



## STEPS OF THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS (OCIA)

### PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION

Prior to beginning the OCIA process, an individual is attracted in some way to the Catholic Church. You may have been drawn to the Church through friends, coworkers, relatives, or even media coverage of the Pope or other news reports of the Church's stand on moral issues. By whatever way you came to be interested, it is God Himself who has drawn you to seek Him, and you are cooperating by seeking answers to what the Church believes. This may entail a long period of searching for some, for others, a shorter time.

### PERIOD OF INQUIRY

The PERIOD OF INQUIRY formally begins with the attending OCIA classes, which typically begin September each year. These classes provide instruction (catechesis) in the Catholic faith. After several weeks of instruction, this Period ends with the *Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens*.

### PERIOD OF CATECHUMENATE

For those who have learned enough about the Catholic faith to decide to enter the Church, this period begins with a liturgical rite – *the Rite of Acceptance*, which is celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent – in which catechumens express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God's call to follow the way of Christ.

During this Period, catechesis continues, which leads to acquaintance with dogmas and precepts as well as a profound sense of the mystery of salvation; and catechumens learn to turn more readily to God in prayer. This Period ends with the *Rite of Election*.

### PERIOD OF PURIFICATION & ENLIGHTENMENT

This Period begins with the RITE OF ELECTION, which closes the period of the Catechumenate. Usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, the Church formally ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the sacraments of the initiation, and the catechumens express their will to receive these sacraments. This Period is a time of reflection; of more intense spiritual preparation, intended to purify the minds and hearts of those who seek to enter the Church. The Scrutinies are celebrated – to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful and to bring out all that is strong, upright, and good. Catechumens are now called elect.

### CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

This is the liturgical rite, which is integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist; and the already baptized candidates are brought into full communion with the Church through the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist.

### MYSTAGOGY

This is the time following the celebration of initiation – continued reflection of the sacraments you have received.