



“What is RCIA?”

***An introduction to the
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults***





Opening Prayer

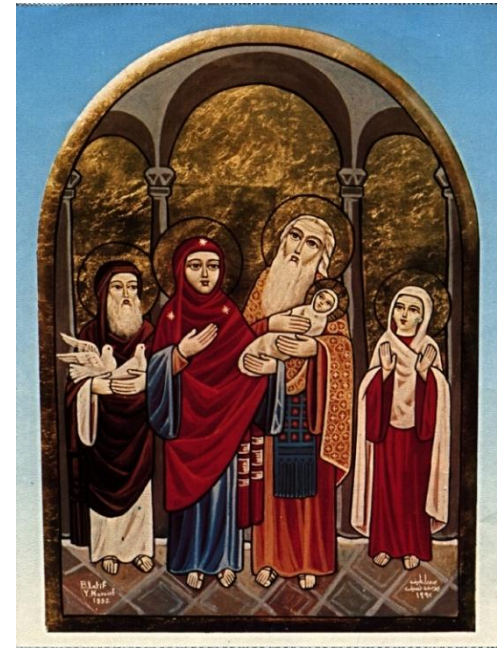
- From Saint Paul the Apostle,
Shettleston; Golden Jubilee Souvenir,
12th July 1959-2009





Intentions

- Introduce new catechists to their role in RCIA
- Review RCIA process
- Some practical tips





Thought & Theme

- “Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ” (Mt 23:10)





Role of the Catechist

“Truly, to help a person to encounter God, which is the task of the catechist, means to emphasize above all the relationship that the person has with God so that he can make it his own and allow himself to be guided by God”

(General Directory for Catechesis 139)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html

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Catechism



“In catechesis Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God,. . . is taught - everything else is taught with reference to him - and it is Christ alone who teaches - anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips. . . Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me'”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 427)

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p1s2c2.htm>

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“What is important here is the recognition that the journey of conversion in initiation is about providing the fundamental skill for living the Christian way of life. It is a mentored and apprenticed model, not an academic one.



One learns the Christian life by living the essentials of the Christian life with Christians.

Again, here is that essential link with the entire community of believers.

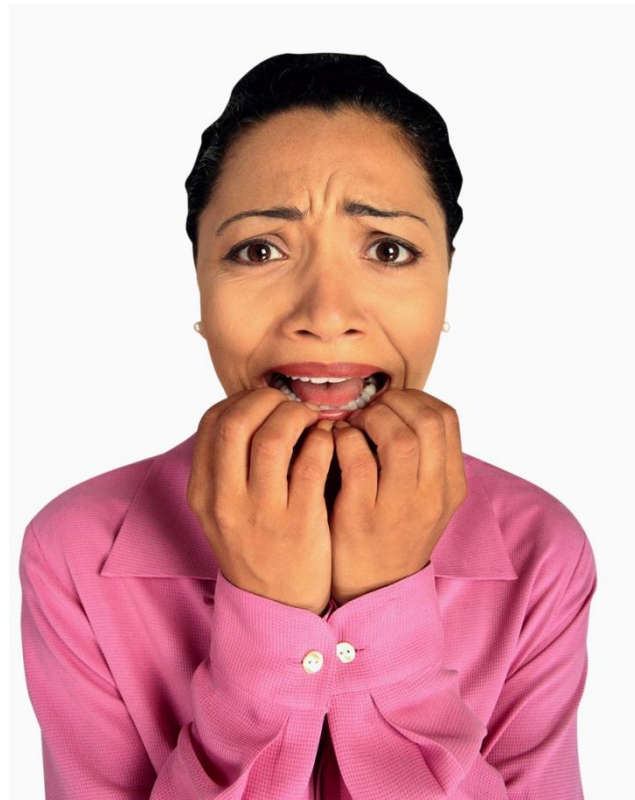
Now, here is the good news. God's work of conversion is just that: God's work. We cannot cause someone's conversion, so relax and stop trying to do just that.



On the other hand, it is our responsibility to provide an environment in which one can become more attentive to and freely respond to the promptings of the spirit. We mentor and tutor in the Christian way of life” (Morris 1997 p45)



- Becoming a catechist or deepening one's involvement frequently produces dilemma and fears...

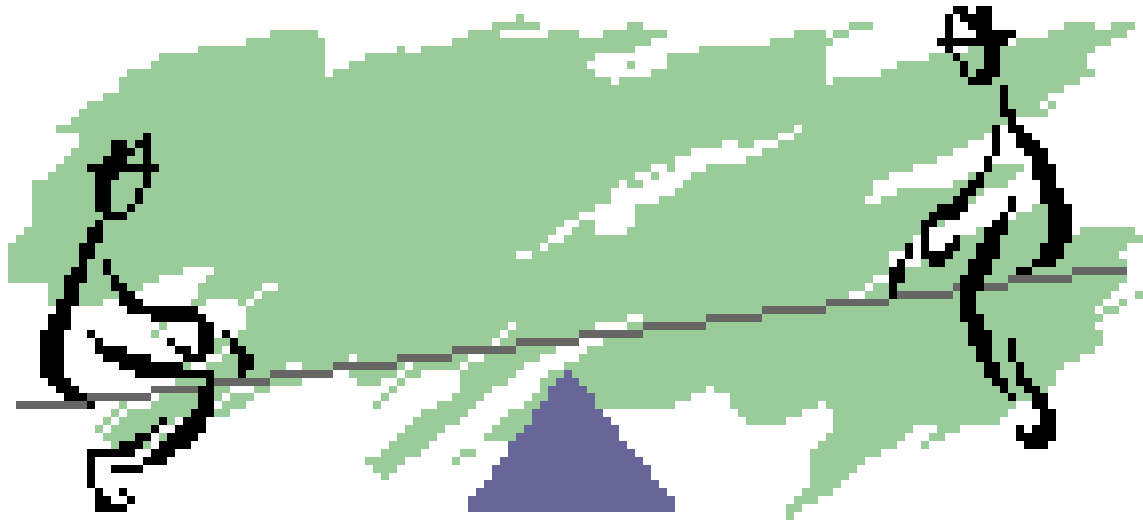




The New Catechist

Confidence

Competence



Confidence (1)



- Characterised by;
- “I’m not good enough”





Confidence (2)

- Encarta online dictionary offers

1. Belief in own abilities

self assurance or a belief in your ability to succeed

2. Faith in somebody to do right

belief or trust in somebody or something, or in the ability of somebody or something to act in a proper, trustworthy, or reliable manner



3. Secret

something told to somebody that is to be kept private

4. Trusting Relationship

a relationship based on trust and intimacy



Etymology

- From Latin *fidere* to trust
- With trust
- With faith
- Trust and faith have same Latin roots.





“Trusting Relationship”

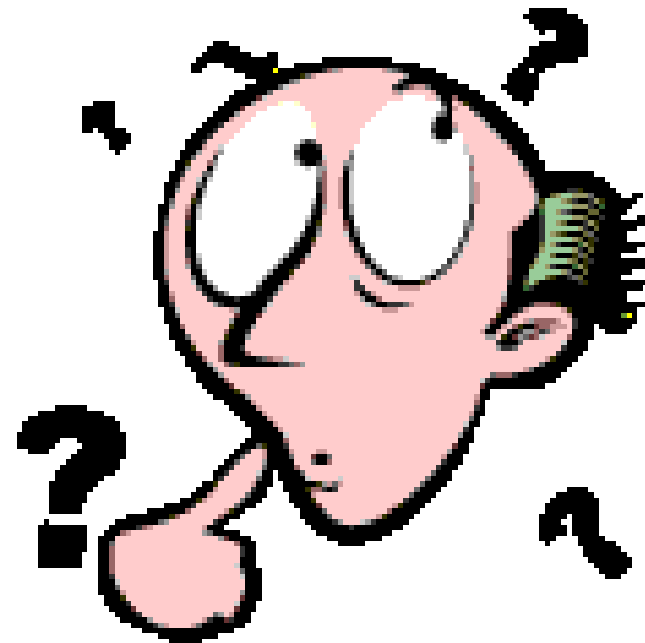
- This is the important aspect.
- If you are a sinner you are “good enough.”
- Catechetical relationship is based on trust, intimacy or having faith in ourselves to do right.

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Competence



- Characterised by;
- “I don’t know enough.”
- “I’d tell them the wrong thing.”





- Etymology of competence reveals "sufficiency of means for living at ease," from Fr. *compétence*, from L. *competentia* "meeting together, agreement, symmetry,"

(Online Etymology Dictionary)





- Whilst becoming or being a catechist is challenging consider themes from what the Church is asking us to do from the previous quotes.
- Perhaps from this a picture emerges.



“Encounter God”

“Relationship has with God”

“Christ’s spokesman”

“My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me”

“...providing the fundamental skill”

“...mentored and apprenticed model, not an academic one”



- We're not being asked to do this alone, God is with us as is the entire Catholic community.
- We can have confidence; in ourselves, in God and in the Church.
- We are competent in our own lives as Christians as Catholics.



- Considering the process of RCIA and reflection over some of the detail may further clarify our role..





Outline

- Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate
- First Step: Rite of Acceptance
- Period of the Catechumenate
- Second Step: Rite of Election
- Period of purification & enlightenment
- Third Step; Sacraments of Initiation
- Period of Mystagogy



Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

“This is a time, of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to gospel values, an opportunity for the beginnings of faith” (RCIA 1985 p14).



First Step: Rite of Acceptance

“This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on some annual date or dates, marking the beginning of the catechumenate proper, as the candidates express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God’s call to follow the way of Christ” (RCIA 1985 p14).



Period of the Catechumenate

“This is the time, in duration corresponding to the progress of the individual, for the nurturing and growth of the catechumen’s faith and conversion to God; celebrations of the word and prayers of exorcism and blessing are meant to assist the process” (RCIA 1985 p14).

[c.f. p 42]



Second Step: Rite of Election

“This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumens’ readiness for the sacraments of initiation and the catechumens, now the elect, express the will to receive these sacraments” (RCIA 1985 p14).



Period of Purification and Enlightenment

“This is the time immediately preceding the elects’ initiation, usually the Lenten season preceding the celebration of this initiation at the Easter Vigil; it is a time of reflection, intensely centred on conversion, marked by celebration of the scrutinies and presentations and of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday” (RCIA 1985 p14).



Third Step; Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

“This is the liturgical rite, usually integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist” (RCIA 1985 p14).



Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

“This is the time, usually the Easter season, following the celebration of initiation, during which the newly initiated experience being fully part of the Christian community by means of both pertinent catechesis and particularly by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration” (RCIA 1985 p14).



- In pairs review one component of the RCIA outline.
- Take five/ten minutes to do this and we'll take some time to feedback and discuss.
- For example...



Period of the Catechumenate

“This is the time, in duration corresponding to the progress of the individual, for the nurturing and growth of the catechumen’s faith and conversion to God; celebrations of the word and prayers of exorcism and blessing are meant to assist the process” (Ibid). C.f p 42



- “Nurturing” suggests to me;
- Loving relationship
- Cultivating
- Developing and sharing values.
- Perhaps less to do with theological knowledge and ability and more about being really me.



Respect

- Give candidate respect
- Give candidate confidence
- Affirm how much they already have/life experience on this journey
- Encourage



Listen

- Don't be a moral judge
- Be careful never to assume the place of a trained therapist
- Allow yourself to admit you can be wrong





Challenge

- Know how to challenge in a way that doesn't override people
- Be confident and not wishy-washy
- Give the candidate confidence about the road they have chosen
- Show leadership quality – motivate, energise, draw out qualities and skills in the other, and help them see how to use these to good effect.





Know Your Stuff

- Some basic theology
- No-one knows everything!
- Sufficient personal skills to get along
- Cant 'impersonate' a counsellor/catechist/therapist – be true to self!
- Don't self-deprecate either



Be Real

- Be yourself
- Don't take on guise of 'the holy' person
- Always allow evenness of conversation
- You are the listener.
- Meet the candidate where they are
 - be relevant to them
- [Congruence]





Empathy

- Get into their shoes – see life from their point of view
- Challenge to allow progress/ sense of direction





General Directory for Catechesis

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_1704_1998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html

Catechism of the Catholic Church

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p1s2c2.htm>

Morris, T (1997) *The RCIA: Transforming the Church*
(Paulist Press: New Jersey)

RCIA (1985) *International Commission on English in the Liturgy Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*
(Chapman: London)

Online Etymology Dictionary

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=competence&searchmode=none>