

PARISH CELEBRATION FOR SENDING CATECHUMENS FOR ELECTION
AND CANDIDATES FOR RECOGNITION BY THE ARCHBISHOP

“The community was of one mind and one heart....”

This optional rite is provided for parishes whose catechumens will celebrate their election and whose adult candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church will celebrate their recognition in a subsequent celebration at the cathedral with the archbishop.

As the focal point of the Church’s concern for the catechumens, admission to election belongs to the archbishop who is usually its presiding celebrant. It is within the parish community, however, that the preliminary judgment is made concerning the catechumens’ state of formation and progress.

This rite offers that local community the opportunity to express its approval of the catechumens and to send them forth to the celebration of election assured of the parish’s care and support.

In addition, those who either are completing their initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist or are preparing for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church are also included in this rite, since they too will be presented to the archbishop at the celebration of the rite of election for the catechumens.

The rite is celebrated in the parish church at a suitable time prior to the rite of election.

The rite takes place after the homily in a celebration of the word of God... or at Mass.

In the catechesis of the community and in the celebration of these rites, care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the catechumens and the baptized candidates. (Rite #530-535)

OUTLINE OF THE RITE

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Homily

Presentation of the Catechumens

Affirmation by the Godparents (and assembly)

Presentation of the Candidates

Affirmation by the Sponsors (and assembly)

Intercessions for the Catechumens and Candidates

Prayer over the Catechumens and Candidates

Dismissal of the Catechumens

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

LITURGY OF THE WORD

HOMILY

After the readings, the celebrant gives the homily. This should be suited to the actual situation and should address not just the catechumens and candidates but the entire community of the faithful, so that all will be encouraged to give good example and to accompany the candidates along the path of the paschal mystery.

PRESENTATION OF THE CATECHUMENS

After the homily, the priest in charge of the catechumens' initiation, or a deacon, or catechist, or a representative of the community (RCIA Coordinator), presents the catechumens using the following or similar words.

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, if done the week before the Combined Rite*) by Archbishop Blair.

The Celebrant replies:

Those who are to be sent to the celebration of election in Christ, come forward, together with those who will be your godparents.

One by one, the catechumens are called by name. Each catechumen, accompanied by their godparent(s), comes forward and stands before the celebrant.

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS AND THE ASSEMBLY

Then the celebrant addresses the assembly in these or similar words:

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 Archbishop.

He addresses the 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:

Have they given evidence of their conversion by the example of their lives?

Godparents:

They have.

Celebrant:

Do you judge them to be ready to be presented to the Archbishop for the rite of election?

Godparents:

We do.

[When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the candidates.]

Celebrant:

My dear catechumens, this community gladly recommends you to the Archbishop, 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.

The signing of the Book of the Elect is to take place in the presence of the Archbishop, so it should be omitted here.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

The priest in charge of the candidates' formation, or a deacon, or catechist, or a representative of the community (RCIA Coordinator), presents the candidates, using the following or similar words.

Reverend Father, I now present to you the candidates who are beginning their final preparation 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 Archbishop Blair this afternoon (*or next Sunday, if done the week before the Combined Rite*).

Celebrant:

Those who are to be recognized, come forward, together with your sponsors.

One by one, the candidates are called by name. Each candidate, accompanied by a sponsor, comes forward and stands before the celebrant.

AFFIRMATION OF THE SPONSORS AND ASSEMBLY

Then the celebrant addresses the assembly in these or similar words:

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.

He addresses the 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 full communion of the Catholic Church?*)

Sponsors:

We do.

[When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the candidates.]

The celebrant concludes the affirmation by the following:

And now, my dear friends, I address you. Your own sponsors and this entire community have spoken in your favor. The Church, in the name of Christ, accepts their testimony and sends you to Archbishop Blair who will exhort you to live in deeper conformity to life of Christ. We invite you now to sign your name on the scroll that will be presented at the Cathedral this afternoon.

(At this time the candidates sign the scroll.)

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

Celebrant:

My brothers and sisters, 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.

Reader:

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

Response:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader:

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

Response:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader:

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

Response:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader:

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:

Response:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader:

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

Response:

Lord, hear our prayer.

PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

After the intercessions, the celebrant, with hands outstretched over the catechumens and candidates, says the following prayer:

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.

Response:

Amen.

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS

If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, the catechumens are normally dismissed at this point.

The celebrant dismisses the catechumens using these or similar words:

My dear friends, 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 Archbishop 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.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

When the Eucharist is to follow, intercessory prayer is resumed with the usual general intercessions for the needs of the Church and the whole world; then, if required, the profession of faith is said. But for pastoral reasons these general; intercessions and the profession of faith may be omitted.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist then begins as usual with the preparation of the gifts.