



## *Prayer as a Pathway to RCIA*

How does an RCIA leader know "what to do?" The one consistent answer is prayer. Prayer is essential to RCIA. Through prayer, we connect with God, seek guidance, and discern God's will.

### **The importance of prayer in discernment**

Discernment is seeking God's will and direction in our lives. RCIA leaders encounter numerous decisions and challenges as we accompany inquirers and catechumens on their faith journey. How do we know the inquirer's desire? How do we help them along their journey with the Lord? How do we know if they are ready for the next step? What if we make a mistake? Prayer is our compass, guiding us toward the choices that align with God's will. We create space for God to speak. We discover God's will for our ministry.

### **Developing a prayer life**

To incorporate prayer within RCIA, first, we must have a regular, active practice of personal prayer. While this seems obvious, many ministry leaders do not pray regularly. A recent study found that just 51% of Catholics pray every day. While the percentage of daily prayers is probably higher among RCIA team members, many still do not pray as much as we need.

Setting aside dedicated time is crucial. Find a time that works best for you in the morning, during lunch breaks, or in the evening. Make your prayer intentional. Create a regular, consistent way of listening to what God has in mind. Infuse prayer into your daily activities. Simple prayers of gratitude, asking for guidance, or surrender can be woven into our work, interactions, and decisions. Cultivating an ongoing conversation with God throughout the day nurtures our ability to discern God's will.

### **Listening and discerning in prayer**

Listening in prayer requires patience, attentiveness, and an open heart. We become receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we surrender our preconceived notions and agents. God speaks in various ways—through Scripture, insights, nudges, quiet or peace. By listening attentively, we can discern God's guidance.

It is essential to approach discernment with humility and an understanding that God's ways may differ from our own. Prayer provides the necessary space to open our hearts to God's will, allowing us to let go of our own expectations and align ourselves more with God's expectations.

Prayer connects us to God and fuels our discernment process as RCIA ministers. Through prayer, we seek God's will, invite the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and align our actions with the Spirit's promptings. By developing a prayerful lifestyle, actively listening in prayer, and embracing humility, we can navigate the challenges of our ministry with confidence and clarity.