



THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY

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Welcome

Each year before Lent I interview each of the catechumens (the unbaptized) and candidates (those baptized in another faith) in the RCIA process. During this time with each of them, I ask them how the process has been for them and how they have seen their relationship with God grow since beginning in September.

Each response is unique and often comes with many surprises. One woman just smiled and threw her head back and said that this has been the best time in her life because of the peace she has felt even amidst chaos in her life. Another young man admits that he never expected to feel the way he does about the Catholic faith. Another woman expressed how her life had been very self-centered

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and now that wasn't enough and didn't work for her anymore. She sees the need to do for others who are in need

and give to them whatever she can to make their lives better. In fact, several expressed that where they were was becoming very uncomfortable for them and they knew they were being called to something deeper that would make a difference in others' lives. One man expressed that he finally felt like he was “becoming” a Christian. He realized he was being formed and transformed through this process and through interactions with others, through his prayer life and through worshipping with this community.

What surprised me the most this year is how very many have come to the deep realization of how important our community has been for them. Several stated how they

had just been “out there on their own.” They never felt the need for anyone else to accompany them on their

faith journey. But now they see that in community is where they most find God in their daily lives. It is the community which supports them and prays with them and witnesses to them the Gospel. It is in the people they meet each day where God lives and makes God Himself known to them. They realize too that others find God in them, a new and essential realization for many of the candidates and catechumens.

Just about all of the candidates and catechumens expressed how deeply moved and supported they felt by all of you in The Basilica community. They spoke about your smiles and your kind and loving words to them and how welcomed they felt in this community. They need your continued prayers. And they are so grateful to you for your spirit of hospitality towards and appreciation of them. This Lent, we hope you will join us in praying specifically for someone from the RCIA group. Cards will be available in baskets at the back of church by Ash Wednesday and members of The Basilica community are invited to take a card (or a few) and to pray specifically for the person listed.



Paula Kaempffer
Director of Learning
The Basilica of Saint Mary

During Lent, we will consider our own journeys of conversion and where we have found God and where God might be calling each of us into deeper relationship and intimacy with God and each other. All of us need each other as we move forward and embrace the Lenten spirit.

OUR VISION:

Seek the well-being of the city to which I have sent you. Pray for it to the Lord. For in seeking its well-being, you shall find your own.

— Jeremiah 29:7