

Welcome

We joyfully welcome you here. Your presence is a powerful reminder that God is still calling hearts to seek Him. No step toward the Catholic Church is ever small, it is a

courageous response to God's love. Here, you will find a community ready to walk with you, pray with you and support you as you open your heart and mind to Christ and his church.

-Bishop Lawrence T. Persico



Contact us

Aaron Kerr

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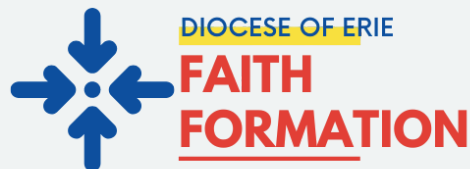
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LIVE YOUR FAITH

Your journey doesn't end at Easter, it's just beginning.

We invite you to:

- Attend Mass regularly
- Stay connected with your sponsor or parish leaders
- Practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy
- Live as a disciple of Christ every day.

"This is the hour for love! The heart of the Gospel is the love of God that makes us brothers and sisters."

- Pope Leo XIV



Photo credit: CNS/Vatican Media

Are you ready to start your adventure in the Catholic Church?

Let us walk with you.



HOW TO BECOME Catholic

A simple guide to entering the Catholic Church through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) process.



1 DISCERN & CONNECT

You've decided to take the next step in your faith. Here's how to begin:

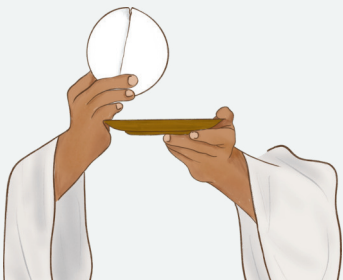
- Call your local parish and say you're interested in becoming Catholic. Find a parish: www.eriecd.org/find-parish-school.php.
- You'll meet with either the Pastor, Faith Formation Director or an OCIA volunteer.
- They will listen, provide support and ask clarifying questions about your interest.
- At this point, you're an inquirer, someone exploring the Catholic faith with an open heart.

This is a time to ask questions, pray and consider if you're ready for the journey ahead.



When you consciously and freely decide to enter the OCIA process you will be invited to attend Mass and prepare for the following rites.

- **Rite of Entrance**
- **Rite of Election (during Lent)**
- **Celebration of the Sacraments (at Easter)**



2 BEGIN THE JOURNEY

After your initial meeting you will become a Candidate or Catechumen:

- **If you're already baptized** (Catholic or another Christian tradition with Trinitarian baptism), you'll be a Candidate.
- **If you're not baptized**, you'll become a Catechumen.

Both candidates and catechumens learn together in a process called OCIA (*Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*).

Each individual's faith journey is unique. Your timeline and level of commitment may look different from others—and that's okay. The church walks with you at your own pace. You'll grow in faith through the following stages below.



FOUR KEY STAGES:

- Inquiry – Exploring and asking questions
- Catechesis – Learning church teachings
- Purification & Enlightenment (during Lent) – Time of intentional preparation, uniting mind and heart through prayer.
- Mystagogy – Prayer, mass and contemplation after receiving the sacraments

3 RITE OF ELECTION

This important step usually happens during Lent and marks your final preparation.

- **Catechumens:** The bishop calls you to the Easter sacraments.
 - You will sign the **Book of the Elect**, committing to this sacred journey.

- **Candidates:** This marks your identity as a Catholic Disciple of Christ.



4 RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS

At the Easter Vigil, the most sacred night of the year:

- Catechumens are baptized, confirmed and receive First Eucharist
- Candidates are confirmed and receive First Eucharist

Congratulations! You are now a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church.