



Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

Catholic Pastoral Center ♦ 1615 West Washington Street ♦ Springfield IL 62702-4757
(217) 698-8500 ♦ FAX (217) 698-0802 ♦ www.dio.org ♦ worship@dio.org

Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate

CANDIDATES



A GUIDE FOR PREPARING FOR THE RITE OF ELECTION AND CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

REVISED FOR LENT 2020

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I. Introduction

This packet applies exclusively to candidates. A candidate is a person at or over the age of 7 who has already received the Sacrament of Baptism and desires to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church [cf. *RCIA*, nos. 41-74 and 260-276].

A candidate may be a person baptized as a Catholic but never received any catechetical instruction or formation and who has neither received the Sacrament of Confirmation nor that of the Eucharist and now wants to complete his or her initiation already begun at Baptism. These candidates ordinarily participate in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, particularly that of the Rite of Sending and the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

A candidate may also be a person who received Baptism validly in an ecclesial community (*i.e.*, a Protestant denomination). For the validity of Baptism, water must move over the head of a person with the invocation of the Trinitarian formula. To ascertain whether such a person has validly received Baptism, consult the list on page 7 of this packet. If the answer is not easily found on the list, contact the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate.

Non-Catholic candidates are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church through a profession of faith and the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist. Such candidates should *not* be made to wait until the Easter Vigil for the celebration of the Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, but should be received whenever it is discerned they possess Catholic faith and are ready to be received, ideally on a Sunday. Moreover, “it is preferable that reception into full communion not take place at the Easter Vigil lest there be any confusion of such baptized Christians with the candidates for baptism...” (NSCUSA, no. 33).

“In the case of Eastern Christians [whether Catholic or Orthodox] who enter into the fullness of Catholic communion, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith, even if such persons are permitted, in virtue of recourse to the Apostolic See, to transfer to the Latin rite” (*RCIA*, no. 474). Should an Eastern Christian come to you seeking full communion in the Latin rite, contact the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate.

Because they have already received Baptism, candidates are *not* accepted into the Order of Catechumens, nor should they be treated as catechumens; they do *not* go through any of the Scrutinies and their formation and catechetical instruction should be tailored to their specific situations. “Anything that would equate candidates for reception with those who are catechumens is to be absolutely avoided” in order to honor the dignity of Baptism which they have received (*RCIA*, no. 477).

Prior to the completion of their Christian initiation, *all* candidates should make a thorough examination of conscience, confess their sins, and receive sacramental absolution (cf. *RCIA*, no. 482).

No permission or delegation is needed to celebrate reception into the full communion of the Church. The Priest who receives a baptized adult or child of catechetical age, however, *must* also administer the Sacrament Confirmation at the same celebration [cf. NSCUSA, no. 35].

After the call to continuing conversion, these baptized Christians are called “candidates.” After reception into full communion, they are called the “newly received.”

II. The Rite of Election and of the Call to Continuing Conversion

Please read through this packet carefully to find answers to questions you may have concerning the preparation of your candidates for the combined rite of the “Celebration of the Rite of Election of Catechumens and of the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates Who Are Preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist or Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.” If your question is not answered in this packet, please contact the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate.

The long title of this rite clearly indicates the three distinct groups of those who are the focus of this liturgy:

- (1) all catechumens seeking the three Sacraments of Initiation;
- (2) baptized but uncatechized Catholics seeking both Confirmation and the Eucharist; and,
- (3) baptized Christians seeking reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

For brevity, the title is often shortened to the “Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.”

The following universal and particular norms apply, to which diocesan and parish ministers have the duty to attend:

1. Although the Rite of Election is a required step for catechumens, the Call to Continuing Conversion is not; it is one of the optional rites for use in the dioceses of the United States of America. If, however, a baptized Christian will celebrate Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil, it makes good sense to participate in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion at the beginning of Lent.
2. The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois continues the practice of celebrating the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion twice to accommodate the number of people who come. Both celebrations take place in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on the weekend of the First Sunday of Lent:
 - † **Saturday at 7:00 P.M.**, for all parishes and institutions within a 50-mile radius of the Cathedral, and others who choose to come.
 - † **Sunday at 2:30 P.M.**, only for those parishes and institutions beyond the 50-mile radius.

A light reception follows both liturgies in the Cathedral atrium.

3. The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion takes place within a Liturgy of the Word outside Mass. Hence, there are no concelebrants.
4. There is no reserved seating in the Cathedral, except for those with particular needs who have previously contacted the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate. Members of parish delegations are encouraged to sit together on a first come basis.
5. From the beginning of the entrance song through the end of the final song, please do not take still or moving pictures either from the pews or by moving about the church. This respects the nature of liturgical prayer and minimizes distractions during this act of worship.

III. Parish Preparation for the Rite

It cannot be assumed that every candidate is ready for the Call to Continuing Conversion and, consequently, reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. If the call to continuing conversion is fundamentally God's work through the Church, then steps must be taken to foster adequate discernment. What does God have in store for each person? How is the candidate responding to God's call?

A. Discernment of Progress

This is done in an attitude of prayer. It is also a mutual process involving the testimony of sponsors and catechists, the wisdom of pastors and pastoral staff and parish catechumenate team members, as well as the reaffirmation of intention by the candidates themselves. It is a mutual listening to God who calls [cf. *RCIA*, no. 119].

Before the Call to Continuing Conversion is celebrated, the candidates who will be a part of that rite are expected to have:

- a conversion in mind and in action;
- a sufficient acquaintance with Catholic teaching;
- a spirit of faith and charity; and,
- the intention to receive the sacraments of the Church [cf. *RCIA*, no. 120].

B. Sponsors

For a baptized but uncatechized Catholic, it is possible that one or both godparents can serve as the sponsor for the Sacraments of Confirmation. If this is not possible, then another sponsor is chosen.

For a baptized but uncatechized Christian, it is possible that one or both godparents can serve as the sponsor for the Sacrament of Confirmation provided they have been received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Otherwise, one or two sponsors are chosen for the Rite of Sending and/or the Call to Continuing Conversion (if celebrated) and reception into full communion [cf. *RCIA*, no. 483].

For those baptized Christians celebrating the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, the same person who guided the candidate during formation also accompanies the candidate for the rites of Lent and Easter. Otherwise, one or two sponsors are chosen for the Rite of Sending and the Call to Continuing Conversion (if celebrated) and reception into full communion [cf. *RCIA*, no. 483].

IV. Parish Rite of Sending

Since the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion belongs to the diocesan Church, it is normative that the diocesan Bishop presides.

A. Parish Rite of Sending

This rite concerns the sending of catechumens and candidates to the diocesan Bishop and the gathered diocesan Church. Candidates are sent for recognition by the Bishop. The Rite of Sending affords the parish the opportunity to hear the testimony, to express its approval, to rejoice at decisions made for the Sacraments of Initiation, and to assure the candidates of the parish's care and support.

B. Which Rite Should Be Used?

Having two rites from which to choose does not mean any one of them can be used interchangeably.

a) Sending of the Catechumens for Election [cf. *RCIA*, nos. 106-117] is used if there are *only* catechumens preparing for all three Sacraments of Initiation at this coming Easter Vigil. Only the unbaptized are properly called "catechumens." **Only their names are inscribed in the parish Book of the Elect.**

b) Parish Celebration for Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop [cf. *RCIA*, nos. 530-546] is used when there are *both* catechumens *and* candidates who will be ready for sacraments this Easter Vigil.

C. When to Celebrate the Rite of Sending

The ritual text states the Rite of Sending is celebrated at a suitable time prior to the Rite of Election [cf. *RCIA*, nos. 108, 436, 533].

It may take place within a Celebration of the Word of God or within Mass.

The anticipated or morning Masses of the First Sunday of Lent make excellent sense since many of the faithful will be able to participate in the rite. However, the Sunday before Lent begins or a day in that week are alternatives, especially if travel time to the cathedral is a factor.

Ash Wednesday does not seem a suitable day since the receiving of ashes imprints a strong penitential character on the liturgy.

D. The Book of the Elect

Candidates, because they are already baptized, do not sign this book, nor do they have their names inscribed in it.

V. Special Concerns

A. Marriages

We must be certain nothing stands in the way of the completion of Christian initiation. If a declaration of nullity of Marriage is needed, it must be granted prior to the First Sunday of Lent in order to participate in the Rite of Sending and the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. If a declaration of nullity has not yet been granted, *do not* include those names on Form A. If the declaration is granted later in Lent, contact the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate for guidance.

If a convalidation of Marriage is required, it is best to celebrate it as soon as permitted by law, even before Lent and Easter. It *cannot* be celebrated during the Paschal Triduum. Contact the diocesan Office for Tribunal Services about these and other marriage concerns.

B. Conditional Baptisms

If there is a reasonable and prudent doubt whether Baptism has been received and it cannot be resolved after serious investigation and conditional Baptism seems necessary, it must be celebrated privately [National Statutes for the Catechumenate [cf. NSCUSA, no. 37]. It seems best to do this as early as possible in the precatechumenate period prior to the Rite of Welcoming and certainly prior to the Rite of Sending. In that way the baptismal status is clear. Because of the nature of conditional Baptism, it is diocesan practice for the priest to request delegation from the Bishop to confirm. Use **Form B: Request for the Faculty to Confirm a Baptized Catholic** to make this request.

C. Confirmation

It remains the Bishop's preference that catechized adult Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation receive it at the celebration of Confirmation of Adults at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield at 2:00 p.m. on the Solemnity of Pentecost. This coming year, Pentecost will be celebrated on May 31st. Forms for this celebration will be sent out by the Office for Catechesis in the coming weeks. They will also be available on the web site and via Parish Link.

Priests require a special faculty from the diocesan Bishop to confirm a baptized but previously uncatechized Catholic who seeks both Confirmation and the Eucharist. This faculty may be requested using **Form B** to request *either* the *Bishop* to confirm a Baptized but uncatechized Catholic *or* for a *priest* to receive the faculty to confirm a Baptized but uncatechized Catholic. (In order to make this request, such a Catholic must not have been catechized, confirmed, or brought to the Eucharist in the Catholic Church according to the norms of *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, nos. 400-410.)

The same priest who admits into the full communion of the Catholic Church a baptized Christian, *must* also administer the Sacrament of Confirmation [cf. canon 883]. Priests *cannot* withhold Confirmation, nor can they separate Confirmation from Baptism or reception. No "pastoral" reason permits an exception to this universal norm and no dispensation is possible.

D. Those Who Cannot Participate in the Call to Continuing Conversion

When candidates are legitimately prevented from taking part in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, contact the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate to give the reason and receive guidance and to request a dispensation.

E. The Chrism Mass

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at 6:30 p.m. on **Tuesday of Holy Week**, April 7, 2020, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

VI. Churches and Ecclesial Communities with and without Valid Baptism and Confirmation

For the valid reception of Baptism, both the proper matter and form must be used. The proper matter is immersion in water or pouring water over the head three times. The proper form is the Trinitarian formula as found in the liturgical books [cf. canons 849 and 850; *RCIA*, no. 226].

Some separated Churches and ecclesial communities with valid Baptism

All Eastern non-Catholics (Orthodox)
African Methodist Episcopal
Amish
Anglican
Assembly of God
Baptist
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Church of the Brethren
Church of Christ
Church of God
Congregational
Disciples of Christ
Episcopalian
Evangelical
Evangelical United Brethren
Liberal Catholic
Lutheran
Methodist
Old Catholic
Old Roman Catholics
Polish National
Presbyterian
Reformed
United Church of Canada
United Church of Christ
United Reformed
Uniting Church of Australia
Waldensian
Zion

Some ecclesial communities without valid Baptism

Apostolic Church
Bohemian Free Thinkers
Christadelphians
Christian Community (Rudolf Steiner)
Christian Scientists (no baptism)
Church of Divine Science
Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)
Church of the Universal Brotherhood (Doukhobors)
Jehovah's Witnesses
Masons (no baptism)
New Church of Mr. Emmanuel Swedenborg (Church of the New Jerusalem in the USA)
Peoples Church of Chicago
Reunification Church
Salvation Army
Shakers (no baptism)
Society of Friends (Quakers; no baptism)
Unitarians

Communities whose Baptism is doubtful because ministers do not observe a uniform practice and for which investigation is required in each case: Mennonite, Moravian, Pentecostal, and Seventh Day Adventist.

- John M. Huels, OSM. *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry*. Third edition. Quincy IL: Franciscan Press, 1995. Page 342.

Some separated ecclesial communities with valid Confirmation are: All Eastern non-Catholics (Orthodox), Old Catholic Church, and Polish National Church. Consult the diocesan Office for Tribunal Services, the Judicial Vicar, and or the Ecumenical Officer as needed.

VII. Filling Out the Forms

The following forms help parishes and institutions prepare for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. They are mailed with this preparation material to the RCIA coordinators prior to the beginning of Lent. For additional convenience, they are also available from the web site of the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate at <http://www.dio.org/worship/election-and-call.html>.

FORM A – Names and Information [ivory]

Page 1 – Parish or Institution Information

- Fill out a separate form *for each parish*, even if two or more parishes join together for common catechumenal training and formation.
- Correct any errors on the label; fill in the information if no label is attached.
- Fill in the information for the RCIA coordinator.
- Check “NO” or “YES” regarding participation in the rites of Lent and Easter.
- If “NO,” stop here and go to **Form C** and complete it. Mail these two forms to the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate *not later than February 26, 2020*.
- If “YES,” indicate whether the parish is coming to the Saturday or Sunday rite.
- If for any reason the RCIA coordinator will *not* be taking part in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, please list the name, address, and phone number of the delegate or temporary person in charge that day.

Pages 3 through 4 – Common Information

- Provide the names in alphabetical order by last name. Please print, type, or affix a label.
- Check the appropriate age group box.
- Give the name and mailing address.
- List any special needs a candidate may have: accessibility, sign language, etc.

Page 3 – Uncatechized Catholic Candidate Information

- This page is only for **baptized uncatechized Catholics** at and over the age of reason.
- Also fill in **Form B** and attach a complete copy of the Baptism certificate.

Page 4 – Baptized Christian Candidate Information

- This page is for **baptized Christians** of separated Churches and ecclesial communities at and over the age of reason.
- See the list of valid Baptisms on page 8 to resolve questions of validity.
- For issues regarding conditional Baptism, see section V.B above.

FORM B – Request either for the Bishop to Confirm a Baptized Uncatechized Catholic or for a Priest to Receive the Faculty to Confirm a Baptized Uncatechized Catholic
[yellow]

This form is to be completed for those Catholics “who were baptized as infants [that is, between birth and age 6] but did not receive further catechetical formation nor, consequently, the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist” [*RCIA*, no. 400].

- Print additional copies of the form as needed.
- Attach a recently issued copy of the person’s Baptism certificate, with any and all notations. Keep the original in the parish files.
- The candidate may now request to be confirmed:
 - by the Bishop during the Easter Vigil at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (complete box 3), or
 - by the priest during the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday in Easter Time at the parish church (complete boxes 4, 5, 6 and 7).
- If the Catholic has already celebrated First Communion, that is, has been catechized, do *not* use this form. These baptized and catechized Catholics will be confirmed by the Bishop on Pentecost, May 31, 2020, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Office for Catechesis will provide details in the coming weeks.

FORM C – Names of New Catholics...Outside the Usual Times [green]

This form is for listing the names, addresses, and dates of catechumens and candidates who celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church *outside of* the Easter Vigil in the past year.

- Follow the directions on that form.

FORM D – Letter of Testimony to Bishop Paprocki [white]

This form is a convenient way for the sponsor for each candidate to put in writing their discernment. Additional letters of testimony may be completed by members of the team, the pastor, parish life coordinator, friends, etc.

Please make copies of this form as needed and give it to the godparents, sponsors, and others. This brief letter should have the same type of testimony that occurs in the parish discernment process and at the Rite of Sending. The form itself provides some guidance and reminders as to the shape this testimony should take. It should include:

- 1) evidence of how God has been active in the life of the candidate;
- 2) how it seems clear that God has chosen him/her; and,
- 3) how his/her involvement in the training and formation in the Christian life and the desire to become Roman Catholic is a manifestation of God's choice and grace.

Have the completed forms returned to the parish RCIA coordinator for review. Make copies for the parish files and to aid in the giving of testimony during the Rite of Sending.

The parish RCIA coordinator then mails the letters of testimony to the Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate, either along with the other forms or under separate cover. The Office for Divine Worship and the Catechumenate will forward them on to the Bishop.

VIII. Preliminary Worksheet on Affirmation and Testimony for Election and Call

At the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, a liturgy celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, the Bishop asks the following questions. Use this worksheet to help think about and clarify the testimony you will give at both the parish Rite of Sending and the diocesan rite and the letter you will prepare for Bishop Paprocki.

How has this candidate...

1. ...faithfully listened to the apostles' instruction proclaimed by the Church?
2. ...come to a deeper appreciation of baptism, in which he/she was joined to Christ and his Church?
3. ...reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church, which is his/her heritage, and joined the brothers and sisters in prayer?
4. ...advanced in a life of love and service of others?