



Instruction on the Celebration of the Sacraments for Catechumens, Candidates, and Catholics who participated in RCIA

Lent of 2020 will go down in history as a time of a world-wide health crisis. It has also been a time of grace for all of us as we strive to find new ways to walk with God's people during this difficult time.

One of the consequences of the response to Covid-19, the Coronavirus, has been the suspension of all public gatherings where the disease might more easily spread. This has had the sad consequence of the suspension of the Masses and Services of Holy Week, in particular the Easter Vigil.

However, many parishes and communities of faith have been guiding three groups of individuals since last fall into the fullness of the Catholic faith through the RCIA process. These include catechumens (non-baptized) and candidates (baptized, non-Catholics) who planned to enter into the Church this Easter. Added to these, alongside them, are Catholics who have been preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The purpose of this instruction is to guide priests and parish ministers in bringing the sacraments to these three groups of people who have prepared well and who so earnestly desire them.

Regarding the first two groups of people, namely those who are catechumens or candidates, and who have been fully prepared to enter into the Catholic Church, the following directions apply:

Priests of the Diocese of Green Bay have the faculty by canon law itself, further reiterated in their Diocesan faculties, to celebrate all of the Sacraments of Initiation, including the Sacrament of Confirmation, with Catechumens and Candidates at any time. (Canon 883) Thus, priests should use their pastoral and prudent discretion in planning an appropriate Mass whereby these catechumens and candidates can be brought into the Church. This would be most fitting during the Easter Season or even afterwards, whenever larger gatherings of people would be again permissible.

Regarding the third group of people, namely those who are adult Catholics, and who have prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation within the RCIA process, the following applies:

The Easter Vigil faculty, which has been granted to priests in recent years within the Diocese of Green Bay, was specifically for this group of Catholics and only for the date of the Easter Vigil. Unlike for catechumens and candidates, priests do not ordinarily have the faculty to Confirm Catholics since this is reserved to Bishops. (Canons 882, 884) However, because of the extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves, Bishop Ricken has now extended the 2020 Easter Vigil Faculty to Confirm. Thus, priests within the Diocese of Green Bay have now been granted the faculty to Confirm adult Catholics who participated in the 2019-2020 RCIA program. This faculty extends only to these adult Catholics and expires on December 31, 2020.

If you have questions, please contact Father John Girotti at jgirotti@gbdioc.org.