



Diocese of Buffalo

Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

A member of the Division for Evangelization and Catechesis

Mystagogy and the Sunday Community

Did you know that Mystagogy is not just for people in RCIA? Mystagogy *“is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it a part of their lives. . .”* (RCIA, 244) During Mystagogy, the newly baptized enter fully into the Eucharistic life of the faith community, reflecting with joy on the graces they have received. The Neophytes need the support of the parish community as they begin their new life in Christ, and the parish needs the witness of the newly baptized to remind them of the gifts of faith and salvation through Jesus.

Just what is Mystagogy? ***A time for all of us to reflect on the mystery of salvation and to recall and unpack the liturgies of the Triduum and Easter, especially the rich symbols of darkness and light, water, oil, and bread and wine.*** Every Sunday Mass is a “little Easter” that recapitulates Jesus’ saving work. As we make the sign of the Cross with holy water, we remember that with Baptism, we were immersed into His death in order to rise with Him to new life. With every Eucharist we receive the true nourishment that will strengthen and sustain us through the journey of life.

How do we do Mystagogy? The formative elements of the catechumenate: Word, Witness, Community and Worship (RCIA, 75) are now experienced fully as the newly initiated take their place in the Body of Christ. The newly baptized deepen in their Christian identity as they experience the sacraments as members of the worshipping community. Godparents and sponsors are key players in Mystagogy, for they are bridges between the Neophytes and the community of faith. The Sunday Masses of the Easter Season are “prime time” for Mystagogy as the Neophytes experience these liturgies as fully initiated Catholics. At these Masses, the paschal experience that has been shared by the Neophytes and the community should be reinforced through the homily and the general intercessions.

But Mystagogy doesn’t stop there. All of us, as well as the Neophytes, encounter Jesus in different ways – and there we will find our own personal and ongoing experience of Mystagogy. Some meet the Lord through active participation at Mass: listening, singing, praying, reflecting on the scriptures and receiving the Eucharist; others meet him by serving the poor or visiting those who are ill or homebound. For others, teaching, counseling, offering hospitality or welcoming new arrivals to our country put them in touch with the face of Christ. Some encounter Jesus as they journey with the terminally ill and their loved ones, contemplate nature, participate in liturgical ministry or accompany others as sponsors or faith witnesses.

The vocations of marriage, parenthood, family life and single life call each of us to experience Christ in one another and to be Christ for one another.

Newly initiated Catholics are now empowered to witness to Christ in any of these ways and more. Godparents and sponsors can help the Neophytes to identify their unique expression of Christian witness and mentor and accompany them as full members of the Body of Christ. The Sunday community supports the Neophytes by welcoming them, getting to know them and affirming their commitment. Both the newly baptized and the faithful grow as disciples of Jesus through Mystagogy.

Contact Sr. Barbara Schiavoni at bschiavoni@buffalodiocese.org or 716-847-5516 to discuss Mystagogy in *your* parish.

4/24/17