

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)

Interested in learning more about the Catholic Tradition? Are you looking for a pressure-free, non-judgmental environment where you can learn about Catholicism? Had a bad previous experience while looking into the faith? Want a fresh start? Perhaps you are searching quietly and need some answers. Get all of your questions answered! **It is not too late to join us** Monday evenings 7:30 p.m. - 9:30p.m. in the School Cafeteria, the Holy Grill. You do not have to journey alone! Call Pat or Gary Norris at 513-677-5379. Further inquiry can also be communicated through harmonic10@aol.com.

Introducing the 2009-2010 RCIA Team... Patty and Gary Norris, Rev. George Schommer, David Ledwin, Frederick Heiselman, Jonathan Pearson, Joann Nordloh, Anne Spaeth and Russ Smith. The Holy Spirit has blessed us with 21 inquirers this year! They asked over 115 questions about the Catholic faith in our first session. We take all the questions that they may have and write them down to be answered over the course of the catechetical process.

What we are doing now. The catechetical process consists of four periods leading to receiving the sacraments of initiation and beyond into a final period called the neophyte year or mystagogy. This first period is called the precatechumenate and will extend until late November when candidates declare their intention to the Church. The first period consists of inquiry on the part of the "inquirer" or "candidates" and of evangelization and the precatechumenate on the part of the Church. During this time, the RCIA team gives a suitable explanation of salvific events and the Gospel and provides an opportunity to experience the company and spirit of Christians in our community. Inquirers are seeking the truth and the team transmits the words and deeds of revelation. There are no liturgical rites in this period because inquirers have not yet entered into a formal relationship with the Church through the Rite of Acceptance. All inquirers have been given a binder full of conversion stories, informational articles about our faith and examples of common Catholic prayers. Many of the questions asked early on are being answered and some are addressed specifically.

Catechism for All of Us...

In our instructional catechetical session we were introduced to God's plan for us, "Salvation History", beginning with Creation and continuing through the Paschal Mystery. In the beginning was God. He is self-sufficient, perfectly complete in the family of Persons or the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each pouring themselves out to the others. Out of His superabundant love God created all things from nothing. All that exists He holds in existence from moment to moment, holding them in His mind. He creates angels, gives them vast power, knowledge and freedom. At the moment that each angel is brought into existence, they know the full outcome of choosing to love God or not. Some angels freely choose to abuse their freedom and fall, Satan is one of them. Then time began, for He also created the rest of the universe and us, and simultaneously His plan for our salvation from sin and our divinization.

In the first Book of Moses, Genesis, we see the description of God creating all things from no pre-existent thing or help, but through his very will and according to his wisdom. He saw that all of these things were good. He then made man in their image to have dominion over all of creation, and saw that it was *very good*. (Gen 1:1-31) All that God creates is good and ordered. We are not the product of any necessity whatever, or of blind fate or chance. We were created by love, for love. St. Thomas Aquinas, a great doctor of the Church, wrote, "Creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hand." (CCC 293) He wanted to make his creatures share in his being, wisdom and goodness and he continually sustains them in existence. He makes possible their actions and leads them to their ultimate perfection. Scripture and Tradition never cease to teach and celebrate this fundamental truth, as explained by St. Bonaventure: "*The world was made for the glory of God...not to increase his glory, but to show forth and communicate it.*" (CCC 293)

In the first man, Adam, we were also given the choice to share in God's eternal love and eternal life. Adam refused this gift because of his unwillingness to resist the temptation offered by the evil angels who had refused the same love. God, who exists outside of time, knew what we would do and having His plan for us, promised Adam that salvation would come. God gradually revealed Himself to us through prophecies, promises and covenants. God willed to give us hope by offering his mere creatures intimate union with himself, gradually revealed in a succession of covenants. We are saved from sin for this purpose, so that we might choose to respond in faith to his final covenant in the Son. What do we mean by a covenant with God? A covenant is a solemn agreement based on love between God and human beings, established at various times in salvation history and culminating in the Final, Everlasting or New Covenant in Jesus' blood through the Incarnation. Covenants are God's offer of relationship; I will be your God and you will be my people. He began by creating a man and woman with a decree that they should multiply and fill the earth. God began to lovingly call people to himself, each covenant bringing more people in relationship with himself. The major covenants each have a sign.

The first covenant is with Adam and Eve, a married couple, having the signs of the Sabbath rest and the consummation of their marriage, in keeping with the first commandment to be fruitful and multiply. The covenant with Noah was with a larger group, a family of eight persons; its sign is a rainbow. The covenant with Abraham was with an even larger group, a tribe; the sign is circumcision. The covenant with Moses was with a nation with signs of the Passover and the Ten Commandments. The covenant with David was with a kingdom of one nation ruling over others. The signs are the throne of the king and the Temple. Despite human unfaithfulness, selfishness, pride, perversion, hatred, and rejection, God remained faithful to his covenants.

Over time, God revealed that His covenant is a divine spousal union between Him and His people. God wants a deep intimacy with us. *Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jer 31:31-34)* God sends his Son to become one of us through the Incarnation and to establish the New and Everlasting Covenant through the Pascal mystery. God reveals himself to us incrementally through his Son, Jesus, who is the fullness of revelation, the last word. The crucifix is the symbol of this final covenant. The New Covenant is with *all humanity*, with those who hear and heed him, made one family in the Holy Spirit. The Church, filled with the Holy Spirit, is the visible embodiment of the New Covenant. Till the end of time, the Church offers God's love and invitation to *all* people. The church is here to articulate for every age the truth revealed by Jesus. We are to know Him and love Him because we are destined to share in God's glory forever; however, love requires that we be free to choose. How will you choose?

Asked and Answered. Was there really an Adam and Eve? In 1909, the Pontifical Biblical Commission declared that certain truths must be held no matter what the latest scientific theories claim to the contrary. The inarguable truths are: 1.) God created all things at the beginning of time, 2.) Man was specially created, 3.) God created man male and female, 4.) All humans descend from a single original race, 5.) Our first parents lived in a happy state of justice, integrity and immortality, 6.) God gave them a command to test their obedience, 7.) They disobeyed the divine command at the instigation of the devil, who took on the form of a serpent, 8.) Our first parents fell from their state of innocence, and 9.) They were promised a future redeemer. Yes, Adam and Eve absolutely existed!

Read it for yourself. Catechism of the Catholic Church (hereafter: CCC) Paragraphs: 53-67, 238, 388, 758-762, 776, 781-786, 831, 839-840, 1080, 1611-1612, 2058-2061, 2810.