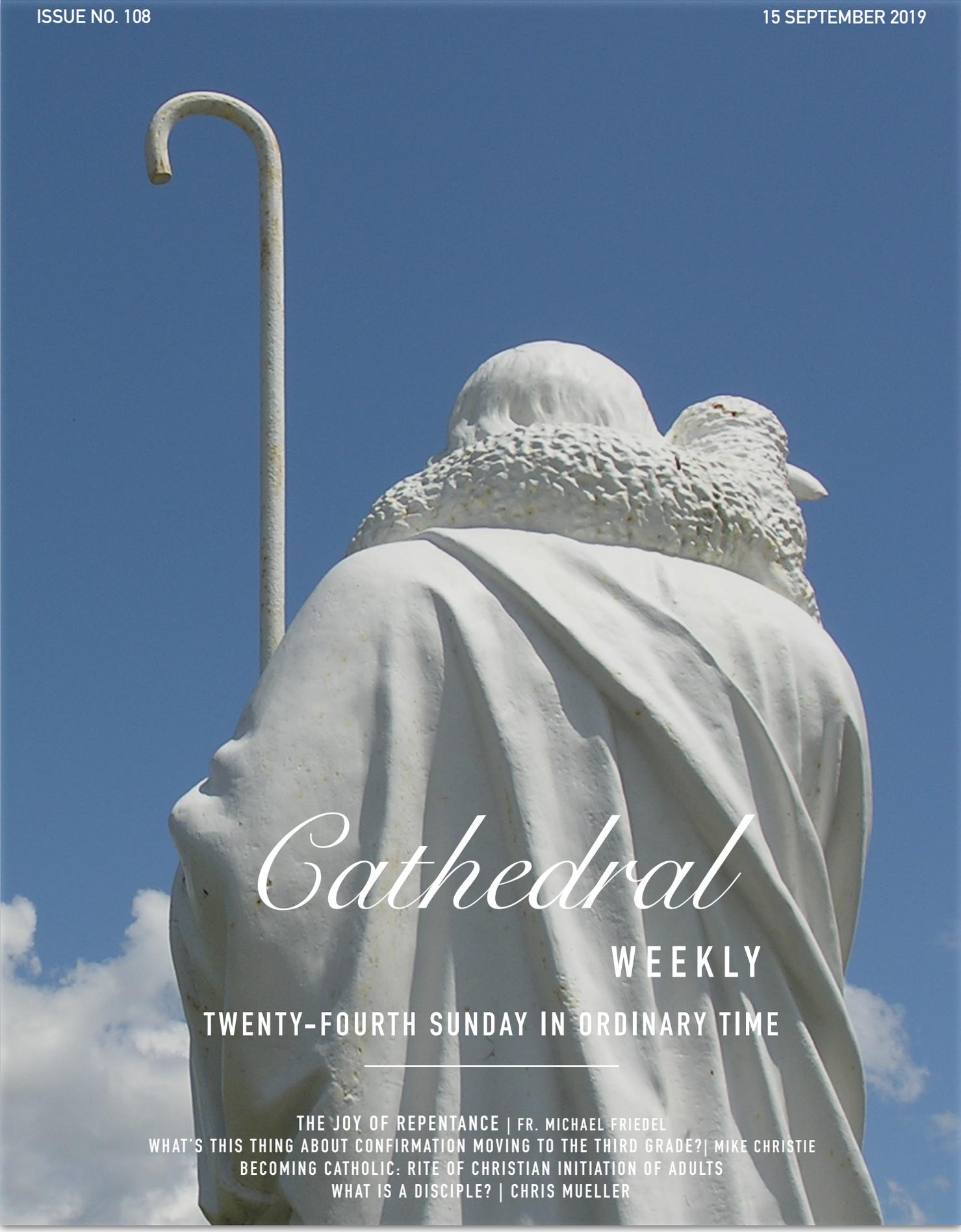


ISSUE NO. 108

15 SEPTEMBER 2019



Cathedral

WEEKLY

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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Cathedral WEEKLY

THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI
NINTH BISHOP
OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

THE VERY REVEREND CHRISTOPHER A. HOUSE, V.J.
RECTOR

THE REVEREND MICHAEL FRIEDEL
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND DOMINIC RANKIN
PAROCHIAL VICAR

DEACON IRVIN LAWRENCE SMITH

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Mass Times: SAT 4PM, SUN. 7AM, 10AM, 5PM
Weekday Masses: MON. thru FRI. 7AM, 5:15PM and SAT. 8AM
Reconciliation (Confessions): MON-FRI 4:15PM- 5PM, SAT. 9AM-10AM,
2:30PM-3:30PM, and SUN. 4PM-4:45PM
Adoration: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4PM to 5PM

Diocesan Victim Assistance is available. For the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, please contact: Patricia Kornfield at 321-1155.

Please remember that if you or a loved one is in the hospital, a nursing home or home-bound, to contact the Parish offices or Sr. Francella at 522-3342 x 142. Hospitals may know you are Catholic, but not know you are from Cathedral. We would be happy to visit.

Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!

On behalf of our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, our parishioners, deacons, and priests, I welcome you to the mother church of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

The seat of the diocese was moved to Springfield from Alton in 1923. In the same year, "Old St. Mary's" church of Immaculate Conception Parish was named as the pro-cathedral of the new diocese until this cathedral church was built and dedicated in 1928. Currently, our diocese comprises twenty-eight counties in central Illinois, serving over 140,000 members of the Catholic faithful.

I hope that your visit to our Cathedral is one of grace and beauty and that you feel at home in the mother church. I also hope that you will find this edition of the *Cathedral Weekly* to be both informative and spiritually enriching. May God bless you and yours!

Mass Intentions for the Upcoming Week

Monday – September 16

7 AM MARY ANN MIDDEN (WILLIAM MIDDEN)
5:15PM DORIS DREA (TIMOTHY ZAJICEK)

Tuesday – September 17

7 AM SPECIAL INTENTION OF THANKSGIVING (CATHEDRAL PILGRIMS OF THE HOLY LAND)
5:15PM ALICE BATES (BATES FAMILY)

Wednesday – September 18

7AM JIM JACKSON (M. TIMMERMANN)
5:15PM JOHN D. SULLIVAN (ROD COLVIN)

Thursday – September 19

7AM Anna Eleyidath (FAMILY)
5:15 PM NO MASS

Friday – September 20

7AM Anabella Devlin (GRANDPA)
5:15PM BILL CRUMLY (MICHAEL & MARY BELFORD)

Saturday – September 21

8 AM SHIRLEY LOGAN (LISA LOGAN & FAMILY)
4 PM MRS. MARY RATNA KUMARI PANDITY (SUSEELA PANDITY)

Sunday – September 22

7 AM MARY ANN MIDDEN (WILLIAM MIDDEN)
10 AM IRVIN LARRY SMITH (FRIENDS FROM ISBE)
5 PM FOR THE PEOPLE



Very Reverend Christopher A. House
Rector

Stewardship Activity

Stewardship of Prayer & Service

Keep in your prayers the priests of our Diocese gathering for their Priest Convocation this week!

Stewardship of Gifts

September 7th & 8th

Envelopes:	\$6,445.00
Loose:	\$3,504.14
Maintenance:	\$185.00

Total:	\$10,134.14
July EFT	(\$17,870.60)

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Helen Frances Call. Please pray for the family of Erianna Jasmine Quintos who recently received their Baptism.



The Joy of Repentance

When I was in seminary, I had a professor of the New Testament who insisted that we should rename the “Parable of the Prodigal Son.” His claim—which isn’t wrong—was that the title we’ve given to this parable seems to imply that its focus is on the younger son, who prematurely requests his inheritance, spends it on a life of profligacy, and returns in repentance to the great joy of his father (and to the vexation of his older brother).

But reading the parable, it’s clear that Luke doesn’t mean for us to focus on the son so much as on the father, whose response to the waywardness and repentance of his son is categorically generous, to say the least. My professor preferred rather to call this familiar story the “Parable of the Merciful Father.”

Admittedly, what we call a parable is of significantly less importance than what we understand it to mean. But my professor was right in insisting that we must focus on Jesus’ focus.

In our Gospel this Sunday, we’re given several parables to ruminate upon—the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. These are parables we’ve all heard many times before. They center on the themes of “return,” of repentance, of rejoicing. But in our familiarity, we often overlook what the focus of these parables really is: not our subjective experience of conversion or repentance, but the almost foolish abandonment of God in pursuing us.

Our God is relentless! He desires us immensely. I always chuckle a bit when I read the question Jesus poses to the Pharisees and scribes: “What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it?” The answer, of course, is no one! No self-respecting businessman would abandon such a valuable flock—in the desert of all places!—to pursue a single errant sheep. But our God does. Why? Because He’s the lover of His creation. He knows us intimately, and even in our sinfulness (or whatever ways we find ourselves to be undesirable), He pursues us. And when we finally make that return to Him from wherever we’ve been, however we’ve strayed, He rejoices, because we are of greatest value to Him.



These parables highlight something intensely true about conversion: the emphasis is far less upon us than it is upon our relentless God. If we remove the obstacles we have to conversion, God’s grace cannot help but prevail in our lives. That’s exactly what the Sacrament of Confession is about. It’s about identifying those roadblocks to grace and allowing God to restore us. And we can be assured of this: when we allow Him to pursue us, to manifest His power in our lives, to call us back to Himself, “there will be joy in heaven.”

Do yourself a favor and let yourself be found. Like the prodigal son, bring yourself to the confessional—to the throne of God’s mercy—and experience the joy God has when we return to Him. Don’t worry or fret, because the work of conversion really belongs to God. For our part, we just have to want to be found.

Fr. Michael Friedel is a Parochial Vicar for the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the Chaplain of Sacred Heart Griffin.



What's this thing about Confirmation moving to third grade?

Your questions, answered.

Candidly, as a father of five not-yet-confirmed children, when I first heard of the concept of “restored order of the sacraments of initiation,” I thought it was

a terrible idea to lower the age of confirmation to third grade. As I listened and learned, however, I found myself saying to Bishop Thomas John Paprocki, “Please confirm my children as soon as possible!”

I know many parents and grandparents have the same initial reaction to restored order, so I want to share what changed my mind. Here are answers to the common questions I originally had and what friends ask me today. I hope you find this helpful.

Why would we start confirming children at a younger age?

First, it's important to note that we are not starting something new. Aside from fairly recent history, it has always been the church's practice to first confirm new members and then welcome them to receive Communion. This practice held for adults and children, alike, and it has continued to the practice of RCIA. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly affirms the proper sequence in paragraph 1322: “The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation.”



The current approach of inverting the sequence of first Eucharist and confirmation first appeared in France in the middle of the 19th century, as the bishops sought a longer formation period for confirmandi. In 1879, Pope Leo XIII rebuked the French practice and ordered the original sequence to be restored, but the bishops failed to make the change. The practice spread subsequently to the American church as well.

So, the real question is not why we would lower the age of confirmation, but rather what have we gained by deferring it to a later age? The facts in this regard are eye-opening. Consider that nearly 80 percent of all fallen away Catholics were never confirmed, and the average age of Catholics falling away from the faith is 13 years old. By deferring the age of confirmation, we have deprived these children of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are strengthened by the sacrament of confirmation. We will never know what might have otherwise happened for them.

OK, but why now? How is this going to help our children?

Bishop Paprocki summed it up best, saying: “Given what our children are confronting in society, why would we delay the grace of confirmation — a grace that can protect them from those dangers.”

Our children are facing an unprecedented barrage of threats to their emotional well-being and moral clarity. With the invasiveness of technology and social media, nearly half of all children report being victims of cyberbullying. More than 70 percent have witnessed cyberbullying and are concerned about it, and victims of cyberbullying are as much as nine times more likely to commit suicide. Girls are twice as likely to be victimized by cyberbullying than boys. Meanwhile, 97 percent of boys have viewed pornography, nearly one quarter have tried to stop but can't, and 13 percent report watching increasingly graphic and violent pornography.

Deferring confirmation deprives our children of special graces that can help them withstand the spiritual challenges of this new reality. Further, deferring confirmation until they are already swimming in these waters also increases the likelihood that they will experience barriers to the sacramental grace. After all, as St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us, there are three obstacles to grace: lack of faith/insincerity; lack of repentance; and presence of demons. (STL III 66-68)

Therefore, delaying confirmation is a double-edged sword: It deprives our children of grace they badly need at a younger age; and it likely decreases the effectiveness of the sacrament in their lives.

Won't students leave our schools/programs after third grade?

As a point of fact, enrollment in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Denver has increased since the implementation of restored order there. This doesn't mean that restored order caused the increase, but it certainly shows that students didn't flee the system after third grade. Further, our PSR programs provide sound preparation for the sacraments of initiation. So, there is already a free alternative to Catholic schools. Therefore, sacramental preparation cannot be the only reason parents invest in Catholic education for their children. To be clear, we have much work to do to ensure our schools remain affordable and compelling for students and parents, especially in the formation of the whole person as a disciple of Christ. Sacramental preparation is an important part, but only a part, of this mission.

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How can we expect third-graders to be prepared to confirm their own faith as adults in the church?

This question points to a couple common points of misunderstanding regarding the sacrament of confirmation. The first over-emphasizes the action of the confirmand in the sacrament, and the second mistakenly views confirmation as a sort of graduation from faith formation. Paragraph 1308 of the Catechism states: “Although Confirmation is sometimes called the ‘sacrament of Christian maturity,’ we must not confuse adult faith with the age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is grace of free, unmerited election and does not need ‘ratification’ to become effective.”

It is certainly important that recipients of the sacraments be properly disposed and prepared to receive the sacraments. As noted above, however, there is a very high probability that a third-grader is more open, receptive, and properly disposed to this sacramental grace than an eighth-grader. Conversely, it is more likely that an eighth-grader faces greater obstacles to grace. The church has deemed the age of reason to be the age of 7.

But confirmation and Eucharist in the same year? Isn't this a lot for children to grasp?

If an 8-year-old is able to understand enough about the Eucharist — that the bread and wine are changed with the words of consecration and become the very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ — and be properly disposed to receive the Eucharist reverently, then it seems reasonable that he or she is also able to understand what it means when we teach that the Holy Spirit gives seven gifts to be used in faith. In fact, this is why the church established the “age of reason” as the appropriate normal age for reception of the sacraments of initiation.

Quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, the Catechism of the Catholic Church wisely reminds us that “age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood, man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says: ‘For old age is not honored for length of time or measured by number of years’ (4:8). Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood” (CCC, 1308).

Will the diocese be offering a curriculum or any kind of lesson planning resources for teachers?

Yes, the diocese is offering resources. Most of the publishers the parishes use already offer curriculum for restored order, since it is becoming increasingly common across the country.

Is this change being made in other dioceses?

This change has been encouraged by both Pope Benedict XVI and by Pope Francis, and many bishops are implementing or planning for the restored order. In the United States, about 15 dioceses to date have implemented the restored order, including Phoenix, Denver and Spokane. Earlier this year, the Denver Archdiocese reported: “The Archdiocese of Denver, as it nears the completion of its transition to Restored Order Confirmation, has seen a number of fruits: greater parent participation in religious education, a new curriculum and parent resources, and a more dynamic approach to catechesis.”

Isn't this a lot for our teachers?

It is certainly a significant change for our teachers, but our schools are blessed with gifted and talented teachers who are eager to do what is best for their students. Each parish has the flexibility to choose the curriculum and transition approach they feel is best for their teachers and students. So, as your school implements restored order, please be patient. Let's remember that we should treat this as an opportunity to form lifelong disciples of Christ.



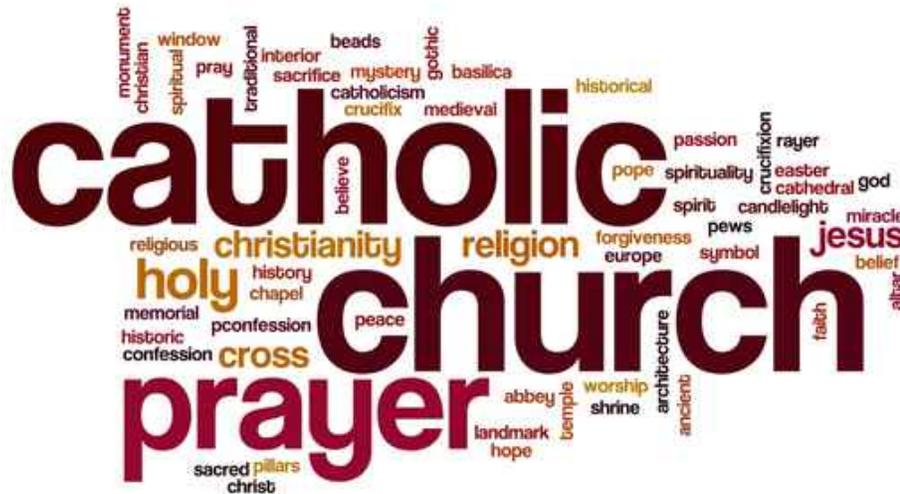
How is this going to work in my school?

Since each parish has flexibility to manage the transition in the way they see fit over the next few years, you should ask your pastor or principal for the plan at your parish or school. Some are taking a slower approach, phasing the change in over time, while others have already completed the transition by confirming children in grades 3-8 in a single year.

Final thought ...

Let's allow the Holy Spirit to do what he does best — inspire, teach, and guide us. I'm confident, if we put our trust in God and faith in the sacraments, restoring the sacraments to their proper sequence will be of great benefit, especially our young people.

Mike Christie is the Diocesan Director of Evangelical Diocesan Director of Evangelical and Catechetical Services and a Parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Springfield.



Becoming Catholic

Are you looking to grow deeper in your relationship with Jesus? Are you discerning Catholicism? Have you attended Mass at Cathedral or a faith formation program and are curious about joining our faith community? The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the opportunity for adults to explore their relationship with Jesus and learn about the Catholic faith. RCIA is a journey geared toward those who:

- are not baptized,
- or are baptized in another religion,
- or are baptized Catholics but have not been fully initiated (received First Eucharist)

A Safe Place to Ask Questions

The process is flexible and depends on the individual's faith journey. You will be provided an opportunity to learn how Catholics express their faith and their relationship with Jesus through liturgical life, the sacraments, and parish life. By the power of the Holy Spirit and through prayer, each participant will be able to discover the meaning of discipleship in the Catholic Church and then ultimately make the decision on whether to join the Catholic Church more formally.

The process is open to all searchers and seekers, whether you once were Catholic and have not completed the sacraments of initiation or if you were raised within a different faith community or none at all. Just because you start the RCIA process, doesn't always mean you complete it. If you are curious, we will walk with you the whole way to provide you with the information you need. All are welcome to join us!

The process begins with an inquiry form, found at <https://spicathedral.org/becoming-catholic/>.

You will then meet with staff member, Vicki Compton, to familiarize yourself with the process here at Cathedral and provide us with the opportunity to get to know a little more about you.

If you have any questions, please contact Vicki Compton at 217-522-3342 ext. 146 or email at vcompton@cathedral.dio.org





What Is a Disciple?

The word disciple is often replaced with student but it is not the same thing. To be a disciple, in the context of ancient Israel meant more than just studying a subject or sitting through a class. To be a disciple of a great teacher was more like being an apprentice learning from a master. The disciple would devote himself to the teacher, seeking to become like him.

Who Could Be a Disciple?

After years of studying and memorizing Scripture the best and brightest might go and seek out a rabbi. The rabbi would examine the student's knowledge and understanding of Scripture, trying to discern if the student had what it took to follow him. When a rabbi accepted a student as a disciple what he was saying was "Yes, I think you can be like me."

A Disciple of Jesus?

Jesus turned that all on its head. Unlike other teachers, Jesus did not look for the most learned. He did not pick the most likely. He did not pick the best and the brightest. Instead Jesus collected a random assortment of misfits. Take a quick look at the apostles.

John and Andrew appear to fit the classic model. They were followers of John the Baptist, they sought out Jesus and asked to follow. After them, however, Jesus departs from the norm almost immediately. He calls Andrew's brash fisherman brother, Peter. Peter was fishing, not looking for a rabbi. Jesus then goes and sort of starts just collecting people. Phillip is presented as just being there. Jesus even picks up a tax collector, Matthew. Now, tax collectors have never been liked all that much, but for a Jew to be a Roman tax collector, well, the Roman emperor claimed that he was a god so it was essentially as if the Matthew was serving another god. Good Jews would have gone out of their way to avoid Matthew.

Jesus took a bunch of misfits, looked them straight in the eye and said, "Yeah, I think you can be like me."

What Did Jesus Ask of His Disciples?

The disciples of Jesus gave up everything to follow him. Peter just walked away from his fishing boat. John and Andrew left John the Baptist. Matthew left his lucrative tax collection business. Jesus lays out what it means to follow him pretty clearly in Matthew 16:24: "Then Jesus said to his disciples,

Activating a Stewardship Way of Life

In preparation for the Season of Stewardship this fall, let's reflect on stewardship as a way of life. The four pillars: *Prayer, Formation, Hospitality, and Service* create the framework and model for our Parish mission. This week we are looking at *formation*. What are you yearning to learn about your faith? Are you able or willing to share your faith with other?

"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

To "deny" someone at the time of Christ was more like disowning them. When Jesus tells his followers to deny themselves he is saying, "You can't be the center of your universe anymore."

Remember, Jesus' cross was not just about suffering. It was about us. Jesus carried the cross for our freedom. In Matthew 16:24 Jesus is telling his followers, "your life has got to be about something greater than you. It is about bringing people to me. The way you do that is by offering yourself. That is how you become like me."

Are You Ready to Follow?

Jesus is still calling unlikely disciples. He is calling you. Right now Jesus is looking you in the eye saying, "yeah, I think you can be like me."

It might sound like you will never be able to live up to that call, but remember, Jesus did not call the best and the brightest. He did not call the most qualified. He called the willing. He did not expect us to do it alone. He did something incredible. He sent the Holy Spirit so that you and I could learn from him personally, so that we could become like him.

You can start being his disciple by reading through the Gospels. Immerse yourself in his life and teaching. Ask the Holy Spirit to counsel you and to help you be like Jesus. Ask him to help you start living a life that is offered for the sake of others. You might notice things that are keeping you from following him; old habits or sins. Drop them like Peter dropped fishing. Confession is a good place to do that. God will help you get out of the center of the universe, so that he can take his proper place.

The last thing to remember is that disciples did not become like their master in an instant. They walked with him for years, each day becoming a little more like the one they followed. If you have not already, today you can become his disciple.

This article was first published on Steubenville Fuel (<https://steubenvillefuel.com/2015/10/12/what-is-a-disciple/>).

Chris Mueller is a youth minister from Murrieta, California. Chris is the president and founder of 242Revolution Ministries. Chris and his wife, Christina, live in California with their five children.

Opportunities for Stewardship: Formation at Cathedral Adult Faith Formation Series

View our calendar of topics here:
<https://spicathedral.org/adult-faith-formation-2/>

Family of Faith

All are welcome to the teach sessions and the calendar can be found here:<https://spicathedral.org/family-of-faith/>