**Frequently Asked Questions About Adult Initiation**

**At this time I have no intention of joining the Church but I do want to learn more about Catholicism. Is there a place for me in the adult initiation process?**

Yes. We all learn from one another and from our journey to know God better. Please contact us for more information about your informal Inquiry.

**I know that I want to join the Catholic Church. Where do I begin?**

This depends on you and where you are on your faith journey. If you are fairly new to Catholicism or have limited experience with the Christian faith, you may still find it helpful to continue to explore Catholicism for a time before preparing to join the Catechumenate process. Each person’s journey is unique and the adult initiation Team will assist you in utilizing the process at OLOM so that your journey is fruitful and fulfilling.

**Once I have decided to join the Catholic Church, why might it take a year or longer?**

**That seems like a long time.**

When someone who is not baptized comes forward with an interest in joining the Catholic Church, that interest is then joined with knowledge about the Church’s traditions and teachings, as well as a sufficient experience of the Catholic faith community. Joining the Catholic Church is not about passing a test on Catholicism; rather it is about learning and living the Gospel of Jesus in the context of the parish and wider Catholic community. This takes time and it is suggested that someone preparing for baptism wishing to join the Church experience at least one full liturgical year of the Catholic faith community. Adult baptisms are celebrated each year at the Easter Vigil (the Saturday night before Easter Sunday), which occurs each year in the Spring. If one comes to the parish in December with a desire to be baptized and to join the Church, the following Easter would only be approximately 4 months away. This is not sufficient time for someone to experience the fullness of the Catholic faith Church and community. This “December seeker” would be welcomed into the adult initiation process and would usually

join a fellow group of seekers. This journey might lead to initiation into the Catholic Church approximately 16 months later or at an Easter date in the future. There is no set timeline. If one comes to the parish in the spring having made a decision to join the church, depending on the level of appropriate formation, that person may be deemed ready to be initiated into the church at the following Easter, which would be approximately 12 months later or at a future Easter date. Each person’s journey is unique and the duration in formation depends on many factors, most importantly the grace of God. The goal in joining the Catholic Church is not purely to be baptized, although the Sacrament of Baptism is a priceless gift from our God. The goal is to grow in your love and awareness of God, to begin or build on your relationship with Jesus Christ, and to learn how the Catholic faith community lives out this call. Baptism is part of the journey but not a finish line to sprint towards. Joining the Church is a process of shaping our hearts, minds, and spirits so they look more like God’s. The rich exploration of faith is not a race, but a journey to be savored, reflected upon, and celebrated.

**I am not baptized and am getting married to a Catholic. I wanted to join the Church before our wedding. Is that possible?**

Remember, the goal is not purely baptism or even joining the Catholic Church. The goal is learning and living within the context of the Catholic faith community, which allows us to fully live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church. If your wedding is not yet scheduled, you are invited to talk this over with Anna LaNave, Pastoral Associate of Adult Faith Formation. Some people find it easier to divide the process of becoming Catholic and preparing for marriage as two separate journeys. Both are very important and wonderful parts of your faith journey. Having said this, it is possible to prepare to join the Church at the same time you are preparing for marriage. Each situation is unique and deserves consideration. But we do not use the wedding date as a goal. That is no gift to you, your fiance, or the Church community.

**I am Catholic, but my fiance is not. We want to have a Catholic wedding. How can my beloved become Catholic before our wedding?**

Good news! It is possible for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic and still have a Catholic wedding. Talk with your priest or deacon about this. That said, if your fiance is interested in learning more about the Catholic church or is considering becoming Catholic contact us to we can start the discussion.

**I was baptized, but not as a Catholic. I wish to join the Catholic Church. Am I still looking at 12+ months of preparation?**

That depends on a variety of things. If you come to the Catholic faith community with a full experience of living the Christian life within the context of your previous faith community, we would look for a process which builds upon your previous adult faith formation. On the other hand, if you come to join the Catholic Church with limited faith experience or knowledge, you will be better served with a fuller and more extensive experience within the adult initiation process. The journey IS the way to faith. Your individual journey is the highest priority and just like any other relationship, our relationship with our God takes energy, intention, and time.

Unlike adult baptisms, welcoming baptized adults into the Catholic Church can occur throughout the year.

**I was baptized as a Catholic but never received my first Eucharist nor been confirmed. Where do I fit in?**

You might be invited into the weekly adult initiation sessions and to prepare to complete your initiation into the Catholic faith community. Unlike adult baptisms, welcoming baptized Catholics into full initiation can occur throughout the year.

**I was baptized as a Catholic and received my first Eucharist. I was never confirmed. Do I jump into the Adult Initiation process too?**

It depends. Those who are solely preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation may also find the adult initiation sessions to be an excellent way to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Adult Confirmations can also occur throughout the year.

**I am divorced. Is this an issue as far as the adult initiation process is concerned?** Each situation is unique but these are important issue to understand and sort out. You are encouraged to talk with our Pastor about your unique situation when you first inquire about the process.

**I understand that I need a sponsor?**

Jesus taught his disciples the importance of community. It is meaningful that we walk this faith journey with companions. If you decide to join the Catholic Church or if you are a Catholic who wishes to complete your initiation, you will need a sponsor from the Catholic faith community. Basically a sponsor is a fully initiated Catholic who will serve as a companion, listener, and mentor. The sponsor will also help you to learn more about the parish and ways to live out the Catholic faith. If you already have someone in mind that is not from OLOM, a co-sponsor may be assigned from the parish if you wish. Baptismal candidates will also have an opportunity to choose a Godparent(s) as baptism approaches.

**Is there any cost associated with Initiation?**

None whatsoever.

**So where do I start?**

Once you have read through all of the information provided here, you are welcome to contact:

**Anna LaNave – Pastoral Associate, Adult Faith Formation/Evangelization, (301) 365-1415 ext 122 or alanave@olom.org**