

## Ritual Notes and Guidance for the Rite of Election

- Only the names of the catechumens (who will become the “elect”) are entered into the Book of the Elect.
- **Special Notes due to COVID-19:** For the ritual signing of the Book of the Elect (RCIA no. 132), either the elect may sign their name into the book OR the RCIA coordinator may inscribe it for them as the elect announces their name to the assembly.

### WHEN is the Rite of Election celebrated?

May be done on a day other than 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent

### WHERE is the Rite of Election Celebrated?

Due to the coronavirus, the 2021 Rite of Election is to be celebrated in the individual parish or mission of the catechumens (i.e. the unbaptized). For 2021, there will not be a large archdiocesan Rite of Election Celebration, as in past years. With the rollout of the coronavirus vaccine, we hope to return to archdiocesan celebrations in 2022.

Archbishop Wester has given delegation to pastors to preside in his place. This delegation is good only for 2021.

### Who participates in the Rite of Election?

**Catechumens:** The unbaptized adults and children of catechetical age who, after careful consideration by the RCIA leadership team, are evaluated to be ready to receive the three sacraments of initiation (i.e. baptism, confirmation & Eucharist) at the 2021 Easter Vigil. According to RCIA no.120, their “readiness” is discerned using the following criteria:

1. They have undergone a conversion in mind and in action,
2. They have developed a sufficient acquaintance with Catholic Christian teaching, and
3. They have developed a spirit of faith and charity.

## **Catechumens Godparents**

Each catechumen should have one or two godparents who will testify to their readiness during the rite. The godparent(s) will continue journeying with their Elect during the Lenten Period of Purification and Enlightenment, and then will be with them at their initiation into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

## **Parish RCIA Coordinator**

This person will call the catechumens to come forward during the rite and may inscribe the name of the catechumen into the Book of the Elect (if the parish chooses this option).

## **Discerning Readiness of Catechumens for Election**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults states that “the duration of the catechumenate will depend on the grace of God and on various circumstances...The time should be long enough – several years if necessary – for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong” (cf. RCIA no. 76). The National Statutes for the Catechumenate for the Dioceses of the United States (1988) state it should be a period of “at least one year” of formation in the Catholic ways of praying and living, instruction in Catholic teaching, and periods of discernment (cf. NS. no. 6- 7).

- Has the catechumen been in the catechumenate period proper for at least 1 year?
- Have they undergone a conversion in mind and action?
- Have they developed a sufficient acquaintance with Catholic teaching?
- Have they developed a spirit of faith and charity?

## **Criteria for Godparents**

The Code of Canon Law (cf. nos. 874, 892 & 893) gives guidance, along with RCIA nos. 11 & 75.2.

- may be a godmother or a godfather, or both;
- are at least 16 year of age or older (or granted an exception by the pastor);
- are fully initiated Catholic: baptized, confirmed & receiving Eucharist;
- if married, validly married according to the laws of the Church and not bound by any canonical penalties;

- are not the father or mother of the one to be baptized;
- chosen by the catechumen or delegated by the parish and approved by the pastor;
- give witness to the Catholic faith by example, support and prayer;
- journey with their candidate from the day of election, to the celebration of the sacraments of initiation and during the time of mystagogy;
- makes a lifelong promise to help their companion live as a true witness of Jesus Christ.

### Who does NOT participate in the Rite of Election?

- Candidates for Full Communion with the Catholic Church (i.e. baptized in another Christian faith tradition). There is an “optional” rite entitled Rite of Calling Candidates to Continuing Conversion specific for them (cf. PART II, 4c., nos. 446-458).
- Baptized Catholics who are preparing for Confirmation.

### Other Rites

Other rites for the elect – such as the Scrutinies and the Presentations - should be celebrated with social distancing guidelines in mind. Consider how the elect and their godparents might be spaced out in your worship space. If there are a large number of the elect, consider celebrating the rites at several celebrations.

Rites for baptized candidates, including the Call to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 446-458) and the Penitential Rite (RCIA 459-472) are optional. The Rite of Reception into Full Communion (RCIA 473-498) may be celebrated whenever the candidate is deemed ready.

If these liturgies are live-streamed, consider posting the worship aid online, so that families watching at home may participate more fully. (Of course, observe all copyright protocols.)

We are currently in Year B of the Lectionary cycle of readings, but Year A readings may be used. (See the Lectionary for Mass, nos. 744-747.)