entering into the mystery." This phase which occurs after Easter marks a time when those who have become full members of the Church now have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the mystery of the faith. This period reminds everyone that growth in the faith is ongoing and lifelong.

What the RCIA is not?

RCIA is not a class on the fundamentals of the Catholic faith. It IS a conversion process. We believe that your decision to look into the Catholic Church is your response to an invitation made by Jesus to come to know him through this community. In other words, Jesus is inviting you into a personal relationship with him. Conversion describes the process of coming to know Him more deeply. The Catholic community wishes to serve as an instrument to help you to grow in your relationship with the Lord. The goal of the RCIA process, therefore, is not to fill your minds about facts concerning the Catholic Church--Why do Catholics genuflect? Why do Catholics pray to Mary? What is confession all about? (Though we will touch on these). Facts about the Catholic Church are important -- but facts are dead pieces of knowledge without a living relationship with the Lord -- a relationship which we hope to nurture and support.

A process, not a program:

The RCIA can best be described as a process of coming to know Jesus Christ on a personal level. Coming to know Jesus cannot be fitted into a thirty-week instruction program. It is a process of ever-deepening growth and commitment -- a process that continues long after you are initiated into the Catholic Church. We will try to help you discover your readiness to make that commitment to Christ in and through the Church. We will celebrate your journey to Christ in various rituals throughout the process. Finally, the RCIA is very much a public process that takes place in the context of the community of St. Patrick. The ceremonies or rites that we celebrate usually take place at the Sunday liturgies, when our community comes together to worship. In summary, the RCIA is a faith journey. Each of us has a unique path for our faith development. Therefore, there is no obligation on the part of anyone to "join the church." We stand ready to assist you in reflecting upon whether God is calling you at this time to follow him in and through the Catholic community of St. Pius.

I am interested or have further questions. What do I do now?

If you wish to learn more, or to take part in the program, call the church office 341-4900 or contact Christine Newman at cnewman@staff.stpiusx.com.

There is a You Tube video that looks really great!

[Catholics Come Home.org](http://CatholicsComeHome.org)