

Staying Catholic

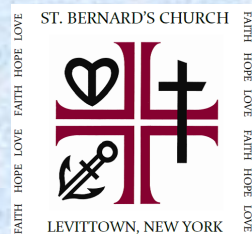
After your Baptism and/or Confirmation, you will have just begun the “honeymoon” of your relationship with Jesus and his Church. And just like newly-married couples do, you’ll want to talk again and again about your journey of finding “someone,” falling in love, and committing yourself to that “someone” for life. Those who remain on the journey will want to learn from your experience, and you’ll have plenty of opportunities to continue meeting with them and encouraging them along the way.

Just as a wedding is the ceremony that “kicks off” the really important part - married life— your Baptism or Confirmation is the ceremony that “kicks off” the Catholic life. This is a life of continuing to worship, to learn, and to serve, just as you have already begun to do as you journeyed toward becoming fully Catholic. Here at St. Bernard’s, our Mission Statement expresses our purpose:

**With faith, hope and love
the people of St. Bernard’s parish family
are on a mission
to bring the gospel of Jesus
to the Levittown community and beyond.**

We hope you will join us!

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Rev. John McCarthy, Pastor



**The Journey of
Christian Initiation for Adults**
Baptism + Confirmation + Communion

St. Bernard’s Church
Levittown, New York

Interested in the Catholic Church?



Maybe you didn't grow up as a Christian or with any religious tradition. Or maybe you're a baptized Christian who wants to know more about the Catholic Church. Whatever your story is,

and no matter how young or old you are, you are welcome!

Getting to know you

You probably have a lot of questions, and we are here for you to answer them as best as we can. We welcome both casual and serious inquirers, and we will converse with you at whatever pace is comfortable for you. You set the agenda, and there is no pressure. In your new relationship with Jesus and the Catholic Church, think of this time, as short or as long as necessary, as "casual dating."

Getting more serious

If after a period of inquiry you begin to like what you see and become more attracted to full membership in the Catholic Church, you may decide that you are ready to move from the "casual dating" scene to what we might call "going steady." If this move is right for you, we will invite you to make a more formal commitment to learning about who we are, what we believe and what we do as Catholics. At this stage of the journey of faith, you will have decided to participate in Mass weekly, to take adult education classes as directed, and to offer some service to others according to your gifts, talents and interests. In this way, you will be "initiated" into what it means to be truly Catholic. And you'll meet some GREAT people and role models along the way!



When you're ready

We hope that your experience of getting to know Jesus Christ through his community at St. Bernard's will be a positive one for you, and that at some point you will be ready to take the next step in that relationship. Like an "engagement" in a true love relationship, this is the step where you and the Church agree to make it permanent! You are saying, "Yes, I want to be Catholic and commit myself to Jesus and his Church," and the Church agrees! Like with an engagement, there is a formal ceremony that marks this occasion, which according to ancient Church tradition occurs just once a year on the first Sunday of Lent, six weeks before Easter.



Making Catholic happen

For Christians, the really "big time" of the year is our celebration of the 50-day long Easter season, which begins on Easter Sunday each year. Because this is our celebration of new life and new beginnings, this is when we normally welcome those who have formally declared their intent to become Catholic. (Others may continue "dating" till they're ready.) Those seekers who are not baptized are baptized, confirmed and welcomed to Holy Communion at the Lord's table at an AWESOME Easter Vigil Mass on the Saturday night before Easter Sunday. Some of those who are already baptized but wish to continue their Christian journey as Catholics may also be welcomed and confirmed into the Catholic Church.

