

## **General Information about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**

### **Rite of Election and Calls to Continuing Conversion**

Each Lent Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan celebrates the Rite of Election with catechumens at St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral. Calls to Continuing Conversion with candidates for full communion into the Catholic Church as well as with Catholic candidates completing their Christian Initiation through the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and/or Confirmation are usually held early in Lent in various regions of the Archdiocese. Parishes are urged to bring their catechumens and candidates to celebrate these rites. Call the Office of Worship and Christian Initiation for dates and locations.

### **RCIA Subcommittee**

The RCIA subcommittee assists the Office of Worship and Christian Initiation in promoting Christian Initiation in the Archdiocese. They help develop training and catechetical programs and assist in Archdiocesan Initiation celebrations

### **Publications**

Periodically, Christian Initiation News, a newsletter on Christian Initiation is published through the Office of Worship and Christian Initiation. Call to be added to the mailing list.

### **Workshops**

The RCIA subcommittee sponsors workshops each year to assist RCIA coordinators and RCIA teams in understanding and implementing Christian Initiation. Call the Office for workshop titles, dates and locations.

### **Outline of Stages and Rites of the RCIA\***

Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

**Rite: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens**

Period of the Catechumenate

**Rite: Rite of Election**

Period of Purification and Enlightenment

**Rite: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (at Easter Vigil)**

Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

**Rite: Lifelong Participation in the Celebration of Sunday Mass**

*\* Note that there are additional rites that belong to various periods. Only the culminating rites are listed.*

# RCIA

## SOME REMINDERS

### 1. Children.

**Unbaptized Children.** Unbaptized children who have attained the use of reason (approximately age 7) have the same rights as adults for the purpose of Christian initiation (c. 852. 1). These children are to be admitted to the catechumenate and be led through the several stages to sacramental initiation (c. 851.1). They should receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil (c. 866 and RCIA, National Statutes, #18)

**Baptized Children.** Children baptized in a separated ecclesial community with the use of reason who are seeking full communion are also considered adults for purposes of Christian Initiation. They may participate in liturgical rites marking their progress (RCIA #478). These children make a profession of faith, are received into the Church, are confirmed and receive Eucharist (RCIA, #490-498). Reception of candidates into the communion of the Catholic Church may take place at a Sunday Eucharist of the parish (RCIA National Statutes, #32). Reception may also take place at the Vigil, for pastoral reasons (RCIA National Statutes, #34).

2. **Length of Period of Catechumenate.** “The period of the catechumenate, beginning at acceptance into the order of catechumens and including both the catechumenate proper and the period of purification and enlightenment after election or enrollment of names, should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation”. (National Statutes for the Catechumenate, #6).

3. **Time of Celebration.** The celebration of the sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) should take place at the Easter Vigil (RCIA, # 23)

#### **Exceptions:**

- a) If the Bishop decides circumstances warrant: a change in time outside the usual times (RCIA #34.2);
- b) Danger of death (c. 865.2);
- c) Serious pastoral needs (a great many people to be baptized) (RCIA #26).

4. **Divorced People:** A divorced person may participate in the RCIA process and receive the sacraments. There is no impediment to being received into the Church. However, it is important that they know the teaching of the Church regarding marriage. The divorced do not need to petition for an annulment before receiving the sacraments of initiation. They will need to petition for an annulment if they plan to marry in the future.

5. **Divorced, Remarried and in Need of an Annulment.** If a person is divorced, remarried, and in need of an annulment, they may participate in the precatechumenate, the Rite of Acceptance, and the period of Catechumenate. They may not participate in the Rite of Election until their annulment has been granted.

- 6. Recording of those Received into Full Communion.** There may be some confusion about the recording of the reception of baptized Christians into the Catholic faith from other faith traditions. Here is what the RCIA rite # 486 says: "The names of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church should be recorded in a special book, with the date and place of their baptism also noted".

In checking with the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, they do not know of any publisher producing a "special book" for the newly received. If a parish has made it's own "special book" for the newly received and is recording the information there, that is proper and may continue.

However, if you have no "special book", the reception is to be recorded in the parish Baptismal Register according to the procedure outlined in RCIA #486. Of course, the Confirmation and First Communion of the newly received are to also be recorded in the parish Confirmation and First Communion register.

## BAPTISM IN OTHER FAITH TRADITIONS

The following information has been provided to the Office of Worship and Christian Initiation by Father Jerry Plotkowski, Judicial Vicar. It is our hope that it will help you in discerning the canonical status of your candidates.

### BAPTISM IN PROTESTANT RELIGIONS

Most Protestant baptisms are recognized as valid baptisms. Some are not. It is very difficult to question the validity of a baptism because of an intention either on the part of the minister or on the part of the one being baptized.

#### ADVENTISTS:

Water baptism is by immersion with the Trinitarian formula. **Valid.** Baptism is given at the age of reason. A dedication ceremony is given to infants. The two ceremonies are separate. (Many Protestant religions have the dedication ceremony or other ceremony, which is not a baptism. If the church has the dedication ceremony, baptism is generally not conferred until the age of reason or until the approximate age of 13).

#### AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL:

Baptism with water by sprinkling, pouring, or dunking. Trinitarian form is used. **Valid.** There is an open door ceremony, which is not baptism.

#### AMISH:

This is coupled with Mennonites. No infant baptism. The rite of baptism seems **valid.**

#### ANGLICAN:

**Valid** baptism.

#### APOSTOLIC CHURCH:

An affirmative decision has been granted in one case involving "baptism" in the apostolic church. The minister baptized according to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and not St. Matthew. The form used was: "We baptize you into the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive a gift of the Holy Ghost." No Trinitarian form was used. **Valid.**

#### THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD:

A dedication ceremony is possible. Infants are not customarily baptized. Baptism through water takes place when a person is mature enough to understand its implications. The method of baptism is not outlined, but appears **valid.**

#### BAPTISTS:

No infant baptism. There is a ceremony of dedication. **Valid** baptism takes place at the approximate age of 13.

#### EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN:

Members are not received into this church unless they have been baptized. Assurance of baptism is required before membership is extended. There is a dedication ceremony. Baptism by water seems **valid** and is generally done by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling. The Trinitarian form is used.

### **UNIVERSALISTS:**

Universalists and Unitarians voted to merge in May of 1960, with the union taking effect in 1961. Even before that time, Universalists favored ultimate salvation and rejected original sin. With time, they denied the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus. **No valid baptism** in either church.

### **SALVATION ARMY:**

The Salvation Army Headquarters state they do not have a baptismal service, but a religious ceremony called a dedication service of children, and also a cradle role. A certificate is issued for the dedication service, but is not to be confused with water baptism. **No baptism.**

### **LATTER DAY SAINTS CHURCH (MORMON):**

There is a dedication ceremony in which no water is used. Baptism takes place by immersion, but not before the age of 8. The Vatican Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith has recently declared this baptism **invalid**.

### **PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES:**

**Invalid** baptism because of Unitarian formula. This is found in the official book of the Pentecostal Assembly. Yet baptism is considered necessary for salvation and is done by immersion.

### **CHRISTADELPHIANS:**

Belief is in spiritual rebirth by immersion. Baptism appears **invalid** since there is no belief in a Trinity, but in one God, Jesus, who was the son of God, but not God the Son. There is no Trinitarian formula, since there is no belief in the Trinity.

### **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES:**

An affirmative decision was granted in such a case because of lack of proper form and intention on the part of the ministers. It appears that the Jehovah's Witnesses are fundamentalists, Unitarians. The Divinity of Christ is explicitly denied, as is the existence of the Holy Spirit as a person. In the ceremony of baptism there is a discourse. It is really a symbol of dedication rather than baptism. The person enters the water, but his name is not called out. No words or formula are pronounced while the person is submerged or immersed in the water. If matter and form are valid, the intention of the minister is to baptize the person into the Jehovah's Witness sect, thereby not intending that the person be baptized in the name of the triune God. This is evident since the Divinity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit are denied. These latter refer simply to a power exerted by Jehovah, who alone is God. **Invalid.**

### **CHURCH OF THE BRETHERN: (Formerly called Dunkers)**

Baptism is made by triune immersion. The formula in Matthew is used. **Valid** Baptism.

### **BOHEMIAN FREE THINKERS:**

An affirmative decision was given in a case of this type in 1964. A name giving ceremony is had which is not baptism. There is no Trinitarian belief. **No baptism** of any kind is practiced.

**CHURCH OF GOD:**

There is a public baby dedication with no sacramental significance. Baptism is conferred later by immersion and with the Trinitarian formula. Baptism is conferred when the individual asks for it. **Valid** Baptism.

**CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE:**

No belief in infant baptism, but only to those who give evidence of repentance and new birth. Baptism is seldom conferred before the age of 12. It is conferred by immersion. It is given upon the personal confession of Christ as the Savior of this person. **Valid**.

**CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS:**

The mother church of all Christian Science Churches states: "Baptism is an individual spiritual experience. It is not a religious rite or ceremony performed by an ordained minister or priest." The textbook states that it is a purification by spirit. A letter from the board of directors states there is no baptismal ritual in the Christian Science movement. In other words, they have **no true baptism**.

**CHURCH OF DIVINE SCIENCE:**

Apparently **invalid** baptism. The ceremony is a christening ceremony, but not one of baptism. There is no change brought about in the person who is blessed. The church does not believe in original sin, so that the child is blessed only when received into the church. An affirmative decision has been granted in such a case.

**DISCIPLES AND CHRISTIANS:**

There is a dedication service; no infant baptism; Trinitarian formula used in baptism by immersion at an older age. **Valid** baptism. These churches are sometimes known as the Disciples of Christ.

**EPISCOPALIAN CHURCH:**

**Valid** baptism.

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH:**

**Valid** baptism.

**LUTHERAN CHURCH:**

**Valid** baptism.

**EVANGELICAL CHURCHES:**

**Valid** baptism.

**METHODIST CHURCH:**

**Valid** baptism.

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:**

**Valid** baptism.

## **Glossary of Terms for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**

<b><i>Annulment</i></b>	A determination by church authorities that a previous marriage was not sacramentally valid and, therefore, not an impediment to a sacramental marriage in the future.
<b><i>Candidate</i></b>	A person already baptized in another Christian community who is now preparing to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church.
<b><i>Catechesis</i></b>	Religious instruction in the fundamentals of Christianity in the Catholic tradition.
<b><i>Catechumen</i></b>	A person who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
<b><i>Catechumenate</i></b>	Second period within the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults involving intense preparation in word, worship, community life and apostolic works.
<b><i>Cycle A, B, C</i></b>	Refers to the three year cycle of liturgical readings used at Sunday Mass. Cycle A: Gospel of Matthew; Cycle B: Gospel of Mark; Cycle C: Gospel of Luke. All three cycles incorporate the Gospel of John. The R.C.I.A. makes particular use of the Cycle A readings during the Scrutinies of Lent.
<b><i>Easter Season</i></b>	A period of seven weeks beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the feast of Pentecost.
<b><i>The Elect</i></b>	The name given to catechumens who enter the final phase of preparation for full initiation into the Catholic Church.
<b><i>Evangelization</i></b>	Inviting, welcoming, witnessing, sharing the faith and proclaiming the Gospel to inquirers and candidates during the precatechumenate.
<b><i>Inquirers</i></b>	Those who participate in the precatechumenate process. They are inquiring into Christianity in the Catholic tradition.
<b><i>Irregular Marital Situations</i></b>	Situations in which an inquirer or candidate is involved in a marital relationship not fully in accord with church law and/or teachings.
<b><i>Lent</i></b>	A six week period extending from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday. It is a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum.

<b><i>Liturgical Year</i></b>	The seasons and cycles of the Christian year including Christmas, Easter and Ordinary Time.
<b><i>Mystagogia</i></b>	A (recommended) one year period following initiation into the Catholic Church wherein new members meet to explore and deepen their understanding of the mysteries of the faith.
<b><i>National Statutes</i></b>	The statutes implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the United States under the authority of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
<b><i>Neophyte</i></b>	A new Catholic who has received the sacraments of initiation.
<b><i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)</i></b>	The official collection of rites of the Roman Catholic Church for initiation of adults (including children of catechetical age) and the reception of baptized candidates into the Church.
<b><i>Precatechumenate</i></b>	The first period of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults consisting of an introduction to the Christian way of life in the Catholic tradition.
<b><i>Purification and Enlightenment</i></b>	The third period of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults coinciding usually with Lent and within which catechumens and candidates are prepared for full initiation into the Church at the Easter Vigil.
<b><i>Rite of Welcome/ Rite of Acceptance</i></b>	For those already baptized, this is the bridge between the inquiry period and the period of pastoral formation within the catechumenate.
<b><i>Rite of Election</i></b>	Presided over by the Bishop, the rite inaugurates the period of Purification and Enlightenment for those who are not baptized.
<b><i>Call to Continuing Conversion</i></b>	A rite which inaugurates the period of Purification and Enlightenment for those already baptized.
<b><i>Scrutinies</i></b>	Three rites of exorcism for the elect, which occur during Lent.
<b><i>Small Faith Communities</i></b>	Members of a parish community who meet in small groups to pray, share faith, read scripture, and journey together toward deeper discipleship.
<b><i>Sacraments of Initiation</i></b>	Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (usually received at the Easter Vigil by those not baptized).
<b><i>Triduum</i></b>	The "three days" of the celebration of Easter beginning at sundown on Holy Thursday and concluding on Easter Sunday. It includes the liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Ester Vigil (Saturday evening) and Easter Sunday.





# OFFICE OF WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

## RCIA COORDINATOR INFORMATION SHEET

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<b>POSITION:</b>
<b>OFFICE PHONE:</b>
<b>HOME PHONE:</b>
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<b>NAME</b>		<b>ADDRESS (+City/Zip)</b>	
<b>E-MAIL ADDRESS</b>		<b>PHONE</b>	<b>ROLE</b>
<b>NAME</b>		<b>ADDRESS (+City/Zip)</b>	
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