

# NEWSLETTER

VOL 31 - DECEMBER 2023

# REFLECTION



During this wonderful season of Advent our Scriptures provide us with much-needed hope and consolation as we move closer to the celebration of Christmas and the new life made possible for us by the Incarnation.

We are reminded to make time for reflection and prayer, to re-focus and to be aware of the many daily comings of Christ into our lives so that when we celebrate the great feast of Christmas and the birth of Jesus, we will be ready to welcome him again. Words of hope and promise, of life and light, of joy and peace, of love and mercy speak to us of a God who cares passionately for all of us and whose desire is that we be one family, bound together by love and compassion. Words such as these have been spoken down through the ages and are as vital to us today as they have been in the past. As we prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate the birth of Christ, we are called also to be open and to be aware of our need to reach out to those in need and to bring Christ into their daily lives.

The themes of joy, excitement and anticipation are very evident in the readings for the third Sunday of Advent. The Prophet Zephaniah spoke of a God who is so full of delight for God's people as to sing and dance for joy. St. Paul reminds us that the Lord is near and we have nothing to worry about because our God will always be there for us, encouraging us to be people of faith and tolerance towards everyone. If we are in any kind of need, the Lord who desires to come close to us, will provide. Paul urges us to continue to praise and thank God, safe in the knowledge that God's peace is ours and that we are encouraged to be happy in the Lord.

This is a good time also to stop and reflect on what it is that we are doing when we invite and welcome new members into our communities. It is the **whole community** that **welcomes, accompanies, supports** and **nurtures** new members in the catechumenate journey, and we do it in the spirit of the early Christian community:

### **Life among the believers: (Acts 2:43-47)**

"Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with **glad and generous hearts**, praising God and having the good will of all the people. And day by day, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

As we move closer to the celebration of Christmas, let us be united in our prayer and model the ways of the early Christian community. We pray that all who have been welcomed as candidates at the beginning of Advent will know of the love and support of our parish communities, and we pray also that together, we will all experience the joy and peace of the Lord, seeking to find a home in our hearts.

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**Kathy Horan**

RCIA Coordinator

**Ash Wednesday:** *Wednesday, 14th February.*

The beginning of the Lenten season and a time of personal and community renewal. During this period, our catechumens, having been welcomed into the community and accepted as candidates for the RCIA, now enter into an extended time of catechesis, pastoral formation and guidance as they become more familiar with the life and teachings of the Church. Most importantly, they seek to explore the process of conversion to Christ, a process that will continue through life for each member of the community. Developing a personal relationship to Christ through prayer is part of this process of conversion and coming to faith.

**First Sunday of Lent:** *Sunday, 18th February*

## The Rite of Election for Catechumens

This takes place at the Cathedral and our Archbishop, Patrick O'Regan, will preside. Prior to the Rite of election, (from 1.15 p.m.) candidates and their sponsors are asked to meet at the Cathedral Hall where the Archbishop will meet informally with the group.

This step in the RCIA process is called '**election**'. It affirms the expressed intention of the catechumens to prepare for the sacraments of initiation at Easter, and, on the basis of the witness of sponsors, catechists and parish priest, it signals the Church's election or choice in accepting the catechumens as ready to celebrate the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil.

## Period of Purification and Enlightenment

This corresponds with the season of Lent and is a time of more intense spiritual preparation as catechumens seek enlightenment and a deeper knowledge of and relationship with Christ.

During this period of the RCIA process, there are some specific rites that take place.

## The Scrutinies

These are rites that are solemnly celebrated on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent, during Mass. The **Scrutinies** are designed to provide opportunities for discerning, uncovering and healing all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the 'elect.' The whole community gathered for the Sunday Eucharist also benefits from this rite.

The **rite of exorcism** is a rite that calls on God to set the 'elect' free from sin and weakness and to sustain them in their quest for deeper enlightenment and conversion of mind and heart.

## Presentations

Following the celebration of the Scrutinies, the **Presentations** take place during the week over a couple of weeks. After the first Scrutiny, the 'elect' are presented with the **Creed**, and they are urged to commit it to memory.

**Presentations** *Continued Next Page*

The second Presentation is the **Lord's Prayer** and takes place during the week following the third Scrutiny.

Throughout Lent and the celebration of the events of Holy Week, the whole community focuses on deepening commitment to Christ, renewing its faith and seeking deeper conversion.

# HOLY WEEK

*Sunday, 24th March: **Palm Sunday***

*Thursday, 28th March: **Holy Thursday***

*Friday, 29th March: **Good Friday***

*Saturday, 30th March: **Holy Saturday***

*Sunday, 31st March: **Easter Sunday***

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**The third step in the RCIA process is the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, and this takes place at the Easter Vigil.**

This is the liturgical rite through which catechumens are initiated into the Catholic Church and receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Following the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord on Easter Sunday, we enter into a period of several weeks in the Easter season. This time is known as 'Mystagogia', a time for further reflection and savouring the wonderful Easter mysteries. It is a time for all to appreciate what it means to be identified with Christ and through our Baptism to become missionary disciples, sharing in the mission of Jesus to the world. For the newly baptised, this is a time of being able to participate fully in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration of the community. It is also a time for discerning how to be an active member of the community, with the guidance, support and witness of the whole community.

## **Mystagogia Mass:**

This is a Mass held at the Cathedral and is an opportunity for all those initiated into the Church at Easter to come together and celebrate with the Archdiocesan community.

The Mass will be held on: **Sunday, 28th April** at the **11.00 a.m. Mass**, with Archbishop O'Regan presiding.

As soon as it is possible for parish RCIA coordinator/parish priest to do so, could you please notify the *Community Life and Worship Office* the names of your RCIA candidates and those preparing to be received into full communion with the Church at Easter?

## Community Life and Worship Office

**P:** 08 8210 8230

**E:** [worship@adelaide.catholic.org.au](mailto:worship@adelaide.catholic.org.au)

## For the Rite of Election

We need to know numbers attending the Rite of Election on Sunday 6th March. The actual **Rite of Election is scheduled for 2.30 p.m.** and the Archbishop would like the opportunity to meet with the group in the Cathedral hall prior to this.

Tea and coffee will be available and I would appreciate RCIA candidates, sponsors and any support people from parishes being present for this, and meeting in the hall from 1.00 p.m.

