

Happy Easter! He is Risen! Please welcome our new Catholics!

At the Easter Vigil, our parish was blessed to initiate **49** people into the full communion of the Catholic Church! From the English OCIA, 20 Elect were baptized: Zachary, Maddison, and Oliver Bingham, Hiram Magallanes, Becki Bumgardner, Rosie Cardiel, Charlie Apgar, Sierra Burke, Kevin and Daniel Tutor, Cesar Morales Herrera, Malia Henry, Nina Lara, Christopher Sultan, Sterling Skyes, Cameron and Reagan Crone, Yeslyn Pacheco, Brooke Angulo, and Karina Ward. Fourteen already-baptized Christians were formally received into the Catholic Church: Jennifer Formolo, Melissa Olson, Cara Coimbra, Jesslyn Aquino, April Lynch, Robin Reynolds, Sydney Gent, Shelby and Gus Horton, Luke Lepzig, Larry Thompason, Todd Jennings, Thomas Cline, and Ruth Vangness. Baptized Catholics Anna Tutor, Daniel Formolo, and Jeffery Simas completed their initiation Sacraments. In addition, three Catholic adults will be confirmed at the Confirmation Mass on May 22nd: Sherry Bolin, Cristina Santos, and Jesse Ruvalcaby. At our request, some of our newly initiated Catholics wrote a few words about their journey, below.

All were educated and formed through our parish's warm and friendly OCIA team which includes the catechists for children, Shari Lloyd and Carrie Jantzer; and the adult group's team of Elizabeth Steele, Cheryl Robertson, Jill Naumann, Matthew Cardiel, Bill Bumgardner, Travis and Carrie Jantzer, Ivan and Charlotte Robinson, Jenna Shanti, Evan Wallman, and Aaron Ballew, led by OCIA Director Ann Brophy.

“OCIA has been a great experience in my faith journey and answered a lot of questions I had about the Catholic faith. I didn't grow up Catholic, but my husband did. I decided to look into it, and I'm glad I did. I look forward to living my faith with my family and being a part of this wonderful community.” – *Brooke*

In the Catholic Church, I have found the faith community established by Christ – one that has solidly endured for over 2000 years, against which the gates of hell will not prevail. The richness of her beauty, holiness, history, and cultural diversity has led me into deeper devotion of God and awe of Him. For me, becoming Catholic means entering the fullness of the Christian faith, with so much more to learn and embrace. Whether it is participating in the Mass, receiving the sacraments, praying the rosary, or learning to emulate the saints, it has all felt like drinking from an overflowing spring of holy water. I am so thankful that the Holy Spirit has lit my path to Christ's church, and I look forward to a lifetime of continued growth and working out my faith in love. -
Ruth

Joining the Catholic Church is the result of a journey where the pieces of faith, history, and reason finally came together in a way that made sense. Over time, questions I had about Christianity began to find clear and coherent answers within the Catholic tradition, and it felt like the puzzle pieces were fitting into place. What once felt abstract became real, and the continuity of the Church across the centuries became impossible to ignore. Entering the Catholic Church now feels less like adopting something new and more like coming home to the fullness of a faith that finally makes sense. – *Becki*

As a staunch atheist, coming to Christ was a huge move for me. When I opened my heart to Christ, I felt a strong urging to find His true Church, the one He established. I found that in the Catholic Church. I cannot wait to receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord in the Eucharist.”
– *Zachary*

“The Catholic Church has changed my life. It has brought me a profound sense of peace and quieted anxieties that once troubled me. Feeling too smart for religion, the Church has humbled me. When other churches let me down, the Catholic Church has lifted me. I was not searching for Her, but was called.” – *Jennifer F.*

I remember growing up as a Jehovah’s Witness. My family would talk about how we used to be Catholic and how great it was to be “far away” from that environment. And yet...there was a grand Catholic Church down the street. I can still hear the Sunday morning bells ringing. Thank God I’m back to the biggest family in the world and beyond. Thank you and God bless. – *Hiram*

I tried to prove to my friend that Catholicism is false. Now I am here, becoming Catholic.

Coming into the Catholic Church feels like coming home, but to a place I’ve never been. God has transformed me through this process to be an instrument in His hands. I feel truly blessed. – *Shelby*

I have found such a home and a family in the Catholic Church. I am so excited to begin living the sacramental life! – *Sydney*

I am on this beautiful faith journey thanks to Fr. James and my husband William. Fr. James came to give William last rites. Then my husband became so serene and comfortable at the end of his life. I thought if only I could attain a portion of this comfort and joy, I would be happy and eternally grateful. I decided to take the OCIA classes and become a member of this warm Catholic family. The knowledge I have gained through OCIA, the more comfortable the religion has become and the closer I feel to Jesus - a journey planned by William through our years together. - *Robin*

“I’m Rosie, and I am ten years old. I’m excited to be Catholic because my parents are Catholic, and I want to be just like them. I’ll be able to take Communion like never before!” - *Rosie*

“I feel very blessed and thankful for the journey I’ve been on and am very excited to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church. I have learned so much and met many great people and will hopefully continue to do so. I am excited for new beginnings. Cheers!” – *Karina*

I have “The Chosen” to thank for my desire to return to my faith and complete my initiation sacraments, This and a close friend who is very religious sparked my interest to go back to church, as I was baptized Catholic early in life and attended church through my younger years. – *Jeff*

Over the years, wherever I was, I always felt closest to God when I visited a Catholic Church. I am looking forward to becoming an active member of this parish. The OCIA has been a wonderful journey, and I will miss the Tuesday evening classes! – *Larry*

“I’m Charlie, and I am eight years old. I want to become Catholic because I believe in God. I’m looking forward to receiving Communion.” *Charlie*

What excites me the most about this journey is the chance to lead my marriage and family with and through Christ. I look forward most of all, to receiving the Eucharist for the first time. – *Todd*

Originally my journey started with feeling overwhelmed and nervous, as I never knew Jesus in my life. After praying to feel closer, I let go of the urge to try to understand it all, and that’s when I finally felt the calm and peace that He brings. My life is peaceful and joyful with Him at the center of it. Everyday I’m so grateful that He called me by name and called me home.” – *Maddison*

More than anything else, I came to the Catholic Church to find meaning and purpose. I believe that ordering my life around Christ will help me, and that the Church will help me do this. Sacred Heart parish has convinced me that, through the Church, I can find the meaning I hope for. I especially look forward to receiving the Eucharist and Confession. – *Daniel T.*

Being Catholic has been the best thing I’ve ever done and will ever do. I’ve always craved connection and acceptance, and I’ve never felt that more than when I began walking with the Lord. It is truly a blessing to be a child of God. – *Jesslyn*

My journey to the Catholic Church has been years in the making. It started as a youth growing up in the Episcopal Church and finally into the Catholic Church with the help of my beautiful wife Natalie. Here we found our true home with the vibrant community, wonderful friendships, and most importantly, we found God. I am so grateful to become an initiated Catholic. – *Tom*

I am happy to become a fully initiated Catholic through the sacrament of Confirmation so I can complete my journey as a Catholic. I grew up Catholic my entire life, so being able to finally be fully initiated and grow closer to the Church will help me live a better life. – *Jesse*

No matter how big the dragon -how powerful the villain – the good guy always wins. As a boy and young adult, I believed that with all my heart until I faced my first dragon – and lost. Sin, temptation, and the workings of the enemy took the day. Eventually, I wasn’t strong enough to lift my armor. I tossed my sword and shield away and wandered the battlefield of this world, submissive to the dragon. I think many boys could share a similar tale. This world, after all, is filled with more dragons than there are true knights to slay them, and we lose hope. But the truth is that I only lacked a King – and in Christ, I found one – willing to stand beside me on the battlefield. It took courage and long, winding arguments, but in the end, I took the knee. He knighted me. He cleaned my armor, sharpened my sword and gave me His shield. With blood, mud, and tears, Christ restored me, and now I know: in Him, the good guy always wins. - *Sterling*

Becoming Catholic has been the best decision of my life. Although I started my faith journey in a non-denominational church, I was drawn to the Catholic Church when I learned that it was the church that Jesus founded. At the first Mass that I attended in 2025, I was overwhelmed by the beauty of Sacred Heart and thought, I want this to be my new home. Through the OCIA journey,

I have learned so much. I have regained my identity as a child of God, found meaning in suffering, trial, and loss, and found peace and joy again. I am so grateful to God for calling me here and to all the Sacred Heart parishioners for welcoming all of us into your family. – *Cara*

I was baptized Catholic but raised without faith. Discovering that my adult sons had found their way to God was a turning point. Watching “The Chosen” made my whole heart just want Jesus to be my friend. The first church we “tried” was Sacred Heart, and I knew I was home. LET’S GO! What was this OCIA? But here also was the seriousness I craved. Each class drove my roots deeper into what feels like a well of unlimited nourishment. These past 8 months were not a period of waiting, but a beautiful journey towards an eternity of love. - *Anna*

I have always considered myself a Catholic. As a young child I was baptized and received my First Communion. Over the years though, challenges separated me from the Church. Now, I feel God has been calling me back to the Church and to Sacred Heart parish. Attending OCIA, I have learned so much more about why the Church holds us to a higher standard and the peace and joy that comes in sharing our faith with this community. I will be receiving my Confirmation this May, and my husband and I are so happy to have found our way home. - *Sherry*