



Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

EPISODE 1: PERIODS OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRE-CATECHUMENATE

Opening Prayer

O God, who sent your Son into the world as the true light,
pour out, we pray, the Spirit he promised
to sow seeds of truth constantly in people's hearts
and to awaken in them obedience to the faith,
so that, being born to new life through Baptism,
all may become part of your one people.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

From the Ritual

36. Although the Order of Initiation begins with admission into the catechumenate, the period that precedes it, the "precatechumenate," is of great importance and should not normally be omitted. For within it takes place that evangelization in which the living God is confidently and constantly proclaimed, together with the one whom he sent for the salvation of all, Jesus Christ, so that, as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts, non-Christians may be freely converted to the Lord as believers and sincerely hold fast to him who, since he is the way, the truth, and the life, fulfills all their spiritual expectations, and indeed infinitely surpasses them.

Scripture & Sacred Art



Artwork: *Calling of St. Matthew*, Caravaggio.

Scripture Reference: Matthew 9:9-13

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher^h eat with tax collectors and sinners?" He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

Scripture & Sacred Art

Artwork: *Zacchaeus in the Sycamore Awaiting the Passage of Jesus*, James Tissot.



Scripture Reference: Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town.

Now a man there named Zacchaeus,
who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man,
was seeking to see who Jesus was;
but he could not see him because of the crowd,
for he was short in stature.

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus,
who was about to pass that way.

When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said,
"Zacchaeus, come down quickly,
for today I must stay at your house."

And he came down quickly and received him with joy.
When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying,

"He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner."

But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord,
"Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor,
and if I have extorted anything from anyone
I shall repay it four times over."

And Jesus said to him,

"Today salvation has come to this house
because this man too is a descendant of Abraham.

For the Son of Man has come to seek
and to save what was lost."

From the Ritual

37. From evangelization, carried out with God's help, arise faith and initial conversion, by which each person feels called away from sin and into the profound mystery of divine love. The entire Period of the Precatechumenate is devoted to this evangelization, so that the will to follow Christ and to seek Baptism may mature

Reflection Questions

- St. Augustine said, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." Where have our hearts been restless on our journey to the Lord? What stumbling blocks of sin or even distraction have been placed on that path? Are these the same areas of restlessness that might be felt by your inquirers?
- Jesus called Matthew and Zacchaeus today and now, with a sense of urgency. How do we exemplify living the faith in the here and now for our inquirers? How do we live the faith so as to not delay in our response to Christ's call?
- This period is dependent on our obedience to the call to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What opportunities are there, both ones we have taken advantage of and ones we have missed, to preach the Gospel of Christ at all times?

Citations

- Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (Totowa, New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corporation, 2024), nos. 36-37.
- Caravaggio. Calling of St. Matthew. 1600. San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy. Public domain.
- Tissot, James. Zacchaeus in the Sycamore Awaiting the Passage of Jesus. Between 1886 and 1894. Brooklyn Museum, New York. Public domain.
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