

X (d): RCIA: Christian Initiation

THESIS: Christian initiation “is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful.” (RCIA, *Introduction*, 4). The examination of such initiation is studied properly within the liturgical context that the Church has provided in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

I. Period of Evangelization

A. Anthropology

1. human beings as social
2. coming together in a social context part and parcel of humanity
3. human as receptor

B. Seed of the Logos

1. humanity’s link with God through creation
2. humanity disposition to the divine by virtue of being created in the image and likeness

C. Initiative of God

1. the movement toward initiation is the result of the gratuitous and free offer by God
2. human cooperation
3. response to the word
 - a. “... faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” (Rom 10:17)

II. Period of Catechumenate

A. Proclamation of the Word

1. Basic kerygmas
 - a. I Cor 15: 3-6 - the person of Jesus Christ
 - i. Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures**
 - ii. He was buried**
 - iii. He was raised in accordance with the scriptures**
 - iv. He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve**
 - b. I Cor 11: 23-26 -the Eucharist
 - i. took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”**
 - ii. in the same way, took the cup, saying “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”**
 - iii. proclamation of the Lord’s death until He comes.**
2. paravdosis (handed on, I Cor 15:3, I Cor 11:23)
 - a. ‘that which is transmitted,’ that is, the content
 - b. divine authority
 - c. ‘fixed formula’
3. Catechesis
 - a. echoing the word of God

b. instruction in the mysteries

B. Faith

1. Relational
 - a. response/acceptance to the word that is preached
 - b. relationship with the Lord and others within the community of believers
 - c. developing into adherence to tenets of belief.

III. Period of Purification and Enlightenment

A. Evidence of metanoia (conversion)

1. change of heart
2. all levels of human existence
3. such conversion made possible by grace and the cooperation of human will

B. Sacramental

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Eucharist

IV. Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

A. Experiential

1. deepening of the experience of the mysteries (Sacraments)
2. no set period - essentially, a way of Christian living

V. Bibliography

A. Sources

National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Sharing the Light of Faith (National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States)*. Washington: Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 1979.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Translation prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy and Bishops' Committee on Liturgy. In *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Study Edition*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1988.

B. Literature

Behm, J. "metanoia." in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. page 639. eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (One Volume editor, Geoffrey W. Bromiley) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985.

Büchsel, F. "paradosis." in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. page 168. eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (One Volume editor, Geoffrey W. Bromiley) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985.

- Bultmann, R. "pisteuo." in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. page 849. eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (One Volume editor, Geoffrey W. Bromiley) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985.
- Di Berardino, Angelo, ed. *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1992. S.v. "Catechumen, Catechumenate" and "Initiation," both by A. Hamman.
- Dujarier, Michel. *A History of the Catechumenate*. Translated by Edward J. Haasl. New York: William H. Sadlier, Inc., 1979.
- Kavanagh, Aidan. *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation*. New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1978.
- Rahner, Karl, SJ., editor. *Encyclopedia of Theology - The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975. S.v. "Catechesis," by Jaques Audinet.
- Study Text 10 - Christian Initiation of Adults: A Commentary*. Prepared by the United States Catholic Conference. Washington: Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 1985.
- Walsh, Christopher J. "Adult Initiation in the Catholic Church." Chapter in *Adult Initiation*. Edited by Donald A. Withey. Nottingham: Grove Books Limited, 1989.