

# **Becoming Catholic: Finding Rome in the American Spiritual Marketplace**

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***Introduction***  
**The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults  
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*Travels with Charley in Search of America* recounts an epic 10,000 miles road trip John Steinbeck took in 1960 from Sag Harbor in New York to the West Coast and back in his truck, Rocinante. Early in his travelogue, Steinbeck tells of an encounter with a liquor store salesman in Connecticut from whom he has just purchased “bourbon, scotch, gin, vermouth, vodka, a medium good brandy, aged applejack, and a case of beer.” Steinbeck’s conversation with the “young-old man” went like this:

“Must be quite a party.”

“No—it’s just traveling supplies.”

He helped me to carry the cartons out and I opened Rocinante’s door.

“You going in that?”

“Sure”

“Where?”

“All over.”

And then I saw what I was to see so many times on the journey—a look of longing. “Lord! I wish I could go.”

“Don’t you like it here?”

“Sure. It’s all right, but I wish I could go.”

“You don’t even know where I’m going.”

“I don’t care. I’d like to go anywhere.”<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that a land peopled by nomadic native tribes, global explorers, pilgrims, and refugees is restless in its very spirit and highly mobile in its constitution. Indeed, according to sociologist James Jasper, restlessness is definitive of American character. Journalist David Brooks’ most recent “comic sociology” also highlights how Americans “live now (and always have) in the future tense,” rather than dwelling in the past.<sup>2</sup>

The centrifugal forces that produce this restlessness cannot help but affect religious life in America. Indeed, American religion has been described as a *spiritual marketplace* in which people are religious consumers free to shop for the faiths that meet their individual tastes and preferences.<sup>3</sup> This reality both has deep roots in American society and has come into full bloom only recently.

The formal disestablishment of religion in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States encoded an open market for religion into the DNA of the country.<sup>4</sup> That open market allowed for—and perhaps even promoted—considerable religious vigor in the early decades of the new republic, including revivalism and even the birth of new, distinctively American religions like Mormonism.<sup>5</sup> Still, American *culture* remained steadfastly Protestant during this time. It wasn’t for another century that cultural disestablishment of American (Protestant) religion took place, aided in particular by internal divisions between fundamentalists and modernists within Protestantism and by waves of Catholic immigrants who challenged Protestant hegemony in politics, education, and elsewhere. Sociologist Phillip Hammond calls

this the “second disestablishment” of American religion.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, Will Herberg famously argued in the mid-1950s that a moderate pluralism existed which allowed for Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to be seen as equal contributors to the “American Way of Life.”<sup>7</sup>

In the decades following the Second World War, the moderate denominational pluralism of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* would give way to the seemingly unlimited diversity of religious options in present-day America. Religion as an integrative force and source of collective identity gave way to a more individualized approach to faith which centered on “‘personal autonomy,’ meaning both an enlarged arena of voluntary choice and an enhanced freedom from structural restraint.” This is the “third disestablishment” of American religion.<sup>8</sup> It is driven by structural and cultural changes in American society. Increasing geographic mobility (especially suburbanization), social mobility (driven by rapidly expanding higher education), and familial mobility (rising rates of divorce and blended families) all acted to loosen the connection between place, family, and inherited faith which sustained a “collective-expressive” view of the church, or what Robert Wuthnow calls a “spirituality of dwelling.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, alongside and related to these structural changes was a profound cultural change which significantly increased the centrality of individualism and individual choice. According to Robert Bellah, in earlier times, religious life was a “one possibility thing”; in modern society, it becomes an “infinite possibility thing.” Bellah and his co-authors in *Habits of the Heart* present an exemplar of the final disestablishment of American religion in the person of Sheila Larson. “I believe in God. I’m not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. My faith as carried me a long way. It’s Sheilaism. Just my own little voice.” The authors conclude that “‘Sheilaism’ somehow seems a perfectly natural expression of current American religious life.”<sup>10</sup>

This description of the move from religious identities being “ascribed” to their being “achieved” highlights the connection between this movement in the religious sphere and developments taking place in modern society generally. Not only is religious identity increasingly chosen but so are family, ethnic, and other identities. According to British social theorist Anthony Giddens, in societies based on tradition, individuals have relatively clearly defined roles; in societies in which modernity has taken root, individuals have to establish their roles for themselves. “Modernity,” Giddens writes, “is essentially a post-traditional order. The transformation of time and space, coupled with the disembedding mechanisms, propel social life away from the hold of preestablished precepts or practices.”<sup>11</sup> Or, as Karl Marx put it, somewhat more poetically, “All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air.” This is the experience of modernity.<sup>12</sup>

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Although James Jasper argues that religion doesn’t succeed at “calming the inner restlessness of American[s],”<sup>13</sup> we find that the centrifugal forces in American society do produce counterbalancing centripetal *desires*—a search for some grounding, continuity, stability. In a word, for home. Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley* again provides a telling commentary. Having traveled from his home in New York up to Maine, across the country to Washington state, down the West Coast, through the Southwest and across Texas to New Orleans, Steinbeck directed Rocinante back North, toward New York. Toward the end, he writes,

My own journey started long before I left, and was over before I returned. I know exactly where and when it was over. Near Abingdon, in the dog-leg of Virginia, at four o'clock of a windy afternoon, without warning or good-bye or kiss my foot, my journey went away and left me stranded far from home. . . . The road became an endless stone ribbon, the hills obstructions, the trees green blurs, the people simply moving figures with heads but no faces. . . . After Abingdon—nothing. The way was a gray, timeless, eventless tunnel, but at the end of it was the one shining reality—my own wife, my own house in my own street, my own bed. It was all there, and I lumbered my way toward it.<sup>14</sup>

While we do not—indeed, cannot—deny the profound dislocations and fragmentation created by modernity, it still seems premature to declare, as sociologist Wade Clark Roof does when he quotes Walter Lippman quoting Aristophanes, that when it comes to American religion “Whirl is King.”<sup>15</sup>

Modernity does create a situation of unprecedented choice. Indeed, according to Peter Berger, because “modernity pluralizes,” it also universalizes *heresy*, or choice. Berger concludes, “Modernity creates a new situation in which picking and choosing becomes an imperative.”<sup>16</sup> But, at the same time that Americans have nearly unlimited discretion to choose and an unprecedented number of options to choose from, they frequently opt for *convention*. Indeed, in *Spiritual Marketplace*, Roof himself documents that 59 percent of American baby boomers are “born-again Christians” or “mainstream believers” and only 14 percent are “metaphysical believers” or “spiritual seekers.”<sup>17</sup> Christian Smith has extensively documented this in his work

on American religion. In his recent studies of American youth, for example, Smith found that “the vast majority of American teenagers are *exceedingly conventional* in their religious identities and practices. Very few are restless, alienated, or rebellious; rather, the majority of U.S. teenagers seems basically content to follow the faith of their families with little questioning.” In explaining the vitality of American evangelicalism, Smith goes so far as to argue that choice in fact is key to greater religious commitment: “Moderns authenticate themselves through personal choice. Therefore, modern religious believers are capable of establishing stronger religious identities and commitments on the basis of individual choice than through ascription.”<sup>18</sup>

Clearly, the rise of personal choice and autonomy in the religious sphere is not related to the decline or disappearance of religion, *per se*. Early interpreters of the emerging modern social order held that the “acids of modernity” were destructive of religion, especially the supernatural beliefs that undergird it. According to Emile Durkheim, “the former gods are growing old or dying.” In Max Weber’s famous phrase, the modern world is “disenchanted.”<sup>19</sup> Although there is an element of truth in these descriptions, most contemporary religion scholars no longer take seriously the model of inevitable, linear secularization, where secularization is understood as the decline of religion, *per se*. Particularly in the United States, the question is not whether tradition will survive, for it obviously has. The question is how tradition is transformed by modern social forces, including the centrifugal forces embodied in the triple disestablishment of religion and the corresponding expansion of choice in the American spiritual marketplace, as well as the centripetal forces that arise in response.

\* \* \*

This book attempts to address this broad question by answering some more specific questions about the process by which individuals become Catholic in a late-modern society. In the first place, to paraphrase any number of our friends, *Given the choice, why would anyone want to become Catholic today?* How *do* people “find Rome” in the American spiritual marketplace? Second, once they are recruited, what process do they enter, and what does that process tell us about the character of the church they are joining? Finally, *what difference the process make* individuals and the Church as a whole?

To answer these questions we need to examine how the Catholic revolution initiated by the Second Vatican Council profoundly transformed the process by which adults are initiated into the Church today. After reviewing that history and its implications, we provide a brief overview of each of the chapters that follow.

## **VATICAN II, THE CATHOLIC REVOLUTION, AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION**

The Roman Catholic Church has been one of the most central institutions in the history of the West and, therefore, has not been immune to the developments we call modernity. Despite organizationally promoting the rise of the modern industrial order, as Max Weber demonstrated, the Church remained steadfastly opposed ideologically to important dimensions of the modern social order, such as secular democracy and religious freedom. It is important to see, therefore, that the most significant set of changes in the recent history of the Church, those introduced by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), are a partial accommodation to modernization.<sup>20</sup>

The changes introduced into the Roman Catholic Church by the Second Vatican Council

have been nothing short of revolutionary.<sup>21</sup> In promoting the opening up of the church to the world and its internal updating (a process captured by the Italian term *aggiornamento*), “the Council fathers had gleefully poured new wine into old wineskins and the wineskins had burst.”<sup>22</sup> As Jose Casanova argues, Vatican II marked an unprecedented openness to modernity.

Two council documents were particularly crucial to establishing a new understanding of church itself and its role in the modern world. *Dignitatis humanae* (the Declaration on Religious Freedom) recognized the fundamental human right to freedom of conscience and in doing so accepts the disestablishment of religion and separation of church and state. *Gaudium et spes* (the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) accepted the legitimacy of the modern secular state and advocates participation in and critical dialogue with it.<sup>23</sup> And *Lumen gentium* (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), while not ignoring the church hierarchy, promotes a radically new vision of the church as the “People of God” assisted by the ordained priesthood in realizing the “universal call to holiness.” The promulgation of these documents during the council created a moment of effervescence which led to profound changes in the church whose effects continue to be felt today and which cannot be undone without a wholesale counterrevolution.<sup>24</sup>

As significant as these changes are, the revolution that has most directly affected the average Catholic in the pews has been liturgical. These changes were inspired by the first of the four Vatican II constitutions to be promulgated by Pope Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum concilium* (the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). This document, approved by a vote of 2,147 to 4 and promulgated on 4 December 1963, famously declared, “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power

flows” (n.10). It also insisted that “the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects” (n.11). And expressing perhaps its most famous phrase, it held that “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that *fully conscious, and active participation* in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy” (n.14, emphasis added). Extending from these general principles, a number of reforms were proposed, leaving no part of the sacred liturgy untouched.

Michael McCallion and David Maines summarize some of the major changes forwarded by *Sacrosanctum concilium*:

This document represents nothing less than a radical redefinition of the methods and meanings of worship, especially with respect to ritual practices. For example, the document stated that Mass could be conducted in languages other than Latin; it emphasized the Liturgy of the Word, or Biblical sources of sacred meanings, as well as the Eucharist; it mandated that the Homily (sermons) always focus on scriptural interpretation in an attempt to bring new spiritual understandings to the laity; it embraced enculturation—that the liturgy should be flexible and can be modified to fit variations on cultural practices and modes of expression.<sup>25</sup>

As Melissa Wilde recounts in *Vatican II*, the results were immediate and dramatic:

On November 29, 1964, the first Sunday of Advent, Roman Catholics walked into their parishes around the globe and, for the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire,

participated in a mass that was given largely in their native tongue. Not only did parishioners find themselves responding to the priest in words they spoke every day, but they spoke more often than they had at any Catholic service they had ever attended. Many Catholics saw the strange sight of their priest consecrating the Eucharist facing the congregation rather than the crucifix behind the altar, along with other new practices meant to make the mass and liturgy more participatory by incorporating the “people of God.”<sup>26</sup>

And these were just the immediate changes. Soon enough the faithful would receive the Eucharist in their hand rather than on the tongue and standing rather than kneeling. They would be confronted, for better or worse, by guitar-based folk music rather than organ-based hymns. In many churches, communion rails would be removed, altars would be pushed out into the center of the congregation and surrounded by seating “in the round,” statuary would be minimized if not removed altogether, and tabernacles would be moved to side altars or entirely separate chapels. Taken together, these changes amounted to a “Copernican revolution in Catholic worship.”<sup>27</sup> A less well-known—though significant and enduring—product of *Sacrosanctum concilium* is the revision of the process by which adults are initiated in the church. Chapter III of *Sacrosanctum concilium* addresses the sacraments other than the Eucharist, including the two non-repeatable sacraments of initiation (baptism and confirmation).<sup>28</sup> Three somewhat oblique paragraphs mandate revision in the process of initiation for adults:

64. The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and

to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this, means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.

65. In mission lands it is found that some of the peoples already make use of initiation rites. Elements from these, when capable of being adapted to Christian ritual, may be admitted along with those already found in Christian tradition, according to the norm laid down in Art. 37-40, of this Constitution.

66. Both the rites for the baptism of adults are to be revised: not only the simpler rite, but also the more solemn one, which must take into account the restored catechumenate. A special Mass "for the conferring of baptism" is to be inserted into the Roman Missal.

From this mandate would come a new book of rites for adult initiation, published in 1972 in Latin under the title *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum*. This new "Order of Initiation" was introduced into the Catholic Church in the United States with a provisional English translation made available in 1974.

It was not until 1988, however, that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops published the official American English translation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)* and promulgated the "National Statutes for the Catechumenate," establishing norms for and mandating the use of the new process. Although it is not yet fully implemented in every U.S. parish, the RCIA is the officially recognized liturgical and formational process by which adults "become Catholic" today.<sup>29</sup>

Since 1988, over a million individuals in the United States have entered the church through the RCIA process. The *Official Catholic Directory* reports that, on average over the past five years in the U.S., 74,395 adults annually have been Baptized and 86,737 Received into Full Communion with the Roman Catholic Church. These 160,000-plus people becoming Catholic *annually* in themselves would comprise the 50<sup>th</sup> largest religious body in America, and Catholic converts collectively would be among the 10<sup>th</sup> largest religious bodies in America, just behind the Presbyterian Church (USA) and ahead of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.<sup>30</sup> A group this large clearly warrants attention. But the importance of understanding conversion to Roman Catholicism today is not merely numerical. This book is not just about the individuals who are becoming Catholic, but about the process they go through. The process of initiating new members, as theologian Aidan Kavanagh has written, “defines simultaneously both the Christian and the Church, and the definition is unsubordinated to any other except the gospel itself.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, the implementation of the RCIA has the potential to tell us a great deal about American Catholics and American Catholicism today.

#### TERMINOLOGICAL NOTES

(1) *Catechumenate* originally referred to the extended period of formation that individuals (called “catechumens,” that is, “hearers of the word”) entered into as preparation for baptism in the Church in the second and third century of the Christian Era.<sup>32</sup> Since the promulgation of the new Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, catechumenate specifically refers to the second major period of formation in the adult initiation process.

(1) *Ordo* is short for *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum*, the Latin text promulgated in 1972 and translated into English as “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.” This translation is somewhat confusing because the *Ordo* is actually a collection of liturgical *rites* that together constitute the *order* of initiation. We, therefore, use the term *Ordo* to refer to the RCIA as a whole as distinct from the various specific rites (e.g., rite of acceptance, rite of election).

(2) *RCIA* (in italics) refers to the officially approved English translation of the ritual text (“the vernacular typical edition”), mandated for use in the U.S. from 1 September 1988 forward.

(3) *RCIA* (not italicized) refers to any process of adult initiation that attempts to follow the steps and stages given in the *Ordo*. Some organizations, like the National Pastoral Life Center, discourage the use of this acronym because they believe it conveys a sense of the *RCIA* as another “program.” We do not share that fear and find the alternative (“the adult initiation process”) linguistically cumbersome.

### ***RESSOURCEMENT AND THE RESTORATION OF THE CATECHUMENATE***

The restoration of the catechumenate for adults, called for in the Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, is an example of what theologians call *ressourcement*: looking to the ancient church for models of liturgy and practice to be implemented in the contemporary church. It is, quite literally, a “return to the sources.” Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century French advocates of “*la nouvelle théologie*” saw *ressourcement* as an essential precondition for *aggiornamento*; the problems the church faced in the modern world were best addressed by a return to “the very headwaters of the Christian tradition.”<sup>33</sup> Although this approach looks to the past for guidance, *ressourcement* in its essence is not retrograde, but generative. It uses tradition to advance tradition, recalling the distinction between tradition as “the living faith of the dead,” and traditionalism as “the dead faith of the living.”<sup>34</sup>

*Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum* draws mainly on early sources from the Christian Church even before the time of Constantine. According to Paul Turner’s history of the catechumenate, initiation in the early church in the West centered on the theological works of Cyprian and Tertullian (ca. 150-220) in North Africa and the Apostolic Tradition as it was carried out in Rome.<sup>35</sup> The Apostolic Tradition was first composed in Greek by Hippolytus (ca.

215). Fragments turned up in other languages in Syria, North Africa, and Italy. According to the Apostolic Tradition, baptism for adults was to be preceded by a structured period of instruction or catechesis which could last as long as three years. Individuals undergoing instruction were called “catechumens” (“hearers of the word”) and the period of instruction was designated the “catechumenate.” The process also called for a number of pre-baptismal rites associated with purification and exorcism in preparation for initiation.<sup>36</sup>

At the time of Ambrose (339-397), teacher and mentor of Augustine, a year-long catechumenate was in place that appears very similar to today’s RCIA process in its periods and rites. The period of catechesis began with a public signation which designated the individual as a catechumen. Later, the catechumens submitted their names as candidates for baptism to a minister who smeared mud in their eyes. Thereafter, they were called “the elect.” During the final preparations for baptism, in the season of Lent, the focus was on prayer, exorcisms, scrutinizes, and ascetic practices. On the Sunday before Easter, the community presented the Creed orally to the elect. Just before the baptismal rite, the bishop performed the ephphetha, or “opening” rite, touching those to be baptized on the eyes and nose. After Easter, the bishop explained to the newly baptized what they had celebrated in a period of post-baptismal catechesis.

Unable to retain its integrity under the weight of the massive number of conversions to the faith after Constantine (280-337), and heavily influenced by Augustine’s (354-430) doctrine of original sin, the structured catechumenal model of initiating adults would soon disappear. According to historical theologian Maxwell Johnson, Augustine argued that the because of the fall of Adam, “the human will is not free but sick, ‘curved in upon itself’ (*incurvatus in se ipsum*) and seeks only the gratification of its own self-oriented desires (a condition of concupiscence or

lust). Hence, from the moment of birth (if not before), human beings cannot chose, will, or do what is good but are in need of the medicine of divine grace in order to choose, will, and do the good.”<sup>37</sup> Baptism of infants was seen as the salve to remove the sickness of original sin; consequently, infant baptism became a regular practice and concern with initiating adults waned.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, the process of adult initiation was brief, private, and focused on catechetical instruction, often conducted one-on-one by a priest, though sometimes in “convert classes.” *Fr. Smith Instructs Jackson*—an instruction manual by Archbishop John Francis Noll that presents doctrinal instruction in dialogue style, following the order of *The Baltimore Catechism*—was typical of the instructional material and approach of the time. (It remains in print today in a revised edition.) Upon successful completion of the catechesis, the sacraments of initiation were usually administered to individuals outside of the context of the worshipping community.

ADD ONE PARAGRAPH BRIDGE HERE: Missionary Evangelization calling the privatized, one-on-one model into question, along with the general movement in the church for liturgical renewal, and specific developments in France.

As Michael McCallion and his colleagues have observed, Vatican II mandates often “lacked definitive markers or criteria for implementation.”<sup>38</sup> In the case of the restoration of the catechumenate, this created a space for some entrepreneurial Catholics to play a leading role.

Immediately following the provisional English translation of the *Ordo* in 1974, people outside the hierarchy took the initiative in charting a path for the implementation of the RCIA in the United States. Central figures included the Belgian theologian Christiane Brusselmans and Fr. James Dunning. In 1978, Brusselmans invited a small group of individuals—including Dunning—to meet in Senanque, France to discuss the newly published rite. Later, she and Dunning welcomed some 200 initiation leaders to Estes Park, Colorado to reflect on the rite and its implementation in North America. This and another meeting in Calgary, Alberta gave birth to The North American Forum on the Catechumenate. Jim Dunning served as its founding coordinator.<sup>39</sup> Thus, by the time the U.S. bishops mandated the use of the RCIA in 1988, the Forum was already well-established as the leading organization fostering its “full and faithful” implementation.

Taken together, the “General Introduction,” the ritual text itself (including the combined rites approved specifically for use in the U.S.), and the U.S. bishops conference’s “National Statutes for the Catechumenate” paint a general picture of the revised/restored adult initiation process. The broad outlines of the process as it applies to unbaptized adults (and children of catechetical age) are captured in the Table 1.<sup>40</sup>

This overview table, however, is only a point of departure. Like many church documents, the formal texts of the RCIA do not constitute a road map for implementation. Much of our work in the book and elsewhere seeks to understand that variation in implementation from parish to parish.<sup>41</sup>

**TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF RCIA PROCESS**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Length/Timing</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Period 1	Evangelization and Precatechumenate	Unspecified, varies by individual need	Ensure that “the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidates.” Look for “the first stirrings of repentance, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church, and some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with a priest or with members of the community” (RCIA, no. 42).
<i>Ritual Transition</i>	<i>Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens</i>	<i>Whenever inquirer is ready</i>	<i>During a liturgy, inquirers declare their intentions to continue their faith journey; the church welcomes them as persons who intend to become its members</i>
Period 2	Catechumenate	May be “several years” (RCIA, no. 7); “should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation” (NS, #6)	To give the candidates “suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life.” The four means of achieving this are: catechesis, community, liturgy, and service (RCIA, no. 75).
<i>Ritual Transition</i>	<i>Rite of Election</i>	<i>Sunday prior to Ash Wednesday</i>	<i>Held at Cathedral, presided over by ordinary (bishop or archbishop)</i>
Period 3	Purification and Enlightenment	Lent (40 days)	This is “a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they search their own consciences and do penance” (RCIA, no. 139).
<i>Ritual Transition</i>	<i>Rites of Initiation</i>	<i>Easter Vigil</i>	<i>Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, in the same liturgy and in this order</i>
Period 4	Mystagogia	Eastertime (50 days)	Sometimes called the period of “postbaptismal catechesis” because it seeks to lead the newly initiated more deeply into reflection on the experience of the sacraments and membership in the community.

NOTES: This is the normative vision of the process specified in the ritual text and the US bishops’ *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, promulgated in 1988. This table was inspired by Ron Lewinski, *Welcoming the New Catholic* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1983), pp. 12-13.

The aftermath of a revolution can often involve more struggle—a struggle to define the meaning of the revolution itself and the changes it embodies. Not surprisingly, then, Vatican II has been the source of considerable conflict over the past thirty-plus years. “Liberals” and “conservatives” in the church continue to fight over the consequences and, indeed, the very meaning of the Council.<sup>42</sup> These days, aging liberals—what Dominican priest Paul Philibert calls “Vatican II Fundamentalists”—frequently lament the failure of the church to live up to “the vision of the Council,” while church conservatives lament, in Ralph McInerny’s phrase, “what went wrong with Vatican II.”<sup>43</sup>

Given these serious divisions in the church, noted above, we do well to recognize how widespread is the support one product of the Council: the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Although its implementation is not above criticism, the ideal of adult faith formation embodied in the RCIA finds praise in all corners of the church. As Robert Duggan and Maureen Kelley have put it, “At once extremely conservative and traditional, yet forward-looking and progressive, the *Order* has proven to be one of the most dramatic ‘surprises’ of the Second Vatican Council.”<sup>44</sup> The RCIA process has also become an influential model for other Christian traditions. According to the ecumenical North American Association for the Catechumenate, “During the past two decades non-Catholic Christian churches have slowly begun to understand the catechumenate as a process of faith formation and spiritual development for twenty-first century people who have little or no previous association with the Christian faith.” Among the denominations that have already implemented a catechumenal process of initiation are the Anglican Church of Canada, Episcopal Church USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Mennonite Church USA, Presbyterian Church (USA),

Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church.<sup>45</sup>

The RCIA as a model of adult faith formation has also been influential in the Roman Catholic Church itself. *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, a 1992 document prepared by the International Council for Catechesis, declares, “According to ancient tradition, every form of catechesis should be inspired by the catechumenal model. Precisely because the catechesis of adults aims at living the Christian life in all its fullness and integrity, the process outlined in the catechumenate seems the most appropriate model and should be encouraged everywhere” (no. 66). This sentiment is elaborated in the *General Directory for Catechesis* published in 1997 by the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy: “The concept of the baptismal catechumenate as *a process of formation and a true school of faith* offers post-baptismal catechesis dynamic and particular characteristics: comprehensiveness and integrity of formation; its gradual character expressed in definite stages; its connection with meaningful rites, symbols, biblical and liturgical signs; its constant reference to the Christian community. Post-baptismal catechesis . . . does well . . . to draw inspiration from ‘this preparatory school for the Christian life’” (no. 91).

Although the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is “the most mature fruit of all the liturgical reforms mandated by the Second Vatican Council,”<sup>46</sup> very little is known empirically about it. For at least a decade after the publication of the Latin text of the *Rite*, the RCIA process it was not widely implemented in American parishes. For example, when Dean Hoge published *Converts, Dropouts, Returnees* in 1981, the RCIA had not been implemented in any of the parishes he studied. After 1988, when the US Catholic Bishops issued national statutes for and mandated use of the RCIA process, its use expanded rapidly. By the mid-1990s, over 60 percent of parishes were using the RCIA process. At this point, the RCIA process is well-enough

established that some assessment can be made of its contribution to the life of individual Catholics and Catholic parishes, yet it remains new enough that any empirical assessment contributes immensely to our knowledge and understanding.

In October 2000, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops released *Journey to the Fullness of Life*, a report on the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the US based on a three-year study overseen by Dean Hoge and Rev. Dr. Robert O'Donnell. Like most good research, the study raises as many questions as it answers. By collecting diocesan-level data on the implementation of the RCIA—reporting the percentage of parishes in the dioceses that had implemented various aspects of the process—the study reveals the RCIA to be widely but unevenly implemented. Unfortunately, by neglecting the parish as a unit of analysis, the study does not allow for a systematic investigation of the relationship between the implementation of the RCIA in different parishes (the organizational-level) and the experiences of converts in those parishes (the individual-level).

Moreover, by relying exclusively on survey data, the NCCB study neglects what is arguably the central aspect of the RCIA process: its *liturgical* dimension. The RCIA is a product of the Second Vatican Council's movement for liturgical renewal and the process views the formation and initiation of new Catholics as a liturgical process. Therefore, understanding Catholic conversion today requires understanding its ritual dimension.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK**

This book examines the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Catholic conversion in the United States today through a comprehensive case study of the Roman Catholic Diocese of

Fort Wayne-South Bend in Indiana. At the heart of our research is fieldwork we conducted in six parishes from August 2001 through June 2002. During that time, we attended hundreds of meetings and dozens of rites, met scores of individuals who were considering becoming Catholic, and recorded more than a thousand typed, single-spaced pages of observational notes.

This ethnographic data is complemented by closed-ended surveys and open-ended interviews with individuals in the RCIA process. In fall 2000 and again in fall 2001 we collected baseline qualitative and quantitative data on 224 individuals who were in the early stages of the RCIA process in 30 different parishes in the diocese. In the summer of 2001 and 2002, we collected a complete second wave of data on 167 of these individuals. Of the 167 individuals for whom we have two complete waves of data, 159 had completed the RCIA process.

Finally, we collected organizational-level data on parishes through closed-ended surveys and open-ended interviews with individuals responsible for the RCIA process. We have quantitative data on 53 of the 78 parishes in the diocese (69 percent), and qualitative data on 33 parishes. Quantitative data exists for all 30 parishes from which we have individual respondents, allowing us to conduct analyses that compare individual changes to organizational characteristics.

The book is organized according to the structure of the RCIA process. Each chapter begins with a description one of the major periods or transitions in the process, drawn from our field research, and investigates the analytical issues that are evident in that aspect of the process.

### *Period of Evangelization*

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THIS PERIOD GOES HERE**

## ***Chapter 1: The Circumstantial Convert as a Moral Actor***

Most people are recruited to religious groups by someone they know, most frequently a spouse, but sometimes a friend or co-worker. This is Rodney Stark's well-established network theory of conversion,<sup>47</sup> and it does an excellent job explaining the mechanisms by which people are recruited to the Catholic Church. In the 1940s and 50s, Joseph Fichter found that 75 percent of converts came to the church through interfaith marriages. Two decades later, Ruth Wallace found a similar pattern among Catholic converts in Toronto, Canada. They were overwhelmingly likely to have Catholic spouses or to be engaged to Catholics. Some also had Catholic friends. Dean Hoge has observed that, even though pressure for one spouse to convert in an interfaith marriage has gone down over the years, family remains the most important factor in predicting conversion to Catholicism.<sup>48</sup> In this sense, converts to Roman Catholicism in America today are products of their circumstances, not religious seekers or even consumers shopping for faith.

Although this theory accounts for the *mechanisms* of recruitment, it accounts less well for the *motivations* for conversion. After all, some people convert prior to marriage and some after decades of marriage. What explains the difference? This chapter answers this question by looking at the decision to convert not as a rational choice by individuals seeking to maximize their religious utility or to conserve their household religious capital, but as a moral choice by individuals seeking to align their actions with broader moral worldviews and belief systems. In developing this alternative to rational choice theories of conversion we draw on the work of Christian Smith (*Moral, Believing Animals*) and Hans Joas (*The Creativity of Action*).

## *Period of the Catechumenate*

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THIS PERIOD GOES HERE**

### *Chapter 2: Producing Catholicism*

Of course the initiation of new members is never just about the individuals involved. The process of initiation presents a normative vision of the Church itself. The way in which the RCIA process is implemented in different parishes, therefore, tells us a great deal about diversity and unity in Catholicism today.

The dominant story of Roman Catholicism in America is one of conflict and division, and this story has been extensively chronicled in studies of the divergent beliefs and attitudes of individual Catholics.<sup>49</sup> Catholicism in America, it seems, is dividing up into two great, hostile camps: liberals (modernists, progressives, integrationists) and conservatives (traditionalists, orthodox, restorationists). Liberal American Catholics tend to embrace modernity, especially ideas of freedom and democratic authority, and look to “the internal measure of experience to validate belief.” By contrast, conservative Catholics in America adopt a “posture of resistance to modernity,” especially what modernity entails for doctrinal truth and hierarchy, and look to the magisterium of the church as an external source of authority in matters of faith.<sup>50</sup>

These divisions in the Catholic house do not simply exist between individual believers; they also manifest themselves in differences at the parish level. The “de facto congregationalism” characteristic of American religion in general is evident on Sunday morning when Catholics across America “float” from their geographically-defined parish to their parish-of-choice, often passing several other Catholic churches on the way.<sup>51</sup> Catholics choose

their parishes because Catholic parishes have their own local cultures and identities through which official church policies are interpreted.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, one of the major conclusions of the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life in the 1980s was that “relative to the life of the rest of the church, parishes seem to have a life of their own.”<sup>53</sup> As Catholics increasingly ignore their geographical parish in favor of their chosen parish, we see increasing homogeneity within and heterogeneity between Catholic parishes. Just as individual Catholics can be classified as more modernist or traditional, liberal or conservative, so too can Catholic parishes.

These differences in parish identity should crystalize particularly clearly in the normative vision of Catholicism presented in the initiation process. As Dorothy Bass notes, efforts to transmit religious traditions often look no different than other forms of schooling.<sup>54</sup> This is the case in the RCIA. In addition to the liturgical rites which move individuals through the process, converts also meet on a regular basis as a group for “catechesis”: instruction in the faith. Studying the normative vision of the Church embodied in this aspect of the RCIA involves understanding both the explicit and hidden curriculum (to borrow from the sociology of education)—what to believe and how to believe, the materials chosen to present the faith and the manner in which the faith is presented.

### *Period of Purification and Enlightenment*

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THIS PERIOD GOES HERE**

### *Chapter 3: Sacrifice and Therapy*

Where Chapter 2 examines what the Church is, Chapter 3 considers what it isn't.

Having considered the normative vision of the church expressed in the RCIA process, we undertake the more difficult process of studying what was not expressed. That is, we are examining not what we saw but what we didn't see in the process, and considering the significance of that.

As political scientist Michael Budde has argued, contemporary religious worship and formation must conform to secular and especially capitalist culture. American culture transforms Christian discipleship, regardless of the type of parish we look at. Protestant theologian David Wells has described religion in contemporary society as “weightless.” Weightlessness, Wells writes, is “the common form in which modernity rearranges all belief in God.”<sup>55</sup> The metaphor suggests that religion does not bear heavily on believers. In our observations, we found this to be true over and over. Sacrifice—so dominant a theme in the Judeo-Christian scriptures and traditions—is unknown to most moderns, at least as a religious principle. Our interviews with individuals in the RCIA process yielded similar results as those conducted by Tom Landy with current Catholics of various ages in Boston. Landy found his respondents essentially mute when it came to articulating the significance of sacrifice.<sup>56</sup>

Not surprisingly, into this void rushes the therapeutic ethos which is an American lingua franca.

### *Rites of Initiation*

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RITES GOES HERE**

#### *Chapter 4: Ritual and the Common Ground of Experience*

Chapter 4 is the only chapter not centered on one of the periods of the *Ordo* but on a ritual transition: the rite of initiation themselves. As such, it shines a light on ritual and the (potential) common ground of experience.

“New paradigm” attempts to understand the vitality of the American “religious economy,” particularly at the level of congregations, have helped to refocus some sociological attention on ritual and experience. For example, in her recent work on congregations, Nancy Ammerman has argued that “transcendent experiences and ideas about God are central to the values congregations protect and disseminate among their members.” They do this through ritual: “worship services are intended as times when human presence meets divine, and that encounter can occasionally be transformative.”<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Donald Miller writes, “It is the experience of the holy (i.e., the sacred, the numinous, God) that distinguishes religious worship from experiences at a rock concert or an evening at the local bar or nightclub.” Miller suggests that “new paradigm” churches offer a contemporary style of worship that is more able to provide access to profound, vital, life-changing, affective experience of the sacred than the archaic rituals of mainline churches.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, recognizing that ritual and experience are inherently linked, Victor Turner (1972:392) suggests that “there is really no contradiction between liturgical archaism and religious creativity: they are two sides of the one liminal coin.”<sup>59</sup> It is at least possible, then, that an ancient ritual process like the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults can evoke the types of religious experiences that are likely to lead to a deep experience of religious conversion and enduring commitment for individuals.

Rituals do not only affect individuals, though. As Ammerman (1987:54) has suggested,

ritual “is meant to express the unifying vision of the congregation. All rituals help to create the community that enacts them.”<sup>60</sup> At first glance, it seems inappropriate to use the term “community” to describe a church divided over sexual ethics, peace and social justice, and the role of women in the church. But, in fact, there is some evidence that the experience of ritual is a major source of unity among Catholics. Michele Dillon’s recent work on Catholic identity documents a broad and fertile common ground of commitment to core symbols, meanings, and memories in the Catholic tradition between “pro-change” and conservative Catholics. This communal integration of individuals who are otherwise doctrinally polarized is frequently the result of participation in Catholic liturgy, notably the sacramental occasions tied to rites of passage such as initiation and marriage.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Andrew Greeley has gone so far as to claim that there is among Catholics a “liturgical imagination” that is constituted by “experiences, images, rituals, and stories” that “tenaciously cling to Catholics and bind most of them to their heritage.”<sup>62</sup> Thus, at the same time we see diversity in normative understandings of the church expressed in the initiation process, we find that drawing Catholic converts deeply into the liturgical life and imagination of the church affects not only their individual lives, but bridges divisions within the church as well.

### *Period of Mystagogia*

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THIS PERIOD GOES HERE**

### *Chapter 5: Becoming Catholic: Does the RCIA Process Make a Difference?*

This chapter addresses two related questions: Do individuals who participate in the RCIA

process in the Catholic Church experience conversion? If so, is the extent of conversion explained by aspects of the RCIA process itself? In other words, does the RCIA process make a difference?

To answer this question, we employ a quasi-experimental, pre-test/post-test design—using data collected from individuals early in their involvement in the RCIA process and after their initiation at the Easter Vigil—to concretely identify the extent of conversion in different domains of religiosity over the course of the RCIA process. Our organizational-level data allow us to relate differences in the extent to which individuals experience conversion to parish differences in the extent to which the RCIA process is fully implemented. Thus, we are able to assess directly the effect of differences in the implementation of the RCIA on the extent of conversion to Catholicism.

We find, in fact, that the RCIA process *does* make a difference. The more fully implemented the RCIA process is in a parish, the more ecclesial and spiritual conversion individuals experience as they go through that process.

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In the end, ours is a case study. It is not designed to causally explain nominal changes in religious affiliation in a representative sample of Americans. Existing statistically sophisticated work do a fine job of this. Rather, we look into the mess that lies beneath the surface level of religious affiliation, at the process and meaning of finding Rome in the American spiritual

marketplace. We find that “Catholic” is not just a label to be applied or a box to be checked on a survey, but as an identity to be achieved. One that is chosen or that one is called to, that is forged and negotiated in a lengthy, formal initiation process, and that continues to grow and change—or perhaps to wither or be discarded—over time.

## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> John Steinbeck, *Travels With Charley in Search of America* (New York: Viking, 1962), p. 24.
- <sup>2</sup> James Jasper, *Restless Nation: Starting Over in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); David Brooks, *On Paradise Drive: How We Live Now (And Always Have) in the Future Tense* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004).
- <sup>3</sup> Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Richard Cimino and Don Lattin, *Shopping for Faith: American Religion in the New Millennium* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).
- <sup>4</sup> R. Stephen Warner has argued that an open market for religion is constitutive of American religious life. See his "Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1993):1044-93.
- <sup>5</sup> Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).
- <sup>6</sup> Phillip Hammond, *Religion and Personal Autonomy: The Third Disestablishment in America* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 9-10. Drawing on Robert Handy, *A Christian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).
- <sup>7</sup> Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*(New York: Doubleday, 1955).
- <sup>8</sup> Hammond, pp. 10-11; Roof and McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future*, p. 33-39.
- <sup>9</sup> "Collective-expressive" is from Hammond, *Religion and Personal Autonomy*. See also Robert Wuthnow's distinction between the earlier "spirituality of dwelling" and contemporary "spirituality of seeking" in *After Heaven: Spirituality in American Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
- <sup>10</sup> Robert Bellah, "Religious Evolution," in *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 40; Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 221.
- <sup>11</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 20. See also David Gauntlett's synopsis of Giddens' work in *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002).
- <sup>12</sup> Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," pp. 469-500 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), p. 476; Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988).
- <sup>13</sup> Jasper, *Restless Nation*, p. 213.
- <sup>14</sup> Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*, pp. 243-244.
- <sup>15</sup> Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*, p. 294.
- <sup>16</sup> Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1980), pp. 14, 25. Berger notes that the word heresy "comes from the Greek verb *hairein*, which

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means ‘to choose.’ A *haireisis* originally meant, quite simply, the taking of a choice” (pp. 24-25). At the same time, we should recognize, with Sean McCloud, that “not all groups and classes of people are equally affected by late modernity” and not all have equal access to the same range of resources upon which to make choices. See Sean McCloud, “Liminal Subjectivities and Religious Change: Circumscribing Giddens for the Study of Contemporary American Religion,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 22 (October 2007):295-309, p. 303. On class inequality and choice, see Beverly Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*, p. 178.

<sup>18</sup> Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 120; Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 104.

<sup>19</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Karen Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), p. 429; Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” pp. 129-156 in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 139.

<sup>20</sup> John Seidler and Katherine Meyer, *Conflict and Change in the Catholic Church* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

<sup>21</sup> Michel Dillon, *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith, and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Revolution: New Wine, Old Wineskins, and the Second Vatican Council* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 72-73.

<sup>24</sup> Greeley, *The Catholic Revolution*, chapter 1. Melissa Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), chapter 1. *Lumen gentium* was approved by a 2,151 to 5 vote of the bishops and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964. *Dignitatis humanae* was approved by a vote of 2,308 to 70 and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965. *Gaudium et spes* was approved by a vote of 2,307 to 75 and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 8, 1965. These and other conciliar documents are available on the Vatican website ([http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm)) or in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar & Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1975).

<sup>25</sup> Michael McCallion and David Maines, “The Liturgical Social Movement in the Vatican II Catholic Church.” *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change* 21 (1999):125-49, p. 129.

<sup>26</sup> Wilde, *Vatican II*, p. 1. Wilde also notes, “Though it was fifth in the bound copies of the preparatory documents the bishops received prior to the Council, progressives quickly set about making sure that it became the first issue addressed by the Council” (p. 20).

<sup>27</sup> Peter Steinfels, *A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2003), p. 168. Michael McCallion notes that the environmental changes are seen by some as a “Protestantization of Catholic church buildings” (“Lay and Professional Views on Tabernacle Location in Catholic Parishes,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 29 [December 2000]:717-46, p. 740). One priest we interviewed characterized his newly built church as a “nondenominational chapel in a retirement home.” Notable criticisms of these developments are Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can’t Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1990) and Michael Rose, *Ugly As Sin: Why They Changed Our Churches from Sacred Places to Meeting Spaces and How We Can Change Them Back Again* (Manchester, NH:

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Sophia Institute Press, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> The Eucharist is also considered a sacrament of initiation, though it differs from these other two in being repeatable.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Erickson, *Late Have I Loved Thee: Stories of Religious Conversion and Commitment in Later Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Out of 170 denominations in the United States which reported membership data to the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 2000*, edited by Eileen Lindner (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000). In 1995, a national survey of American Catholics who were at least 18 years of age found that 6.3 percent had converted to Roman Catholicism. Assuming that this proportion has declined only slightly in the past ten years, by the end of the second millennium over three million adults in the United States were Catholic converts. See “National Catholic Pluralism Project, 1995” survey, James D. Davidson, Principal Investigator. Data available from the American Religion Data Archive <[www.thearda.com/archive/natcath2.html](http://www.thearda.com/archive/natcath2.html)>.

<sup>31</sup> Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 145. See also Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1969) and Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960 [1908]).

<sup>32</sup> Maxwell Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), p. 73

<sup>33</sup> D’Ambrosio concludes, “*Ressourcement* theology was, in essence, a deft exercise in the hermeneutics of tradition that successfully navigated between the Scylla of archaism and the Charybdis of modernism.” Marcellino D’Ambrosio, “*Ressourcement* Theology, *Aggiornamento*, and the Hermeneutics of Tradition.” *Communio* 18 (Winter 1991). <[www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library.html](http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library.html)>. Accessed 21 October 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 252.

<sup>35</sup> See Paul Turner *The Hallelujah Highway: A History of the Catechumenate* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2000), p. 37.

<sup>36</sup> Johnson *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, p. 87.

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, p. 154.

<sup>38</sup> Michael McCallion, David Maines, and Steven Wolfel, “Policy as Practice: First Holy Communion as a Contested Situation,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 25 (October 1996):300-326, p. 302.

<sup>39</sup> James Dunning, *Echoing God’s Word* (Arlington, VA: North American Forum on the Catechumenate, 1993), p. xix; “The Rite Leadership,” *Church* 16 (Winter 2000), p. 4; and information provided to us in 2004 by James Schellman, who was executive director of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate at the time.

<sup>40</sup> For a similar table that breaks the process down by baptismal status and whether or not the candidate is catechized, see Thomas Morris, *The RCIA: Transforming the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 59. See Robert Duggan and Maureen Kelly, *The Christian Initiation of Children: Hope for the Future* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), for a consideration of the initiation of children of catechetical age.

<sup>41</sup> David Yamane and Sarah MacMillen, with Kelly Culver, *Real Stories of Christian Initiation: Lessons for and from the RCIA* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2006).

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- <sup>42</sup> Mary Jo Weaver, ed., *What's Left? Liberal American Catholics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), and Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).
- <sup>43</sup> Philibert includes himself in the fundamentalist category (personal conversation); Ralph McInerny, *What Went Wrong with Vatican II: The Catholic Crisis Explained* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1998).
- <sup>44</sup> Duggan and Kelly, *The Christian Initiation Of Children*, p. 6.
- <sup>45</sup> Home page of the North American Association for the Catechumenate <[www.catechumenate.org](http://www.catechumenate.org)>. See also Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*.
- <sup>46</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, p. 296.
- <sup>47</sup> Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects," pp. 307-24 in *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
- <sup>48</sup> Joseph H. Fichter, *Social Relations in an Urban Parish* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); Ruth A. Wallace, "A Model of Change of Religious Affiliation," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 14 (1975):345-55; Dean Hoge, *Converts, Dropouts, Returnees: A Study of Religious Change among Catholics* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981).
- <sup>49</sup> William D'Antonio, James Davidson, Dean Hoge, and Mary Gautier, *American Catholics Today: New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); William D'Antonio, James Davidson, Dean Hoge, and Katherine Meyer, *American Catholics: Gender, Generation, and Commitment* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001); Davidson, James, *The Search for Common Ground: What Unites and Divides Catholic American* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1997); William D'Antonio, James Davidson, Dean Hoge, and Ruth Wallace, *Laity, American and Catholic: Transforming the Church* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1996).
- <sup>50</sup> Mary Jo Weaver, "Preface," pp. ix-xiv in *What's Left? Liberal American Catholics*, Mary Jo Weaver, ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. xi-xii; Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995).
- <sup>51</sup> R. Stephen Warner, "The Place of the Congregation in the Contemporary American Religious Configuration," pp. 54-99 in *American Congregations*, James Wind and James Lewis, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
- <sup>52</sup> Michael McCallion, David Maines, and Susan Wolfel, "Policy as Practice: First Holy Communion as a Contested Situation," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 25 (1996):300-26, p. 302.
- <sup>53</sup> Joseph Gremillion and Jim Castelli, *The Emerging Parish: The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Life Since Vatican II* (San Francisco: Harper & Row), p. 47.
- <sup>54</sup> Dorothy Bass, "Congregations and the Bearing of Traditions," pp. 169-191 in *American Congregations*, James Wind and James Lewis, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 178.
- <sup>55</sup> Michael Budde, *The (Magic) Kingdom of God: Christianity and Global Culture Industries* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); David Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Realities of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 90.

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas Landy, "A Place for Sacrifice: American Catholics and the Religious Value of Sacrifice" (doctoral dissertation, Boston University, August 2000).

<sup>57</sup> Nancy Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), pp. 370, 55.

<sup>58</sup> Donald Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 90, 25.

<sup>59</sup> Victor Turner, "Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas," *Worship* 46 (1972):390-412, p. 392.

<sup>60</sup> Ammerman, *Congregation and Community*, p. 54.

<sup>61</sup> Michele Dillon, *Catholic Identity*, pp. 206-11.

<sup>62</sup> Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).