

Diocese of Victoria in Texas

2024 RITE OF ELECTION
AND
CALL TO CONTINUING
CONVERSION



**INFORMATION
AND
RESOURCES**

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General Information

ABOUT THE RITE

DATE and LOCATION: This rite will be held **Sunday, February 18, 2024 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, in Victoria, Texas.**

TIME: The celebration will begin at **2:00 p.m.**, and will last until approximately 3:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION: Complete and submit the number of catechumens and candidates from your parish by **mail, online, or call by Monday, February 12, 2024.**

NEW COORDINATORS: If this is the first time that you have participated in this liturgy in the Diocese of Victoria, please call with any questions that you may have.

THIS LITURGY IS NOT A MASS. The ceremony begins with a liturgy of the word followed by the Celebration of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion.

PLEASE NOTE: Those obliged to attend Mass should do so at another time this day.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN THIS RITE?

Three groups of adults, teens and children preparing for the sacraments of initiation:

- (1) **Catechumens preparing for Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.**
- (2) **Individuals who were baptized in other Christian denominations** and are preparing to be received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.
- (3) **Baptized, uncatechized Catholics who have received neither Confirmation nor Eucharist** (see *RCIA Text*, n. 446) and baptized Catholics who were confirmed as infants but who have not received the Eucharist (a practice in some Central American countries.)

What About Catholics Who Are Preparing for Confirmation Only?

Adult Catholics who are preparing to receive only the sacrament of Confirmation would normally do so either at a special Diocesan Mass with Bishop Cahill at the Cathedral, or at their parish when the bishop or his delegate comes for Confirmation. Therefore, these individuals do not participate in this liturgy. Since these individuals sometimes join catechumens and candidates for formation, you might encourage them to come as guests to support those participating in the rite.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If someone from your group will be in a wheelchair, or has other special needs, indicate this on the registration form.

CONFIRMING BAPTIZED CATHOLICS

If a baptized, uncatechized Catholic is preparing to receive both the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist at Easter, please note that the pastor of your parish must request faculties to confirm him or her.

This permission is required for the validity of the sacrament. Canon law grants faculties to a priest to confirm unbaptized persons or those being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church (Canon 883), however, "Priests...do not have the faculty to confirm in the case of a baptized Catholic who, without his or her fault never put the faith into practice" (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, n. 28) See pages 18-19 for a sample form to request faculties to confirm a baptized, uncatechized Catholic.

☐ CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

Mary Lupita Reyes, Liturgical Commission RCIA Committee
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Rite of Sending Information

PARISH RITE OF SENDING

□ **The Rite of Sending** is to be celebrated at a convenient time prior, and in proximity, to the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion (often at a Mass earlier on the First Sunday of Lent, at the Vigil on Saturday or on the previous weekend.)

□ **If your parish only has catechumens**, celebrate the *Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election* (see RCIA text nos. 106-117).

□ **If your parish only has candidates**, celebrate the *Rite of Sending the Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop and for the Call to Continuing Conversion* (see RCIA text nos. 434-445).

□ **If both catechumens and candidates** will participate in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, use the *Parish Celebration for Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop* (see RCIA text nos. 530-546.)

□ Use the *Liturgy Preparation*, p. 6 for questions to ask yourself as you prepare for this rite. In your preparations, remind candidates of the fact that by their Baptism, they are already “a new creation” in Christ. They do not sign the Book of the Elect, since, as baptized Christians, their name is already written in the Book of Life.

□ **Q: What if a catechumen or candidate is not able to attend the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion?**

A: They should participate in the Rite of Sending, to acknowledge God’s call and their readiness for initiation at the Easter Vigil. If the person is a catechumen, his or her name should still be called at the Rite of Election.

THE BOOK OF THE ELECT

□ At the Rite of Sending, **catechumens** inscribe their names in the Book of the Elect. If you do not yet have one, consider purchasing a nicely bound edition to have for several years in the parish. Parishes needing help with the book of the elect should contact their pastor.

PLEASE NOTE: Only those who are preparing for baptism are to write their names in the Book of the Elect.

- When preparing the Book of the Elect to be signed:
 - (1) Catechumens should sign their full name
(Please write in the full name of a child or anyone else who is not able to do so for themselves.)
 - (2) If there are more catechumens' names than will fit on one page, **date the bottom of each page** on which catechumens sign this year **with the date of this year's Rite of Election.**
 - (3) Please check previous years' entries and add dates to the appropriate pages so that it is clear where each year begins and ends.

Combined Rite of Sending Catechumens and Candidates n. 530 ff

Please note:

Rite of Sending Catechumens ONLY: n. 106 ff.

Rite of Sending Candidates ONLY: n. 434 ff.

Questions to Prepare for the Rite of Sending Liturgy Preparation

BEFORE THE RITE

- 1. Will the catechumens/candidates be in the entrance procession? No**
Will the Book of the Elect be in the procession? No
- 2. Where will the catechumens be seated? Where will the candidates be seated?** Catechumens & Candidates will be seated together with their RCIA director and/or team members.
- 3. How will you inform the parish that the Rite of Sending will be taking place?**
Announcements could be placed in the bulletin for several weeks beforehand and/or the coordinator or celebrant could make a brief announcement at the beginning of the Mass.
- 4. How will a distinction be made between the catechumens and candidates in the Rite?**
For example, gather the catechumens around the baptismal font and the candidates around the altar.

PRESENTATION OF THE CATECHUMENS

- 5. Who will present the catechumens?**
The rite suggests that the priest in charge of the catechumens' formation, a deacon, the Christian initiation coordinator, or a representative of the community could do so.

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS AND THE ASSEMBLY

- 6. What questions will you use?**
The questions given at n. 538 or adaptations of these questions?
- 7. Will testimony be given? If so, by whom?**
RCIA n. 9.3 suggests that the community "should be sure to give honest and carefully considered testimony about the catechumens." Could the sponsors or other members of the community offer a brief reflection on the progress the catechumens have made?
- 8. How will the entire assembly be asked to express approval?**
There is no text given in n. 538. One option is to use the "Affirmation by the Godparents and the Assembly" from the Rite of Election, n. 131.

SIGNING OF THE BOOK OF THE ELECT

- 9. Will the Book of the Elect be signed at the Rite of Sending or at the Rite of Election?**
In the Diocese of Victoria, the Books are to be signed at the Rite of Sending.
- 10. What will be said to introduce the signing of the Book of the Elect (RCIA, n. 539)?**
There is no text given in the RCIA text. Here is one suggestion for what the celebrant might say:
"My dear catechumens, the Book of Revelation makes reference to a 'Book of Life,' in which are inscribed the names of those who have chosen to follow the Lord Jesus and be baptized.
Those of us who are already baptized, as Catholics or in other denominations, have had our names "written" in the Book of Life at our baptism. I now invite you to come forward and sign this Book, which we call the Book of the Elect as a sign of your desire to be numbered among the elect, who are preparing for Baptism."
- 11. What music will be used while the books are being signed?**
Sing a song or psalm response that has been used throughout the initiation process.
- 12. Where will the elect go after they have signed the Book?**
They will return to their pews or move to another place while the candidates are recognized.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

13. Who will present the candidates?

The rite suggests that the priest in charge of the candidates' formation, a deacon, the Christian initiation coordinator, or a representative of the community could do so.

14. Where will the candidates stand?

If the catechumens have not returned to their pews, be sure to make a visual distinction between them and the candidates.

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS AND THE ASSEMBLY

15. What questions will be asked?

No questions are asked of the candidates, but the sentences in n. 541 could be turned into questions.

16. Will testimony be given? If so, by whom?

17. How will the fact that the candidates are already baptized be recognized?

Since the candidates for full communion have already been baptized, they do not sign their names in the Book of the Elect. However, as a way of recognizing the candidates' baptism, at this point, the celebrant might say, "I now invite the candidates to place their baptismal certificates on the Book of the Elect as a reminder of the Baptism which they have already received."

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

18. Will intercessions for the whole Church be included with these intercessions?

There is an option to include the general intercessions at this point. If the ritual has taken some time, it might be wise to do so.

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS

19. Who will go with them to break open the word and reflect on this rite?

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

20. The profession of faith may be omitted and general intercessions may be combined with earlier ones in the rite. (Cf. RCIA, n. 546)

OTHER IDEAS

21. Will you do anything with the catechumens and candidates before the Rite of Election?

Some parishes hold a potluck following this liturgy prior to departing for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion so that the catechumens and candidates do not have to leave the parish and return.

Checklist

- ☐ Reserved Pews
- ☐ Book of the Elect prepared with proper page marked and dated.
- ☐ Pen to sign the Book (and an extra.)
- ☐ Lectern on which to sign the Book
- ☐ Worship Aids for the congregation
- ☐ Script for Presider, Musicians, etc.
- ☐ Lists of names to be called (Catechumens and Candidates)
- ☐ Baptismal certificates for the candidates (See question 17, above.)
- ☐ Intercessions for Reader
- ☐ Congratulations Cards from team, clergy, intercessors, etc.

At the Cathedral

Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, 1309 E. Mesquite Lane, Victoria, TX. 77901

- **RESTROOMS** are located just off the Narthex (entrance) of the cathedral.
- **WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:** The cathedral is fully accessible from any entrance. Please sit in front of the first bank of center pews in the cathedral.
- **PARKING:**
Parking is available in both the front and rear parking lots. *For those able to walk and attending the reception at the chancery, parking is available also in the chancery parking lots.*

SEATING

- **Candidates and Catechumens** should sit with their sponsors, by parish. There is no reserved seating.
- **GENERAL SEATING** is for family members, RCIA team members, friends, etc. who are in attendance.

Liturgy Overview for Presenters

Please review the procedure, particularly if this is the first-time presenters will be serving in this role.

1. PRIOR TO THE RITE

+ **Parish presenters will be seated during the procession.**

2. OPENING PROCESSION

+ **Presenters will not be in the opening procession.**

3. LITURGY OF THE WORD

4. CELEBRATION OF ELECTION

+ **N.B. Master of ceremonies will direct presenters through this portion of the Rite.**

+ After the homily, a Diocesan representative will address the Bishop and introduce this portion of the rite. Then **the presenters**, standing with their books opened, will come to a microphone in the sanctuary to call the catechumens' names saying in a clear, loud voice,

“The parish of *N.* presents [*You will read the names of catechumens.*]”

+ The catechumens and their godparents come forward to the sanctuary and are greeted by Bishop Cahill.

+ After all parishes have read the names of their catechumens, **the presenters** then present their Book of the Elect to the Bishop and return to their seats.

+ After this, the elect and their godparents return to their pews.

5. CELEBRATION OF RECOGNITION

+ The Diocesan Representative will once again address the Bishop and introduce this portion of the rite. Then **the presenters** will present the candidates from each parish, saying:

“The parish of *N.* presents [*You will read the names of candidates.*] it's candidates for recognition.”

+ The candidates and sponsors come to the sanctuary where their sponsors and the assembly attest to their readiness and the Bishop recognizes their desire to enter the full communion of the Catholic Church.

+ Candidates and sponsors, and presenters return to their pews.

6. INTERCESSIONS

+ The intercessions are sung by the cantor.

7. CLOSING PROCESSION

Presenters will not be in the closing procession.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

Q: Where and when will this Rite take place?

A: The rite will take place at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory, Victoria, Texas,

Sunday, February 18, 2024, at 2:00 P.M.

Q: Who will preside at the Rite? Who else will be there?

A: Bishop Brendan Cahill, the Bishop of Victoria in Texas will preside at this rite.

Q: Who else will be there?

A. Catechumens and candidates from around the Diocese of Victoria in Texas will attend.

Q: How long will the Rite last?

A: The Rite will last approximately 1 hour

Q: What should I wear?

A: The rule of thumb is to wear your “Sunday best” for this liturgy.

Q: Are guests invited to attend the Rite?

A: Yes. Guests are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Q: Is the Rite a Mass?

A: No. The rite begins with a liturgy of the word, similar to Sunday Mass, followed by the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion. Sponsors and guests who are obliged to attend Mass should do so at another time.

Q: Will I have to say anything at the Rite?

A: Godparents, sponsors and catechumens will respond to several questions from the Bishop. The questions will be printed in the program that you will receive at the Rite.

Q: Is the Cathedral wheelchair accessible?

A: Yes. All entrances.

Q: What if there is inclement weather?

A: The Rite will take place. Please attend if you are able to do so safely.

The Celebration of Election

These texts will be used during the Rite of Election for the catechumens preparing for Baptism. Take some time to reflect on the texts, the questions and your answers.

Diocesan Representative: Your Excellency, these catechumens, whom we now present to you, are completing their period of preparation for the Easter Sacraments. They have found strength in God's grace and support in the Church's prayers and example. Now they ask that after the celebration of the scrutinies, they be allowed to participate in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.

Bishop Cahill: God's holy Church wishes to know whether these candidates are sufficiently prepared to be enrolled among the elect for the coming celebration of Easter. And so I speak first of all to you, their godparents.

To the Godparents:

- **As God is your witness, have these catechumens faithfully listened to God's word proclaimed by the Church?**
- **Have they responded to that word and begun to walk in God's presence?**
- **Have they shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer?**

And now, I speak to you, my brothers and sisters in this assembly:

To the Assembly gathered:

- **Are you ready to support the testimony expressed about these catechumens and include them in your prayer and affection as we move toward Easter?**

And now, my dear catechumens, I address you. Your own godparents, teachers and this entire community have spoken in your favor. The Church, in the name of Christ, accepts their judgment and calls you to the Easter sacraments. Since you have already heard the call of Christ, you must now express your response to that call clearly and in the presence of the whole Church.

To the Catechumens:

- **Do you wish to enter fully into the life of the Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist?**

The Celebration of the Call to Continuing Conversion

These texts will be used during the Call to Continuing Conversion for the candidates preparing for full communion. Take some time to reflect on the texts, the questions and your answers.

Diocesan Representative: Your Excellency, we now present to you the candidates who are preparing to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church or who are preparing to complete their initiation through confirmation and the Eucharist. They, too, have found strength in God's grace and support in the Church's prayers and example. Now they ask that after this Lenten season they may be admitted to Confirmation and the Eucharist.

Bishop Cahill: The Christian life and the demands that flow from the sacraments cannot be taken lightly. Therefore, before granting these candidates their request to share fully in the Church's sacraments, it is important that the Church hear the testimony of their sponsors about their readiness.

To the Sponsors:

- **Have these candidates faithfully listened to the apostles' instruction proclaimed by the Church?**
- **Have they come to a deeper appreciation of their Baptism, in which they were joined to Christ and his Church?**
- **Have they reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church, which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer?**
- **Have they advanced in a life of love and service of others?**

And now I speak to you, my brothers and sisters in this assembly:

To the Assembly gathered:

- **Are you ready to support the testimony expressed about these candidates and include them in your prayer and affection as we move toward Easter?**

“God Chose You”

As you prepare to take a step closer to becoming a Catholic, you may wish to spend some time reflecting on the following Scripture readings. Jot down any thoughts that come as you read or reflect on the questions on the following page.

1 Corinthians 1:18, 25-29, 2:1-10

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Consider your own calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. When I came to you, brothers and sisters, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. Yet we speak a wisdom to those who are mature, but not a wisdom of this age, nor of rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for, if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: “What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him,” this God revealed to us through the Spirit.

John 1:35-42

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The two disciples of John heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi,” which translated means Teacher, “where are you staying?” Jesus said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah,” which is translated Christ. Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas,” which is translated Peter.

Questions for Reflection on the Biblical Passages

- 1) How has your sponsor or godparent, your local parish, specific parishioners, family members or friends “given thanks” for you? Are there people who have found it difficult to hear that you want to become Catholic?*
- 2) Think about the circumstances that have led you to choose to become a Catholic. St. Paul explains that God has chosen those who follow Him. How does Paul's statement help you to see these circumstances differently?*
- 3) Think about the relationship you have with your closest friend. What do you talk about? What do you do together? What does it mean to you to hear Jesus call you His friend?*
- 4) How do you think Jesus is calling you to “bear fruit” as His disciple?*

Called By Name

Following the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, you may want to reflect on these texts and the experience of the Rites with your godparent or sponsor.

Act of Admission or Election *(For Catechumens)*

I now declare you to be members of the elect, to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the next Easter Vigil. God is always faithful to those he calls: now it is your duty, as it is ours, both to be faithful to him in return and to strive courageously to reach the fullness of truth, which your election opens up before you.

Act of Recognition *(For Candidates)*

The Church recognizes your desire to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and to have a place at Christ's eucharistic table. Join with us this Lent in a spirit of repentance. Hear the Lord's call to conversion and be faithful to your baptismal covenant.

Questions for Reflection

- (1) What was your experience of the Rite of Sending at your parish?*
- (2) How did the Scriptures that were proclaimed and the homily speak to you?*
- (3) What were you thinking as your name (or your parish name) was called?
What was going through your mind as you walked forward?*
- (4) How did you feel hearing the Bishop question your Godparents or Sponsors about your readiness to participate in the Sacraments?*
- (5) What did you think as the Book of the Elect was presented to the Bishop?
For those in the pews (e.g., candidates) what were you thinking during this action?*
- (7) How did you feel when the Bishop called you to receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil?*
- (8) What was it like to see others who are preparing to become Catholic at Easter?*

Request for Faculties to Confirm Baptized Catholics

Instructions

“The Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation. A priest can validly confer this sacrament only if he has the faculty to do so, either from the general law¹ or by way of a special grant from the competent authority. If, during the celebration of the Easter Vigil a priest wishes to confirm a Catholic previously baptized but uncatechized and who has participated in the parish’s RCIA program, he must make this request in writing to the Vicar General in Curia. This delegation is required for the *validity* of the sacrament.”

A sample form *Request for Faculties to Confirm Baptized Catholics* (next page) to request faculties to confirm an individual who was baptized as a Catholic. Copy this form onto parish letterhead and complete and return to the Chancery at least one month before the anticipated confirmation date.

Please observe the following distinctions when requesting faculties to confirm a baptized Catholic:

I. A baptized, uncatechized Catholic is someone who was baptized as an infant but received neither the sacrament of Confirmation nor the Eucharist. In other words, he or she is preparing for the completion of the sacraments of initiation through **both** Confirmation and Eucharist. The Church provides for this individual to participate in the Christian initiation (RCIA) process (cf. “Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist” RCIA, n. 400ff) including certain liturgical rites. Baptized, uncatechized Catholics may be confirmed at the Easter Vigil (cf. RCIA, n. 409) provided that faculties to confirm these individuals are requested.

II. A baptized, catechized Catholic is someone who has received the Eucharist and has lived as a Catholic (e.g., regular attendance at Mass, etc.) but was never confirmed. This individual is not generally included in the above category of “uncatechized.” Ideally, individuals who only need to be confirmed would participate in a formation program separate from the RCIA. If individuals preparing for confirmation do participate in the RCIA process for the purpose of formation, they would not participate in the liturgical rites. These individuals would ordinarily be confirmed at the annual diocesan celebration of Confirmation, which was instituted for the purpose of confirming the adult Catholics in need of this sacrament. Alternately, these individuals may receive this sacrament at a parish celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation. If an individual cannot attend one of these two events, the pastor may request faculties to confirm these individuals at the Easter Vigil.

Note: Canon 883 grants the faculty of confirming an adult to a priest who “baptizes one who is no longer an infant or one already baptized whom he admits into the full communion of the Catholic Church.”

Sample Form to Request for Faculties to Confirm Baptized Catholics

Your Excellency,

I wish to request faculties to confirm the following baptized Catholics at the Easter Vigil on
(Date) at (Parish, City)

Priest who will confer the sacrament, if other than the pastor:

(1) Names of **baptized, uncatechized Catholics** who will also make their First Communion at the Easter Vigil:

(2) Names of **baptized, catechized Catholics** who would only be confirmed at the Easter Vigil.

(3) Reason for requesting faculties to confirm group (2) (*e.g.* “Unable to attend Diocesan celebration.”)

Pastor

Date

Return at least one month prior to the anticipated Confirmation date to:

Most Reverend Brendan Cahill
1505 E. Mesquite Lane
Victoria, Texas 77901

FAX: (361) 573-5725

RCIA Director/Representative Checklist for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

COORDINATORS: Before the Rite

- ☐ **FIND THE BOOK OF THE ELECT:** Check to see that you know where your Book of the Elect is.
- ☐ **PREPARE FOR THE RITE OF SENDING:** See pages 6 and 7 for ideas.
- ☐ **PLAN THE DAY OF THE RITE:** Some parishes may want to drive to Victoria together.
- ☐ **INCLUDE AN INTERCESSION:** Include an intercession for the catechumens and candidates at all of the Masses on the weekend of the Rite of Sending/Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.
- ☐ **ANY CHANGES?** Inform the Diocesan Liturgical Commission of any changes in the numbers in attendance or any special needs your catechumens or candidates may have at 361-552-0123 (Mary Reyes), no later than **February 12, 2024**.

RCIA DIRECTOR or Parish Representative should report to the Cathedral by **1:30 p.m.**

- ☐ **BRING THE BOOK OF THE ELECT** from your parish. Be sure that (1) it is signed by the catechumens; (2) your parish name is on one of the title pages; and (3) that the date is included on the bottom of all of the page(s) the catechumens sign.
- ☐ **BRING A LIST OF NAMES** (and PRONUNCIATIONS) of CATECHUMENS: If the hand-written names in the Book of the Elect are difficult for you to read or pronounce, you may want to bring a list of the catechumens' names and pronunciations.