



Frequently Asked Questions About Becoming Catholic

How Does One Become Catholic? Those who have never baptized as well as some baptized individuals, are initiated through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) process that leads to the full initiation into the sacramental life of the Church. Unbaptized individuals are received into the Church at the Easter Vigil. They are baptized, confirmed and receive Eucharist for the first time. Baptized individuals may be received either at the Easter Vigil or at another time. They renew their baptismal promises, make a profession of faith, are confirmed and receive Eucharist for the first time.

What Does OCIA Involve? The OCIA sessions meet on Sunday mornings from 9:45 – 11:45 AM beginning in the fall through Easter. Additionally, there are service opportunities, retreats, Bible studies, and prayer services which help you become incorporated into the Body of Christ.

What is Inquiry? This is the first step to become a Catholic in the OCIA process. This period may vary in length according to God's timing and the work of the Holy Spirit in you. Conversion is a gradual process or a faith journey. The aim of this period is to awaken one's faith. Once God's time has been fulfilled and the inquirer is ready to take the first step in the process of conversion, the **Rite of Entrance into the Catechumenate** (for unbaptized individuals) and the Rite of **Welcoming the Candidates** (for baptized candidates) is celebrated.

What are the Rites of Entrance into the Catechumenate and Welcoming of Candidates? During these Rites, baptized and unbaptized inquirers publicly declare to the church their intentions to continue their faith journey. The Church, in turn, welcomes and accepts them as persons who intend to become fully initiated members in full communion with the Catholic Church. Here at the Cathedral, these Rites are typically celebrated in October and January.

I Am Ready to Celebrate Rites of Acceptance into the Catechumenate/Welcoming of Candidates.

What Do I Do Next? If you would like to celebrate the Rites of Acceptance into the Catechumenate or Welcoming of Candidates, please schedule a conference with Bernadette Flowers, Associate Director of Adult Faith Formation at 404-267-3690 or bflowers@ctking.com. This conference helps the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA) team know how to best support you in your faith journey. If you have been baptized already, you will need to bring a copy of your birth and baptismal certificates with you to the conference.

If I Begin, Am I Obligated to Become a Catholic? There is no obligation to make any kind of commitment nor is there pressure exerted on anyone to become a Catholic. We respect the conscience and decision of every inquirer. We hope you will gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of Catholic beliefs and practices through your attendance at Inquiry.

I Am Already Baptized. Will I Need to Be Baptized Again? Generally not. The Catholic Church recognizes the action of the Holy Spirit in other Christian communities and accepts valid Christian baptisms. A valid baptism must have flowing water and be in Trinitarian form.

What is A Sponsor? What if I Don't Know Anyone Who Can Be My Sponsor? A sponsor is a confirmed Catholic who has volunteered to be your companion during your faith journey. Sponsors commit to pray with and for you, attend OCIA sessions with you and generally help you to become a part of the parish family. If you do not have someone to be your sponsor, we will provide you with one.

Are Catholics Christians? Yes. The term Christian refers to all who recognize Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), Son of God and Lord. Catholics are the one group of Christians who can trace their lineage as a Church back to Jesus' Twelve Apostles.

Why Can't I Go to Communion? Sharing of the Eucharist is a sign of full unity, an expression of shared belief, practice and fellowship in the Catholic Church. We respectfully ask those who do not yet one with us in belief to refrain from receiving the Eucharist. Everyone is invited to come forward at the time of Communion to receive a blessing from the priest or Eucharistic minister. Simply indicate your desire for a blessing by crossing your arms across your chest.

Who Can I Contact if I Have Additional Questions? Please contact Bernadette Flowers, Associate Director of Adult Formation at bflowers@ctking.com with any questions you might have.