

# Pillar of Fire

# Pillar of Truth

Join us for a unique encounter with  
Christ



## OCIA

Order of Christian Initiation  
of Adults

2025-2026

Church of the Nativity

You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our  
hearts are restless until they rest in you.

- St. Augustine

### The Lord's Call

Are you curious about Jesus Christ or His Church? You are not alone. There is a remarkable truth that many do not realize: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."<sup>1</sup>

Ancient Israel was both freed from slavery and led through the desert, a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. So too the followers of Christ. Jesus frees us from our sins and leads us with truth to where we cannot reach on our own, the new Promised Land - Heaven!

Join us for an encounter with Christ. The introduction begins in September.

If you are an adult who has never been baptized, a non-Catholic who has been baptized in another Christian denomination, or a baptized Catholic who did not continue on to First Communion and Confirmation, or are simply curious about the Catholic Church, we invite you to enter upon this path of conversion in the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA).



### Our Invitation to You

At Nativity, OCIA is a series of weekly classes in preparation for reception of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion at Easter, followed by another month of continued study. Adults explore the treasures of our Catholic faith. You will learn about the person of Jesus and develop an intimate friendship with our Savior through prayer, scripture study, exploration of Catholic beliefs and practices, regular attendance at Sunday Mass, and fellowship. The journey is marked by milestones along the way, public celebrations of a deepening acceptance of the Lord's call.

### The Classes



Classes will be on Sundays at 9:30am to 10:45am. Regular weekly attendance at Nativity's 11:30am Sunday Mass or another Sunday Mass is strongly encouraged.

**Our first introductory class will be held on Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am in the O'Hare Center directly behind the church.** Our classes are small and relaxed, with ample opportunity for individual attention. Priests, deacons, seminarians and lay Catholics will present class material. To enroll, plan to join us at one of our introductory classes in September or early October and introduce yourself. All materials will be provided. Eventually, you will need to find a sponsor (we can help you). If you have been baptized, your baptismal certificate will need to be submitted.

<sup>1</sup> Deus Caritas Est, Pope Benedict XVI

## Outline of the OCIA Year

**Inquiry Period, September-early October.** This is a time of no fixed duration or structure, a time of informal inquiry and introduction.

**First Step: Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, Fall.** This rite, held at a Sunday Mass in the fall (exact date to be determined). It marks the beginning of a more formal period of preparation. The **non-baptized are enrolled as Catechumens**, a term from the early Church for those who are being prepared for baptism. Those **already baptized, referred to as Candidates, are called to continuing conversion.** All participants express, and the Church accepts, their intention to follow Christ more closely.

### Period of Catechumenate, October-February.

A time for nurturing and growth of the catechumens' and the candidates' relationship with Jesus through prayer, readings and instruction.

**Second Step: Rite of Election, First Sunday of Lent, February 22<sup>nd</sup>.** In this Rite, held at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco, the catechumens write their names into the Book of the Elect, expressing their desire to receive the sacraments. The archbishop, on behalf of the whole Church, accepts catechumens among the elect. Baptized candidates participate as well, affirming their call to continuing conversion. It is a momentous occasion in which we join all the other OCIA participants in the archdiocese in our beautiful cathedral.

**Period of Purification and Enlightenment, Lent to Easter.** During the five weeks of Lent, the elect, the baptized candidates, and the parish prepare for Easter in a time of deepening reflection, penance, and prayer. Candidates make their first Confession. Our pastor, Father Doherty, meets privately with each member of the class. On the final three Sundays of Lent, the parish community holds the catechumens and candidates in prayer at Holy Mass in what are called the Scrutinies, an ancient rite in which God takes a close, loving look at the Elect. **Holy Week** begins on **Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>**, and recalls the final week of Christ's life on earth. During this week, catechumens and candidates deepen their preparation for the sacraments to be received at the Easter Vigil.

### Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, Easter Vigil, April 4<sup>th</sup>.

This is the pinnacle of the church year, in whose candle-lit splendor the Risen Jesus appears anew in each Christian's soul. In His loving embrace, the elect are baptized, and both the elect and candidates are confirmed and receive the Risen Christ in Communion for the first time.



**Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagoga, April-May.** The newly initiated enter into full participation in the Christian community by means of continued catechesis, regular celebration of Sunday Holy Mass with an invitation to spread God's love in service to others.

## For Further Information

Please contact the rectory: (650) 323-7914

Or the Coordinators:

Mary Rudolph: mem.rudolph@gmail.com

Joan Desmond: jfdesmond@aol.com

Hal Fletcher: hal.fletcher@gmail.com

Whether you are ready to take the necessary steps to become a Catholic, or are unsure of the path forward, please accept our invitation to embark on a rich period of spiritual discernment and formation. Those participants who are certain they want to continue to receive the sacraments at Easter are asked to attend classes regularly, so that they are well-prepared to take these serious steps with full understanding and conviction.

*Note: Catholic adults who have received the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confession, and desire the Sacrament of Confirmation may enroll in a two-day program in the archdiocese (after conferring with the parish) and are confirmed by a bishop either in the fall or spring. Confirmation candidates are most welcome to attend our program. Please contact one of the coordinators above.*

## Nativity welcomes you!

Church of the Nativity  
210 Oak Grove Ave.  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
(650) 323-7914

<https://www.nativitymenlo.org>