

## §200 THE BAPTISMAL CATECHUMENATE

*When celebrating infant Baptism, the Church looks to the parents whose home must become the place where faith and conversion will be nurtured in the child. While the initiation of infants may be celebrated at different times during the year, the celebration always reflects the spirit of the Paschal Mystery, the death and rising of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*The Rite of Baptism for Children is used exclusively for the initiation of infants, that is, those below catechetical age (which is at or about 6 or 7 years old). At the same time, the Church's theology and pastoral care of infants and their parents is influenced by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Since the initiation of adults is first in focus and sets the norms for pastoral care with infants, this document will treat it first.*

*What follows here is intended to assist all communities and other institutions in the full implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the Rite of Baptism for Children. What is provided here is intended to highlight some key areas of concern for our local Church. In promoting a consistent practice in regard to the Sacraments of Initiation, the intent is that the vision behind these rites will be strengthened.*

## §201 RITUAL BOOKS APPROVED FOR USE WITH THE BAPTISMAL CATECHUMENATE

*With the publication of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] began the practice of publishing ritual books in both English and Spanish. For the baptismal catechumenate, there are two separate books because of the many pages. In both vernacular editions, the numbering is uniform and corresponds to the same pastoral note, rubric, or prayer.*

**§201.1. Policy.** The English translation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 1988 edition, approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, shall be used with the baptismal catechumenate when English is used.

**§201.2. Policy.** The Spanish translation of the *Rito de Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos*, 1991 edition, approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, shall be used with the baptismal catechumenate when Spanish is used.

### **Procedures**

- a) Pastoral ministers may make use of both vernacular translations when bilingual celebrations occur, making suitable adaptations as needed for good celebration.
- b) When rites of the baptismal catechumenate require the use of an additional language, an approved ritual book by another conference is used.

## §202 SEQUENCE AND RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

**§202.1. Policy. Required Use of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*** The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* shall be normative and shall be the standard for Christian Initiation in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. Every parish, school, and institution shall be prepared to minister to those who seek Christ by either full initiation, completion of initiation, or reception into the Church.

**Commentary.** Fuller definition of terms used in the above policy:

- **Full initiation** – refers to a previously unbaptized person of catechetical age seeking the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- **Completion of initiation** – refers to a previously uncatechized baptized Catholic of catechetical age seeking both Confirmation and Eucharist.
- **Reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church** refers to those baptized in a separated Church or ecclesial community seeking unity by profession of faith, Confirmation (almost always), and Eucharist.

### Procedures

- a) The parish pastoral council (and the similar body in the school or institution), which shares in the pastoral concern for living the Christian life, makes every effort to see that the vision, methods, and pastoral care in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* becomes a consistent and well integrated part of local faith and life that fosters Christian discipleship.
- b) The parish, school, or institution provides a complete and thorough formation for catechumens (the unbaptized over the age of 6 or 7 years). This includes the first evangelization that can lead to genuine conversion, the opportunity for spiritual counsel or direction, suitable catechesis accommodated to the liturgical year, familiarity with the Christian way of life, the celebration of the rites, formation in private prayer and public worship, and the opportunity to “learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church” [RCIA, nos. 37 and 75].
- c) When resources of parishes, schools, or institutions do not permit them to maintain their own catechumenal process, they may collaborate with others to provide one well-developed process for Christian Initiation of adults and children of catechetical age for the area. In these instances, however, every effort is made to maintain connections to the parish from which a catechumen comes. Rites are ordinarily celebrated in the catechumen’s own parish [RCIA, nos. 45, 75, 80, 145 and NSCUSA, no. 4].

**§202.2. Policy. Rites Are Integral** The major rites provided for catechumens and candidates cannot be omitted because the Liturgies of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* are integral to the whole Christian Initiation process. They shall be well prepared so that they will inspire the faithful and effectively touch the lives of those who are the focus of the rites.

**§202.3. Policy. Sequence of the Sacraments** Within the baptismal catechumenate, the Sacraments of Initiation must be celebrated and received in this order: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

*Commentary.* Concerning the sequence of the Sacraments, see canon 842§2; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], no. 206; and National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA], nos. 14, 18, and 19.

**§202.4. Policy. Celebrated at One Liturgy** Within the baptismal catechumenate, the three Sacraments of Initiation must be celebrated in order and within a single Liturgy, usually during the Easter Vigil.

*Commentary.* Concerning celebration during the same Liturgy, see Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], no. 207 and National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA], no. 14.

#### **Procedure**

*Permission of the diocesan Bishop is required for celebrating Christian Initiation apart from an Easter Vigil. See policy **Book IV §202.7 Celebration outside the Usual Time** below for policy and procedures.*

**§202.5. Policy. Places for Baptism** Baptism shall be celebrated in a parish church or a chapel using the baptismal font or a suitable font set up for the occasion.

#### **Procedures**

- a) The general practice is for adults to be baptized in their own parish church or the parish or institution in which they became catechumens. Infants are baptized in the parish church of the parents. *See canon 857 on the proper place for Baptism.*
- b) If desired, the font should be large enough to accommodate the immersion of either an adult or an infant or child as well as the minister of Baptism, should he choose to be in the water for that part of the rite. At a minimum, it is constructed to accommodate the pouring of water over the head of an adult or infant as well as the immersion of the head of an adult.

*Commentary.* Concerning the size of the font, see *Christian Initiation, General Introduction [CIGI]*, nos. 22 and 25; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA]*, no. 17; *Book of Blessings, [BB]*, no. 1085 in the “*Order for the Blessing of a Baptistery or of a New Baptismal Font*” concerning the latest universal legislation on the matter; as well as the ritual texts for Baptism. See also *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship [BLS]*, nos. 66-69.

- c) All the elements for church building, church renovation, and church care and maintenance are covered by diocesan policy and procedures found in Policy Book 5.

*See policy **Book V §700 Extraordinary Expenditures for Repairs, Renovations or New Constructions for Parishes, Schools and Agencies** for specific diocesan details.*

**§202.6. Policy. Methods for Baptism** Baptism must be celebrated either by immersion of the whole body or of the head three times or by the pouring of water three times (the matter) with the proper words (the form) found in the ritual book.

*Commentary.* Concerning the method for Baptism, see *Christian Initiation, General Introduction [CIGI], no. 22; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], nos. 213, 226, and 31; and National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA], no. 14.*

**§202.7. Policy. Celebration outside the Usual Time** Permission of the diocesan Bishop must be sought and given in each individual case for the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation outside the Easter Vigil.

*Commentary.* Concerning celebration outside the Easter Vigil, see *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], no. 331. The Bishop may grant the permission requiring an expanded form or an abbreviated form.*

### **Procedure**

A pastor, parochial administrator, Priest-moderator, pastoral facilitator, or catechumenate director requests this permission in writing with the following information included:

- name of the catechumen,
- name of the Priest celebrant,
- name of the parish church or the chapel,
- Sunday date and Solemnity or Feast name,
- time of the Mass,
- the major rites already celebrated by the catechumen, and
- the reason for making this request.

This written request is sent to the diocesan Bishop and copied to the director of the Office for Worship and the Catechumenate. The office can offer guidance on the suitability and the making of this request.

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## §203 ADULT CATECHUMENS

*Commentary.* The norm and the process for the formation and initiation of catechumens are described in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], Part I: Christian Initiation of Adults; nos. 1-251. Adaptations for unbaptized children are found in Part II, Chapter 2: Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age, nos. 252-330.

**§203.1. Policy. “Adult” Defined** All those of catechetical age and older must be considered adults for the purpose of Baptism.

*Commentary.* Concerning the age for catechumens, see canon 852§1; National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA], no. 18; and Responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age for the Province of Chicago (1991), no. 12.

### Procedure

The *Code of Canon Law* gives two ages for Initiation. What is prescribed for adult catechumens is applicable to children who have reached catechetical age (the age of reason), at or about 6 or 7 years, but presumptively by age 7 (per canon 97, §2).

- The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA] is used for adults and children of catechetical age.
- The *Rite of Baptism for Children* [RBC] is used for infants and children below catechetical age, who then follow the customary pattern for Catholic children for the reception of the Sacraments after Baptism.

**§203.2. Policy. “Catechumen” and Other Names Defined** Those adults who are not baptized shall be called by the appropriate name designated for each period of their training and formation.

### Procedures

- a) During the first Period of Evangelization and Pre-catechumenate, one asking about Baptism is called “candidate [for Acceptance]” or “inquirer” or “seeker” and also, less commonly, “sympathizer” [RCIA, nos. 38-39 ff. and NSCUSA, no. 1].

*Commentary.* After the Period of Evangelization and Pre-catechumenate, the Church calls those who are not baptized by different names to reflect progress and new status in the Christian life.

- b) The name **catechumen** is strictly reserved for one who is not baptized and has celebrated the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens [RCIA, nos. 46, 57, 66 ff. and NCSUSA], no. 2].
- c) The name **elect** is reserved for a catechumen who has celebrated the diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion [RCIA, nos. 124 ff.].

- d) The name **neophyte** is reserved for one who has celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation; it is generally used throughout Easter Time and may be used in the first year of mystagogy until the anniversary of initiation [RCIA, nos. 241, 243 ff. and NSCUSA, nos. 22-24]. The neophyte also bears the name faithful as do all the baptized in communion.
- e) The name **convert** is strictly reserved for one who was not baptized as Christian and whose conversion to Christian belief formally begins in the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. It is never used to describe a baptized person who is received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

*See policies **Book IV §205 Baptized but Uncatechized Catholics and Other Christians** and **Book IV §206 Baptized Christians of a Separated Ecclesial Community** below for appropriate names for those who are already baptized.*

**§203.3. Policy. Duty of Preparation for the Sacraments** Suitable preparation for celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation shall be given by the parish that includes the parish school, other Catholic schools, and institutions as designated by the periods and steps in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA].

*Commentary.* Concerning a summary of this suitable preparation, see the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], nos. 4-8, 17-31, and the outline between nos. 35-36.

#### **Procedure**

This preparation attends to the norms of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], the *National Directory for Catechesis* [NDC], and the policies and procedures that follow.

**§203.4. Policy. Collaboration** Since the baptismal catechumenate is the task, not of a few, but of all the baptized, pastors, parochial administrators, Priest-moderators, and pastoral facilitators shall associate with themselves men and women of the parish, school, or institution to collaborate in the formation and initiation of new members.

*Commentary.* Concerning this collaboration, see *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction [CIGI], nos. 7-17; *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], nos. 9-16; and the steps and periods of the rite throughout the ritual text.

**§203.5. Policy. Ministers of the Sacraments** All of the ministers and ministries of Christian Initiation shall be put into use for the pastoral and spiritual benefit of inquirers, catechumens, the elect, and neophytes.

*Commentary.* Concerning ministers and ministries, see *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction [CIGI], nos. 7-17 and *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], nos. 9-16.

**Procedures**

- a) **The Faithful.** Every effort is made so that parishioners understand and show by their concern that the Christian Initiation of adults and children of catechetical age is the responsibility of all the baptized [Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14; CIGI, no. 7 and 16; and RCIA, nos. 4 and 9].
- b) **Sponsors.** The parish, school, or institution prepares, trains, and chooses a sponsor (Latin "sponsor") or sponsoring household for each inquirer and catechumen. This is a temporary ministry that begins in the Period of Evangelization and Pre-catechumenate and usually concludes just prior to the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion and the Period of Purification and Enlightenment [RCIA, no. 10].

*Commentary.* *Sponsor is a temporary ministry and is usually a member of the parish or institutional community.*

- c) **Godparents.** The parish, school, or institution prepares, trains, and affirms the catechumen's choice of a godparent (Latin "patrinus" and variants) or godfather and godmother. This permanent ministry begins prior to the parish Rite of Sending and the diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion and includes the rites and formation during Lent, Easter Time, and mystagogy [CIGI, nos. 8-10 and RCIA, no. 11].

*Commentary.* *Concerning godparents, the norms of canons 873 and 874 apply. The godparent:*

- *is either male or female or one of each if there are two,*
- *has completed the sixteenth year of age,*
- *is a fully initiated Catholic,*
- *leads a life in harmony with the faith and the permanent role to be undertaken,*
- *is not bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared, and*
- *is not the father or the mother of the one to be baptized.*

*The catechumen may choose the sponsor from the Period of the Catechumenate to become the godparent. This, however, is not required or expected.*

- d) **Bishop.** The diocesan Bishop oversees and promotes the catechumenate. He grants permissions for pastoral need and issues decrees and dispensations as required. He also normally presides at the diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion [CIGI, no. 12; RCIA, nos. 12, 34, and 331; and *Responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age for the Province of Chicago* (1991), nos. 19 and 25-26].
- e) **Priests.** Pastors, Priest-moderators, and parochial administrators oversee the parish catechumenate, attend to the pastoral and personal care of those preparing for Baptism, approve the choice of godparents and willingly listen to and help them, and celebrate well the many rites throughout the course of the catechumenate [CIGI, nos.

11 and 13-17 and RCIA, nos. 13-14]. Parochial vicars assist as delegated. Where applicable, the pastoral facilitator oversees these tasks in consultation with the Priest-moderator in the parish without a pastor.

- f) **Deacons.** Deacons assist the parish catechumenate in ways in keeping with the office, particularly in the areas of the apostolic life, charity and justice, and Christian service [CIGI, nos. 11 and 14-15 and RCIA, no. 15].
- g) **Catechists.** The parish, school, or institution prepares and sees to the training and formation of catechists attuned to the needs of adults and children of catechetical age [RCIA, no. 16].
- h) **Catechumenate Director.** The parish, school, or institution prepares and sees to the training and formation of a director to oversee the parish, school, and institution efforts. The director is well prepared for this ministry and works in close collaboration with the pastor and pastoral staff and all the ministers as well as the pastoral council and liturgy committee.
- i) **“The Team”.** Although the ritual text does not explicitly provide for a local board, commission, or team, it is both a common and helpful practice encouraged by the conference and the diocese. Without usurping the role of all the baptized, this team provides special intense ministry for those preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation and oversees this training and formation for the parish, school, or institution. It collaborates with other bodies responsible for Liturgy, service, parish life, etc. [Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, nos. 14-15].

**§203.6. Policy. Catechists for the Baptismal Catechumenate** Catechists, who are prepared, shall be properly deputed by their pastor, parochial administrator, or Priest-moderator to lead prayer and teach in keeping with this office. This includes leading minor exorcisms and blessings as well as other prayers.

**Commentary.** *Concerning these catechists, see Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], no. 16, 91, and 96; Book of Blessings [BB], nos. 519-521; National Directory for Catechesis [NDC]; and Responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age for the Province of Chicago (1991), no. 20.*

*Catechists may lead prayer and teach in keeping with this office by seeing that the prayer and teaching are (a) filled with the spirit of the Gospel, (b) adapted to the liturgical signs and the cycle of the Church’s year, (c) suited to the needs of the inquirers and catechumens, and, as far as possible, (d) enriched by local traditions [RCIA, no. 16].*

### **Procedures**

- a) Catechists for the baptismal catechumenate take part with other parish catechists in the annual parish Blessing of Those Appointed as Catechists, usually held on the third Sunday in September as Catechetical Sunday.



*Commentary.* Concerning this blessing, see Book of Blessings [BB], nos. 491-507. See also the annual material prepared by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops [USCCB]. Contact the Office for Catechesis for additional assistance about this annual event.

- b) Catechists take part in the Diocesan Catechist Formation Process overseen by the Office for Catechesis.
- c) Catechists also avail themselves of the training and formation offered by the Office for Worship and the Catechumenate and other offerings of the diocese.
- d) Catechists also participate in the diocesan training for Protecting God’s Children offered by the Office for Safe Environment.
- e) Catechists enrich their own ongoing formation by reading, prayer, workshops and conferences, and participation in the Liturgy.

**§203.7. Policy. Readiness of the Unbaptized Candidates for the Sacraments** The parish, school, or institution shall attend to the sacramental readiness of each catechumen by regular discernment during each period and prior to each major rite.

#### **Procedures**

- a) The pastor or parochial administrator, or Priest-moderator and pastoral facilitator, along with the catechumenate director and team oversee this sacramental readiness.
- b) Those who oversee this sacramental readiness seek the wisdom and advice of sponsors, godparents, and the faithful.
- c) This sacramental readiness is not only determined solely or principally by the parish, institution, or school calendar but also by the needs and dispositions of the individual catechumen as well as the norms and procedures of the Church.
- d) Although the terms “sacramental readiness” and “discernment” are not explicitly used in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, they are implied and are commonly used in this country for preparation of all of the Sacraments.

**§203.8. Policy. Celebrating the Periods and the Rites** The parish, school, and institution as well as the ministers shall attend to and shall use all of the periods, steps, and other liturgical rites provided for the baptismal catechumenate in the ritual text.

*Commentary.* A “period” is a span of time. The first two are open-ended. The third usually coincides with Lent and the fourth with Easter Time but also extends for one year to the first anniversary of Christian Initiation in the Dioceses of the United States of America [RCIA, nos. 4-5 and 7; and NSCUSA, no. 24].

A “step” is a major liturgical rite that both closes the preceding period and opens the one that follows [RCIA, nos. 4-6].

### **Procedure**

The baptismal catechumenate assumes and requires, even when catechumenal preparation takes place in a non-parish setting, that catechumens are introduced into the Christian life of a parish or similar community. Their Initiation and mystagogy, in this way, does not isolate them from the ordinary life of the Church [NSCUSA, no. 4].

**Commentary.** For possible changes to the norm of RCIA Part I, nos. 36-251, see policy **Book IV §207 Christian Initiation in Exceptional Circumstances** below on policy and procedures which the Bishop may permit for suitable pastoral care and policy **Book IV §208 Christian Initiation in Danger of Death** below.

**§203.8.1. Policy. Period of Evangelization and Pre-catechumenate** This first period is not bound to a date-certain start or end but shall begin when an inquirer presents himself or herself.

### **Procedures**

- a) This inquiry, this evangelization and pre-catechumenate may begin at any time and in any season of the year.
- b) This first period lasts as long as is necessary to meet the basic standards of RCIA, nos. 36 and 42.
- c) A parish sponsor or sponsoring family is assigned to each inquirer at a suitable time during this first period. In this way, the sponsor is prepared to take part in an authentic way in the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens.
- d) An essential step for beginning this period is a first meeting or interview with each seeker to determine what may be needed. The diocese provides a template that can serve as a first interview form.
- e) It is essential to raise marriage concerns during the first meeting or interview. Information on next steps is given as needed. Contact the Office for Tribunal Services for assistance.

**§203.8.2. Policy. First Step: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens** This step is not assigned to a certain liturgical day or season but shall be celebrated when both an inquirer and the parish or institution is ready.

### **Procedures**

- a) This rite may take place more than once in the course of a liturgical year as individual inquirers are ready. See RCIA, nos. 18, 28, and 44.

- b) Although not required, it may be celebrated during a Sunday Mass in order to easily accommodate the assembly of the faithful. Since there are no ritual Mass texts in the *Roman Missal* for this rite, the parish attends to the rank of liturgical days, the given readings, and the season of the year to suitably accommodate the rite to the needs of all. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA]*, no. 62 and *Lectionary for Mass [LM]*, no. 743 provide guidance on reading selection, particularly when Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens is celebrated on a weekday.
- c) The names of the catechumens, the sponsors, and the minister as well as the date and place of the celebration are faithfully inscribed in the parish *Register of Catechumens*.

**Commentary.** See *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA]*, no. 46 and policy **Book IV §203.9 Sacramental Records** below concerning the Register of Catechumens.

**§203.8.3. Policy. Period of the Catechumenate** This second period shall be an extended one for suitable pastoral formation and guidance aimed at training catechumens in the Christian life.

#### **Procedures**

- a) This training and formation is achieved by the Church's four pillars of Christian living:
- suitable catechesis accommodated to the liturgical year,
  - familiarity with the Christian way of life,
  - suitable liturgical rites to include Celebrations of the Word of God, Sunday Mass with dismissal and dismissal prayer, and the other Rites belonging to the Period of the Catechumenate; and exposure to the apostolic life of the Church. See Acts of the Apostles 2 (a reading of the Second Sunday of Easter, Year A) and RCIA, nos. 75-76, 79-80, and 81-89 ff.
- b) This length of this period for training and formation, beginning with the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, should be at least one year of formation, instruction and probation. Ordinarily this period should go from at least the Easter Season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year. [Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14; RCIA, no. 77; and NSCUSA, no. 6].

**§203.8.4. Policy. Permission to Shorten the Period of the Catechumenate** In particular cases on the basis of the spiritual preparation of the candidate, the parish or institution must request of the diocesan Bishop permission to shorten the Period of the Catechumenate, described above; in altogether extraordinary circumstances the catechumenate may be completed all at once with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

See Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], nos. 75, 77, and 331; and National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA], no. 6.

### **Procedure**

The Diocesan Office for Worship and the Catechumenate will offer assistance in making this request.

**§203.8.5. Policy. Rites Belonging to the Period of the Catechumenate** Almost every gathering with catechumens shall include a Celebration of the Word of God or an extended period of prayer suited to them.

### **Procedures**

- a) These rites include the Liturgy of the Word of Mass on Sunday, Holydays, and other days as well as those that revisit the Sunday celebration or are specially designed for catechumens. A model and outline for these rites outside Mass is provided at RCIA, nos. 85-89.
- b) Additional rites specific for catechumens are Minor Exorcisms [RCIA, nos. 90-94], Blessings of Catechumens [RCIA 95-97 and *Book of Blessings*, no. 519-521], and Anointing of the Catechumens [RCIA, nos. 98-101].

See policy **Book IV §203.6 Catechists for the Baptismal Catechumenate** above about being properly deputed to lead these prayers.

- c) Although the Presentation of the Creed and the Presentation of the Lord's Prayer normally take place in Lent (Period of Purification and Enlightenment) and the Ephphetha Rite on Holy Saturday, one or all may be anticipated toward the end of the Period of the Catechumenate rather than at the regular times for one or more catechumens for pastoral need and effectiveness [RCIA, nos. 104-105]. Note that an individual catechumen celebrates each of these rites only once.

**§203.8.6. Policy. Parish Rite of Sending** The parish or institution shall determine whether the local rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election is celebrated.

### **Procedures**

- a) For those catechumens discerned ready for the Rite of Election, Lent, and the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, it is recommended for the parish or institution to celebrate this rite prior to the diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

*Commentary.* This diocese celebrates the optional so-called combined rite, "Celebration of the Rite of Election of Catechumens and of the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates Who Are Preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist or Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church" – Election and Call to Continuing Conversion for short – that includes both catechumens and baptized

*candidates. Note that although the combined title is used here and following, catechumens are admitted to the Easter Sacraments by election.*

- b) Though an optional rite for the Dioceses of the United States of America, it does offer the larger local community the opportunity to approve and pray with those who will celebrate the diocesan rite. See RCIA, nos. 106-117 and the annual “Guide for Preparing for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion” from the Office for Worship and the Catechumenate.
- c) In this diocese, the *Book of the Elect* is a parish book. The names of the unbaptized are inscribed in it prior to the diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

**§203.8.7. Policy. Second Step: Diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion** This second step shall close the Period of the Catechumenate, launch the elect into the 40 Day baptismal retreat, and elect them for the Sacraments of Initiation to be celebrated during the next Easter Vigil.

**§203.8.8. Policy. Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion: A Necessary Rite** Each catechumen discerned ready for the Sacraments of Initiation must celebrate the Diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. Further, to be able to take part in Election, nothing must stand in the way or impede the later celebration of the Sacraments during the Easter Vigil.

### **Procedures**

- a) There is a necessary connection between a Rite of Election at the beginning of Lent and the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation during the Easter Vigil 40 days later.
- b) Children of catechetical age are included in this diocesan celebration.
- c) Those who are baptized and will be celebrating rites during the Easter Vigil also take part in this diocesan celebration.
- d) The Office for Worship and the Catechumenate will offer assistance concerning readiness for this rite. For example, a needed declaration of nullity must be already granted in order to celebrate this diocesan rite. See the annual “Guide for Preparing for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion” from the office.
- e) If someone is legitimately prevented from taking part in the diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversation, the Office for Worship and the Catechumenate

will facilitate a dispensation from the diocesan Bishop that decrees election and participation in the rites of Lent and the Easter Vigil.

- f) If an elected catechumen does not celebrate Christian Initiation during the following Easter Vigil and then chooses to delay it until a following year, the same catechumen celebrates again the diocesan rite that immediately precedes the Easter Vigil by the 40 Days of Lent.

**§203.8.9. Policy. Minister of the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion**

The diocesan Bishop is the ordinary minister for presiding over the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion in this diocese.

**Procedures**

- a) It is diocesan practice that the Bishop ordinarily does not delegate individual priests to celebrate this rite in the parish.
- b) If someone is unable to be present at the rite for a serious reason, the Office for Worship and the Catechumenate assists the parish in obtaining a decree of dispensation.

**§203.8.10. Policy. Period of Purification and Enlightenment**

This third period shall usually coincide with Lent.

**Procedures**

- a) In this Lenten period, the faithful renew Baptism already received by prayer and Lenten practices and the elect prepare for their Christian Initiation.
- b) The following rites of this period, as well as the preparation for the reflection after, suitably fill the 40 Days of Lent. Lent is not the time for formation and catechesis that properly belongs in the Period of the Catechumenate.

**§203.8.11. Policy. The Three Scrutinies**

Chief among the Lenten rites are the three Scrutinies that shall be celebrated in the proper order and shall use the required proper texts – both readings and prayers.

**Procedures**

- a) The proper texts for these Ritual Masses are found in
- the *Lectioary for Mass* [LM] nos. 745-747, 28, 31, and 34;
  - the *Roman Missal* [RM] in the Ritual Masses and Proper of Seasons sections; as well as
  - the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], nos. 141-146, 150-156, 164-170, and 171-177.

- b) Children of catechetical age are not exempt from the celebration of the scrutinies. See policy **Book IV §204.7 Using the Adapted Rites for Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age** below for details.
- c) The three rites in RCIA Part I are used with adults and children of catechetical age.
- d) RCIA Part II, Chapter 2 Second Step: Penitential Rites (Scrutinies) at nos. 291 ff. provides adapted texts that may be used with children of catechetical age. Although only one rite is given, three rites are celebrated. If the adapted rites are not used, these children celebrate with the adults each of the three rites in RCIA Part I.

**§203.8.12. Policy. Dispensation from Celebrating Some Scrutinies** The celebration of all three Scrutinies, for both adults and children of catechetical age, shall be celebrated with the elect. Should this not be possible, the parish or institution shall request through the Office for Worship and the Catechumenate a dispensation from the diocesan Bishop from one Scrutiny on the basis of a serious obstacle or from two in extraordinary circumstances.

*Commentary.* See Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], nos. 34.3 and 331. Note that only “serious” and “extraordinary” reasons apply for this request; not “pastoral” reasons. This shows the importance of these rites for the benefit of the elect and the faithful.

**§203.8.13. Policy. The Presentations** The presentations shall be celebrated and shall use the required proper texts.

#### **Procedures**

- a) The Presentation of the Creed is preferably celebrated during Mass using the assigned Mass and ritual texts on a weekday in the Third Week of Lent unless it is anticipated prior to the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion [RCIA, nos. 104-105, 147-149, 157-163, and 185.2].
- b) The Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer is preferably celebrated during Mass using the assigned Mass and ritual texts on a weekday of the Fifth Week of Lent unless it is anticipated prior to the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion or deferred to the Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday [RCIA, nos. 104-105, 147-149, 178-184, and 185.2].
- c) The proper texts in the Ritual Masses section of both the *Lectionary for Mass* [LM] and the *Roman Missal* [RM] as well as the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA] are used for these presentations.

**§203.8.14. Policy. Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday** At some time during the day of Holy Saturday, certain rites shall be chosen and arranged for the pastoral benefit of the elect.

#### **Procedures**

- a) See *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], nos. 185-205 for the list of rites that may be used, guidance on how to choose, a model outline for celebrating them, and the ritual texts to be used.
- b) These rites presume the parish Priest presides. If that is not possible, suitable adaptations are made.
- c) Members of the faithful may participate and benefit from these preparation rites [RCIA, nos. 185-205].

**§203.8.15. Policy. Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation** The Sacraments of Initiation with adults and children of catechetical age shall be celebrated during the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of the Resurrection of the Lord unless the diocesan Bishop permits otherwise.

#### **Procedure**

Permission of the diocesan Bishop is required in each individual case for celebration at another day and time [RCIA, no. 331].

*See also policy Boo IV §202.7 Celebration outside the Usual Time above.*

**§203.8.16. Policy. A Single Minister for Baptism and Confirmation** For the validity of Confirmation, the same Priest who baptizes the elect at the celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation must also be the one who confirms them. Further, Confirmation must not be withheld or delayed.

*Commentary.* Canon 883§2, that is the universal law, gives the faculty to the Priest who baptizes or receives into full communion an adult or child of catechetical age to also validly confirm. Canon 885§2 requires that the Priest who has this faculty has the duty to use it.

*The desire to include all ordinary ministers in celebrating the Sacraments – for example, Priest A or Deacon B baptizes and Priest C confirms – renders the Confirmation invalid.*

**§203.8.17. Policy. Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy** The parish shall make every effort and provide methods and resources to help neophytes embrace the Christian life as part of the faithful with all the baptized.

*Commentary.* Concerning mystagogy or postbaptismal catechesis, see *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], nos. 244-251 and National Statutes for the Catechumenate, nos. 22-24.

#### **Procedures**

- a) These first efforts for mystagogy are the Sunday Masses of Easter Time.



- b) Brief weekly gatherings may also take place during Easter Time to include other members of the faithful to reflect on the Sacraments of Christian Initiation and the Christian life.
- c) The neophytes also gather at least monthly until the first anniversary of Initiation to deepen their Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian Community.

**§203.9. Policy. Sacramental Records** The parish shall keep accurate sacramental records that follow universal, provincial, and diocesan norms.

*Commentary.* Concerning the parish records, contact the Office of the Archives & Records Management for assistance concerning the “Care and Management of Sacramental Records. See policy **Book IV §900 Sacramental Records** for more detailed policies and procedures. Contact the Office of the Archives & Records Management for assistance.

### **Procedure**

The registers used are:

- Register of Catechumens [RCIA, no. 46]. *This is a permanent journal for the parish or institution that notes the name of the catechumen, the sponsor, the date, and the minister of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. A parish or institution may create its own register or purchase one from a supplier.*
- Baptism Register. *This serves as the “permanent record” for the one baptized and the place for recording this and all subsequent sacramental celebrations.*
- Confirmation Register. *Though a member of the elect must receive all three Sacraments of Christian Initiation in the proper order and within the same celebration, the information noted in the Baptism Register is repeated in this register. See the policies **Book IV §201.1 Sequence of the Sacraments** and **Book IV §201.2 Celebrated at One Liturgy** above.*

**§203.10. Policy. Special Pastoral Considerations for Catechumens** The rights of catechumens as part of the household of Christ shall be respected.

*Commentary.* Concerning these pastoral situations, see Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], nos. 46-47.

### **Procedures**

- a) Marriage of Catechumens: When a catechumen marries an unbaptized person, a catechumen, or a baptized person, the proper rite is used – the Rite of Celebrating Marriage between a Catholic and Unbaptized Person. Consult the Office for Tribunal Services for assistance as needed.

- b) Funeral Rites with Catechumens: When a catechumen dies and Christian Initiation of a Person in Danger of Death [RCIA, nos. 370 ff.] has not been celebrated, the funeral rites of the Church are still accorded. Accommodations are made to texts and rites to reflect the catechumenal status.
- c) Other Blessings and Prayers with Catechumens: The rich treasury of liturgical rites, blessings, sacramentals, and devotions are part of the Church's pastoral care with catechumens. Every effort should be made to include them in these ways of praying.
- d) Special Needs: Those with special needs may require special attention. See policy and procedure in **Policy Book III §504.5.1 Catechesis for Persons with Special Needs** on formation and catechesis when only Baptism is appropriately celebrated.

Refer to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] website <http://usccb.org> for these documents concerning specific help and guidance on how to provide suitable pastoral care:

- *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, 1995;
- *Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities* (e-book), 1978; and
- *Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities, A Framework of Access and Inclusion* 1998.

Contact the Office for Pro-Life Activities and Special Ministries for assistance with special needs ministry.

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**Primary Resources:**

The following are universal and particular law for the baptismal catechumenate.

*Christian Initiation, General Introduction [CIGI]* (1969, emended 1974)

- This short document gives the basic theological understanding for the Sacraments of Initiation, the dignity of Baptism, offices and ministries, requirements, and adaptation.
- It is included in the front pages of both the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA] and the *Rite of Baptism for Children* [RBC] as well as other places.

*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA] (1988)

- This ritual book provides not only the many rites and prayers used in the initiation process; it also gives the basic vision, method, and norms for doing the baptismal catechumenate.
- Every minister of initiation should have a personal copy and needs to be familiar with it.

*Rito de la Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos* (1991)

- This is the edition of RCIA produced and approved for use in the dioceses of the United States of America. No other Spanish translation may be used in the dioceses of this conference.

*National Statutes for the Catechumenate* [NSCUSA] (1988)

- These statutes, required by universal law, were approved by the conference and confirmed by the Apostolic See. They are normative for every diocese of the conference.
- This is included in Appendix III in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA]. This same Appendix III also cites helpful texts from Vatican Council II and the *Code of Canon Law* in the Documents section.

*National Directory for Catechesis* [NDC], especially Chapter 5 (2005)

- Gives the Church's vision for catechesis, its various stages, and the impact of the baptismal catechumenate as source of inspiration for all catechesis.

*Lectionary for Mass*, second typical edition [LM] (1998 and 2001)

- LM, Volume I provides the biblical texts for Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and the Saints. They are a primary source for catechesis and formation in the Period of the Catechumenate as well as the steps and periods that follow.
- LM, Volume IV provides the biblical texts for the various Ritual Masses for the Conferral of Christian Initiation.

*Roman Missal, Third Edition* [RM] (2011)

- The prayers are also a primary source for catechesis and formation in the Period of the Catechumenate as well as the steps and periods that follow.

- The missal provides the additional prayers not already part of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA] for the various Ritual Masses for the Conferral of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.

*Responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age for the Province of Chicago* (1991)

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## §204 CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

**Commentary.** *The norm and the process for the formation and initiation of unbaptized children of catechetical age are described in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], Part I: Christian Initiation of Adults; nos. 1-251. The adaptations for these children are found in Part II, Chapter 1: Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age, nos. 252-330. These children are and must be treated as catechumens.*

**§204.1. Policy. “Catechetical Age” Defined** Children at or about 6 or 7 years, but presumptively by age 7 shall be considered of catechetical age (per canon 97, §2).

**Commentary.** *See policy Bool IV §203.1 “Adult” Defined above for policy and procedure concerning the two ages for initiation, the two ritual books, and the norm for “catechetical age”.*

*Concerning the age for catechumens, see canon 852§1; National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA], no. 18; and Responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age for the Province of Chicago (1991), no. 12.*

### Procedures

- a) Once an unbaptized child reaches catechetical age, the *Rite of Baptism for Children* [RBC] may no longer be used for reception of the Sacraments.
- b) Unbaptized children of catechetical age presented for Baptism, because they are true catechumens, are treated in suitable ways that will be different than children baptized in infancy and raised within Catholic households.
- c) This age includes pre-adolescents to about age 12 or 13. See the precedents of the *Lectionary for Masses with Children*, for use with children to middle school age, and canon 863 that defers the Baptism of those 14 and older to the diocesan Bishop (in this diocese, however, the faculty is granted to pastors and parochial vicars to Baptize those who are fourteen years of age and older – see *policy Book IV §1700 Faculties* below).

**§204.2. Policy. Duty of Preparation for the Sacraments** The formation for unbaptized children of catechetical age shall follow the general pattern of the baptismal catechumenate.

*See the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], no. 253.*

**Procedures**

- a) The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA] provides the necessary theological, liturgical, and pastoral framework for ministry with these children.
- b) There should be no attempts to “hurry these children along” or have them “catch up” with the formation of the Catholic children who are their peers. In responding to God’s grace, appropriate time and suitable formation should be provided by the parish to both the children as well as to their parents and families for worthy reception of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Given their young age, a catechumenate for children may need to be longer than one designed for mature adults.

**§204.3. Policy. Permission of Parents or Legal Guardians** Permission of the parents or legal guardians, or at least one of them, shall be required for accepting children into catechumenal formation and before celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation.

**Procedure**

Parents or legal guardians as well as other members of the family should be encouraged to participate with these children in the preparation and formation to the extent possible. This support, influence, and example of living the Christian life is a necessary component of this formation.

*See the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], no. 254 and the Code of Canon Law, canon 868.*

**§204.4. Policy. Ministers of the Sacraments** All of the ministers and ministries of Christian Initiation shall be put into use for the pastoral and spiritual benefit of unbaptized children of catechetical age, their parents or guardians, and their families.

**Procedures**

- a) As with adults, collaboration with many is necessary. See policy **Book IV §203.4 Collaboration** and its accompanying note above.
- b) The initiation of children of catechetical age is always understood within the larger framework of the parish community. The parish staff and other parish groups will want to work closely with parents to provide a healthy and effective environment within which young children and pre-adolescents can grow in age, wisdom, and grace. Parish efforts in religious formation, youth, and family ministry as well as Liturgy need to be coordinated in order to provide a consistent and well-integrated vision and pastoral approach.

- c) Although the parish has only one unified baptismal catechumenate, there may be suitable components for age groups and/or for family approaches. There is, however, no “RCIC” or “Rite of Christian Initiation of Children”.
- d) Should these children be enrolled in the parish Catholic school, the faculty and staff will also collaborate with the other ministers in this formation.
- e) Sponsoring peers and even households will be a blessing and benefit in this formation since the ritual texts presume the children of catechetical age will be joined with Catholic peers as a supportive group of companions [RCIA, no. 254].

**§204.5. Policy. Readiness of the Unbaptized Candidates for the Sacraments** As with older catechumens, the parish, school, or institution shall attend to the sacramental readiness of each catechumen of catechetical age by regular discernment during each period and prior to each major rite.

**§204.6. Policy. Celebrating the Periods and the Rites** As with older catechumens, the parish, school, and institution as well as the ministers shall attend to and shall use all of the periods, steps, and other liturgical rites provided for the baptismal catechumenate in the ritual text.

**§204.7. Policy. Using the Adapted Rites for Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age** The adapted rites for the Christian Initiation of Children of Catechetical Age in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA], Part II, Chapter 1 shall always be used with the following exceptions and guidance.

### **Procedures**

- a) The chapter on Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age is in RCIA Part II of the ritual text titled “Rites for Particular Circumstances”. This chapter (as well as the other four in Part II) does not stand alone. It is always read in light of and in keeping with Part I which is the norm and standard for the baptismal catechumenate.
- b) Acceptance in the Order of Catechumens [RCIA, nos. 260-276] may be used, especially when these children or child do not yet have the experience of the Sunday community. They may, however, celebrate acceptance with the older adults at which ministers make suitable adaptations for the benefit of the children as provided in the ritual texts.
- c) The Rite of Election of Enrollment of Names adapted for children [RCIA, nos. 281-290] is not used in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. The children, who are catechumens and discerned ready for election, take part in the Diocesan Rite of

Election and Call to Continuing Conversion with the older adults celebrated in the cathedral church on the First Sunday of Lent.

These children also take part in the optional parish Rite of Sending to the Bishop prior to the diocesan rite if it is used.

- d) The Penitential Rites (Scrutinies) [RCIA, nos. 291-303] may be used, especially when Catholic peers are celebrating sacramental Penance for the first time (see RCIA, no. 303). Note this part of the ritual book speaks of more than a single celebration. These children celebrate three rites as do the older elect.
- e) It is always appropriate for children of catechetical age to celebrate the Three Scrutinies in Part I on the proper Sunday in Lent with the older elect.
- f) The adapted rite for children, The Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation [RCIA, nos. 304-329], is only used if there are no youth or mature adults celebrating the Sacraments of Christian Initiation at an Easter Vigil. When there are both children of catechetical age and older elect, the rite in Part I is used.

**§204.8. Policy. Duty of the Minister to Confer the Sacraments of Christian Initiation during One Celebration** Children of catechetical age who are the elect shall receive the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation – that is Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist – at the Easter Vigil, together with the older elected catechumens. The Priest shall not withhold the celebration of Confirmation from them. The three Sacraments of Initiation must be celebrated in order and within a single Liturgy, usually during the Easter Vigil.

*Commentary.* See policy **Book IV §202.4 Celebrated at One Liturgy** above with the accompanying notes about RCIA, no. 207, NSCUSA, nos. 14 and 28, and canons 842, 851, 852, 883, and 885.

*While there may be the desire to baptize but then delay Confirmation to a later time, for example, when the Bishop comes to confirm the Catholic children, it is not permitted.*

*Permission of the diocesan Bishop is required in each individual case for celebrating full Christian Initiation apart from an Easter Vigil. See policy **Book IV §202.7 Celebration outside the Usual Time** above for policy and procedures.*

**§204.9. Policy. Post Celebration Pastoral Care and Mystagogy** Following the reception of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, these neophytes of catechetical age shall continue their ongoing Christian formation.

#### **Procedures**

- a) These neophytes of catechetical age are given the Easter Time mystagogy as well as the gatherings during the year following Christian Initiation until the next Easter Vigil.

*Commentary.* See Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults [RCIA], nos. 244-252 and 330; and National Statutes for the Catechumenate [NSCUSA], nos. 22-24.

- b) These neophytes also participate in the religious formation of the parish and the school in age appropriate ways.

**§204.10. Policy. Sacramental Records** The parish shall keep accurate sacramental records that follow universal, provincial, and diocesan norms.

**§204.11. Policy. Special Pastoral Considerations** The parish shall attend to special needs as the law allows for the pastoral benefit of the children, their families, and the parishioners.

**Procedures**

- a) Pastoral care for families is an essential consideration in this catechumenal ministry with children of catechetical age. Formation and suitable catechesis should be family focused whenever possible.
- b) Children with special needs may require special attention.
- c) Contact the Office for Pro-Life Activities and Special Ministries for assistance with special needs ministry.
- d) Migrants are due special and suitable pastoral care. Contact the Office for Hispanic Catechesis and Pastoral Services and its Comité Diocesano de Ministerio Hispano – Diocesan Committee for Hispanic Ministry for assistance.