

Statements made by past RCIA candidates and catechumens following Masses on 9/16 and 9/17:

Samantha

One reason I wanted to speak to you tonight was to tell you how my journey through the RCIA changed our entire family's lives. The main reason my husband Jeff and I joined was because our daughter McKenzie was attending St. Francis School last fall. I knew Jeff and I would always try to provide a safe, loving and religious environment for our children, but I was thrilled with the idea that our beliefs and practices could be incorporated at school also. Growing up as a Christian and attending a Catholic college, religion has always been a part of my life; however church was not a part of our family's routine. Jeff was neither comfortable nor knowledgeable in religion. Besides Christmas and our wedding day, the only church we attended on Sundays was "mattress" Mass. So we knew going through RCIA would enrich the entire family. I think making the choice to send McKenzie to St. Francis was God's plan. This was our chance to learn and grow together under the same religious foundation and practices. Now when McKenzie comes home teaching us stories and prayers, we can all participate together. Through our RCIA journey we made lifelong friends that we consider family, but also an incredible support system. The RCIA was a commitment that provided us the opportunity to take a break from our busy schedules every Tuesday night to reflect on our many gifts in life that we take for granted. In turn, while in the RCIA my dad was diagnosed with and died of cancer. Working with Sister Kathleen and Father Mike, and my father being Catholic, he had the opportunity to have the sacraments of healing and he is buried in the St. Francis columbarium. In the past year, St. Francis has not only shared and provided a beginning for God's love in my children's, my husband's and my lives, but a beautiful place for my dad to be remembered. We have truly been blessed that we were given this opportunity by God and know that our experience with the RCIA changed our lives forever.

Doug

Hello, my name is Doug Delaney. Last year, I sponsored my wife as she was confirmed into the Church and received Holy Eucharist for the first time. The RCIA journey was one of the most deeply moving experiences I have ever been through. As a cradle Catholic, I either forgot or was simply unaware of the beauty that lies within the truth of our faith. In a very non-intimidating manner, the RCIA program helped to educate us both in our faith as well as enkindle a true love and awe for the precious gift of the Eucharist.

The speed of our lives sometimes blinds to the nostalgia that man has for God buried deep within our hearts. As John Paul the Great put it, "Christianity is not simply a doctrine, but an encounter with God made present in our history through the incarnation of Jesus." Our experience with the RCIA was this "encounter." I strongly recommend that you consider participating in the program as either catechumen, sponsor or just to listen hi. It was a great experience for us. Thank you.

Joanne

The RCIA program at St. Francis is wonderfully run and set apart from many. I know, because before joining Sister Kathleen's class, I had attended four similar programs in four different parishes and unfortunately completed none of them. From my first class at St. Francis, I sensed that this time would be different and it was, as at Easter time, I was welcomed into full communion of the Catholic Church.

With the help of volunteers, deacons and priests, Sister Kathleen was a gentle yet strong voice leading and encouraging all of us in a transforming experience. I learned much about the faith and gained a deeper appreciation of the meaning and beauty of the many rituals of the church. My conversion to Catholicism, in important ways, not least my 28 year marriage to a Catholic, has been a blessing in my life.

Those of you who are members of St. Francis should take great pride in this special program and those of you who are considering participating this year, should know your life will be enriched by the experience, life.

Joan

Good morning. Several years ago, my husband and I moved to this area from Tucson, Arizona. During our last year in Tucson, we attended an R C I A course and upon completion, I was baptized, confirmed and made my first communion. My husband has been a Catholic all his life and I was very happy to join him in worshipping God. However, I was anxious to learn more about our faith.

Not too long after our move here, The St. Francis Sunday bulletin stated that R C IA classes would start soon and that all were welcome. Since I still had a great desire to learn more about Catholicism, I asked Sister Kathleen if there was room for us in the new class as my husband wanted also to attend. We were welcomed with open arms.

During the first meeting we were given several books and an agenda, spelling out the week-by-week courses and who would present them. This entire program was extremely well organized and presented by many talented Catholic Priests, deacons, nuns and laypersons. We were very impressed with the thoroughness of the entire program. We also were very honored to serve as sponsors for a young couple who had none. I would strongly recommend to anyone wanting to become a Catholic or if you are already baptized and confirmed, to learn more about your Church, to join the program. It is interesting, thorough and satisfying. Thank you.