



NORMS FOR THE RITE of CHRISTIAN INITIATION of ADULTS

LITURGICAL NORMS

A. Acceptance Into the Order of Catechumens

1. The period of inquiry ends with the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (*RCIA* 41). The catechumenate must have some integrity in length (*RCIA* 76). National statutes require a minimum of **one liturgical year** (*RCIA* 77, *NS* 6). Only those who are not baptized become catechumens (*NS* 2).
2. Diocesan policy on annulments and admittance into the catechumenate: In the Diocese of Orlando, no one may proceed beyond the period of evangelization and pre-catechumenate until all impediments to baptism or reception into the Church have been removed. An individual and/or his or her spouse would have to be granted the necessary annulment(s) or other declarations of nullity, and their present civil union would have to be convalidated before they could celebrate any of the rites (Office of the Bishop, April, 14, 1989).
3. The rite will take place on specified days, set by the parish community, during the year that are suited to local conditions. In respecting the character of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Lent, it is desirable not to celebrate this rite during these seasons (*RCIA* 44). This rite may be celebrated twice during the year but no more than three times if absolutely necessary (*RCIA* 18).
4. When the *Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens* is combined with the *Rite of Welcoming the Candidates* (Paragraphs 505-529), clear distinction must be made between catechumens and baptized candidates.

5. Whenever catechumens are present in the assembly, they are to be dismissed following the homily (*RCIA 67*). Texts for this dismissal appear in the rite. This dismissal is never limited to Lent. If baptized candidates, of their own free choice (*RCIA 401*), opt to be dismissed with the catechumens, the distinction must be addressed by the presider in the dismissal formula.

B. Rites Belonging to the Catechumenate

1. *Anointing* with the Oil of the Catechumens takes place during, not before, the period of the catechumenate. While this rite may be celebrated several times during the catechumenate, it does not take place after the catechumen has been called to election (*RCIA 102-103*).
2. *Blessings and minor exorcisms* are rich prayers that may be used at different intervals throughout the period of the catechumenate. It seems most desirable to do these within the context of the group rather than at public celebrations. Water should never be used to bless the unbaptized. (*RCIA 90-101, NS 8*)
3. The *Rite of Sending to Election* should be celebrated in the parish on the weekend of the First Sunday of Lent. If for some serious reason this is not possible, it may be celebrated on the preceding Sunday (*RCIA 118-137*).
4. The *Rite of Election* is not an optional rite. It is a diocesan celebration presided over by the bishop. Election is not to be celebrated in the parish, for it is the bishop alone who calls the catechumens to the Easter Sacraments. (*RCIA, 121, 122, 125, 127*)

C. Rites Belonging to the Period of Purification and Enlightenment

(Refer also to Appendix I)

1. The *Scrutinies* are celebrated only for the elect on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The baptized candidates celebrate a Penitential Rite which respects the dignity of their baptism. (*RCIA 141-146*)

The rite intends the scrutinies to be celebrated with Cycle A Scriptures. Since Cycle A is used for the scrutinies, it should be used at every parish mass, even at those masses at which a scrutiny is not celebrated. On the First and Second Sundays of Lent, as well as Passion (Palm) Sunday, the current scriptural cycle is retained (*RCIA 146*).

The liturgy at which the scrutiny takes place uses the texts from the *Ritual Mass for the Scrutinies* found in the *Sacramentary* (pp. 826-829). The proper preface of the particular Sunday is retained. The Penitential Rite that is a part of the Introductory Rites is omitted (*RCIA* 146).

2. Each of the three scrutinies must be celebrated with each of the elect. If, for some *serious* reason, and if it is not possible to celebrate the scrutiny at one of the weekday celebrations of the Eucharist, and the elect is not able to go through a particular scrutiny, the pastor is delegated to offer a dispensation. Notification of this dispensation is to be made to the Office of Liturgy in writing. In the case of dispensation from more than one scrutiny, the Office of Liturgy must be contacted for dispensation (Office of the Bishop, August 15, 1993).
3. The *Presentations of the Creed* and *The Lord's Prayer* are made to the elect. For pastoral reasons, they may also be made to the candidates. Normally the Creed is presented during the Third Week of Lent and the Lord's Prayer during the Fifth Week of Lent. These are never added to the scrutinies. The Presentations can be made at services during the week or also during the catechumenate (*RCIA* 104-105, 147-149, 157-162, 178-183, 197-199).
4. The Sacrament of Penance is not celebrated with the elect before Baptism since Baptism is the entrance into the sacramental life of the Church. However proper catechesis is to be provided and neophytes are to be prepared to celebrate this sacrament at some future time.

D. Rites for Baptized, Uncatechized Adults Preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist

Sacramental candidates are those Christian men and women who choose to become members of the Roman Catholic community from another Christian tradition and also those adults who were baptized Roman Catholic but did not receive catechesis and the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. These rites are **not** intended for adult Roman Catholics preparing for Confirmation and adult Roman Catholics returning to the Church after an absence. These guidelines do not apply to Eastern Rite Catholics (Refer to Appendix IV) who are joining the Roman Rite.

1. The *Rite of Welcoming* the candidates may be celebrated at any time as needed. However, the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Lent are to be avoided (*RCIA* 414).
2. The *Penitential Rite* for candidates leads the candidates to the Sacrament of Penance. and so should precede the celebration of the Sacrament. It is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent for those who will be received into the Church during the Easter Season. This may also be celebrated at an appropriate time during the year for those who will enter the Church at times other than the Easter Season. The scrutinies are not celebrated for baptized candidates (*RCIA* 459-463).

3. The Sacrament of Penance is celebrated with the candidates prior to the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion (*RCIA* 482, *NS* 36).
4. With the exception of the Sacraments of Initiation and the Sacrament of Penance, all other rites are optional.

E. Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion with the Catholic Church

The *Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians Into Full Communion with the Catholic Church* is a rite for persons baptized and catechized in another Christian tradition, and who seek full communion with the Catholic Church (*RCIA* 473-486).

"During the period of their doctrinal and spiritual preparation, individual candidates for reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church may benefit from the celebration of liturgical rites marking their progress in formation. Thus, for pastoral reasons and in light of the catechesis in the faith which these baptized Christians have previously received, one or more of the rites included in Part II (Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist) may be celebrated as they are presented or in similar words" (Paragraph 478). However, the rite is so arranged that no greater burden than necessary is required for the establishment of communion and unity (*RCIA* 473).

Any priest who receives candidates into Full Communion must confirm them (*RCIA* 481, *General Faculties of Priests of the Diocese of Orlando* # II and III). This also includes children of catechetical age. Confirmation, must not be delayed.

However, at anytime other than the Easter Vigil, if candidates were baptized Catholic, permission from the bishop must be obtained. Please refer to Appendix IV for sample letter of request.

If however, such Baptized Roman Catholics will be admitted to Confirmation and Holy Communion **at the Easter Vigil**, priests who are the principal celebrants in the missions and parishes of the Diocese of Orlando are given the faculty to confirm at the Easter Vigil persons over the age of 7:

1. Are already baptized Catholic or have previously been received into the Full Communion of the Church
2. Are now properly prepared and catechized by having participated in the parish's RCIA or comparable process
3. Have not been previously confirmed

A notation should be made in the parish's Confirmation Register: "Special Faculty, c.884."

F. Combined Rites

When celebrating any of the combined rites for catechumens and candidates, *clear* distinctions must be made between the two groups (RCIA 506).

G. The Triduum and Elect

Preparation Rites

- a. Holy Saturday is a day of prayer and fasting. Practical preparation should not overshadow spiritual preparation (RCIA 185).
- b. Preparation Rites are found in the RCIA #185 to #205, Care should be taken not to duplicate anything previously celebrated.
- c. Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens no longer takes place on Holy Saturday; this should be celebrated sometime before Election.

H. The Sacraments of Initiation

1. For celebrating the Easter Vigil refer to RCIA #243 if only the elect are receiving the sacraments of initiation.
2. Refer to RCIA #594 if this is a combined celebration of the sacraments of initiation for the elect and *Rite of Reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church* for candidates.
3. Symbols: "Renewal requires the opening up of our symbols, especially the fundamental ones of bread, wine, water, oil, the laying on of hands, until we can experience all of them as authentic and appreciate their symbolic values" (*Built of Living Stones*).

A full experience of sacrament is enhanced through a rich use of symbols. Sacramental symbols are intended to speak to our senses.

I. Mystagogy

This period of Sacramental reflection and catechesis rightly includes parish celebrations and preparation for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance (RCIA 244-251).

II. CATECHETICAL GUIDELINES

(Refer to Appendix V)

A. Period of Inquiry (Pre-catechumenate) (Paragraphs 41-47)

1. ~~The~~ ~~agenda~~ agenda for the period of inquiry (pre-catechumenate) is set by the inquirers. It is a time for sharing their story of faith and to raise their questions. During this time they are introduced to the prayer and worship of the Catholic community. Just as they share their story, we share with

them the story of our faith as found in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures (Old and New Testament). Through this interaction they are able to connect their story with God's story and enter into an initial conversion or call to change.

2. *Atmosphere*. This period should be very relaxed and informal, characterized by openness and hospitality, including refreshments. This period is not to be a lecture series on the main points of the Catholic faith. Rather it is to be a time for the inquirers to surface their questions about the Church. A living room environment is most conducive for this interaction to occur.

3. *Time*. The time an individual will spend in this period is relative to the background and life experience of the person in relationship both to God and to the faith community. Thus, there is no set length of time for this period.

4. *Diocesan policy on annulments and admittance into the catechumenate*. In the Diocese of Orlando, no one may proceed beyond the period of evangelization and pre-catechumenate until all impediments to baptism or reception into the Church have been removed. An individual and/or his or her spouse would have to be granted the necessary annulment(s) or other declarations of nullity, and their present civil union would have to be convalidated before they could celebrate any of the rites. (Office of the Bishop, April 14, 1989)

5. *Interview*. Part of the catechetical process during this, and subsequent periods, is the individual interview to help discern when a person is ready to celebrate the rite. Questions during the pre-catechumenate interview should focus on whether they worship with the community and how their prayer life is developing.

6. *Role of the Pastor*. It is the overall responsibility of the pastor (and those associated with him in pastoral ministry) to insure that catechumens and/or candidates are properly prepared to complete initiation and be received into full communion. Pastors and parochial vicars are to be involved intimately in the process of initiation.

B. Period of the Catechumenate (Paragraphs 75-80)

1. *Ritual catechesis*. After celebrating each of the rites of the catechumenate, some time should be spent reflecting together (as a group) on how the catechumens have experienced God, Christ, and the Church in the various rites.

2. *Dismissal catechesis*. The catechumens are to be dismissed from weekly Sunday worship after the homily. Together with a facilitator, the catechumens are called to reflect more deeply on the Liturgy of the Word they celebrated with the parish assembly. This process is called "Breaking Open the Word" and is a time to reflect upon and process what they have heard and celebrated. The agenda for this period is the liturgical season and the *Lectionary*.

3. *Catechetical formation*. This period helps the catechumens integrate their life within the framework of the life and teaching of the Church. Doctrinal issues naturally arise from reflection upon the Sunday Liturgy of the Word; thus it would be inappropriate to structure the catechesis by focusing only on a book of instruction or a specific textbook. It is also a time of formation for the sacraments of initiation, a time to enliven faith, and a time for passing on information. During this period we share what it means to be Catholic and show how the richness of our faith tradition helps to inform and shape all of our lives. Principles of adult education should be respected throughout the process. Catechumens will raise the questions needed to explore the mystery of God in their lives and reflect on how that experience connects with the Catholic faith. During this period they should be introduced to service (as experienced and shared in the parish community) as a part of the baptismal call to perfection. This service should not be a liturgical ministry, rather it should be outreach service to the poor, the needy, the suffering Body of Christ in our world.

C. Period of Purification and Enlightenment (Paragraphs 118-128, 141-149)

1. *Ritual catechesis*. These are reflections with the elect following the *Rites of Election*, the *Scrutinies* and the *Presentations*.

2. *Catechesis*.

a. *Dismissal catechesis* continues to be an essential part of this period.

b. *Catechetical formation*. During this period catechesis is different than that of the other periods. It presupposes that the person is ready to enter into a baptismal commitment, and thus the focus should be closer to a retreat experience than to a catechetical experience. The focus of this time is the gracious presence of God in our lives and the corresponding side which reminds us of how we have failed to respond to that gracious presence. The reality of sin is to be named, and we are to see how we have, and have not, responded to God's love. It is a time to further deepen the conversion experience. The

Scrutinies are essential to the process of purification and enlightenment. This period is a time to support the elect on their

journey as they reflect on sin, alienation, grace, and forgiveness. We must remember to keep the focus on God's love rather than on our sin. Prayer and fasting are enriching components of this period.

D. Sacramental Candidates (Catechized and Uncatechized)

1. *Catechized Candidates.* Candidates for full communion with the Catholic Church often come to the Catholic Church having been well catechized in the Christian tradition. Only that catechesis which is necessary for their coming into full communion is to be required. For some persons this may be minimal because of their past experience in the Catholic or other Christian faith communities.

2. *Uncatechized Candidates.* Some candidates for full communion may require more extensive catechesis. They may participate in the catechesis of the catechumenate. However, their status as baptized members of the Church must be respected throughout the process.

3. *Rituals.* (See Liturgical Guidelines D & E) Special rites mark the process of coming into full communion in the Catholic Church or completing Christian initiation for those who are already baptized. Ritual catechesis is to take place following each of these rites. The distinctions between the previously baptized and the unbaptized should be respected throughout the catechetical process when persons of both experiences are present.

E. Period of Mystagogy (Paragraphs 244-251)

1. *Content.* This period is a time to reflect on the rich symbols of faith that have been experienced during the initiation rites. The emphasis should be on the sacraments and how one integrates a sacramental life with all of life. This is a time for wonderment in the face of mystery.

2. Time

a. Easter to Pentecost is a period to reflect weekly on the sacraments experienced.

b. In the neophyte year the newly initiated continue to meet, at least monthly, to be further supported on their journey in faith. Again, they should set the agenda of the topics that they wish to discuss. Often they go back to things already discussed, but now they come to them with new insight and meaning and are looking for further clarification. By the end of the neophyte year they should be fully integrated into the faith of the community in terms of its liturgical, educational, ministerial, and communal life.

APPENDIX I

THE LENTEN SEASON

First Sunday Parish celebration: *Rite of Sending to Election*

Diocesan celebration: *Rite of Election*: **mandatory rite**

Second Sunday Penitential Rite for sacramental candidates
(Those previously baptized who will enter
the Church during the Easter season)

Third Sunday First scrutiny (for the unbaptized elect) **mandatory rite**

Third Week of Lent Presentation of the Creed

Fourth Sunday Second scrutiny: **mandatory rite**

Fifth Sunday Third scrutiny: **mandatory rite**

Fifth Week of Lent Presentation of the Lord's Prayer

Palm (Passion) Sunday Dismissal of the elect

Triduum Thursday - Dismissal of the elect

Friday - Dismissal of the elect

Vigil - Celebration of the Easter

Sacraments of Initiation: : **mandatory rite**

Period of Mystagogy Pentecost - Parish celebration for the neophytes

In the Fall - Diocesan celebration for the neophytes

APPENDIX II

BAPTISM

1. Since Baptism cannot be repeated, conditional Baptism or re-Baptism should be done only after a thorough investigation establishes that the baptism in question did not take place, or that it was invalid or unless there is *serious* doubt.
2. If water and the trinitarian formula were used, one can presume that the intention of the minister was to do what the Church does when it baptizes unless there are indications to the contrary.
3. Baptism is ordinarily proved by means of a Baptismal Certificate. If such a certificate is not available, the testimony of a reliable witness, someone who was present at the ceremony, is acceptable. The oath of the baptized person can also be accepted as proof as long as the baptism took place after the person was seven years of age.
4. If a conditional Baptism needs to be done, it should not be done at the Easter Vigil. The conditional baptism should be prefaced with "If you are not baptized, I baptize you in the name..."
5. The following are some non-Catholic churches which have valid Baptisms: All Eastern non-Catholic (Orthodox), Adventist, African Methodist Episcopal, Amish, Anglican, Assembly of God, Baptist, Evangelical United Brethren, Church of the Brethren, Church of God, Congregational Church, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, Liberal Catholic Church, Old Catholic, Old Roman Catholic, Church of the Nazarene, Polish National Church, Presbyterian Church, Reformed Churches, Lutheran Church, United Church of Christ, and Episcopal.

The following are some churches without valid Baptism: Apostolic Church, Bohemian Free Thinkers, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Christian Scientist, Church of Divine Science, Masonic (no baptism at all), People's Church of Chicago, Quaker, Salvation Army, Pentecostal Churches, Christadelphian, Jehovah's Witness, Unitarian, Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon). (Although the majority of Mormon baptisms are invalid, some do use a trinitarian formula. Each case should be carefully investigated.)

Compiled from *The Pastoral Companion* by John M. Huels, O.S.M., J.C.D.

APPENDIX III

EASTERN RITE CATHOLICS

In order for a person to transfer from an Eastern Rite Catholic Church, the pastor needs to write a letter of request to the bishop, who will then process the application. The person does not need to be initiated since their celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist is valid. No record of this needs to be kept in the parish.

A person who has left the Catholic Church by formally entering another church must make a formal profession of faith to return to the Catholic Church.

PARISH RECORD BOOKS

1. Each parish should have a registry book that contains the names of all of those who have been received into the catechumenate, even if they never finish the initiation process.
2. After the initiation ceremony, the names and records of all should be recorded in the parish Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion Registers. Women should be recorded under their maiden names with their married names recorded second. *Professions of Faith* should be recorded in the Baptism Register with the information from the Baptism recorded in the appropriate spaces and a note in the end note column for information regarding the *Profession of Faith*.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONFIRM BAPTIZED BUT UNCATECHIZED ROMAN CATHOLICS

Dear Bishop:

I do, hereby, request that you grant _____ (pastor/associate) of _____ Church, faculties to confirm _____ (name/s), who is/are baptized, and heretofore, (an) uncatechized Roman Catholic(s) at the Easter Vigil on _____ (date) at _____ (time).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Name
Title