

the journey

How does a person become a Catholic?

Stirred by the Spirit, adults seek meaning in their lives. The Catholic Church welcomes those who are searching through the catechumenate (RCIA) process. Based within a parish community the RCIA process is adapted to the spiritual needs and life journey of adults.

It is the process by which unbaptised adults and children over seven years of age are welcomed into the active community of believers in the Catholic Church.

The RCIA is also the accepted form of preparation for adults already baptised who seek full communion with the Catholic Church.

What is the first step?

Anyone seriously thinking about joining the Catholic Church or simply seeking answers to questions is welcome to approach their nearest parish.

Please contact:



There are four stages to the journey. Each one concludes with a community ceremony (RITE) which acts as a starting point to the next stage. At each Rite the candidates affirm their intention to proceed to the next stage while the community commits to supporting them on their journey.



Enquiry

Candidates make initial enquiries about the Catholic faith

Rite of Welcome

Formation in Christian Life

A period of learning the teaching of Jesus through the Gospel and reflecting on how Catholics bear witness to their faith



Rite of Election



Preparation for Easter

A time to prepare for the Sacraments of Initiation and reflect on the Easter message

Sacraments of Initiation



Deepening of Faith

Having received the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil the new Catholics reflect on the direction of their lives

Missioning Ceremony

Who will accompany you on your journey of faith?

The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptised (RCIA 9).

THE WHOLE PARISH. Christian Initiation is the privilege and responsibility of the whole parish. The community, through prayerful support and encouragement, welcomes and nurtures new members as they journey in faith into full communion with the Catholic Church.

THE ARCHBISHOP. As shepherd and leader of the Archdiocese, the local bishop personally and actively promotes the process of pastoral formation for new members. He welcomes the new members by presiding at the Rite of Election and at a Mass of Thanksgiving after Easter.

THE PRIEST. The role of the priest extends across the various stages and phases of the initiation process. In particular, the priest presides at all the liturgical celebrations and is responsible for the pastoral and spiritual care of those on the journey and those accompanying them.

THE SPONSOR. The parish family chooses a person to accompany a new member on their journey of faith. The sponsor, who is strong in their faith and commitment to the Church, provides an active and supportive role as a companion and guide.

THE RCIA TEAM. Their role is to nurture God's work of conversion in each new member through pastoral formation and guidance. Drawn by the Holy Spirit, they are people of faith and prayer who know and love the Word of God and the Church's teachings. Their lived experience of the Christian life guides and prepares the new members to become aware of and to share the experience of God in their own lives and come to a deeper understanding of the faith of the Church.

For further information please contact:

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Dear Friends,

Every year the Lord abundantly blesses his Church with new members. The majority of these people are baptised into membership of the Church soon after they are born and will be "brought up Catholic" – that is, grow up in an environment where the Church is always a part of their lives.

But there are also other people who hear the call of God later in their lives and find themselves drawn towards the Church. The stories these people tell are in some ways the most interesting and when they come to the point of seeking admission as a full member of the Catholic Church, they undergo the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, which is also called the Catechumenate.

The RCIA is an integral part of the life of the Church and the normal way of preparing adults for the Sacraments of Initiation. It is a life giving and revitalising experience not only for the individual, but for the parish that welcomes them. For all concerned the RCIA is a wonderful journey to conversion. It is a powerful experience of the living Church.

If you are enquiring, or if you have decided that you would like to join the Catholic Church, then read this pamphlet carefully and talk to your Parish Priest or RCIA Co-ordinator about the RCIA. The one true God invites us to come and see the good things he has promised. The RCIA is the process through which the Church responds to this invitation.

ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE.

welcome the door is open



The Catholic Church welcomes those who are searching