



## St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

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### The RCIA Process Rite of Acceptance

"Receive this sign of the cross on your forehead. It is Christ Himself who strengthens with this sign of His love. Learn to know and follow Him."  
- The Rite of Acceptance

You have now made the decision to move forward in your journey as a catechumen (not baptized) or candidate (baptized Christian or Catholic). Your choice to continue marks your "Exodus" from the Inquiry stage into a new way of life. This new life will be an answer to God's earlier call to follow Him. You will now be a part of this community, the family of God, for He has called you by name. Your acceptance into this worshiping community is marked by a formal rite, the Rite of Acceptance, which brings you a step closer to the Easter sacraments.

You may be wondering why all the pomp and circumstance to become a member of the Church. It is a necessary part of your initiation process, a part of the Church since the early days when the Christians were persecuted for their faith. We must accept you into our midst and as a community help you to follow in the footsteps of Christ. We do all of this through your sponsor. The sponsor is a representative of our community who speaks for all of us when he or she comes before the assembled people of God. During the Rite of Acceptance you will be marked with the cross, the sign of Christ's love for us. You will also receive a cross to wear as your sign that you want to find and follow Jesus. This is followed by the presentation of the word when you will be asked to "embrace the Word of God". This action has a twofold meaning: (1) that you will embrace God's word in the Scriptures and make this your way of life from this day forward; and (2) that you are embracing Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John 1:1-4, Jesus is described as the Word:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*

The final part of the Rite of Acceptance is your dismissal from the assembly, something that will be repeated weekly until Easter vigil. After the dismissal you come together to discuss the Word of God and the homily. The purpose of dismissal is to help you grow in love and knowledge of God through the Scriptures. Since you can not join our brothers and sisters in Christ at the Eucharistic table, you will be fed by God's word. After you are dismissed the assembled people continue to pray for you and participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is a prayer of thanksgiving and a celebration of the real presence of Jesus Christ, in which we share fully with one another through Holy Communion. The paschal mystery, or the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, is why we believe we are saved from the darkness which exists in the world today. Through your baptism and confirmation you will be a part of this celebration at Easter. **--Alleluia!**