The catechumenate (OCIA/RCIA)

The months of getting ready: what OCIA is and what it asks of you.

In short. From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been a journey and initiation in several stages.[1] Today the Christian initiation of adults begins with entry into the catechumenate and reaches its culmination in a single celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.[2]

Key points

- Becoming a Christian is a journey that can be covered rapidly or slowly.[1]
- The catechumenate aims at bringing conversion and faith to maturity.[3]
- Catechumens are already joined to the Church, which embraces them as her own.[4]
- Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.[5]

Try this, this week

1. **Contact one parish.** Ask, "How do I find out about becoming Catholic?"
2. **Find your baptism record, if you have one.** The church where you were baptized can usually send a copy.
3. **Think about a sponsor.** A practising Catholic you trust can walk with you, and the parish can suggest one.
4. **Keep going to Mass.** You are welcome long before you are received.

> *"'Can anyone forbid these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just like us.' He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay some days."*
>
> **Acts 10:47–48, World English Bible**

Watch out: what this does not mean

- The catechumenate is more than a class: it is to be a formation in the whole Christian life, in which the disciples are joined to Christ their teacher.[3]
- The reception of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.[7]

Common questions

How long does it take?

Video answer: Catholic Answers, stoneandincense.com/en/questions/how-long-does-becoming-catholic-take/

The Church says this journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present.[1] Its aim is to bring conversion and faith to maturity, in union with an ecclesial community.[3]

I was baptized in another church. Will I be baptized again?

Video answer: Catholic Answers, stoneandincense.com/en/questions/i-was-baptized-in-another-church-will-i-be-baptized-again/

Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.[5] Those who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.[6]

Remember: You do not need to have it all figured out to ask.

Sources

1. CCC 1229
2. CCC 1233
3. CCC 1248
4. CCC 1249
5. CCC 1272
6. CCC 1271
7. CCC 1285

Quotation above: Acts 10:47–48, World English Bible. Catechism: official text on vatican.va.

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Full lesson, video and every source:
stoneandincense.com/go/bc6

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