

# The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

## Introduction and Chapter I: Christian Initiation of Adults

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### INTRODUCTION

**Three Basic Steps** (RCIA 6). The RCIA is divided into three basic grades or steps (*gradus seu gressus*) marked by three liturgical rites:

- 1) **Catechumenate** - marked by the rite of acceptance into the order (*ordo*) of catechumens
- 2) **Period of Purification and Enlightenment** - marked by the rite of election/enrollment of names
  - o Scrutinies take place on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Lent – that is, the final three Sundays – after that comes Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday
  - o Presentations: *traditio symboli* – Nicene Creed given after first scrutiny; *traditio orationis* – Lord's Prayer given after the third and final scrutiny
- 3) **Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation** at the Easter Vigil

**Four Periods of Inquiry and Growth** (RCIA 7)

- 1) Precatechumenate: inquiry and evangelization. Ends with the rite of acceptance.
- 2) Catechumenate: includes catechesis – **thorough catechesis** – and the rites connected with catechesis. Ends on the day of election. **Can last for several years.**
- 3) Purification and enlightenment: much shorter period, ordinarily coinciding with the Lent.
- 4) Postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy: extends through the whole Easter season.

**Paschal Character** (RCIA 8). The whole of initiation must have a markedly Paschal character:

- 1) Initiation is the first sacramental participation in the death and resurrection of Christ
- 2) Ordinarily coincides with Lent and Easter

**Ministries and Offices:** the role of Christ's faithful (RCIA 9-16; OICA 41-48)

- Entire community. The entire community plays a role, set forth in five stages: Pre-catechumenate; Catechumenal celebrations; Day of election; Lent; Easter
- Sponsor (*sponsor*), accompanies the candidate (*candidatum*); has known and assisted the candidate and stands as witness to the candidate's moral character, faith, and intention. Need not be a godparent (RCIA 10; OICA 42)
- Godparent (*patrinus*), accompanies the candidate on the day of election, at the celebration of the sacraments, and during the period of mystagogy
  - o Chosen on the basis of example, good qualities, and friendship; delegated by the community and approved by the priest
  - o Responsibilities – to show candidates how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness, to guide the candidate's progress in the baptismal life (RCIA 11; OICA 43)
- Bishop, in person or through delegates:
  - o regulates and promotes pastoral formation for catechumens
  - o admits candidates to their election and to the sacraments (RCIA 12; OICA 44)
  - o when necessary, deposes catechists to celebrate the minor exorcisms (RCIA 90-94) and the blessings of the catechumens (RCIA 95-97)
- Priest, has responsibility of attending to the pastoral and personal care of catechumens:
  - o provides instruction with help of deacons and catechists

- approves godparents (RCIA 13; OICA 45)
- if he baptizes, he also should confer confirmation in absence of bishop
- Deacons, assist in the ministry to catechumens (RCIA 15; OICA 47)
  - May serve as celebrant of the rite of acceptance (RCIA 48; OICA 73)
- Catechists
  - should whenever possible have an active part (*partem actuosam*) in the rites
  - may perform the minor exorcisms and blessings
  - This section presumes that teaching is their main function (RCIA 16; OICA 48)

### Time and Place

#### A. Proper or Usual Times (RCIA 18-25; OICA 50-57)

- General rule (*de more*): sacraments at Easter Vigil; rite of election on first Sunday of Lent (RCIA 17)
- Celebrating the rite of acceptance:
  - Should not be too early – time to conceive an initial faith and show first signs of conversion
  - Sufficiently large group for catechesis and rites
  - Two or three dates should be fixed as usual times
- Rite of election – First Sunday of Lent (*de more*) (RCIA 51)
- Scrutinies – Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent; if necessary, any other time in Lent (RCIA 20)
- Presentations, by ancient usage, take place after the scrutinies. May take place during period of the catechumenate (RCIA 21)
  - *traditio symboli* – presentation of the creed, during week after the first scrutiny
  - *traditio orationis* – presentation of the Lord’s Prayer, week after the third scrutiny
- Holy Saturday – can be used for various rites, including reciting or giving back the creed / *redditio symboli*, ephphetha, choosing a Christian name, anointing with the oil of the catechumens (RCIA 22)
- Easter Vigil – celebration of the sacraments themselves
- Sundays after Easter Sunday in Easter season – Masses for Neophytes

#### B. Outside the Usual Times (RCIA 26-30; OICA 58-66)

- In cases of pastoral necessity, other arrangements can be made:
  - rite of election and rites of period of purification and enlightenment may be held outside Lent
  - sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, although during the Easter season is best (RCIA 26)
- Adjustments to be made when times change (RCIA 27-30):
  - sacraments on Sunday if possible
  - rite of election about six weeks before sacraments, but not on a solemnity
  - scrutinies on Sundays or weekdays, with the usual intervals, not on solemnities

**Adaptations by the Conferences of Bishops** in the Use of the Roman Ritual (RCIA 32-33; OICA 64-65). The conference of bishops has the discretionary power to determine the following:

- 1) [rite of acceptance] Ways of receiving inquirers to the catechumenate
- 2) [rite of acceptance] A first exorcism in the rite of acceptance and a renunciation of false worship
- 3) [rite of acceptance] Manner of signing forehead
- 4) [rite of acceptance] To decide whether or not candidates receive a new name in that rite
- 5) [rite of acceptance] To allow additional rites
- 6) To establish additional ‘rites of passage’ during the catechumenate, including the rites of the period of purification. The NCCB makes important allowances here for: oil of catechumens; presentations; ephphetha; *redditio symboli*
- 7) Omission or transfer of the oil of catechumens

- 8) To make more specific and detailed the formularies of renunciation for the rite of acceptance to the catechumenate, and those at the celebration of baptism

#### **Adaptations by the Bishop** (RCIA 34; OICA 66)

- 1) To set up and regulate the formation program
  - a. Archdiocese of St Louis, Guidelines for Implementation of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (StL Guide), recommends the formation of teams with roles such as the following: coordinator; sponsor coordinator; catechist coordinator; hospitality coordinator; liturgy coordinator; communications coordinator; priest, deacon, non-ordained presiders and preachers
  - b. The role of the teams is first and foremost self-formation, then evangelization, evaluation, and discernment (StL Guide 10-11)
- 2) To decide whether and when the rite is celebrated outside of the usual times
- 3) To dispense from one or two scrutinies.
  - a. In St Louis, “all three scrutinies are to be celebrated,” with readings from Cycle/Year A (StL Guide 49)
  - b. The chancellor or the Office of Worship may dispense from one or two scrutinies (StL Guide 51)
- 4) To permit the simple rite
- 5) To depute catechists to give exorcisms and blessings.
  - a. StL Guide 37 gives this faculty to priests, while insisting that presentations and anointings be celebrated by a priest or deacon
- 6) To preside at the rite of election.
  - a. To be celebrated with the bishop on the first Sunday of Lent (StL Guide 41)
  - b. StL Guide 42 also recommends a rite of sending catechumens to their election, to be accompanied by signing a parish *Book of the Elect*
- 7) To stipulate the age for sponsors – in St Louis, 16 (StL Guide 15)

#### **Adaptations by the Minister** (*ministris / celebrans*) (§35)

- Much latitude is given to the celebrant in the rite, for accommodating the rite to circumstances, in invitations, instructions, and intercessions, in choosing from various options, etc.

## **CHAPTER I: CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS**

### **Evangelization and pre-catechumenate** (RCIA 36-40; OICA 9-13)

- No fixed duration or structure
- Time of evangelization, proclamation of the living God and Jesus Christ (RCIA 36)
- From evangelization come faith and initial conversion (RCIA 37)
- Priests, deacons, catechists, and other laypersons explain the Gospel (RCIA 38)
- Conference of bishops provides for the evangelization of, and may determine a preliminary manner of receiving, **sympathizers** – inquirers who, even though they do not believe, show some leaning toward the Christian faith (RCIA 39)

### **First Step** (*primus gradus*) **Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens** (RCIA 41-74; OICA 14-17, 76-97)

- Rite of acceptance is an important moment: first public assembly (RCIA 41)
- Participants: celebrant (*celebrans*) – priest (*sacerdos*) or deacon; candidates (*candidati*); sponsors (*sponsores*); assembled faithful
- Prerequisites on the part of the candidate/recipient (RCIA 42): beginnings of the spiritual life; fundamentals of Christian teaching; evidence of: first faith, initial conversion, intention to change, first

stirrings of repentance, start of prayer, sense of the Church, experience of company and spirit of Christians

- Parts of the Rite (RCIA 44)
  - Reception of the candidates
    - greeting (RCIA 49)
    - opening dialogue (RCIA 50)
    - first acceptance of the Gospel (RCIA 52) OR rite of exorcism and renunciation of false worship (RCIA 70-72)
    - affirmation by sponsors and assembly (RCIA 53)
    - signing with the cross (RCIA 54-56), with concluding prayer (RCIA 57)
    - [optional] giving of a new name (RCIA 58, 73)
  - Celebration of the word of God/Liturgy of the Word (RCIA 61-66)
    - [optional] presentation of the cross (RCIA 74, 59)
    - readings (RCIA 62)
    - homily (RCIA 63)
    - [optional] presentation of a Bible (RCIA 64)
    - intercessions for catechumens (RCIA 65)
    - prayer over catechumens (RCIA 66)
  - Dismissal of the candidates (RCIA 67)
  - Celebration of the Eucharist (RCIA 68)
- After celebration, inscription of names in the register of catechumens, along with names of sponsors and minister, and date and place (RCIA 46)
- Catechumens are now part of the household of Christ (RCIA 46)

#### Period of the Catechumenate (RCIA 75-117)

- An extended period of pastoral formation and guidance aimed at training in the Christian life. At least one year in St Louis (StL Guide 35)
- The dispositions manifest at acceptance are brought to maturity in four ways (RCIA 75):
  1. Suitable catechesis, planned to be gradual and complete, accommodated to liturgical year and supported by celebrations of the word – including dogmas, precepts, and the mysteries of salvation
    - Lectionary is the primary source of catechesis (StL Guide 34)
  2. Helped by the example and support of sponsors, godparents, and the entire Christian community: lean more readily to pray, to bear witness to the faith, etc.
  3. Liturgical rites to purify and strengthen the catechumen (*catechumenus*) – listed below; chief among them are celebrations of the Word and attendance at the first part of Mass
    - Catechumens must be dismissed before the eucharistic liturgy
    - Dismissal presumes that catechumens are not dismissed from the liturgy, but only from the assembly (StL Guide 31-33)
  4. learning to work with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by life's witness
- Duration, program of instruction, number of catechists, deacons, and priests, etc., all left to various circumstances. Nothing can be settled a priori (RCIA 76).
- Instruction should present Catholic teaching in its entirety while enlightening faith, etc. (RCIA 78)
- Time to consider choosing godparents (*patrini*) (RCIA 80)

#### Rites of the Catechumenate (RCIA 81-117)

- Celebrations of the word of God are foremost (RCIA 81-89):
  - Celebrations held especially for the catechumens. The main purpose of such special celebrations is fourfold (RCIA 82): to implant in their hearts the teachings they are receiving; to give

- instruction and experience in prayer; to explain the signs, actions, and times of the liturgy; to prepare for entering the worship community
- Celebrations of the word may be held in connection with catechetical instruction (RCIA 84)
  - Model for a Celebration of the Word of God (RCIA 85-89, not in *editio typica*): song; readings; homily; concluding rites that may include a minor exorcism or blessing of the catechumens or both; anointing may follow or replace the minor exorcism
  - Catechumens should be taught to keep holy the Lord's day (RCIA 83):
    - some special celebrations of the word should be held on Sunday
    - gradual admission to first part of the celebration of Sunday Mass
    - catechumens should be mentioned in intentions after their dismissal
  - Minor exorcisms, blessings, etc., may be celebrated, especially in conjunction with celebrations of the word of God (RCIA 79)
  - **First or minor exorcisms** (RCIA 90-94)
    - Petitions directly addressed to God (RCIA 90)
    - "Presiding celebrant" (not in *editio typica*): priest (*sacerdos*), deacon, or qualified catechist (*catechista*) appointed by the bishop (RCIA 91)
    - Context: within a celebration of the word of God in a church, chapel, or center for the catechumenate; or at the beginning or end of a meeting for catechesis (RCIA 92)
    - Gestures: the catechumens bow or kneel, and the celebrant extends hands over them while reciting the chosen formulary (RCIA 94)
    - Formulae: eleven (11) are provided in RCIA 94; no provision for adaptation
  - Blessings of the Catechumens (RCIA 94-97)
    - A sign of God's love and the Church's tender care (RCIA 95)
    - Celebrant: priest (*sacerdos*), deacon, or qualified catechist appointed by the bishop (RCIA 96)
    - Context: Usually given at the end of a celebration of the word (RCIA 96)
    - Gestures: said with extended hands. When it is completed, the catechumens can come to the celebrant (*celebrantem*) one by one to have hands laid on them individually (RCIA 97)
    - Formulae: nine (9) are provided in RCIA 97; no provision for adaptation
  - [optional] Anointing of the catechumens (RCIA 98-103)
    - Anointing with the oil of catechumens may be celebrated wherever beneficial (RCIA 98)
    - Celebrant: priest or deacon (RCIA 98, OICA §127)
    - "Care is to be taken that the catechumens understand the significance of the anointing with oil. The anointing with oil symbolizes their need for God's help and strength so that, undeterred by the bonds of the past and overcoming the opposition of the devil, they will forthrightly take the step of professing their faith and will hold fast to it unflinching throughout their lives" (NCCB only, RCIA 99; cf. OICA 212)
      - NOTE: here discrepancies in numbering begin between the US version and that of England, approved by the Liturgy Office of England and Wales
    - Context: after the homily in a celebration of the word; possibly several times (RCIA 100)
    - Oil: blessed by the bishop at the chrism Mass; but a priest may bless oil for the rite immediately before the anointing for pastoral reasons (RCIA 101)
  - [optional] Presentations of the creed and Lord's Prayer, normally take place during Lent, but may be held during the catechumenate (RCIA 104-105)

**Second Step** (*secundus gradus*): **Rite of Election / Enrollment of Names** (RCIA 118-137; OICA 22-24, 133-151)

- General description: Marks close of the catechumenate proper and beginning of the period of final, more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation (RCIA 118); The Church judges their state of readiness and decides on their advancement toward the sacraments of initiation (RCIA 119)
- Names of the Rite (RCIA 119):

- election – choice and admission, because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the church acts
- enrollment of names – because the candidates inscribe their names in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation
- Subjects:
  - Prerequisites (RCIA 120): conversion in mind and action; acquaintance with Christian teaching; spirit of faith and charity; intention to receive the sacraments publicly
  - Names of the catechumens henceforth (RCIA 124): elect; *competentes* (co-petitioners) because they together ask for and aspire to receive the sacraments; *illuminandi* – those who will be enlightened
- Celebrant: **bishop** or priest or deacon who acts as the bishop’s delegate (RCIA 121)
  - The role (*munus*) of the celebrant, namely the bishop or his delegate:
    - to show the religious and ecclesial significance of the election
    - to declare the Church’s decision (RCIA 124)
    - if appropriate, to ask the community to express its approval/affirmation (RCIA 125)
    - asks the catechumens to personally express their intention (RCIA 125)
- Other participants:
  - godparents are chosen before the rite of election, and approved by the local community. Godparents publicly exercise their ministry for the first time in the rite of election (RCIA 123)
  - priests, deacons, godparents, catechists, and indeed the entire community should arrive at a judgment concerning the catechumens’ state of formation and progress (RCIA 122)
- Time: rite of election should normally take place on the **First Sunday of Lent** (RCIA 126)
  - When celebrated at other times, should precede the sacraments by about six weeks
  - Not a solemnity
- Place: in the church or, if necessary, some other suitable place (RCIA 127)
- Context: within Mass of First Sunday of Lent, after the homily.
  - Otherwise, the Mass “Christian Initiation: Election or Enrolment of Names” may be used. Readings may be for First Sunday of Lent or elsewhere (RCIA 128)
- Parts of the Rite
  - Homily by bishop or bishop’s delegate (RCIA 129)
  - Presentation of the catechumens to the celebrant (*celebrans*) (RCIA 130)
    - Priest, deacon, catechist or representative of the community presents the candidates
    - One formula is given; similar words may be used.
    - Called by name, candidates call forward one by one, with godparents
  - Affirmation by the godparents [and assembly] (RCIA 131)
    - The celebrant addresses the assembly with option A (if celebrant has been involved in the preceding deliberation), B (if not), or similar words, the purpose of which is to announce that the catechumens are prepared; the godparents respond
    - An option for asking the entire assembly their approval is provided for the USA only
  - Invitation and enrollment of names (RCIA 132)
    - Celebrant addresses catechumens in these or similar words, asking them to respond to the call of Christ in the presence of the Church by expressing their desire for the sacraments
    - Candidates give their names; inscription of names may take various formats (in St Louis, associated with a rite of sending)
  - Act of admission or election (RCIA 133)
    - Celebrant explains the significance of the enrollment, then uses these or similar words declaring candidates to be “members of the elect (*electi estis*), to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the next Easter Vigil”
    - Celebrant next addresses the godparents in these or similar words
  - Intercessions for the elect (RCIA 134)

- Two sets of intercessions are provided: A (OICA 148) and B (OICA 375); the ICEL translations are weak
- “Assisting minister” (*lector*) reads the intercessions
- Prayer over the elect, prayed by the celebrant, concludes the intercessions – two formulae are provided, A or B (RCIA 135)
- Dismissal of the elect (RCIA 136)
  - Options A and B, or similar words – when elect are dismissed before eucharistic liturgy. Option A is a translation of the formula in OICA 150. The remaining options are ICEL compositions.
  - Option C, or similar words – when elect remain, for serious reasons
  - Option D, or similar words – when eucharistic is not celebrated
- Eucharistic celebration (RCIA 137; OICA 151)

### **Period of Purification and Enlightenment (RCIA 138-205)**

- General introduction
  - Customarily coincides with Lent – the reminder of baptism already received or the preparation for its reception, as well as the theme of repentance, renew the entire community (RCIA 138)
  - A period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction – to purify the minds and hearts of the elect (RCIA 139)
  - Holy Saturday – day of proximate preparation of the sacraments; rites of preparation (RCIA 140)
- Scrutinies in general
  - Solemnly celebrated on Sundays and reinforced by exorcisms (RCIA 141)
  - Rites for self-searching and repentance, and have above all a spiritual purpose. Intention: to uncover and heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out and strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good. Deliver the elect from the power of sin and Satan, protect them against temptation, give them strength in Christ. (RCIA 141)
  - Progress in genuine self-knowledge through self-examination and true repentance (RCIA 142)
  - The scrutinies inspire a desire in the elect for purification and redemption by Christ (RCIA 143):
    - they are instructed gradually about the mystery of sin
    - their spirit is filled with Christ the redeemer, the living water (Samaritan woman, 1<sup>st</sup> scrutiny), the light of the world (man born blind, 2<sup>nd</sup> scrutiny), and the resurrection and the life (Lazarus, 3<sup>rd</sup> scrutiny)
  - Rite of exorcism (RCIA 144-145)
    - Celebrated by a priest or a deacon, frees elect from the effects of sin and devil’s influence
  - Scrutinies (RCIA 146) – specification of ritual Masses “Christian Initiation; The Scrutinies,” readings from 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Lent, Year A
    - Outside of Lent, scrutinies are celebrated on Sundays or weekdays, but not solemnities, with usual intervals – use ritual masses “Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies”
- Presentations in general (RCIA 147-149)
  - Presentations follow the scrutinies – unless they took place during the catechumenate. The Church lovingly entrusts to the elect the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, in order to enlighten the elect.
  - Presentation of the Creed takes place in the week following the first scrutiny. The elect are to commit the Creed to memory; they will recite it publicly (RCIA 148)
  - Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer, during the week following the third scrutiny (RCIA 149)
- First Scrutiny (*primum scrutinium*), 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent (RCIA 150-156)
  - Readings – from first scrutiny of “Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies” (RCIA 150)
  - Homily (RCIA 151)

- Prayer in silence (RCIA 152): Elect with their godparents stand before the celebrant; Celebrant invites the assembly to pray in silence; then invites the celebrant to pray in silence with bowed heads or kneeling
- Intercessions for the elect (RCIA 153); *Deprecatio pro electis* (OICA 163)
  - Two sets of formulae are given, and may be adapted: A (OICA 163) or B (OICA 378)
  - Godparents stand with hand on the should of the elect
- Exorcism (154)
  - Two sets of formulae provided; no adaptation allowed: A (OICA 164) and B (OICA 379)
  - Each set comprises two deprecatory prayers, one to the Father and one to the Son, with the celebrant laying hands on the elect one if possible, outstretching hands for the second
  - [Appropriate *cantus* may be sung; examples from the psalms are provided]
- Dismissal of the elect (RCIA 155)
  - Options A or B, or similar words – when elect are dismissed before eucharistic liturgy. Option A is a translation from OICA 165. Remaining options are ICEL compositions.
- [An appropriate song]
- Presentation of the Creed, third week of Lent, weekday following the 1<sup>st</sup> scrutiny (RCIA 157-163)
  - Readings (RCIA 158)
  - Homily (RCIA 159)
  - Presentation of the Creed (RCIA 160). Elect come forward and the celebrant addresses them in these or similar words
    - Option A: Apostles' Creed
    - Option B: Nicene Creed
  - Prayer over the elect – these or similar words (RCIA 161)
  - Dismissal of the elect (RCIA 162) – again, options A or B, or similar words
  - Eucharistic liturgy (RCIA 163)
- Second Scrutiny (*secundum scrutinium*), 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent (RCIA 164-170)
  - Readings – from second scrutiny of “Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies” (RCIA 164)
  - Homily (RCIA 165)
  - Prayer in silence (RCIA 166) – simply refers to RCIA 152
  - Intercessions for the elect (RCIA 167)
    - Two sets of formulae are given, and may be adapted: A (OICA 170) or B (OICA 382)
    - Godparents stand with hand on the should of the elect
  - Exorcism (RCIA 168)
    - Two sets of formulae are given; no adaptation allowed: A (OICA 171) and B (OICA 383)
    - Each set comprises two deprecatory prayers, one to the Father and one to the Son, with the celebrant laying hands on each elect if possible, and outstretching hands for the second
    - [Appropriate *cantus* may be sung; examples from the psalms are provided]
  - Dismissal of the elect (RCIA 169) – as in RCIA 155
  - Eucharistic liturgy (RCIA 170) – as in RCIA 156
- Third Scrutiny, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent (RCIA 171-184)
  - Readings – from third scrutiny of “Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies” (RCIA 171)
  - Homily (RCIA 172)
  - Prayer in silence (RCIA 173) – simply refers to RCIA 152
  - Intercessions for the elect (RCIA 174)
    - Two sets of formulae are given, and may be adapted: A (OICA 177) or B (OICA 386)
    - Godparents stand with hand on the should of the elect
  - Exorcism (RCIA 175)
    - Two sets of formulae are given; no adaptation allowed: A (OICA 178) and B (OICA 387)
    - Each set comprises two deprecatory prayers, one to the Father and one to the Son, with the celebrant laying hands on each elect if possible, and outstretching hands for the second
    - [Appropriate *cantus* may be sung; examples from the psalms are provided]

- Dismissal of the elect (RCIA 176) – as in RCIA 162
- Eucharistic liturgy (RCIA 177) – as in RCIA 156
- Presentation of the Lord's Prayer, fifth week of Lent, weekday following the 3<sup>rd</sup> scrutiny; preferably celebrated in the presence of a community of faithful within Mass (RCIA 178-184)
  - Readings
    - specific readings listed, taken from the ritual Masses "Christian Initiation: Presentation of the Lord's Prayer," replace the first reading assigned for the weekday Mass (RCIA 179)
    - The Gospel reading is Matthew's account of the Lord's prayer, preceded by an address to the elect, "Listen to the gospel reading in which our Lord teaches his followers how to pray" (RCIA 180)
  - Homily (RCIA 181)
  - Prayer over the elect – these or similar words (RCIA 182)
  - Dismissal of the elect (RCIA 183) – as in RCIA 162
  - Eucharistic liturgy – as in (RCIA 184)
- Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday / Proximate Preparation for Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation
  - Disciplines: refraining from usual activities; prayer, reflection, fasting (RCIA 185.1)
  - When it is possible to bring the elect together, some or all of the following rites may be celebrated (RCIA 185.2):
    - presentation of the Lord's Prayer, if it has been deferred
    - return or recitation of the Creed – designated for immediate preparation for baptism (RCIA 193-196)
    - ephphetha – impresses on the elect their need of grace in order to hear the word of God and profess it for their salvation. Celebrant touches the right and left ear and the closed lips of each of the elect (RCIA 197-199)
    - choosing of a baptismal name, if not included in the rite of acceptance (RCIA 200-202)
  - Model for a celebration of the preparation rites (RCIA 187-192): song; greeting; reading of the word; homily; celebration of the rites chosen [possibilities listed above]; concluding rites – prayer of blessing and dismissal (RCIA 204-205)
  - Recitation of the Creed (RCIA 193)
  - Ephphetha Rite (RCIA 197) – rite of opening the ears and mouth, to impress on the elect their need of grace in order to hear the word of God and profess it for their salvation
  - Choosing a Baptismal Name (RCIA 200-202) – either on Holy Saturday or upon the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens. The elect may choose a new name that is either Christian or a name of regional usage not incompatible with Christian beliefs.

### **Third Step (*tertius gradus*): Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation**

- Usual time for celebration is the Easter Vigil, following the blessing of the water. The preferable minister is the bishop himself (RCIA 207-208)
- Celebration of Baptism (RCIA 209-214)
  - Presentation of the candidates with *monitio celebrantis* (RCIA 219-220, OICA 213)
  - Litany – other saints may be added (RCIA 221)
  - Blessing of water (RCIA 210, 222) – declares the religious meaning of water as God's creation and the sacramental use of water, a remembrance of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation; introduces an invocation of the Trinity
    - Three blessings of water are provided – A, B, and C, from OICA 215, 389
    - RCIA 222 prescribes lowering the Easter candle into the water if convenient; OICA 215 prescribes touching water with the right hand

- There follow two thanksgiving formulae for the Easter season, D and E. Outside the Easter Vigil but during the Easter season, the water blessed at the Vigil is used, with a prayer of thanksgiving including the themes of the blessing (RCIA 210)
  - Renunciation of sin (RCIA 224)
    - Along with the profession of faith, the renunciation ensures that the elect are not initiated merely passively, but with resolve to renounce error and to hold fast to God (RCIA 211)
    - Three formularies of renunciation are provided; no provision for similar words. Diocesan bishop may make them more specific (RCIA 224)
    - Note that the order is reversed: option A in RCIA 224 is option C in OICA 217
  - [In England & Wales, but not in U.S., an anointing with the oil of catechumens takes place here]
  - Profession of faith, in threefold interrogatory form (RCIA 225, see also 211)
  - Baptism (RCIA 226, 212-213)
    - Option A – by immersion (OICA 220)
    - Option B – by infusion (OICA 221)
  - Explanatory rites (RCIA 227-230, 214)
    - Post-baptismal anointing with chrism, only when confirmation does not immediately follow baptism. A sign of the royal priesthood of the baptized. One formula is provided, no provision for adaptation (RCIA 228; OICA 224)
    - Clothing in a baptismal garment, white or possibly another color (white in St Louis, resembling a tunic, poncho, or robe: see StL Guide 54) – one formula is given, no provision for adaptation; signifies new dignity (RCIA 229)
    - Presentation of a lighted candle – lit from the Easter candle by a godparent. One formula is given, no provision for adaptation; signifies that the newly baptized is called to walk as befits the children of the light (RCIA 230)
- Celebration of Confirmation (RCIA 231-236, 215-26)
  - The conjunction of baptism and confirmation signifies the unity of the paschal mystery, the close link between the mission of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
  - [Suitable song between baptism and confirmation (RCIA 231)]
  - Location: same place as baptism (RCIA 231)
  - Minister: bishop if he has conferred baptism; otherwise, priest who conferred baptism. Minister may associate priests with himself as ministers in cases of large numbers (RCIA 232)
  - Parts of the rite:
    - Invitation: address to the newly baptized, then to the people (*ad populum*) – these or similar words – followed by silent prayer (RCIA 233; OICA 229)
    - Laying on of hands – outstretched over the entire group in RCIA 234; *manus super omnes confirmandos imponunt* in OICA 230)
    - Anointing with chrism, “N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit” (RCIA 235)
- Renewal of baptismal promises (RCIA 237-240), this is not in the OICA
  - Renunciation of sin/Satan – two options (RCIA 238)
  - Profession of faith, in one interrogatory form (RCIA 239)
  - Sprinkling with baptismal water, with singing of this or another song and concluding prayer
- The Neophytes’ First Sharing in the Celebration of the Eucharist – the culminating point in Christian initiation (RCIA 232-234, 217; OICA 232-234)
  - Profession of faith is omitted, so Mass continues with intercessions, and for the first time the neophytes take part in them (RCIA 241)
  - Eucharistic Prayers I, II, or III – use interpolations in the ritual Masses, “Christian Initiation: Baptism.” Eucharistic Prayer IV may be used outside the Easter Vigil (RCIA 242)
  - It is recommended that neophytes receive under both species (RCIA 243)

**Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy (*De tempore mystagogiae*)**

- Time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and making it part of their lives (RCIA 244)
  - In St Louis, this period should last at least a year. Weekly sessions should continue through Pentecost, after that, perhaps monthly. Missioning or commissioning should take place at Pentecost (StL Guide 60)
- Neophytes are introduced into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message they have learned through the experience of the sacraments they have received (RCIA 245)
- Increased contact between the neophytes and the rest of the faithful. They should receive a full and joyful welcome (RCIA 246)
- Masses for neophytes
  - Sunday Masses of the Easter season; suitable readings from the Lectionary, especially for Year A (RCIA 247)
  - All the neophytes and their godparents should make an effort to take part in the Masses for the neophytes, along with entire local community (RCIA 248)
- Some sort of celebration should close the period of postbaptismal catechesis (RCIA 249)
- Anniversary of baptism – neophytes should gather to give thanks, share, and renew their commitment (RCIA 250)
- The bishop should arrange to meet the recently baptized at least once in the year and to preside at a celebration of the Eucharist with them (RCIA 251)
  - At this Mass they may receive holy Communion under both kinds

# The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

## Part II: Rites for Particular Circumstances

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Outline notes by Daniel G. Van Slyke, S.T.L., Ph.D.

### 1.a. Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age

- In *editio typica*, caput V: *Ordo initiationis puerorum qui aetatem catechetica adepti sunt*. In NCCB ICEL edition, part II, chapter 1, §§252-330, in *Rites*, vol. 1, pp. 170-213
- Essential difference between the situation of a child and that of an adult: the child is still under the authority of its parents
- Preparation of the recipients (RCIA 243): personal and somewhat developed conversion; proper education; permission of the parents (RCIA 254.2)
- Timing (RCA 256):
  - May take several years
  - If possible, some coincidence with preparation of friends to receive confirmation or Eucharist
  - Final period of preparation preferably coincides with Lent
  - Sacraments preferably take place at the Easter Vigil
- Roles
  - Priest or deacon presides over the rite of acceptance, the rite of enrollment (RCIA 262, 281); priest (with help of deacon when numbers are large) baptizes and confirms (RCIA 323)
  - Parents have an active role at the rite of acceptance; accompany children to the baptismal font
  - Catechists may sign children during the rite of acceptance, present children at rite of election
  - Sponsors, if necessary, take the place of parents in presenting the children at the rite of acceptance (RCIA 260); accompany previously baptized children at confirmation (RCIA 308)
  - Assisting minister (*lector*) reads intercessions (RCA 274)
  - Godparents accompany children on the third step, sacraments of initiation (RCIA 307)

### 1.b. Rites for Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age

- Presentations of the Creed (RCIA 157-162) and of the Lord's Prayer (RCIA 178-183), with proper adaptation, may be incorporated
- **First Step:** Rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (RCIA 260-276)
  - Introductory remarks: Reception and greeting of children (RCIA 262-263, OICA 316-317)
  - Opening dialogue concluded with brief catechesis; these or similar words (RCIA 264)
  - Dialogue (affirmation) with the parents (or sponsors) and assembly; these or similar words (RCIA 256)
  - Signing with the cross on forehead [and other senses] (RCIA 266-267) by the celebrant and, if opportune, by parents (sponsors) and catechesists
  - Introduction into the church/Invitation to celebration of the word of God; these or similar words (RCIA 269; OICA 324)
  - Liturgy of the word, including address to the children, wide latitude for choice of readings, homily [presentation of a Bible] (RCIA 270-273)
  - Intercessions for the children (*deprecatio*); these or similar words (RCIA 329)
  - Prayer over the children said by celebrant; one formula given (RCIA 275)
  - Dismissal, including song, Eucharist not typically celebrated afterward (RCIA 276)
- [optional] Rite of election or enrollment of names (RCIA 277-290; USA only)
  - Especially appropriate when the catechumenate is extended over a long period of time; preferably on the first Sunday of Lent, within Mass (RCIA 277, 280)

- Following homily, presentation of children to celebrant of Mass, by priest, deacon, catechist, or community representative, with these or similar words (RCIA 282)
- Affirmation by parents, godparents, [and assembly] (RCIA 283)
- Invitation and enrollment of names, these or similar words (RCIA 284)
- Act of admission or election, these or similar words (RCIA 285)
- [Recognition of the godparent(s)] (RCA 286)
- Intercessions for the elect (RCIA 287)
- Prayer over the elect, said by the celebrant, 2 options given (RCIA 288)
- Dismissal of the elect: option A or B if the children depart; if they stay for the Eucharist, option C; if the Eucharist is not to be celebrated, D (RCIA 289)
- **Second Step** (*secundus gradus*): Penitential rites or scrutinies (RCIA 291-303)
  - Introduction:
    - Similar to the scrutinies, so guidelines for the adult rite may be adapted (RCIA 291)
    - Prerequisite: near maturity of faith and understanding requisite for baptism (RCIA 292)
    - Where possible, may be held in conjunction with celebration for those already baptized and about to receive penance for the first time (RCIA 295)
    - During Lent, or other suitable time; at least once, twice if convenient
    - Second time: texts composed on the model given here, but texts for intercessions and exorcism drawn from the adult rite, with requisite modifications (RCIA 294)
    - Celebrant: priest (see RCIA 295)
  - Greeting and introduction (RCIA 295)
  - Prayer, option A or B (RCIA 296)
  - Readings from the list here given (RCIA 297)
  - Homily (RCIA 298)
  - Intercessions; introduction and intentions may be adapted from adult rite (RCIA 299)
  - Exorcism, option A or B – B being dialogical (RCIA 300; OICA 339, 392)
  - Anointing with oil of catechumens or laying on of hands
    - Anointing takes place on breast or both hands, or even other parts of the body if desirable
    - A blessing of oil for the rite is provided
    - Anointing may be followed by a blessing of catechumens
  - Liturgy of penance
- **Third Step**: Sacraments of Initiation (RCIA 304-329), within Mass
  - Celebration of baptism (RCIA 310-321)
    - Readings and homily – if outside of the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, texts from the current Sunday or feast, or those in the lectionary under “Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil” (RCIA 306, 309)
    - Invitation to prayer to all assembled, these or similar words (RCIA 310)
    - Prayer of thanksgiving over the water – option A for Easter Vigil; otherwise other options from adult baptism (RCIA 311, referencing 222)
    - [Profession of faith by all present, introduced by a formula admonishing to community to help the new initiates – Apostles’ Creed or Nicene] (RCIA 312)
    - Renunciation – option A or B, interrogatory formulae (RCIA 214)
    - [Anointing with oil of catechumens – if not celebrated previously, ordinarily omitted in U.S.A.] (RCIA 315)
    - Profession of faith, interrogatory formula (RCIA 316)
    - Baptism by immersion, option A, or pouring, option B; each baptism may be followed by a short acclamation (RCIA 317)
    - Explanatory rites – anointing, garment, candle, all optional (RCIA 318-321)
  - Celebration of confirmation (RCIA 322-326)
    - Song between baptism and confirmation, if opportune (RCA 322)
    - At baptismal font or in the sanctuary (RCIA 322)

- Invitation, these or similar words (RCIA 324)
    - Laying on of hands, according to rubrics of the adult rite (RCIA 325, referencing 234)
    - Anointing with chrism, sacramental formulae (RCIA 326)
  - Celebration of the Eucharist (RCIA 327-329)
- Period of Mystagogy or Postbaptismal Catechesis, adapted from the guidelines for adults (RCIA 330)

### **2.a. Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances**

- In *editio typica*, caput II: *Ordo simplicior initiationis adulti*. In NCCB ICEL edition, part II, chapter 2, §§331-369, in *Rites*, vol. 1, pp. 214-230
- This rite depends upon the local bishop's permission and guidance (RCA 331-332)
- For use in extraordinary circumstances (RCA 331-332)
- Abbreviated form
  - The simpler *ordo* can be done as a single continuous action, in cases when it is not possible or necessary for catechumens to pass through all the normal stages
  - Normally celebrated within Mass, if possible, on a Sunday with local community
- Expanded form
  - May include the addition of some elements from the full rite (RCIA 331)
  - Decisions to be made by pastors who opt for this expanding: set forth in RCIA 334, OICA 276
  - Full/adequate catechesis/instruction and preparation remains a necessity (RCIA 335-336)

### **2.b. Rites for Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances**

- Rite of reception (340-345)
  - Receiving the candidate – celebrant (priest), wearing vestments for Mass meets candidate with godparents and friends outside the church or at entrance, or some other convenient place. Faithful sing a suitable *cantus*.
  - Greeting of candidate by celebrant
  - Opening dialogue between celebrant and candidate (same as RCIA 50, from rite of election/enrollment)
  - Candidate's declaration; response to these or similar words (first paragraph from RCIA 52)
  - Affirmation by godparents, dialogical form (formula of thanksgiving same as RCIA 53)
  - Invitation to celebration of the word, and entrance into the Church
- Liturgy of the word (346-352)
  - Readings from the usual sources (see RCIA 338)
  - Homily
  - Intercessions for the candidate/*Deprecatio*; these or something similar – resemble those of the scrutinies, but do not match them
  - [Penitential rite – the Confiteor with head bowed or kneeling, by candidate and assembly]
  - Prayer of exorcism (RCIA 300)
  - Anointing with the oil of catechumens [omitted in U.S.] or laying on of hands, if not celebrated at another time; one formula for each
- Celebration of baptism (353-358)
  - Invitation to prayer
  - Prayer over the water – option A here, or options from RCIA 222, of the adult rite
  - Profession of faith, as in RCIA 223
  - Renunciation of sin; three interrogatory formulae provided
  - Profession of faith in interrogatory form
  - Baptism by immersion (A) or pouring (B), as in RCIA 226
- Explanatory rites (359-361)
  - Baptismal garment, as in RCIA 229, and so presumably optional
  - Lighted candle, formula like that in RCIA 230

- Celebration of confirmation (362-366)
  - Appropriate song might be sung between baptism and confirmation
  - Invitation addressed to the neophyte (“person newly baptized”), the invitation to silent prayer issued to the congregation; these or similar words, same as RCIA 233
  - Matter and form, as in RCIA 234-235 and rite of confirmation 25
- Eucharistic liturgy (367-369) As usual, picks up with general intercessions; for first time the neophyte takes part in them; carries gifts to altar; communion under both species recommended

### 3.a Christian Initiation of a Person in Danger of Death

- In *editio typica*, caput III: *Ordo brevior initiationis adulti in proximo periculo vel in articulo mortis adhibendus*. In NCCB ICEL edition, part II, chapter 3, §§370-399, in *Rites*, vol. 1, pp. 231-244
- Intended for use by a catechist or any layperson; can also be used by priests and deacons (OICA 280). Ordained ministers, however, are advised to use the previous rite (Rite 2, exceptional circumstances)

### 3.b Rites for Christian Initiation of a Person in Danger of Death

- Opening dialogue – dialogue between *minister* and “candidate” (*infirmus*): includes a promise to pursue catechesis and formation in the event of recovery (RCIA 377, OICA 285)
- Affirmation by godparent and witnesses – to remind the candidate of his promise and assist in fulfilling it (RCIA 378)
- Gospel reading and explanation (RCIA 379)
- Intercessions for the candidate/*Deprecatio*, read by minister or anyone present (“assisting minister” = *minister (vel unus inter astantes)* [sic] (RCIA 380; OICA 288)
- Prayer over the candidate/conclusion of *deprecatio* (RCIA 381)
- Renunciation of sin, interrogatory formula with one response, adaptations allowed (RCIA 382)
- Profession of faith – interrogatory form or Apostles’ Creed (RCIA 383)
- Baptism by threefold pouring (RCIA 384)
- Various ways of proceeding depending upon minister:
  - Post-baptismal anointing if minister is a deacon
  - Viaticum follows if minister is not a priest (RCIA 386, skipping forward to 393)
  - If neither confirmation nor viaticum follow, skip forward to concluding rite after baptism (RCIA 387, jump to 399)
  - If minister is a priest, confirmation follows (RCIA 388-391)
- Communion as viaticum (RCIA 393-396), like that in Pastoral Care of the Sick 88
- Conclusion according to whether or not confirmation and viaticum are given; both options end with the Our Father (RCIA 300)
- Blessing, again dependent upon minister (RCIA 397)
- Sign of peace (398)

### 4.a Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist

- In *editio typica*, caput IV: *De praeparandis ad confirmationem et Eucharistiam adultis qui, infants baptizati, catechesim non receperunt*. In NCCB ICEL edition, part II, chapter 4, §§400-472, in *Rites*, vol. 1, pp. 245-274
- This chapter became the object of a detailed official interpretation, driven by queries of the neocatechumenal communities, regarding which rites may be repeated and which not
  - For more information on how this rite has been expanded, see the “[Statute of the Neocatechumenal Way](#)” (29 June 2002), especially Title IV: Baptismal Catechumenate
- Subjects: adults baptized as infants, who received neither further catechetical formation nor confirmation and first communion (RCIA 400)

- Already members of the Church and children of God by virtue of baptism, their status differs from that of catechumens; their conversion is based on baptism already received
- For the most part, the plan of catechesis corresponds to that of catechumens
- Roles: sponsor presents these adults to the community; they choose godparents approved by the priest

#### **4.b Rites of Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist [OPTIONAL]**

- Not in *editio typica*, USA only
- 4.A. Rite of Welcoming the Candidates (RCIA 411-433) – adults are welcomed into the community and acknowledge themselves to be part of it because they have already been marked with the seal of baptism (RCA 405, 412)
- Celebrations of the word of God (RCIA 406, 413, referencing 81-84)
- Some rites of the catechumenate can be used: presentations of the Creed and Lord's Prayer, presentation of a book of the Gospels (RCIA 407)
- 4.B. Rite of Sending the Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop and for the Call to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 434-445)
- 4.C. Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 446-457), at beginning of Lent
- 4.D. Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) (RCIA 459-472), lacks anything that might be construed as an exorcism

#### **5. Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church**

- In *editio typica*, this was added as an Appendix: *Ordo admissionis valide iam baptizatorum in plenam communionem ecclesiae catholicae*. In NCCB ICEL edition, part II, chapter 5, §§473-504, in *Rites*, vol. 1, pp. 275-286
- The rite is reduced to a minimum.
- Generally takes place during Mass, without triumphalism or publicity (RCIA 475)
- The only act formally required for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church is a profession of faith
- Roles:
  - Minister: bishop, who may entrust the celebration to a priest
  - Sponsor(s) accompany the candidate at the reception
- Three possible cases:
  - Reception within Mass (RCIA 487-498)
  - Reception outside Mass – for exceptional cases, within liturgy of the Word (RCIA 499-504)
  - Special cases – comprising only invitation, profession of faith, and laying on of the hand (RCIA 499, as described in 490-497)