

Why do people want to become Catholics? Why do people want to go through the whole catechumenate programme process and ask to share in the sacraments of both Confirmation and the Eucharist? Is it because the Catholic Church always gets everything right? Is it because Catholics are holier than anybody else? Is it because the Catholic Church looks after people better than anyone else?

The Catholic Church, if it is anything, is a people that is on the move, on a pilgrimage with *walls of water to the right and to the left of us*. All the armies of the world may be at our heels, but the Lord is at our head, the Lord is rescuing us and **is** bringing us to the promised land. *The Lord is a warrior, the Lord is his name*.

The Catholic Church, if it is anything, believes that this world, this universe, is a wonderful and beautiful thing, that our humanity is a wonderful and beautiful thing.

The Catholic Church, if it is anything, works ceaselessly for peace and justice, for renewal and sustainability. *Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth*.

But the Catholic Church also knows that renewal must happen first of all at a spiritual level. Social and political projects on their own, however well intentioned, will not work. *Buy corn **without** money, to eat, and at **no** cost, wine and milk*. Spiritual renewal, spiritual change, is free. Dig deep and draw water from these wells of salvation.

The Catholic Church also knows darkness and despair. It knows the silence and the blackness of the tomb. It knows that true humanity can only be born the other side of death, the death of Jesus. We must all enter the tomb with Christ. We must all be immersed in the waters of Baptism.

The Catholic Church, if it is anything, visits the sepulchre, the place of Jesus' burial, on the first day of the week. And not all the male clergy and apostles, but Mary of Magdala and the other Mary. Their visit does not go unrewarded. Jesus comes to greet them. "Do not be afraid" he says; "Go and tell my brothers."

So why do we become Catholics?

- to be part of a pilgrim people
 - to renew the face of the earth
 - to discover a spiritual path
 - to face up to death and despair
- and to hear Jesus say, "Do not be afraid".