



# ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CENTER

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CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## St. Mary's RCIA/Confirmation Enrollment Policy

The mission of St. Mary's Catholic Center is "Forming Apostles for the Church and the World." And as a personal parish, our mission is strictly geared towards students, faculty, and staff of Texas A&M University and Blinn College. Through the grace of God, this unique mission to a specific population has led to the development of a vibrant and lively ministry of college students that is passionate about the Catholic faith. One of the hallmarks of this community is its attractiveness to others, both students and non-students alike. In recent years, St. Mary's has seen an increase in non-students who seek to become Catholic and receive their sacraments through its RCIA program.

This trend has presented some unique challenges and situations that are hindering our distinct mission here at St. Mary's. It is worth noting that non-students are often in a very different place spiritually than students are. This is apparent in the questions they ask, the challenges they face, the concerns they have, and the reality of the day-to-day practice of their faith. In the current format of the RCIA program, non-students are often alone in a group of students, and this can create awkward and unrelatable moments of sharing between both parties. Furthermore, non-students often require additional staff time in regards to the gathering of paperwork, sorting through marriage issues, and scheduling difficulties resulting from a typical 9-5 job. However, the biggest problem and concern for non-students is the lack of a pathway to long-term success and growth in a university parish.

As a personal parish for college students, St. Mary's does not offer programs, retreats, or opportunities for spiritual growth and community for non-students. And while non-students might make significant spiritual strides through participation in our RCIA program, that is only the beginning of their journey with the Lord. Their long-term success is largely contingent upon integration into a church community where they can share life with people like themselves and continue their formation. That crucial step is not available at St. Mary's. Therefore, St. Mary's is introducing a new RCIA enrollment policy that is faithful to our student-focused mission and promotes the long-term best interests of non-students.

Starting in January 2023, any person who wishes to participate in the RCIA or Confirmation program here at St. Mary's must fall under one of the following categories:

- A current student at Texas A&M, Blinn, or Rellis
- A current faculty or staff member at any of those institutions
- A recent college graduate
- Spouse of a current student or permanent parishioner
- A person who demonstrates a special connection or association with St. Mary's (subject to pastor approval)

If a person does not fall under any of those categories, St. Mary's will have a policy of referring him or her to one of the other parishes in town who are designed to facilitate long-term relationships with other adults at a similar stage of life. Any appeals for an exemption may be made to the RCIA Director and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Let us trust in the grace of the Holy Spirit that "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion" (Phil 1:6).

