

## WHO DOES NOT BELONG IN THE CATECHUMENATE?

2) List of various groups that are not addressed by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and thus belong in a Process Other Than the Catechumenate (RCIA):

### **THEY DO NOT BELONG IN THE CATECHUMENATE:**

The (RCIA) catechumenate is a process of initiation and conversion centered on the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Its steps and periods are designed for the welfare of catechumens and candidates proper, whose progress in faith it is meant to serve. Although its principles and structure may give inspiration to other processes and programs in the Church, the catechumenate itself must maintain a clear identity, and should not be asked to take on tasks for which it was not intended.

The implementation of the catechumenate comes at a time when the Church is increasingly aware of the pastoral and catechetical needs of many of its members. These needs are real and important, but should be addressed by other means.

- A. **Fully Initiated Alienated Catholics** who are interested in exploring the possibility of a return to the Church and the practice of their faith do not belong in a catechumenate. Their experiences of the Church, their questions, and their pastoral needs are different from those of catechumens and candidates, and require a different pastoral response on the part of the Church.
- B. **Fully Initiated Adult Catholics Seeking Updating** or a deeper knowledge of their faith belong in a parish adult faith formation program or a faith renewal process, not the catechumenate. Adult faith formation programs should be available through the local parish. If Catholics who want to deepen their faith are also interested in becoming involved in the catechumenate through a particular ministry, such as hospitality or sponsorship that is another matter and should be decided based on the person's gifts and desire to serve.
- C. **Adult Catholics Seeking Confirmation Only** belong, not in the catechumenate, but in a program of preparation for the reception of Confirmation. Although these adults may have received only a rudimentary catechesis during their Catholic upbringing, they are nonetheless different from the "Baptized but Uncatechized Adults" who have received no Christian formation, and typically have never participated in the Eucharist. Normally adults seeking Confirmation only should receive an appropriate catechesis and be confirmed by the bishop.

Because of the variety of ages at which the sacrament of Confirmation is administered in the Church at present, and because of the mobility of our society, an increasing number of young Catholics "fall through the cracks" of the sacramental system and reach adulthood without having been confirmed. Their lack of Confirmation frequently goes unnoticed until they prepare for marriage. When large numbers of unconfirmed Catholics seeking marriage are introduced into the catechumenate, they alter the focus of the process and create time pressures that are not appropriate for a conversion journey. Therefore it is especially important that the needs of such candidates be considered separately.