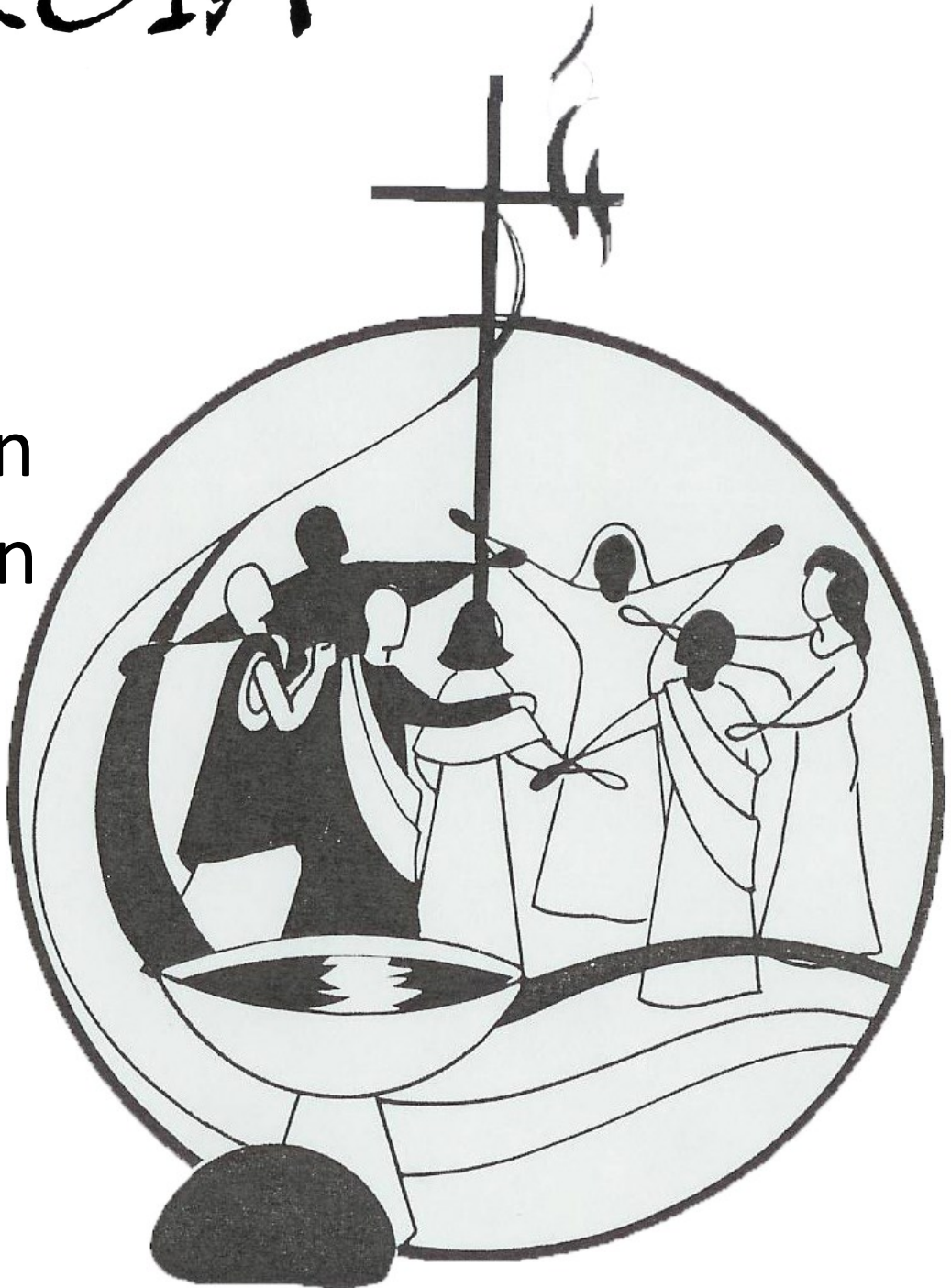


A Faith Journey



Rite
of
Christian
Initiation
of
Adults



Church of the Visitation

655 Sunnysdale Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134

Tel: 415-494-5517 * www.visitacionchurch.org

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA is rooted in the very early years of Christianity. Small communities of Christians took interested, inquiring individuals (Catechumens) into their company and introduced them to their way of life and their belief in Jesus and His teachings. About 150-200 A.D., initiation began to have formal requirements--thus the beginnings of a "Catechumenate". The 3rd and 4th centuries brought about the most developed structure – a process that took at least three years. By the 5th century, disintegration occurred and by the 12th century, the Catechumenate no longer existed.

Attempts to reestablish the Catechumenate in the 16th century failed. It was not until the 20th century that there was a strong revival in Africa and France. Vatican II called for reinstating the Catechumenate and in 1988, U.S. Bishops made implementation mandatory in the United States.

However, RCIA is more than the process by which those desiring to be baptized and/or complete their Christian initiation with the reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. It is also a faith journey in which each church member reexamines his own relationship with God. Each of us, as a member of the faith community, has a responsibility to help welcome and support new Catholics. What we do to make them feel welcome can have a tremendous impact on the growth of their faith. The rite is intended to revive the missionary spirit of all members of our faith community.

We, as church, are involved in each of the various periods of the candidates' journey in the RCIA process. We answer their questions, give our support, publicly recognize their progress and finally approve of their acceptance into the church.

We are grateful for all those members of Church of the Visitacion who have actively participated in RCIA as sponsors, godparents and catechists. In the past you have unselfishly come forward and committed yourself to our newcomers and we sincerely thank you. We also thank and appreciate all those unknown parishioners who have supported our newcomers with their prayers and words of encouragement. We entreat each member to consider how you, too, can help to fulfill Jesus' commandment to "Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation."

The benefits of the RCIA are special and lifelong. RCIA can help to: **Build Community** by establishing a bond between newcomers and the faith community; **Renew the Commitment** of church members to live out their baptismal mission; **Increase Understanding** of the teachings of the Gospel and the Church; **Inspire Reflection** of the mystery of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of the faithful; and **Deepen Responsibility** of the church members to spread their faith as Jesus commanded.

**RCIA – a way for all of us to welcome new Catholics into a church
that is alive in Jesus Christ.**

RCIA is ESPECIALLY FOR

**Unbaptized adults who want to learn about Christianity, or
Baptized Catholics who want to prepare for Eucharist and/or Confirmation,
or Baptized non-Catholics wanting to learn about
Catholic Christianity and tradition**

It has as its goal that each candidate may come to enjoy a fuller and richer understanding of God and mankind's relationship to God and community. The RCIA class is small and informal. It meets weekly, on Thursday evenings, for one and a half hours. The members of the class meet with a team of dedicated parishioners and clergy who serve as facilitators, sponsors and catechists. They also gather together at the 9:30 AM Sunday mass to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word.

Their Faith Journey starts in September at an unhurried pace, getting acquainted with each other and the Scriptures, in the Period of Inquiry; through the "teachings" phase of the Period of the Catechuminate; to the preparation of mind and spirit in the Period of Enlightenment; and to the journey's climactic reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist, at the Easter Vigil.

Finally, in the time between Easter and Pentecost, in the Period of Mystagogy, or Mysteries, the newly received begin to understand and experience the mysteries of faith. The entire community participates in this final stage of adult initiation by their example and gathering for Eucharist.

The community of Church of the Visitacion is aware and supports each RCIA group. It expresses its interest by celebrating with the candidates the various stages and rites in their journey. There is no fee for the program and those living within or outside Church of the Visitacion parish are welcome.

QUESTIONS?

- Q. If I'm not a Catholic, must I join the church after the RCIA program?
- A. Not at all. We are happy to share our Catholic Tradition as well as the Good News of Jesus: God, Savior and Friend. Joining the Church is totally a personal decision.
- Q. If I start and later feel I am not ready to commit further, may I leave?
- A. Yes, there is no pressure for anyone to continue.

If you or someone you know would like more information or want to register.
Please call the Rectory Office: 415-494-5517.

or

You may complete the blue registration form, found by the church doors.
Return them by placing them in the collection basket or dropping them off at the rectory.

R.C.I.A. 20 - 20 Schedule

Thursday meetings from PM to PM in Marini Room (Rectory)
Sunday Masses at 9:30 AM (Liturgy of the Word and Scripture Breaking)

Period of Inquiry

September / October
November

**Sunday, November – Rite of Acceptance and Welcoming
Church of the Visitacion 9:30 AM Mass**

Period of the Catechumenate

December
(No meetings December —Christmas)
January / February

**Sunday, February
Rite of Sending – Church of the Visitacion 9:30 AM Mass
Rite of Election – St. Mary's Cathedral 3:00 PM**

Period of Election

March

Sundays: March : Rites of Scrutiny AM Mass

Holy Week

April Palm Sunday
April , Chrism Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
April , Holy Thursday
April , Good Friday
Saturday Evening, April , Easter Vigil

Period of Mystagogy

April / May

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