

**Ordinary Time:** The cycle within the liturgical year that is outside the liturgical seasons (Advent, Lent, and Easter). This time provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of God's gift to us in Christ, our attitudes, our prayer life, and our service to others.

**Pre-catechumenate:** The first period of the order of Christian initiation of adults is the initial introduction of an inquirer into the Christian way of life in the Catholic Tradition. It is also the period of evangelization on the part of the Church.

**Presentations:** During the period of purification and enlightenment, the elect are presented with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer through special rites. Both presentations can be anticipated during the period of the catechumenate.

**Purification and Enlightenment:** This is the third period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which usually coincides with the Lenten season. It is the final period of preparation for initiation at the Easter Vigil.

**RCIA:** Acronym for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for use in scholarly reference to identify the paragraph.

**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults:** English title of *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum*. The latest English translation edition was published in 1985.

**Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens:** The bridge between the pre-catechumenate and the catechumenate for the unbaptized.

**Rite of Welcome:** The bridge between the inquiry period and the period of pastoral formation that coincides with the catechumenate. It is for those already baptized.

**Rite of Election:** Presided over by the Bishop, the rite inaugurates the final period of preparation before initiation. It is the bridge between the catechumenate, and purification and enlightenment.

**Rite of Call to Continuing Conversion:** Coincides with rite of Election, but is the rite for candidates, the already baptized.

**Rite of Scrutiny:** Three rites of exorcism for the Elect during Lent.

**Rite, Penitential:** Celebration for candidates, similar to the rite of scrutiny.

**Rite of the Sacraments of Initiation:** Rites usually celebrated at the Easter Vigil which are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

**Sunday:** The first day in the Christian liturgical week, the original feast day, the heart of the calendar, the basis and nucleus of the liturgical year.

**Triduum:** The three days of the celebration of Easter which begins with sundown on Holy Thursday evening and ends with evening prayer on Easter Sunday evening. It includes the liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday.

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**Pope John Paul II Society of Evangelists**  
P.O. Box 5584, Bakersfield, California 93388  
E-mail: [info@pjpiisoe.org](mailto:info@pjpiisoe.org) Phone: 661 393-3239  
<https://pjpiisoe.com> Pamphlet 096

# RCIA Glossary of Terms



**Advent:** A period of four weeks prior to Christmas. It has a twofold theme: preparing for the Second Coming of Christ and preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

**Absolution:** Act by which a priest, acting as the agent of Christ, grants forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Prayer to Christ, who is recognized as being truly present in the Sacrament, which is displayed for the people.

**Altar:** A table on which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered. It is the center of importance in the place where the Mass is celebrated. Also called: The Table of the Lord.

**Amen:** Hebrew word meaning truly, it is true. As concluding word of prayers, it expressed assent to the acceptance of God's will. Also called the great Amen, it is the acclamation by the people expressing their agreement with all that has been said and done in the Eucharistic prayer.

**Book of Gospels:** The book which contains the Gospel texts, from which the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel of the day.

**Breaking of the Bread:** The celebrant recreates gestures of Christ at the Last Supper when He broke the bread to give to His disciples. The action signifies that in communion, we who are many, are made one in the one Bread of Life which is Christ.

**Candidate:** One who is already baptized in another Christian faith and who now is preparing to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. At the time of full reception, he or she will make a profession of faith, be confirmed, and receive the Eucharist.

**Catechumen:** One who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

**Catechumenate:** Second period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which involves intense preparation in word, worship, community life, and apostolic works.

**Cycle A, B, C:** The three-year cycle of liturgical readings: A Cycle - Matthew; B Cycle - Mark; C Cycle - Luke. All three cycles incorporate John.

**Deacon:** An ordained minister who assists the Celebrant at the Liturgy of the Word and at the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

**Deacons/diaconate:** The diaconate is the first order or grade in ordained ministry. Any man who is to be ordained to the priesthood must first be ordained as a transitional deacon. Deacons serve in the ministry of liturgy, of the word, and of charity. The Permanent Diaconate is for men who do not plan to become ordained priests. The program is open to both married and unmarried men.

**Easter Season:** A period of seven weeks beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the feast of Pentecost.

**Elect:** The name given to catechumens who celebrate the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent signifying their being chosen for the initiation sacraments.

**Evangelization:** The task of the Church during the pre-catechumenate which involves the inviting, the welcoming, the witness, the sharing of faith, and the proclamation of the gospel to inquirers/candidates.

**Grace:** A free gift of God to human beings, grace is a created sharing in the life of God. It is given through the merits of Christ and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It is necessary for salvation.

**Holidays – Holy Days of Obligation:** Feasts in Latin-rite churches on which Catholics are required to assist at Mass. In the United States these are: Christmas, (the Nativity of Jesus); January 1, (Mary Mother of God); Ascension of the Lord forty days after Easter; August 15 (Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary); November 1, All Saints' Day; and December 8, Immaculate Conception (of the Blessed Virgin Mary). Outside the United States, variations of Holy Days may occur.

**Host, The Sacred:** The bread under whose appearances Christ is and remains present in a unique manner after the consecration of the Mass.

**Immaculate Conception:** Catholic dogma concerning Mary and the name of a feast in her honor celebrated December 8. It refers to the Catholic belief that Mary was without sin from the moment she was conceived.

**Inquirers:** Those who participate in the pre-catechumenate of a parish. They are "inquiring" into the Christianity in the Catholic Tradition.

**Lectionary:** The book used in liturgical celebrations that contains all the scripture readings of the liturgical year.

**Lent:** Is a six-week period extending from Ash Wednesday to sundown on Holy Thursday. It is

a retreat time in preparation for the Easter Triduum.

**Liturgical Year:** The seasons and cycles of the Christian year. It is the instrument and means for leading God's people along the way to the Lord. The readings introduce and invite us into the Paschal Mystery. It includes: Christmas Cycle (the first Sunday of Advent through the Baptism of the Lord), Easter Cycle (Ash Wednesday through Pentecost), and Ordinary Time.

**Minor Rites:** Rites during the period of the catechumenate which include exorcisms, blessings, and anointing's.

**Mystagogy:** The final period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which is from Easter to Pentecost. The National Statutes for implementation in the USA also recommend and extended mystagogy for one year.

**National Statutes:** Particular law for the implementation of the order of Christian initiation of adults in the United States presented by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

**Neophyte:** One who is initiated at the Easter Vigil. The term comes from the Greek word meaning new plant, as in a new sprout on a limb/branch.

**Ninety Days:** Occasionally used to mean the combination of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, and the Period of Mystagogy which corresponds with Lent (40 days) and the Easter Season (50 days).

**Order of Christian Initiation of Adults:** This is the official collection of rites of the Roman Catholic Church for initiation of adults (including children of catechetical age), and the reception of baptized candidates.