

## The Theology of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

- 1) The RCIA is intended to facilitate the experience of conversion and the response of faith (RCIA. n. 1). At the heart of this experience is the proclamation of the kerygma, the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Embracing the gift of salvation is embracing the demands of the reign of God.
- 2) The RCIA respects the individual experience of conversion, offering a process that accommodates and adapts to one's journey in faith in the midst of the community (RCIA. n. 1. 2. 4. 5).
- 3) The RCIA creates a dynamic for adults to share faith together. Hence, it is meant for groups of adults while respecting the individual's experience of God (RCIA. n. 1. 3. 5). The rite does make provisions for the initiation of children for catechetical age (RCIA. n. 3).
- 4) The RCIA is celebrated in the midst of the community and is a challenge to the community to deepen its own conversion (RCIA. n. 4).
- 5) The RCIA emphasizes the close relationship between liturgy and catechesis. Growth in faith is ritualized in various ways throughout the RCIA (RCIA. n. 6). The proper time to celebrate the rituals of the RCIA will be influenced by both the individual's conversion and the liturgical calendar (RCIA. n. 18-30).
- 6) The RCIA recognizes that growth in faith that leads one to commitment happens gradually and in discernible periods (RCIA. n. 7).
- 7) The RCIA bears a markedly paschal character. The proper time for celebrating the sacraments of initiation is the Easter Vigil (RCIA. n. 8. 23).
- 8) The RCIA affirms the responsibility for ministry and service of all the baptized. Furthermore, both explicitly and implicitly, the rite calls for a variety of ministries for full implementation (RCIA. n. 9-16).
- 9) The RCIA recognizes the importance of incorporating the particular needs and demands of the community and the candidate. The ritual celebrations need to authentically express the conversion experience of the candidates. Therefore, the rite encourages the appropriate adaptation of the RCIA at all levels (RCIA. n. 32-35).
- 10) The RCIA provides a new context and model for sacramental catechesis, evangelization, conversion, the response of faith, and mission. All of this is formative and dynamic, responding to the initiative of God. The further exploration of the various periods and steps of the RCIA will underscore this understanding of sacramental catechesis.

Ultimately, the theology of the RCIA is about conversion.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Handout from Bishop Wiesner from the Workshop on RCIA given at OLPH Sherwood Park April 1, 2017.