

Parish Celebration for Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop

[Excerpts from the English translation of *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 1985, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc.]

Adapted from RCIA nos. 530-546. The following version is adapted for use with both candidates and catechumens, including the dismissal of the catechumens.

The following rite should take place at the celebration of the First Sunday of Lent (or the final Mass at which the Candidates and Catechumens are gathered at the Parish before the Rite of Election, the afternoon of the First Sunday of Lent). Please review RCIA #530-535 for a more detailed review of the ritual.

The catechumens with their godparents and the candidates with their sponsors should be seated together.

The Book of the Elect and pen should be placed on a suitable stand or table during the celebration to allow for signing by the catechumens.

HOMILY

During the homily, emphasis should be placed upon the community's accompaniment of the candidates and catechumens along their journey.

PRESENTATION OF THE CATECHUMENS (Not Candidates)

After the Homily, the RCIA leader or Deacon presents the catechumens to the celebrant:

Reverend Father, these catechumens, **N.** and **N.**, are beginning their final period of preparation and purification leading to their initiation. They have found strength in God's grace and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that they be recognized for the progress they have made in their spiritual formation and that they receive the assurance of our blessings and prayers as they go forth to the Rite of Election celebrated this afternoon (*or*: next Sunday) by Bishop David Ricken at the Cathedral church of the Diocese.

Celebrant: Those who are to be sent to the celebration of election in Christ, come forward as your name is called, together with those who will be your godparents: **(read names one by one)**.

As their names are called, the catechumens and their godparents come forward and stand before the celebrant.

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS & SIGNING OF THE BOOK OF THE ELECT

Celebrant (to the Assembly): My dear friends, these catechumens who have been preparing for the sacraments of initiation hope that they will be found ready to participate in the Rite of Election and be chosen in Christ for the Easter sacraments. It is the responsibility of this community to inquire about their readiness before they are presented to the bishop.

Celebrant (to Godparents): I turn to you, godparents, for your testimony about these candidates. Have these catechumens taken their formation in the Gospel and in the Catholic way of life seriously?

Godparents: They have.

Celebrant (to Godparents): Have they given evidence of their conversion by the example of their lives?

Godparents: They have.

Celebrant (to Godparents): Do you judge them ready to be presented to the bishop for the Rite of Election?

Godparents: We do.

Celebrant (to Catechumens): My dear catechumens, this community gladly recommends you to the bishop, who, in the name of Christ, will call you to the Easter sacraments. May God bring to completion the good work he has begun in you.

I now invite you to sign the Book of the Elect which will be presented to the Bishop at the Rite of Election.

The catechumens, one by one, approach the Book of the Elect and sign. After signing, they move to the side.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES (Not Catechumens)

The RCIA leader or Deacon presents the Candidates to the celebrant:

Reverend Father, I now present to you the candidates who are beginning their final preparations for the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist (and/or: reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church). They have found strength in God's grace and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that they be recognized for the progress they have made in their spiritual formation and that they receive the assurance of our blessings and prayers as they go forth for recognition by Bishop David Ricken, this afternoon (or: next Sunday) at the Cathedral church of the Diocese.

Celebrant: Those who are to be sent to the celebration of election in Christ, come forward as your name is called, together with your sponsor: (read names one by one).

As their names are called, the candidates and their sponsor come forward and stand before the celebrant.

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS

Celebrant (to the Assembly): My dear friends, these candidates, already one with us by reason of their baptism in Christ, have asked to be able to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Those who know them have judged them to be sincere in their desire.

During the period of their catechetical formation they have listened to the word of Christ and endeavored to follow his commands more perfectly; they have shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters in this community and joined with them in prayer.

And so I announce to all of you here that our community supports these candidates in their desire. Therefore, I ask their sponsors to state their opinion once again, so that all of you may hear.

Celebrant (to Sponsors): As God is your witness, do you consider these candidates ready to receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist (or: ready to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church)?

Sponsors: We do

Celebrant (to Candidates): And now, my dear friends, I address you. Your own sponsors have spoken in your favor. The Church, in the name of Christ, accepts their testimony and sends you to Bishop Ricken, who will exhort you to live in deeper conformity to the life of Christ.

The candidates are then joined by the catechumens.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant (to the Assembly): My brothers and sisters, please stand. We look forward to celebrating at Easter the life-giving mysteries of our Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection. As we journey together to the Easter sacraments, these catechumens and candidates will look to us for an example of Christian renewal. Let us pray to the Lord for them and for ourselves, that we may be renewed by one another's efforts and together come to share the joys of Easter.

A deacon or other minister then reads the intercessions:

For the Church, that all may hear the call to share the joy that comes from Christ with all people, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That leaders of nations recognize their responsibilities to build peace and to protect the vulnerable among them, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That these catechumens and candidates may be freed from selfishness and learn to put others first, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That their godparents and sponsors may be living examples of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That their teachers may always convey to them the beauty of God's word, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That these catechumens and candidates may share with others the joy they have found in their friendship with Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our community, during this (coming) Lenten season, may grow in charity and be constant in prayer, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

BLESSING OVER THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

Celebrant:

We now ask God's blessing upon these catechumens and candidates:

(hands outstretched)

Father of love and power,
it is your will to establish everything in Christ
and to draw us into his all-embracing love.

Guide these catechumens and candidates
in the days and weeks ahead:

strengthen them in their vocation,
build them into the kingdom of your Son,
and seal them with the Spirit of your promise.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Candidates return to their seats if they have not done so already.

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS (IF APPLICABLE)

Celebrant (to Catechumens):

My dear catechumens, you are about to set out on the road that leads to the glory of Easter. Christ will be your way, your truth, and your life. In his name we send you forth from this community to celebrate with the bishop the Lord's choice of you to be numbered among his elect. Until we meet again for the scrutinies, walk always in his peace.

Catechumens: Amen.

The catechumens are dismissed.

The Mass continues with the Creed, followed by the preparation of the Altar.