

## WEEK ONE

“Good evening Father Bob.”

“... Evening Ben. How many do we have this session?”

“Fifteen so far.”

“Well, we’ll probably gain or lose a few over the course of the program, given the way these classes go,” the priest says.

Pausing a moment to survey the group standing around a table filled with coffee and pastries he and Ben stand silent for a moment while Joey mingles with the assembled guests.

“Yea, from what I gathered in talking to each of them as they signed up, I think this session should be a pretty good one,” Ben says softly, not wanting to be overheard. “When Joey and I was interviewing the people you see here, we both sensed some interesting personalities and backgrounds in the people in this group.”

The priest smiles. “So, you think they’ll keep the two of you on your toes,” he says, chuckling softly.

“I hope so,” Ben says.

“Good. I get the feeling this will be a good ... maybe even stimulating ... class. What do you say we join Joey, Ben?”

“Sounds good to me, Father ... lead the way.”

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**Tonight, is the initial session of this year’s RCIA program at St. Kate’s. RCIA is the Rite of Christin Initiation of Adults; a structured format for adults seeking to learn more about the Church of Rome with an eye on possibly be initiated into it. And it also serves as a structured course of instruction for those Catholics who find deficiencies in their understanding of their faith. Something all too common these days. The structured nature of the program dates back to the early candidates for initiation into the faith in the time of the Apostles.**

**“Uncle” Joey and Ben Foster are two members of St. Kate’s who are quite active in the affairs of the parish. They were selected by Father Bob several years ago to head up the weekly RCIA sessions, as each been a lifelong**

**member of the parish, and both have a wide-ranging background in the teachings of the Church. Both attended St. Ed's and both studied Theology somewhat extensively in college. Others will help along the way; we'll meet them later on. Father trusts the two of them and he has had many an opportunity to hear them conduct the classes. I think Father Bob knows his program is in good hands.**

**Tonight is informal; an evening to get acquainted. The coffee and pastries were furnished by Samantha Bates, owner of the best Bistro on the Southside. Samantha, a parishioner at St. Kate's, loves doing this and feels it's her contribution to the faith formation of her friends and neighbors. A sweeter soul than Sam, you'll never meet.**

**So, as they say on the game shows, without further ado, let's meet the members of this year's session.**

Janice Manning – forty something mother of three children, one a college student and two in high school. Janice comes from a mixed background of Christian denominations, having on occasion, attended Catholic services here at St. Kate's and has indicated a desire to know more. From past encounters, she is noted for a keen and sometimes biting sense of humor.

Lois Webster – Quiet young woman in her early thirties. A newlywed, her husband is a parishioner at St. Kate's and Lois decided to take the course to better understand his faith. Lois comes from a Pentecostal protestant background and is unsure whether she would take the step of entering the church of Rome at this point. From what she has said, she's been the target of some animosity about marrying a Catholic from a few family members.

Thomas Taylor – Early fifties, businessman in banking and finance, has no affiliation to any church, claiming to be a “curious agnostic” as he calls himself. Was baptized Catholic as a boy, but family was generally non-observant, and, as he says, only remembers the Catholic Church from Christmas and Easter services.

David Palmer – late twenties, single, seriously dating a Catholic young lady who is steadfast in practicing her faith. Professing no particular denomination, Dave calls himself as a “generic Christian.” The possibility of a future with the young woman in his life is the impetus for his presence in the group, as he wants to better understand her motivations and faith choices.

Melissa Stargell – mother of two boys ages 7 and 9, Melissa was baptized as a child in the Catholic faith and attended a Catholic grade school for a few years. Melissa describes herself as a “sometimes” Catholic and feels a need for something firmer in her understanding of the faith to which she is now exposing to her boys.

Devin Crosby – student at the nearby Catholic college, Devin was raised in the Baptist faith. He is on a basketball scholarship and his continual exposure to the monks at the college has prompted him to ask questions. St. Kate's functions as a home parish for the college and sees a significant number of students at its Sunday services. Devin states he wants a different, or maybe better an additional perspective to what is offered by the student ministry on campus.

Darrell Lambert – middle age businessman and member of a local non-denominational Christian Church. Unsatisfied with the answers to his questions about the Catholic faith and the constant criticism he hears of Rome from those he comes into contact with, he says he wants to hear about the Church "from the horse's mouth." So, while "warning" Father Bob that he is making no promises to join the Catholic church, he has come here to find his own answers.

Roy Sanders – late thirties, father of three, successful sales career, and another man who was baptized in the Catholic faith when he was a boy, but never received much exposure to Rome because of a lackadaisical religious upbringing. A somewhat typical product of parents who expose their children to the Catholic faith, but don't participate themselves. Roy is looking for answers maybe he should have gotten thirty years ago.

Susan Mantle – graduate student at the University Law School with no affiliation to any church. Said she decided to take these classes when her academic exposure to moral issues collided with some of the religious teachings she was exposed to as a young girl. This due to attending a Catholic all girls high school, but not being of the Catholic faith at the time.

Clarice Evert – Methodist, grandmother of five children. She sees a need to better understand the Catholic faith as both her son in law and daughter in law are Catholic and feels she needs to be able to better relate to her grandchildren in a manner consistent with the manner in which their parents are raising them, particularly when it comes to their religious faith.

Barbara Larsen – Mother of three grown children and married to a Catholic husband. Says she was always interested in his faith but never really had the time or inclination to make the effort to look further into the Church. With the kids being pretty much on their own, she decided it was a good time to give the church a more extensive look.

Sandra Bradshaw – early twenties, single, recent college graduate, embarking on a career in teaching. Was raised in no structured faith but always has been involved with charitable causes. Says she was impressed by a group of Catholic nuns she met in the course of working with underprivileged children, and wanted to see what was the source is of what she calls, an attitude of simple joy in the sisters' work.

Antony Rice – early thirties, U.S. army veteran who having seen some serious combat and the misery that accompanies it. Anthony says he decided to look into the Catholic faith in an attempt to find answers to questions his military service and exposure to the darker side of life has raised. Suffers from PTSD and says that the only place he really finds peace is inside St. Kate’s by himself in the quiet. Says he feels a presence and wants to know more.

Mike DeCastro – Early thirties, bachelor, successful businessman and self-described lapsed Catholic and “former playboy”. Seems his former lifestyle is now more troubling than pleasurable and is looking more deeply at what was offered to him in his youth in an attempt to find a deeper meaning in life.

Margaret Tillman – Graduate student at the University pursuing an M.B.A. Very attractive, yet claims she is not interested in the men she runs across in her life. Seems their morals are not glued to them too tightly as she laughingly described them. Yet the professors she encounters all seem to be happily married and the kind of men she claims to be looking for. It happens that three of those professors are Catholic and it made her want to take a look at why they live the way they do and relate to their wives in such a manner; a manner she can’t seem to find in the men she comes across daily.

#### The RCIA Team

Father Bob Scanlon, Pastor, St. Katherine’s, Catholic Church

Father John, Parochial Vicar, St. Katherine’s

“Uncle” Joey, nicknamed “uncle” by the gang in the neighborhood, Joey is a lifelong Catholic, a local businessman, and deeply involved in the faith

Ben Foster. Like Joey, a lifelong Catholic, local businessman, and also deeply in involved in the faith. Both Joey and Ben immersed themselves in a fair amount of theology while attending St. Edward’s, a local Catholic University.