

Dear Friends,

In last week's bulletin article, I pointed out that we are adding of members to the Church by profession and initiation. This is the account provided in the Acts of the Apostles, the movements and achievements of the first disciples not only to bring the good news to those whom they meet, but to incorporate – literally, to bring into the body – new members of the Church. It is the body of disciples with Christ the head that seeks to live the gospel and share it with the world. Initiation into the Roman Catholic Church can have many forms, which I discussed briefly a few weeks ago. Tim LeRoyer, is our coordinator of RCIA and Young Adult Ministry. His article will help us more fully understand the process of initiation.

In Christ,
Fr. Jones

“Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life”

At the end of every Mass, we are extolled to go out into the world and share God's love and the Good News to everyone in our lives. We are called to share the beauty, truth, and love of Christ that our Faith offers to those who are discerning God's call to explore Catholicism. The RCIA team is dedicated to sharing this beauty with others. Let me introduce them to you:

Tim Deragon is well-known in the parish. He has vast experience with RCIA, and is gentle, wise, and a great teacher. We also have two new members to our team, **Alex and Stacey Rawleigh**. **Alex Rawleigh** went through the RCIA process this past fall, and received Confirmation and Holy Eucharist at the end of Advent this past year. He has a deep knowledge of Scripture, the Liturgy, and the Catholic Faith in general. **Stacey Rawleigh** is a veteran elementary teacher who knows and loves the Catholic faith well. Our parish is blessed to have them, and I am very grateful that they are willing to help others discern the Faith.

That word, “discernment” is very important in RCIA. Everyone is in a different place on their journey of Faith, and it is important to meet people where they are. Church documents identify two types of RCIA persons: Catechumens (unbaptized persons) and Candidates (validly baptized persons). For those who aren't validly baptized, more grace and time is needed to discern and accept the Truth of Catholicism. For those who are validly baptized, less is needed. Catechumens need more of the graces available in the Church's formal prayers, blessings, and exorcisms, so they participate in many Rites and have extensive preparation before they fully become a Catholic at the Easter Vigil. Candidates, as Christians, need less of this, and so the Church offers fewer Rites to help each one be properly disposed to receive the Sacraments. They can enter into full communion at any Mass.

This year we have been blessed with three Candidates, and by the time you read this article all three will have received the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation. Our parish was blessed to receive Alex Rawleigh, Narvic Shelansky, and Jessica Woodhouse into the Roman Catholic Church, and into our parish family this past year. If you get the chance to meet them, you will find, as I have, that they are humble, loving, and devout in their Faith and interactions with others. We are truly blessed to have them as fellow parishioners!

RCIA is all about discernment, catechesis, and formation. This is also exactly what evangelism is. Praying that others discern well, sharing the Faith with them, and allowing God to form them through our love. The way we can help others enter the Faith is through prayer, relationships, and friendly invitations. Evangelism can seem intimidating and difficult, especially when people have lots of questions we don't know the answers to, or they are angry at the Church and perhaps also at its teachings. However, we aren't called to answer all questions, quell all fears, or quash all anger. All God calls us to is to be a good friend, share with others our love for Him, and invite them to discover that love more fully for themselves. If you know anyone who has questions, or is a non-Catholic you are friends with, invite them to join you at a parish event. Know that all of you are in the prayers and thoughts of Fr. Jones, our parish leadership and staff, and myself. If you need anything, or have any questions, we are here for you.

God bless!
Timothy LeRoyer