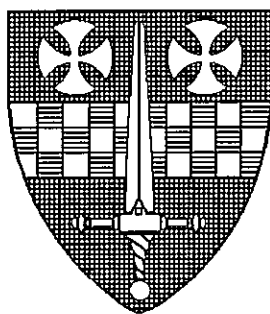

THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION



**POLICIES
FOR THE
DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH**

The Sacraments of Initiation Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh



June, 1995

The Sacraments of Initiation: Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh

Authorized for Publication by
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List of Abbreviations of Church Documents

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCEO	Code of Canons for the Oriental Churches
CIGI	Christian Initiation, General Introduction
CJC	Code of Canon Law (1983)
GNLYC	General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar
NSC	National Statutes for the Catechumenate (USA)
PCS	Pastoral Care of the Sick (rite)
RBC	Rite of Baptism for Children
RC	Rite of Confirmation
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1988 edition)



PASTORAL LETTER INTRODUCING THE DIOCESAN POLICIES CONCERNING THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

To the Clergy, Religious and Laity
of the
Church of Pittsburgh

The love and peace of God be with you.

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

With these words, the risen Lord Jesus gave the Church its primary mission: to proclaim the gospel to everyone and to form disciples for the Lord, immersing people into his paschal mystery through the ministry and rite of Christian baptism. From that day onward, the Church has embraced the challenge. We are quickly approaching the beginning of the third millennium of the coming of Christ and we acknowledge nearly 2,000 years of fidelity to this mission.

We in this local Church have recently observed the 150th year of the life and mission of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. We have further undertaken a great project of parish and diocesan reorganization as a step toward revitalizing our whole community -- its spiritual vigor, its structures and its ministries.

What better way to celebrate this challenging time in the Church's pilgrimage than to reflect upon the meaning of the "sacraments of Christian initiation...[which] lay the foundations of every Christian life" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1212). How better to prepare ourselves for carrying our mission into the next millennium than to reflect on the way we fulfill the ministry whereby disciples of Christ are first formed. We seek renewal by coming to the very wellspring of Christian life, by carefully attending to the way we celebrate the holy mysteries which confer divine adoption, build up the living Body of Christ, and consecrate women, men, and children for their Christian apostolate in the world.

In the renewal of Catholic life called for by the Second Vatican Council, the dignity and work of Christian initiation has a central place. The significance of the sacraments of initiation can be seen in the revised ritual books published soon after the council, from the *Rite of Baptism for Children* in 1969 through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* in 1972. In the years since, a thoughtful use of these rites and the pastoral experience gained in their implementation have brought us a certain wisdom about this crucial ministry in the Church. In addition, the revision of the *Code of Canon Law* (1983) and the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) have further clarified and enhanced our understanding of these sacraments and our practice concerning them.

The publication of new diocesan policies for the sacraments of initiation completes a process that began in 1989 when I established a committee of persons representing the many aspects of the initiation ministry. This group set about examining all the pertinent documents (liturgical rites, canon law, policies for the Church in the United States, doctrinal and catechetical sources). The goal was to achieve a vision of sacramental ministry that integrates these perspectives.

The committee also reviewed the policy statements of a number of other dioceses and, in 1991, invited the input of all the diocesan clergy, catechetical administrators, school principals, social ministers, music directors, catechumenate leaders, advocates for persons with disabilities, and youth ministers. A great amount of information had to be sorted and evaluated in order to produce a useful guide for the sacramental practice of our diocesan community. More recently, drafts of this policy have been reviewed, and in some cases amended, in a listening session for the clergy and by the priest council, and diocesan pastoral council, and the diocesan administrative board.

Now that the preparatory work is finished, I thank all those who worked so long and with such devotion on this project. My prayer is that their effort will bear abundant fruit as the policies are applied and give structure, direction and life to our pastoral service and ecclesial ministry.

I now direct that the document *Sacraments of Initiation: Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh* be published as the norm for sacramental practice in our local Church. Its provisions become effective on August 6, 1995, the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, with the obvious exception of the universal Church law or national statutes that are already in force.

A process of familiarization and implementation will be undertaken throughout the coming year. Pastors, in conjunction with parish liturgical and catechetical leaders, should develop procedures for *parish* initiatory practice in accord with the diocesan policies. These procedures should be in place (preferably in writing) by the start of the catechetical year, September 1996.

It is my hope that in promulgating this statement of policies and principles for the ministry of Christian initiation in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, our whole local Church can be strengthened and inspired in this life-giving work. In particular, I want to encourage the priests and deacons of our diocese, along with parish catechetical, liturgical and apostolic leaders. Your role is crucial to the enlightened development of this ministry among our people. Such work requires time, understanding, dedication and care; but it can also be a source of personal renewal and joy as the life of Christ blossoms in new sisters and brothers.

One of the best insights of our renewed appreciation of Christian initiation is that it is truly "the work of all the baptized" (RCIA 9). Catholic parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, Catholic neighbors and fellow workers -- all of these, just as surely as catechists, sponsors, priests, deacons, and the bishop -- are involved in planting and nurturing the seed of the Good News in the lives of other people. Together we form that environment of faith and continuing conversion where alone the life of a Christian disciple can be formed and strengthened. That is why, from the earliest time, the society we form has been called "Mother Church;" from her -- from us -- through the working of divine grace are born the daughters and sons of the living God.

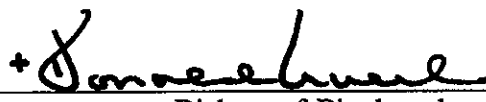
Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered!
Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes forever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Savior shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

(The Easter Proclamation)

Given this fourth day of June, 1995, the Solemnity of Pentecost.




Bishop of Pittsburgh



General Introduction

The sacraments of Christian initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—lay the *foundations* of every Christian life...(CCC 1212)

The initiation of new members of the Christian community is one of the Church's most sublime works, and it is "the responsibility of all the baptized" (RCIA 9). This ministry begins when the Good News of Jesus Christ has taken hold in the human heart and produced its first blossoms in initial faith and conversion.

This new faith must be nourished, this conversion deepened. The elements that form the environment in which people are led to the holy mysteries of rebirth include an experience of the community's life and service, the worship of God and divine support in prayer, and the appropriation of God's word through catechesis. This environment, the concrete life of the local community of faith, is centered around the regular celebration of the eucharist, especially on Sunday. This life is shaped and renewed in the yearly observance of the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year as it "unfolds the entire mystery of Christ" and "carries out the formation of the faithful." (GNLYC 1) Hence, initiation is intimately tied to the rhythm of the liturgy.



In the sacraments of Christian initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God...(CIGI 1)

The initiation of a Christian is not primarily a human work. It is the work of God, the Holy Trinity, saving and sanctifying the world. Grace is poured out upon women and men of all races and nations, upon persons of various ages. The Church participates in this divine work, mirroring the loving collaboration of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the coming together of many persons for the ministry of Christian initiation. Priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, catechists, liturgical planners, and the whole parish community—all strengthened by the ministry of the

bishop and those who assist him—each in a special way, but all united, share the work that brings to spiritual birth God’s daughters and sons.

The Catholic community also recognizes the unique and essential place of family life as the primary context for the human and Christian formation of every person. This is especially true for the young, in whose lives parents play such a crucial role, along with other family members, in sharing the message, spirit, values, and traditions of the Church.



Christian Initiation: Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh, takes what is stated above as the foundation for organizing the considerations of the various disciplines of the initiation ministry (liturgical and catechetical, pastoral and canonical). Particular details should always be seen in their relationship to this vision of how the Church lives its life and welcomes others to share in it.

This document also seeks to present a unified vision of the Church’s initiatory goals and methods. If we have sometime thought of the sacraments of initiation as separate events, each with its own preparation scheme, we are challenged now to gain a vantage point that embraces the whole scope of this great ministry in its many forms.

Though comprehensive, *Christian Initiation: Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh* is not an exhaustive text. It will be necessary to amplify some elements (curriculum implications for catechesis, models for pastoral ministry with parents of young candidates, etc.). However, this document both assembles current regulations and presents a standard of practice for all involved in Christian initiation.

In several places throughout the text, in addition to the statement of norms and principles, you will find some supplementary sections offering liturgical, doctrinal, or pastoral background. These sections are printed in this special type.



Whether in the catechumenate or in the process for initiating those baptized as infants, the sacraments of initiation have an essential and abiding meaning.

Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us as God's people. The first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children, a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence we are called and are indeed the children of God.

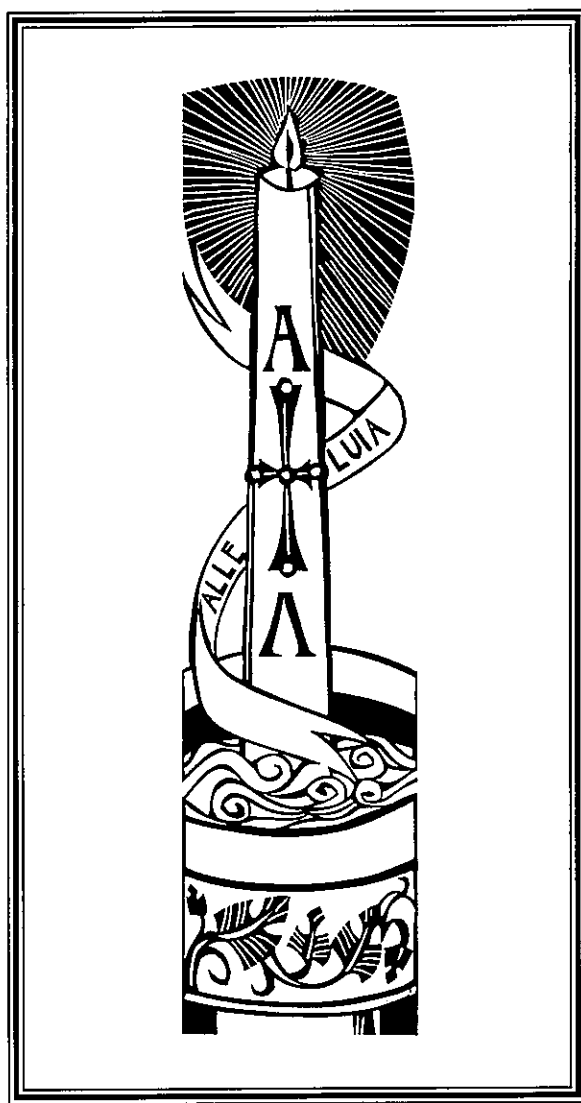
By signing us with the gift of the Spirit, confirmation makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit, so that we may bear witness to him before all the world and work to bring the Body of Christ to its fullness as soon as possible.

Finally, coming to the table of the eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that we may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering ourselves with Christ, we share in the universal sacrifice, that is, the entire community of the redeemed offered to God by their High Priest, and we pray for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of God's family. (CIGI 2)

Though the ministry of initiation seeks to form and build up the Christian community, this must always be seen in the light of the call of the Church to proclaim the Gospel and to spend itself in love for the sake of the world.

Thus the three sacraments of Christian initiation closely combine to bring us, the faithful of Christ, to his full stature and to enable us to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world. (CIGI 2)

Throughout the Church of Pittsburgh, all who bring their gifts and dedication to the work of Christian initiation should be inspired and sustained by the wonder and importance of this task.



CHAPTER I

The Christian Initiation Of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age

From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to eucharistic communion. (CCC 1229)

The image of the journey of faith is clearly evident in the Church's ritual for the initiation of adults and older children. Whether for those just coming to faith in Christ or those who are entering the Catholic community as persons already baptized in the Lord, there is a journey to make—and it is made step-by-step in the midst of the community of faith (RCIA 4). As a holy journey made in response to the grace of God, its movement is centered in the Church's life of worship and sometimes marked with special rites.

The witness, prayer, and liturgical involvement of the Catholic community are essential elements in this process, as is the collaboration of diverse ministries. This effort is in the service of a great and holy work of God.

Whenever God opens a door for the word in order to declare the mystery of Christ, then the living God, and he whom he has sent for the salvation of all, Jesus Christ, are confidently and perseveringly proclaimed...This is in order that non-Christians, whose hearts are being opened by the Holy Spirit, might, while believing, freely turn to the Lord who, since he is the "way, the truth, and the life," will satisfy all their inner hopes, or rather infinitely surpass them...

Under the movement of divine grace the new convert sets out on a spiritual journey by means of which, while already sharing through faith in the mystery of the death and resurrection, he passes from the old self to the new self who has been made perfect in Christ. This transition, which involves a progressive change in outlook and morals, should be manifested in its social implications and effected gradually during the period of the catechumenate. (Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes*, 13)

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 1 Use of the **Roman Ritual**, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (1988 United States edition) is mandatory (Decree, *RCIA*, v.) in the following circumstances:
 - A. The baptism of adults (*RCIA* Part I);
 - B. The baptism of children who have reached catechetical age (about the age of seven) (*RCIA* Part II, Chapter 1);
 - C. The baptism of adults or children of catechetical age in exceptional circumstances (*RCIA* Part II, Chapter 2);
 - D. The baptism of adults or children of catechetical age in danger of death (*RCIA* Part II, Chapter 3);
 - E. The preparation of baptized but uncatechized (adult) Catholics for confirmation and/or eucharist (*RCIA* Part II, Chapter 4);
 - F. The reception into full communion of non-Catholic adults and children of catechetical age (*RCIA* Part II, Chapter 5);
 - G. The preparation of such candidates for reception when they are not catechized (*RCIA* Part II, Chapter 4).

In such circumstances no other rite or pastoral procedure is to be used. Norms for ritual adaptation and exceptional circumstances are found within the ritual text itself.

- 2 As particular law for the dioceses of the United States, the National *Statutes for the Catechumenate* are to be observed (See *RCIA*, Appendix III)
- 3 Where it is pastorally helpful, parishes may cooperate in a **regional form of catechumenal ministry**. In such cases, each parish retains the obligation to provide welcome and pastoral care for the inquirers and catechumens (and candidates) from its community.

-
- 4 Pastoral ministers should be attentive to the **special needs** of persons with disabilities and those from minority cultures so that their welcome and formation will be both complete and adapted to their circumstances.
- 5 Those who have responsibility for planning and leading the various rites of Christian initiation are to review the possible need for **ritual adaptation** as stated in *RCIA* 35. Proper exercise of this discretion requires that the planners become familiar with the overall structure and purpose of the “journey of faith” (*RCIA* 5) that the individual rites celebrate.
- 6 .1 **Terminology** used in the ministry of initiation is to accord with official usage. (NSC 2) In particular:
- A. **Catechumen** is a term used only for *unbaptized* adults or children of catechetical age who have been admitted to the Church as catechumens according to the liturgical rite.
 - B. **Convert**, though used generally to describe any person who has experienced Christian conversion, is a term applied in a specific way to those unbaptized persons who are approaching original commitment to Christ in baptism.
 - C. **Candidates for the completion of initiation** are members of the Catholic faithful who seek confirmation and/or eucharist.
 - D. **Candidates for reception into full communion** are baptized members of non-Catholic traditions who seek membership in the Catholic Church.
- .2 Since the ministry of the catechumenate is concerned with welcoming people to the sacraments of initiation, it should be kept distinct from efforts such as reconciling alienated or inactive Catholics and general adult enrichment.

Section One: Unbaptized Adults and Children of Catechetical Age (Catechumens)

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

The Community

- 7 The initiation of adults and older children is the responsibility of **all the baptized**, especially in their local parish communities. (*RCIA* 9)

Sponsors

- 8 .1 **Sponsors** who have known the inquirers are to accompany them when they seek admission as catechumens, and assist them through the period of the catechumenate. They may come from the local or another parish but must be active members of the Church, willing and able to assume this responsibility.
- .2 The local community provides such sponsors for inquirers who do not already have them (*RCIA* 10)

Godparents

- 9 .1 Prior to the Rite of Election, the catechumens should choose suitable **godparents** (for each a godmother or godfather or both) to be approved by the priest on behalf of the Christian community. They are to assist the elect catechumens in the period immediately preceding baptism and also to help them deepen their Christian life in the post-baptismal period. They should therefore be chosen wisely. Mere formality is to be avoided (*RCIA* 11; *CJC* 872, 873)
- .2 One who served as sponsor may also be appointed as godparent, providing that he or she fulfills the requirements below.
- .3 To be admitted as a godparent one must (*CJC* 874):

- A. be designated by the catechumen and approved by the priest;
 - B. have the intention of performing this role;
 - C. be at least sixteen years of age (unless the pastor or minister sees just cause for an exception);
 - D. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already shared Holy Communion and who leads a life in harmony with the faith and with the sponsor's role;
 - E. not be bound by any legitimately imposed canonical penalty;
 - F. not be the father or mother of the catechumen.
- .4 A member of an **Oriental rite** of the Catholic Church may serve as godparent for baptism in the Latin rite.

The Bishop

- 10 The **diocesan bishop**, assisted by offices he has established, regulates and promotes the ministry of initiation in the local Church. In particular, he personally celebrates the Rite of Election and consecrates the chrism which is used in the confirmation of the newly-baptized. (*RCIA* 12; *CJC* 880.2)

It is the responsibility of the bishop to initiate catechumens who are fourteen years of age and older. (*CJC* 863) This ministry has also been entrusted to priests with the faculties of the Diocese of Pittsburgh (Faculties for Priests, Diocese of Pittsburgh).

Priests

- 11 .1 **Priests** have responsibility for the pastoral care of catechumens, especially those who seem hesitant or discouraged. (*RCIA* 13)
- .2 Priests are to preside at the Rite of Admission, the Anointings of Catechumens, the (optional) rite of Sending Catechumens for Election by the Bishop, and the scrutinies. They may also lead the other rites of the catechumenate.
- .3 Priests should be involved in the ministry of catechesis, in accord with the rite, being especially attentive to their role as preacher at Masses when the catechumens are present and later at the Easter Masses of the period of mystagogy.
- .4 Since the Rite of Election is reserved to the bishop, priests are not to celebrate this rite in parish churches. However, in the rare cases when the norms for "exceptional circumstances" must be used (*RCIA* 331-339), the priest is permitted to use an adapted form of the Rite of Election. In this case, he obtains from the diocesan Worship Office a copy of the Book of the Elect for use in the enrollment of names.

- .5 Priests are authorized to baptize catechumens. (CJC 530.1, 861.1, 863; Diocesan Faculties for Priests).
- .6 Priests are authorized to use the form of initiation for "Exceptional Circumstances" (RCIA 331-339), but only in those individual cases for which it is intended. See below, Nos. 50-53. (RCIA 331, Diocesan Faculties for Priests)
- .7 Priests are to confirm and admit to Holy Communion those who have reached catechetical age whom they baptize. (CJC 883.2, 885.2; NSC 13, 35)

Deacons

- 12 **Deacons** should assist with the care of catechumens. They may be involved with catechesis or with the apostolic elements of formation, and may preside at certain of the liturgical celebrations as indicated in the rite. (RCIA 15, 75)

Catechists

- 13 .1 **Catechists** assist both the progress of the catechumens and the growth of the community. (RCIA 16) This ministry is exercised:
 - A. in the context of celebrations of the word;
 - B. in the time of reflection and formation following the dismissal from the eucharistic celebration;
 - C. in other special catechetical sessions.
- .2 Those who are **directing catechetical formation** in the catechumenate are to hold appropriate diocesan certification for this role.
- .3 All who exercise a catechetical role in the catechumenate should be prepared for the special demands of the catechesis of adults and older children. They must also be familiar with the nature and purpose of Christian initiation as presented in the rite.
- .4 Catechists should take care that their teaching is:
 - A. filled with the spirit of the Gospel;
 - B. adapted to the signs and cycles of the liturgical year;
 - C. suited to the needs of the catechumens and candidates;
 - D. thoroughly grounded in Catholic doctrine (RCIA 16, NSC 7; see also "Formation" below, Nos.17-20)

- .5 Catechists with appropriate training as leaders of liturgical prayer may be appointed to arrange and preside at celebrations of the word apart from Mass. (*RCIA* 81-89)
- .6 With explicit delegation from the pastor, a catechist with appropriate training as a leader of liturgical prayer may preside at the celebration of the Minor Exorcisms or the Blessings of the Catechumens, using the rite provided. (*RCIA* 16, 91, 96)

CANDIDATES (Catechumens)

Catechumens

- 14 .1 Once they have been admitted in the liturgical rite, catechumens are members of the household of Christ. They form a unique presence or "order" in the Church and enter upon the apprenticeship of a disciple of the Lord. They are to benefit from the full and multi-faceted ministry called the catechumenate. (*RCIA* 75)
- .2 In addition to having a place in the liturgical assembly for the celebration of the word, they may **receive blessings and other sacramentals** proper to Christians. (CJC 206; *RCIA* 47; NSC 8)
- .3 When the catechumens **marry**, they do so as members of the Catholic church. The appropriate chapter of the Rite of Marriage is used for a wedding outside of Mass. (NSC 10)
- .4 A catechumen who **dies** is entitled to Christian burial, including the Funeral Mass, omitting any language that refers directly to the sacraments which the catechumen has not received. When the sensibilities of the immediate family suggest, the Funeral Mass may be omitted. (NSC 9)
- .5 Once admitted, catechumens take part in a period of formation that normally **lasts at least a year**, preferably from before Lent in one year until Easter of the following year. (*RCIA* 76; NSC 6)

Unbaptized Children Below Catechetical Age

- 15 Unbaptized children who have not yet reached catechetical age are, at the request of one of their parents or legal guardians, baptized using the rite for infants, i.e., *Rite of Baptism for Children*. The completion of their sacramental initiation then follows the same form as for other children baptized in the Catholic Church as infants. (The usual conditions for infant baptism apply. See Chapter II, Nos. 61-62, below.)

Unbaptized Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age

- 16 .1 In view of their capacity for personal response to the call of faith, children who have reached catechetical age are to be prepared for full sacramental initiation in the same manner as adults. (CJC 852.1; RCIA 252, 253) Though the rites are adapted (NSC 18; see RCIA Part II, Chapter 1), the essential structure remains the same:
- A. Participation in a period of evangelization;
 - B. Admission to the Order of Catechumens (when there are signs of the beginnings of personal Christian faith and initial conversion);
 - C. Participation in the catechumenate for at least a year;
 - D. Celebration of the lenten period of purification;
 - E. Celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist in a single ceremony, preferably at the Easter Vigil;
 - F. Participation in mystagogical catechesis and full inclusion in the normal religious formation of Catholic age peers.
- .2 For such children, **the catechumenate** is to be the primary context for their formation.
- .3 Such children may **share some of the catechetical experiences provided for other Catholic children**, but their status as catechumens is not to be ignored or confused with those who are already Catholic. (NSC 19)

The Catholic faithful, including the peer group of the catechumens (and young candidates for reception into full communion), are to offer special welcome, example, and support leading up to the celebration of the sacraments of initiation.

- .4 Those responsible for the catechumenate are to offer guidance and support to any catechists in the Catholic school or C.C.D. program who will share in the formation of these children.

- .5 For such catechumens, the **sacraments** of initiation must be **celebrated in the order prescribed by the rite**. Priests who baptize or receive such children into the Catholic Church are to confirm them at the same time and to admit them to the eucharist. (CJC 885.2; NSC 13, 19)

FORMATION / READINESS

- 17 Since the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens presumes that inquirers have already freely come to an initial personal faith in the Gospel of Christ, care must be taken that **evangelization** precede the more formal structures of catechesis. (RCIA 1, 36, 37, 42)
- 18 .1 **Catechetical formation** should be thoroughly comprehensive in its presentation of the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life. (NSC 7) It should retain the breadth and spirit described by the rite (RCIA 75) and be of the type that:
- A. enlightens faith,
 - B. directs the heart toward God,
 - C. fosters participation in the liturgy,
 - D. inspires apostolic activity, and
 - E. nurtures a life in accord with the spirit of Christ. (RCIA 78)
- .2 The **doctrinal elements** of such catechesis must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and its creeds. In their preparation, catechists are to rely especially upon the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *The Teaching of Christ* and other approved catechetical materials (such as the adult formations series *Exploring the Teaching of Christ*). (NSC 7)
- 19 .1 The **lenten catechesis** of the Elect is accomplished primarily through the fruitful celebration of the scrutinies. This period of purification and enlightenment is to be marked more by interior reflection than catechetical instruction. (RCIA 139, 141, 142)
- .2 In the preparation of Elect catechumens for the Easter sacraments, it is required that all **three scrutinies** be celebrated, using the lectionary readings from Year A as directed in the rite. (RCIA 20, 34.4, 143, 146)

- 20 After the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, the newly-baptized and received should continue their journey of faith in the period of **mystagogy**.
- A. Participation especially in the Masses of the Easter season should deepen their grasp of the paschal mystery through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and doing works of charity. (*RCIA* 244, 247)
 - B. Special contact should be maintained with these new members of the Church through the entire year that follows their initiation, providing continued incorporation into the life and mission of the Christian community and deeper understanding of the Church's teaching. (NSC 24)

TIMES FOR INITIATION

Ministry Throughout the Year

- 21 The work of welcoming new members into the Christian community and preparing them for the sacraments of initiation is to continue throughout the year, allowing for seasonal variations, especially in view of the formation periods of the *RCIA*. In particular,
- A. Parishes and pastoral leaders should be ready to **welcome inquirers whenever they present themselves**, and to begin offering opportunities for evangelization and pastoral care.
 - B. Since inquirers may enter the catechumenate at different times (*RCIA* 42, 44) and since catechumens are to receive formation for at least a year between their admission and their baptism (NSC no. 6), the **catechumenate** must be understood as a **year-round ministry of the Church**.

Usual Times

- 22 .1 In the circumstances of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the order of the catechumenate is to **follow the "usual times"** specified in the rite (that is, for example, a complete catechumenate; Election at the beginning of Lent followed by the three scrutinies; sacramental initiation at the Easter Vigil). (*RCIA* 18-25, 34.2)

- .2 Parish communities may not establish an alternative pattern invoking Nos. 26-30 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The only exception is in the case of individual catechumens for whom the rite for “exceptional circumstances” is employed. (See Nos. 50-53, below.)
- .3 When initiation is done in **non-parochial settings** (e.g., prisons, colleges, extended-care health institutions), the usual times are to be observed as much as possible. Pastoral leaders in such settings are to consult with the diocesan Office for Worship before establishing an alternate practice.
- .4 Since serious reasons are not present in the Diocese of Pittsburgh as required by No. 24 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the **confirmation** of adults and children of catechetical age who are baptized or received into full communion at the Easter Vigil is **not to be postponed**.

Section Two:

UNCATECHIZED ADULT CATHOLICS COMPLETING INITIATION

CANDIDATES

- 23 .1 The norms of Part II, Chapter 4 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* are to be observed in the pastoral care of persons who:
- A. were baptized in the Catholic Church as infants and
 - B. did not receive further catechesis nor, consequently, the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist, and
 - C. are beyond the normal age for completing the sacraments of initiation. (In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, this is the beginning of ninth grade, the age of confirmation for those baptized as Catholics in infancy.)
- .2 Although not yet fully initiated, and perhaps not having heard the message of the mystery of Christ, such persons are **members of the Catholic Church**. They are distinct, therefore, from catechumens and also from baptized Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church. (*RCIA* 400)

- .3 Uncatechized Catholics who have **not yet reached the normal diocesan age for completing the sacraments of initiation** are to receive appropriate catechesis that will enable them to proceed with their Catholic age-peers towards the completion of initiation at the usual time.
- .4 Those who were baptized as Catholics in infancy and later formally **joined another religion** are dealt with in Section III, below (Reception Into Full Communion).
- .5 Adult Catholics who, while not confirmed, have continued to participate in the Church's life and have **already received appropriate Catholic formation** are prepared for confirmation as described in Chapter III, below. (See No. 104)

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

The Community

- 24 The completion of initiation for those baptized as infants takes place in the context of the normal life of Christian community. **All the baptized**, especially in their local parish communities, bear responsibility for leading the baptized toward full initiation, assisting them with their love and prayer. (*RCIA* 9, 403))

Sponsor

- 25 A **sponsor** presents these adults to the community and helps them during the period of formation. (*RCIA* 404, and see No. 8, above.)

Godparent

- 26 .1 A godparent accompanies the candidate in the later stage of formation and at the time of the celebration of confirmation. Therefore, sometime during their period of formation, the candidates should choose a suitable **godparent** (for each a godmother or godfather or both) to be approved by the priest on behalf of the Christian community. Godparents assist the candidates in the same way as godparents for the catechumens in the period immediately preceding the celebration of the sacraments; they also help them deepen their Christian life in the period that follows the completion of initiation. They should therefore be chosen wisely. Mere formality is to be avoided (*RCIA* 11, 404; *CJC* 872, 873)
- .2 One who served as sponsor may also be appointed as godparent, providing that he or she fulfills the requirements below.
- .3 To be admitted as a godparent one must (*CJC* 874):
- A. be designated by the catechumen and approved by the priest;
 - B. have the intention of performing this role;
 - C. be at least sixteen years of age (unless the pastor or minister sees just cause for an exception);
 - D. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already shared Holy Communion and who leads a life in harmony with the faith and with the sponsor's role;
 - E. not be bound by any legitimately imposed canonical penalty;
 - F. not be the father or mother of the catechumen.
- .4 Those who were godparents at the baptism of these candidates may act as godparents at this time, provided they are capable of the fulfilling the role. (*RCIA* 404)
- .5 A member of an **Oriental rite** of the Catholic Church may serve as godparent in the Latin rite.

The Bishop

- 27 .1 The diocesan bishop regulates and promotes the ministry of initiation in the local Church. He normally celebrates the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion (in conjunction with the Rite of Election), and consecrates the chrism which is used in confirmation. (*RCIA* 12, 449; *CJC* 880.2)
- .2 Since the candidates are already Catholic by baptism, they are confirmed by the bishop (or by a priest who has received the faculty to confirm).

Priests

- 28 .1 Priests have responsibility for the pastoral care of the candidates, especially those who seem hesitant or discouraged. (*RCIA* 13)
- .2 Priests preside at certain of the rites which may sanctify this period. (See *RCIA* 405-409)
- .3 Priests should be involved in the ministry of catechesis, being especially attentive to their role as preacher at Masses when the candidates are present.
- .4 Priests do not have the general faculty to confirm such candidates. When there is good pastoral reason for the priest to confirm, he is to request the faculty from the bishop through the Department of Canonical Services. (NSC 29; see Chapter III, No. 104 below)

Deacons

- 29 Deacons should assist with the care of the candidates. They may be involved with catechesis or with the apostolic elements of formation, and may preside at certain of the liturgical celebrations as indicated in the rite. (*RCIA* 15, 75)

Catechists

- 30 Catechists assist in leading uncatechized adult Catholics toward the completion of initiation. (*RCIA* 16) What is said above in relationship to the catechumenate applies in this case as well. (See No. 13, above.)

FORMATION / READINESS

- 31 The preparation of uncatechized adult Catholics for the completion of initiation generally corresponds to the pastoral pattern given for catechumens, always recognizing their unique status as baptized persons. (*RCIA* 402, also 75)

The goal of this formation is that the faith made available in baptism should grow in these candidates and take deep root. Their continuing conversion is supported through comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life, contact with the Christian community, and liturgical participation, including the special rites offered in *RCIA* Part II, Chapter 4 . (*RCIA* 401)

TIMES OF CELEBRATION

- 32 .1 The formation of these adults should be properly coordinated with the liturgical year, especially its final phase which normally coincides with Lent. (*RCIA* 408)
- .2 The completion of initiation will normally occur at the Easter Vigil. If neither the bishop nor another authorized minister is present at the Vigil for confirmation, this sacrament is to be celebrated as soon as possible thereafter. (*RCIA* 409)

Section Three: CANDIDATES FOR RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION

CANDIDATES

- 33 .1 Candidates for reception into full communion are persons baptized in a separated ecclesial community, who seek full membership in the Catholic Church.
- .2 Such candidates are **not automatically** to be **associated with** the group and formation of **catechemens**. (NSC 30, 31)

- .3 Through initial and respectful conversation with the candidates, pastoral leaders should determine the **degree of Christian formation such candidates have already achieved**. In this assessment, reference should be made to the marks of readiness proposed in the various stages of the *RCIA*:
- A. Signs of effective evangelization; *RCIA* 42
 - B. Hallmarks of pre-baptismal formation; *RCIA* 75, 76
 - C. Readiness for election for the sacraments; *RCIA* 120, 131b, 132
 - D. Implications of the renunciation of sin and profession of faith; *RCIA* 211
 - E. Preparation of Candidates for Reception. *RCIA* 477

Baptized Non-Catholic Children

34 In the case of baptized non-Catholic children, the following is to be observed:

- .1 Baptized non-Catholic children **who have reached catechetical age** are to be received into full communion in the same way as adult candidates. See No. 33.3, above, about determining the readiness of such candidates.

Although the rite of reception may be adapted for use with children, it always retains its essential features:

- A. Profession of Faith
 - B. Act of Reception
 - C. Confirmation
 - D. Admission to Holy Communion
- .2 Baptized non-Catholic children **who have not yet reached catechetical age** are received into the Catholic Church without any rite, but simply at the request of their parents or legal guardians. The fact and date of this reception must be recorded in the baptismal register of the parish in the same way as other receptions, including information about the prior baptism. (The conditions given for infant baptism apply in this case as well. See Chapter II, Nos. 61-62, below.)

Such children then complete their sacramental initiation as do other children who were baptized in the Catholic Church as infants.

Eastern (“Orthodox”) Christians

35 In the case of separated Eastern Christians (“Orthodox”) who enter the fullness of Catholic communion, the following is to be observed:

- .1** Maintaining a spirit of welcome, pastoral ministers of the Latin rite are to encourage such persons to enter Catholic communion **in the Oriental rite** (“Ritual Church”) that corresponds to their inherited tradition. (RCIA 474, CCEO, 35)
- .2** Since those coming to Catholic communion from separated Eastern Churches are already validly baptized, confirmed, and in most cases have already shared eucharistic communion, there is **no liturgical rite for their reception**. They are received after simply making a profession of Catholic faith (RCIA 491-492), either at Mass or within a celebration of the liturgy of the word.

With regard to formation, the pastoral norms provided above for Catholics completing initiation are to be observed. (See above, No. 31)

- .3** In the case of an Eastern Christian who is **married to a Catholic**, the following provisions also apply:
 - A. After the profession of faith, a spouse may declare that he or she is transferring to the Ritual Church of his or her spouse. (CJC 112.2)
 - B. When the marriage has ended, such a person may freely return to their original rite.
- .4** An **unbaptized child who is fourteen years of age or older** may, at the time of his or her baptism, choose the Ritual Catholic Church he or she prefers. (CJC 111.2))

OFFICES and MINISTRIES

The Community

36 Members of the Catholic community should welcome these Christians with respect and encouragement, offering the witness of life in Christ and the support of love and prayer. (See RCIA 403)

Sponsor

- 37 .1 At the time of their reception, those who are received into full communion are also to be accompanied by a sponsor, and may even have two sponsors. (*RCIA* 483) This sponsor functions in the manner of the “godparent” mentioned in No. 26 above, and must have the same qualifications.
- .2 When the candidate for reception is included in the formation process of catechumens, he or she should also have the assistance of a sponsor like that mentioned in No. 25 above. (See also No. 8, above.)

The Bishop

- 38 It is the office of the bishop to receive baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church. *RCIA* 481

Priests

- 39 .1 Priests have responsibility for the pastoral care of such candidates, especially those who seem hesitant or discouraged. (*RCIA* 13)
- .2 Priests are authorized to receive baptized non-Catholics into full communion. (CJC 530.1, 861.1, 863; *RCIA* 481; Diocesan Faculties for Priests).
- .3 Priests are to confirm and admit to Holy Communion those who have reached catechetical age whom they receive into full communion. (CJC 883.2, 885.2; *RCIA* 481, NSC 35)

Deacons

- 40 **Deacons** should assist with the care of the candidates. They may be involved with catechesis or with the apostolic elements of formation, and may preside at certain of the liturgical celebrations as indicated in the rite. (*RCIA* 18, 75)

Catechists

- 41 Catechists assist in leading the candidates toward their reception into full communion. (*RCIA* 16) What is said above in relationship to the catechumenate applies in this case as well. (See No. 13, above.)

FORMATION / READINESS

42 .1 Those who wish to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, determined according to the individual case. Consideration should be given to the extent to which the baptized person has led a Christian life within a community of faith and has been appropriately catechized to deepen his or her inner adherence to the Church, where the candidate will find the fullness of baptism. (*RCIA* 477, NSC 30)

.2 Since these candidates may benefit from the celebration of liturgical rites marking their progress in formation, and especially when candidates have received relatively little Christian upbringing, the provisions given in Section Two, above ("Uncatechized Adults Catholics Completing Initiation" No. 31) may also be employed. (*RCIA* 402, 478; also 75; NSC 31. See also the "combined rites" of *RCIA* Appendix I.)

Ministry on behalf of these candidates will always acknowledge their status as baptized persons, and will not equate them with those who are catechumens. (*RCIA* 477)

NOTE: Candidates for reception into full communion or the completion of initiation **do not take part in the scrutinies as do the Elect.** Already baptized, they take part in these rites along with other members of the Church, praying for those still approaching the waters of rebirth. If desired, a scrutiny-like penitential rite may be celebrated for such candidates on the Second Sunday of Lent. (*RCIA* 459-472)

.3 In preparation for sacramental reception, and at a time prior to and distinct from the rite of reception, the candidate, according to his or her own conscience, should celebrate the sacrament of penance. (*RCIA* 482, NSC 36) They are given this opportunity in preparation for their renewal of baptismal faith and eucharistic participation, and in view of Catholic teaching that:

- A. the sacrament of penance offers forgiveness for sins committed after baptism; (CJC 959)
- B. the faithful are not to receive the Body of Christ if they are conscious of grave sin; (CJC 916)
- C. the candidates have a right to the grace and assurance of forgiveness offered in this sacrament and the help to continuing conversion that it provides.

It is fitting that such candidates celebrate the sacrament in a communal setting with other members of the Catholic community, especially during Lent. It is also possible to arrange a communal celebration specifically for the candidates, or to allow them to approach the sacrament privately.

TIMES OF CELEBRATION and LITURGICAL RITES

- 43 .1 The formation of candidates for reception into full communion should be properly coordinated with the liturgical year. (*RCIA* 408)
- .2 The rite of reception (*RCIA* Nos 487-504) may be celebrated for one or more candidates at any appropriate time throughout the year, ordinarily at the Sunday eucharist of the parish community. (*RCIA* 475, NSC 32) If the preparation of such candidates is reaching its completion just before or during Lent, it is preferable that their reception be celebrated in the Easter season, even at the Easter Vigil.
- .3 The rite celebrated at the Easter Vigil follows the order given in the *RCIA* Nos. 562-594. This arrangement is often pastorally suited to those candidates who, in view of their particular needs, have been associated with the formation offered catechumens. (*RCIA* 33, 34; see No. 42.2, above.)
- .4 Priests who receive such candidates into the full communion of the Catholic Church are obliged to confirm them at the same time. (CJC 883.2, 885.2; NSC 35)
- .5 If, in very rare circumstances, it is necessary to celebrate the reception of such candidates outside Mass, they are to be admitted to the eucharist the next time they are present for Mass. (*RCIA* 484)

THE CANDIDATE'S PRIOR BAPTISM

Validity Of Non-Catholic Baptism

- 44 Concerning the validity of baptism in non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities the following is to be observed:
- .1 The Catholic Church teaches that baptism is conferred by the immersion in, or pouring of, natural water in the name of the Holy Trinity with the intention to do what the Church does in this sacrament, and that, once received, baptism is irrevocable and unrepeatable. Therefore, great care must be taken when there is doubt concerning the fact or validity of the baptism of one who seeks reception into full communion.
- .2 An **authentic certificate** of baptism sufficiently establishes the fact of baptism. When such a certificate is lacking, it is ordinarily sufficient to obtain the declaration of a single witness who is above suspicion, or the oath of the baptized person, if the baptism was received at an adult age. (CJC 876)

- .3 Baptism in a church or ecclesial community that customarily practices a valid form of baptism is **considered valid** unless there is serious doubt that the minister observed the regulations of that community or, in the case of one baptized as an adult, that the candidate intended to be baptized. (CJC 869.2; 1993 Vatican Ecumenical Directory, 95a)
- .4 Since the quality of **the minister's personal faith** does not affect the validity of the sacrament, sufficient intention is to be presumed unless there is serious ground for doubting that the minister intended to do what the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church does in baptizing. (1993 Vatican Ecumenical Directory, 95b)
- .5 When there is doubt about whether or how **water** was used, there should be a respectful and serious inquiry into the practice of the community concerned before a judgment is made about the validity of baptism. (1993 Vatican Ecumenical Directory, 95c)
- .6 The conferral of **conditional baptism** simply **as a precaution** is not permitted, but only in individual cases of serious doubt. (CJC 869.2)

Conditional Baptism

- 45 Conditional baptism is conferred only when the fact or validity of a prior baptism cannot be established. In such circumstances the following is to be observed:
 - .1 Conditional baptism is not to be conferred until the doctrine of the sacrament of baptism is explained to the person, if an adult, and the reasons for the doubtful validity of the baptism have been explained to the adult recipient or, in the case of an infant, to the parents. (CJC 869.3; 1993 Vatican Ecumenical Directory, 99d)
 - .2 The conditional baptism must be celebrated **privately** sometime before the day of reception into full communion. The minister, the candidate, and the godparent alone are sufficient, but some family members and companions from the community may be present, if pastorally helpful. (RCIA 480; 1993 Vatican Ecumenical Directory, 99d)
 - .3 The rite should be celebrated with the greatest simplicity, but also with the dignity that befits Christian baptism. Only the following **elements are to be included**: (RCIA 480)
 - A. A brief statement of welcome by the minister;
 - B. A reading of one of the gospels from the lectionary section for "Christian Initiation: Baptism";

- C. A brief homily, if this seems appropriate;
 - D. The Prayer Over the Water (*RCIA* 222, A-E [whichever is appropriate]);
 - E. Renunciation of Sin by the candidate alone (*RCIA* 224);
 - F. Profession of Faith by the candidate alone (*RCIA* 225);
 - G. Baptism: The minister immerses or pours water upon the candidate, introducing the usual baptismal formula with the words, "N., If you are not already baptized, I baptize you..." (*RCIA* 226);
 - H. The Lord's Prayer;
 - I. A concluding blessing, if this seems appropriate.
- .4 The public Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church is celebrated later in the usual way. (NSC 370)
- .5 The conditional baptism may be **conferred by any priest or deacon** who has pastoral care of the candidate. The public reception may then be celebrated by another priest, who alone is to confirm the newly-received person.

Section Four:

MARRIAGE AND ADULT INITIATION

Early Assessment

- 46 In early discussion with inquirers, pastoral leaders must seek to understand significant elements of the inquirer's life, certainly including information about marriage. In particular:
- .1 **If the inquirer is presently married**, the validity of the marriage must be clear in that:
- A. This is the first/only marriage for each partner;
 - B. Any prior marriage has been dissolved by death or has been judged null by a Catholic marriage tribunal;
 - C. In the case of marriage to a Catholic, that canonical norms were followed in celebrating the marriage.

- .2 If the inquirer is not presently married but has been previously married, information about the marriage is to be reviewed so that the inquirer knows where she or he stands with regard to any future marriage.

Marriage Validly Contracted Outside The Catholic Church

- 47 The marriage of a non-Catholic person that is valid prior to a candidate's sacramental initiation or reception into full communion remains valid. It is not necessary or possible to celebrate any further marriage rite. Specifically:
- A. The sacramental bond that exists between **two baptized non-Catholics** remains intact when one or both of them are received into full communion.
 - B. The natural bond of marriage that exists between **two unbaptized persons** continues (in its non-sacramental state) when **one** of them is baptized.
 - C. The natural bond of marriage that exists between **a baptized Christian and a non-baptized person** becomes a sacrament at the moment of the latter's baptism (so long as marital consent perdures at that time).
 - D. If **two unbaptized persons** are married and then **both** receive baptism their natural bond of marriage becomes sacramental at the moment of baptism (so long as marital consent perdures at that time).

Marriage Engagements and Initiation

- 48 .1 Pastoral ministers are to **welcome** those who inquire about entrance into the Catholic Church in conjunction with their engagement to marry a Catholic person.
- .2 In the period of inquiry, pastoral leaders are to determine that the desire to enter the Church springs from **true religious motives** rather than external formality. Ministers should help inquirers to tap these motives where they are present and assure that no rite is celebrated without the disposition appropriate to it.
- .3 The need for catechesis and **formation** is to be determined for these inquirers in the same way as for others, and the initiation process is **not** to be **abbreviated** simply to complete it by the time of the wedding.
- .4 In view of the serious nature of both premarital preparation and the process of Christian initiation, care must be taken that neither is compromised. (It may **sometimes** be **best to take up the formal initiation process only after the wedding**. In such cases, pastoral contact appropriate to the inquiry period should be maintained and, if applicable, contact should be established with the parish in which the married couple will reside.)

Irregular Marriage and the Initiation Process

- 49 It is the obligation of the pastor to **explain** the following conditions to applicable inquirers **near the onset** of their inquiry period. (In cases of a prior bond of marriage, contact with the diocesan tribunal is to be established at the same time.)
- A. Except in danger of death, candidates living in invalid marriages **cannot be sacramentally initiated** or received into full communion. When initiated in danger of death, candidates must understand that if they recover they will be bound by the same regulations that apply to other Catholics invalidly married. (CJC, 865.2, 1352; RCIA 371)
 - B. Inquirers who are invalidly married may be **admitted as catechumens** if they have come to the initial faith and conversion required by the Rite of Admission. The pastor is to explain that the normalization of the marriage is an important aspect of deepening Christian conversion. Where a possible prior bond of marriage exists, it must also be made clear that there is no assurance that the tribunal process will result in a declaration of nullity.
 - C. Once it is clear that an irregular marriage can be legitimately convalidated, this should be done without undue delay, and certainly before the celebration of the rite of initiation .
 - D. Catechumens who remain invalidly married are **not** to be presented for the **Rite of Election**, since this rite promises sacramental initiation. The only exception is in the case of one who has received an undisputed declaration of nullity from a Catholic marriage tribunal allowing for the convalidation of the marriage before the Paschal Triduum.

Section Five: INITIATION IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Adults In Danger Of Death

- 50 .1 Adults in danger of death may be baptized if they have **some knowledge of the principal truths of the faith** and have indicated a **desire** to be baptized and to follow the Christian way of life. (CJC 865.2)
- .2 The **appropriate rite** is to be used (*RCIA* 372):
- A. Deacons and priests normally follow the rite found in *RCIA* 340-369, with adaptations required by the circumstances.
 - B. Catechists and other lay persons use the rite found in *RCIA* 357-399. (This rite, also found in the *Rite of Pastoral Care of the Sick*, may also be used by deacons or priests when necessary.)
- NOTE: See also No. 58.3, below, about baptism conferred in danger of death by one who is not a Christian.
- .3 When a priest baptizes and chrism is available, the sacrament of **confirmation** is also to be celebrated. (*RCIA* 363, 388)
- .4 Admission to the **eucharist** takes the form of viaticum. (*RCIA* 393)
- .5 When **death is imminent** and time is short, the minister, omitting everything else, pours natural water (even if not blessed) on the head of the sick person while saying the usual sacramental form. (*RCIA* 373)
- .6 One who **recovers** after being initiated in this way is to complete the usual formation in accord with *RCIA* 371, 374.

Children In Danger Of Death

- 51 .1 Unbaptized children who have **not reached the use of reason** should be baptized without delay using the *Rite of Baptism for Children*. (CJC 867.2) When a priest baptizes and chrism is available, the post-baptismal anointing is omitted and the sacrament of confirmation is conferred. (CJC 889.2; RC 11; RPCS 238, 276)

When the ordinary minister is not available, baptism may be conferred by any member of the faithful or by anyone with the right intention. (See Chapter II, No. 58.3, below.)

- .2 Unbaptized children who have **reached the use of reason** are initiated according to the norms presented above, No. 50.
- .3 Priests are to **confirm** an already-baptized child, even an infant, in danger of death. If the child can distinguish the eucharist from ordinary bread, he or she is also to be admitted to **Holy Communion** in the form of viaticum. (CJC 889.2; RC 11; RPCS 276, 280)

Candidates For Reception In Danger Of Death

- 52 In danger of death, baptized Christians seeking full communion in the Catholic Church are to be **received in this way**:
- A. With a brief introductory rite and Liturgy of the Word the reception is celebrated in accord with *RCIA* 487-492.
 - B. If chrism is available, the priest then confirms the newly-received (*RCIA* 493-495).
 - C. The General Intercessions follow adapting the form found in *RCIA* 380.
 - D. Viaticum follows as in *RCIA* 394-398.

Other Exceptional Circumstances

- 53 .1 Exceptional circumstances are those that:
- A. unavoidably prevent a candidate's participation in the entire process of the catechumenate (e.g., sickness, old age, long absence for travel); or
 - B. reveal an unusual depth of Christian conversion and religious maturity. (*RCIA* 331-332)

- .2 It is for the bishop, in individual cases, to permit the use of the **“rite for exceptional circumstances”**, that is Part II, Chapter 2 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Priests with the faculties of the Diocese of Pittsburgh are delegated to evaluate particular circumstances and employ this rite when necessary. (RCIA 331; NSC 20; Diocesan Faculties for Priests)
- .3 Use of this ritual form is to be as **limited** as possible and should not compromise the integrity of the process of Christian initiation. (NSC 20)

Change of residence from one parish or diocese to another is not alone sufficient reason to employ this rite. (NSC 20)

- .4 So that the candidate may experience as much of the Church’s pastoral care as possible, the **“expanded form”** (RCIA 332-335) is normally to be followed in these exceptional circumstances. Only in truly extraordinary cases is the **“abbreviated form”** (RCIA 336-339) to be used.
- .5 Candidates prepared in an abbreviated form are to celebrate the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil and take part in the period of mystagogy to the extent possible. (NSC 21)
- .6 Since the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* sets down the pastoral care and liturgical norms even for extraordinary cases, its directives are to be **followed in all circumstances**.

Section Six:

REGISTRATION OF INITIATION

- 54 Soon after the celebration of sacramental rites, proper entries should be made in the registers of the church. Namely,
- A. Upon **acceptance into the order of catechumens**: the names of the catechumens, their sponsors, the minister, the place and date of the celebration are to be recorded in a permanent parish register of catechumens. (RCIA 46)

(Note: this event establishes a canonical relationship between the catechumens and the Catholic Church, with implications for marriage, burial, etc.)

- B. Upon the **celebration of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist** for the elect, two notations must be made:
- i. In the parish baptismal register: the names of those baptized, date and place of birth, the names of their parents and godparents, the name of the minister, the date and place of the baptism, along with a notation of confirmation. (CJC 877.1)
 - ii. In the parish confirmation register: the names of those confirmed, their parents, godparents, and the minister, along with the date and place of the confirmation. (CJC 895)
- C. Upon the **completion of initiation** for those who are already Catholic, two notations must be made:
- i. In the parish confirmation register: the names of those confirmed, their parents, sponsors, and the minister, along with the date and place of the confirmation. (CJC 895)
 - ii. Notation about the confirmation must be made in the baptismal register of the church where the person was baptized. (If the latter happened in another parish, it is the responsibility of the pastor of the place where confirmation was conferred to notify the pastor of the place of baptism.) (CJC 895, 535.2)
- D. Upon the **reception into full communion** of a baptized person, two notations must be made:
- i. In the parish baptismal register: the names of those received, their date and place of birth, along with the names of their parents and the date, place, and minister of baptism. In the place for notations, the fact of reception into full communion is to be recorded, along with the place, date, sponsor and minister of reception. (RCIA 486)
 - ii. In the parish confirmation register: the names of those confirmed, their parents, sponsors, and the minister, along with the date and place of the confirmation. (CJC 895)
- E. In addition, in the case of those who have just been baptized or received into full communion (B and D above), notations should also be made in the baptismal register concerning their valid marriage, if one exists.

CHAPTER II

The Baptism Of Children (Infants)

(that is, those who have not achieved the use of reason)

Children born into Christian families are born into the “domestic church,” the fundamental cell of society and the place where both human and Christian culture is nourished. This accounts for why, from the earliest days of the Church, the infant children of believers have been presented for baptism and recognized as called by God to share the one life of the Lord’s family. “The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism” (CCC 1250)—while bringing no human achievements or works whatever to their encounter with God, they are nonetheless given a share in divine life.

At the same time, the Church has understood that these children share the nature common to all humans; this means that they, like all other members of our race, “must be born again” (John 3:3). This realization has underscored the necessity for Catholic parents to bring their children soon after birth to the saving waters of baptism.

Though seen from a different point of view, the same elements apply in the baptism of infants as in the catechumenate. In the case of infants, it is especially the role of *parents* to provide the environment where a young disciple of Christ can grow. This will be most critical in the earliest years of life. Here is where the Church needs parents to fulfill their role as evangelizers and Christian models—and where the Church needs to support parents in this great work. This formation in the family will naturally lead to readiness for eucharistic participation when the child is a little older.

Where infant Baptism is the form in which this sacrament is usually celebrated, it has become a single act encapsulating the preparatory stages of Christian initiation in a very abridged way. By its very nature infant Baptism requires a *post-baptismal catechumenate*. Not only is there a need for instruction after Baptism, but also for the necessary flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth...(CCC 1231)

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

The Christian Community

- 55 Since the initiation of new members of God's people is the responsibility of all the baptized, and given the rights of children to the love and help of the community, parishes should offer welcome and both spiritual and practical support to families anticipating birth and those with young children. (RCIA 9, RBC 4)

Parents

- 56 Since by God's plan and purpose parents have a unique and sacred relationship with their children, they have the Christian obligation to:
- A. sanctify their children through the Christian spirit of their marriage and family life;
 - B. form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example;
 - C. prepare to take part in the celebration of baptism with understanding, renewing their own profession of the Christian faith. (CJC 835.4, 774.2, 951.2; RBC 5. See Nos. 67-70, below.)

Godparent

- 57 .1 Insofar as possible, the child to be baptized is to be given a **godparent**. (CJC 872)
- .2 Only **one** male or one female godparent **or one of each sex** is to be employed. (CJC 873)
- .3 Godparents have the following **responsibilities**:
- A. to present the child for baptism (along with the parents); (CJC 872)
 - B. to assist the parents in their Christian responsibilities; (RBC 40)
 - C. to represent the community of faith in which the baptism is celebrated; (1993 Vatican Ecumenical Directory, 98)
 - D. to renew their own profession of the Christian faith; (RBC 56-59)
 - E. to help the child, by word and example, lead a Christian life and fulfill the obligations of baptism. (CJC 774.2, 872; CIGI 8)

- .4 In view of this, a person to be admitted as a **godparent must:**
- A. be designated by the parents or guardians, or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister of the sacrament;
 - B. have intention of performing this role;
 - C. be at least sixteen years of age (unless the pastor or minister sees just cause for an exception);
 - D. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already shared Holy Communion and who leads a life in harmony with the faith and with the sponsor's role;
 - E. not be bound by any legitimately imposed canonical penalty;
 - F. not be the father or mother of the child.
- .5 The **pastor of the designated godparent** is normally responsible for determining that the designee understands the sponsor's role and is qualified to assume it, providing a letter of eligibility when the baptism is to be celebrated in another parish.
- .6 Through pastoral dialogue and catechetical helps, the godparents are to be **prepared for their role** both as faith-companion for the one to be baptized and as a support for the parents in their Christian responsibilities. They should be invited to participate in the formation opportunities (both spiritual and catechetical) offered to parents of the child to be baptized. (CJC 851.2; CIGI 8 and 13; Cf. RBC 40. See Nos. 51-53, below.)
- .7 A **member of an Oriental rite** of the Catholic Church may serve as godparent for one who is baptized in the Latin rite.
- .8 An Eastern (**Orthodox**) Christian may be appointed godparent so long as a Catholic godparent is also present. This applies also to those who belong to churches formally judged to be equivalent to the Eastern Churches (e.g., the Polish National Catholic Church). (1993 *Vatican Ecumenical Directory*, 98b)
- .9 A baptized person who belongs to some other non-Catholic ecclesial community may be asked to serve not as godparent but as a **Christian witness** as long as a Catholic godparent is also present. (Such a person does not assume the post-baptismal responsibilities of a godparent.) (CJC 874.2)

Catholics who have abandoned the Catholic faith are not to serve as Christian witnesses.

Ministers of the Sacrament

- 58 .1 The **ordinary ministers** of the rite of baptism are bishops, priests, and deacons. (CJC 861)
- .2 Priests, with the assistance of deacons and specially prepared catechists, are to offer special care in regard to the baptism of children, in particular:
- A. helping families, through personal visitation, prayer, and catechetical help to prepare for the baptism and to undertake the task of Christian formation that flows from it;
 - B. arranging celebrations of the sacrament that are dignified, fully developed, and attentive to the needs of the families involved. (RBC 5, 7)
- .3 When a child is in danger of death and the ordinary minister is not available, any member of the faithful or **anyone with the right intention** is to confer baptism, using water and the proper form. (CJC 861) In this case:
- A. "right intention" is understood to mean simply the intention to do what the Church does in this sacrament;
 - B. if at all possible, a godparent should be present, or at least one witness by whom the conferral of baptism can be proved; (CJC 875)
- 59 Except in case of necessity, the **permission of the pastor of the place** is to be received before anyone confers baptism. (CJC 862. See also No. 78, below.)

CANDIDATES

- 60 .1 The norms for infant baptism apply to children who have **not attained the use of reason**.
- .2 A child who has **attained the use of reason** is to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of initiation according to the pattern for adults. (CJC 852.1; see RCIA Part II, Chapter 1)
- .3 Persons who are **not of sound mind** are baptized according to the pattern for infants. (CJC 852.2)

REQUIREMENTS: Parental Faith

- 61 Since infants cannot make a personal profession of the Christian faith or pledge themselves to living a Christian life, it is necessary that:
- A. the parents (or at least one of them) consent to the baptism;
 - B. there be the founded hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic life;
 - C. the parent(s) and godparent(s) make their own profession of faith along with the Church at time of the celebration of the sacrament. (CJC 868.1; RBC 5, 18)
- 62 When **parents are not yet prepared** to profess their faith or undertake the duty of bringing up their child as a Catholic, the following is to be observed:
- .1 Pastoral leaders (that is, parish priests, deacons, and lay leaders prepared for and delegated for this ministry) are to welcome and seek to dialogue with the parents about their faith and the unique responsibility to share it with the child God has entrusted to them.
 - .2 Where it appears that parents are requesting baptism simply out of social convention, such pastoral leaders should provide the opportunity for basic evangelization in order to stir up a response of true Christian faith.
 - .3 Any pledge that gives honest hope for the Catholic upbringing of the child (even if it is made by some member of the family or the godparent) is to be considered sufficient to proceed with the baptism. However, pastoral leaders are to continue to offer the parents opportunities for ongoing Christian formation.
 - .4 If conditions are insufficient to provide this honest hope, the pastor is to delay the celebration of baptism, informing the parents of the reasons. This delay must never be presented as a refusal to baptize a child, but as an opportunity for further pastoral care in order to help the family to grow in faith or become more aware of their responsibilities. (CJC 868.1; RBC 8; Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Infant Baptism*, October 20, 1980)

SPECIAL CASES

- 63 In the matter of “**Ritual Churches**,” the rite in which the baptism is celebrated does not determine the rite of the child. Rather:
- A. The child of two Latin-rite parents is considered a member of the Latin rite even if the baptism is celebrated in a non-Latin rite.
 - B. If one or the other parent does not belong to the Latin rite and both parents agree that the child should be a Latin rite Catholic, the child is considered to belong to the Latin rite.
 - C. In the case of B, above, when there is no agreement between parents, the child is considered to belong to the rite of the father. (CJC 111.1)
- 64 .1 In the case of children who are in the process of being **adopted**, the baptism may be celebrated with the consent of the natural parents; otherwise, the baptism is to be postponed until after the adoption has been finalized, except in danger of death.
- .2 Foster parents do not have the authority to present a foster child for baptism.
- 65 .1 Unless it is clear that they have already been baptized, **abandoned children** or foundlings are to be baptized unconditionally. (CJC 870)
- .2 If aborted fetuses are alive, they are to be baptized if this is possible. (CJC 871)
- 66 When a child is in **danger of death**, the following is to be observed:
- A. Such children are to be baptized without delay, even if an ordinary minister is not available. (CJC 867.3, 861)
 - B. Such children may be baptized even if the parents do not consent. (CJC 868.2)
 - C. If a priest baptizes the child, he omits the post-baptismal anointing and instead confirms the child. If the baptism is conferred by someone else, a priest is to confirm the child when this is possible. (CJC 889.2, RC 11)

FORMATION OF PARENTS AND GODPARENTS

- 67 .1** The period for helping parents prepare for the baptism of their children must be understood to include the time of pre-marital ministry and the pastoral care of newly-married couples. Parishes should welcome such couples and provide opportunities for their Christian development.
- .2** Parents should be encouraged to contact the pastor early in the pregnancy to make more proximate preparations for baptism. Parish communities should extend special care to expectant couples and their families. (CJC 867.1)
- .3** Pastoral leaders should visit families preparing for baptism or gather several such families together for common prayer and appropriate formation. They should offer helpful, family-centered catechetical materials to assist the parents deepen their faith and their understanding of the Church's teachings. (CJC 851.2; RBC 5)
- 68** Parents and godparents are to be properly instructed in the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations which are attached to it. (CJC 851.2)

In the rite for baptizing infants, the parents (at least one of them) and godparents profess the Christian faith in their own name and not as proxy for the child. (RBC 5, 18, 56-57) At the same time, parents and godparents assume responsibility for the Christian formation of the child. (CJC 774.2, 872)

This is the distinctive mark of the preparation for infant baptism. In the later sacraments of initiation (confirmation, eucharist), parents assist in preparing their child for the sacramental rite; In infant baptism, parents (and godparents) must be prepared for the role they themselves accept in the celebration of the rite.

Spiritual Readiness

- 69 .1** **All parents** preparing for a child's baptism are to take part in spiritual preparation that is:
- A. centered on interior readiness for and joyful anticipation of the sacramental celebration;
 - B. supported by the opportunity for prayer.
- .2** **Godparents** are to be similarly prepared in mind and heart, and may be invited to share in the opportunities for spiritual readiness afforded to parents.

Catechetical Readiness

- 70 .1 Catechesis is to be provided for and expected of parents and godparents who are **for the first time** presenting a child for baptism. (It is not required that parents and godparents participate in the same catechetical process, though this is often valuable.)
- .2 Parents who have previously participated in such a program should be welcomed to take part again.
- .3 Such catechesis is to be:
- A. neither superficial nor cumbersome;
 - B. centered on the meaning of baptism as expressed in the liturgical rite and its implications for family life, the dignity of the child, church fellowship, etc.;
 - C. directed toward the whole life of the parents or godparents so that it:
 - 1. enlightens faith,
 - 2. directs the heart toward God,
 - 3. fosters participation in the liturgy,
 - 4. inspires apostolic activity, and
 - 5. nurtures a life in accord with the spirit of Christ. (RCIA 78)
- .4 The **doctrinal elements** of such catechesis must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and its creeds, clearly presenting the Catholic faith regarding this great sacrament, its effects and obligations.

Baptism should be presented in accord with this summary from the rite:

A. *The sacraments of Christian Initiation offer:*

- 1. *freedom from the power of darkness;*
- 2. *communion in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ;*
- 3. *reception of the Spirit of adoption as God's sons and daughters.*

B. *Baptism offers:*

- 1. *incorporation into Christ, producing an unchangeable effect in the person;*
- 2. *a share in the life and fellowship of the blessed Trinity;*
- 3. *passage from the death of sin ("original sin" inherited from the first Adam) into life (bestowed by Christ, the new Adam);*
- 4. *formation of the people of God;*
- 5. *forgiveness of all sins;*
- 6. *dignity of a new creation and a royal priesthood;*

C. *Baptismal life is enriched in confirmation which:*

1. *seals the baptized with the gift of the Spirit so that they more perfectly share the image of their Lord;*
2. *identifies the baptized as those called to witness to Christ before the world and to work for building up the Body of Christ.*

D. *Finally, baptism leads to the table of the eucharist in which:*

1. *the baptized eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that they have eternal life;*
2. *the baptized offer themselves with Christ, sharing in his sacrifice as their high priest;*
3. *the baptized pray for the greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that the human race may be brought into the unity of God's family.*

E. *Thus the three sacraments of Christian initiation closely combine to bring the faithful to the full stature of Christ and to enable them to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world. (CIGI 1, 2, 4, 5)*

- .5 In preparing for their ministry with parents, catechists are to rely especially upon the *Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Teaching of Christ*, and other diocesan-approved catechetical guides (such as *Exploring the Teachings of Christ*).

71 Special pastoral care should be exercised with:

- A. families who have experienced difficulty or crisis;
- B. parents who are inactive or whose faith is weak. (See Nos. 61-62 above.)

Baptismal Name

- 72 .1 It is necessary that the name given the one to be baptized not be foreign to a Christian mentality. (CJC 855)
- .2 The practice whereby parents give their children the name of a Christian saint or a name associated with the Christian mysteries is encouraged.

Parents should be encouraged to reflect on the importance of personal names and the meaning of any name they select for their child. Where possible, the Christian understanding of given names can be explained. (RCIA 73)

Mystagogy

- 73 In the **years immediately following baptism**, families are to provide the environment for nurturing the faith of the newly-baptized and leading them to the completion of Christian initiation. During this time, they should be assisted by the prayer, support, and catechetical help of the Catholic community.

TIME AND PLACE FOR BAPTISM

- 74 The faithful are to present their children for baptism **soon after birth**, giving due consideration to the health of the child and the mother and the need for parents and godparents to be appropriately prepared. (CJC 867.1, RBC 8)
- 75 .1 As celebrations of the paschal mystery, the baptism of infants should take place on **Sundays**.
- .2 Infants may be baptized during the **Easter Vigil**, taking into consideration the needs of families with young children and the prominence that should be given on that occasion to the full initiation of adults and older children whose baptism follows upon their public profession of faith.
- .3 In exceptional cases for serious reasons, baptisms may be celebrated on **weekdays**. (CJC 856, RBC 9)
- 76 As far as possible, all recently born babies should be baptized in a **common celebration on the same day**. Except for good reason, baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church. (CIGI 27)
- 77 .1 The pastoral staff should **schedule** opportunities for the baptism of infants that are:
- A. neither so infrequent that children will be unduly held back from the sacrament, nor
- B. so frequent that the rite is not carried out with appropriate planning, dignity, and participation.
- .2 It is fitting that the sacrament be celebrated even **during Sunday Mass**.

This should **not be done too often** (RBC 9) so as not to obscure the eucharistic purpose of the Sunday gathering or disturb the cycle of readings and themes of the liturgical year.

Some Sundays throughout the year will better lend themselves to such celebrations than others (e.g., the Baptism of the Lord, the parish patronal feast, the Easter season, etc.). The parish may establish these as days for baptizing infants at Mass, choosing other Sundays for use of the rite outside Mass.

Place Of Baptism

- 78 .1 Outside of emergency circumstances, the proper place for baptism is a church or oratory (a place designated by the bishop for divine worship). (CJC 857.1, 1223)
- .2 Normally, infants are to be baptized in **the parish church of their parents**. (CJC 857.2) When, because of grave inconvenience, this is not possible, the baptism is to be conferred in another church or oratory. (CJC 859)
- .3 Outside of emergency circumstances, baptism is not to be conferred in private homes. (CJC 860.1)
- .4 Except in emergency or for other grave reasons, baptism is not to be conferred in hospitals. (CJC 860.2)
- .5 Every parish church is to have a baptismal font. It should be fit for the celebration of the sacrament according to the ritual, including the possibility of the immersion of infants. (See *Christian Initiation - General Introduction*, 18-26) For good reason, the bishop may permit an additional font in another church or oratory within the parish boundaries. (CJC 858)

LITURGICAL RITES

- 79 Parishes should encourage the development of Christian family and household rituals and should make full use of rites available for blessing families, children, expectant parents, homes, etc. (See the *Book of Blessings* and *Catholic Household Blessings*)
- 80 .1 The celebration of baptism for infants is to be part of regular liturgical planning in all parishes. Pastors, musicians, liturgical committees, and those involved in the ministry to expectant parents should be involved in this planning, giving careful study to the *Rite of Baptism for Children*.

- .2 In planning particular celebrations, the circumstances and needs of the families involved must always be considered. (RBC 34)
- 81 In all celebrations of baptism, special care must be taken with **the ritual acts** and signs, especially so that they be ample and dignified.
- A. *The water should be visible in significant quantity.*
 - B. *The pre-baptismal anointing (RBC 50) should cover the breast of the candidate.*
 - C. *The "royal anointing" after baptism (RBC 18.3) is done with chrism upon the whole crown of the head (not the forehead).*
 - D. *The white garment given to the newly-baptized refers to an actual garment rather than a piece of cloth placed upon the child. This clothing should ordinarily be provided by the family. (RBC 63)*
 - E. *The Easter candle is to be used for the giving of the lighted candle. (RBC 64)*
 - F. *The "Ephphetha" is optional in the United States. (RBC 65) If the minister judges this prayer to be pastorally helpful in particular cases, the touching of the ears and mouth should be done with reverence.*
- 82 Regarding the essential ritual **matter and form** of baptism, the following is to be observed:
- .1 Either the rite of immersion or the rite of infusion (pouring) may be used. (CIGI 22; CJC 854)
 - .2 When **immersion** is used, the minister takes the child and immerses him or her three times in the baptismal water, while saying the appropriate words. (RBC 60) The whole body is to be set down into the water, but is not necessary that it be completely submerged or that the head be completely wet. One of the parents (holding a towel) ordinarily receives the child after the third immersion.
 - .3 When **infusion** is used, one of the parents normally holds the child while the minister pours water three times upon the child (at least upon the head) while saying the appropriate words.
 - .4 It is not permitted for one person to immerse the child (or pour the water) while another says the sacramental formula. In addition, the **words must always accompany the sacramental action.**

- .5** The **water** used in baptism should be true water, capable of communicating the sacramental symbolism, and always clean. During the Easter season, the water consecrated at the Easter Vigil is to be used (if it remains fit); otherwise water is to be blessed for each occasion. It is to be heated, if necessary. (RBC 18-21)
- 83** Since baptism may be celebrated in different ritual circumstances, the structures of these rites must be examined and observed.

.1 Outside of Mass (the “four stations” of the rite [CIGI 26]):

- A. *As an act of welcome, the rite of “reception” normally takes place at the entrance of the church. This ends with the minister inviting the assembly to take part in the celebration of the Word. A procession (possibly with music) leads to the next station. (RBC 16, 32-42)*
- B. *The Liturgy of the Word should be celebrated where the people can be seated together and easily hear the readers, homily, etc. (CIGI 24) Although it may be brief, this part of the rite serves the important purpose of stirring up the authentic faith of the assembly. Provision can even be made for the infants to be taken to another place so that parents, sponsors, etc., can concentrate on hearing the Word of God. The children should return after the homily or the period of silence that follows it. (RBC 14, 17, 43)*

The readings, intercessions, and litany are normally given by appropriate persons other than the presiding minister.

- C. *The baptism itself occurs at the font. (If the space warrants, all go there in procession. (RBC 52)) The blessing (or thanksgiving) is sung or spoken over the water. If there is flowing water, the blessing is given as it flows. (CIGI 21) The assembly should be invited to join in the simple acclamations of this prayer, especially when forms B and C are used.*

The parents and sponsors then renounce sin and renew their profession of faith, after which the assembly may assent in an appropriate song. (RBC 59)

One by one each family approaches for the baptism. After all the children have been baptized, the post-baptismal rites follow. (CIGI 22-23; RBC 18, 53-65)

- D. *The conclusion of the rite takes place at the altar. (People go there in a simple procession, perhaps accompanied by song. (RBC 67)) This moment looks toward the future completion of baptismal initiation in the celebration of the eucharist. After saying or singing the Lord’s Prayer together, the minister leads the final blessing. An Easter or thanksgiving hymn or the Magnificat may conclude the celebration. (RBC 19, 67-71)*

.2 During Sunday Mass (RBC 29):

- A. *The Mass of the Sunday is used. If necessary, a biblical reading from the baptismal rite may be substituted for one given for the day.*
- B. *The reception rite takes the place of the penitential rite.*
- C. *The homily follows the normal requirements for Sundays, taking into account the baptism that is to occur.*
- D. *After the homily, the baptismal rite picks up with the intercessions. (RBC 47 or 84) The creed is omitted in favor of the profession of faith that occurs just before the baptism.*
- E. *The intercessions are taken from the baptismal rite, with some additions in view of the needs of the day.*
- F. *The baptismal ritual continues through the giving of the lighted candle. (RBC 49-64 or 86-100)*
- G. *The preparation of the altar and gifts follows, with the Mass continuing as usual.*
- H. *The blessing at the end of Mass may use a formula from the baptismal rite. (RBC 70, 247-249)*

.3 At the Easter Vigil (RBC 28):

- A. *Sometime before the vigil, the rite of reception is celebrated (RBC 36-41) and the exorcism and anointing is given. (RBC 49-50)*
- B. *Parents and sponsors may be asked to make their profession of faith after the catechumens, with the baptism of the infants following immediately.*
- C. *The presentation of the lighted candle to the parents (with its accompanying statement) is omitted, as are the Ephphetha and the concluding rite.*

84 .1 The Rite of Bringing A Baptized Child to the Church is to be used only for a child who has been baptized in danger of death. Upon their recovery, this rite welcomes them as children who are already baptized members of the Catholic Church. (RBC 31.3, 165-166)

- .2** This rite is not to be used for the reception of baptized non-Catholic children into the Catholic Church. Such children, if they are below the age of reason, are received at the request of their parents and without any rite. Non-Catholic children who have reached the age of reason are received into the Catholic Church in the same way as adults. (See the guidelines for Adult Initiation, Chapter I, No. 34, above.)

BAPTISMAL RECORD

- 85 .1** The pastor of the place where baptism is celebrated must carefully and without delay record in the **baptismal book** the names of those baptized, making mention of the minister, parents (including the mother's maiden name), sponsors, witnesses, if any, and the place and date of the conferred baptism, together with an indication of the date and place of birth. (CJC 877)
- .2** Notations concerning **other sacraments** received later in life are to be entered in this book: confirmation, marriages (including convalidations), reception of holy orders, perpetual profession in a religious institute, and change of rite. Notations of annulment (and prohibitions on future marriages), laicization and dispensation from vows are also to be entered when requested officially by appropriate authorities.
- 86 .1** If a child is born of an **unmarried mother**, the name of the mother is to be inserted in the baptismal register if there is public proof of her maternity (e.g., a civil birth record) or if she asks this willingly either in writing or before two witnesses. (CJC 877.2)
- .2** Likewise the name of the **father** is to be inserted in the register if his paternity has been proved either by some public document or by his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses. (CJC 877.2)
- .3** If these conditions are not met, the child is to be recorded as of "unknown mother" or "unknown father." (CJC 877.2) *It is not permitted to make an annotation which says "illegitimate".*
- 87 .1** In the case of **adopted children**, the following is to be observed regarding baptismal records:
- A.** For those baptized after their adoption is finalized, the following information is to be entered:
1. the Christian name of the child as designated by the adopting parents;
 2. the name of the adopting parents;

3. the date and place of birth;
4. the names of the godparents selected by the adopting parents;
5. the name of the minister.
6. A notation shall also be made simply that the child is adopted.
7. Baptismal certificates for adopted children will be no different from those issued for children of natural (non-adopting) parents. The notation of adoption in the baptismal register is not to be entered on any baptismal certificate.

B. For those baptized before their adoption is finalized, the following notations are to be added to the baptismal register, but only after the adoption has been finalized.

1. Parentheses are placed around the names of the natural parents
2. The names of the adopting parents are inserted
3. The child's former surname is parenthesized and the new surname added
4. A notation is made that the child was adopted together with the name of the court or agency, date of adoption, and the case number.
5. Baptismal certificates issued for such persons are to give only:
 - the names of the adopting parents;
 - the child's new legal surname;
 - the date and place of baptism;
 - name of the minister.
6. The names of the godparents are not to be given and the notation of adoption in the register must not be entered on any baptismal certificate.

- .2 Parish personnel having valid access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person any information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted.



CHAPTER III

Confirmation

For Jesus the Messiah,

...his whole life and his whole mission [was] carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father [gave] him 'without measure.'

This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people*. (CCC 1286-7)

The members of Christ's body share the messianic identity of their master. The Church celebrates the pouring out of the Spirit upon the baptized in the sacrament of confirmation. Whether celebrated immediately after baptism (as in the case of catechumens) or several years later (as for those baptized in infancy) the meaning of this sacrament is the same.

Through the sacrament of confirmation, those who have been born anew in baptism receive the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit himself, by which "they are endowed...with special strength." Moreover, having received the character of this sacrament, they are "bound more intimately to the Church" and "they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and deed as true witnesses of Christ." (*Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation, 1971, by Pope Paul VI*)

Parents, catechists, pastors, and the whole community remember what those baptized in infancy are not able to know: that these young lives are consecrated by the Holy Spirit. The community must affirm this identity in the young Christians as they lead them to the day when this gift is poured out in a special way in confirmation.

On that day, the candidates are asked to renew baptismal promises. This is a connecting link in the journey of faith and the process of initiation. In the "post-baptismal catechumenate" (CCC 1231), these growing Christians continue to unfold the implications of their baptism and awaiting new manifestations of God's presence and power.

Preparation for confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit...To this end catechesis for confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of the confirmands. (CCC 1309)

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

The Christian Community

- 88 Since baptized children have the right to the love and help of the community and since their preparation for confirmation is one of the highest responsibilities of the people of God, parish communities are to provide the candidates with a spirit of welcome, good example and opportunities for involvement in parish life. (RC 3)

Pastors

- 89 .1 Pastors should see that all the baptized come to the fullness of Christian initiation and are carefully prepared for confirmation. (RC 3)
- .2 Pastors should, as well, see that the sponsors chosen by the candidates are spiritually qualified for the office and fulfill the requirements set forth below. (RC 5)

Parents

- 90 .1 Parents, along with pastoral leaders, are to see to it that the candidates are properly instructed about the sacrament and approach it at the appropriate time. (CJC 890) In fulfilling their role, parents:
- A. are to strive to increase a spirit of faith in their children;
 - B. help the children prepare to celebrate the sacrament fruitfully;
 - C. give expression to their own faith through active participation in and celebration of the sacraments. (RC 3)

Sponsor

- 91 .1 A sponsor is to accompany the candidate for confirmation. The sponsor sees to it that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament. (CJC 892)

- .2 All conditions and **requirements** for a godparent at baptism are applied to the sponsor for confirmation. (CJC 893.1; cf. CJC 874; RC 6) To be a sponsor one must:
- A. be designated by the candidate, parents or guardian, or in their absence by the pastor or minister;
 - B. have the intention of performing this role;
 - C. **be at least sixteen years of age;** (With good cause, exceptions may be granted by the pastor or minister of the sacrament.)
 - D. be a Catholic who has been confirmed, has already received the eucharist, and leads a life in harmony with the faith;
 - E. be free from any impediment of the law in fulfilling the office of sponsor;
 - F. **not be the father or mother of the candidate.**
- .3 The pastor of the designated sponsor is normally responsible for determining that the designee understands the sponsor's role and is qualified to assume it, providing a letter of eligibility when the confirmation is to be celebrated in another parish.
- .4 **It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of godparent at baptism be the sponsor for confirmation.** (CJC 893.2; RC 5)
- A. It is necessary to determine that such a person remains qualified for the role of sponsor as given above.
 - B. If there were two godparents at the baptism of the candidate, it is acceptable for both of them to act as sponsors at confirmation if the candidate so wishes, and if both godparents remain qualified for this role.
- (Note: This provision is made in view of the special relationship established with the godparents at baptism. In all other cases, only one sponsor is to be chosen for confirmation.)
- C. When the baptismal godparent is deceased, not readily available, no longer qualified, or for some other good cause, another sponsor should be chosen who can fulfill the requirements stated in No. 91.1 and 91.2 above.
- .5 **A member of an Oriental Rite** of the Catholic Church may serve as a sponsor for confirmation in the Latin Rite.

Catechists

- 92 Catechists assist both the progress of the candidate and the growth of the community. (RCIA 16) They should take care that their teaching is:
- A. filled with the spirit of the Gospel;
 - B. adapted to the signs and cycles of the liturgical year;
 - C. suited to the needs of the candidates. (See “formation,” below.) (RCIA 16)

Ministers of the Sacrament

- 93 .1 The ordinary minister of confirmation is the **bishop**. (CJC 882)
- .2 The **diocesan bishop** is to administer confirmation personally or see that it is administered by another bishop, but if necessity requires he may give the faculty to administer this sacrament to one or more specified priests. (CJC 884.1)
- .3 The **priest** has the faculty to confirm in the following circumstances: (CJC 882; 883)
- A. when he baptizes a person who has reached the age of discretion; (CJC 883.2)
 - B. when he receives into the full communion of the Catholic Church a person who has reached the age of discretion and who was validly baptized in a non-Catholic tradition; (CJC 883.2)
 - C. when he readmits to communion a baptized person who had totally repudiated the Christian faith [“apostasy” CJC 751]; (NSC 28.a)
 - D. when he welcomes again to Catholic practice a baptized Catholic who has, without fault, been instructed in or adhered to a non-Catholic religion. (NSC 28.b)

NOTE: A priest does *not* have the faculty to confirm a baptized Catholic who simply never put the faith into practice. (NSC 28.c)

- E. when a baptized Catholic, including a child below the age of discretion, is in danger of death. (CJC 883.3)

NOTE: In all the above circumstances (A through E) the priest is *obliged* to exercise the faculty to confirm. (CJC 885.2)

- .4 In cases of true necessity (e.g., a large number of candidates) the bishop or priest who has the faculty to confirm may **associate other priests** with himself in conferring the sacrament. (CJC 884.2; RC 8; See also RC 25, 28)

- 94 For good reason a priest may request from the diocesan bishop the **faculty to confirm baptized Catholics** who are under his parochial care and are:

- A. beyond the normal age for confirmation, and
- B. in other special circumstances.

This request is made through the Office for Canonical Services.

CANDIDATES

- 95 Given the obligation of the faithful to be confirmed at the appropriate time and their right to the sacraments of the church, every effort must be made to develop the gift of baptismal life in the candidates and lead them to the fruitful celebration of the sacrament of confirmation with appropriate preparation and ^{without} undue hindrance. (CJC 213, 843.1, 885.1, 890)
- 96 Confirmation is conferred in these circumstances:
- A. when an adult or child of catechetical age is baptized in the Catholic Church. (RCIA 215; NSC 19)
 - B. when an adult or a child of catechetical age who was validly baptized in a non-Catholic tradition is received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. (RCIA 481; NSC 35)
 - C. when a person, who as an infant was baptized in the Catholic Church and who has reached the age of discretion, is suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew their baptismal promises. (CJC 889.2, 891)

NOTE: Policy No. 97 also applies to these candidates.

- D. when a person who as an infant was validly baptized in a non-Catholic tradition and who while still an infant was received into the Catholic Church and who has reached the age of discretion, is suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew their baptismal promises. (CJC 852.1; NSC 18, 19)

NOTE: Policy No. 97 also applies to these candidates.

- E. when a baptized Catholic is in danger of death, even if they are infants or others who do not have the use of reason. (CJC 889.2)

- 97 .1 In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, those who were baptized in or received into the Latin rite of the Catholic Church as infants are to be led to the sacrament of confirmation normally when they reach the eighth (8th) grade, either the first or second semester. The age of confirmation can be extended to the first semester of the ninth (9th) grade at the discretion of the pastor.
- .2 Non-Catholic children who have reached catechetical age are to be confirmed at the time of their baptism or reception into full communion, even when this occurs before the age mentioned in .1 above. (Refer to No. 96, A and B, above.)
- .3 For Catholics **beyond the normal age**, see No. 104, below.
- 98 .1 **Persons with physical or learning disabilities** and those who are **behaviorally disturbed** are to receive formation and be presented for confirmation along with their age peers, seeking a degree of understanding appropriate to their individual condition.
- .2 **Persons who are mentally retarded** and have reached the normal age and are receiving formation within the community according to their capacity, as is their right, are to be confirmed if they express some disposition to receive the sacrament. In cases of profound retardation, there should be no hesitation about confirming the person at the normal age, if not sooner, without further requirements.

Admission To Confirmation

- 99 .1 To be confirmed, baptized persons who have the use of reason must be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew their baptismal promises. (CJC 889.2)
- .2 A baptized person who does not have the use of reason may be confirmed without further requirement.

- .3 In addition, candidates who are already Catholic must have reached the common age for confirmation in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, except in danger of death. (Refer to No. 97, above.)

READINESS / FORMATION

Formation of Candidates

- 100 .1 The time of formation is understood to include the whole period following baptism.
- .2 This long-term formation is to help the candidates: (RC 12)
- A. develop a sufficient effective relationship with the Christian community;
 - B. give the witness of a Christian life;
 - C. exercise the Christian apostolate;
 - D. develop a genuine desire to participate in the eucharist and the sacramental life of the Church.
- 101 From the age of reason, children should be participating in the **catechetical programs** the local church provides to assist and augment formation within the Christian family. Such programs should present the teachings and moral life of the Catholic Church through catechesis that is comprehensive and accommodated to the various stages of the child's growth as a faithful disciple of the Lord.
- 102 .1 **Specific preparation** of the candidates for confirmation is to occur during the year preceding the celebration of the rite. This preparation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ—throughout the world as well as in the local community. (See CCC 1309.) Such preparation includes:
- A. reflection on the life and commitment implied in the renewal of one's baptismal promises;
 - B. reflection on the nature and dignity of the sacrament of confirmation and the rite in which it is celebrated;
 - C. guidance toward a more intimate union with Christ and a deeper knowledge of his saving mysteries; (CCC 1309)

D. leading the candidates towards spiritual purification and enlightenment as immediate, inward preparation for the celebration of the sacramental rite.

- .2 In catechesis, confirmation should be presented in accord with the teaching given in Church's liturgical rite, namely, from the Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation, *Divinae consortium naturae*:

"The New Testament shows how the Holy Spirit assisted Christ in fulfilling his messianic mission...(Christ) later promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them also to bear fearless witness to their faith even before persecutors...And in fact, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down in an extraordinary way on the Apostles as they were gathered together with Mary the mother of Jesus and the group of disciples.

"...Peter regarded the Spirit who had thus come down upon the apostles as the gift of the messianic age...From that time on, in fulfillment of Christ's wish, the apostles imparted the gift of the Spirit to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands to complete the grace of baptism. This makes clear the specific importance of confirmation for sacramental initiation by which the faithful, 'as members of the living Christ are incorporated into him and made like him through baptism and through confirmation and the eucharist.'

"In baptism, the newly baptized receive forgiveness of sins, adoption as (children) of God, and the character of Christ, by which they are made members of the Church and for the first time become sharers in the priesthood of their Savior (see 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

"Through the sacrament of confirmation, those who have been born anew in baptism receive the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit himself, by which 'they are endowed...with special strength.' They are 'bound more intimately to the Church' and 'they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ.'

"Finally, confirmation is so closely linked with the holy eucharist that the faithful, after being signed by holy baptism and confirmation, are incorporated fully into the body of Christ by participation in the eucharist."

And from the *Rite of Confirmation*:, No 2:

"This giving of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more perfectly to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his body in faith and love. They are so marked with the character or seal of the Lord that the sacrament of confirmation cannot be repeated."

- .3 Although confirmation is sometimes referred to as the "sacrament of Christian maturity" (CCC 1308), it should not be implied that confirmation marks the achievement of natural adulthood, the end of Christian conversion, the completion of religious formation, or the reception of the Holy Spirit for the first time. The celebration of the sacrament underscores the need for baptismal faith to be nourished and to grow.

- .4 The **doctrinal elements** of such catechesis must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and its creeds. In their preparation, catechists are to rely especially upon *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *The Teaching of Christ* and other diocesan-approved catechetical materials. (Cf. NSC 7)
5. Opportunities for Christian service experience should occur within the context of the apostolic activity of the family and the life of the parish. *Any notion of contracts or required service hours is to be avoided.*

103 In the case of **children who have not participated consistently** in such catechetical programs, the pastor should consult with catechists and parents and determine the type of preparation required, keeping in mind the goals mentioned in Nos. 100.2 and 102.1, above.

As baptized persons, such children may not be held back from confirmation if they seek it at the proper time and fulfill the requirements of canon 889.2. See No. 99, above. (CJC 843, 885.1)

104 In the case of **baptized Catholics who are beyond the normal age** of confirmation, the following is to be observed:

- .1 Each parish is responsible for preparing its members for the sacrament of confirmation. (*RCIA*, no. 4, *RCIA* 403)
- .2 Since Catholic people remain unconfirmed for varying reasons, the religious formation of the candidate must be considered in each case.
 - A. Those who have been living a Catholic life and have an understanding of faith appropriate to their age may be presented for confirmation after a period of spiritual discernment in accord with No. 102.1, above.
 - B. For those who have been uncatechized, Part II Chapter 4 of the *RCIA* is to be followed. (See also above, Chapter I, Nos 23-32.)
- .3 Such candidates should be presented for confirmation:
 - A. when the bishop comes to the parish to celebrate the sacrament;
 - B. when the bishop is confirming in a neighboring parish, in which case the pastor of the candidate should make arrangements with the pastor of the other parish;
 - C. when the bishop gathers candidates at the cathedral in the Easter season, according to arrangements made through the Office for Worship.

- .4 For the uncatechized candidates who have been associated with the catechumenate process, if it seems advisable, the pastor may request from the bishop the faculty to confirm at the Easter Vigil. This faculty must be requested in writing through the Office for Canonical Services.
- .5 When the pastor judges that there are serious reasons to do so, he may request from the bishop the faculty to confirm a particular candidate at some other time. This faculty must be requested in writing through the Office for Canonical Services.
- .6 If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it **before** being admitted to **marriage**. (CJC 1065.1)
 - A. When Catholics seek confirmation in preparation for marriage their readiness for confirmation should be determined in accord with Nos. 100.2 and 102.1, above.
 - B. The importance and dignity of confirmation should not be compromised. If necessary, confirmation should be delayed until after the wedding so that it can be celebrated worthily. (See RC 12)

Parental Formation

- 105 .1** In the case of candidates who are children, their parents should be gathered and prepared in the year or so prior to the celebration of confirmation.
- A. The **parents of all candidates** are to be reminded of their unique and God-given role in the Christian formation of their children. They should be given an opportunity to receive practical information concerning preparations for confirmation. In addition, they should have the opportunity for personal spiritual preparation for the sacramental celebration.
 - B. **Parents** who for the **first time** are leading a child to confirmation are to receive catechesis about the sacrament in order to deepen their understanding and appreciation of confirmation in the life of the Church and in their own lives.
 - C. **Parents who have previously participated** in such programs should be welcomed to take part again.
 - D. Parents and families with special needs (e.g., family crisis, alienation from the Church) are to receive particular pastoral attention to enable them to participate fruitfully in the celebration of the sacrament.

- .2 A candidate whose **parents do not participate** in special programs may not for this reason be deprived of the right to confirmation. (CJC 843, 912)

Mystagogy (Post-Sacramental Formation)

- 106 .1 After the celebration of the sacrament, those who have been confirmed are to be led to a richer participation in the mystery of Christ, especially in the eucharist, and a more complete share in the mission of the Church.
- .2 Parishes are to assist those who have been confirmed in the next stage of their journey of faith (e.g., by providing programs of comprehensive youth ministry, further adult formation opportunities, etc., depending on the circumstances of the newly-confirmed).

TIMES OF CELEBRATION and SCHEDULING

- 107 .1 The pastor is responsible for requesting a date for the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation, responding to the annual inquiry sent by the Office of the Chancellor. (Refer to No. 97, above, regarding the age of those presented for confirmation.)

In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, confirmation is normally celebrated according to a schedule that allows the bishop to be present as the ordinary minister of the sacrament.

- .2 The required minimum number of candidates to request confirmation on a yearly basis is fifty (50). However,
 - A. two or more parishes can join together for the celebration of the sacrament;
 - B. a parish may request to join the celebration of the sacrament held at Saint Paul Cathedral in the Easter season.
- .3 A parish may request confirmation every other year, regardless of the number of candidates, so that the sacrament is not delayed beyond two years in any parish.

- .4 In order to facilitate appropriate liturgical planning, and to enable parishes to offer the preparation called for in No. 102.1, above:
- A. the Office of the Chancellor will make every effort to schedule confirmation visits with as much notice as possible;
 - B. parish catechetical leaders should arrange programs that are flexible enough to allow the rite to be celebrated anytime from September through December (for the Fall) and anytime from February through May (for the Spring).

LITURGICAL RITES

- 108 .1 To express more clearly the fundamental connection of confirmation with the whole of Christian initiation, it is desirable that the sacrament be celebrated **within Mass**. (CJC 881; RC 13)
- .2 Confirmation may be celebrated **outside of Mass**, using the appropriate rite, in these circumstances:
- A. when those being confirmed are not being admitted to First Holy Communion at the same time; (RC 13)
 - B. when other pastoral needs require.
- 109 Parishes must consider **all candidates** for confirmation **equally**.
- A. There is to be no distinction or separation of candidates according to school or parish religious education programs.
 - B. The needs of persons with physical and developmental disabilities are to be fully considered in planning and celebrating the rite.

- 110** According to the *Rite of Confirmation*, it is preferred that the **name** given at baptism be used at the time of confirmation. This indicates the unity of the sacraments of initiation and the nature of baptism as the origin of Christian identity. Therefore:
- A. Candidates are not to be required to select a new name for confirmation.
 - B. A candidate who, of his or her own accord, chooses to claim a name with a Christian meaning, is permitted to use this name in the rite of confirmation.
- 111** In the **liturgy of confirmation**, the following is to be considered.
- .1** Liturgical planning should respect:
 - A. the nature of confirmation as a festive and solemn event with significance for the local church; (RC 4)
 - B. the relationship of confirmation to the whole process of Christian initiation; (RC 13)
 - C. the paschal character of the entire process of Christian initiation; (RCIA 8)
 - D. the Church's expression of faith in the effects of the Holy Spirit. (RC 4)
 - .2** Liturgical planners should consult with the master of ceremonies for the minister of the sacrament, to work out details of the celebration.
 - .3** Special attention should be given to the following.
 - A. The chrism itself should be given prominence, perhaps by being carried in the entrance procession.
 - B. The proclamation of the word from which the power of the Holy Spirit flows upon the Church. (RC 13)
 - C. The primary acts of the sacrament of confirmation, namely:
 - 1. the laying on of hands by which the Holy Spirit is invoked; (RC 9)
 - 2. the anointing with chrism and accompanying words by which the candidate receives the indelible character, the seal of the Lord, together with the gift of the Holy Spirit. (RC 9)

These elements should not be compromised by other additions to the celebration.

- .4 Consideration should be given to placement in the assembly:
- A. The candidates may enter as part of the liturgical procession or they may already have their places in the assembly.
 - B. Candidates and sponsors may be seated together.
 - C. Boys and girls may be seated together.
 - D. Attention should be given to the appropriate place for any adult candidates.
- .5 After the proclamation of the Gospel, the pastor or another priest, a deacon, or catechist, presents the candidates for confirmation in his or her own words. (There is no text provided by the rite.) (RC 21)
- .6 When, along with the candidates, there are **Catholic catechetical companions who have already been confirmed** (e.g., as catechumens or those from Oriental rites), these may be presented to the bishop to receive the sign of peace. This is done following the anointing, after the bishop has washed his hands.
- This presentation should not suggest a renewal or reaffirmation of the sacrament of confirmation. The following is a sample text.*
- One (or a number) of our eighth-year students received the sacrament of confirmation at an earlier point on his/her/their Christian formation. In the joy of this day, and since he/she/they share/s so much with our newly-confirmed, I now invite them (or N._____) to come forward to receive the sign of peace from Bishop N._____.*
- .7 In addition to their normal participation in the liturgy, the special focus of the candidates should be on their renewal of baptismal promises and reception of the sacrament of confirmation. Other liturgical roles (e.g., reader, usher, etc.) are better given to other competent young people and adults.
- .8 Though normal decorum should prevail, no special clothing may be required of candidates. "Stoles" are not to be worn by the candidates. (Bishop's Committee On the Liturgy, NCCB, December 1984)

Additional Rites

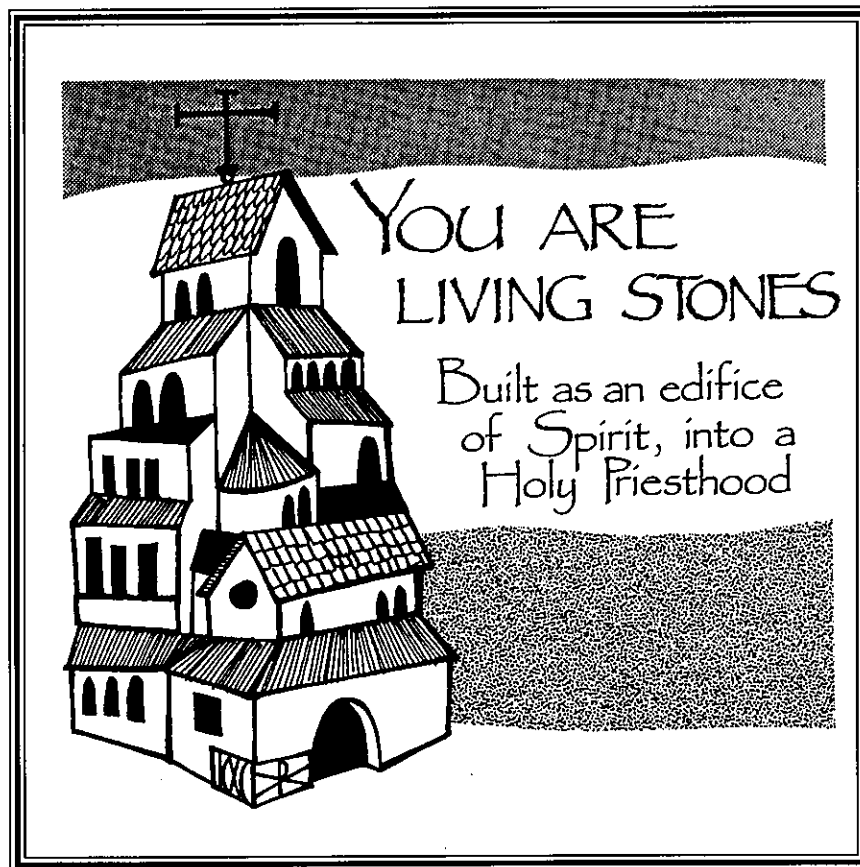
- 112 .1** In the period of preparation for confirmation, the children should receive the benefit of prayerful support and welcome in the local community, even in the liturgical assembly. Rites of blessing, intention, etc., may be celebrated if they are adapted to the liturgical year and always respect the candidates as baptized members of the faithful already participating in the mystery of Christ.
- .2** Such rites should not be too numerous. In addition, a candidate who does not participate is not for this reason to be deprived of the right to confirmation. (CJC 843, 890, 912; see also No. 102.1 and 103, above)

REGISTRATION OF CONFIRMATION

- 113 .1** Soon after the celebration of the sacrament, the pastor of the place is to make the appropriate entry in the confirmation register of the parish. This entry notes the names of those confirmed, their parents and sponsors, the place and date of the conferral, and the name of the minister.
- .2** A notation of the date and place of confirmation is also to be made in the baptismal register of the place of baptism for each candidate. The pastor of the place where confirmation was celebrated is to inform the pastor of the church of baptism as needed. (CJC 895)

PARISH POLICIES

- 114 Parish policies for preparing and celebrating confirmation should be developed in accord with these norms. Such policies should be clear, written, and shared with the families of candidates early in the preparation period. All procedures must be based on sound liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral principles.



CHAPTER IV

First Communion Of Children

"The Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the eucharist..." (CCC 1322)

The welcome to the holy table of the Lord seals the intimate bond which baptism establishes between Jesus Christ and his disciples. For those baptized as infants, the earliest years of life are nourished in the faith, hope, and love of the Christian family. The family, in turn, is rooted in and sustained by the parish community, a local embodiment of the whole People of God.

In time, and especially through participation with the family in the Church's celebration of the Lord's Day, the young Christian becomes more and more aware of the wonderful encounter with Christ in the eucharist, and their role as a member of the liturgical assembly, their larger family in the Lord.

Toward the end of early childhood, around the age of seven, the young disciple, whose baptismal faith has been enriched through catechesis, is presented to the Church for admission to the sacrificial meal of the Body of Christ.

This holy banquet is most fittingly set before these young Christians as part of the Church's paschal celebration, the Fifty Days of Easter. In preparation for this festival, the whole Church seeks a new conversion to the Lord and a renewal of baptismal life through the observance of Lent. In this season the Church invites its young candidates for First Communion to gather close to the community and prepare their hearts for what awaits them in the eucharist. This presents a most suitable occasion to introduce these candidates to the sacrament of penance, a rite they are to celebrate before they come to the table of unity and love.

"The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the eucharist...To respond to this invitation we must prepare ourselves for so great and so holy a moment." (CCC 1385)

With initiation into the eucharistic communion of the Church, the young Christian begins a lifelong participation in the central mystery of our life in Christ.

"The eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life.' 'The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the eucharist and are oriented toward it...'
(CCC 1324)

"The eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the people of God by which the Church is kept in being..." (CCC 1325)

"Finally, by the eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life when God will be all in all." (CCC 1326)

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

The Christian Community

- 115** Parish communities should welcome children being led to First Communion and offer liturgical participation in accord with the *Directory for Masses With Children*, and the *Lectionary for Masses with Children*.

Parents

- 116 .1** It is the responsibility, in the first place, of parents to lead their children to eucharistic communion with appropriate preparation. (CJC 914)
- .2** Parents should bring their children **regularly to celebration of Sunday Mass** in order to introduce them to the eucharistic celebration.

This is so for two reasons:

- A. *First Communion indicates that children are being integrated into the Church's eucharistic life. They must, therefore become familiar with this life in a concrete way.*

- B. The liturgical year "unfolds the entire mystery of Christ" and "completes the formation of the faithful" (General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, no. 1). Understanding the "mystery of Christ" is required for admission to Holy Communion (CJC 913); celebration of the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year is a primary means for gaining such understanding.*

Catechists

- 117** Catechists assist both the progress of the candidates and the growth of the community. (RCIA 16) They should take care that their teaching is:
- A. filled with the spirit of the Gospel;
 - B. adapted to the signs and cycles of the liturgical year;
 - C. suited to the needs of the candidates;
 - D. thoroughly grounded in Catholic doctrine. (See Nos. 134-135, below)

Pastor

- 118 .1** The pastor is to collaborate with parents in order to lead baptized children to eucharistic communion at the proper time and with appropriate formation.
- .2** The pastor should take care that children not approach the Holy Banquet who have not reached the use of reason or who are not sufficiently disposed. (CJC 914)
- .3** The pastor should give special consideration to cases mentioned below regarding those in danger of death (No. 123), children presented before the usual time (No. 129), and children who have not consistently participated in a catechetical program (No. 130).

CANDIDATES

Catholic Children

- 119** Those who were baptized in the Catholic Church as infants are to be led to eucharistic communion when they reach the use of reason (generally at the age of seven). (CJC 914, 97.2)
- 120** Those who as infants received baptism in another Christian community but who, while still infants, were received into the Catholic Church are likewise led to eucharistic communion when they reach the use of reason.

Children of Catechetical Age Who Are To Be Baptized Or Received Into Full Communion

- 121** Children of catechetical age who as infants were neither baptized as Catholics nor received into the Catholic Church are admitted to the eucharist at the time of their Catholic baptism or reception into full communion. (Follow *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Part II*, Chapter 1 or 5.) No other rite or practice is permitted. (CJC 852.1, 866, NSC nos. 18, 19)

Admission To Holy Communion

- 122** To be admitted to First Communion, children “must have sufficient knowledge ... to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity,” so they “can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.” (CJC 913.1)
- 123** In **danger of death**, children may receive Holy Communion if they can distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receive communion reverently. (CJC 913.2; PCS no. 280) Note that such children are also to be confirmed (RC no. 11, CJC 889.2, 891; PCS nos. 31, 246, 276, 280)
- 124 .1** Children with **physical or learning disabilities** and those who are **behaviorally disturbed** are to be presented for eucharistic communion along with their age peers, seeking a degree of understanding appropriate to their individual condition.
- .2** **Children who are mentally retarded** are to be admitted to the eucharist when they express a desire for the sacrament and in some way manifest their reverence for it. In cases of profound retardation, the eucharist may be shared without further requirements, as long as the child is able to consume the sacred elements.
- 125** **Once admitted** to the eucharist, even in emergency circumstances, a child may continue to share in the sacrament as any other member of the faithful.

READINESS / FORMATION

Formation of Candidates

- 126** Candidates for First Communion are to be led to “full, conscious, and active participation” in the Liturgy of the Eucharist according to the principles of the *Directory for Masses With Children*. Such participation is their “right and duty by virtue of their baptism.” (See Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14)

This goal—both spiritual and practical in nature—must always be kept in mind. Becoming a communicant means more than simply “receiving communion.” As “the culmination of Christian initiation” (RC 13) this act invites the candidate into full participation at the table of the Lord, that is:

- A. self-offering along with Christ,*
- B. taking one’s place with “the whole community of the redeemed” in the “universal sacrifice offered to God by our High Priest,” and, finally,*
- C. coming to the table of the eucharist (where) we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that we may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God’s people.” (CIGI 2)*

- 127 .1** The time of formation must be understood to include the **whole period following the child’s baptism**. Thus, parents are to help their children develop a life of prayer, a knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and his teachings, and a practical relationship with the local church. (RBC 5.5; RC no. 3; CJC 914)
- .2** Through support and practical helps, parishes should assist parents fulfill this role in the first several years of a child’s life.
- 128 .1** When children approach the **age of reason**, they should be **enrolled in the catechetical programs** the Church provides to assist and augment formation within the Christian family. Such programs should present the teachings and moral life of the Catholic Church through catechesis that is comprehensive and accommodated to the various stages of the child’s growth as a faithful disciple of the Lord.
- .2** Children are to be considered candidates for First Holy Communion **in the second year** of such catechesis.

- 129** In particular cases where a child is presented for First Holy Communion **before the ordinary time**, the pastor should, in consultation with the parents, determine that the child has achieved the readiness required in accord with Nos. 122, 126, and 127, above, except in danger of death. (CJC 914)
- 130** In the case of children who have **not participated consistently in such catechetical programs**, the pastor should consult with catechists and parents to determine the type of preparation required, keeping in mind the goals mentioned in Nos. 122, 126, and 127, above. (CJC 843, 912)
- 131 .1** **Children with physical or learning disabilities** and those who are **behaviorally disturbed** should generally be led to the eucharist and receive formation along with their age peers, seeking a degree of understanding and reverence appropriate to their individual condition. (See No. 124, above.)
- .2** **Children who are mentally retarded** are to receive formation within the community according to their capacity, as is their right. (See No. 124, above.)
- .3** In order to provide full and suitable formation for children with special needs, parish communities should make use of the assistance and catechetical resources available through the diocesan Department for Persons with Disabilities.

Eucharistic Formation And The Sacrament of Penance

- 132** Before they come to eucharistic communion, candidates are to celebrate **sacramental confession**. (CJC 914)
- This is based on the general practice of the Church and must be interpreted in this light, namely:*
- A. *The faithful are not to receive the Body of Christ if they are conscious of grave sin. (CJC 916)*
- B. *After attaining the age of discretion, serious sins are to be confessed at least once a year. The confession of venial sins is recommended. (CJC 988, 989)*

Thus, candidates for First Communion are to receive appropriate catechesis concerning the sacrament of penance and are to be helped to develop and examine their consciences as they are led to celebrate sacramental reconciliation in readiness for the eucharist.

- 133.1 In rare and particular cases where a **child**, after appropriate preparation and invitation, **chooses not to approach the sacrament of penance**, the pastor, in consultation with parents, should determine if it is advisable to proceed with eucharistic communion. If the child is admitted to the eucharist, care must be given to his or her continuing catechesis regarding the sacrament of penance, so that he or she may soon share it fruitfully.
- .2 Similar discernment is to be made in the circumstances of children who, because of severe cognitive impairment, are not able to make a confession of sin. (The guidance of the diocesan Department for Persons with Disabilities should be sought in these cases.)

Doctrinal Formation

- 134 The doctrinal elements of catechesis for the **sacrament of penance** must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and its creeds. In preparing for their role, catechists are to rely especially on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *The Teaching of Christ*, and other diocesan-approved catechetical materials. (Cf. NSC 7)

- A. *Catechesis concerning this sacrament should reflect the teaching of the Rite of Penance that this sacrament is rooted in baptismal grace and leads toward complete reconciliation in the eucharist.*

"This victory (of Christ over sin) is first brought to light in baptism where our fallen nature is crucified with Christ so that the body of sin may be destroyed and we may no longer be slaves to sin, but rise with Christ and live for God. For this reason the Church proclaims its faith in 'the one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.'

"In the sacrifice of the Mass the passion of Christ is made present; his body is given for us and his blood shed for the forgiveness of sins are offered to God again by the Church for the salvation of the world. In the eucharist Christ is offered as 'the sacrifice which has made our peace' with God and in order that 'we may be brought together in unity' by his Holy Spirit.

"Furthermore, our Savior Jesus Christ, when he gave to his apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins, instituted in his Church the sacrament of penance. Thus the faithful who fall into sin after baptism may be reconciled with God and renewed in grace." (Rite of Penance, N. 2)

Baptismal dignity and the call to continuing conversion should be emphasized, along with recognition of the reality of sin in our world and our lives and our consequent need for the forgiveness God offers us in Christ. This formation should aim to instill in the children the desire to be spiritually ready for eucharistic communion with the Lord.

- B. In discussion and publication, care should be given to appropriate titles and descriptions of the sacrament. The formal title is the "Sacrament of Penance"; the liturgical ritual can be called the "Rite of Reconciliation." (E.g., "The children will celebrate the sacrament of penance for the first time." Or, "the Rite of Reconciliation has been scheduled for our children who are preparing for First Holy Communion.")

The term "penance" alludes to the process of personal repentance in the context of the community of faith, the discipline embraced by one who wants to be a "disciple" of the Lord (recalling the journey of the catechumenate). The term "reconciliation" alludes to the act whereby God, through the Church, overcomes our separation and sinful isolation in a gesture of merciful love.

In addition, the sacrament has been known by other names that bring out its varied meanings in the Christian life: "conversion" (it offers a way to turn again to the Father); "confession" (in admitting our sins before the priest, we acknowledge our failings to God and at the same time confess God's holiness and our praise for God's mercy); "forgiveness" (through the priest's absolution God lifts the burden of sin and guilt). (See Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1423-1424.)

- C. Regarding the "Prayer of the Penitent", (formerly called the "act of contrition"):

The goal of formation is that children develop proper understanding and motivation in order to offer the prayer honestly. Like other penitents, children always have the freedom to speak this prayer in their own words. Models of traditional prayers may be presented even for memorization. (Rite of Penance, no. 19. See also nos. 85-92 for examples.)

135 The doctrinal elements of catechesis for **First Holy Communion** must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and in its creeds. In preparing for their role, catechists are to rely especially on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *The Teaching of Christ*, and other diocesan-approved catechetical materials. (Cf. NSC 7)

- A. Catechesis is to reflect the goal of eucharistic communion as stated in No. 126, above.
- B. In teaching, discussion, and publications regarding First Holy Communion, it must always be clear that the candidates are, by baptism, already members of the Body of Christ and living in communion with the Lord. They are to be welcomed into full eucharistic sharing, participating for the first time in the holy meal of the Lord's Body and Blood.

This will not be their first time to "meet Jesus," but rather it opens up to them a new, tangible, and wonderful way to encounter him truly present in the form of food and drink.

Formation of Parents

- 136 .1** All parents should be gathered and prepared in the year or so prior to the celebration of First Communion.
- A. The **parents of all candidates** should be reminded of their unique and God-given role in the Christian formation of their children. They should be given an opportunity to receive practical information concerning preparations for the first eucharistic communion of the their children, and for the celebration of the sacrament of penance during the time of formation. In addition, they should have the opportunity for personal spiritual preparation for these sacramental celebrations.
 - B. Parents who for the **first time** are leading a child to eucharistic communion are to be provided with **catechesis** to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the eucharist in the life of the Church and in their own lives. They should also be helped to appreciate the relationship between such communion and the call and dignity of baptism. Within this context, they are to be offered catechesis concerning the Church's ministry of reconciliation, celebrated in the sacrament of penance and fulfilled at the table of the Lord.
 - C. Parents who have **previously participated** in such programs are to be welcomed to take part again.
 - D. Parents and families with **special needs** (i.e. family crisis, alienation from the church) are to receive particular pastoral attention to enable them to participate fruitfully in the celebration of the sacrament.
- .2** A candidate whose **parents do not participate** in special programs may not for this reason be deprived of the right to eucharistic communion. (CJC 843; 912)

Mystagogy (Post-Sacramental Formation)

- 137** **After the celebration of First Communion** the children are to continue their journey of faith in a type of mystagogical formation.
- A. In the period immediately following First Communion, an opportunity should be given for the children and their families to reflect on and enjoy the new experience of sacramental life.
 - B. Continued opportunities should be given for the children to experience the joyful welcome of closer ties with the community of the faithful. (RCIA 246)

- C. Continuing catechesis should help the new communicants to deepen their grasp of the paschal mystery through reflection on the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church concerning the eucharist, and, of course, through regular sharing in the eucharist and increasing involvement in the works of charity. (RCIA 244)
- D. Catechesis should also continue to help the children to develop their Christian conscience, achieve increasing comfort in celebrating the sacrament of penance, and pursue a life of discipleship devoted to reconciliation and peacemaking.

TIMES OF CELEBRATION

138 .1 The mystery of Christ unfolds through the **liturgical year**. At its center is the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of the Lord and the renewal of baptismal life at Easter. The initiation of children into sacramental life should be accommodated to this pattern and be supported by its themes and spirit. (GNLYC 1, 17, 18) (See No. 116.2, above.)

- .2** Candidates for First Communion (in the Easter season) should normally be led to their first celebration of the **sacrament of penance** during the preceding **lenten season**. (Cf. RCIA 293)

This period is the time of "purification and enlightenment" for all the members of the Church. The children should experience the example and support of the whole community in their efforts at conversion and baptismal renewal leading up to the Easter festival.

- .3** Since the Easter Season is the preeminent time for celebrating Christian initiation, **First Communion** is normally celebrated **during the fifty days of Easter**.

LITURGICAL RITES

First Penance

139 .1 Whenever possible, the opportunity should be provided for those who celebrate the sacrament of penance for the first time to do so in the context of a **communal celebration** along with adults and other children.

.2 Those who plan such celebrations must familiarize themselves with **Chapter II of the Rite of Penance**, which is normative for these liturgical rites.

Such celebrations should be adapted for use with children, always maintaining the liturgical structure of the rite, emphasizing primary ritual acts, and avoiding practices that inflate secondary elements. (General principles from the Directory for Masses With Children, and the Lectionary for Masses with Children should be employed.)

In the context of a celebration prepared primarily for adults (as in parish lenten services), every effort must be made to welcome and accommodate children who are celebrating the sacrament of penance for the first time.

140 Planning for the rite, selection of readings, and preaching should reflect the teaching of the *Rite of Penance*. (See No. 134, A, above, regarding the spirit of the celebration.)

First Communion

141 Liturgical planners should observe what is stated above in Nos. 126 and 135, above, regarding the goal and spirit of First Holy Communion.

142 .1 As initiation into the eucharistic communion of the whole Church, the celebration of First Holy Communion most fittingly happens at the **parish Sunday Mass**. There, in the event which most fully expresses the life, worship, and love of the Body of Christ, the local community welcomes its newest communicants. (It should not appear that, after celebrating the "First Communion Mass," it is necessary later to welcome the children into the eucharistic life of the rest of the Church.)

- A. *Several such celebrations can be scheduled during the Easter season, either for groups or for one or two candidates at a time.*
- B. *Especially where the number of candidates is small, a single celebration may be arranged wherein the parish admits all its candidates at the same time.*
- C. *When the children of the parish are admitted to the eucharist on various occasions, they may still be gathered together to celebrate a special Mass as a large group of new communicants.*
- .2 Where it seems pastorally advisable, **an additional Sunday Mass** can be scheduled for this celebration, with the permission of the Office for Canonical Services.
- .3 Celebrations on **other days of the week** are to be considered exceptional. Where this pattern prevails, efforts should be made to develop appreciation of First Communion on the Lord's Day.
- 143** Parishes must **consider all candidates for First Holy Communion equally**. There must be no distinction or separation of children according to schools or parish religious education programs.
- 144** In the **liturgy of First Communion**, the following must be considered:
- .1 The placement of the candidates in the assembly should reflect both their integration into families and the local community as well as their special presence as candidates for admission to the eucharist. This will admit of a number of practical arrangements in local circumstances.
- .2 Where possible, baptismal sponsors of the candidates should be invited to take part in this celebration.
- .3 In the selection of music, texts, etc., the principles of normal, good liturgical planning should be employed and reference made to *the Directory for Masses With Children*, and *the Lectionary for Masses with Children*. Preference should be given to music from the normal repertory of the parish community rather than to acclamations and songs that will not be part of regular eucharistic practice of the children.
- .4 The special focus of the candidates should be on their participation in the action of the eucharist (see No. 126, above). The candidates should be well-prepared to sing the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer, join in the Lord's Prayer, share the sign of peace, and partake in Holy Communion. Some of them should be involved in the presentation of the gifts.. (Only the bread and wine for the eucharist—and possibly an offering for the poor—are presented at this time.)

Other liturgical roles (e.g., greeter, reader, cantor) are better given to other competent young people and adults.

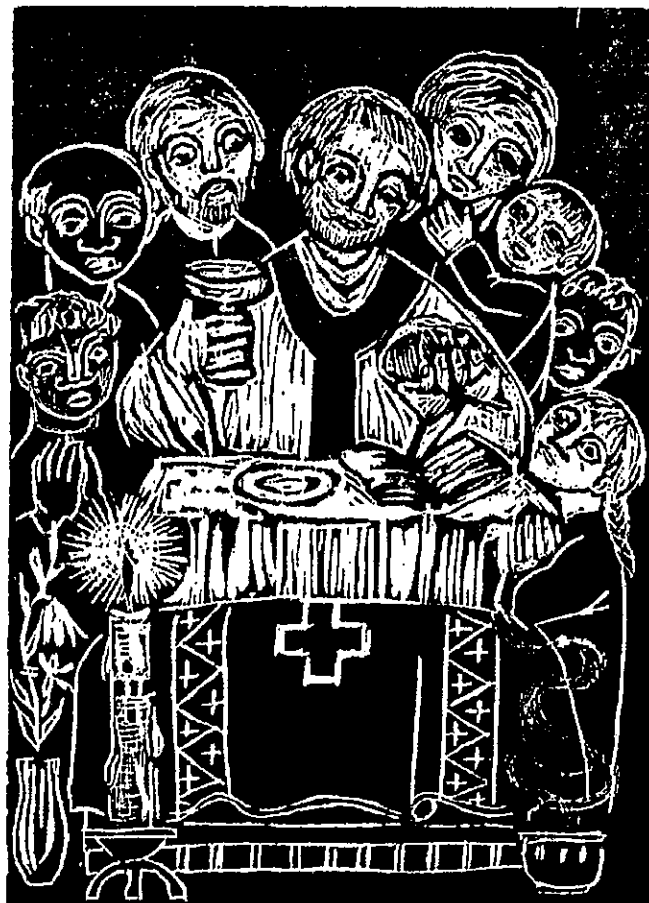
- .5 “Before saying ‘This is the Lamb of God,’ the celebrant may briefly remind the ... children of the preeminence of the eucharist, which is the climax of their initiation and the center of the whole Christian life.” (RCIA 329)
- .6 Since the communion rite to which they are admitted includes the possibility of sharing in both the eucharistic bread and cup, children should be fully prepared for communion under both forms (including the chance to taste both elements in their unconsecrated form as part of their catechesis). In the Mass of First Communion, they should be able to exercise the options allowed to all communicants: reception of the host in the hand or on the tongue, and the chance to share in the cup of the Lord’s blood.
- .7 Patterns of the communion procession that include family members escorting the candidates to communion should not be arranged in a way that might embarrass non-communicants.
- .8 Though normal decorum should prevail, no special clothing may be required of candidates for First Communion.

Additional Rites

- 145 .1 In the period of preparation for eucharistic communion, the children should receive the benefit of prayerful support and welcome in the local community, even in the liturgical assembly. Rites of blessing, “intention,” etc., may be celebrated if they are adapted to the liturgical year and always respect the candidates as baptized members of the faithful already participating in the mystery of Christ.
- .2 Such rites should not be too numerous. In addition, a candidate who does not participate in these rites is not for this reason to be deprived of the right to eucharistic communion. (CJC 843, 912)

PARISH POLICIES

- 146 Parish policies for preparing and celebrating Holy Communion (and the sacrament of penance) for the first time should be developed in accord with these norms. Such policies should be clear, written, and shared with the families of candidates early on in preparation. All procedures must be based on sound liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral principles and should, through dialogue with parents, catechists, and liturgical planners, achieve a pattern that is somewhat consistent from year to year.



APPENDIX I: The Sacraments of Initiation and Catholic Schools

- A. The sacraments of initiation are aspects of being “**parishioners**” in a parish community, not students in a Catholic school. As a result, parishes have primary responsibility for the sacramental initiation of their members. At the same time, Catholic schools are valuable extensions of the church’s care for the young.
- B. Candidates for Christian initiation have a right to the **welcome, pastoral care, and community life of their parish**, no matter where they are enrolled for catechetical formation.

This is true for children who are already Catholic as well as for those who may come to seek entrance into the Catholic Church.

Note: School administrators and catechists should be attentive to the **baptismal status of every child enrolled in the school**. These leaders must also be aware of the special norms which govern the **baptism of children who have reached catechetical age** and the **reception of baptized non-Catholic children into the full communion of the Catholic Church**. If such a child or their parent expresses interest in entering the Catholic Church, they will need help to understand these norms.

- C. The **celebration** of the sacraments of initiation will ordinarily take place in the parish community of the candidate, regardless of where the catechetical preparation occurs.
- D. A pastor may **allow parishioners to celebrate the initiation sacraments** with their companions **in another parish** (e.g., in the parish whose school they attend), so long as this is acceptable to the pastor of the other parish. In this case:
- The pastor of the candidate(s) should personally make this request and work out an agreement with the other pastor well in advance.
 - Parishioners should be informed of this arrangement.
 - The pastor does not relinquish responsibility for the welcome and pastoral care of such candidates.

Such an arrangement can be on-going.

- E. The **catechetical program** normally offered in a Catholic school should suffice as the primary educational component of preparation for the sacraments, no matter what parish the candidate belongs to.
- F. **Other formation experiences** (in addition to the catechetical program) are often desirable. This is especially true in order to gather together all the candidates from one parish, even though they are enrolled in separate catechetical programs. These extraordinary gatherings should:
- not duplicate normal catechetical programs in the Catholic school or parish religious education program
 - not be so numerous that they become a burden to those who are faithfully taking part in other catechetical programs.
- G. **Parish policies** concerning the sacraments of initiation should be **clearly presented** to the families of candidates (preferably in writing) **at the very start** of the special preparation for those sacraments.
- H. **Catholic schools should arrive at clear agreements with participating parishes** concerning how students from those parishes will be prepared for and will celebrate the initiation sacraments. Such arrangements should be **in writing**.
- I. **When parents enroll** their children in a Catholic school, they should be made aware that **celebrating the initiation sacraments is a matter between the family and their parish**. (Of course, the school will want to express its readiness to be an important partner with the parish in leading to such sacraments.)

The particular arrangement between the school and family's parish should be communicated at the time of enrollment of the child.

APPENDIX II: Sacraments, Pastoral Care, and the "Journey of Faith"

The following pages offer a diagrammatic representation of the process and ministry of initiation in reference to:

- infant baptism,
- first eucharistic communion,
- and confirmation.

They are presented as a helpful overview, but also to illuminate our pastoral understanding of these sacraments by placing them in the context of the Church's fundamental initiatory model.

From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to eucharistic communion. (CCC 1229)

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* presents initiation into the Christian mystery as a "journey." There are various stages along the way — with forms of pastoral care appropriate to each stage. Sacramental celebrations are themselves parts of this journey, privileged moments of divine initiative and human response.

All these things — the stages, ministries, and celebrations — become real only in the actual journey of faith and conversion of particular persons. And these individual journeys are intertwined with the pilgrimage of the whole people of God. Thus, Christian initiation takes place within the concrete life of the local community of the faithful.

This journey is most clearly articulated in the *Roman Ritual: Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The diagrams that follow are based upon the initiatory stages found in that document.

Evangelization	The time for the Church to proclaim God's good news in Jesus Christ so that human beings, "their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord and commit themselves sincerely to him" (RCIA 36)
Catechumenate	"An extended period during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life... achieved in four ways" (RCIA 75): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• catechesis that is complete and rooted in the liturgical year• spiritual growth within the Church's communal life• celebration of liturgical rites• sharing the Church's apostolic mission
Purification and Enlightenment	"A period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction... intended to purify the minds and hearts" of the candidates (RCIA 139)
Mystagogy	"A time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and in doing the works of charity" (RCIA 244)

INFANT BAPTISM

	REMOTE (Evangelization)	PROXIMATE (Catechumenate)
GOAL	To root the Christian family in the life of the local Catholic community of faith	To enable expectant parents (and all family members) to prepare for childbirth in faith, hope, and love
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help engaged couples to appreciate how God may call them to share life and faith with children in the mystery of human birth and divine rebirth • Reach out to newly-married couples with the love and faith of the Catholic community • Make efforts to include young adults and new families in the life of the parish community • Help families develop the spirituality and rituals of faith in the “domestic church” • Offer pastoral care to couples and families in trouble • Keep the life of families as a central focus in parish planning, activities, teaching, homilies, etc. • Periodically encourage sponsors (godparents) in their relationships with those whom they have sponsored • Regularly share information about Catholic practice concerning the baptism of infants and communicate the desire of the Church to help expectant parents to prepare for birth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer “pastoral pre-natal care” in accord with the needs of the family — to intensify the bond with the local community during this time of expectation • Establish dialogue with parents regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the vocation of Christian parents to nurture human life and to share the life of the gospel with their children • the meaning of Christian baptism • the particular implications for parental faith in the presentation of a child for baptism • the role of the baptismal sponsor (and desirable qualities for such a person) • Assess and strengthen the faith-life of the family • Offer encouragement and formation in Christian parenting • Enable candidates for the role of sponsor to understand their ministry and to undertake it in a realistic way • Offer practical assistance for expectant families with special needs
RITUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer at home — especially celebrating the seasons and feasts of the liturgy • Blessings of families • Annual blessing of families in the home • Blessing of married couples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blessing of parents before childbirth • Blessing of mothers before childbirth • Family prayers in and for expectant parents • Blessing of the home (if this has not already been done)
MINISTRIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouses • Catholic friends and neighbors • Family Life ministry • Parish evangelization ministry • Family members • Parish staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouses • Catholic friends and neighbors • Family Life ministry • Pre-baptismal ministry • Family members • Parish staff

The Sacramental Journey And Pastoral Care

IMMEDIATE (Purification and Enlightenment)	+	AFTER-CARE (Mystagogy)
Prayerful preparation of parents, family, and church community for the celebration of baptism		Growth of the family as “domestic church” in the midst of the local parish community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the birth with prayerful thanksgiving and hope • Offer practical assistance where needed • Set the date for the baptism and prepare for it with prayer arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the wonder and mystery of human life • the privilege of sharing divine life with another person • the responsibilities that come from welcoming a new member into God’s family • Offer special pastoral care in case of difficult birth, illness, or loss of child • Provide parental and sponsor formation, if this did not take place in the time of “Proximate” preparation [Refer to previous column.] 	Celebration of the Sacrament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer support (and/or formation) in Christian parenting for the crucial years following the celebration of baptism • Offer periodic gatherings for parents of preschool children and for the children themselves — times for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing reflections • ritual prayer • community activity • Encourage the baptismal sponsor to establish a relationship of friendship and faith-sharing with the child <p>[Refer also to the “Remote Formation” column in the following chart for <i>First Communion</i>.]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily family prayer of praise and intercession for the life of the new child • Blessing of mother after childbirth • (Blessing after miscarriage) • Blessing of the family 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic blessings for children in the parish • Development of prayer life and religious rituals in the home — especially celebrating the seasons and feasts of the Church year • Annual parental blessing of children in the home on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • birthday • anniversary of baptism • Special liturgical celebrations prepared for younger children (in accord with <i>Directory with Masses for Children</i> and <i>Lectionary for Masses with Children</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouses • Catholic friends and neighbors • Parish staff • Pre-baptismal ministry 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and family • Parish community (especially other families) • Family catechesis leaders • Parish staff • Parish liturgical planners

FIRST COMMUNION

	REMOTE (Evangelization)	PROXIMATE (Catechumenate)
GOAL	To nurture the baptismal life of the child within the family and gradually lead him or her to share the life of the local Christian community, which is centered in the eucharistic celebration, especially on Sunday	To unfold the Christian mystery for the young candidates so that, with understanding and honesty, they can seal their baptismal life at the table of the Lord's sacrifice
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster the affiliation between the child's family and the local community of faith Develop the child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identity as child of God, follower of Jesus, member of God's family knowledge and love of Jesus and his basic message capacity to pray in community and individually practical relationship with the local community of faith and familiarity with the "church's house" ability to take an active and thoughtful part in the liturgical celebrations Nourish "the human values that are present in the eucharistic celebration" (DMC 9): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> community activity exchange of greetings capacity to listen capacity to seek and grant pardon expression of gratitude experience of symbolic actions meals of friendship festive celebrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the candidate's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> awareness that baptism brings both the privilege and the responsibility of living as a child of God appreciation of Christ's work of reconciliation and the Church's share in it capacity for moral discernment (conscience) appreciation for the eucharistic mystery and the Church's teaching about it capacity for generosity and self-giving (a "sacrificial" spirit) familiarity with the Order of Mass and the role of the assembly and its ministers Strengthen the faith of parents concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature of the eucharist the experience of the eucharistic celebration of the community the ministry of reconciliation in and through the Church
RITUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer at home — especially celebrating the seasons and feasts of the liturgy Appropriation of basic signs and gestures of prayer: sign of the cross, baptismal font and holy water, folding/lifting hands in prayer, standing, kneeling, bowing, genuflection, etc. Annual Blessings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birthdays Anniversaries of Baptism Increasing participation in the liturgy, observing the liturgical year — in time emphasizing the annual baptismal renewal at Easter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration of "enrollment" or blessing of children as candidates for eucharistic communion Full participation in the celebration of the word as a sharing at the "table of God's word" in readiness for sharing at the table of Christ's body and blood Participation in penitential rites (at Mass and other celebrations) as occasions for sharing the Church's prayer for strength, healing, and reconciliation Participation in communal celebrations of praise and thanksgiving to God Special observance of the Advent and Christmas seasons as celebrations of Jesus' presence — Emmanuel who chooses to abide in the living temple of the Church, his body
MINISTRIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Parish staff Catholic friends and neighbors Family catechesis leaders Baptismal sponsors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and family Catechists Parish Staff Parishioners (including other children)

The Sacramental Journey And Pastoral Care

IMMEDIATE (Purification and Enlightenment)	+	AFTER-CARE (Mystagogy)
Spiritual preparation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the local church for welcoming the candidates to the table of the Lord the candidates for this new degree of communion with Christ 		To deepen the young Christian's experience of communion in Christ and awareness of his presence — especially in the eucharist — as basis for developing personal Christian mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the candidate's desire and ability to join the Church's eucharistic action (CIGI 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offering of self with Christ praising the Father in the Holy Spirit eating and drinking the flesh and blood of God's Son showing forth the unity of God's people Assure that the candidates are comfortable with the communicant's role at Mass. Help the candidates prepare for the paschal banquet by sharing the Church's penitential discipline, opening their hearts to Christ, examining their lives, and seeking reconciliation Commend the candidates to the prayer and support of the local community 	Celebration of the Sacrament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help young Catholics establish Sunday participation in the Mass as a normal pattern in their lives Welcome young Catholics to increased familiarity with their role at the community's liturgical celebrations Invite them into special liturgical roles for which they are individually capable (e.g., reader, cantor, greeter, server) Deepen their understanding of the meaning of the eucharist in the life of the Church Develop awareness of the Church's mission in and for the world — and their share in this work as members of Christ's body Foster the young Catholic's care for their developing moral life and regular participation in the Church's celebrations of reconciliation and penitential disciplines Continue regular catechetical formation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special participation with the Church in this year's observance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ash Wednesday Lent the Easter Triduum Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance for the first time (as part of the lenten observance) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to reflect on the sacramental meaning of the prayers and readings of the Masses of this year's Easter season Special observance of this year's solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) Celebrations of the eucharist according to the <i>Directory for Masses with Children</i> Opportunities for sharing eucharistic devotion in accord with <i>Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass</i> (e.g., parish Eucharistic Day) Special involvement in the two "local solemnities" of the parish (the anniversary of the dedication of the parish church and the feast of the patron saint of the parish) Occasions to share in various forms of celebrating reconciliation in the Church Invitation to pray for and help welcome next year's candidates for eucharistic communion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and family Catechists Homilists at the Masses of Lent Minister of the Sacrament of Penance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish community Parish staff Homilists at the Masses of the Easter season Leaders of formation for liturgical ministers

CONFIRMATION

	REMOTE (Evangelization)	PROXIMATE (Catechumenate)
GOAL	To lead the baptized person “toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1390)	To deepen “the sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community” (CCC 1309)
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an atmosphere of welcome into parish life for the candidates and their families • Continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ as a personal message for the candidates — one that invites their response • Encourage the ongoing faith-relationship between the candidates and their baptismal sponsors • Foster familiarity between the candidates and other members of the local parish • Deepen the bonds of trust and affection between the candidates and the Church • Support the candidates’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of God’s presence in their lives, in the Church, and in the world • ability to turn to God in prayer — as God’s true children in the communion of the Holy Spirit • recognition of their baptismal dignity — with its call to holiness and service • Invite the candidates to assume greater personal responsibility for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of their faith as a disciple of Christ • their share in the life of the local church community • the unique ways they can contribute to the work and mission of the Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the candidates’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solidarity with the local community • awareness of the variety and breadth of the Catholic community throughout the world and through the ages • sense of communion with the whole body of Christ • appreciation of the various roles of service and leadership within the Church — and their share in this work • Enhance the candidates’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • familiarity with the word of God, especially the message of Jesus Christ • understanding of their baptismal profession of faith (Apostle’s Creed) • celebration of the Paschal Mystery as unfolded through the liturgical year • appreciation of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit • Invite baptismal godparents (or newly-chosen persons) to prepare for their role as sponsor at confirmation through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deepening their own share in God’s Spirit and the life of the community • developing their understanding of the mystery of confirmation • reflecting on their special role in relation to the candidate and the Church • [For young candidates] Strengthen the faith of parents concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the variety of gifts and the communion of persons in the life and mission of the Church • the role of the Holy Spirit in the world and the Church — and particularly in the process of Christian initiation
RITUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer at home — especially celebrating the seasons and feasts of the liturgy • Annual Blessings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birthdays • Anniversaries of Baptism • Participation in the various gatherings of the local community for prayer and the celebration of the liturgy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of “enrollment” or blessing of candidates for confirmation • Full participation in the liturgical life of the local Catholic community • Prayers for the candidates and their sponsors
MINISTRIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Baptismal sponsors • Catholic friends and neighbors • Parish staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Parents and] family • Catechists • Parish Staff • Parishioners • Sponsor

The Sacramental Journey And Pastoral Care

IMMEDIATE (Purification and Enlightenment)	+	AFTER-CARE (Mystagogy)
Spiritual preparation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the local church for sharing the gift of the Spirit with some of its members the candidates for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit 		To strengthen the newly-confirmed in their ability to live as members of the messianic people of God (See CCC 1287)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deepen the candidate's recognition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the intimate life they are able to share with God in the Holy Spirit the creativity and goodness of God in forming them as unique and gifted persons the support they have in the unity of the members of Christ's body their responsibility to care for the world and , in particular, to be a witness to God's love for their brothers and sisters in the human family and Increase the candidates' desire and readiness to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> renew the promises of their baptism be newly-consecrated by God as sharers in Christ's messianic nature be empowered with heavenly gifts for their role in the world Help the candidates prepare for the gift of the Holy Spirit by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examining their lives opening their hearts to God's light and truth welcoming the Church's intercession for them setting aside any hindrances through prayer and, as needed, through reconciliation Encourage family members — and especially the sponsors — to spend time with the candidates in prayer and joyful anticipation of the sacrament Offer opportunities for retreat or day of recollection Commend the candidates and sponsors to the prayer and support of the local community 	Celebration of the Sacrament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the newly-confirmed become fully integrated into the life and mission of the Church through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular participation in parish worship, especially the eucharist inclusion in various social and spiritual activities of the parish and diocesan community involvement in roles of responsibility and leadership in the local church, according to their gifts and circumstances engagement in forms of service — both through the Church and in the unique life-situation of the newly-confirmed Support the continuing journey of faith of the newly-confirmed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate catechesis in youth ministry and/or adult enrichment programs ongoing observance of the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year by which the Church carries out the formation of the faithful" (GNLYC 1) Encourage the newly-confirmed to expand their awareness of the Church through the world — in its variety, unity, and mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayers of intercession for the candidates (and sponsors) Celebrations of encouragement and purification (in the spirit of the "scrutinies" of the catechumenate) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrations of blessings, dedication, and commissioning for various roles of service undertaken in the name of the Church Annual renewal of baptismal commitment at Easter Liturgical events that stress the connection between the eucharistic celebration and daily life and mission in the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsors Catechists Parish community 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Parish staff Parish community Adult formation leaders Parish staff Youth ministry leaders Parish apostolate/evangelization leaders

*Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered!
Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes forever!*



*Rejoice, O Mother Church!
Exult in glory!
The risen Savior shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song
of all God's people!*

(The Easter Proclamation)

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