

Becoming A **CATHOLIC** 2019-2020





Searching for More

EVER FOUND YOURSELF ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH, GOD, MEANING OR PURPOSE? You're not the only one. Asking and wrestling with these kinds of questions is part of being human. But in asking them we may find ourselves unsettled or dissatisfied. To this end, don't worry. Author Matthew Kelly writes:

"It's okay to be dissatisfied. Being dissatisfied and pretending that we are not is the kind of lie that leads to spiritual and physical illness. Our dissatisfaction is trying to lead us to something better, or something different altogether. It is time to start listening to what God is saying to us through our dissatisfaction."
(RESISTING HAPPINESS, 28-29)

For Catholics, responding to dissatisfaction in life entails seeing our life story in light of Jesus'. Ultimately, as St Augustine once put it, "our hearts are restless until they rest in you Lord." We believe that our happiness, purpose, and sense of self are only fulfilled by encountering the person of Jesus. In the end, faith and Church are about seeking

relationships: a relationship with God that overflows into our relationships with others. It is through these relationships that we continually discover who we are and find ourselves in service to others. As Pope Francis puts it:

"The life that Jesus gives us is a love story, a life history that wants to blend with ours and sink roots in the soil of our own lives. That life is not salvation up 'in the cloud' and waiting to be downloaded, a new 'app' to be discovered, or a technique of mental self-improvement. Still less is that life a 'tutorial' for finding out the latest news. The salvation that God offers us is an invitation to be part of a love story interwoven with our personal stories; it is alive and wants to be born in our midst so that we can bear fruit just as we are, wherever we are and with everyone all around us." (CHRISTUS VIVIT, 252)

Where Do I Go From Here?

WE WANT TO HELP YOU ASK LIFE'S QUESTIONS, SEARCH FOR ANSWERS, AND WRESTLE WITH WHAT IT MEANS TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. As Catholics, we believe that the Seven Sacraments are moments in which we encounter God and receive his grace. When we celebrate the Sacraments, we invite God into our lives, regardless of how messy they are, to help us be the person he has called us to be. This begins by celebrating the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. By celebrating all three of these Sacraments, we are drawn closer to God, made a full participant in the life of the faith community, and given support for life's journey.

If you are an adult and have not yet received one or any of the Sacraments of Initiation, we invite you to join the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). RCIA is a process through which adults 18 and older can ask questions, wrestle with faith, and learn more about the Catholic faith. While RCIA is an opportunity to reflect upon and discern questions of faith, individuals who feel ready and want to take the next step are welcome to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation upon completing RCIA in the Spring.



Through **RCIA**, the Catholic Church extends an invitation to:



- ◀ Those who are not associated with a community of faith and who wish to become Catholic;
- ◀ Those who want to convert to Catholicism from another faith (for them, RCIA is the process through which they will become full fledged Catholics);
- ◀ Those who want to learn about the Catholic faith.

These individuals may be involved in interfaith marriages or simply are actively involved in a Church of a different denomination and they want to learn more about the Catholic faith in the spirit of unity. The RCIA fills all these needs for those who are searching and inquiring about the Catholic faith. (Taken from the Catechism of the Church)

Starting the Journey

The RCIA process has several distinct stages:

1

Just Looking

In the inquiry stage, you're just finding out about Jesus, Christianity, and the Catholic Church. Your main task here is to explore and develop your faith enough so you can make an informed initial decision about entering the Catholic community. The final decision won't come for a long time, when you actually enter the Church at Easter and receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

2

Learning about the Faith

In the catechumenate stage, your faith has begun to develop. Now you need to learn and grow more. Your focus on catechesis in this stage includes learning about the faith, how to live as a Christian, and developing your interior life. Your job now is to come into closer contact with the Living God and learn more about the Catholic Faith.

3

Getting ready for a new start!

This period of purification and enlightenment is the final stage before receiving the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter. (Those already baptized with a valid Baptism in another Christian church aren't baptized again). This stage of intense reflection calls you to deeper conversion in preparation for your renewal at Easter. This is what the season of Lent is for, but it has a special intensity for you this year as you're entering the Church and receiving the Sacraments of Initiation.

4

Reflecting on the mysteries of the Mass

This stage of mystagogy during Easter is for continued reflection on the sacraments you have received at Easter, especially the Eucharist. Specific catechesis on the Mass, the Sacraments, and especially the Eucharist are the focus of this stage. The Mass and the Eucharist are the source and summit of the Christian life in the Catholic Church, and this period is designed to help you understand, appreciate, and live more deeply this center of Catholicism.

RCIA in Practice

RCIA begins in the Fall and spans several months, meeting weekly on Thursday evenings at 7 PM. Individuals are treated to fellowship, an environment where they meet other individuals asking similar questions, and a forum for open and honest discussion on topics of the Catholic faith.

OCT 10	WELCOME
OCT 17	WHAT IS FAITH?
OCT 24	THE TRINITY
NOV 7	WHO IS JESUS?
NOV 14	THE BIBLE
NOV 21	PRAYER
DEC 5	THE MASS AND CHURCH YEAR
DEC 12	WHAT IS THE CHURCH?
DEC 19	MARY
JAN 9	THE SAINTS
JAN 16	"LAST THINGS"
JAN 30	SACRAMENTS
FEB 6	INITIATION
FEB 13	HEALING AND SERVICE
FEB 20	MORAL LIVING
FEB 27	RITE OF ELECTION
MAR 5	LIVING LENT
MAR 12	SCRUTINIES
MAR 19	THE CREED
MAR 26	WAY OF THE CROSS
APR 2	THE LORD'S PRAYER
APR 9	HOLY WEEK
APR 11	EASTER VIGIL

Parish Contact Information:

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MONSIGNOR ROBERT S MEYER, Pastor

DAVID CARVALHO
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A Sponsor must be someone who meets the following requirements:

- ☑ Is at least 16 years old
- ☑ Be fully initiated in the Catholic Church
(Received Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)
- ☑ Leads a life in harmony with the Church
- ☑ Is a registered member and active member of his/her parish
- ☑ Regularly attends mass and participates in the sacramental life of his/her parish

Additional Information

DO SPONSORS NEED TO PROVIDE ANYTHING?

Sponsors who are St Teresa of Avila Parishioners must complete a "Request for Sponsor Certificate" form, which can be found on our website or picked up at the Parish Main Office. Sponsors who are not St Teresa Parishioners are asked to submit a sponsor certificate from their home parish to St Teresa's.

*Note that the parents of the candidate cannot serve as sponsors. (cf Code of Canon Law, No 874.1). Only one sponsor is required for Baptism and Confirmation. While it is not required, it is encouraged that the Confirmation sponsor also have been the sponsor from Baptism, so as to highlight the unity of the two sacraments (CCC 1311). In the case that the sponsor cannot be present during the sacrament, a proxy can stand in their stead.

BAPTISMAL AND COMMUNION CERTIFICATES

Individuals seeking Confirmation who have already received either Baptism or 1st Communion, but did not receive either of these Sacraments at St Teresa's, must provide a recently dated certificate of Baptism and/or 1st Communion (if not received at the same Parish of Baptism). This means that you will need to provide the parish with a newly printed certificate and not the one you received at the time of the candidate's Baptism or 1st Communion. This can be obtained by contacting the Parish of Baptism, who can then have it sent to St Teresa's.

CONFIRMATION NAME

When being confirmed, candidates can either use their Baptismal name (if they have been Baptized) or the name of a Catholic Saint. The latter became a tradition as Saints serve as intercessors and models to aspire to for believers (CCC 828).

NON-BAPTIZED INDIVIDUALS

In addition to information and paperwork required of sponsors and the Confirmation Name, non-Baptized individuals must also provide St Teresa's with a copy of their Birth Certificate.

Evangelical Convert: Brandon Vogt

[Brandon Vogt is a 24-year-old Catholic blogger, author, husband, and father who writes from the perspective of a young mainline Protestant drawn into the depths of the Catholic faith by way of the Eucharist and the lives of the Saints.]

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT FROM BRANDON'S STORY, VIA [WHYIMCATHOLIC.COM](http://whyimcatholic.com)
<http://whyimcatholic.com/index.php/conversion-stories/protestant-converts/evangelical/50-evangelical-convert>

"He lies in wait like a lion in cover" —Psalm 10:9

FOR MOST OF MY LIFE, I NEVER MET A RIGOROUS GOD WHO MADE ANY SORT OF DEMAND ON MY LIFE. And I never encountered an intimate God who ravished me with deep love, or an epic God who warred against evil for my sake. The church I grew up in cared for me deeply. It encouraged kindness, and presented the basic, Biblical stories to me. But I never really experienced anything transcendent. The God I grew up with was a tame Lion, more cat than beast, more comfortable than dangerous.

When I set off for college at Florida State University, I decided that regardless of how casually I took God, I would at least try to make it to church each Sunday. Whether out of habit or to placate my mom and girlfriend, I felt compelled to at least show up. When the first Sunday rolled around I played denominational roulette, allowing chance to determine my church-of-choice. In practice, that meant rolling out of bed and attending the church closest to my dorm. Providentially, that church ended up being the FSU Wesley Foundation, the Methodist campus ministry.

During my first couple of years, I just attended the Sunday services at the Wesley Foundation—nothing more. But after repeated invitations and dwindling excuses, I began participating in other groups and activities. This ignited my spirituality. As I entered into this church community, I increasingly felt closer to God. At times I heard God's voice in prayer, in worship I felt I was adoring a real Person and not a phantom, and in Scripture I discovered a Lover on a relentless pursuit. It was in small-groups that revealed the Holy Spirit through the healing and holiness he brought. And I had a pastor, Vance Rains, who encouraged me more than anyone to take seriously the claims of Jesus.

About this time, I also entered into another community. I befriended a group of homeless guys at a local lake, hanging out with them at least once a week throughout my final college years. Like my friends at Wesley, these men caused another dramatic shift in my spirituality. During our times together, things I considered important just became insignificant. When I bemoaned my broken computer, my frustrating design project,

or the recent football loss, these troubles just seemed to fade into oblivion even as they rolled off my tongue—not because they weren't legitimate, but because they just weren't important. I began seeing my life through the lens of a different Story, one where my agenda, my worries, and my happiness weren't at the center of the plot.

My lake friends also taught me what it really means to be "poor in spirit", and how those types of people can possibly be blessed. The Wesley Foundation brought me into the story of Jesus. My lake friends added others to the tale, while pulling my own ego out.

Back at the Wesley Foundation as in many Evangelical circles, there was a resurgence in classical spirituality. Hearing recommendations of Chesterton, Merton, Mother Teresa, and Augustine became regular. And ancient spiritual practices like 'lectio divina' and 'Lenten fasting' became fresh streams for thirsty souls.

As I engaged these authors and practices, though, I couldn't avoid a nagging theme: the Catholic tradition lurking behind so many of these gems. I thought, 'If so many of these spiritual giants were Catholic, and if so many of these practices stem from the Catholic tradition, then there must be some truth to the Catholic faith'. How could Chesterton and Augustine be so right about everything except their religion? Were the Catholic vows shared by Teresa and Merton a foundation or a hindrance to their profound spirituality? And there was another theme that echoed again and again: the Eucharist. What to make of this "Eucharist" that so many of these masters counted as gold? These questions—along with a proposal to my Catholic girlfriend—convinced me to seriously explore the Catholic faith.

THE EUCHARIST REALLY CATALYZED MY PROBING. It was an unavoidable hinge. Many of the holiest saints claimed the Eucharist as their fuel, and in her Catechism, the Church proclaimed it as the "source and summit" of her Faith. What I understood as just a symbol, they deemed to be God himself, hidden in bread. I read the writings of Christians throughout the ages, from the earliest church fathers to modern commentaries, searching for the truth about this sacrament.

Once I found the Church that had the real presence of Jesus pulsating at the center of her Faith, I was hooked. This Divine Lure drew me into the Catholic Church in 2008 at the Easter Vigil, a Mass attended by many of my friends from the Wesley Foundation and even my gracious pastor, Vance.

Following graduation and marriage, I discovered a great friend, Bert Ghezzi, who brought me into a third transformative community: the communion of Saints. Through conversations with Bert, and his many books on the Saints, I found a whole group of friends and heroes. Each Saint I discovered was as intimidating, alluring, and energizing as Jesus himself, and each taught me something unique.

Over the years, these discoveries radically changed my relationship with God. I now see Him as demanding, because he wants every bit of my life, not satisfied with me as a "half-saint". He is now a lover, luring my heart through the seduction of the Eucharist. And I no longer see Him as a disinterested master, but as a king who sets foot on the battlefield to fight evil with every fiber in His being.

MY CONVERSION CONTINUES TODAY. I am heavily involved with social-justice activities in my parish, primarily because of my friends at the lake. I am leading some groups in town that aim to attract young adults to God, a desire birthed during my time at the Wesley Foundation. And as I've read more of the great spiritual masters, I've become drawn toward writing about the Faith myself—both through blogging and a new book that will soon be released.

Looking back, it's clear that God was always on the move, leading me to where I am now. It took community, the sacraments, the Saints, and a big dose of Divine Providence to stimulate my conversion. Without those elements—without Him—God would still be a safe, declawed kitten. But now I hear his roar, now I feel his strength. And now, finally, I've been caught by the Lion who has always been in pursuit.

"He gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion."
—Revelation 10:3