

Dear Parishioners of Sacred Hearts,

While we are enjoying the wonderful and warm months of our secular season of summer, the Church has moved into her own liturgical season of Ordinary Time. Every year during these weeks which follow our celebrations of Easter and related holy days, we hear in the readings of our Sunday Masses many of the great and familiar parables taught by Jesus during the brief years of his itinerant ministry.

Today's Gospel reading taken from Matthew Chapter 13 always resonates with me in a special way relating to the particular ministry I have chosen to be involved with at Sacred Hearts.

Twenty-two years ago, when our St. Patrick's church in Groveland was still an independent parish, I was asked if I would be willing to join a team of parishioners to establish and implement there the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), a process based on ancient rites from the early Church which were revived by the Second Vatican Council, and by which non-baptized persons, or those baptized in other Christian churches are prepared to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. I agreed to join the team, and have continued to serve ever since that time, walking with adults and older teens along the path leading them into the Catholic Church.

The experience of working on the RCIA team is always an incredibly joyful one, not only in seeing the faith of the candidates grow, but by the way my own faith is bolstered by them! There is no denying that today's adults live fast-paced, busy, and active lives filled with responsibilities which compete for their time. I often marvel at how our RCIA candidates are willing to sacrifice in order to commit themselves to the time needed for preparation. And yet, the explanation as to why they desire and manage to do so is before us today in the Gospel reading: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys the field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it."

Once the Holy Spirit has done the work of opening the hearts of our RCIA Candidates to the beauty of truth found in the Catholic Church, they begin to recognize the "treasure buried in a field," and "the pearl of great price" which they have been searching for, and are eager to set about obtaining those riches in their lives... and any sacrifice of time or any inconvenience appears insignificant in comparison.

Jeanne Dignan
Director of RCIA