



CHURCH OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA

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February 25, 2007
First Sunday in Lent

A Season of Transformation

The Lenten season calls us to experience in a new way Christ's transformational love. We are invited to open ourselves to renewal through prayer, repentance and self-reflection. Lent means "Spring," the season in which the dead winter world around us is transformed into the promise of new life. The entire season is about growth and change.

In anticipation of our celebrating Easter and participating in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ in His suffering, death and Resurrection, we have an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the meaning of our Baptism: to the Gospel way of life, to a deeper appreciation of community and to a more active and engaged discipleship. We are called to renew our faith and spirituality, to allow ourselves to blossom in the "Spring."

The season of Lent also marks a 40-day period of transformation during which a group of twenty-five women and men at our Parish will make their final preparation and decision to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist. The Spirit of God has called these people to a loving and intimate relationship with Himself in Jesus Christ, to experience God's grace, and to be members of the universal Church. This process of transformation in their lives is initiated and nurtured by God's love and made concrete in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the way today's Church reaches out to people who inquire into the Catholic faith.

The RCIA traces its roots to ancient Christian practice when people wanting to become Christian lived in a small Christian community to learn their way of life. This experience became known as the "Catechumenate." Today's RCIA reflects this early Church experience by focusing

on meeting the community, reading and praying with Scripture, reflecting on and discussing the Word of God, attending the Liturgy, and participating in adult catechesis through which they receive the teaching of the Church.



"This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Through a formation in the Christian way of life, those who are not baptized, as well as those who already know Christ by virtue of their Baptism in another Christian denomination, and those Roman Catholics who have not received First Eucharist or Confirmation, come to a new and deeper relationship with Jesus Christ in the Catholic community. In our community, they learn to live as Jesus' disciples and to join us in continuing the mission of Jesus Christ in the world today.

As members of this Parish, each one of us has a role in the faith formation of the women and men who are making this journey of transformation. In the Gospel of John, Chapter 13, Jesus tells his followers: "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." It is your manifestation of this Christian love, your welcoming these people through the **Rite of Welcome** and the **Rite of Entrance into the Catechumenate**, and your consistent and heartfelt prayers and support that have strengthened them in this journey as they come to know the Catholic Church as their own.

This journey continued last Thursday, when the members of the RCIA participated in the **Rite of Enscrollment**. In this simple Rite, they signed their names in our Parish's Book of the Elect, signaling their desire to continue on their journey of transformation and conversion through the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

This morning at the 11:30 Solemn Liturgy, the entire Parish community, led by our Pastor, Father Gerry Blaszczyk, will celebrate the **Rite of Sending**, formally affirming their readiness and sending them forth to St. Patrick's Cathedral. Later this afternoon at the **Rite of Election**, Cardinal Egan will welcome our Catechumens on behalf of the universal Church and will officially choose or "elect" them to be received into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. The Cardinal will bless the Book of the Elect as a sign that each of the Catechumens has been chosen by God, who calls them by name, loves each one unconditionally, and claims each as God's own. At this Rite we will hear sung the words of Isaiah: *"I have called you by name; you are mine."*

Next Sunday afternoon, again at the Cathedral, our Parish's Candidates (those Christians already baptized and those baptized Catholics preparing for full initiation) will participate in the **Call to Continuing Conversion**. During this Rite, the Candidates will be recognized for their Baptism as they continue to prepare for full communion and full initiation into the Catholic Church through reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

Indeed, we Catholics believe that conversion to Jesus Christ is a lifelong and ongoing process. The journey of transformation does not end with initiation; it continues throughout our lives, through the saving grace of the Eucharist.

In this season of Lent, when we witness others changing their lives, giving up old ways of doing and being, and committing themselves to Jesus Christ, we are reminded of Jesus' call to us to recommit ourselves, to transform our hearts, to be His disciples in the world. We look forward to the Easter Vigil and the Easter Liturgies when all of us will renew our Baptismal promises and God will transform our hearts... and through us transform our world. The devotion and excitement that the Catechumens and Candidates bring to worship is a beautiful way to bring enthusiasm and reverence for the mystery of the Paschal sacrifice to our own Lenten observance!

**Cindy Caruso, RCIA Team Member
and Parishioner**

Catechumens (preparing for Baptism, Confirmation & First Eucharist):

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Eric Byun | Sameea Chughtai |
| Jennifer Cooper | Marianne Cosgrove |
| Randi Delirod | Jane Dryden |
| Yoshiko Kinoshita | Patricia Martell |
| Jenny McLeod | Phil Rose |
| Audrey Seybert | Alyssa Varley |

Candidates for Full Communion (preparing for Confirmation & First Eucharist):

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|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Ansley Dauenhauer | George Michel Dimitri |
| Joseph Feehan | Andrea Sanseverino Galen |
| Jenny Hebel de Ibarra | Justin Livengood |
| Karen Lubin | Dyanne Shaw |
| Thor Valdmanis | |

Candidates for Full Initiation (Baptized Roman Catholics preparing for Confirmation & First Eucharist):

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Vanessa Bacha | Zorina Rivera |
| Albert Serrano | Jenna Walters |

Six Minute Reflections for Lent

A small booklet of prayers and reflections for the Lenten season is available at the Parish House for one dollar. Authored by the late Bishop Kenneth Untener of Saginaw, Michigan, these booklets have been well received in past years. The goal is to find six minutes of quiet time each day in the Lenten season and walk through this booklet one page at a time.

👁️ Look for our **Lent and Easter Brochures** in the Narthex and at the Parish House for a complete listing of our Lent and Easter Programs.



We Pray for the
Faithful Departed

VITO NARDELLI

May He Rest in the Peace of
The Risen Lord