

Do You Know Your Rites?

RCIA- Rites of Acceptance & Welcoming

Rite of Acceptance

1st Liturgical Step for the Unbaptized into the Order of Catechumens

Signs & Stages of Conversion:

1. Desire to enter into a relationship with God.
2. Evidence of repentance and conversion, (especially from serious sin), with the intention to change one's life. (RCIA # 37)
3. The beginnings of a life of prayer.
4. A growing sense and understanding of the Church (i.e. founded by Jesus as the instrument of salvation in the world), with experience "of the company and spirit of Christians."
(See RCIA n. 42)

Characteristics:

1. Through this rite as with all rites, "God showers His grace on the candidates." (RCIA n. 41)
2. The *Rite of Acceptance* may be celebrated two or three times a year. (RCIA n. 18.3)
3. *Candidates* (also called *sympathizers*) have completed a period of the *Precatechumenate* which consists of inquiry and evangelization, in which they have come to an understanding of Who God is and what He requires of them as Christians in His plan of love and salvation.
4. The candidates who have completed the period of the *Precatechumenate*, "declare their intention to the Church, and the Church, in turn... accepts them as persons who intend to become its members." (RCIA n. 41)
Hence, through this rite candidates are accepted and called *catechumens*. (RCIA n. 6.1)
5. From the time the candidates enter the church through the Rite, and become catechumens, they "become part of the household of Christ, since the Church nourishes them with the word of God and sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations." (RCIA n. 47)

OUTLINE OF THE RITE OF ACCEPTANCE

- Receiving the Candidates (RCIA n. 48-50)
- Candidate's First Acceptance of the Gospel (RCIA n. 52)
- Affirmation by the Sponsors & Assembly (RCIA n. 53)
- Signing of the Candidates with the Cross (Forehead and Senses) (RCIA n. 54-56)

- **LITURGY OF THE WORD**
- Readings (RCIA n. 62)
- Homily (RCIA n. 63)
- Presentation of Bible/Crucifix (Optional) (RCIA n.64)
- Intercessions for the Catechumens (RCIA n.65)
- Prayer over the Catechumens (RCIA n.66)
- Dismissal of the Catechumens (RCIA n.67)

- **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

(Over)

Rite of Welcoming

1st Liturgical Step for the Baptized

Signs & Stages of Conversion:

1. Deeper desire to know God in the fullness of Truth and Love.
2. Evidence of repentance and conversion with the intention to change one's life.
3. Greater growth in one's prayer life.
4. A growing sense and understanding of the Church (i.e. founded by Jesus as the instrument of salvation in the world).

(See RCIA n. 42)

“ [A]dults are welcomed into the community and acknowledge themselves to be part of it because they have already been marked with the seal of baptism” (RCIA n. 405, cf. n.412)

OUTLINE OF RITE OF WELCOMING

- Welcoming the Candidates (RCIA n.416) – (distinct separation from the unbaptized)
- Candidate's Declaration of Intent (RCIA n. 418-419)
- Affirmation by the Sponsors & Assembly (RCIA n. 420)
- Signing of the Candidates with the Cross (Forehead and Senses) (RCIA n. 421-423)

- **LITURGY OF THE WORD**
- Readings (RCIA n. 426)
- Homily (RCIA n. 427)
- Presentation of Bible (Optional) (RCIA n.428)
- General Intercessions (RCIA n.430)
(Intercessions anticipate the needs of the catechumens in this next period of the process – *the Catechumenate*).
- Prayer over the Candidates (RCIA n.431)
- Dismissal of the Assembly (RCIA n. 432)

The Combined Rite of Acceptance and Rite of Welcoming can be found in Ap. I, n.505-529.

- During this Combined Rite, it is important to always keep the *unbaptized* separate from the *baptized*, as the *baptized* are already connected to the community, by virtue of the seal of Baptism.
- “*Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit..., and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.*”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213)

For more information please contact: Peter Savva, Assistant Director of Catechesis & Evangelization for Catechumenal Ministry at Tel: (608) 791-2657

e-mail: psavva@dioceseoflacroscross.com