

RITE OF WELCOMING FOR CANDIDATES

416 When this rite is celebrated within Mass, the entrance song or antiphon is sung as usual. Because they are already numbered among the baptized, the candidates are seated in a prominent place among the faithful.

GREETING

417 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 in welcoming them. He reminds the assembly that these candidates have already been baptized. If it seems opportune, he may also indicate briefly the particular path which has led the candidates to seek the completion of their Christian initiation.

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

418 Unless the candidates are already known to all present, the celebrant asks for or calls out their given names. The candidates answer one by one, even if, because of a large number, the question is asked only once. 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 question for the individual candidates or, when there are a large number, for the candidates to 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.

Celebrant: **What do you ask of God's Church?**

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

CANDIDATES' DECLARATION OF INTENT

419 The celebrant addresses the candidates, adapting one of the following formularies or similar words to the answers received in the opening dialogue.

- A. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in his great mercy has given us a new birth unto a living hope, a hope which draws its life from Christ's resurrection from the dead. By baptism into Christ Jesus, this hope of glory became your own. Christ opened for you the way of the Gospel that leads to eternal life. Now, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you desire to continue that journey of faith.**

Are you prepared to reflect more deeply on the mystery of your baptism, to listen with us to the apostles' instruction, and to join with us in a life of prayer and service?

Candidates: **I am.**

- B. Celebrant:

Please declare before this community the reasons why you desire to enter more fully in the life of the Church.

The candidates respond with a brief personal witness.

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY

420 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 complete their Christian initiation (or: prepare for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church)?

All: **We are.**

With hands joined, the celebrant says:

**Father of mercy,
we thank you for these your servants.
You have already consecrated them in baptism
and now you call them
to the fullness of the Church's sacramental life:
we praise you, Lord, and we bless you.**

All sing or say:

We praise you, Lord, and we bless you.

SIGNING OF THE CANDIDATES WITH THE CROSS

421 Next the cross is traced on the forehead of the candidates; 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

421 The celebrant speaks to the candidates in these or similar words.

Dear candidates, you have expressed your desire to share fully in the life of the Catholic church. I now mark you with the sign of the Christ's cross and call upon your catechists and sponsors to do the same.

Then the celebrant makes the sign of the cross over all together, as a cross is traced by a sponsor or catechist on the forehead of each candidate. The celebrant says:

**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 you, Lord Jesus Christ!

SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES

423 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 over 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.**

Candidates: **Amen.**

CONCLUDING PRAYER

424 The celebrant concludes the signing of the forehead (and senses) with the opening prayer for the Mass of the day or with the following prayer.

Let us pray.

**Almighty God,
by the cross and resurrection of your Son
you have given life to your people.
In baptism these your servants accepted
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.
R. Amen.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

INSTRUCTION

425 The celebrant next speaks briefly to the candidates and their sponsors, helping them to understand the dignity of God's word proclaimed and heard in the church.

READINGS

426 The readings are those assigned for the day. According to the norms of the Lectionary, other appropriate readings may be substituted.

HOMILY

427 A homily follows that explains the readings.

PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE

428 A book containing the gospels may be given to the candidates by the celebrant. The celebrant may use words suited to the gift presented, for example, "Receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The candidates may respond in an appropriate way.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

429 On Sundays and solemnities the profession of faith is recited.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

430 Then the sponsors and the whole congregation join in the general intercessions. One or more of the following intentions for the candidates are added to the intentions for the candidates are added to the intentions for the Church and the whole world.

Assisting minister:

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

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That these candidates may come to a deeper appreciation of the gift of baptism, which joined them to Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

R. 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:

R. 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:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

That in due time these candidates may be (embraced by the Father's merciful forgiveness,) sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and know the joy of being one with us at the table of Christ's sacrifice, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

PRAYER OVER THE CANDIDATES

431 After the intercessions, the celebrant, with hands outstretched over the candidates, says the following prayer.

**Almighty and eternal God,
whose love gathers us together as one,
receive the prayers of your people.**

**Look kindly on these your servants,
already consecrated to you in baptism,
and draw them into the fullness of faith.**

**Keep your family one in the bonds of love
through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.**

DISMISSAL OF THE ASSEMBLY

432 If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the entire assembly is dismissed by use of the following formulary or similar words.

Celebrant: **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

433 The liturgy of the eucharist begins as usual with the preparation of the gifts.