

June 1st, 2007

To: All Candidates for the RCIA Process
From: Luis Brown, DRE
Re: RCIA Registration and Preparation

You have expressed interest in participating in the R(ite) of C(hristian) I(nitiation) for A(dults) process here at St. Mary's. May the Lord guide you and give you peace and wisdom during this process and this time of inquiring and questioning. The RCIA process is not a "sign-up" for becoming a Catholic. It is a time of no obligation, during which we together as human beings and some as Christians pursue the truths and meaning of life, the answers to eternal questions, and the truths, teachings, and practices of the Catholic Church.

RCIA is both for those who are sure and those who wish to inquire. Your time of inquiry will be respected as each person's faith journey and path of grace is different. Our priests and staff will lead the RCIA evening sessions through teaching, direction, question answering, discussion, and prayer. As different people pursue the possibility of becoming Catholic through the RCIA process, they fall into various categories as follows:

Inquirer- anyone who is in RCIA simply to check out the possibility and learn more, but is very much uncertain about making any decision.

Catechumen- An unbaptized person who has made a decision to possibly enter the Catholic Church

Candidate- A baptized Christian who has made a decision to possibly enter the Catholic Church. A candidate can also be a baptized Catholic who never received first communion or any religious instruction.

Catholic Adult Confirmation Candidate- These are Catholics who join the class for eight weeks only to prepare for their Confirmation. If you are reading this letter, you are not in this category.

RCIA evenings are each Monday from 7:30-9pm in St. Mary's Lyceum Auditorium on 313 Duke St. beginning Monday, August 20th, 2007. We do not usually have RCIA on major holiday weekends. The exception is Martin Luther King Jr. day, because it is so close to other holiday weekends. We also do have a session on both the Monday before and after Thanksgiving. All are required to be at each session of the year, however it is allowable to miss a session or two for good reason and candidates will be beginning their journey throughout the year. Also, each session is videotaped so you can catch up on what you missed.

There will also be a few other days over the course of your preparation that are either required or highly recommended. These include an RCIA Advent Morning of Reflection

on Saturday, December 1st, an RCIA retreat on Saturday, January 26th, 2008, the Rite of Election on the last weekend of February, the Scrutinies, which take place at various Sunday Masses during Lent in Feb/March 2008, and the final rehearsal for Easter Vigil on the morning of Saturday, March 22nd. There may also be one or two pilgrimage/trip opportunities for the groups as well.

Enclosed is an:

- RCIA Registration Form
- Sponsor Requirements Sheet
- RCIA Reading List (this is not required reading; just for your reference)
- Pamphlet describing the RCIA process.

Please fill out and return the Registration Form as soon as possible in order to have you on record and so that you do not miss any correspondence.

As you prepare to attend the RCIA sessions here, you will also need to do or gather the following (if applicable):

- Copy of your **Baptismal Certificate** (Catholic or Christian)
- **Marriage Certificate** (if you are married)
- Choosing a **Sponsor**
- **Sponsor Certificate** (this is only obtained after you pick a sponsor)
- Choosing a **Saints Name**

NOTE: **If you are only inquiring**, that is, if you are **very unsure** about making any kind of decision about joining the Catholic Church or receiving additional sacraments, **then please do not worry about the above requirements yet (other than the Registration Form)**. Simply attend the sessions and the Lord will guide your heart in His time. However, be aware that these requirements are necessary for entrance at Easter time, so if and when you have discerned that this is probably your path, you should pursue the above as listed. It is also advisable to pick a sponsor early even if you are unsure, as a sponsor can be a valuable help and support in discernment and dialogue.

Each of you will pick a sponsor in the coming months as a guide and support on your journey of faith and preparation. This person is a practicing Catholic 16 years of age or older. The **Sponsor Requirements** sheet enclosed outlines for you what is needed in order to be a sponsor for a Catholic sacrament. Please spend some time in thought and prayer in the coming months to help you select someone. Eventually, your sponsor will need a certificate or letter from the Catholic parish they attend that verifies their eligibility to be a sponsor. These letters take various forms, but all must be signed by a Catholic priest, deacon, or delegated staff member. If you have trouble picking a sponsor, especially if you do not know many Catholics, please let us know and we would be glad to help you.

During the summer, I would suggest reading helpful materials from the RCIA reading list. Throughout the year, please do not hesitate to ask myself or one of our priests or volunteers for help, a listening ear, prayers, or answers regarding any aspect of the Catholic faith, a personal struggle or question, or simply for support.

In addition, before you begin the RCIA process, I will conduct a **Personal RCIA Interview** with you. These interviews will be done during the Summer of 2007, and I will set them up with you during a weekday or weekday evening.

Finally, I pray that the Holy Spirit may guide each of you and prepare your hearts and minds as you continue to pursue the way, the truth, and the life which is found in Jesus Christ and His church.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me by email at brownluis@hotmail.com or by phone at 703-836-5450.

Luis Brown
St. Mary's Director of Religious Education

Please fill out and return the Registration Form as soon as possible via mail, fax, or email to:

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