

SEGMENT TWENTY ONE

THEME: MYSTAGOGY – POST-BAPTISMAL THEMES

OPENING PRAYER / SCRIPTURE READING:

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:14

Acts 13: 32-33

1 John 1: 1-4

1 Corinthians 15: 3-4

Romans 4: 25; 6: 4

Galatians 3: 27

INSTRUCTORS’ SUMMARY STATEMENTS:

Mystagogy or post-baptismal catechesis is the final period of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults extends through the entire Easter season ending with Pentecost. It is a time for deepening of Easter faith, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the Christian community.

Mystagogy is the time for the newly baptized, or *neophytes*, as they are called, to reflect on the Easter Vigil experience of sacramental initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Looking back the neophytes deepen their understanding of being made a “new creation in Christ” through sacramental initiation. And looking forward they reflect on how they will live out their new life of faith in Jesus Christ through their participation in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and through daily and ongoing conversion.

At the Sunday Masses of the Easter season the entire Christian community should be encouraged to welcome the neophytes into the community, helping them to feel more at home in the community of the baptized. The neophytes should also be encouraged to discern the ways in which God is calling them to witness to their Easter faith and serve in various ministries of the Church. The Emmaus account (Luke 24: 13 – 35) reflects the abiding presence of the risen Lord with the disciples and with every community of believers.

- ❖ The Easter Vigil and the reception of the sacraments of initiation conclude the Rite of Christian Initiation. But they are only the beginning of a new life lived in the power of the redemption offered to us by the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.
- ❖ After the completion of their Christian initiation in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, the neophytes begin the period of *mystagogy* by participating in the Sunday Eucharist during the entire Easter season. They should do so in the company of their godparents and those who have assisted in their formation.
- ❖ The Eucharist is the “repeatable” sacrament of initiation that deepens the new life of grace received and confirmed in Baptism and Confirmation. Instituted by Jesus as a memorial of his death and resurrection, every Eucharist we participate in is our sharing in the Passover, the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord, that he commanded his apostles to celebrate until his return. (CCC 1337)
- ❖ Liturgical catechesis or *Mystagogy* aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ. By proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the “sacraments” to the “mysteries.” (CCC 1075) The rites of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist point to the meaning and grace received in the sacraments of initiation. (CCC 1234)
- ❖ In the Easter season the neophytes reflect on the meaning of the rites, the signs and symbols of the Easter Vigil as the visible means through which they were initiated into a new life of grace and into the Christian community of believers.
- ❖ The sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist gives us a real share in the risen life of Jesus, in his victory over sin and death. By his death Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection he opens for us the way to new life with God. (CCC 651 – 655)
- ❖ Saint Paul reminds us that just “as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) During the Easter season, the newly baptized reflect on what it means to “walk in the newness of life” in the Risen Lord.

- ❖ “The neophytes are, as the term *mystagogy* suggests, introduced into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message they have learned and above all through their experience of the sacraments they have received...they have been renewed in mind, tasted more deeply the sweetness of God’s word, received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and grown to know the goodness of the Lord. Out of this experience, which belongs to Christians and increases as it is lived, they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church and of the world.” (RCIA, no. 245)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The following questions may be used by the RCIA team to guide large or small group discussions during weekly RCIA meetings. They may also be given to the participants as a basis for personal reflection during the week.

- 1. Share your experience of sacramental initiation at the Easter Vigil.**
- 2. How did the signs and symbols and the scripture readings of the Easter Vigil deepen your understanding of the new life of faith you received in the sacraments of initiation?**
- 3. How will you continue your spiritual journey through participation in the sacraments, study of scripture and prayer, and service in the Christian community?**
- 4. How are you called to be a witness to your Easter faith in the resurrection of Christ?**

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Universal Catechism, article nos. 1234 – 1245 for Baptism; 1293 – 1301 for Confirmation; 1333 – 1336 for the Eucharist.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, nos. 244 – 251 on “The Period of Post-baptismal catechesis or *Mystagogy*.”

CLOSING PRAYER

The Creed