

RCIA at St. Olaf

by Fr. Mark Pavlik

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The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. This catechetical program begins in the fall and continues until its culmination at the Easter Vigil. The sessions are made up of presentations on various aspects of the Church's teachings, including Scripture, Tradition, liturgy, and social justice. While these presentations make up the core of the actual meetings, the central principle of the RCIA is conversion. By entering into the journey through RCIA, those who are participating join the paschal journey of Jesus Christ and are introduced to Church doctrine, prayer life, liturgy, and apostolic work.

RCIA is designed not only for those who seek to join the Catholic Church. Participants in the program fall into one of two categories. One group is called catechumens, those who have not been baptized into any Christian denomination and are preparing to receive the three sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil: baptism, confirmation and first Eucharist. The other group is called candidates, and is made up of those who have been baptized into another Christian denomination, such as Lutheran or Presbyterian. These people prepare to be received into the Catholic Church and receive first Eucharist and Confirmation. RCIA is also for those Catholics who have not yet been confirmed. The RCIA program develops the faith of each individual going through the process while maintaining the ideals and visions of the Catholic community.

Again this year, St. Olaf is offering RCIA classes on Sunday mornings, following the 10:00 am Mass, beginning September 20th. In addition to those who are in the RCIA program, the classes will be open to the public to provide continuing faith formation for members of our parish community. The presentations will take place after Mass in Fleming Hall and will last about an hour, followed by time for question and answer and small group faith sharing. Presentations will be given by myself and members of the St. Olaf staff.

I invite you to think about adults you know who might be interested in joining the Church. Or perhaps you are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith and desire to join our faith community. The RCIA program is a tremendous learning experience, both for those who are preparing to receive sacraments and for the sponsors. Please consider those you know who would be interested and encourage them to consider attending the classes. Information fliers are available throughout the church complex. Most importantly, join me in prayer for this program which will bring many people to journey closer to the Lord and bear much fruit for our parish.