

CELEBRATION OF THE RITE OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS AND OF THE RITE OF WELCOMING BAPTIZED BUT PREVIOUSLY UNCATECHIZED ADULTS AND/OR EUCHARIST OR RECEPTION INTO THE FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

RECEIVING THE CANDIDATES

507 Those who are to be accepted into the order of catechumens, along with those who are candidates for the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist, their sponsors and a group of the faithful gather outside the church (or inside at the entrance or elsewhere) or at some other site suitable for this rite. As the priest or deacon, wearing an alb or surplice, a stole, and, if desired, a cope of festive color, goes to meet them, the assembly of the faithful may sing a psalm or an appropriate song.

GREETING

508 The celebrant greets the candidates in a friendly manner. He speaks to them, their sponsors, and all present, pointing out the joy and happiness of the Church. He may also recall for the sponsors and friends the particular experience and religious response by which the candidates, following their own spiritual path, have come to this celebration. He uses these or similar words.

Dear friends, the Church joyfully welcomes today those who will be received into the order of catechumens. In the months to come they will prepare for their initiation into the Christian faith by baptism, confirmation, and eucharist.

We also greet those who, already one with us by baptism, now wish to complete their Christian initiation through confirmation and eucharist or to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

For all of these, we give thanks and praise to the God who has led them by various paths to oneness in faith. My dear candidates, you are welcomed in the name of Christ.

Then he invites the sponsors and candidates to come forward. As they are taking their places before the celebrant, an appropriate song may be sung, for example, Psalm 63: 1-8.

OPENING DIALOGUE WITH CANDIDATES FOR THE CATECHUMENATE AND WITH CANDIDATES FOR POST-BAPTISMAL CATECHESIS

509 Unless the candidates are already known to all present, the celebrant asks for or calls out their given names. The names of candidates for the catechumenate are given first, followed by the names of the candidates for post-baptismal catechesis. The

candidates answer one by one, even if, because of a large number, the question is asked only once for each group. One of the following formularies or similar words may be used.

A The celebrant asks:

What is your name?

Candidate:

N.

B The celebrant calls out the name of each candidate.

The candidate answers:

Present.

The celebrant continues with the following questions for the individual candidates for the catechumenate. When there are a large number the candidates may answer as a group. The celebrant may use other words than those provided in asking the candidates about their intentions and may let them answer in their own words: for example, to the first question, "What do you ask of the Church of God?" or "What do you desire?" or "For what reason have you come?", he may receive such answers as "The grace of Christ" or "Entrance into the Church" or "Eternal life" or other suitable responses. The celebrant then phrases his next question according to the answer received.

Celebrant:

What do you ask of God's Church?

Candidate:

Faith.

Celebrant:

What does faith offer you?

Candidate:

Eternal life.

The celebrant then addresses the following questions to the individual candidates for post-baptismal catechesis. Again when there are a large number the candidates may answer as a group. The celebrant may use other words than those provided in asking the candidates about their intentions and may let them answer in their own words. The celebrant then phrases his next question according to the answer received.

What do you ask of God's Church?

Candidate:

To be accepted as a candidate for catechetical instruction leading to confirmation and eucharist (or: leading to reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church).

Celebrant:

What does this period of formation offer you?

Candidate:

A fuller sharing in the life of the Church.

510 At the discretion of the diocesan bishop, the catechumens' first acceptance of the Gospel (which follows in no. 511) may be replaced by the rite of exorcism and renunciation of false worship (nos. 70-72) [see no. 33.2].

CATECHUMENS' FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL

511 The celebrant addresses the candidates for the catechumenate, adapting the following formulary to the answers received in the opening dialogue.

God is our Creator and in him all living things have their existence. He enlightens our minds, so that we may come to know and worship him. He has sent his faithful witness, Jesus Christ, to announce to us what he has seen and heard, the mysteries of heaven and earth.

Since you acknowledge with joy that Christ has come, now is the time to hear his word, so that you may possess eternal life by beginning, in our company, to know God and to love your neighbor. Are you ready, with the help of God, to live this life?

Candidates:

I am.

CANDIDATES' DECLARATION OF INTENT

512 The celebrant then addresses the candidates for post baptismal catechesis, adapting the following formulary to the answers received in the opening dialogue.

Those of you who seek to complete your Christian initiation (or: be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church), are you prepared to listen to the apostles' instruction, gather with us for prayer, and join us in the love and service of others?

Candidates:

I am.

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY

513 Then the celebrant turns to the sponsors and the assembly and asks them in these or similar words.

Sponsors, you now present these candidates to us; are you, and all who are gathered with us, ready to help these candidates follow Christ?

All:

We are.

With hands joined, the celebrant says:

**Father of mercy,
we thank you for these your servants.
You have sought and summoned them in many ways
and they have turned to seek you.**

**You have called them today
and they have answered in our presence:
we praise you, Lord, and we bless you.**

All sing or say:

We praise you, Lord and we bless you.

SIGNING OF THE CATECHUMENS AND OF THE CANDIDATES WITH THE CROSS

514 Next the cross is traced on the forehead of the catechumens (or, at the discretion of the diocesan bishop, in front of the forehead for those in whose culture the act of touching may not seem proper); at the discretion of the celebrant the signing of one, several, or all of the senses may follow. The celebrant alone says the formularies accompanying each signing.

SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD OF THE CATECHUMENS

515 The celebrant speaks to the catechumens and their sponsors in these or similar words.

Celebrant:

Catechumens, come forward now with your sponsors to receive the sign of your new way of life as catechumens.

With their sponsors, the catechumens come one by one to the celebrant; with his thumb he traces a cross on the forehead; then, if there is to be no signing of the senses, the sponsor does the same. The celebrant says:

**N., receive the cross on your forehead.
It is Christ himself who now strengthens you
with this sign of his love.
Learn to know him and follow him.**

All sing or say the following or another suitable acclamation.

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES OF THE CATECHUMENS

516 The signing is carried out by the catechists or the sponsors. (If required by special circumstances, this may be done by assisting priests or deacons.) The signing of each sense may be followed by an acclamation in praise of Christ, for example, "Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!"

While the ears are being signed, the celebrant says:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,
that you may hear the voice of the Lord.**

While the eyes are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,
that you may see the glory of God.**

While the lips are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,
that you may respond to the word of God.**

While the breast is being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,
that Christ may dwell there by faith.**

While the shoulders are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders,
that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.**

[While the hands are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your hands,
that Christ may be known in the work which you do.**

While the feet are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your feet,
that you may walk in the way of Christ.]**

Without touching them the celebrant alone makes the sign of the cross over all the candidates at once (or, if they are few, over each individually), saying:

**I sign you with the sign of eternal life
in the name of the Father, and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Catechumens:

Amen.

517 Next the cross is traced on the forehead of the candidates for confirmation and eucharist (or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church); at the discretion of the celebrant the signing of one, several, or all of the senses may follow. The celebrant alone says the formularies accompanying each signing.

SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD OF CANDIDATES

518 The celebrant speaks to the candidates for confirmation and the eucharist and their sponsors in these or similar words.

Celebrant:

Candidates for confirmation and the eucharist (or: reception into full communion), come forward now with your sponsors to receive the sign of your life in Christ.

With their sponsors, the candidates come one by one to the celebrant; with his thumb he traces the cross on the forehead; then, if there is to be no signing of the senses, the sponsor does the same. The celebrant says:

**N., receive the cross on your forehead
as a reminder of your baptism
into Christ's saving death and resurrection.**

All sing or say the following or another suitable acclamation.

Glory and praise to your, Lord Jesus Christ!

SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES OF THE CANDIDATES

519 The signing is carried out by the catechists or the sponsors. (If required by special circumstances, this may be done by assisting priests or deacons.) The signing of each sense may be followed by an acclamation in praise of Christ, for example, "Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!"

While the ears are being signed, the celebrant says:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,
that you may hear the voice of the Lord.**

While the eyes are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,
that you may see the glory of God.**

While the lips are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,
that you may respond to the word of God.**

While the breast is being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,
that Christ may dwell there by faith.**

While the shoulders are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders,
that you may the gentle yoke of Christ.**

[While the hands are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your hands,
that Christ may be known in the work which you do.**

While the feet are being signed:

**Receive the sign of the cross on your feet,
that you may walk in the way of Christ.]**

Without touching them the celebrant alone makes the sign of the cross over all the candidates at once (or, if they are few, over each individually), saying

**I sign you with the sign of eternal life
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Candidates:

Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

520 The celebrant concludes the signing of the forehead (and senses) with the following prayer.

Let us pray.

**Almighty God,
by the cross and resurrection of your Son
you have given life to your people.**

**Your servants have received the sign of the cross:
make them living proof of its saving power
and help them to persevere in the footsteps of Christ.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R7. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

521 The celebrant next invites the catechumens and candidates and their sponsors to enter the church (or the place where the liturgy of the word will be celebrated). He uses the following or similar words, accompanying them with some gesture or invitation.

N. and N., come into the church, to share with us at the table of God's word.

The Lectionary for Mass or the Bible is carried in procession and placed with honor on the lectern, where it may be incensed.

During the entry an appropriate song is sung or the following antiphon, with Psalm 34:2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 16.

**Come, my children, and listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

INSTRUCTION

522 After the catechumens and the candidates have reached their places, the celebrant speaks to them briefly, helping them to understand the dignity of God's word, which is proclaimed and heard in the church.

Celebration of the liturgy of the word follows.

READINGS

523 The readings of those assigned for the day. According to the norms of the Lectionary, other appropriate readings, such as the following may be used.

FIRST READING

Genesis 12:1-4a - *Leave your country, and come into the land I will show you.*

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 33:4-5, 12-13, 18-19, 20 and 22

R7. (v. 12b) **Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.**

Or:

R7. (v.22) **Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

John 1:41, 17b

We have found the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who brings us truth and grace.

GOSPEL

John 1:35-42 - *This is the Lamb of God. We have found the Messiah.*

HOMILY

524 A homily follows that explains the readings.

PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE

525 A book containing the gospels may be given to the catechumens and the candidates by the celebrant; a cross may also be given, unless this has already been done as one of the additional rites (see no. 74). The celebrant may use words suited to the gift presented, for example, "Receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The catechumens and candidates may respond in an appropriate way.

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

526 Then the sponsors and the whole congregation join in the following or a similar formulary of intercession for the catechumens and candidates.

[If it is decided, in accord with no. 529 that after the dismissal of the catechumens the usual general intercessions of the Mass are to be omitted and that the liturgy of the eucharist is to begin immediately, intentions for the Church and the whole world are to be added to the following intentions for the catechumens and candidates.]

Celebrant:

These catechumens and candidates, who are our brothers and sisters, have already traveled a long road. We rejoice with them in the gentle guidance of God who has brought them to this day. Let us pray that they may press onwards, until they come to share fully in our way of life.

Assisting minister:

That God our Father may reveal his Christ to them more and more with every passing day, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may undertake with generous hearts and souls whatever God may ask of them, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may have sincere and unfailing support every step of the way, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may find in our community compelling signs of unity and generous love, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That their hearts and ours may become more responsive to the needs of others, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That in due time the catechumens may be found worthy to receive the baptism of new birth and renewal in the Holy Spirit and the candidates may be found worthy to complete their initiation through the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist (or: be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church), let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

527 After the intercessions, the celebrant, with hands outstretched over the catechumens and candidates, says the following prayer.

**Almighty God,
source of all creation,
you have made us in your image.
Receive with love those who come before you.
Lead our catechumens to the baptism of new birth,
and our candidates to a deeper share
in the paschal mystery,
so that, living a fruitful life
in the company of your faithful,
they may receive the eternal reward that you promise.**

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

R7. Amen.

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS

528 If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the catechumens are normally dismissed at this point by use of option A or B; if the catechumens are to stay for the celebration of the eucharist, option C is used; if the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the entire assembly is dismissed by use of option D.

A The celebrant dismisses the catechumens in these or similar words.

Catechumens, go in peace, and may the Lord remain with you always.

Catechumens:

Amen.

B As an optional formulary for dismissing the catechumens, the celebrant may use these or similar words.

My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more deeply upon the word of God which you have shared with us today. Be assured of our loving support and prayers for you. We look forward to the day when you will share fully in the Lord's Table.

C If for serious reasons the catechumens cannot leave (see no. 75.3) and must remain with the rest of the liturgical assembly, they, along with the candidates, are to be instructed that though they are present at the eucharist, they cannot take part in it as the Catholic faithful do. They may be reminded of this by the celebrant in these or similar words.

Although you cannot yet participate fully in the Lord's eucharist, stay with us as a sign of our hope that all God's children will eat and drink with the Lord and work with his Spirit to re-create the face of the earth.

D The celebrant dismisses those present, using these or similar words.

Go in peace, and may the Lord remain with you always.

All:

Thanks be to God.

An appropriate song may conclude the celebration.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

529 When the eucharist is to follow, intercessory prayer is resumed with the usual general intercessions for the needs of the Church and the whole world; then, if required, the professions of faith is said. But for pastoral reasons these general intercessions and the profession of faith may be omitted. The liturgy of the eucharist then begins as usual with the preparation of the gifts.

2 PARISH CELEBRATION FOR SENDING CATECHUMENS FOR ELECTION AND CANDIDATES FOR RECOGNITION BY THE BISHOP [OPTIONAL]

The community was of one mind and one heart

530 This optional rite is provided for parishes whose catechumens will celebrate their election and whose adult candidates for confirmation and eucharist or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church will celebrate their recognition in a subsequent celebration (for example, at the cathedral with the bishop).

531 As the focal point of the Church's concern for the catechumens, admission to election belongs to the bishop who is usually its presiding celebrant. It is within the parish community, however, that the preliminary judgment is made concerning the catechumen's state of formation and progress.

This rite offers that local community the opportunity to express its approval of the catechumens and to send them forth to the celebration of election assured of the parish's care and support.

532 In addition, those who either are completing their initiation through the sacraments of confirmation and the eucharist or are preparing for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church are also included in this rite, since they too will be presented to the bishop at the celebration of the rite of election for the catechumens.

533 The rite is celebrated in the parish church at a suitable time prior to the rite of election.

534 The rite takes place after the homily in a celebration of the word of God (see no. 89) or at Mass.

535 In the catechesis of the community and in the celebration of these rites, care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the catechumens and the baptized candidates.

OUTLINE OF THE RITE

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Homily

Presentation of the Catechumens

Affirmation by the Godparents [and the Assembly]

Presentation of the Candidates

**Affirmation by the Sponsors [and the Assembly]
Intercessions for the Catechumens and
Candidates
Prayer over the Catechumens and Candidates
Dismissal of the Catechumens**

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PARISH CELEBRATION FOR SENDING CATECHUMENS FOR ELECTION AND THE CANDIDATES FOR RECOGNITION BY THE BISHOP

LITURGY OF THE WORD

HOMILY

536 After the readings the celebrant gives the homily. This should be suited to the actual situation and should address not just the catechumens and candidates but the entire community of the faithful, so that all will be encouraged to give good example and to accompany the candidates along the path of the paschal mystery.

PRESENTATION OF THE CATECHUMENS

537 After the homily, the priest in charge of the catechumens' initiation, or a deacon, a catechist, or a representative of the community, presents the catechumens, using the following or similar words.

Reverend Father, these catechumens, N. and N., are beginning their final period of preparation and purification leading to their initiation. They have found strength in God's grace and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that they be recognized for the progress they have made in their spiritual formation and that they receive the assurance of our blessings and prayers as they go forth to the rite of election celebrated this afternoon (or: next Sunday [or: specify the day] by Bishop N.

The celebrant replies:

Those who are to be sent to the celebration of election in Christ, come forward, together with those who will be your god-parents.

One by one, the catechumens are called by name. Each catechumen, accompanied by a godparent (or godparents), comes forward and stands before the celebrant.

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS [AND THE ASSEMBLY]

538 Then the celebrant addresses the assembly in these or similar words:

My dear friends, these catechumens who have been preparing for the sacraments of initiation hope that they will be found ready to participate in the rite of election and be chosen in Christ for the Easter sacraments. It is the responsibility of this community to inquire about their readiness before they are presented to the bishop.

He addresses the godparents:

I turn to you, godparents, for your testimony about these candidates. Have these catechumens taken their formation in the Gospel and in the Catholic way of life seriously?

Godparents:

They have.

Celebrant:

Have they given evidence of their conversion by the example of their lives?

Celebrant:

They have.

Celebrant:

Do you judge them to be ready to be presented to the bishop for the rite of election?

Godparents:

We do.

[When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the candidates.]

The celebrant concludes the affirmation by the following:

My dear catechumens, this community gladly recommends you to the bishop, who, in the name of the Christ, will call you to the Easter sacraments. May God bring to completion the good work he has begun in you.

539 If the signing of the Book of the Elect is to take place in the presence of the bishop, it is omitted here. However, if the signed Book of Elect is to be presented to the bishop in the rite of election, the catechumens may now come forward to sign it or they should sign it after the celebration or at another time prior to the Rite of Election.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

540 The priest in charge of the candidates' formation or a deacon, a catechist, or a representative of the community, presents the candidates, using the following or similar words.

Reverend Father, I now present to you the candidates who are beginning their final preparation for the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist (and/or: reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church). They have found strength in God's grace and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that they be recognized for the progress they have made in their spiritual formation and that they receive the assurance of our blessings and prayers as they go forth for recognition by Bishop N. this afternoon (or: next Sunday [or: specify the date]).

The celebrant replies:

Those who are to be recognized, come forward, together with your sponsors.

One by one, the candidates are called by name. Each candidate, accompanied by a sponsor, comes forward and stands before the celebrant.

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS [AND THE ASSEMBLY]

541 Then the celebrant addresses the assembly in these or similar words:

My dear friends, these candidates, already one with us by reason of their baptism in Christ, have asked to be able to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Those who know them have judged them to be sincere in their desire. During the period of their catechetical formation they have listened to the word of Christ and endeavored to follow his commands more perfectly; they have shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters in this community and joined with them in prayer.

And so I announce to all of you here that our community supports these candidates in their desire. Therefore, I ask their sponsors to state their desire. Therefore, I ask their sponsors to state their opinion once again, so that all of you may hear.

He addresses the sponsors:

As God as your witness, do you consider these candidates ready to receive the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist (or: ready to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church)?

Sponsors:

We do.

[When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the candidates.]

542 The celebrant concludes the affirmation by the following:

And now, my dear friends, I address you. Your own sponsors (and this entire community) have spoken in your favor. The Church, in the name of Christ, accepts their testimony and sends you to Bishop N., who will exhort you to live in deeper conformity to the life of Christ.

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

543 Then the community prays for the catechumens and candidates by use of the following or a similar formulary. The celebrant may adapt the introduction and the intentions to fit various circumstances.

[If it is decided, in accord with no. 546, that after the dismissal of the catechumens the usual general intercessions of the Mass are to be omitted and that the liturgy of the eucharist is to begin immediately, the intentions for the catechumens and candidates.]

Celebrant:

My brothers and sisters, we look forward to celebrating at Easter the life-giving mysteries of our Lord's suffering, death and resurrection. As we journey together to the Easter sacraments, these catechumens and candidates will look to us for an example of Christian renewal. Let us pray to the Lord for them and for ourselves, that we may be renewed by one another's efforts and together come to share the joys of Easter.

Assisting minister:

That these catechumens and candidates may be freed from the selfishness and learn to put others first, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That their godparents and sponsors may be living examples of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That their teachers may always convey to them the beauty of God's word, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That these catechumens and candidates may share with others the joy they have found in their friendship with Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That our community, during the (coming) Lenten season, may grow in charity and be constant in prayer, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

544 After the intercessions, the celebrant, with hands outstretched over the catechumens and candidates, says the following prayer.

**Father of love and power,
it is your will to establish everything in Christ
and to draw us into his all-embracing love.**

**Guide these catechumens and candidates
in the days and weeks ahead:
strengthen them in their vocation,
build them into the kingdom of your Son,
and seal them with the Spirit of your promise.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R7. Amen.

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS

545 If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the catechumens are normally dismissed at this point by use of option A or B; if the catechumens are to stay for the celebration of the eucharist, option C is used; if the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the entire assembly is dismissed by use of option D.

A The celebrant dismisses the catechumens in these or similar words.

My dear friends, you are about to set out on the road that leads to the glory of Easter. Christ will be your way, your truth, and your life. In his name we send you forth from this community to celebrate with the bishop the Lord's choice of you to be numbered among his elect. Until we meet again for the scrutinies, walk always in his peace.

Catechumens:

Amen.

B As an optional formulary for dismissing the catechumens, the celebrant may use these or similar words.

My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more deeply upon the word of God which you have shared with us today. Be assured of our loving support and prayers for you. We look forward to the day when you will share fully in the Lord's Table.

- C If for serious reasons the catechumens cannot leave (see no. 75.3) and must remain with the rest of the liturgical assembly, they, along with the candidates, are to be instructed that though they are present at the eucharist, they cannot take part in it as the Catholic faithful do. They may be reminded of this by the celebrant in these or similar words.

Although you cannot yet participate fully in the Lord's eucharist, stay with us as a sign of our hope that all God's children will eat and drink with the Lord and work with his Spirit to re-create the face of the earth.

- D The celebrant dismisses those present, using these or similar words.

Go in peace, and may the Lord remain in you always.

All:

Thanks be to God.

An appropriate song may conclude the celebration.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

546 When the eucharist is to follow, intercessory prayer is resumed with the usual general intercessions for the needs of the Church and the whole world; then, if required, the profession of faith is said. But for pastoral reasons these general intercessions and the profession of faith may be omitted. The liturgy of the eucharist then begins as usual with the preparation of the gifts.

3 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

The body is one and has many members

547 This rite is for use when the election of catechumens and the call to continuing conversion of candidates preparing either for confirmation and/or eucharist or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church are celebrated together.

548 The rite should normally take place on the First Sunday of Lent, and the presiding celebrant is the bishop or his delegate.

549 In the catechesis of the community and in the celebration of these rites, care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the catechumens and the baptized candidates.

OUTLINE OF THE RITE

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Homily

CELEBRATION OF ELECTION

Presentation of the Catechumens
Affirmation by the Godparents [and the Assembly]
Invitation and Enrollment of Names
Act of Admission or Election

CELEBRATION OF THE CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

Presentation of the Candidates
Affirmation by the Sponsors [and the Assembly]
Act of Recognition
Intercessions for the Elect and the Candidates
Prayer over the Elect and the Candidates
Dismissal of the Elect

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

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

LITURGY OF THE WORD

HOMILY

550 After the readings (see no. 128), the bishop, or the celebrant who acts as delegate of the bishop gives the homily. This should be suited to the actual situation and should address not just the catechumens and the candidates, but the entire community of the faithful, so that all will be encouraged to give good example and to accompany the catechumens and candidates during the time of their Lenten preparation for celebrating the Easter sacraments.

CELEBRATION OF ELECTION

PRESENTATION OF THE CATECHUMENS

551 After the homily, the priest in charge of the catechumens' initiation, or a deacon, a catechist, or a representative of the community, presents the catechumens, using the following or similar words.

Reverend Father, Easter is drawing near, and so these catechumens, whom I now present to you, are completing their period of preparation. They have found strength in God's grace and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that after the celebration of the scrutinies, they be allowed to participate in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist.

The celebrant replies:

Those who are to be chosen in Christ, come forward, together with your godparents.

One by one, the catechumens are called by name. Each catechumen, accompanied by a godparent (or godparents), comes forward and stands before the celebrant.

[If there are a great many catechumens, all are presented in groups, for example, each group by its own catechist. But in this case, the catechists should be advised to have a special celebration beforehand in which they call each catechumen forward by name.]

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS [AND THE ASSEMBLY]

552 Then the celebrant addresses the assembly. If he has taken part in the earlier deliberation on the catechumen's suitability (see no.122), he may use either option A or option B or similar words; if he has not taken part in the earlier deliberation, he uses option B or similar words.

A **My dear friends, these catechumens have asked to be initiated into the sacramental life of the Church this Easter. Those who know them have judged them to be sincere in their desire. During the period of their preparation they have listened to the word of Christ and endeavored to follow his commands; they have shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer.**

And so I announce to all of you here that our community has decided to call them to the sacraments. Therefore, I ask their godparents to state their opinion once again, so that all of you may hear.

He addresses the godparents:

As God is your witness, do you consider these catechumens worthy to be admitted to the sacraments of Christian initiation?

Godparents:

We do.

When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the catechumens in these or similar words:

Celebrant:

Now I ask you, the members of this community:

Are you willing to affirm the testimony expressed about these catechumens and support them in faith, prayer, and example as we prepare to celebrate the Easter sacraments?

All:

We are.

B. **God's holy Church wishes to know whether these catechumens are sufficiently prepared to be enrolled among the elect for the coming celebration of Easter. And so I speak first of all to you their Godparents.**

He addresses the godparents.

Have they faithfully listened to God's word proclaimed by the Church?

Godparents:

They have.

Celebrant:

Have they responded to that word and begun to walk in God's presence?

Godparents:

They have.

Celebrant:

Have they shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer?

Godparents:

They have.

When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the catechumens in these or similar words:

Celebrant:

And now I speak to you, my brothers and sisters in this assembly:

Are you ready to support the testimony expressed about these catechumens and include them in your prayer and affection as we move toward Easter?

All:

We are.

INVITATION AND ENROLLMENT OF NAMES

553 Then addressing the catechumens in their following or similar words, the celebrant advises them of their acceptance and asks them to declare their own intention.

And now, my dear catechumens, I address you. Your own godparents and teachers [and this entire community] have spoken in your favor. The Church in the name of Christ accepts their judgment and calls you to the Easter sacraments.

Since you have already heard the call of Christ, you must now express your response to that call clearly and in the presence of the whole Church.

Therefore, do you wish to enter fully into the life of the Church through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist?

Catechumens:

We do.

Celebrant:

Then offer your names for enrollment.

The catechumens give their names, either going with their godparents to the celebrant or while remaining in place and the actual inscription of the names may be carried out in various ways. The catechumens may inscribe their names themselves or they may call out their names, which are inscribed by their godparents or by the minister who presented the catechumens (see no. 117). As the enrollment is taking place, an appropriate song for example, Psalm 16 or Psalm 33 with a refrain such as "Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own" may be sung.

[If there are a great many candidates, the enrollment may simply consist in the presentation of a list of the names of the celebrant, with such words as: "These are the names of the candidates" or, when the bishop is celebrant and candidates from several parishes have been presented to him: "These are the names of the candidates from the parish of N."]

ACT OF ADMISSION OR ELECTION

554 The celebrant briefly explains the significance of the enrollment that has just taken place. Then, turning to the catechumens, he says the following or similar words.

N. and N., I now declare you to be members of the elect, to be initiated into the sacred mysteries of the next Easter Vigil.

Catechumens:

Thanks be to God.

He continues:

God is always faithful to those he calls: now it is your duty, as it is ours, both to be faithful to him in return and to strive courageously to reach the fullness of truth, which your election opens up before you.

Then the celebrant turns to the godparents and instructs them in the following or similar words.

Godparents, you have spoken in favor of these catechumens: accept them now as chosen in the Lord and continue to sustain them through your loving care and example, until they come to share in the sacraments of God's life.

He invites them to place their hand on the shoulder of the catechumen whom they are receiving into their care, or to make some other gesture to indicate the same intent.

CELEBRATION OF THE CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

555 The priest in charge of the candidates' formation, or a deacon, a catechist, or a representative of the community, presents the candidates, using the following or similar words.

Reverend Father, I now present to you the candidates who seek to complete their Christian initiation (or: who are preparing to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church). They too have found strength in God's grace and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that after this Lenten season, they be admitted to confirmation and the eucharist (or: to full eucharistic sharing).

The celebrant replies:

Those who desire to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church, come forward, together with your sponsors.

One by one, the candidates are called by name. Each candidate, accompanied by a sponsor, comes forward and stands before the celebrant.

[If there are a great many candidates, all are presented in groups, for example, each group by its own catechist. But in this case, the catechists should be advised to have a special celebration beforehand in which they call each candidate forward by name.]

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS [AND THE ASSEMBLY]

556 Then the celebrant addresses the assembly. If he has taken part in the earlier deliberation on the candidates' suitability (see no. 122), he may use either option A or option B or similar words; if he has not taken part in the earlier deliberation, he uses option B or similar words.

A My dear friends, these candidates, our brothers and sisters, have asked to be able to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Those who know them have judged them to be sincere in their desire. During the period of their preparation they have reflected on the mystery of their baptism and have come to appreciate more deeply the presence of Christ in their lives. They have shared the company of their brothers and sisters, joined with them in prayer, and endeavored to follow Christ's commands more perfectly.

And so I am pleased to recognize their desire to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church. I ask their sponsors now to state their opinion once again, so that all of you may hear.

He addresses the sponsors:

Do you consider these candidates ready to receive the sacraments of confirmation and the eucharist?

Sponsors:

We do.

When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the candidates in these or similar words:

Celebrant:

Now I ask you, the members of this community:

Are you willing to affirm the testimony express about these candidates and support them in faith, prayer, and example as they prepare to participate more fully in the Church's sacraments?

All:

We are.

B The Christian life and the demands that flow from the sacraments cannot be taken lightly. Therefore, before granting these candidates their request to share fully in the Church's sacraments, it is important that the Church hear the testimony of their sponsors about their readiness.

He addresses the sponsors:

Have they faithfully listened to the apostles' instruction proclaimed by the Church?

Sponsors:

They have.

Celebrant:

Have they come to a deeper appreciation of their baptism, in which they were joined to Christ and his Church?

Celebrant:

They have.

Celebrant:

Have they reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church, which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer?

Sponsors:

They have.

Celebrant:

Have they advanced in a life of love and service to others?

Sponsors:

They have.

When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the candidates in these or similar words:

Celebrant:

And now I speak to you, my brothers and sisters in this assembly:

Are you ready to support the testimony expressed about these candidates and include them in your prayer and affection as we move toward Easter?

All:

We are.

ACT OF RECOGNITION

557 The celebrant then says:

N and N., the Church recognizes your desire (to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and) to have a place at Christ's eucharistic table. Join with us this Lent in a spirit of repentance. Hear the Lord's call to conversion and be faithful to your baptismal covenant.

Candidates:

Thanks be to God.

Then the celebrant turns to the sponsors and instructs them in the following or similar words.

Sponsors, continue to support these candidates with your guidance and concern. May they see in you love for the Church and a sincere desire for doing good. Lead them this Lent to the joys of the Easter mysteries.

He invites them to place their hand on the shoulder of the candidate whom they are receiving into their care, or to make some other gesture to indicate the same intent.

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE ELECT AND THE CANDIDATES

558 The community may use either of the following formularies, options A or B, or a similar formulary to pray for the elect and the candidates. The celebrant may adapt the introduction and the intention to fit various circumstances.

[If it is decided, in accord with no. 561, that after the dismissal of the elect the usual general intercessions of the Mass are to be omitted and that the liturgy of the eucharist is to begin immediately, intentions for the Church and the whole world are to be added to the following intentions for the elect and candidates.]

Celebrant:

My brothers and sisters, in beginning this period of Lent, we look forward to celebrating at Easter the life-giving mysteries of our Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection. These elect and candidates, whom we bring with us to the Easter sacraments, will look to us for an example of Christian renewal. Let us pray to the Lord for them and for ourselves, that we may be renewed by one another's efforts and together come to share the joys of Easter.

A Assisting minister:

That together we may fruitfully employ this Lenten season to renew ourselves through self-denial and works of holiness, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That our catechumens may always remember this day of their election and be grateful for the blessings they have received from heaven, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That our candidates preparing for confirmation and eucharist (or: reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church) may grow daily in fidelity to their baptismal covenant, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That their teachers may always convey the beauty of God's word to those who search for it, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That their godparents and sponsors may be living examples of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That their families may help them to follow the promptings of the Spirit, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That our community, during this Lenten period, may grow in charity and be constant in prayer, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That those who have not yet overcome their hesitation may trust in Christ and come to join our community as our brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That these elect and candidates may find joy in daily prayer, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That by praying to you often, they may grow ever closer to you, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may read your word and joyfully dwell on it in their hearts, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may humbly acknowledge their faults and work wholeheartedly to correct them, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may dedicate their daily work as a pleasing offering to you, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That each day of Lent they may do something in your honor, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may abstain with courage from everything that defiles the heart, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may grow to love and seek virtue and holiness of life, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may renounce self and put others first, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That you will protect and bless their families, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That they may share with others the joy they have found in their faith, we pray:

R7. Lord, hear our prayer.

PRAYER OVER THE ELECT AND THE CANDIDATES

559 After the intercessions, the celebrant, with hands outstretched over the elect and the candidates, says one of the following prayers.

A **Lord God,
you created the human race
and are the author of its renewal.**

**Bless all your adopted children
and add these chosen ones
to the harvest of your new covenant.
As true children of the promise,
may they rejoice in eternal life,
won, not by the power of nature,
but through the mystery of your grace.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R7. Amen.

B **Father of love and power,
it is your will to establish everything in Christ
and to draw us into his all-embracing love.**

**Guide these chosen ones:
strengthen them in their vocation,
build them into the kingdom of your Son,
and seal them with the Spirit of your promise.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R7. Amen.

DISMISSAL OF THE ELECT

560 If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the elect are normally dismissed at this point by use of option A or B; if the elect are to stay for the celebration of the eucharist, option C is used, if the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the entire assembly is dismissed by use of option D.

A The celebrant dismisses the elect in these or similar words.

My dear children, you have set out with us on the road that leads to the glory of Easter. Christ will be your way, your truth, and your life. Until we meet again for the scrutinies, walk always in his peace.

The elect:

Amen.

- B As an optional formulary for dismissing the elect, the celebrant may use these or similar words.

My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more deeply upon the word of God which you have shared with us today. Be assured of our loving support and prayers for you. We look forward to the day when you will share fully in the Lord's Table.

- C If for serious reasons the elect cannot leave (see no. 75.3) and must remain with the rest of the liturgical assembly, they along with the candidates, are to be instructed that though they are present at the eucharist, they cannot take part in it as the Catholic faithful do. They may be reminded of this by the celebrant in these or similar words.

Although you cannot yet participate fully in the Lord's eucharist, stay with us as a sign of our hope that all God's children will eat and drink with the Lord and work with his Spirit to re-create the face of the earth.

- D The celebrant dismisses those present, using these or similar words.

Go in peace, and may the Lord remain with you always.

All:

Thanks be to God.

An appropriate song may conclude the celebration.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

561 When this rite is celebrated with the bishop, the liturgy of the eucharist is usually omitted. However, when the eucharist is to follow, intercessory prayer is resumed with the usual general intercessions for the needs of the Church and the whole world; then, if required, the profession of faith is said. But for pastoral reasons these general intercessions and the profession of faith may be omitted. The liturgy of the eucharist then begins as usual with the preparation of the gifts.