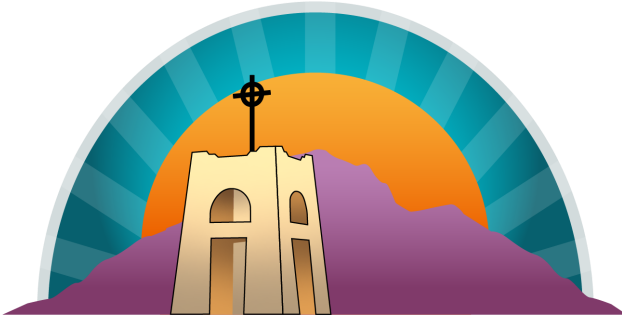


# WELCOME HOME

## Frequently Asked Questions



*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton*  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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***Jesus spoke to them saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."***

*John 8:12*

There are many reasons why we Catholics sometimes take an extended leave-of-absence from our relationship with the Lord through the Roman Catholic Church. Resuming full participation or becoming reconciled to the Church community, however, is a deeply personal and sometimes difficult challenge. But for many who have made that journey, it is like a long-delayed homecoming which fills a spiritual void they have experienced for a long time. Our Welcome Home is here to help lapsed Catholics reconnect with their Catholic faith and explore the possibility of resuming fuller participation in the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church. It also assists baptized Catholics who have received First Communion complete their initiation into the Roman Catholic Church through reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. Listed below are some questions and answers about our Welcome Home Ministry here at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish.

**I am thinking of returning to the Catholic Church. Do I have to go through some kind of program in order to do this?**

If you are a Catholic who has been baptized and received First Communion and Confirmation, you do not need to go through any program. Receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and begin coming back to church! You are invited, if you desire, to join our Welcome Home ministry to discuss any concerns you might have and to refresh your faith.

**I am not registered at SEAS. Can I still return?**

Of course! The important thing is reconnecting with Jesus Christ through a faith community. This is your church! We miss you and will do everything we can to help you return to the active practice of your faith. Whether or not you eventually join us here at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton or another parish is entirely your choice.

***“May the church be the place of God’s mercy and love, where everyone can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel. And in order to make others feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged, the church must have open doors so that all might enter .” (Pope Francis)***

**If I return to the Church, will I need to go to confession? Or can I just come to Mass?**

If you are a baptized Catholic you are always welcome to come to Mass! There are no prerequisites or conditions for attending and participating at Mass. However, before receiving Holy Communion you will most likely want to celebrate the sacrament of God's mercy and reconciliation. Our regularly scheduled time for the sacrament of Reconciliation is Saturday after the 8:00 a.m. Mass or by appointment.

**I was not married in the Catholic Church. Does this affect my return to the Church?**

If you are in your first marriage, then having your marriage recognized by the Roman Catholic Church should be quite simple. If either you or your spouse have been married before, we can still help you, but it will likely take a little more time. It would be best to make an appointment with one of our priests or deacons to discuss previous marriages. You are welcome to still join our sessions as you work through this process.

**I have been divorced. Does this affect my return? What if I am remarried?**

Often the Catholic teaching concerning divorce is misunderstood. Divorce in and of itself does not remove you from the Church or affect your status, including your participation in the sacraments like Holy Communion and Reconciliation. A divorced person, not remarried outside the Church, can participate fully in the sacraments. If you are remarried outside the Church, without a declaration of nullity (annulment) regarding the first marriage, you may still attend Mass and actively participate in the life of the parish community even though you cannot receive Holy Communion. It may be beneficial for you to make an appointment with one of our priests or deacons to learn what is involved for the Roman Catholic Church to recognize your present marriage. We understand that those who have gone through divorce have lived through very difficult times, and there is often a need for healing and closure. We are here to help you in any way we can!

**I am over 18 years of age and have never received the sacrament of Confirmation. Is this program for me?**

Most definitely! If you have been baptized Catholic and received Holy Communion, then our Welcome Home ministry can help you receive the sacrament of Confirmation and thus complete your initiation into the Roman Catholic Church. **This 8-session program meets on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.** and is designed to answer your questions, grow in your faith, receive appropriate adult-based formation leading to the reception of Confirmation. **Two 8-session modules are offered throughout the course of the year (one in the Fall; one in the Spring).**

**I was baptized Catholic but missed my First Communion and Confirmation. What do I need to do?**

People come back with all kinds of needs. Our job is to listen and find the best way to help. For some, it is our Welcome Home ministry. For people in your situation, it is a process known as the *Becoming Catholic: The OCIA* (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults). These sessions meet on Thursday evenings from 6:00-8:00 p.m. beginning in mid-September. Contact our parish office for more information.

**I am not Catholic, but am curious about the Roman Catholic Church. What should I do?**

In your situation, the Catholic Church offers the OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults). The OCIA is a gradual process of information, spiritual formation, inner transformation, and fellowship through which adults learn about Catholic belief and practice and discern possible initiation into the life of the Catholic Christian community. To register or for more information about our parish OCIA process, please contact the parish office.

***"I will go peaceably and firmly to the Catholic Church: for if faith is so important to our salvation, I will seek it where true faith first began, seek it among those who received it from God Himself."***

***(St. Elizabeth Ann Seton)***

### **Do I need to come to every session?**

Obviously, there will be times when people must miss a session due to illness, travel, business, family, or other emergencies. But it is important to remember that this is a commitment, especially if you are preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. When participants must be absent, they should let the Director know. Excessive absences may necessitate the postponement of your reception of Confirmation.

### **Is there a charge?**

We provide hospitality as well as numerous handouts and other materials appropriate to the weekly topics. A fee of \$50 helps to cover these costs.

### **What if I don't understand the material?**

Any question you might have should be asked ... at any time. It is likely that someone else has the same question, but is reluctant to ask it. Team members, clergy, presenters, and sponsors are available to explain whatever you may not understand.

### **What does a typical Welcome Home session look like?**

Since the focus of our Welcome Home is formation and information, our sessions typically include prayer, instruction, faith sharing, group discussion, fellowship and laughter!

### **What are sponsors?**

Those preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation need a sponsor. A sponsor is a practicing Catholic who serves as a mentor and companion to those who have already been baptized. Your sponsor should be someone with whom you feel comfortable discussing matters of faith and sharing your faith journey. The sponsor should attend as many Welcome Home sessions with you as possible in order to lend support and provide guidance.

## **What are the requirements for being a sponsor?**

Because the godparent/sponsor serves also as a representative of the faith community, Church (canon) law requires that he/she fulfill certain criteria:

- He/she must be a practicing Catholic.
- He/she must be over 16 years of age and have themselves received the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation).
- He/she must be living in harmony with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church (not cohabitating, in a valid marriage, etc.).
- He/she cannot be the parents of the candidate.

## **What if I don't know any Catholic well enough to ask the person to be my sponsor?**

Don't worry! Members of our faith community are available as parish sponsors and godparents. This should not discourage anyone from participating in our Welcome Home. Pairing candidates with a suitable sponsor, if necessary, is one of the jobs of our Welcome Home team.

## **Can a fiancé, spouse, or friend act as my sponsor?**

The answer is "Yes," as long as this person meets the criteria established by church law as outlined above.

## **How do I register?**

If you are interested in pursuing our Welcome Home or have any other questions, we encourage you to contact Marcie Wilske at 702-804-8370 or mwilske@seaslv.org or Deacon Steve Doucet at 702-804-8369 or sdoucet@seaslv.org. You can also go to our parish website: [www.seaslv.org](http://www.seaslv.org) and look for the Welcome Home link provided under the title "Faith Formation For All Ages".