

# Did You Know?

February 28, 2021

During this Lent, the “Did You Know?” columns will focus on the journey of our catechumens as they prepare to become Catholic at the Easter Vigil. It is hoped that these columns help you have a deeper connection to our Catholic faith as we journey this Lenten season through the eyes of those seeking the faith.

Blessed Trinity is blessed to have two catechumens going through RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), a mother and her 8 year old daughter. Technically, the 8 year old is going through RCIAC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults Adapted for Children). These seekers of the Catholic faith are called catechumens because they are not baptized and are preparing to enter the Church at the Easter Vigil. But I am getting ahead of myself. I need to back up a few months.

There are stages in the RCIA process. Here at Blessed Trinity, the RCIA/RCIAC process begins in September. For the first couple of weeks, those interested in hearing about the process of becoming Catholic decide if they want to move forward and hear more. Once they make that decision, the seekers enter the first stage in the process, the Inquiry Stage, and are now called *inquirers*.

During the Inquiry Stage, inquirers are still thinking about entering the Church. They are finding out and asking questions about Jesus, Christianity, and the Catholic Church. They are coming to Mass and getting a feel for the place. They are talking to us, the parishioners, and are walking around in our shoes for a bit.

If the inquirers have developed a hunger for more, they go through the first rite, the Rite of Acceptance. (Ours happened earlier this month.) During the Rite of Acceptance, inquirers are welcomed by the members of



the parish who state they are ready to help the inquirers find and follow Christ. Then the sponsors (a person chosen to help the inquirer in the faith journey) signs the inquirers with the sign of the cross over their forehead, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet as a sign of their new way of life in Christ. From this point forward, they are called *catechumens* and they are now in the Catechumenate Stage in the RCIA/RCIAC process.

During this time, catechumens are learning! They are learning about the sacraments, what baptism in the Catholic Church means, they are listening to what God is saying to them in the scriptures, and they are considering what changes in their life they need to make to respond to God. (Some things us seasoned Catholics contemplate during our own faith journeys.) When catechumens believe themselves to be ready to make a faith commitment to Jesus in the Catholic Church, the next step is the request for baptism and the celebration of the Rite of Election the first Sunday of Lent. This rite usually happens with the bishop in the cathedral, but because of Covid restrictions, the rite happened in individual parishes this year.

During the Rite of Election, our catechumens publicly expressed their desire for baptism to Fr. Joe and they wrote their names in the Book of the Elect. Our catechumens are now called the *Elect* and have entered the next stage, the Purification and Enlightenment Stage.