

## **MINISTRIES in the PARISH RCIA PROCESS**

**The journey to conversion and full incorporation into the Body of Christ is multi-dimensional and requires the active support and ministration of the entire community as well as particular ministers.**

### **THE PARISH COMMUNITY**

Vatican II teaches that each one of us “has the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of our ability” (Lumen Gentium 17) and that “Christian initiation should be the concern of the whole Christian community, so that from the beginning the catechumens will feel that they belong to the people of God” (Ad Gentes 14). In its Introduction, the Rite tells us that the community must always be prepared “to give help to those searching for Christ” and that the entire community must help the candidates and the catechumens throughout the process of initiation (RCIA 9). There are some very specific responsibilities which the entire community and each member must assume at various stages and moments of the process:

- *Vibrant evangelization*
- *Active response and testimony during the public rituals*
- *Role modeling through prayer, fasting, learning, acts of justice and service*
- *Wholehearted welcome and integration of new members into the life of the community*

### **PRIEST**

Pastors have the responsibility to assure quality pastoral care and instruction of catechumens and candidates through appointment and support of competent leadership and personnel and/or direct involvement in the ministry of initiation. Priests and deacons must preside at the liturgical celebrations of the RCIA according to the prescribed rites.

### **SPONSOR/GODPARENT**

The sponsors selected to accompany inquirers on their journey of faith should be mature, active Catholics able to assist with the formation of the candidates in a personal way. They accompany the candidates at the

Rite of Acceptance, then support them and respond to their questions about the faith during the catechumenate period .

Godparents begin their role at the Rite of Election and continue their support through Lent, the celebration of the initiation sacraments, the mystagogy period and as lifelong companions in faith. The godparent may be the same person who served as the sponsor, or it may be a different person, chosen with the approval of the priest, and able to witness to the quality of Catholic faith life desired for the new member.

### **PARISH RCIA DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR**

The person who directs the local process assures that the team members and all the other ministers understand the vision of the RCIA, are trained for their particular ministries, and have the information and cooperation they need to carry them out. The director communicates with everyone involved to ensure that the participants, the community, the ministers and the parish staff have the information and encouragement they need to fulfill their responsibilities. The RCIA Director is expected to hold Catechetical Leader certification according to Archdiocesan guidelines (cf. Ministry of the Catechetical Leader) so that he/she can provide the multi-faceted leadership that is required. For a sample job description for the RCIA Coordinator, [click here](#).

### **RCIA. TEAM**

This organic approach to RCIA ministry assures participants of a wholistic, interconnected experience for their initiation journey. The parish team shares responsibilities which include evangelizing, hospitality, prayer leader, catechist, small group facilitator, liturgist, musician, sponsor coordinator and many other possibilities.

Team members are chosen for their personal qualities, background and individual talents and skills. Everyone serving on the team and in particular ministries must participate in initial and ongoing formation in the knowledge and skills of the ministry.

### **CATECHISTS**

Each parish should have qualified catechists of adults and children for each period of the RCIA. Catechists should have theological and catechetical training and hold Archdiocesan Catechist Certification according to the Ministry of the Catechist. (cf. Certification)