

## Is it God who is calling Me?

How do you recognize the movement of the spirit in your heart? The Catholic faith calls the process “discernment.” It’s your decision, but you owe it to yourself to get honest and truthful information so you get it right.



“Our hearts are restless, O Lord,  
until they rest in you.”

—St. Augustine of Hippo

## Is the Catholic Church for Me?

Maybe this is a question you have been asking yourself for a while now. Answers sometimes come dramatically, but more often the answers come through careful study and a good deal of soul searching. We can help. Give us a call at the parish office. We’re looking forward to meeting you!

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*Order of  
Christian  
Initiation of  
Adults  
(OCIA)*

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## Order of Christian Initiation of Adults



*Better to light one  
candle than to curse  
the darkness.*  
—The Christophers

The Catholic Church has always offered methods for people who were not Catholic to learn more about the Catholic faith. In the earliest days of the Church, from the time of the apostles, the faith has been spread through the teaching and the witness of those who knew Jesus personally

or knew those who did. From its infancy, the Church has called the teaching by its Greek name, *catechesis*, or “echoing” of the faith to the newcomer.

This process of catechesis was formalized during the Second Vatican Council and called “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).” More recently, this process has been more correctly renamed “Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA).” It relies heavily on the way this work was done in the first centuries.

### Stages in OCIA

OCIA follows the movement of the spirit in the heart of the participant, and it is this movement that truly is the OCIA journey. The highpoint, but certainly not the endpoint, takes place at Easter. As the newcomers and the OCIA team journey together towards this goal, we undergo several “stages.” Let’s talk about each of these stages based on what the newcomers are called at each stage.

#### Inquirer

The first stage is one where your earliest questions are answered. Some examples might be: Why do Catholics kneel, stand and sit so much? Why are there statues in in the church and on the grounds? Ultimately, you will learn what Catholics believe about God, about humanity and about themselves.



*Father Mieczyslaw “Mitch” Maleszyk celebrates Palm Sunday Mass just a week before the OCIA Elect and Candidates are welcomed in to the Catholic Church and receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist.*

#### Catechumen

During the second stage of the OCIA process, people are called either *catechumen* or *candidates*, depending upon whether or not they are baptized. During this stage, we go deeper into the creed, the liturgy and sacraments of the Catholic faith, as well as the biblical foundation of the Church.

#### Elect

The third stage of the OCIA process begins forty days before Easter and includes a concentrated time of prayer and learning. It focuses on morality and how one lives his or her life according to the beliefs of a Catholic. It culminates in the events of the holiest week in the Catholic calendar, the week preceding and including Easter Sunday.

#### Neophyte

This stage of the OCIA process begins after Easter and is open ended. It addresses the basic question: “Now what?” It gives the newly baptized individual the impetus to become the new person, grounded in faith, that God has called them to be.

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