RCIA Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Hemel Hempstead West Parish: Ss Mary & Joseph & St Mark's

Name: .....

Address.....

Tel.No.....

Mobile.....

Email: ..... Date of birth: .....

Baptism Details. *Any information you give will be treated confidentially.*

Have you been baptised? (Christened) Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please state denomination, where and when:

.....

Please provide a certificate.

Is your spouse or partner baptised? (Christened) Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, which denomination? .....

Marital Status. *Any information you give will be treated confidentially.*

Married ☐ Married but separated ☐ Divorced and single ☐

Single ☐ Divorced and remarried ☐ With partner but unmarried ☐

Other ☐ *Give details*

.....

If married or formerly married, please give details of date and place of marriage:

.....

.....

Has your spouse or partner been married? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, were they married in church? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, which church (denomination) .....

Sponsors

If you decide to go forward to full membership of the Church, you will find it helpful to have a companion for your journey. The members of the RCIA group will provide friendship and support but there may already be a Catholic friend or family member whom you would like to include in your journey. Please give their name and relationship to you here:

.....

Attendance at all sessions is essential

Marriage and the Process of Initiation

It is our Catholic understanding that marriage is a lifelong relationship between a man and a woman, a relationship that is at once permanent and exclusive. This relationship is brought about by the gift of the spouses to each other and is ordered to the mutual well-being of the spouses, as well as to the possible gift of children and their upbringing.

Catholics believe that marriage is a natural human institution, inscribed into the Natural Law by God. We respect that law. As such, this permanent and exclusive bond is considering binding, dissoluble normally only by death.

Catholics also believe that when marriage is entered into by two Christians, this natural relationship is raised to be a sacrament of Christ's love for the Church. The spouses become sacraments of Christ to each other, and their relationship a sacrament of Christ to the world. A marriage that exists between two non-Catholic Christians is considered a real marriage, which is also sacramental and lifelong.

This sacrament of Christ's faithful, sacrificial love is so important a sign for the mission of the Church, that Catholic Christians are required to be married before a witness of the Church (usually a Priest) in order to enter into a valid marriage. This is usually referred to as"the canonical form of marriage, and Catholics are obliged to observe it.

The Catholic Church views marriage as a lifelong, sacred sacrament. RCIA candidates must have their complete marital history reviewed because prior divorces, civil-only marriages, or non-Catholic ceremonies can affect full reception into the Church and must be resolved or validated before receiving sacraments.

Why Marital Status Matters

Validity of Current Marriage: The Church recognizes prior natural (civil) or sacramental marriages as binding.

If a current marriage took place outside of the Catholic Church without permission (and one partner was Catholic), it is considered legal by state law, but canonically invalid until regularized. The marriage needs to be convalidated in a Church marriage.

The Annulment Process: If a candidate or their current spouse has been previously married and divorced, any former spouse must be deceased, or the prior marriage must go through the Catholic nullity (annulment) process to determine Freedom to Marry.

Timeline Constraints: Any required annulments or marriage validations (convalidations) must typically be finished and resolved before a candidate can advance to the Rite of Election or receive sacraments at the Easter Vigil.

Key Actions for Candidates

Gather Documents such as civil marriage certificates, divorce decrees, and past baptismal or marriage certificates from any previous religious traditions. Arrange to see the priest to discuss them.

Disclose your full marital history honestly during this meeting so the Priest can start paperwork early.

Pursue Convalidation or Annulment: Work closely with your Parish Priest if your current union needs a Church blessing or if a past marriage requires a formal decree of nullity.