

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

by Fr. Antony

Being a Catholic

What a profound experience it is to be Catholic – or to become Catholic! Some become Catholic while they are infants, and others when they are older, as adults.

A person is brought to the full communion through Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. For adults, this process is called RCIA - Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. The process may remind us of the 'Exodus' - the long journey - through the desert to the 'promised land', a journey made by the Israelites under the leadership of Moses. Because RCIA is a long process of preparation and waiting, we call it a 'faith journey'. The act of becoming Catholic is to love God and love one another.

The RCIA classes for the year 2005-2006 started on Tuesday, September 13. The topic of the first session was "The Catholic outlook on life." When we define 'catholic outlook', we find it is nothing other than attaining the attitude of Jesus.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, says, "Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus" (**Phil. 2: 5**). In other words, he is telling us to have the same attitude as Jesus. He continues with, "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves" (**Phil. 2: 3**).

The entire Christ event is 'the other-oriented'. He emptied himself for humanity, and is now inviting his followers to come out of our own selves for others.

Jesus, in his public life, cured the sick, gave sight to the blind, comforted the afflicted, gave support and hope to the dejected ones of the society and even raised the dead. By doing these acts, he was fulfilling the prophetic words of Isaiah, which are mentioned in Luke 4:18-19 (**Is 61: 1-3**). Here, we are given a clear declaration of Christ's outlook.

The Sermon on the Mount, 'The Beatitudes,' also clearly presents the outlook of Jesus (Mt 5:1-12). From the beatitudes come the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to visit the imprisoned, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick, to bury the dead; and the spiritual works of mercy: to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear the wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries and to pray for the living and the dead.

Jesus made it very clear in Mathew 25: 40 "What ever you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me." We should keep this in mind when we shape our own attitudes and actions. Let us remember the words of Mother Theresa, "Unless life is lived for the other, it is not worthwhile."

As we begin this faith journey, I invite the entire parish to pray for the success of RCIA.