

The Rite of Initiation:

What It's All About; How To Become A Catholic Christian

Period of Inquiry: This is a time of introduction to the gospel of Jesus Christ and of reflection on one's own life in the light of the values of the reign of God. It is an unstructured time of no fixed duration for questions and an opportunity for the beginnings of Christian faith.

Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens: Those who profess their faith in Jesus Christ and sincerely desire to enter the church celebrate with the worshiping assembly the beginning of their journey of faith. They accept the way of Jesus receive the sign of the cross of Christ and join in the liturgy of the word of God.

Period of the Catechumenate: Along with their sponsors for the journey, catechumens celebrate the liturgy of the word each Sunday, receive anointings, participate in prayers of exorcism and blessing and take part in the mission of the church to the world. During these months or years in the catechumenate catechumens discover the love and power of God in their lives and in the church.

Election or Enrollment of Names: This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent in the cathedral of the diocese, in which the bishop formally acknowledges the readiness of the catechumens and calls them to the sacraments of initiation. Catechumens-the elect-respond by expressing their desire for these sacraments.

Period of Purification and Enlightenment: Usually during the Lenten season preceding the celebration of initiation at the Easter Vigil, this is a time of intense immediate preparation. Centered on the word of God, creed, Lord's prayer and evangelical scrutinies, catechumens-the elect -experience the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in their own lives.

Sacraments of Initiation: Catechumens-the elect-celebrate initiation in the threefold sacrament of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist ordinarily at the Easter Vigil. The waters of baptism put to death the old person of sin and give birth to the new person in Christ. Anointing with sacred chrism seals and strengthens the newly baptized Christian. Faithful and active participation at the Eucharistic table of the Lord as apostles and witnesses is the goal of Christian initiation and constitutes full membership in the church.

Period of Mystagogy: Mystagogy is the 50-day Easter time following the celebration of Christian initiation. Newly baptized persons receive sacramental catechesis and participate fully with the faithful in the Eucharistic life and in the mission of the church for justice and peace. A program of Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community assists the newly baptized persons until their anniversary of initiation. This period reminds everyone that growth in faith is ongoing and lifelong.