

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

The Way for Catholic Inquirers

Rev. Fr. Benjamin Wanner, M.A.

*Church of St. Joseph in Williston
Church of St. John the Baptist in Trenton
Church of St. Boniface in Grenora*



Major Basilica: Basilica of St. Peter in Vatican City

Groundbreaking: April 18, 1506

Solemn Consecration & Dedication: November 18, 1626 by Italian Pope Urban VIII, 235th Pope 1623-1644

Appendices

- 1 – Catholic Discipleship Terminology
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OCIA 'Garden' Growth for Catholic Inquirers

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 - Repent and Renounce Evil and Error
 - Display an Interest in Anything Catholic
 - Be Open to Friendly Dialogue about Goodness, Truth, and Beauty
- Become a Catholic Inquirer
 - Register for OCIA
 - Have your Catholic Discipleship Meeting
 - Join the Catholic Discipleship GroupMe
 - Watch 1 Video on FORMED
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 - Choose your Confirmation Saint in Heaven
 - Have a Founded Personal Intention to Become Fully Catholic in Freedom
- Become a Catholic Candidate by the Rite of Welcoming



- Engage in Catholic Discipleship
 - Receive Fr. Wanner's Signature on your Personal Catholic Discipleship Formation Plan
 - Receive the Initial Kerygma
 - Receive the Thinker Sculpture after contemplating Philosophy
 - * Receive a Blessing of your Catholic Bible after contemplating Sacred Scripture
 - Receive the Nicene Creed after contemplating Sacred Doctrine
 - * Receive a Blessing of your Nativity Set after contemplating the Nativity Mysteries
 - * Receive a Blessing of your Home Crucifix after contemplating Sacred Liturgy
 - Receive the 10 Commandments after contemplating Morality
 - * Receive a Blessing of your Book of Saints after contemplating Church History
 - * Receive a Blessing of your Baptismal Candle after contemplating the Paschal Mysteries
 - Receive the Lord's Prayer after contemplating Spirituality
 - Receive the Final Kerygma
 - Join the Catholic Keynote GroupMe for continuing Growth as a Catholic Adult

** Inquirers are to obtain these 5 objects for themselves to receive their special blessing, which is the reward for contemplating the unit.*

***An adult in danger of death can become Catholic if, having some knowledge of the principal truths of the faith, the person has manifested in any way at all the intention to become Catholic and promises to observe the commandments of the Catholic religion.*

2025-2026 Catholic Discipleship Chiastic Curriculum Calendar

Date	Focus	Mystery
06/09 – 07/05	Human Formation	How can we grow in human friendship?
07/06 – 07/12	Initial Kerygma	What is the big picture of Catholicism?
07/13 – 08/16	Philosophy	What can we know without God telling us?
08/17 – 09/27	Sacred Scripture	What has God told us?
09/28 – 11/01	Sacred Doctrine	What do we know for sure by faith?
11/02 – 12/24	Sacred Liturgy	How do we have real contact with Jesus now?
12/25 – 01/03	Nativity Mysteries	How is God with us?
01/04 – 01/17	Sacred Liturgy	How do we have real contact with Jesus now?
01/18 – 02/21	Morality	How should I act in imitation of Jesus?
02/22 – 04/1	Church History	How has humanity responded to the Gospel?
04/02 – 04/11	Paschal Mysteries	What does love look like?
04/12 – 05/16	Spirituality	What is growing in holiness like?
05/17 – 05/24	Final Kerygma	What is the big picture of Catholicism?
05/25 – future	Catholic Keynote	How can we grow as practicing Catholics?

2025-2026 OCIA Important Calendar Dates for Catholic Candidates

Date	Event	Description
Sun Dec 7 th	Rite of Welcoming	1 st Opportunity to become a Catholic Candidate 8:30pm at the St. Joseph Baptismal Font
R Dec 25 th	Christmas	attend Holy Mass at Christmas at a Catholic Church
Sun Jan 11 th	Rite of Welcoming	2 nd Opportunity to become a Catholic Candidate 8:30pm at the St. Joseph Baptismal Font
Sun Feb 8 th	Rite of Welcoming	3 rd Opportunity to become a Catholic Candidate 8:30pm at the St. Joseph Baptismal Font
Sat Feb 14 th	2025-2026 OCIA Cycle Deadline	Complete the Checklist for Becoming a Sympathizer Complete the Checklist for Becoming an Inquirer Complete Catholic Discipleship up to receiving a Blessing of your Home Crucifix
Sat Feb 14 th Sun Feb 15 th	(Optional) Cathedral Sendoff	Home Parish Blessing at the end of Holy Mass for those who want to receive Calling from the Bishop in Bismarck (RSVP)
W Feb 18 th	Ash Wednesday	attend Holy Mass for Ash Wednesday at a Catholic Church to receive Ashes of Repentance
Sat Feb 21 st Sun Feb 22 nd	Rite of Calling to Conversion	Catholic Candidates begin their more intense Period of Enlightenment during Holy Mass at their Home Parish or at the Cathedral in Bismarck (RSVP)
Sat Feb 28 th Sun Mar 1 st	Penitential Scrutiny	Catholic Candidates Perform this during Holy Mass at their Home Parish (RSVP)
Sat Mar 28 th Sun Mar 29 th	Palm Sunday	attend Holy Mass for Palm Sunday at a Catholic Church to begin Holy Week
R Apr 2 nd	Holy Thursday	attend Holy Mass for Holy Thursday at a Catholic Church to begin the Sacred Triduum
F Apr 3 rd	Good Friday	attend a Good Friday Service at a Catholic Church to continue the Sacred Triduum
Sat Apr 4 th	Preparation Rites	All Catholic Candidates Perform this on Holy Saturday 4:00pm at the Church of St. Joseph in Williston
Sat Apr 4 th	Easter Vigil Sacraments of Initiation	attend the Easter Vigil, the culmination of the Sacred Triduum 8:30pm at the Church of St. Joseph in Williston
Sun May 24 th	Pentecost	Catholic Keynote BBQ finishing the annual OCIA Cycle 5:00pm in the Rectory Backyard (25 th St W in Williston)

Becoming an Inquirer

interested in possibly becoming Catholic

“The Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel” ~Mark 1:15

An Inquirer is someone interested in *possibly* becoming Catholic. Like a Sympathizer, an Inquirer does not necessarily *want* to become Catholic. Unlike a Sympathizer, an Inquirer believes that Catholicism is at least worth a professional conversation and is willing to give it a chance. The key difference is that an Inquirer is willing to actively interact with the Catholic Church according to some desire toward a fullness of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty because the Inquirer believes that the Catholic Church has something enriching to offer for his or her reasonable journey of faith. Of course, anyone can always back out of the conversation in freedom at any time. However, it is a best practice of charity to remain in friendly and honest contact with the Catholic Church rather than cut off contact suddenly and completely. You are human and worthy of respect, and we are too. Inquirers who end up having a desire to become fully Catholic will have later opportunities to state that intention by becoming a Catechumen or Candidate.

Like a beloved plant growing in a nurturing garden (*seminarium*; Mk 4:26-32), becoming fully Catholic includes different stages of organic spiritual growth to ensure that the seeds of authentic holy desires already contained in the heart gradually grow deep roots and a strong spine so that the abundant fruits of God’s life and love can be most fully experienced and shared as an adult. Inquirers will become fully Catholic at the proper time when it is most *fruitful* for the soul (Gal 5), not necessarily when it is quickest, easiest, most comfortable, or most convenient. Like the practice of the earliest Church, adults must become fully Catholic according to the refined wisdom of the Church’s terms and judgments, not the terms and judgments of the individual Inquirer alone. The Initiation of Catechumens and Candidates takes place in gradual stages amid the local parish community, who calls all to continual conversion toward the heights of holiness by providing exemplary models of obedience to the Holy Spirit of Truth.



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To mark this gradual progress of growth, specific thresholds are provided with accompanying rewards through Catholic Discipleship (e.g. a small Thinker Statue after completing the Philosophy unit). The Catholic Church has objective standards for excellence (see the OCIA checklist above), which include the subjective judgement of a Catholic priest with a loving human heart who determines whether an adult is truly ready to convert and become a mature fully practicing Catholic. Nevertheless, the Church desires to harmonize its work with the human circumstances of individuals, which may require appropriate requests for dispensations and personal adaptations for just and reasonable causes. OCIA is not meant to be a burden but to be suited to the spiritual journey of all Inquiring adults, which varies according to the many forms of God’s grace as well as the free cooperation of individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place. However, it does take human effort, action, and commitment. The best way to grow is to simply be docile and faithful to the entire program prepared for all the OCIA members together as a spiritual family of growth so that all can enjoy a full professional presentation of Catholicism harmoniously enriched by local experience.

Everything from the Sympathizer Packet continues to apply to Inquirers as well. While spending routine time in silence, Inquirers are highly encouraged to begin investing in a personal relationship with God *daily*. In fact, the most important thing is simply to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus (cf. Heb

12:2), cultivating the relationship of friendship with Him, for if there is anything clear in the Gospels, it is that Jesus Christ, first and foremost desires our friendship. The consciousness of this friendship of Jesus Christ is the very secret of the all the Saints in Church History. Indeed, encountering Jesus saves our life and draws us to the heights of our sanctification. Inquirers are also encouraged to prayerfully reflect daily on their growing understanding of Catholicism and their relationship with other Catholics as falsehoods and misconceptions gradually wither away. When the time is ripe, Inquirers are also encouraged to grow in friendship with the Catholics who volunteer and are staffed officially at the school and the parish, including the Priests, Deacons, and any Religious. As the 'Gardener' Director of OCIA, it is essential to remain connected with Fr. Wanner throughout the process and to reveal to him honestly any objections or obstacles to Catholicism that emerge. Any 'weeds' will be treated appropriately with professional sensitivity and confidentiality. It will not be helpful in the long run for the Inquirer or for the parish to 'sweep Catholic issues under the rug' or treat your questions and concerns with causal flippancy. Inquirers are highly encouraged to continually ask many questions with freedom and to pursue Catholic answers from official Catholic sources rather than from ambiguous, esoteric, or uncharitable sources.

As Inquirers continue to open their mind and heart to hear the mystery of Christ proclaimed by the Catholic Church with the Holy Spirit, it is common to grow in wonder about the mysteries of faith as Inquirers begin to see how they all fit together within their honest personal pursuit of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty in a relational context of human and divine love. It is common to grow in a desire for conversion from evil and error toward the fullness of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty contained in Catholicism. It is common to grow in a desire for holiness and to yearn more earnestly for salvation and sanctification in Christ. It is common to grow in an ever more sincere commitment to Jesus Christ, who is the way of Goodness, the fullness of Truth, and the very source of the Beauty of life (Jn 14:6).

Yet it is also common to experience spiritual warfare and obstacles from external enemies, visible and invisible. Only Jesus Christ can fulfill the restlessness you feel within your heart and carry you through your temptations. Only Jesus Christ will infinitely surpass your spiritual expectations, for only he is the fullness of God's revelation. The Catholic Church claims to contain Jesus Christ fully, just as Jesus was fully contained in the womb of Mary. Allow yourself to continue to be drawn into these mysteries of God's love as you seek the living God and embark on your reasonable journey of faith. Invite the strength of the Spirit of Truth (Jn 16:12-15) to be the primary aid and critical agent of your growth. It is common in this stage of prayer to experience through Catholicism, perhaps for the first time in your life, a *personal encounter* with Jesus Christ as a real person and not just as an historical idea or a nice model for morality. Experiencing this kind of *real personal knowledge* of Jesus is like finding a hidden treasure and a pearl of great price (Mt 13:44-46)! A maturing Inquirer will develop a genuine will to follow Jesus Christ attentive to *all* of the Lord's footsteps and form a *conscious intention* to become Roman Catholic that is clear, pure, and *genuinely* free.



Commended by the very ancient practice of the earliest Christian Church - who lived through the pagan religious context of the ancient Roman Empire - and suited to our contemporary times adapted to local conditions, there are several distinct steps in the calendar outline above that mark the stages of organic growth enriched by sacred rites based in ancient Christian tradition that are celebrated at successive intervals of time. Diligent Inquirers are willing to act promptly on the graces they have already received to officially pursue Goodness, Truth, and Beauty with the love of the Catholic Church. The following are the concrete action items all Inquirers are responsible for completing by **** February 14th **** to become fully Catholic at the 2026 Easter Vigil on April 4th. In line with over 2,000 years of Church History, the Easter Vigil is the normative time for adults to become fully Catholic. For serious reasons (e.g. choice to cohabit), full initiation may be delayed past the Easter Vigil, preferably within the Easter Season to show its paschal character. The following work of conversion may be accomplished at the Inquirer's convenience in no specific order:

1 Become a Sympathizer

Receive the Sympathizer Packet and prayerfully read through it. Keep it close to this Inquirer Packet and put them both in a convenient place for easy reference. Feel free to share the Sympathizer Packet with your family and friends who may have similar interests to you.

2 Repent and Renounce Evil and Error

The first step toward a happy life is to repent and renounce evil and error. If you want to live a good life, then you must first repent from the bad that you have done as you know it in your



conscience. If you want to enjoy Heaven on earth, then you must first renounce Hell on earth as you have experienced it. If you want to be filled with the Truth, then you must first be willing to empty yourself of all error as you understand it. It will take a gradual process to fully repent and believe in the Gospel in the way that the Catholic Church understands it (Mk 1). That is ok. It is normal. It is a human process. It is a healing process. Your journey toward Goodness, Truth, and Beauty is unique. Your personal relationship with God is unique. Consider reciting

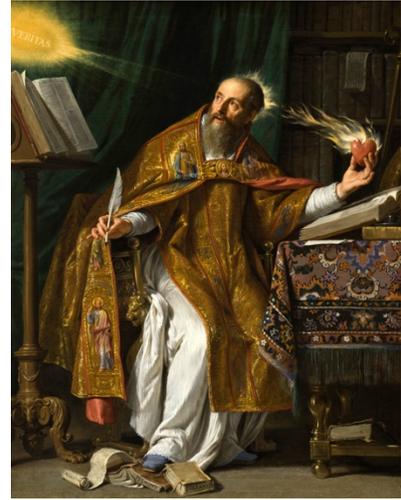
this following formula daily (or writing your own) as a loving invitation to take an initial baby step away from Hell and toward Heaven:

Act of Desire for Goodness, Truth, and Beauty

I [*name*], freely choose to repent from all the bad that I have done in my life. I desire to follow my conscience and to be free from any habits of evil. I am sorry for all the ways I have wounded others by my words and actions. I want to live a life that is truly Good, Beautiful, and full of Love. I also freely choose to renounce all evil in my life that I have seen, done, or experienced in thought or deed. I renounce all spiritual darkness within and around me, and I renounce any darkness within or around me caused by others, including any curses or evil spirits against me. I freely reject all falsehoods, lies, and deceits. I desire to empty my mind of all error so that I can be filled and enlightened by Truth.

3 □ Display an Interest in Anything Catholic

Everyone's initial attraction to Catholicism is unique. Consider your initial attractions as your starting point. In other words, 'pour water' over the spots where the 'seeds' of religious passion are. Some people are most attracted by particular Truths – perhaps you received a grace of enlightenment with a passion for Sacred Scripture, Doctrine, Church History, Mortality etc. Find a good book or podcast with the topic of your passion and read it. Others are most attracted by particular Goods – perhaps a Catholic prayed for you in a time of need by lighting a Votive Candle and the prayer was answered. Find other people in need and pray for them by lighting Votive Candles yourself. Spend more time with that Catholic and befriend them. Some people are most attracted by particular Beauties – perhaps you experienced God's transcendent majesty for the first time listening to sacred music in a Catholic Church or by visiting a grand Cathedral. Listen to polyphony in the car. Look up the free virtual tours of the four major basilicas in Rome. Put up a painting of Caravaggio in your home. Wherever you have experienced Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, start walking down that path. God has particular graces meant just for you, and you will find more treasures the deeper you dive in! Follow the Holy Spirit – He is your principal divine guide.



4 □ Be Open to Friendly Dialogue about Goodness, Truth, and Beauty

Find some Catholics and start having authentic friendly conversations. Listen to Catholics. Dialogue with Catholics. Ask Catholics questions. Give Catholics objections. Make Catholic accusations – have some fun with it! Put Catholics on the spot. If Catholicism is an institution that claims to have the fullness of truth, the path to heavenly happiness, and no error in official teaching, then try to sniff out error and hold Catholics to the highest standards – try to prove us wrong with your understanding of truth! Even if you are confused and disagree about many things – stay in the conversation. Keep tilling the soil. Don't let it go stagnant. Don't let the rocks discourage you.

5 □ Become a Catholic Inquirer

An Inquirer is someone who was willing to do a Sympathizer Packet action item. If you have not accomplished all 3 tasks, please do so as soon as you are comfortable (#6-8). It is best practice to do these sooner rather than later before life gets 'too busy for God'. Trust us – you will be happiest if you put heaven *first* in your life's order of priorities. *Holiness* and *Happiness* go together in the Kingdom of *Heaven!* The pearl of great price is worth any worldly sacrifice (cf. Mt 16:24-28).

6 □ Register for OCIA

Take some time to prayerfully fill out the Confidential OCIA Registration Form
<https://stjparish.com/rcia-registration>

It is best practice to register shortly before your Catholic Discipleship Meeting to make the conversation easier. In a private, prayerful, silent, and focused environment, take about 15 minutes on your computer to fill out an online questionnaire so that Fr. Wanner can know you and serve you best as a religious professional. Think of it like filling out the paperwork for a doctor of the body before going in for a Physical, but this is a Spiritual with a doctor of the soul! You will be asked a variety of

questions that will be personal and religious in nature. Its purpose is to assist Fr. Wanner in serving you according to your personal situation to lead you to heaven most effectively. You will be asked about your marriage and family situation so that Fr. Wanner can gradually assist you in conforming your family life to the Gospel (Mk 10:1-16). Fr. Wanner will *not* shame you or accuse you of any sins. On the contrary, he will attract you to the joys of conversion (Lk 15). If you are uncomfortable typing something on the online questionnaire, you may speak to Fr. Wanner about it confidentially in person at your Catholic Discipleship meeting instead. Any information written or spoken will only be used for the Church to assist you to heaven as a religious professional and to issue sacrament certificates.

7 □ Have your Catholic Discipleship Meeting

Contact the Parish Office to set up a Catholic Discipleship Meeting with Fr. Wanner just like making a Dentist or Doctor's Appointment

Schedule a confidential one-on-one office meeting with Fr. Wanner. A Catholic Discipleship Meeting usually lasts about one hour. After greeting you and welcoming you into the office, Fr. Wanner will begin with a prayer and give you as much time as you want to tell him in your own words the story of your life. Feel free to tell him whatever you want about your life however you want so that he can assist you most effectively on your journey to heaven. Fr. Wanner is especially interested in your family upbringing, your faith background, your experience with the occult and any other religions, your predominant image of God in prayer, what specifically drew you to Catholicism etc. Some confidential notes may be taken so that your personal situation does not get mixed up with the situation of another Inquirer. After hearing about the testimony of your First Faith, Fr. Wanner will then assist you in discerning the continuing impact of your personal encounter with the Lord. Fr. Wanner will explain your personal path through the OCIA formation program, answer any questions, and encourage you to finish all your other action items well in a timely fashion.

To schedule your Catholic Discipleship Meeting, simply reach out to Fr. Wanner, whose contact information is below. Like scheduling a Dentist appointment, it is best practice to schedule a meeting with Fr. Wanner during office hours: Tuesdays-Fridays 8:00am-5:00pm. However, for serious reasons, he may be able to make himself available outside of his office hours. Feel free to reach out to him in any way at any time and to schedule any additional appointments as is desirable. Fr. Wanner is available for you and is committed to giving you the top priority of his attention after tending to emergencies and celebrating other sacraments.

The Parish Office is located at the back of the Church of St. Joseph: 106 6th St W in Williston. Parking is available in the parking lot to the north of the school or on the street. Fr. Wanner will either meet you by the Baptismal Font toward the back of the Church next to the large Easter Candle or at the Parish Office between the Church and the School buildings (just past the Church bathrooms).



Rev. Fr. Benjamin Wanner, M.A.
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Home: 701-572-0236

8 □ Join the Catholic Discipleship GroupMe

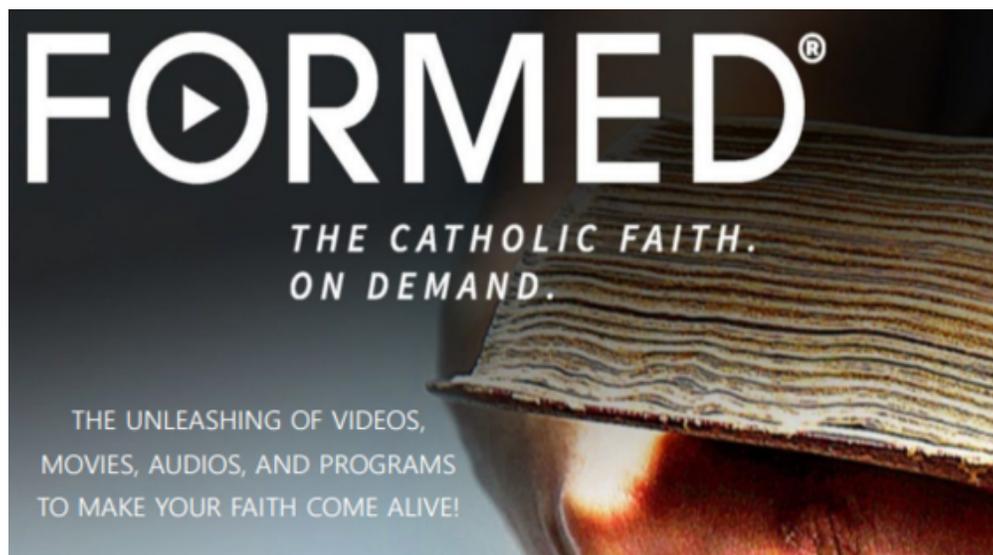
Join the Catholic Discipleship GroupMe on your phone or computer for live updates a professional platform, not social media

Catholic Discipleship (explained below) is the best way to grow in your understanding of Catholicism with a routine Spirit of Knowledge, Spirit of Reflection, and Spirit of Wonder. In addition to attending the weekly gatherings in person on Sundays 7:00pm-8:15pm at the Parish Life Center (25 6th St W in Williston – right behind Dominos), download the GroupMe App and scan the QR Code here to join the Catholic Discipleship GroupMe on your internet device. This is the best way for you to stay connected to the Catholic Church and to receive spiritual nourishment with professional boundaries according to your stage of growth. Fr. Wanner will post a few quotes daily in the morning right before Daily Public Confessions/Mass. Think of it like a ‘spiritual vitamin’ that will provide you with a stable source of spiritual nourishment that will complement the teachings at Catholic Discipleship. If you do not want to look at notifications in time for the communal sacred discipline of Daily Mass, then you can manage your own notification settings accordingly. It only takes about 30 seconds per day to stay updated with the GroupMe for maximal growth. Live updates and notifications will also be posted through the GroupMe, such as reminders for gatherings as well as any deadlines or cancelations (e.g. due to snow etc.). Feel free to like posts that are especially helpful for you so that Fr. Wanner knows what is nourishing for you. If any posts stir up questions, concerns, or objections, please bring them up for discussion at the next Catholic Discipleship gathering. As the administrator of the GroupMe, Fr. Wanner will delete any posts that he considers inappropriate.



9 □ Watch 1 Video on FORMED

Our parish offers you a *free* subscription to a variety of quality electronic Catholic Resources for all ages and stages of growth! We encourage you to find and enjoy something from this platform that interests you to assist in your routine commitment to spiritual growth. To create your account, go to formed.org and click ‘sign up’. Then choose ‘I belong to a Parish’ and type in the zip code 58801 to find St. Joseph. Then type in your name and email, confirm it, and you will unlock unlimited access!



10 □ Obtain All Official Documents

The Catholic Church highly respects and reveres all religious acts. Please obtain official copies of any of the following documents that apply to you and hand them in to Fr. Wanner at the Parish Office:

- 1) Official Baptismal Record: Ask the Church where you were Baptized for an official copy of your Baptismal Record including any notations, officially sealed, and physically signed by the current pastor/minister (no typed, stamped, or electronic signatures). A previously issued certificate kept at home may be sufficient.
- 2) First Holy Communion Record: If you have already received your First Holy Communion, this is supposed to be a notation already included on your official Catholic Baptismal Record. If not, contact the parish where you received your First Holy Communion and request them to send proof of your First Holy Communion Record to your parish of Baptism so that your parish of Baptism can make the required notation on your official Catholic Baptismal Record to be given to Fr. Wanner. A previously issued certificate kept at home may be sufficient, or even a separately issued official certificate from the Catholic Church where you received your First Holy Communion if different than Baptism.
- 3) Any Marriage Documents (ask Fr. Wanner to clarify if you have any questions)
 - Civil: all Marriage Licenses, Divorce Decrees, Death Certificates of Spouse, etc.
 - Church: all Tribunal Decrees, Freedom to Marry, Censures, Declarations of Nullity, etc.

11 □ Receive a Home Blessing

Having a holy environment in your home is crucial for your spiritual growth and protection from temptations toward evil and error. It is best practice to have at least a Blessed Crucifix and a Blessed Sacred Image displayed somewhere prominently in your home and to have all your property and possessions blessed within the Kingdom of God by a Catholic Priest or Deacon. Get rid of anything



contrary to Jesus Christ, including any occult items or sinful things (e.g. pornography). Make routine use of various Catholic Sacramentals and Devotions in your home such as Rosaries, Scapulars, Holy Water, Holy Salt, Holy Metals etc. The Parish Office (between the Church and the School) has a small religious shop with a variety of holy objects for your convenience. Just remember that once a religious item is blessed by a Cleric, you are not to sell it for extra money (simony), throw it away (sacrilege), or pour it down a drain into the sewer (sacrilege). If you are finished with a blessed religious object, either burn it, bury it, consume it, or give it to the Church for holy disposal. Blessed secular objects (e.g. vehicles) may be disposed regularly with the reverence due to their nature. To schedule a home blessing, simply reach out to Fr. Wanner, Fr. Eberle, or one of the Deacons. The experience is up to you as the host. It can be a short and simple home appointment at anytime or a more extended encounter over a meal. Do not be anxious about presenting a pristine home. For example, Fr. Wanner is one of nine children and understands that life can easily get messy ☺. It is best practice to have your home blessed by a Cleric on an annual basis. To prepare for a home blessing, collect all your religious items to be blessed, prepare a small vessel of salt to be blessed, restrain any pets as necessary, make the rooms accessible for blessing, and ask the Cleric for any personal dietary restrictions.

12 □ Choose your Catholic Sponsors on Earth

It is important that your growth toward Catholicism does not happen in isolation. Since God Himself is a communion of persons, it is vital for you to grow in relationship with other practicing Catholics as you gradually become more integrated into the local, diocesan, and universal community of the Catholic Church. Friendly advice for approaching other Catholics can be found in the Sympathizer Packet. Do not be shy or isolate! Even if you intend to move away, it is still worth investing in Catholic relationships and friendships here and now. Growing in authentic friendship skills will greatly assist you on your joyful faith journey to heaven! You do not have to ‘prove yourself’ to other Catholics or impress them. Just be yourself and you will be warmly welcomed and received no matter your situation or your background. Do not be afraid! You will be loved unconditionally.

It is a very ancient custom of the Church that adults become fully Catholic with Catholic Sponsors. Your Sponsors will expand your spiritual family, giving you a spiritual father and spiritual mother with mature Catholic faith, no matter the faith background of your natural father or mother. Since the purpose of your Sponsors is to assist you on earth to get you to heaven by remaining faithful to Jesus and the Catholic Church, you will choose practicing Catholics to become your Sponsors. It is best practice to have two Sponsors, one male and one female. However, it is sufficient to have only one, either male or female. Sponsors must be freely designated by the Inquirer. If you are still experiencing difficulty finding your Catholic Sponsors into January, please ask another Catholic, a Deacon, or a Priest for assistance in connecting you more personally with another parishioner most suitable for you. A Catholic Sponsor must have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling their obligations. This is a commitment that is serious and lifelong. It is a commitment for the Kingdom of Heaven in your eyes, the eyes of the Church, and the eyes of almighty God. Your Sponsors will walk on your spiritual journey with you, which is meant to bear fruit in eternal life. It is best practice to pick Catholic Sponsors who regularly attend Daily Mass.

13 □ Choose your Confirmation Saint in Heaven

In addition to receiving assistance on earth from the whole Church, especially through your Godparents and Sponsors, all the angels and saints in heaven are ready to assist you on your journey to heaven, most especially the Holy Family, your Guardian Angel (Mt 18:10), and your Confirmation Saint. As you approach the Sacrament of Confirmation, you have a wonderful opportunity to choose a specific saint to assist you in a more personal way to heaven. Think of it like friend from heaven to help keep your eyes fixed on the final goal. As you grow in familiarity with the various canonized saints in Church History through Catholic Discipleship, you are invited to prayerfully choose your Confirmation Saint. It is best practice to prayerfully do some research to eventually choose a saint whose story relates to you personally in some meaningful way and can serve as a specific model of encouragement, inspiration, and zeal for holiness. You will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation with the name of your Confirmation Saint, thus giving you an enduring spiritual connection to heaven while you continue your earthly journey in faith. While you may choose any saint that has been officially canonized by the Catholic Church, it is best practice for a Roman Catholic to choose a saint that is celebrated in the Roman Liturgy so that you can enjoy celebrating your Confirmation Saint annually on a specific day at Holy Mass. On the Confirmation Saint Name Form, a list of all the saints celebrated in the Roman Liturgy are provided in chronological order with the date of their celebration. Men must choose the name of a male saint, and women must choose the name of a female saint. Both men and women may choose St. Michael, St. Gabriel, or St. Raphael since angels do not have human gender. Once you prayerfully do some research and choose your Confirmation Saint, fill out the Form and hand it in to Fr. Wanner at the Parish Office.

14 □ Have a Founded Personal Intention to Become Fully Catholic in Freedom

The Catholic Church is not only concerned about your beliefs and actions but also the *intentions* that lie at the depth of your heart. *Why* do you want to become Catholic? Catholicism will not be cheap or flippant with your immortal soul, so it will not be beneficial for you in the long run to be casual about Catholicism. We want you to say ‘yes’ to Catholicism with real faith, genuine freedom, and steadfast confidence. It would be less noble to become Catholic merely to gain a parishioner discount at our private school, to gain a fiancé, to gain a more ‘holy’ status, to gain superficial psychological contentment after a nomadic period of ‘Church shopping’, or to enjoy the social benefits of our local community etc. A mature Inquirer’s desire to become Catholic will be at its core a pure fruit born out of an honest and intense pursuit of the fullness of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. God is not converting to you. You are doing the work of turning toward God with the assistance of his Church.

15 □ Become a Catholic Candidate by the Rite of Welcoming

As you are accomplishing the tasks on the OCIA checklist, as you continue to grow in the formative environment of Catholic Discipleship, as you seek to gain more freedom from error and evil, and as you work to purify the religious intentions of your heart, an *authentic* desire to become fully Catholic with all its practical implications may eventually sprout up in the soil of an Inquirer’s heart. This is a great grace and gift from God (cf. Mt 16:17)! It is common for this initial desire to begin private, small, internal, and vulnerable. It is important to *notice* this sprout emerging from within you and to be open to it. Notice how it would be unjust and irrational to hide it, neglect it, or to stomp it back down with all the practical fears that come with any conversion. God does not work through fear. The Devil does though. Caution is necessary. Your lifestyle and eternal destiny may be at stake for better or for worse. In this moment, it is essential to continue to renounce evil and error and double down with *courage* on your commitment to Goodness, Truth, and Beauty so that their *implications* can grow from the roots, even in unexpected directions. Some truth is objective, and if real seeds of truth are sown, they will necessarily grow *toward* their own objectivity, which may be *away* from your own past subjectivity (cf. Ps 119:33-40). More humility (*humilis* means ‘soil’ in ancient Latin) is needed to grow with depth. If and only if Catholicism is really true, then every seed of truth will naturally and inevitably bend toward its light.

Once this *authentic* desire to become fully Catholic has deep roots, it will become less vulnerable. It will then naturally and gradually grow larger and stronger by becoming less private and more external at the proper times in proper stages. It will take *extra* time in prayer to discern who to tell this desire, how to tell it, where to tell it, and when to tell it. Do not be flippant with yourself – God’s love is literally growing inside of you! Proceed with a heightened sense of dignity and reverence toward your own soul as it falls in love with God and becomes more and more attracted to God within the Catholic Church. Do not throw your pearls before swine! Get up, leave the swine, and start walking toward the Father’s house (cf. Lk 15). He is already looking out for you and is preparing a feast for you.

Becoming a Catholic Candidate marks the flowering of this experience: when you want to publicly manifest your desire to become fully Catholic and are willing to pronounce it externally in Church with the ancient Christian signs and symbols. The Rite of Entrance is your chance to publicly put out your desire to become fully Catholic. At the Church of St. Joseph in Williston, there are three opportunities to reap this fruit: in December, January, or February. If you are not ready to enter this next stage of more intense testing, then it is better to wait another year for the next cycle than to try picking the spiritual fruit in your soul before it is ripe. The Church will not formally receive your proposal until a later time. A ring does not guarantee the engagement but increases its ardor.

Catholic Discipleship the garden for Catholic growth

“A sower went out to sow... As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit” ~Mathew 13

Catholic Discipleship is the friendly group of adults from the Williston area who are considering Catholicism. Just as Jesus gathered his disciples for teaching conversations, Fr. Wanner seeks to gather together all Inquirers, Catechumens, and Candidates weekly to guide them through all the basic mysteries of Catholicism. Catholic Discipleship meets every Sunday 7:00pm-8:15pm at the Parish Life Center: 25 6th St W in Williston (the building between Dominos and the Parish Rectory). Simply join Catholic Discipleship on the GroupMe App for live updates and communication. You may start coming as soon as this Sunday evening! Please arrange your work and any necessary babysitting schedule to accommodate for Catholic Discipleship so that you can attend rested, relaxed, and ready to fully enjoy the Kingdom of God together! Please let Fr. Wanner know in advance if you are unable to attend for a serious reason and schedule a meeting with him during the week to make up the discussion, preferably Tuesday-Friday during 8:00am-5:00pm office hours if possible.



Catholic Discipleship is a comprehensive formation program that offers more than the mere information of a Catholic Curriculum. It is not a class with tests and grades from a professor. It is an opportunity for quality discipleship with a priest. It offers experiences of prayer, sacred beauty, and dynamic lecture presentations as well as opportunities for questions, dialogue, and friendship. Catholic disciples are encouraged to exercise their spiritual muscles regularly by their prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture and other reading materials to strengthen their Virtue of the Mind with a Spirit of Knowledge, their Virtue of the Heart with a Spirit of Reflection, and their Virtue of the Soul with a Spirit of Wonder. The ultimate goal of Catholic Discipleship is to impart an experience of union with God and to set up all disciples for unceasing union with God so that they can enjoy God as much as they can in this life and enjoy him as much as they can in the next life. Catholic Discipleship is attentive and sensitive to the human background and needs of each disciple from their Catholic Discipleship Meeting. It seeks to introduce disciples to a variety of ways to pray and grow in holiness, and it offers opportunities for simple but impactful charitable works of service. Catholic Discipleship is integrated with the Liturgical Year so that what is received in the mind can also be experienced with the heart and integrated into the soul effectively within the local Roman Church. We highly encourage all disciples to actively engage with Catholic Discipleship by serving the common good of the group, asking good questions, and bringing up any objections to Catholicism that you have encountered. Fr. Wanner hopes to draw your humanity toward the fullness of God's Goodness, Truth, and Beauty with conversations that are open, critical, and enlightening!

Catholic Discipleship is not a mere expounding of doctrines and precepts but more of a suitable training period in the whole Christian life. It draws out the duties of apprenticeship with which disciples are joined to Christ their Teacher. It is in this context that Inquirers are most properly instructed in the mysteries of salvation and sanctification and in the practice of Gospel morality. By sacred rites which will be held at successive intervals, they will be gradually introduced into the full life of faith, liturgy, and love which is experienced locally by the People of God. Catholic Discipleship takes the pains to provide the comprehensive instruction necessary to form you to become the present generation of saints by making the faith - illuminated by teaching - a vital, explicit, and effective force in your individual and familial life.

Catholic Discipleship also takes seriously the visible and *invisible* reality of the spiritual warfare taking place in the battleground of every single human soul without exception which is being pushed and pulled constantly with an intensity of tensions between God and Satan, angels and demons, flesh and spirit, as well as family, friends, and foes from the past in the present and into the future. If Catholicism offers an earthly foretaste of heavenly delights and repose in ultimate Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, it will not come without a true warrior's cost, requiring much fortitude and zeal. To assist in this potentially dramatic religious battle between princes and principalities (Eph 6:12), the Church offers her protection to Inquirers through Minor Exorcisms and Blessings. Exorcistic prayers have the purpose of driving out any evil spirits that may be present and introduce the Inquirers to the true character of the spiritual life in battle. They also give due importance to renunciation to obtain the beatitudes of the Kingdom of God as well as the continual need for divine assistance. From the heavenly side of the battlefield are Blessings, which are also signs of the charity of God and the care of the Church offered to Inquirers so that, while they still lack the grace of the Sacraments, nonetheless, they may receive from the Church courage, joy, and peace in pursuing their task and journey. With the assistance of weekly exorcisms and blessings, Inquirers will have the graces necessary to gain self-mastery by rising above their immediate temptations and being faithful to their Personal Catholic Discipleship Formation Plan. Never give in to the illusion of thinking of yourself as 'alone' or 'by yourself'. Without doubt, you are the primary protagonist of your own Catholic Discipleship formation who is called to a great journey of constant growth in the human, spiritual, intellectual, and evangelical dimensions of your personality.

16 □ Engage in Catholic Discipleship

There are two keys that will allow you to open the door of engagement with Catholic Discipleship. The first key is to serve the common good of the group. If you arrive early, assist Fr. Wanner in setting up the Catholic Discipleship for a hosting environment. If you have some time, assist Fr. Wanner in putting everything away. It is Sunday evening for everyone. Be open to personal friendship with other Inquirers and show respect and concern for their unique spiritual journey too. Everyone has something to contribute to the group experience and everyone has something to gain. View Catholic Discipleship as a safe and healthy opportunity to get outside of your comfort zone and get out of isolation and social anxiety. Be free and be yourself. You are not Catholic yet, so you do not have to put up a Catholic façade. Try Catholic charity on and notice what it looks like and feels like.

The second key is to serve well the mysteries of conversion in your own heart. Listen attentively to the teachings and soak them in (Lk 10:38-42). Read the written materials at a pace suitable to you. It may be helpful to take notes, but it may not be. You are encouraged to ask questions that would be beneficial for the group or to ask questions privately after class or in a different context. Your curiosity is not a problem. Your ignorance is not a burden. Your objections are *not* strikes against you but more opportunities for friendly dialogue. Your mission is to navigate the contours of your own inner

growth, which gives you the privilege, the responsibility, and the freedom to move: request nutrients, call out for water, stretch toward the sun, fill in gaps in the soil, pull out rocks, pull out weeds etc.

To mark a disciple's gradual progress through Catholic Discipleship, each Mystery culminates with a presentation of a sacred gift that allows the disciple to move incrementally toward the goal of becoming fully Catholic. By ancient usage, these presentations act as a rite of passage to the next stage of enlightenment. Just as Jesus had twelve apostles, Catholic Discipleship offers twelve distinct thresholds for becoming fully Catholic:

16.1 □ Receive Fr. Wanner's Signature on your Personal Catholic Discipleship Formation Plan

In your Catholic Discipleship experience, you will reap what you sow. All disciples need foundational structured goals for growth as well as an opportunity to suitably personalize goals to incentivize maximal growth in charity and to guard against our default sloth and human weaknesses. Take about a week to prayerfully fill out your Personal Catholic Discipleship Formation Plan for the year. It is best practice to make sure it is truly challenging yet not overly burdensome. You may give your Godparents, Sponsors, and others permissions to assist you in being faithful to your plan so that you do not have to rely on your fallen willpower on your own. If you articulate a precise plan in advance and gather an encouraging team around you, you will grow exponentially. Fr. Wanner is very flexible in approving personal Formation Plan possibilities. You do not need to impress Fr. Wanner with your plan – only show that you care to follow a personal plan of growth. Communicate to Fr. Wanner any changes to your plan so that he can oversee your growth and assist with disciplined accountability.

16.2 □ Receive the Initial Kerygma

Summer is a time to gather in a more relaxed environment around the fire pit with great snacks. Instead of starting off with more serious religious presentations, it is a time to get to know the humanity of each other with easier opportunities for lighter conversations. Since there is no established curriculum, it is also a great time to ask more informally any initial questions you may have about Catholicism, both theological and practical. You are encouraged to open your heart to friendship with the other incoming disciples and to enjoy getting used to the new weekly Sunday rhythm of attending Catholic Discipleship.

Before diving into deeper religious topics and 'getting lost in the forest', it is essential to first see the entire forest from the mountain above. The Kerygma is the big picture presentation of Catholicism – understanding what we are going to enjoy and how we are going to enjoy it before actually enjoying it. Fr. Wanner will explain the nature and wisdom of the Chiastic Curricular Structure of Catholic Discipleship. If each Mystery is an ocean one could spend a lifetime studying, Fr. Wanner wants to ensure that everyone at least dips their toes into each ocean and understands its basic size and boundaries. As we swim along from Mystery to Mystery, if there is a specific Mystery that excites a disciple, Catholic Discipleship also has the capacity set up that disciple to dive as deep as their yearning. The Catholic Church lacks no depth (Lk 6:38). As an objective guide for authoritative Catholic teaching, the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) (CCC) will serve as a stable reference throughout each stage giving parameters. It is best practice to refer to the Kerygma often during the rest of the stages to wisely maintain the sense of unity of the entire Catholic Faith: how all the parts relate to the whole.



16.3 □ Receive the Thinker Sculpture after contemplating Philosophy

CCC 1-49, 142-184

With a commitment stronger than any other religion, the Catholic Intellectual Tradition champions the symbiotic relationship between faith and reason like an eagle that uses both wings to soar toward the heights of Truth. Philosophy helps us understand what we can and cannot know without God telling us. Starting with the basic world around us, we reason up to an understanding of the human person with full human dignity – whether actual or potential – from the moment of conception. We then go through various arguments for the existence of God and address the questions of pain, evil, and silence with God. After gaining a philosophical understanding of God’s existence and his unique essence, we consider the nature of faith and its reasonableness.



The Mysteries of Philosophy

1. Natural Philosophy
2. Anthropology
3. Philosophy of God
4. Logic of Faith

16.4 □ Receive a Blessing of your Catholic Bible after contemplating Sacred Scripture

CCC 50-141

After examining the nature of Divine Revelation as the Divine Word in the human words of Sacred Scripture that culminates in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, we go through a brief overview of the entire Bible. Faithfulness to praying with the weekly Sacred Scripture charts will gradually form your prayerful imagination toward a Biblical one so that your mind, heart, and soul can host the living Word within most effectively. Once you pray with Sacred Scripture daily, you will realize that being a Christian with your Bible is like being a fish fully alive in the vast ocean.

*It will be necessary for you to **obtain a personal Catholic Bible** for yourself to present to Fr. Wanner for a special Blessing after contemplating this unit. It is best practice to invest in a nice one that will be meaningful for your prayer for a long time. The NRSV or RSV2CE are recommended translations of Catholic Bibles (see appendix).



The Mysteries of Sacred Scripture

1. Divine Revelation
2. Torah/Pentateuch
3. Old Testament
4. 4 Gospels
5. New Testament

16.5 □ Receive the Nicene Creed after contemplating Sacred Doctrine

CCC 185-682

Although all Christians can pray with the Bible, not everyone's beliefs arising from the Bible can be correct. A religious authority established by God himself is necessary to maintain over space and time the integrity of the Deposit of Faith received from God. Sacred Scripture needs Tradition and the Magisterium to know what God has revealed with unified certainty through the ages.



The Mysteries of Sacred Doctrine

1. Religious Authority
2. Holy Trinity & Jesus
3. Mary, Joseph, Saints, Angels, & Demons
4. Events of Salvation

16.6 □ Receive a Blessing of your Nativity Set after contemplating the Nativity Mysteries

Christmas is the Christian celebration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ: the Divine Word made human flesh. God became a man so that we could become like God. Catholic Discipleship seeks to enjoy the Christian mysteries that Christmas has to offer as opposed to the secular holiday season. The celebration of Christmas is second only to Easter.



16.7 □ Receive a Blessing of your Home Crucifix after contemplating Sacred Liturgy

CCC 1066-1690

The Sacred Liturgy is how we have real contact with Jesus. It is heaven literally spilling into earth through sacred signs and symbols that are human. After understanding the Sacred Liturgy as God's work with human cooperation to bring the Light of the world to the darkness and the darkness to the Light, we go through the seven special gifts that Jesus gave the Church for a lifetime of faith in love: the Sacraments. These divine and human gifts are our ordinary and primary means for salvation and sanctification. The Holy Eucharist is the source, the summit, and the core of all Catholicism. It is helpful to begin with a theological understanding of each Sacrament and then finish with their praxis.

*It will be necessary for you to **obtain a Home Crucifix** for your personal home to present to Fr. Wanner for a solemn Crucifix Blessing. It is best practice to invest in a nice one that is large and can be placed in a dominant space in the home where there will be suffering. It is also best practice to place at least a small crucifix in every room in the home to provide convenient contemplation of the spirit of self-sacrificial love. It is also best practice to use a crucifix (with a *corpus*/a bloody body of Jesus on the cross) rather than just a cross without a corpus to inspire a spirit of compunction and ward off the evil spirit of complacency in regard to our present participation in the work of salvation (Col 1:24).

The Mysteries of the Sacred Liturgy

1. Sacred Liturgy
2. Baptism
3. Anointing of the Sick
4. Confirmation
5. Confession
6. Holy Matrimony
7. Holy Orders
8. Most Holy Eucharist



16.8 □ Receive the 10 Commandments after contemplating Morality

CCC 1691-2557

Once we know what to believe and how to have real contact with Jesus, we need to know what to do in imitation of Jesus. After understanding true human happiness and freedom, we learn how to do good and avoid evil with the assistance of our conscience, virtues, grace, and laws that are human, ecclesial, and divine. Morality gives us the outline for the implications and the ultimate consequences of our free actions: the path to Heaven and the path to Hell.

The Mysteries of Morality

1. Human Happiness: Individual & Social
2. Doing Good and Avoiding Evil
3. Law and Grace
4. 10 Commandments



16.9 □ Receive a Blessing of your Book of Saints after contemplating Church History

CCC 683-1065

While Jesus is at the center of Salvation History, there has been 2,000 years since the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that make up Church History. This story is full of saints and sinners who both responded and failed to respond to the Gospel. The Catholic Church does not pick and choose or hide her history. She has been there the whole time in good times and in bad, from within and without various human institutions. The line between good and evil has always been right down the center of every human heart, not an institution. Founded by Jesus Christ on the 12 apostles and their successors throughout the ages, the Catholic Church still faithfully guards and carries within her all the sacred gifts received from our savior for our salvation and sanctification amid institutional schism.

*It will be necessary for you to **obtain a personal Book of Saints** to present to Fr. Wanner for a special Blessing. It is best practice to invest in a collection of inspiring saint stories most suitable for you that includes all the saints of the Roman Calendar with sacred art for contemplation.

The Mysteries of Church History

1. The Historical Shape of a Papal Church
2. Early Church
3. Medieval Church
4. Modern Church
5. Contemporary, Particular, & Local Church



16.10 □ Receive a Blessing of your Baptismal Candle after contemplating the Paschal Mysteries

Easter is the Christian celebration of the Paschal Mystery: the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven. Jesus died on the cross to save us and to free us from slavery to sin, death, and the devil. Catholic Discipleship seeks to enjoy the Christian mysteries that Easter has to offer as opposed to the secular holiday season. Easter is the principal celebration of Catholicism.

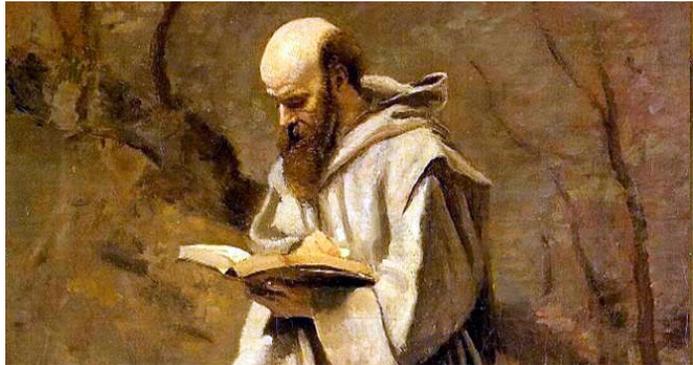
*It will be necessary for you to **obtain your own Baptismal Candle before the Easter Vigil** to keep as a memorial of your Baptism. It is best practice to invest in one that is large and ornate so that it is meaningful to light on the anniversary of your full initiation. Try to stay away from cheap kitsch art and tiny candles – your soul deserves better. The Eastern Catholic traditions tend to make candles much better than contemporary Western Roman Catholic catalogues.



16.11 □ Receive the Lord's Prayer after contemplating Spirituality

CCC 2558-2865

While Philosophy helped us understand God 'from the outside', Spirituality seeks unceasing union with God 'from the inside'. While every soul's experience of union with the Holy Trinity is utterly unique, there are common stages of the spiritual life that draw us closer to God. The purpose of life is to enjoy God as much as we can in this life to enjoy him as much as we can in the next life for the greater glory of God. Various methods of prayer can assist us in enjoying all the mysteries of the Deposit of Faith in this life with variety. As Confirmed Catholics, you are now called and challenged to *share* the Good News with others and to become good stewards of the gifts you have received.



The Mysteries of Spirituality

1. Unceasing Union with God
2. Stages of the Spiritual Life
3. Methods of Prayer
4. Thriving as an Active Catholic

16.12 □ Receive the Final Kerygma

After going through the basics of all the Mysteries of Catholicism, it is best to look once more at the big picture of Catholicism to see again how all the mysteries relate to each other. This is ordinarily



done in the context of the Catholic Keynote Welcome BBQ where you will be welcomed by our local veteran Catholics to celebrate the fruitfulness of your arduous journey! Now you are ready to spend the rest of your life going *deeper* into the inexhaustible mysteries of Catholicism as a Catholic Adult! You will never “figure out” God. He is not an idea or a finite puzzle to be solved but three infinite persons to be enjoyed now and forever. You are not finished – you have been set up to begin again! Your lifelong goal is to continue to expand your mind,

heart, and soul to receive God *more*. Now is the time to be fully alive and set the world on fire with God's love with the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church on your team for heaven!

17 □ Join the Catholic Keynote GroupMe for continuing Growth as a Catholic Adult

Catholic Keynote is for all Confirmed adult Catholics to assist them in growing deeper in the faith. Whereas comprehensive breadth was the guiding value for Catholic Discipleship dialogues, penetrating depth is the guiding value for Catholic Keynote lectures. Feel free to suggest topics of penetrating interest to Fr. Wanner. The GroupMe experience will be similar, but more augmented now that you are a Confirmed Catholic. It will add more weight to your daily spiritual exercises: a daily discipline, a daily indulgence, Church History documents, as well as contemporary Church documents issued by the Magisterium. Reading sources posted on Catholic Keynote will keep you sharper and more balanced as a parishioner than reading primarily from secular or ecclesial news sources.