Stages in the OCIA Process

I.INQUIRY

(Pre-Catechumenate)

– During this phase, the Catholic faith is introduced. Inquirers reflect on their own faith journey and shares experiences. This stage helps them to answer the question: "Do I want to go through the process to become a member of the Catholic Church?"

II.CATECHUMENATE

– Inquirers learn more about the Bible, teachings of the Catholic Church and the way the faith is lived out. Unbaptized participants are now called CATECHUMENS and the baptized are now called candidates.

III.ENLIGHTENMENT

–Those who are preparing to celebrate the sacraments of initiation at Easter move into a more reflective period coinciding with the weeks of Lent. The ELECT and candidates reflect on the meaning of baptism and on being a disciple of Jesus. The emphasis is less on teaching doctrines and more on opening ones heart in an intense spiritual preparation for the Easter sacraments.

IV.MYSTAGOGIA

–The NEOPHYTES and FULLY INITIATED Catholics deepen their grasp of the mystery of Jesus Christ in his passage from death to resurrected life, and making it part of their lives through meditation on the gospel and sharing in the Eucharist.

Celebration of the Rites

The Rites mark the beginning of a new stage of the O.C.I.A. process:

•First Rites

: Rite of Entrance for the Unbaptized
Rite of Welcome for the Baptized

These rites take place on the First Sunday of Advent.

•Second Rites

: Rite of Election for the Catechumens
Call to Lenten Renewal of Baptized Candidates
These rites are celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent.

•Scritinies

: are for the unbaptized are celebrated at Sunday Mass on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent. A prayer is offered for the baptized candidates.