

NEWSLETTER

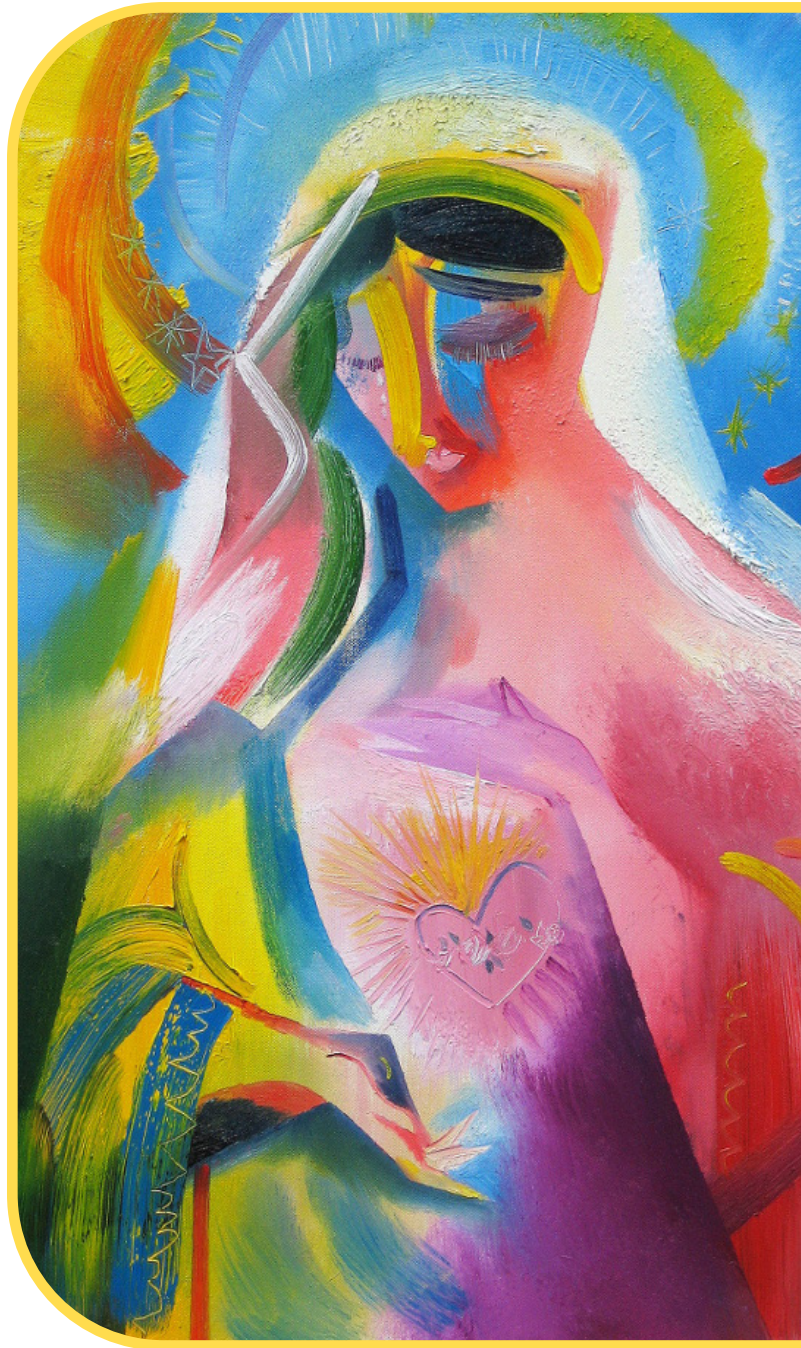
VOL 29 - AUGUST 2023

REFLECTION

The imminent approach of the season of spring brings with it, usually, warmer days, more light and a new energy, often expressed in some kind of spring cleaning. There is a noticeable increase in energy and outlook in many people as we shrug off the long, cold winter days and look forward to something different.

In our Church, this time of year also heralds the beginning of a new season of RCIA; some parishes are under way and many others are close to beginning the process. This is a sign of hope to all of us, and indeed, a great opportunity for all of us in our parishes to support newcomers, those who are seeking something in life to give their lives a deeper meaning and significance. In these days of all of us as Church being called to be aware of and consciously take part in the synodal journey – walking together in faith and hope – in the footsteps of Jesus.

Mary plays a significant role in the life of the Church. At the heart of our faith is Jesus Christ, born of Mary, at a particular time in history, amid troublesome and challenging



times. Luke's gospel describes Mary as blessed among women, and the child she bore is also blessed. (Luke 1:42). We hear in this account that God looked with favour on Mary, and that she responded wholeheartedly to what God was asking of her.

Mary's importance for us emerges out of her deep faith and trust in God, that despite the difficulties she may have been able to imagine, she still took heart from God's choice of her, and responded with faithfulness and trust. Mary raised Jesus and showered him with love, teaching him about what it meant to be considerate and kind, to reach out to those in need and to be committed to his faith in God. In a very real sense, Mary guided Jesus as he took his first steps, and she was with him, not only as mother, but also disciple, as he took his last steps. If anyone knows what it means to walk the journey in faith and prayer, Mary is our model. We are told that she treasured all these things in her heart.

At this time of year when many parishes are preparing for another group of inquirers to become involved in the RCIA process, it is good and timely for all of us in our communities to be open and welcoming of those who wish to join us. In a very real sense, we are the 72 disciples sent out to bring good news to the world and to encourage the beginnings of faith in Jesus in those who are seeking something more in life. Many of the inquirers who make an initial contact about the RCIA will observe that they are looking for something, searching for meaning, wanting to find deeper relevance and meaning in life. They are looking for a community of faith to support them in their life journey and they are seeking fellow companions on the journey.

We honour Mary as Mother of God, our mother, and mother of the Church. Mary was present with the sorrowing, confused disciples at Pentecost, the birth of the Church. The Second Vatican Council named Mary as Mother of the Church, and so to Mary we can turn for inspiration and guidance, and as in her life, she will point us to Jesus. From Mary we can gain a renewed sense of what it means to be disciples, on the way, walking together, welcoming others to share in our faith. For people of faith, the knowledge that we are beloved of God and special to God should spill over into our everyday lives to animate our communities and to provide a welcome to others who want a taste of what we share in our faith.

Kathy Horan

RCIA Coordinator



SUGGESTED RCIA TIMELINE

Period of Evangelization and Pre-Catechumenate:

This is an initial period of time set aside to enable priests, catechists and other laypeople to explore and provide some explanations of the Gospel message. Fr. Elio Capra describes this time as an opportunity to invite and to form people to become disciples of Jesus. Through a careful reading, proclamation and reflection on the Gospels, potential candidates are invited to 'come and see' what the Catholic community is all about. This is a call to a personal relationship with Jesus and with a community of disciples; it is also a call to conversion, turning away from evil and being drawn into God's love.

During this time, candidates have an opportunity to share their life stories and to listen to the stories of members of the community. They are also introduced more deeply to God's story in Jesus Christ and to how this is lived out within the community of the Church, understood as a community of disciples of Jesus.

(Note: This period usually commences around late August/early September; however, there may be local variations on this.)

Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

This takes place after a period of Evangelization and is the first public acknowledgement of those seeking to become members of the Church. They declare their intention to the Church and the Church accepts them as people who intend to become faithful members of the Church. This acceptance signals an initial conversion and the first stirrings of repentance, a beginning to the practice of prayer, a sense of Church and

some experience of a sense of the company and experience of members of the Christian community.

The Rite of Acceptance consists of a reception of the candidates, the celebration of the Word of God, and the dismissal of the candidates. It is highly desirable that the Christian community, or at least a significant representation of the community be present to welcome, offer support and hospitality to those beginning on this journey of conversion. After the Rite of Acceptance, the names of candidates are recorded in the register of catechumens, along with the names of sponsors and the minister and the date and place of celebration.

(Note: This rite usually takes place around the first Sunday of Advent.)

Election or enrolment of names:

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the sacraments of initiation and the catechumens, now the elect, express the will to receive these sacraments.

Purification and Enlightenment

This is a significant time of preparation during the six week season of Lent. It is a time of reflection, intensely centred on conversion, marked by celebration of the scrutinies and presentations and of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

SUGGESTED RCIA TIMELINE
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1st Sunday of Lent:	Rite of Election: this is for all those who are preparing to be fully initiated into the Church at Easter, and is a diocesan event that takes place in St. Francis Xavier Cathedral.
2nd Sunday of Lent:	Presentation of the Creed: Explanation of the Creed
3rd Sunday of Lent:	1st Scrutiny: Explanation of the Scrutinies
4th Sunday of Lent:	2nd Scrutiny: Conversion Experience
5th Sunday of Lent:	3rd Scrutiny: Sharing of Experience and Open Discussions
Passion Sunday:	Explanation of Holy Week Liturgies
Holy Thursday:	Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday:	Celebration of the Passion
Retreat	(Holy Saturday)
Easter Vigil:	Sacraments of Initiation
Easter Sunday	

Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

This is the liturgical rite, usually integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.

Period of Post-Baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

This is the time, usually the Easter season, following the celebration of initiation, during which the newly initiated experience being fully part of the Christian community by means of catechesis and participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.

2nd Sunday of Easter

3rd Sunday of Easter

4th Sunday of Easter

5th Sunday of Easter

6th Sunday of Easter

Ascension Sunday

Pentecost Sunday

During this time, there will be a **Mystagogia Mass to celebrate and welcome our new Catholics.** This will take place in **St. Francis Xavier Cathedral.**

Kathy Horan | RCIA Coordinator

GETTING STARTED WITH PARISH RCIA GROUP

Suggested procedure for beginning the journey with those seeking to become Catholic through the RCIA process:

- Decide on an initial time when the team and the inquirers can come together for a first meeting. At that meeting, you can check with the whole group whether this is an acceptable time, day etc. so that you get into the routine of a regular meeting time.
- It would be good if this could happen in the near future, given that you will probably need a break of a couple of weeks between Christmas and new year when there are holiday breaks for many.

Session 1:

- Provide a simple journal for those involved, or ask people to bring one along. Many people like to write things down so that they can come back to them later, or just call to mind what has been discussed. The journal can also be used for candidates to write down their questions and observations.
- Prepare a simple focus which might just consist of a Bible or Lectionary, a cloth of the colour for the liturgical season, a crucifix and candle etc.
- Welcome all to the gathering.
- Introduce yourself and invite each person present to introduce themselves and share something of their story. In the course of the first meeting you might also mention that a sponsor is required for each candidate, and you could let them know to invite the person they choose, remembering that the sponsor needs to be at least 16 years of age, baptized, confirmed and have celebrated first Communion.

- For the newcomers hoping to become Catholic, ask each person to explain briefly what led him or her to inquire about the Catholic faith. For parish members and RCIA team, encourage each person to share something of their stories, family and faith backgrounds.

Session 2:

- Share briefly the process of the RCIA: You may wish to share with them the brief overview of each stage within the RCIA process.
- Explain that listening to the Scriptures is a very important part of the process as a way of getting to know who Jesus was, how he interacted with people, how he described God for us, and how we can come to know Jesus through prayer and reflection on the Scriptures.
- At this point, choose someone read the gospel for the following Sunday and allow time for people to think about it and maybe to ask any questions they wish to ask. Build in some time each week for the reading of the gospel and reflection time.
- Allow some time to mix informally before the end of the session; agree to a time and date for the next meeting and let them know that each week will focus on a different aspect of the Catholic faith.
- Invite questions: if you do not know the answer, just acknowledge that and say that you will find out between now and when you next meet.

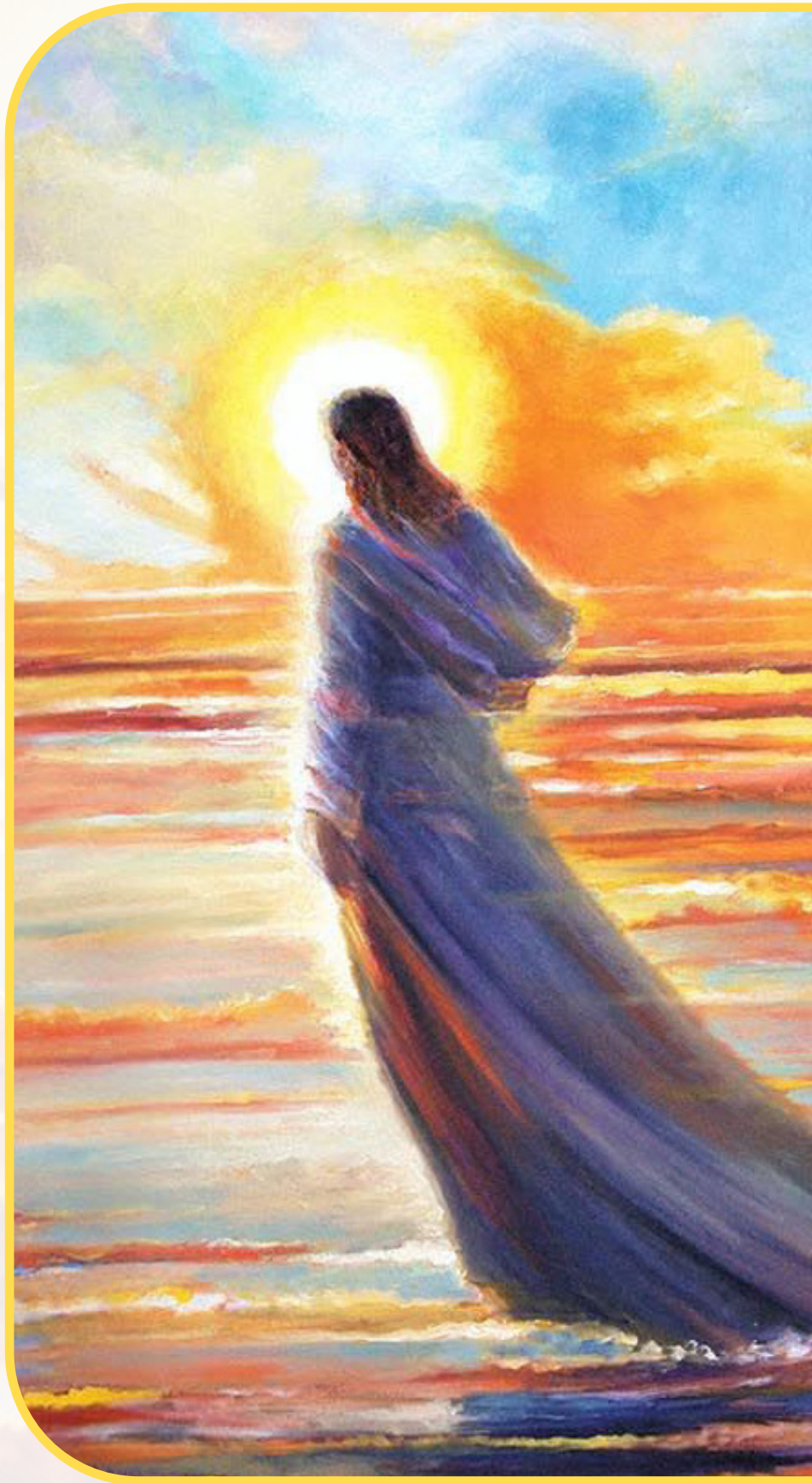
Formation Sessions

Some initial topics that may be helpful to begin your discussions:

- An introduction to the Christian Scriptures
- Jesus Word of God
- Ways of praying
- Sacred objects and symbols
- The liturgical year
- An introduction to the sacraments
- Sacraments of Initiation
- Holy Spirit
- Mary, Mother of God
- The Catholic Church
- Various teachings of the church
- Social justice

Kathy Horan

RCIA Coordinator



ADULT INQUIRER INFORMATION FORM

Information on this form is held in confidence and is not shared without your permission.

Today's Date: _____

First Name: _____

Maiden Name: _____

(if applicable)

Middle Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Place of Birth: _____

(include **locality** (town, city, county, etc.), **region** (state, province, territory, etc.), and **country**)

Name of Father _____

Name of Mother _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

(Daytime)

(Evening/Weekend)

Mobile Phone: _____ Occupation: _____

Email: _____

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

What, if any, is your present religious affiliation? _____

Have you ever been baptised? Yes No I am not sure

If you answered "Yes", please provide the following information:

In what denomination were you baptized? _____

Date or your approximate age when you were baptized: _____

Baptismal Name: (if different from current name) _____

Place of Baptism: (name of church/denomination) _____

Address, if known: _____

Location, if known: _____

(include **locality** (town, city, county, etc.), **region** (state, province, territory, etc.), and **country**)

If you were baptized as a Catholic, check those sacraments you have already received:

Reconciliation (Confession) Eucharist (First Communion) Confirmation

Are you familiar with the Sunday Mass? Yes No

Do you currently attend Sunday Mass? Yes - Weekly Yes - Often Yes - Sometimes No

If regularly, which Parish / Mass time do you usually attend? _____

CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

Check the appropriate statement(s) below and provide any information requested beneath the statement.

I am single and have never been married

I am engaged to be married.

Your Fiancé(e)'s Name: _____

Your Fiancé(e)'s Current Religious Affiliation: (if any) _____

For you: This is my first marriage I have been married before

For your Fiancé(e): This is his/her first marriage My fiancé(e) has been married before

I am married

Your Spouse's Name: _____

Your Spouse's Current Religious Affiliation: (if any) _____

For you: This is my first marriage I have been married before

For your Spouse: This is my spouse's first marriage My spouse has been married before

Date of Marriage: _____

Place of Marriage: _____

(include **locality** (town, city, county, etc.), **region** (state, province, territory, etc.), and **country**)

What type of marriage ceremony did you have: _____

(Catholic priest, Civil celebrant, Government official, Christian minister, Non-Christian minister)

- I am married, but separated from my spouse
- I am in a defacto relationship.
- I am divorced and I have not remarried
- I am a widow/widower and have not remarried since my spouse's death.

FAMILY INFORMATION

- Do you have any children living with you? Yes No
- Have they been baptised? Yes No I am not sure

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What or who has led you to want to know more about the Catholic Faith?

How would you describe your spiritual life right now (e.g. I pray a little/lot, I go to Mass/church)?

What are you looking for in your spiritual life?

How would you like us to help you on your spiritual journey?
