



St. Ignatius RCIA Testimonial Compilation
Current as of 11.08.22

I came to RCIA in October 2020. Like many, I sought out formation because my significant other was Catholic and, though he never pressured me in regards to faith, it was clear he hoped to raise his future children in the Catholic faith. I grew up in the Protestant church and my faith has been part of my daily life and sense of self for many years. I entered into RCIA with anxiety and trepidation. I was anxious that my love for my partner would cloud my theological vision and cause me to make religious choices that did not honor God.

Quite the opposite, my time in RCIA edified by faith. During a busy and lonely season of life—it was the early pandemic after all—I had a Sunday sanctuary of new but trusted friends with whom I had reliable space to share the deepest parts of life. I had the space that I needed to ask repeated, onerous questions about topics like purgatory or the role of Mary. I reflected on my own faith deeply and came to understand it in its global and historical context.

I have to admit that I never expected to love the Catholic Church. At best, I hoped to get over some of my preconceived “hang-ups.” Then, on the Sunday we discussed social justice theology, I found statements reflecting my deep-seated moral convictions written down in church doctrine with the support of scripture and examples in the lives of the saints. The Church had put words to and formalized those underlying impulses which the Holy Spirit had been stirring in my heart for many years.

The temptation exists, especially among my generation, to explore faith individually. However, from its very outset, the Christian faith has never been a solo endeavor. In RCIA, I found enduring community. I felt a sense of belongingness to the St. Ignatius family which gave me the courage to get involved in parish life after RCIA’s completion.

I am incredibly thankful for the spiritual exploration and growth I underwent during RCIA. I thank God for building this incredible ministry, and I pray that those of you who are seeking may feel encouraged to give RCIA a try.

- Macy Early

After 20 years of marriage to a Catholic, I signed up for RCIA as a way to learn more about the Church, ultimately deciding to join. The process was so enriching that my wife and I volunteered to co-lead the RCIA program at our parish for the next 15 years!

Each year I grew deeper in my relationship with God, and accompanying people along their spiritual journeys (through RCIA) has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my life.

- Ted Wiese

As I navigated engaging in discussions of faith, I found that trying to have theological discussions and education is becoming increasingly more difficult. I am eternally grateful for the RCIA program at St. Ignatius for creating an open and safe environment to grow and learn!

I never felt pressure and I always felt like any questions I had were met with intelligent answers instead of blanket, high level religious rhetoric. Out of the seemingly endless choices I had for religious experience and faith development, I couldn't be happier with my choice of a Jesuit church and the people that surround it. 10/10 would recommend to a friend!

- Benjamin Hawkins

I enjoyed the RCIA process. the video material and inputs from various clergy and non-clergy about historical and biblical roots of the Catholic doctrine were very helpful and interesting.

- Cato Clemens

For a long time in my life, I felt a tug, in the back of my head, that I felt pulling me towards God. I was raised non-religious and even though my extended family was Catholic, it was never really a thought I ever dwelled on. I would occasionally ponder on how it felt to be part of a religious community and the support it could offer, with some fear about the judgement it can cast onto others.

Eventually, that tug grew and it made me look with serious curiosity at joining a religion. With Catholicism being the most familiar to me, I began doing research into the various parishes in the Baltimore area and into Catholicism in general, but all the information out there and the scale of joining a new religion seemed too big to deal with at the time. Thinking I had satiated my curiosity, I decided to not move forward with any type of commitment.

Well, that didn't last very long and the pandemic left me with a lot of time for introspection! The tug grew and grew and I found myself with a pile of questions and a deep desire to discuss theology, faith formation, Catholic pedagogy, and the Catholic church itself. At this point I had a ton of questions, and I wasn't satisfied with the 'answers' I was getting through my own research. I had heard good things about St. Ignatius, read about the social outreach programs, the values that the parish held,

and listened to the homilies delivered by Fr. Casciotti, Deacon Andrew and Deacon Webber. What I saw gave me warm feelings and made the pull and the tug into a larger part of my life, so large I couldn't disregard it as much. I decided to reach out to the RCIA program headed up by Ted and Mary Jo Wiese – which seemed like exactly what I was looking for.

RCIA gave me the opportunity to ask those questions to people whose minds and hearts were open and dedicated to helping me better understand God and the Catholic faith. It honestly was everything I hoped for and more. Not only did I get answers to my questions, but I went through a shared journey with a group of others who were in the same boat as me, with them we were able to navigate complex topics, confusing theological aspects of Catholicism, and help each other discover the ways God exists in the world and our own lives and the love He has for us.

I eventually came to understand that original tug that I felt so many years ago was the Holy Spirit, working its way into my life and my consciousness and helping pull me towards God and His Church. As a result of indulging that tug and listening to what God was telling me, RC I have found such a strong sense of faith and my life has been blessed because of it, not just for the ways it has changed me internally, but also for the opportunities I now have to engage with a community of amazing people. I feel so blessed to be able to now lead this ministry and pray for those who may be in similar situations to me and want to explore and question that you join RCIA and get to experience the joy it has brought to me and countless others across the world!

- Brett D'Amore