



National Gathering on Christian Initiation™

A Conference for Catechumenal Ministers and Pastoral Leaders

The Year-Round Catechumenate

**July 2-3
2019
Chicago, IL**



REGISTRATION BOOKLET

“The fire of the Holy Spirit can burn even brighter through the implementation of the year-round catechumenate, and I believe this brings renewed vibrancy and growth to the communities who embrace that challenge.”

**– Angela Darrow Flynn
2019 NGCI Team Member**



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For those of us already facing the many challenges of ministry in our parishes, the concept of an initiating community only adds to our frustration. The truth is that such a community is not far from our grasp. Perhaps we are members of such a community but simply do not recognize it.

—Mary Birmingham, 2019 NGCI Team Member

Mission

To promote the liturgical formation “of the faithful and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and condition, their way of life, and their stage of religious development” so all the faithful may “become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy.”

—*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 19, 14

Misión

Promover la formación litúrgica “y la participación activa de los fieles en la liturgia, interna y externa, conforme a su edad, condición, género de vida y grado de cultura religiosa”, de modo que todos ellos “se impregnen totalmente del espíritu y de la fuerza de la liturgia”.

—*Constitución sobre la Sagrada Liturgia*, 19, 14

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Letter from the Director



We at Liturgy Training Publications are excited to host the third annual **National Gathering on Christian Initiation™**. This event explores the theoretical and practical aspects of initiation ministry as it promotes the full implementation of the *Rite of Christian*

Initiation of Adults. As we continue to fulfill our mission by supporting and training ministers, we maintain our focus on the role of Christian initiation in the life of the parish and the life of the Church. Through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the essential mission of the Church is lived out in the making and baptizing of disciples.

The 2019 **National Gathering on Christian Initiation™** invites participants to envision how their parish community can implement and sustain a year-round catechumenal process. This event aims to respond effectively to the current formational needs of parish leaders, initiation ministers, and regional or diocesan trainers while providing an opportunity for deeper conversation focused on their needs and challenges in parish ministry and diocesan training and formation. We hope you can join us and encourage others to attend this third annual event as we gather catechumenal ministers and pastoral leaders from around the country to explore the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and its implementation in the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,

Deanna M. Keefe

Director

Liturgy Training Publications



What Is the National Gathering on Christian Initiation™?

The National Gathering on Christian Initiation™ is an annual two-day conference for parish Christian initiation ministers and diocesan catechetical, liturgical, and evangelization leaders. Steeped in the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the National Gathering on Christian Initiation™ seeks to promote the vision of the Church as constantly evangelizing, catechizing, and initiating disciples. Throughout the conference, participants will explore the theoretical and practical aspects of initiation ministry, learn from interactive multimedia presentations, engage in prayerful reflection on the liturgies of the RCIA, and share their knowledge and experience with initiation ministers from around the country.



The period of catechumenate ... should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation. Ordinarily this period should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.

—**National Statutes for the Catechumenate, 6**



The National Gathering on Christian Initiation™ will have two tracks. **Parish Leaders and Initiation Ministers** will deepen and enrich their work as they gain practical skills, discuss common challenges, and share best practices. **Regional or Diocesan Trainers** will explore and discuss practical strategies for implementing effective training and formation in their local communities. The two groups will separate at various times of the day for deeper conversation and skills training as they focus on the needs and challenges of parish ministry and diocesan training and formation.

Theme: The Year-Round Catechumenate 2019

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* describes an initiation process that exists at the heart of the Church's life and on the same schedule as the Church: every day, all year long. This process calls us to adapt our ministry to the needs of the diverse people with whom we minister, and welcome people when God calls them. Come to the NGCI to hear from parish ministers who have established a year-round catechumenate, discover the benefits of the process, and learn to thrive amid the messiness that brings grace to our lives. The NGCI team will help you imagine, envision, understand, implement, and sustain a year-round catechumenate in your parish.



Goals of the 2019 Gathering

- Participants will reflect on whether their parishes are “year-round” parishes that are constantly evangelizing, catechizing, celebrating, and initiating.
- Participants will realize and appreciate that Christian initiation is gradual, depends on God’s grace, and varies according to the action of the individuals.
- Participants will learn how to sustain a year-round inquiry process and develop a continuous baptismal catechumenate that will inspire and form the whole parish community.
- Participants will assess their own parish situations and draft realistic timelines for growth and change.

Schedule

The schedule for the National Gathering on Christian Initiation™ has been intentionally designed to offer an engaging balance of presentations, prayer, fellowship, discussion, and skills training. At various times throughout the day, we will break into two smaller groups—**Parish Leaders and Initiation Ministers** and **Regional and Diocesan Trainers**—for an in-depth focus on the needs and challenges of parish ministry and diocesan training and formation.

Coordinator Forum & Reception July 1, 2019

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM and 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM • Registration

For those who would like to check-in early, an opportunity is provided in the lobby of the Hampton Inn.

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM • Optional RCIA Coordinators' Forum

Strategies to Engage Parish Leaders in the RCIA Process

The Coordinators' Forum will help participants identify the parish leaders, both formal and informal, in their own community and consider how they might complement and strengthen the catechumenate team and the initiation process. **Free.**

Registration is limited.

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM • Opening Reception

Join us for a special opening reception in the Palm Court rooftop atrium in the historic Mundelein Center, overlooking Lake Michigan, with an open bar. **Tickets are \$30.**

Day One July 2, 2019

8:00 AM – 8:50 AM • Registration

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM • Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Prayer

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM • General Session

A Year-Round Parish:

Living the Baptismal Catechumenate

Members of the parish community, the People of God, serve as the primary ministers of initiation, according to the RCIA. Are our parishes able to carry out that responsibility? The NGCI team will invite participants to consider whether their parish structures and priorities serve the vision of the RCIA and whether their initiation practice may need to be reconfigured to conform to the life of the parish.

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM • Coffee Break

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM • General Session

A Messy Process: People Coming, Going, and Celebrating

Is a highly organized, predetermined initiation ministry what the RCIA calls for? Because there are so many considerations and variables in the spiritual journey of the catechumens and candidates, we should expect the process to be messy. Trusting in “the many forms of God’s grace” and “the free cooperation of the individuals,” we must be open to Spirit’s action and trust there is order in the chaos of life and ministry. (see RCIA, 5)

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM • Lunch included in registration

2:00 PM – 3:15 PM • Breakout Session

Parish Leaders and Initiation Ministers:

Sustaining a Year-Round Inquiry

A year-round inquiry means being ready to meet people whenever God sends them to us. How do parishes form inquiry teams that are always prepared? How do we let the parish and the local community know that we are ready to welcome anyone interested in exploring the faith at any time? Initiation ministers will exchange ideas on ways to form and maintain an ever-ready inquiry team.

Regional or Diocesan Trainers:

Conducting a Diocesan Assessment of the RCIA in Parishes

A year-round catechumenal process has a direct impact on the life of a parish. Performing annual or periodic evaluations of pastoral leaders and catechumenal directors will assist diocesan staff in planning for initial and ongoing formation opportunities. A sample process and assessment tool will be presented, and participants will have an opportunity to share their own experiences.

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM • General Session

A Continuous Catechumenate:

How Do I Do This All Year?

Considering moving to the year-round catechumenate when you’re used to a school-year model can be overwhelming. In this session, we will review the basics of catechumenal formation. We will explore how the whole parish—not just the catechumens—can live in the spirit of the baptismal catechumenate. The NGCI team members will present real-life examples of how this is done. Finally, we will look at how the parish initiation ministry can animate the whole community’s involvement in this period of formation.

5:30 PM – 6:00 PM • Ritual Celebration

NGCI participants will gather for a Celebration of the Word of God to reflect on our baptismal promises, rights, and responsibilities.

6:00 PM • End of Day (dinner and evening on your own)

Day Two July 3, 2019

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM • Optional Morning Session

Q&A Panel with Priests:

Engaging Parish Clergy in the RCIA

The pastor is essential to the Christian initiation process in the parish. His leadership can animate parishioners to support and pray for catechumens. This session will explore ways to collaborate with priests and help them understand the process. Questions can be submitted virtually or on the first day of the gathering.

9:00 AM – 9:25 AM • Morning Prayer

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM • Training Session

Planning in the Period of the Catechumenate

Participants will work together as parish RCIA teams to prepare several weeks of catechumenal formation. The NGCI team will offer ideas on how to structure a regular team meeting in a year-round process.

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM • Coffee Break

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM • Breakout Session

Parish Leaders and Initiation Ministers:

Journeying with Baptized and Catechized Adults

Working with baptized candidates raises many questions: Can I put the candidates with the catechumens? What are my sessions supposed to look like? Am I supposed to run another program? This session will begin to answer these questions and invite participants to evaluate the role of adult faith formation in the life and structure of their parish community.

Regional or Diocesan Trainers:

Rite of Election: Theology and Practice (Part 1)

In the Rite of Election, the Church in the name of Christ accepts the judgment of the community and calls the catechumens to the Easter sacraments. Why is this important? What does it mean to be among the elect, the *illuminandi*—those who

will be enlightened? In the first part of this two-part session, the NGCI team will lead participants in an exploration of the theology of election and the Rite of Election.

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM • Lunch included in registration

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM • Breakout Session

Parish Leaders and Initiation Ministers:

The Season of Lent and the Period of Purification and Enlightenment

During Lent, parishes with a year-round catechumenate will meet with inquirers, break open the Word with catechumens, and reflect on the experience of the scrutinies with the elect. Participants in this session will exchange ideas on how to nurture people in different periods.

Regional or Diocesan Trainers:

Rite of Election: Theology and Practice (Part 2)

In this second part of the session on the Rite of Election, the NGCI team will facilitate a time for diocesan ministers to share how they prepare for the rite. Participants should bring scripts and worship aids for the discussion on the practicalities of preparation for this rite.

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM • General Session

Developing a Plan:

From School Year to Year Round

Speaking from their years of experience, members of the NGCI team will present things that did and did not work in their communities when moving from school-year to year-round models. They will help participants develop realistic plans that correspond to the life of their parishes. They will also offer suggestions for executing these plans and share how the parish community can be positively changed by moving to this model.

4:00 PM – 4:45 PM • General Session

Mystagogy and Beyond:

A Time for Postbaptismal Catechesis and Evangelization

What are we doing after the Easter Vigil? What should we be doing during the great Fifty Days? This session will look at how the Period of Mystagogy will strengthen neophytes and nurture their growth as Christian witnesses with the help of the community. Where do the catechumens and new inquirers fit in while all this is happening? This session will highlight what it means to be in a constant state of evangelization.

4:45 PM – 5:00 PM • Closing and Prayer

The 2019 NGCI Team

Each year, a different team of presenters will work together with an LTP representative to plan the major presentations and breakout sessions of the event. Team members have been invited not only because of their understanding of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the Church's mission of evangelization, but also because of their vast parish and diocesan experience. As a true collaboration, the individual gifts and ministerial experience of each team member will shape the NGCI experience.



Mary Birmingham the author of many resources for Christian initiation including, *Year-Round Catechumenate* (LTP, 2007) and the *Word and Worship* series. She served as the director of music, liturgy, and Christian initiation at Ascension Catholic Community, Melbourne, Florida, until her recent retirement. She is a former member of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.



Ximena DeBroeck, PhD, forms Christian initiation ministers (in English and Spanish) while serving as director of catechetical and pastoral formation for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. She is an assistant professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, and senior fellow at the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology.

How does the year-round model support the vision of the RCIA?

The year-round model supports that in one complete liturgical cycle the entire mystery of Jesus from his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, and the sending of the Spirit is proclaimed and manifested in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy. It takes an entire year to celebrate Christ's life, and that's what we are initiating them into: the Paschal Mystery of Jesus that is proclaimed and manifested in liturgy. All of our teachings and doctrine flow out of the liturgical cycle and the Word of God. Our social mission comes out of the liturgical year and what's proclaimed in the Sunday liturgy. So everything we are about, what it means to be Catholic, is manifested within the context of the liturgical year.

What do RCIA teams need to help them move from the school-year model to the year-round process?

I think the key is team formation. Each team has to be on board and understand the vision of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. "What takes place during these periods? What are these rites celebrating? What is it all about?" If the team does not understand the RCIA, the transition will be very, very difficult. Furthermore, your team has to be vulnerable enough to share their story and to share their lives, because this whole process is rooted in story. It's rooted in the story of Christ.

What will we learn about this year's theme, the Year-Round Catechumenate, in July 2019 at NGCI?

The year-round catechumenate gives us the possibility of understanding the journey of initiation in a way that is not an academic subject, but the way our faith is lived. Ultimately, it is about being faithful to one's relationship with God. At the National Gathering on Christian Initiation™, we will be able to unpack this and find ways to articulate this better to our own communities, help initiation ministers understand this is not only about knowing the right answers, but it is about being in relationship with a God who loves us deeply and wants to be in communion with us.

Why are you excited about the National Gathering on Christian Initiation™?

I am so excited to see the possibility of having pastoral leaders, clergy and laity alike, coming together to brainstorm ways to make the year-round catechumenate a reality. Many brains together, many hearts together; it is going to be better than just a few people in each of our parishes discussing this. We will talk about concrete ways in which this can happen. We will share best practices from our own experiences. I think that if everybody that attends the Gathering takes back ideas and excitement to their home diocese and shares it with one more person or two more people, it will double or triple the people that will be influenced by the Gathering. This really fills me with great hope and joy.



Angela Darrow Flynn and the Christian initiation team at Immaculate Conception Church, Durham, North Carolina, have implemented a year-round catechumenate at the parish. She is the director of liturgy and music at the parish. Her studies have focused on the restored order of the sacraments of initiation with the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* as the normative initiation model.

What is the year-round catechumenate important?

In almost a quarter century of pastoral ministry, I've seen firsthand the profound ways the Holy Spirit can move in a community that recognizes and embraces the continual process of conversion we each live. The year-round catechumenate is a snapshot of that life of conversion to which we are all called, and I am so excited to share that with leaders and catechists from around the country. Truly the fire of the Holy Spirit can burn even brighter through the implementation of a year-round RCIA, and I believe this brings renewed vibrancy and growth to the communities who embrace that challenge.

As an NGCI team member, what are you looking forward to?

There is an entire community of people across the country who are looking to do exactly the same thing and are struggling with the same questions and same problems. We will come together, discuss opportunities, share from our wisdom and experience, and do what we can to figure it out. My own faith is fanned into flame and my spirit refreshed and renewed as I listen to fellow pilgrims narrate their life's experience in light of their experience of God's saving power at work in their lives.



Msgr. Richard Hilgartner assists with the Christian initiation process at St. Joseph Parish, Cockeysville, Maryland, where he serves as the pastor. He is an adjunct instructor of systematic theology and the director of liturgy at St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore. He is a former executive director of the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship.

What obstacles stand between us and making the year-round catechumenate a reality?

The biggest and first obstacle is creating a culture where the whole parish, the whole community, recognizes that every member of the baptized faithful have a role in the catechumenal process. We need a cultural shift that has to happen with the faithful's own attentiveness to their role of accompanying and inviting. We will overcome this obstacle when we instill a culture of ongoing formation for everyone in the parish.

What do you hope NGCI participants will learn at the 2019 Gathering?

We have been talking about the New Evangelization for well over a decade now—the reproposing of the Gospel in the life of the faithful. The RCIA is about reproposing the Gospel and proposing it new all at the same time. The work of evangelization is the work of the whole community. The more we can broaden that mission, the more the faithful will recognize their role spreading the Gospel message. The year-round catechumenate can influence the whole community's session of purpose in the mission of the Church.



Michael Ruzicki is the training and events manager at Liturgy Training Publications and the director of music for Notre Dame de Chicago Parish. Before arriving at LTP six years ago, he served as a team member of the North American Forum on the

Catechumenate, a parish pastoral associate for liturgy and, for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, as coordinator of adult and sacramental formation and director of the archdiocesan music ministry. He is the author of *Guide for Training Initiation Ministers: An Introduction to the RCIA* (LTP, 2018).

What's new at NGCI 2019?

While I am certainly excited about the theme and this year's remarkable team, we have many new things going on for the 2019 NGCI. In addition to a group rate and group housing options, we have added an RCIA coordinators' forum before the Gathering begins. Experienced catechumenal ministers will serve as table leaders, helping to guide the participants' discussion and training exercise. For those who prefer Spanish as a first language, we are providing translated handouts and specially assigned tables that will foster a deeper conversation on the material. Our new site at Loyola University is beautiful and will provide us with an environment that proudly displays our Catholic identity.

Travel & Accommodations

Location

The 2019 **National Gathering on Christian Initiation™** will take place at the Loyola University Chicago Lake Shore Campus. Located in Rogers Park, along the shores of Lake Michigan, Loyola's Lake Shore Campus is located seven miles north of downtown Chicago and within steps of public transportation. The address for the campus is 1032 W. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660. The main sessions will take place on the second floor of the Damen Student Center in the Sr. Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM Ballroom.

Hotel Information

A limited number of hotel rooms are available at the Hampton Inn Chicago—North Loyola Station for a specially discounted rate of **\$144.00** per night. This rate is available for those who book before May 27, 2019, for the evenings of July 1 – July 3.

Hampton Inn Chicago - North Loyola Station

13 West Albion Ave.

Chicago, IL 60626

Phone: (312) 265-5800 (front desk)

Check in: 3:00 PM

Check out: 12:00 PM

To reserve a room at the Hampton Inn Chicago—North Loyola Station, please call 312-426-7866 and mention NGCI-19, or visit <http://group.hamptoninn.com/NGCI2019>.

Campus and Group Housing Information

There are two types of lodging options available on the campus of Loyola University. These rooms are available on the evenings of July 1 and 2 only. Please note that campus housing amenities are much more limited than typical hotel accommodations. For detailed information, visit <https://www.ngci.org/travel#hotel>.

Apartment Suites are available in the Santa Clara Hall, located at 1000 W. Loyola Ave, Chicago, IL 60626. These suites have two bedrooms and can accommodate up to four people. Each unit has a kitchen and two bathrooms. Each apartment needs to be under one reservation and paid by that person. If several people share a room, you will need to split the cost between yourselves. We are sorry that campus housing cannot do this for you. The rate is **\$240.64** per night.

Residence Hall (dormitory) Rooms are available in DeNobili Hall. The rate for a single occupancy room is **\$99.79**. The rate for a double occupancy room is **\$117.40**. This option has community-style restrooms, with showers, on each floor.

Directions

To/From O'Hare International Airport

Taxi Service	\$50-\$55
UberX	\$30-\$40
Lyft	\$30-\$40

Blue Line Train:

24-hour service; cost is \$2.50 one-way per person (from O'Hare a \$5.00 premium fare applies); travel time to Rogers Park is 1 hour 30 minutes; take Blue Line Forest Park train to the Washington stop; Walk to Red Line (through Block 37); take Red Line Howard train; exit Red Line train at **Loyola** station. The Hampton Inn is approximately a five-minute walk on Sheridan Road to Albion Avenue. Santa Clara Hall is approximately 5 minutes via Sheridan Road to 1000 W. Loyola Ave. Fare cards or daily passes can be purchased at the station. For more information visit: <http://www.transitchicago.com>.

To/From Midway Airport

Taxi Service	\$50-\$60
UberX	\$34-\$40
Lyft	\$34-\$40

Orange Line Train:

Hours are 5:15 AM to 11:30 PM; cost is \$2.50 one-way per person; travel time to Rogers Park is 1 hour 26 minutes; take Orange Line Loop Train to Roosevelt; at Roosevelt take Red Line Howard train; exit train at **Loyola** station. The Hampton Inn is approximately a five-minute walk on Sheridan Road to Albion Avenue. Santa Clara Hall is approximately 5 minutes via Sheridan Road to 1000 W. Loyola Ave. Fare cards or daily passes can be purchased at the station. For more information visit: <http://www.transitchicago.com>

All prices are approximate and subject to change without notice.

Bus and railway options are also available. The Greyhound bus station, Megabus stop, Union Station, and Ogilvie Transportation Center are all located within 10 to 11 miles of the hotel and are easily reachable by taxi. For more details, information about parking, and driving directions, visit www.NGCI.org/travel.



**The Year-Round Catechumenate
2019**



Register by May 11, 2019, to guarantee your spot!

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Parish

Phone Circle: Home / Cell / Work

E-mail Address

\$200 Individual Early Bird Registration, by March 6, 2019
Includes lunch for July 2nd & 3rd.

\$250 Individual Registration, by May 11, 2019.
Includes lunch for July 2nd & 3rd.

\$25 savings Group Registration, for four or more participants
Please contact Liturgy Training Publications directly.

\$30 July 1st Opening Reception. *Optional. Includes an open bar.*

FULL Free Optional RCIA Coordinators Forum (*FULL*)

Please Indicate: Parish Leaders and
Initiation Ministers Regional or Diocesan
Trainers

To reserve a room at the Hampton Inn Chicago–North Loyola Station, call 312-265-5800 and mention NGCI, or visit www.chicagonorthloyolastation.hamptonbyhilton.com.

To register, please complete and return this form with a check payable to:

Liturgy Training Publications
Attn: NGCI
3949 South Racine Avenue, Chicago, IL 60609

To register online, visit: www.NGCI.org. Contact us at ngci@ltp.org or 773-579-4900, ext. 3514 with any questions.