

Preparing for the Rite of Election or Call to Continuing Conversion

What is expected of candidates and catechumens before they enter into the Rite of Election or Call to Continuing Conversion that takes place at the beginning of Lent?

The desire for Baptism should become increasingly apparent for catechumens, and the desire to complete their initiation or enter in to full communion should similarly grow for candidates. *This desire should not be presumed* and participants should be reminded that to be baptized or to become members of the Church is an entirely free decision.

The approach of the first Sunday of Lent is not a reason to conclude that any specific catechumen or candidate is ready for the Rites.

Catechumens and Candidates should have received every possible assistance during the Catechumenate Period by:

- Receiving frequent minor exorcisms, blessings, and anointings (for catechumens) prescribed for them according the RCIA process. [See RCIA 79, 90 - 103]
- Having an experience of Christian witness and community by taking advantage of opportunities to meet families and other members of the parish at various events.
- Being well accompanied; that is - prayed for, offered good example; given love, support and guidance; as well as assisted in times of difficulty.
- Developing a relationship of trust and familiarity with the RCIA team and their godparent(s) or sponsor(s) to assist them with any questions, struggles, being available to them, and modeling the Catholic way of life.

IMPORTANT NOTE: RCIA Directors/Coordinators, please ensure that all marriage issues with every catechumen and candidate have been discussed with the pastor, and if necessary, submitted to the Archdiocesan tribunal if not already done so, as soon as possible. Please do not delay this process. If a catechumen or candidate is in a marriage requiring this adjudication and a decision has not yet been issued by the Archdiocesan Tribunal, this catechumen or candidate may not participate in the Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion. They must also be informed that if the decision from the Archdiocesan Tribunal has not been reached before Easter Vigil, they are ineligible to receive the Sacraments of Initiation or be received into the Church. If and when a favorable decision is given by the Tribunal, the Sacraments of Initiation may then be imparted. Please do not postpone this important conversation with the catechumens and candidates whom this affects.

Also, please be aware that a baptized Catholic (or two baptized Catholics) in a civil marriage, even if it is their first and only marriage, must be married in the Catholic Church first before they can receive First Eucharist and /or Confirmation.

All Candidates for Full Communion to be received into the Church at Easter Vigil should be instructed in and provided the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, ideally as part of the Preparation Rites for Holy Saturday. All Catechumens should also be instructed regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Although they will not receive this sacrament before Easter Vigil, they, along with the Candidates, should be encouraged to receive and provided the opportunity to receive Reconciliation during the Mystagogy Period before Pentecost Sunday.