

A Time for Christ the King!

by Christopher Carstens

The Rites of the adult catechumenate are meant to foster conversion to Christ—in other words, to form adults into living reflections of Jesus. And since Jesus' character is prophetic (knowledge of God), priestly (sacrificial love of God), and kingly (service to God and his people), so is RCIA about instilling divine knowledge, sacrificial love, and service.

At no point during the RCIA process are these three elements found separated—since at no one time in Christ's own life could they be separated. Still, each period has a character proper to itself. The catechumenate (as its name suggests) is focused especially on *catechesis*, that is, knowledge of the faith. The period of purification and enlightenment, while not neglecting catechesis, places emphasis on the second of Jesus' characteristics, namely, of *prayer*, spiritual preparation, and interior reflection. The final period, that of Mystagogy, places an emphasis on the *kingly* aspect:

This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity. To strengthen the neophytes as they begin to walk in newness of life, the community of the faithful, their godparents, and their parish priests should give them thoughtful and friendly help. (n.244)

The emphases, then, of the Mystagogical and Kingly period are “community,” “works of charity,” “walking in newness of life.” In other words, where the Period of the Catechumenate focused on knowledge, and the Period of Purification and Enlightenment on prayer, this Period of Mystagogy focuses on action, life, and service.

Remade, as they are, after images of Christ the King, may all our neophytes be radiant in their service to others.