

# Candidates and catechumens prepare to be received into church



*Debbie Resta rests her hand on the shoulder of candidate Marge Tischler during the Rite of Election ceremony celebrated by Bishop Denis J. Madden at St. John the Evangelist, Severna Park, March 9. (Tom McCarthy | CR Staff)*

**By Elizabeth Lowe**

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SEVERNA PARK - Marjorie Tischler has had a circuitous journey to the Catholic Church.

Raised Methodist, the 83-year-old is preparing to be received into the church after more than 30 years as a member of the Jewish faith.

"Catholicism is filling that void that I had," said Tischler, who worships at St. John the Evangelist in Severna Park. "It's giving me comfort. It's bringing me closer to Jesus. I'm really very happy about it."

Tischler was one of approximately 70 candidates and 30 catechumens from more than a dozen parishes who attended the annual Rite of Election March 9 at St. John the Evangelist in Severna Park. Similar liturgies were held at St. Peter the Apostle in Libertytown and the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland.

Candidates, such as Tischler, are those who have been baptized but have not received the sacraments of Communion and/or confirmation; catechumens have not been baptized.

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In Homeland, there were 124 catechumens and 260 candidates from 45 parishes, and in Libertytown, there were 53 catechumens and 66 candidates from a dozen parishes, according to Ximena DeBroeck, coordinator of adult and sacramental formation for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Not all catechumens and candidates entering the church attended one of the three services. The nearly 400 candidates and more than 200 catechumens will be received into the church during the Easter Vigil April 19.

The Rite of Election is "another step that brings me closer to the church and closer

to Jesus," Tischler said.

Tischler's first husband, whom she divorced, was Christian, but her second and third husbands, both deceased, were Jewish.

"We praised and honored God a lot, but he still seemed remote," said Tischler, who typically attended services at her synagogue monthly. "Jesus was not a major part of my daily life."

After moving to Severna Park in December 2012, Tischler began attending Mass regularly at St. John with her daughter, Bonnie Wolfe. The liturgy impressed her.

"I liked what I heard from the priest and it was something I wanted to do again," she said. "I began to feel (the church's) joy and its warmth."

Tischler decided to join the Catholic Church because of "a desire that seemed to grow within."

"The Catholic religion is giving me what the (Methodist) religion didn't give me or the Jewish religion didn't give me," Tischler said. "In the Catholic Church they were saying things that helped me in my daily life."

Tischler draws inspiration from Pope Francis.

"I especially like the fact that he emphasizes giving to the poor and he lives a simple life," she said.

Wolfe, a St. John parishioner, said her mother has found her spiritual home.

"I've never seen her happier," Wolfe said.

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