

ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC CHURCH



THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS/CHILDREN (OCIA/OCIC) HANDBOOK 2026-2027

St. Ambrose Catholic Church
3901 Woodburn Road
Annandale, VA 22003
www.stambroseva.org

Image: *Theodosius and Saint Ambrose* by Peter Paul Rubens (c. 1616)

WELCOME

Welcome to the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children (OCIA/OCIC)!

Whether you are exploring the Catholic faith for the first time, have already decided to become Catholic, or are a baptized Catholic seeking to deepen your faith and/or receive the sacraments you haven't yet, we are happy to welcome you.

We are here to help you grow in your understanding of the Catholic faith, answer your questions, and support you on your journey. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we may assist you in any way.

We pray that this experience will be a time of learning and growth, and that you will come to know the beauty of the Catholic faith and the welcoming community of the Catholic Church.

In Christ,
Fr. John O'Donohue, Pastor
Fr. Mike Nugent, Parochial Vicar

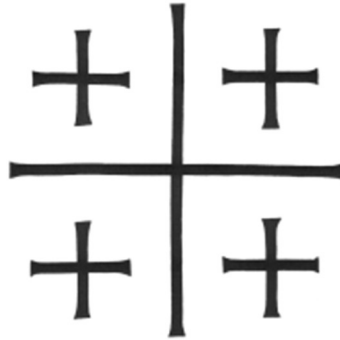


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INTRODUCTION

OCIA/OCIC is more than a series of classes. Throughout this process, you will have opportunities to pray, study scripture, learn the teachings of the Catholic Church, and become part of our community.

The pages that follow begin with passages from the Bible and selections from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and other important documents. Together, they remind us that Christian initiation is rooted in God's saving plan, entrusted to the Church by Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. They also provide the theological foundation for the journey you are about to undertake.

As you read these texts, remember that faith is both a gift from God and a response to His invitation. We pray that your time in OCIA will deepen your love for Christ, strengthen your understanding of the Catholic faith, and help you discover the joy of belonging to His Church.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. Jn 3:16

Then Jesus said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age. Mt 28: 18-20

Then Peter stood with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, "...God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth, as you see and hear."... Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you...for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call."... They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers... And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. Acts 2: 1, 32-33, 37-39. 42, 47

From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion. This initiation has varied greatly through the centuries according to circumstances. In the first centuries of the Church, Christian initiation saw considerable development. A long period of catechumenate included a series of preparatory rites, which were liturgical landmarks along the path of catechumenal preparation and culminated in the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation. The second Vatican Council restored for the Latin Church "the catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps." The rites for these stages are to be found in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA). The Council also gives permission that: "In mission countries, in addition to what is furnished by the Christian tradition, as they can be adapted to the Christian ritual." Today in all the rites, Latin and Eastern, the Christian initiation of adults begins with their entry into the catechumenate and reaches its culmination in a single celebration of the three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. Since the beginning of the Church, adult Baptism is the common practice where the proclamation of the Gospels is still new. The

*catechumenate (preparation for Baptism) therefore occupies an important place. This initiation into Christian faith and life should dispose the catechumen to receive the gift of God in Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. The catechumenate, or formation of catechumens, aims at bringing their conversion and faith to maturity, in response to the divine initiative and in union with an ecclesial community. The catechumenate is to be “a formation in the whole Christian life...during which the disciples will be joined to Christ their teacher. The catechumens should be properly initiated into the mystery of salvation and the practice of the evangelical virtues, and they should be introduced into the life of faith, liturgy, and charity of the People of God by successive sacred rites.” Catechumens “are already joined to the Church, they are already of the household of Christ, and are quite frequently already living a life of faith, hope, and charity. “With love and solicitude mother Church already embraces them as her own.” **The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1229-1233, 1247-1249.***

You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.
St. Augustine, Confessions, X

UNDERSTANDING OCIA/OCIC

The program involves a comprehensive introduction to the Catholic faith based on its four pillars:

1. **The profession of faith:** The truth of what we believe (summarized in The Creed);
2. **The celebration of the Christian mystery:** How we celebrate what we believe in the beauty of the sacred liturgy (summarized in the Seven Sacraments);
3. **Life in Christ:** The goodness of how we live what we believe (summarized in the Ten Commandments);
4. **Prayer:** How we foster friendship with Jesus Christ in prayer (summarized in the Lord's Prayer).

There are three types of persons participating in the OCIA/OCIC:

1. **Catechumens:** The unbaptized who are candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.
2. **Candidates for Full Communion:** The baptized non-Catholic Christians who wish to become received into the Catholic Church by receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist.
3. **Catholics Preparing for Full Initiation:** Those baptized Catholics who wish to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and/or the Eucharist.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATECHUMENS, CANDIDATES, AND SPONSORS

1. Learning the truths of what we believe:

- a. Class attendance: Class attendance is critical for OCIA/OCIA. During the class sessions, we will explain the four pillars of our faith. This understanding helps us to better live our faith.
- b. Theory and Practice
 - i. The classes on Monday nights are *theory*. We'll discuss what we believe as Catholics and why.
 - ii. We also need to *practice* what is learned in class. The weeks leading up to the Easter Vigil on March 27, 2027, are a time to begin living the Catholic faith through daily prayer, personal study, attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and becoming involved in parish groups.
 - iii. We need both *theory* and *practice* to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- c. Homework: Catechumens and Candidates are expected to read the assigned readings from our texts*:
 - i. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*
 - ii. *The Holy Bible*, (RSVCE or NABRE versions). It is essential to use the Catholic version of the Holy Bible for class readings. Our brothers and sisters in other Christian denominations use different versions of the Bible that exclude certain texts that the Catholic Church holds as part of revelation. This will be discussed in class.
 - iii. *Handbook of Prayers* by James Socias (Scepter Publishers) [optional]

2. Celebrating the beauty of the Sacred Liturgy

"The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life... The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice."
Catechism of the Catholic Church 2177, 2181

Students in OCIA and OCIC are expected to attend Sunday Mass every week.

3. Living the goodness of life in Christ through conversion of heart

"Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."
Pope St. Leo the Great, Sermon 21 on the Nativity of the Lord

Catechumens and Candidates are expected to embrace the call to conversion and to live according to the Lord's Commandments of love for God and neighbor.

4. Personal Prayer

"Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God... Prayer is the life of the new heart. It ought to animate us at every moment."
Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2561, 2697

Catechumens and Candidates will be taught how to foster friendship with God through daily prayer.

* Students in OCIC will follow a separate and age-appropriate curriculum that will help them learn and understand the four pillars of the Catholic faith.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

1. **Registration:** Participants must complete required paperwork, which can be found at www.stambroseva.org/OCIA.
2. **Baptismal Certificate:** Candidates for Full Communion and Catholics Preparing for Full Initiation must provide an original baptismal certificate issued within the past six months.
3. **Marriage Certificate:** All married participants must present (1) a copy of their marriage certificate, and (2) their spouse's baptismal certificate (if they're baptized).
 - Please note that invalid marriages or irregular living situations will affect a person's readiness to receive the Sacraments of Initiation.
 - If you have been divorced and are remarried, please communicate this to one of the priests as soon as possible. We are here to work with you!
4. **Choosing a Sponsor:** Catechumens and Candidates must pick a sponsor or "godparent" who will spiritually accompany them on their pilgrim journey of faith. Mindful of the importance of the spiritual relationship between Candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation and their sponsors, Church law (Code of Canon Law, cans. 893, 874) requires that sponsors:
 - Be at least sixteen years old;
 - Be a baptized Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist;
 - Live a life of harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken—that is, a believing, practicing Catholic (who, for example, if married, is married in the Church);
 - Not be the father or mother of the Candidate.

Candidates prayerfully and carefully should choose the person they think is best suited to serve as sponsor. Sponsors must have their parish's pastor complete a sponsorship eligibility form, which can be found at www.stambroseva.org/OCIA.

5. **Confirmation Saint:** Those who will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation will be confirmed with a new name, the name of a saint, who will be the patron saint of the confirmed. Candidates should explore the lives of the saints to choose a saint they would like to have as a model of holiness and as a friend in heaven.

OPTIONAL OCIA FIELD TRIPS

Our optional Saturday field trips are opportunities to see the Catholic sites around Washington, DC and to grow in friendship with your classmates and the priests at St. Ambrose. Details will be provided as we approach these dates. We will meet on site, not at the parish hall.

- November 14, 2026 at 11 AM | John Paul II National Shrine | 3900 Harewood Rd NE, Washington, DC 20017
- January 9, 2027 at 11 AM | National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception | 400 Michigan Ave NE, Washington, DC 20017
- February 27, 2027 at 11 AM | National Gallery of Art | 6th St and Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20565

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT THE CATHOLIC FAITH

1. Books

- a. Introductions to Catholicism
 - i. *The Light of Christ* by Thomas Joseph White [...*buy this one...*!]
 - ii. *Jesus of Nazareth* (3 book series) by Pope Benedict XVI
 - iii. *The Case for Jesus* by Brant Pitre
 - iv. *Catholicism* by Robert Barron
 - v. *Jesus Shock and Back to Virtue* by Peter Kreeft
 - vi. *Rescued: The Unexpected and Extraordinary News of the Gospel* by John Riccardo
- b. Prayer and Spirituality
 - i. *Interior Freedom* by Jacques Philippe
 - ii. *Searching for and Maintaining Peace* by Jacques Philippe
 - iii. *The Discernment of Spirits* by Timothy Gallagher
 - iv. *I Believe in Love* by Jean C. J. D'Elbee
 - v. *The Shattering of Loneliness* by Erik Varden
 - vi. *Into Your Hands, Father* by Wilfred Stinissen
- c. Novels
 - i. *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Shadows on the Rock* by Willa Cather
 - ii. *Kristin Lavransdatter* by Sigrid Undset
 - iii. *Helena and Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh
 - iv. *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene
 - v. *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain
 - vi. *The Citadel of God* by Louis de Wohl

2. Catholic Podcasts

- a. Bible in a Year with Fr. Mike Schmitz
- b. Catechism in a Year with Fr. Mike Schmitz
- c. Godsplaining
- d. The Thomistic Institute Podcast

3. Videos

- a. The Rescue Project by Acts XXIX
 - i. Powerful overview of the Catholic message. Free online
- b. Aquinas 101 Series
 - i. Cleverly-animated short (5-10 minutes) videos explaining the sacraments, grace, the person of Jesus, the virtues, etc.
 - ii. Google: "Aquinas 101 YouTube playlist"
- c. The Search: Finding the Meaning of Life
 - i. To access, log into FORMED for free here: <https://stambroseva.org/faith-formation/formed>
- d. Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained
 - i. To access, log into FORMED for free here: <https://stambroseva.org/faith-formation/formed>
 - ii. Video series summarizing Catholic beliefs. Dive deep on topics of interest.

OCIA SYLLABUS 2026-2027*

Contact:

Jennifer Wyse
 Director of Religious Education, St. Ambrose
DRE@stambroseva.org, 571-640-9938

Texts:

The Holy Bible (NABRE or NRSV-CE, i.e. the Catholic Bible)
 The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

Recommended Resources:

Magnificat.net – Daily Bible Readings and Meditations
 FORMED – digital streaming platform for books, videos, talks,
 etc. Sign up for FREE at stambroseva.org/FORMED

Instructors:

Fr. John O'Donohue
 Fr. Mike Nugent

Where:

St. Ambrose Parish Hall.
 Optional field trips meet *on location* at 11 AM on the day
 of (not at the parish hall).

When:

Mondays from 7-8 pm
 (detailed schedule is below).

Date	Topic	Weekly Reading	Instructor
August 24	Introduction to OCIA: Theory & Practice	N/A	Fr. O'Donohue Fr. Nugent
August 31	Catholicism: God Wants His Family Back	Bible: John 3 CCC: 1-49	Fr. Nugent
September 7	NO CLASS		
September 14	Divine Revelation: Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition	Bible: 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Thess 2:15; John 21 CCC: 50-143	Fr. Nugent
September 21	Existence of God, Holy Trinity, Fall of Man, Jewish Roots	Bible: Genesis 3; Genesis 17; Romans 11; Acts 7 CCC: 144-420	Fr. O'Donohue
September 28	Jesus Christ: Fully Divine and Fully Human	Bible: John 1; Luke 2 CCC: 422-682	Fr. Nugent
October 5	The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Communion of Saints	Bible: John 2:1-12; Luke 1 and 2; Matthew 2; John 4; John 19:25-29 Revelation 12 CCC: 946-975	Fr. Nugent
October 12	NO CLASS		
October 19	The Church: The Family of God	Bible: Matt 28; Acts 2; Revelation 7:9-17 CCC: 811-962	Fr. Nugent

October 26	The Papacy and Infallibility	Bible: Matt 16:13-20; John 16; Isaiah 22:15-24; Acts 15:1-12 CCC: 683-810	Fr. O'Donohue
November 2	Baptism: The Door to the Sacraments	Bible: Matt 28; Acts 2; John 3 CCC: 1210-1284, 1285-1321, 1830-1832	Fr. O'Donohue
November 9	Confirmation: The Fullness of the Spirit	Bible: John 14:15-17; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-6 CCC: 1285- 1314	Fr. Nugent
November 14	Optional Field Trip to Pope St. John Paul II Shrine in Washington	--	
November 16	The Eucharist (Holy Communion)	Bible: John 6; Matthew 26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 CCC: 1322-1419	Fr. Nugent
November 23	Holy Orders (The Priesthood)	Bible: John 20; Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 4:14, and Titus 1:5 CCC: 1536-1600	Fr. Nugent
November 30	NO CLASS		
December 7	Holy Matrimony (Marriage)	Bible: Ephesians 5, Matthew 19:1-2, Mark 10:1-12 CCC: 1601-1666	Fr. Nugent
December 14	Catholic Christmas	Bible: Matt 1:18-2:23	Fr. O'Donohue
December 21	NO CLASS		
December 28	NO CLASS		
January 4	Penance (Confession) and Anointing of the Sick	Bible: John 20:23, John 8:1-11; James 5; Proverbs 28:13; Mark 6:7-13 CCC: 1420-1498, 1499-1498	Fr. Nugent
January 9	Optional Field Trip to the National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception	--	--
January 11	Introduction to the Moral Life: God Wants Us to Be Happy!	Bible: Exodus 20:2-17; Matthew 5 CCC: 2030-2195	Fr. Nugent

	and The 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Commandments		
January 18	NO CLASS		
January 25	The 4 th and 8 th Commandments	CCC: 2196-2257, 2464- 2513	Fr. Nugent
February 1	The 5 th Commandment	CCC: 2258-2330	Fr. O'Donohue
February 8	The 6 th and 9 th Commandments	Bible: 1 Corinthians 6:9- 11; Psalm 103; Isaiah 43 CCC: 2331-2400, 2514- 2533	Fr. Nugent
February 15	NO CLASS		
February 22	The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, and the Resurrection	Bible: Matthew 25:31-46 CCC: 988-1065	Fr. Nugent
February 27	Optional Field Trip to the National Gallery of Art	--	
February 29	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Part 1	Bible: John 6; Matthew 26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 CCC: 1333-1419	Fr. Nugent
March 8	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Part 2	Bible: John 6; Matthew 26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 CCC: 1333-1419	Fr. Nugent
March 15	Overview of Holy Week Liturgies	John 18:1 to John 19:42	Fr. O'Donohue
March 22	No Class		
March 27	Easter Vigil	--	Rehearsal at 9 am Report to Parish Hall at 7:30 pm. Mass at 8:30 pm.
March 29	No Class		
April 5	The Beatitudes	Bible: Matthew 5 CCC: 1716-1761; 459	Fr. O'Donohue
April 12	The 7 th and 10 th Commandments	Bible: Luke 12 CCC: 2401-2464, 2534- 2557	Fr. Nugent
April 19	No Class		
April 26	Prayer	Bible: Isaiah 43, Psalm 51, Psalm 139 CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. O'Donohue
May 3	Tour of the Church	n/a	

May 10	The Discernment of Spirits: Rules of the Road in the Spiritual Life	Bible: Galatians 5 CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. Nugent
May 17	Where Do I Go from Here? The Call to Holiness and Having a Plan of Life	--	Fr. Nugent
May 24	The Devotional Life (Litanies, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Brown Scapular, Miraculous Medal, Sacramentals, etc.)	CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. O'Donohue
May 31	No Class		
June 7	Closing dinner with parish ministries and OCIA alumni		

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Please note: The CCC reading refers to the *paragraph numbers*, not the page numbers.

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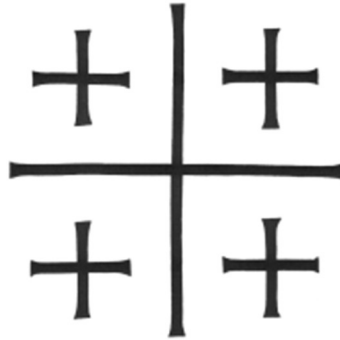


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Catechumens and Candidates are expected to embrace the call to conversion and to live according to the Lord's Commandments of love for God and neighbor.

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Jennifer Wyse
 Director of Religious Education, St. Ambrose
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December 14	Catholic Christmas	Bible: Matt 1:18-2:23	Fr. O'Donohue
December 21	NO CLASS		
December 28	NO CLASS		
January 4	Penance (Confession) and Anointing of the Sick	Bible: John 20:23, John 8:1-11; James 5; Proverbs 28:13; Mark 6:7-13 CCC: 1420-1498, 1499-1498	Fr. Nugent
January 9	Optional Field Trip to the National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception	--	--
January 11	Introduction to the Moral Life: God Wants Us to Be Happy!	Bible: Exodus 20:2-17; Matthew 5 CCC: 2030-2195	Fr. Nugent

	and The 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Commandments		
January 18	NO CLASS		
January 25	The 4 th and 8 th Commandments	CCC: 2196-2257, 2464- 2513	Fr. Nugent
February 1	The 5 th Commandment	CCC: 2258-2330	Fr. O'Donohue
February 8	The 6 th and 9 th Commandments	Bible: 1 Corinthians 6:9- 11; Psalm 103; Isaiah 43 CCC: 2331-2400, 2514- 2533	Fr. Nugent
February 15	NO CLASS		
February 22	The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, and the Resurrection	Bible: Matthew 25:31-46 CCC: 988-1065	Fr. Nugent
February 27	Optional Field Trip to the National Gallery of Art	--	
February 29	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Part 1	Bible: John 6; Matthew 26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 CCC: 1333-1419	Fr. Nugent
March 8	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Part 2	Bible: John 6; Matthew 26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 CCC: 1333-1419	Fr. Nugent
March 15	Overview of Holy Week Liturgies	John 18:1 to John 19:42	Fr. O'Donohue
March 22	No Class		
March 27	Easter Vigil	--	Rehearsal at 9 am Report to Parish Hall at 7:30 pm. Mass at 8:30 pm.
March 29	No Class		
April 5	The Beatitudes	Bible: Matthew 5 CCC: 1716-1761; 459	Fr. O'Donohue
April 12	The 7 th and 10 th Commandments	Bible: Luke 12 CCC: 2401-2464, 2534- 2557	Fr. Nugent
April 19	No Class		
April 26	Prayer	Bible: Isaiah 43, Psalm 51, Psalm 139 CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. O'Donohue
May 3	Tour of the Church	n/a	

May 10	The Discernment of Spirits: Rules of the Road in the Spiritual Life	Bible: Galatians 5 CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. Nugent
May 17	Where Do I Go from Here? The Call to Holiness and Having a Plan of Life	--	Fr. Nugent
May 24	The Devotional Life (Litanies, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Brown Scapular, Miraculous Medal, Sacramentals, etc.)	CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. O'Donohue
May 31	No Class		
June 7	Closing dinner with parish ministries and OCIA alumni		

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Please note: The CCC reading refers to the *paragraph numbers*, not the page numbers.

ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC CHURCH



THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS/CHILDREN (OCIA/OCIC) HANDBOOK 2026-2027

St. Ambrose Catholic Church
3901 Woodburn Road
Annandale, VA 22003
www.stambroseva.org

Image: *Theodosius and Saint Ambrose* by Peter Paul Rubens (c. 1616)

WELCOME

Welcome to the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children (OCIA/OCIC)!

Whether you are exploring the Catholic faith for the first time, have already decided to become Catholic, or are a baptized Catholic seeking to deepen your faith and/or receive the sacraments you haven't yet, we are happy to welcome you.

We are here to help you grow in your understanding of the Catholic faith, answer your questions, and support you on your journey. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we may assist you in any way.

We pray that this experience will be a time of learning and growth, and that you will come to know the beauty of the Catholic faith and the welcoming community of the Catholic Church.

In Christ,
Fr. John O'Donohue, Pastor
Fr. Mike Nugent, Parochial Vicar

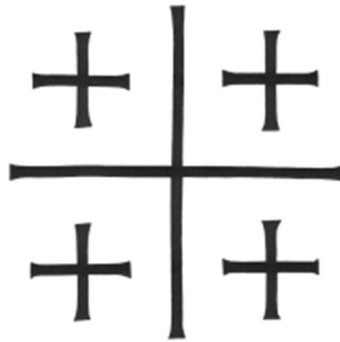


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INTRODUCTION

OCIA/OCIC is more than a series of classes. Throughout this process, you will have opportunities to pray, study scripture, learn the teachings of the Catholic Church, and become part of our community.

The pages that follow begin with passages from the Bible and selections from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and other important documents. Together, they remind us that Christian initiation is rooted in God's saving plan, entrusted to the Church by Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. They also provide the theological foundation for the journey you are about to undertake.

As you read these texts, remember that faith is both a gift from God and a response to His invitation. We pray that your time in OCIA will deepen your love for Christ, strengthen your understanding of the Catholic faith, and help you discover the joy of belonging to His Church.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. Jn 3:16

Then Jesus said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age. Mt 28: 18-20

Then Peter stood with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, "...God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth, as you see and hear."... Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you...for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call."... They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers... And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. Acts 2: 1, 32-33, 37-39. 42, 47

From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion. This initiation has varied greatly through the centuries according to circumstances. In the first centuries of the Church, Christian initiation saw considerable development. A long period of catechumenate included a series of preparatory rites, which were liturgical landmarks along the path of catechumenal preparation and culminated in the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation. The second Vatican Council restored for the Latin Church "the catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps." The rites for these stages are to be found in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA). The Council also gives permission that: "In mission countries, in addition to what is furnished by the Christian tradition, as they can be adapted to the Christian ritual." Today in all the rites, Latin and Eastern, the Christian initiation of adults begins with their entry into the catechumenate and reaches its culmination in a single celebration of the three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. Since the beginning of the Church, adult Baptism is the common practice where the proclamation of the Gospels is still new. The

*catechumenate (preparation for Baptism) therefore occupies an important place. This initiation into Christian faith and life should dispose the catechumen to receive the gift of God in Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. The catechumenate, or formation of catechumens, aims at bringing their conversion and faith to maturity, in response to the divine initiative and in union with an ecclesial community. The catechumenate is to be “a formation in the whole Christian life...during which the disciples will be joined to Christ their teacher. The catechumens should be properly initiated into the mystery of salvation and the practice of the evangelical virtues, and they should be introduced into the life of faith, liturgy, and charity of the People of God by successive sacred rites.” Catechumens “are already joined to the Church, they are already of the household of Christ, and are quite frequently already living a life of faith, hope, and charity. “With love and solicitude mother Church already embraces them as her own.” **The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1229-1233, 1247-1249.***

You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.
St. Augustine, Confessions, X

UNDERSTANDING OCIA/OCIC

The program involves a comprehensive introduction to the Catholic faith based on its four pillars:

1. **The profession of faith:** The truth of what we believe (summarized in The Creed);
2. **The celebration of the Christian mystery:** How we celebrate what we believe in the beauty of the sacred liturgy (summarized in the Seven Sacraments);
3. **Life in Christ:** The goodness of how we live what we believe (summarized in the Ten Commandments);
4. **Prayer:** How we foster friendship with Jesus Christ in prayer (summarized in the Lord's Prayer).

There are three types of persons participating in the OCIA/OCIC:

1. **Catechumens:** The unbaptized who are candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.
2. **Candidates for Full Communion:** The baptized non-Catholic Christians who wish to become received into the Catholic Church by receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist.
3. **Catholics Preparing for Full Initiation:** Those baptized Catholics who wish to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and/or the Eucharist.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATECHUMENS, CANDIDATES, AND SPONSORS

1. Learning the truths of what we believe:

- a. Class attendance: Class attendance is critical for OCIA/OCIA. During the class sessions, we will explain the four pillars of our faith. This understanding helps us to better live our faith.
- b. Theory and Practice
 - i. The classes on Monday nights are *theory*. We'll discuss what we believe as Catholics and why.
 - ii. We also need to *practice* what is learned in class. The weeks leading up to the Easter Vigil on March 27, 2027, are a time to begin living the Catholic faith through daily prayer, personal study, attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and becoming involved in parish groups.
 - iii. We need both *theory* and *practice* to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- c. Homework: Catechumens and Candidates are expected to read the assigned readings from our texts*:
 - i. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*
 - ii. *The Holy Bible*, (RSVCE or NABRE versions). It is essential to use the Catholic version of the Holy Bible for class readings. Our brothers and sisters in other Christian denominations use different versions of the Bible that exclude certain texts that the Catholic Church holds as part of revelation. This will be discussed in class.
 - iii. *Handbook of Prayers* by James Socias (Scepter Publishers) [optional]

2. Celebrating the beauty of the Sacred Liturgy

"The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life... The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice."
Catechism of the Catholic Church 2177, 2181

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3. Living the goodness of life in Christ through conversion of heart

"Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."
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November 30	NO CLASS		
December 7	Holy Matrimony (Marriage)	Bible: Ephesians 5, Matthew 19:1-2, Mark 10:1-12 CCC: 1601-1666	Fr. Nugent
December 14	Catholic Christmas	Bible: Matt 1:18-2:23	Fr. O'Donohue
December 21	NO CLASS		
December 28	NO CLASS		
January 4	Penance (Confession) and Anointing of the Sick	Bible: John 20:23, John 8:1-11; James 5; Proverbs 28:13; Mark 6:7-13 CCC: 1420-1498, 1499-1498	Fr. Nugent
January 9	Optional Field Trip to the National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception	--	--
January 11	Introduction to the Moral Life: God Wants Us to Be Happy!	Bible: Exodus 20:2-17; Matthew 5 CCC: 2030-2195	Fr. Nugent

	and The 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Commandments		
January 18	NO CLASS		
January 25	The 4 th and 8 th Commandments	CCC: 2196-2257, 2464- 2513	Fr. Nugent
February 1	The 5 th Commandment	CCC: 2258-2330	Fr. O'Donohue
February 8	The 6 th and 9 th Commandments	Bible: 1 Corinthians 6:9- 11; Psalm 103; Isaiah 43 CCC: 2331-2400, 2514- 2533	Fr. Nugent
February 15	NO CLASS		
February 22	The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, and the Resurrection	Bible: Matthew 25:31-46 CCC: 988-1065	Fr. Nugent
February 27	Optional Field Trip to the National Gallery of Art	--	
February 29	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Part 1	Bible: John 6; Matthew 26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 CCC: 1333-1419	Fr. Nugent
March 8	The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Part 2	Bible: John 6; Matthew 26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 CCC: 1333-1419	Fr. Nugent
March 15	Overview of Holy Week Liturgies	John 18:1 to John 19:42	Fr. O'Donohue
March 22	No Class		
March 27	Easter Vigil	--	Rehearsal at 9 am Report to Parish Hall at 7:30 pm. Mass at 8:30 pm.
March 29	No Class		
April 5	The Beatitudes	Bible: Matthew 5 CCC: 1716-1761; 459	Fr. O'Donohue
April 12	The 7 th and 10 th Commandments	Bible: Luke 12 CCC: 2401-2464, 2534- 2557	Fr. Nugent
April 19	No Class		
April 26	Prayer	Bible: Isaiah 43, Psalm 51, Psalm 139 CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. O'Donohue
May 3	Tour of the Church	n/a	

May 10	The Discernment of Spirits: Rules of the Road in the Spiritual Life	Bible: Galatians 5 CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. Nugent
May 17	Where Do I Go from Here? The Call to Holiness and Having a Plan of Life	--	Fr. Nugent
May 24	The Devotional Life (Litanies, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Brown Scapular, Miraculous Medal, Sacramentals, etc.)	CCC: 2558-2865	Fr. O'Donohue
May 31	No Class		
June 7	Closing dinner with parish ministries and OCIA alumni		

* Students in OCIC will follow a separate and age-appropriate curriculum that will help them learn and understand the four pillars of the Catholic faith.

Please note: The CCC reading refers to the *paragraph numbers*, not the page numbers.