

# The Weave

June 2011

Volume 15 Issue 3

A Quarterly Newsletter of St. Mary Parish Family, Franklin MA

## RCIA at St. Mary's

by Eileen Groncki

*"Go into the whole world teaching the Gospel and baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

### What is RCIA?

RCIA – stands for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It was designed to aid adults to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church.

RCIA can be traced as far back as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century so it is not new. In the earliest centuries of the Church, adult Baptism was the norm. The early Church invited people who were interested in Christianity to join the community on a journey in faith. Those who accepted the invitation became the candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation ... Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (Holy Communion). The candidates were also called catechumens and entered into a step-by-step process called catechumenate. This process of information and instruction lasted 1 to 3 years, or more. Joining the Church in the early centuries was no easy matter.

By the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the catechumenate process had virtually disappeared. The Sacrament of Initiation, (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist), became three sacraments, celebrated at separate times. Soon adult Baptism declined, infant Baptism became norm, and the



RCIA candidates Jessie Handley, Matthew Handley, Andrew Thornton, Lucienne Obou, Jourdan Bua, Julie Jarosz, Jeff Jarosz at the Easter Vigil.

RCIA as practiced in the early Church became a lost art.

In the period following World War II, the church began to experience a need for a fresh approach to welcoming new members. Church leaders reached into the Church's rich heritage and began to apply the ancient catechumenate process to modern situations.

This return to former practice was motivated by a desire to assure greater stability among converts coming into the Church. The more lengthy instruction and formation allowed greater time for the faith of

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## Walking in His Love

by Joan McGuire

The days after His resurrection and before His ascension were filled with examples of Christ's unconditional love for us.

In the garden calling Mary Magdalene by name was so comforting to her (John 20:11-16). Anyone who has gotten up with a child having a nightmare or being frightened by thunder knows the soothing effect of just whispering their name. The feeling the child has is that they are personally loved and protected.

As the disciples walked the seven miles to Emmaus they talked between themselves of the sorrowful and frightening things that had happened on the previous days. How often have we listened to a heart broken person telling the painful happening over and over again until they are exhausted. Jesus walked with them. He listened intently to their fears and discouragement. He comforted their minds and hearts. Their hearts were set on fire by his gentle personal words. He gave them hope. "And they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24:13-35) When people tell me that they do not have to go to Mass but can pray anywhere I think of this scene. Yes, we can and should pray everywhere but to

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## Families' Corner

by John M. Ristaino

It is Commencement season as I sit and write this article. In the past two weeks I have had the honor and privilege of sitting through two sets of Commencement events. With each there have been speeches, celebratory honors, and moments of reflection. These events came with fanfare, adulations and tears. They are truly beginnings! They are also ends. These events celebrate change. And change is what we celebrate at Pentecost and in the Sacrament of Confirmation. We are changed by the Holy Spirit and such change carries with the call to live differently and to start new.

Commencement and Pentecost are indeed very similar. We hear the Commencement speakers encouraging and advising the soon-to-be-new graduates to go out and to do great things with their newly achieved diplomas and degrees. And in the same way we are called by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to do the very same.

On May 15 Salve Regina University held its 2011 Commencement. Dr. Jill Biden, the wife of the United States Vice President Joseph Biden, was the Commencement Speaker. In concluding her remarks she said; "You owe it to your selves, to your professors, to your school. You owe it to the families who are just dying to hug you right now, and to the friends all around you. Keep the fire lit - and lit brightly-so others can follow the trails you blaze."

It struck me as I listened that her words apply to us as Catholics as well. And I began to ponder how best to keep the fire of the Holy Spirit, which I received in Confirmation, lit and burning brightly.

This sounds like a silly task really. How can one keep a fire lit when that fire is not visible to the naked eye? There is the challenge. We each carry a separate piece of the flame of the Holy Spirit. Each of us has to find new ways to see the flame in others as well as ourselves. Then, we need to keep our flame burning bright.

Visiting members of our community who are housebound, in a hospital or in a nursing home are ways to fuel the flame of the Holy Spirit. Is this type of visit easy? It is not for many (me included). Even when these are loved ones, rela-

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Published quarterly  
(February, April, August  
and November)  
by Saint Mary Parish, Franklin MA

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