



FALLING IN LOVE WITH JESUS

Vision 2020 is about calling parishes, and our diocese, back to our core mission: forming missionary disciples, persons in love with Jesus Christ. Persons who want to follow him. The Church gives us a roadmap for doing so; there is no need to reinvent the wheel. This roadmap is called the RCIA, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Our Church teaches that “[t]he model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate... catechumenal formation should inspire the other forms of catechesis in both their objectives and in their dynamism.” (GDC, 59). In other words, the RCIA process should be the inspiration for all our formation efforts, whether we are preparing adults for baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist... or teens for confirmation... or couples for marriage... or simply living our life as an evangelizing parish.

RCIA 75: Recovering an Ancient Paradigm

The heart of this roadmap is found in [RCIA paragraph 75](#). There we read: “The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life.” In other words, the RCIA – and all of parish life – is an apprenticeship. We fall in love with Christ, and learn to follow him, with our whole being: hearts and hands as well as heads.

An Apprenticeship in the Faith

What are the components of this apprenticeship? RCIA 75 lists four ways that catechumens, and all of us, are to be formed in the faith:

1. By “**suitable catechesis**... planned to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word.”
2. By becoming “familiar with the Christian way of life... helped by the example and support of sponsors, godparents, and the entire **Christian community**...”
3. By “**suitable liturgical rites**...”
4. By learning “how to **work** actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the **witness** of their lives...”

Catechesis, community life, liturgy and prayer, service and witness. These are how disciples are made. This is how discipleship is deepened. The parish is the curriculum.¹

So, as we continue our Vision 2020 journey, we have a lens through which we can look at our parishes and our diocese. How are we doing these things well? What successes do we need to celebrate? Where might we need to put more time, effort, and attention? How might we become more attractive communities?

¹See: Diana Macalintal, *Your Parish is the Curriculum: RCIA in the Midst of the Community* (Liturgical Press, 2018).

FORMING DISCIPLES... BY SUITABLE CATECHESIS...



The word, catechesis, comes from a Greek word meaning “to echo.” We “echo” what we ourselves have received. Sometimes, that takes place in a formal classroom setting. As RCIA 75.1 states, a suitable catechesis should lead to “an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts,” with what the Church teaches. That’s necessary; but by itself that is not enough. RCIA 75.1 continues: catechesis includes instilling a “profound sense of the mystery of salvation” – and that’s something that is caught more than taught. In other words, catechesis is more than what catechists do; we are all responsible for being able to share why we are Christians and what impact our faith has in our lives.²

3 Questions

What are the many ways that we “echo” the faith to others, not just in a formal classroom setting but by the other ways we share our faith?

Are our catechists well-prepared for their ministry, able to not only explain dogmas and precepts, but invite and accompany others into the mystery of Christ’s love for us?

Are we comfortable sharing our faith, what we believe and why... and what difference it has made in our lives? If not, what can we do to get more comfortable doing so?

Resources

Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1989.

Diana Macalintal, *Your Parish is the Curriculum: RCIA in the Midst of the Community*. Liturgical Press, 2018.

Nick Wagner, *Field Hospital Catechesis: The Core Content for RCIA Formation*. Liturgical Press, 2018.

Other resources may be found on our Vision 2020 website:

<https://www.davenportdiocese.org/evangelization-resources>

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²Diana Macalintal, *Your Parish is the Curriculum: RCIA in the Midst of the Community* (Liturgical Press, 2018), 74-7.

FORMING DISCIPLES... BY OUR COMMUNITY LIFE...



In Luke's Gospel (and in Acts), the followers of Jesus are said to be on the Way. Faith is a journey, not a destination—and it is a journey that we take with others. What does this journey look like? RCIA 75.2 tells us that by being in Christian community we “learn to turn more readily to God in prayer, to bear witness to the faith, in all things to keep [our] hopes set on Christ, to follow supernatural inspiration in [our] deeds, and to practice love of neighbor, even at the cost of self-renunciation.” We learn to be Christians by sharing community life with other Christians, from their example of discipleship. From their stories. It's a journey that takes a lifetime.³

3 Questions

Who have been examples of the Christian life for us, individually and in the history of our parish? Who would we hold up as examples now, in our families and our parish? Why?

In what ways are we a welcoming and inviting community? What are we doing to build relationships in our parish? What can we do to be more attractive to others, to invite them to journey with us?

How do we help one another (as individuals and as families) grow in prayer, in witness, in hope, in openness to the Spirit, in love of neighbor? How do we tell our stories?

Resources

Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*, revised edition. USCCB, 2007.

Stephen Bullivant, et al., *Why Catholics Leave, What They Miss, and How They Might Return*. Paulist Press, 2019.

Mary Ann Gubish and Susan Jenny, SC, *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council*. Paulist, 2001.

Diana Macalintal and Nick Wagner, *Joined by the Church, Sealed by a Blessing: Couples and Communities Called to Conversion Together*. Liturgical Press, 2014.

Paul Turner and Katie Ferrell, *Guide for Ushers and Greeters*. LTP, 2008.

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³Diana Macalintal, *Your Parish is the Curriculum: RCIA in the Midst of the Community* (Liturgical Press, 2018), 77-8.

FORMING DISCIPLES... BY OUR LITURGY AND PRAYER...



Our Church tells us that the liturgy is the source and summit of our life as Christians: the most important thing that we do and the font from which all our other ministry flows (SC 10). It is where we meet Christ: in the assembly gathered and presiding minister, in the word proclaimed, and in the sacraments (SC 7). Meeting Christ, we are transformed... or should be, if we are open. As the liturgy, repeated over a lifetime, soaks into our bones, we are to become more and more Christ-like. Made more Christ-like, we are sent out “to the margins” to share the Good News in word and deed, to live a Eucharistic life: a life marked by the paschal mystery, of being poured out for others. A sacrificial life. The Christian life.⁴

3 Questions

Are all of us fully, consciously, and actively participating in the liturgy? Do we know how to speak the “symbolic language” of the liturgy fluently? Is our participation a matter of the heart as well as of hands and voices? Are we present?

How do we, especially those with specific ministries in the liturgy, strive to foster an encounter Christ? Do we bring the best that we are, and that we have, to the liturgy? Do we understand the roles of art and song and silence, of the senses and the body? Do we take our time?

Do we take the time to reflect on our worship together, on what we have done and on what it means, to share our joy? How do we reflect that the liturgy is the source and summit of our life?

Resources

Gabe Huck, *Liturgy with Style and Grace*, 3rd edition revised. Liturgy Training Publications, 2018.

Anne Y. Koester, *Sunday Mass: Our Role and Why It Matters*. Liturgical Press, 2007.

Kathy Kuczka, *Connecting the Liturgy with Our Lives*. Liturgy Training Publications, 2019.

Timothy P. O’Malley, *Divine Blessing: Liturgical Formation in the RCIA*. Liturgical Press, 2019.

Rita Thiron, et al., *Our Sacrifice of Praise / Nuestro Sacrificio de Alabanza*. FDLC, 2018.

Other resources may be found on our Vision 2020 website:

<https://www.davenportdiocese.org/evangelization-resources>

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⁴Diana Macalintal, *Your Parish is the Curriculum: RCIA in the Midst of the Community* (Liturgical Press, 2018), 79-81.

FORMING DISCIPLES... BY OUR WITNESS AND WORKS OF CHARITY AND JUSTICE...



RCIA 75.4 is short and to the point: “Since the Church’s life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith.” Those seeking to join the Church learn to be Church by doing. The same is true for those of us who were baptized as infants and then grow into the Church. To be a disciple of Jesus means to be an evangelist: one who shares the story of Jesus, and the difference he has made in our lives, by what we say and what we do. And part of what we do is be of service to others in Jesus’ name: to take part in the works of charity and justice.⁵

3 Questions

How do we reflect the apostolic nature of Church life? How might we focus less on ourselves and more on the community around us, on those “on the margins,” as Pope Francis would say?

How aware is our parish of Catholic Social Teaching, and how have we put that teaching into practice? Are we active in serving the needs of those around us (charity) and in trying to make our communities better (justice)?

When people ask why we engage in the works of charity and justice, do we share with them our faith in Jesus?

Resources

Kevin Ahern, et al., *The Liturgy and Catholic Social Teaching: Participation in Worship and the World*. Liturgy Training Publications, 2019.

Jerry Galipeau, *Apprenticed to Christ: Activities for Practicing the Catholic Way of Life*. World Library Publications, 2007.

USCCB Website: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/two-feet-of-love-in-action.cfm>

CRS Videos: <https://www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101>

Other resources may be found on our Vision 2020 website:
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⁵Diana Macalintal, *Your Parish is the Curriculum: RCIA in the Midst of the Community* (Liturgical Press, 2018), 81-2.