

What is life in Christ?



Adult Faith Formation

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Several years ago when we celebrated baptisms we would sing a song called "*You Are Called This Day*," written by Richard M. Lawless (music by Carol Dick).

The refrain was, "You are called this day to a life in Christ, by your name to a life in the Lord."

You are called this day to a life of love, you are marked with the oil of kings.
By the water poured and the name of God
you are with us and are sign to the world.

You are called this day to be child of the Father, your name is inscribed with the saints.
Let our love help you grow and be strength to your heart;
you are with us and our thanks go to God.

You are called this day to do justice and make peace,
to give praise by your words and your deeds.
You will die and rise, you will laugh and cry,
you are with us and are Christ's for all time.

I have always been struck how each verse starts with "You are called" and ends with "You are with us ...". Together we are called to a life in Christ and together we live and learn and grow into that life, not for our own sake, but as a sign to the world. In each of these verses we are reminded of what Life in Christ looks like: we are marked with the oil of kings and made members of the communion of saints who do justice and make peace as we give God praise with our words and deeds.

When I think of being called to a life, I think of the old TV show Kung Fu. Kwai Chang Caine didn't just want to learn the way of peace, he wanted to *become* peace and knew this could only happen by sitting at the foot of the master with the other apprentices. Depending on your age, other examples might be Luke Skywalker or Harry Potter. These are all fictional characters who showed a lifelong commitment to their call ~ even while encountering hardships, temptations and forces of evil.

On a more profound and real level (with no commercial breaks or intermission) we are called (together) to sit at the foot of our Master to learn to become the presence of God in the world. This call comes with hardship and suffering/death, but it also leads to resurrection. It's communal, and as we learn the life we have been called to live, we also teach others. It's called discipleship, and it's lifelong. Some questions to ponder:

- What does it mean to you to be called to a life in Christ? What does it mean for us as a faith community?
- How are you learning to follow Christ's way of life? What are we learning and teaching together about discipleship?
- What is the "dying and rising" you might experience as a follower of Christ? How can we support each other in our dyings and risings?
- How does being part of a community of disciples affect your "Life in Christ?" What difference does our shared "Life in Christ" make in the local community?

Kwai Chang Caine's master called him "Grasshopper." Our Master calls us "Beloved," the same name Jesus heard at his baptism in the Jordan. We belong to Christ, called together to a life in Christ.

(continued on reverse)

- Tuesdays, February 28 and March 6 we are offering baptism classes. This is required for those preparing to have a child baptized, but it is also a great opportunity for interested people to come together and talk about what it means to be baptized (*hint: Life in Christ*)
- Wednesday, Feb. 29 – Art Zannoni will lead us in a scripture study on the three conversion stories in John’s gospel. These are the gospel readings that will be proclaimed on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays during Lent.
- Wednesday, March 28 – Art Zannoni will lead us in a scripture study on the passion narrative on Mark’s gospel.
- April 19, 20, and 21 we will offer a Christ Centered retreat. We have limited space for this so we encourage you to sign up early. Each evening we will have talks given by parishioners, followed by a time for sharing in small groups.
- Each Wednesday there is a Faith Formation opportunity. First and third Wednesdays are Whole Community Wednesdays where we come together and discuss the focus of the month . Second and fourth Wednesdays are RCIA evenings. It’s a good place to come and raise questions and have some respectful dialog. I’m convinced that we can never exhaust conversation about the mystery of faith that we live, and the conversations we have at RCIA are rich and thoughtful - and open to anyone who would like to come.

Exploring the Conversion Stories in the Gospel of John

Wednesday, February 29th

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Presenter: Art Zannoni

Program Description:

Central to the celebration of the Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) are the conversion stories in the Gospel of John. These include the stories of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42), his curing of the man born blind (John 9:1-41) and his raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-57). They are read on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent (cycle year A) and in parishes that have catechumens entering the church. This year St. Cecilia has a catechumen who will enter the church at the Easter Vigil.

These conversion stories are at the very core of coming to faith. This presentation will explore the content, context and meaning of these stories. In addition, the dramatic character, rich symbolism of water and spirit, sight and insight, light and faith, death and life, contained in these readings, will be explored as a model for the practice of adult faith.

Special Note: Participants are encouraged to read John 4:1-42; 9:1-41; and 11:1-57 prior to the program and to bring a Bible or Lectionary with them to the program.