

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, Introduction (Prot. 0)

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I. Structure of the Initiation of Adults

1. The rite of Christian initiation described below is designed for adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. By God's help they will be strengthened spiritually during their preparation and at the proper time will receive the sacraments fruitfully.

2. This rite includes not only the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, **confirmation**, and the eucharist, but also all the rites of the catechumenate. A catechumenate, endorsed by the ancient practice of the Church and adapted to contemporary missionary work throughout the world, was so widely requested that the Second Vatican Council decreed its restoration, revision, and adaptation to local traditions. [1]

3. So that it will be accommodated more closely to the work of the Church and to the circumstances of individuals, parishes, and missions, the rite of initiation first gives the complete or usual form, intended for the preparation of a large number of people (see nos. 68-239). By making simple changes, pastors may adapt this form for the preparation of one person. Then, for special cases, there is the simple form, which may be carried out in one celebration (see nos. 240-273) or in several celebrations (see nos. 274-277), as well as a short form for those in danger of death (see nos. 278-294).

I. STRUCTURE OF THE INITIATION OF ADULTS

4. The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. Together with the catechumens, the faithful reflect upon the value of the paschal

mystery, renew their own conversion, and by their example lead the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously.

5. The rite of initiation is suited to the spiritual journey of adults, which varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place.

6. On this journey, besides periods for making inquiry and for maturing (see no. 7) there are stages or "steps": the progress of the catechumen is, as it were, a passage through a gateway or the climbing of another "step."

a. First stage [catechumenate]: at the point of initial conversion, they wish to become Christians and are accepted as catechumens by the Church.

b. Second stage [final preparation]: when their faith has grown and the catechumenate is almost completed, they are admitted to a more intense preparation for the sacraments.

c. Third stage [sacraments of initiation]: after the spiritual preparation is completed, they receive the sacraments of Christian initiation.

These three stages, "steps," or "gateways" are to be considered as the major, more intense moments of initiation and are marked by three liturgical rites: the first by the rite of entrance into the order of catechumens, the second by the election or enrollment of names, and the third by the celebration of Christian initiation.

7. The stages lead to the periods for making inquiry and maturing; alternatively, the periods may also be considered to prepare for the stages.

a. The first period consists of inquiry on the part of the candidates and of evangelization and the precatechumenate on the part of the Church. It ends with entrance into the order of catechumens.

b. The second period, which begins with this entrance into the order of catechumens and which may last for several years, includes catechesis and the rites connected with catechesis. It comes to an end on the day of election.

c. The third period, shorter in length, ordinarily coincides with the Lenten preparation for the Easter celebration and the sacraments. It is a time of purification and enlightenment.

d. The final period goes through the whole Easter season and is devoted to the postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. It is a time for deepening the Christian experience, for gaining spiritual fruit, and for entering more closely into the life and unity of the community of the faithful.

Thus there are four continuous periods: the precatechumenate, marked by the hearing of the first preaching of the Gospel; the catechumenate, set aside for a complete catechesis; the period of purification and enlightenment (Lenten preparation) for a more intense spiritual preparation; and

the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy, marked by the new experience of sacraments and community.

8. The whole initiation must bear a strong paschal character, since the initiation of Christians is the first sacramental sharing in the death and rising of Christ and since, in addition, the period of purification and enlightenment ordinarily coincides with Lent [2] and the postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy with the Easter season. In this way Lent achieves its full force as a more intense preparation of the elect and the Easter Vigil is considered the proper time for the sacraments of initiation. [3] Because of pastoral needs, however, the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated outside these seasons.

#### A. EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE

9. Although the rite of initiation begins with admission to the catechumenate, the preceding period or precatechumenate is of great importance and as a rule should not be omitted. It is a time of evangelization: faithfully and constantly the living God is proclaimed and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all. Thus those who are not yet Christians, their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord and commit themselves sincerely to him. For he is the way, the truth, and the life who fulfills all their spiritual expectations, indeed infinitely surpasses them. [4]

10. From evangelization, completed with the help of God, come faith and initial conversion; these cause a person to feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God's love. The whole period of the precatechumenate is set aside for this evangelization, so that the genuine will to follow Christ and seek baptism may mature.

11. During this period, catechists, deacons, and priests, as well as laypersons, are to give a suitable explanation of the Gospel to the candidates. They are to receive help and attention so that with a purified and clearer intention they may cooperate with God's grace. Meetings of the candidates with families and groups of Christians may then more easily be arranged.

12. In addition to the evangelization that is proper to this period, the conferences of bishops may provide, if necessary and according to local circumstances, a preliminary manner of receiving interested inquirers ("sympathizers"): those who, even though they do not fully believe, show some inclination toward the Christian faith.

Such a reception, if it takes place, will be carried out without any ritual celebration. It is the expression not yet of faith, but of a right intention.

The reception will be adapted to local conditions and opportunities. Some candidates need to see evidence of the spirit of Christians that they are striving to understand and experience. For others, however, whose catechumenate has been delayed for one reason or another, some first outward act on their part or on the community's is appropriate.

The reception will be held at a meeting or gathering of the local community, on an occasion suitable for friendly conversation. An inquirer or "sympathizer" is introduced by a friend and then welcomed and received by the priest or some other worthy and suitable member of the community.

13. During the precatechumenate period, pastors should help inquirers with prayers suited to them.

## B. CATECHUMENATE

14. The rite described as the "entrance into the order of catechumens" is of the utmost importance. Assembling publicly for the first time, the candidates make their intention known to the Church and the Church, carrying out its apostolic mission, admits those who intend to become members. God showers his grace on them, as this celebration manifests their desire publicly and marks their reception and first consecration by the Church.

15. For this step to be taken it is required that in the candidates the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching be already established. [5] There must be evidence of the first faith that was conceived during the period of the precatechumenate, of an initial conversion and intention to change their lives and to enter into a relationship with God in Christ. Consequently, there must also be evidence of the first stirrings of repentance and a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, and some first experience of the company and the spirit of Christians.

16. With the help of the sponsors (see no. 42), catechists, and deacons, it is the responsibility of pastors to judge the external indications of these dispositions. [6] It is also their duty, in view of the power of sacraments already validly received (see General Introduction to Christian Initiation no. 4), to see that no baptized person seeks for any reason whatever to be baptized again.

17. After the celebration of the rite, the names are written at once in the register of catechumens, along with the names of the minister and sponsors and the date and place of admission.

18. From this time on, the catechumens, who have been welcomed by the Church with a mother's love and concern and are joined to the Church, are now part of the household of Christ; [7] they are nourished by the Church on the word of God and sustained by liturgical celebrations. They should be eager, then, to take part in the liturgy of the word and to receive blessings and sacramentals. When two catechumens marry or when a catechumen marries an unbaptized person, an appropriate rite is to be used. [8] One who dies during the catechumenate receives a Christian burial.

19. The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given pastoral formation and are trained by suitable discipline. [9] In this way, the dispositions manifested at their entry into the catechumenate are brought to maturity. This is achieved in four ways:

A suitable catechesis provided by priests, deacons, or catechists and other laypersons, planned to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and enriched by celebrations of the word, leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to personal knowledge of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate.

Familiar with living the Christian way of life and helped by the example and support of sponsors and godparents and the whole community of the faithful, the catechumens learn to pray to God more easily, to witness to the faith, to keep alive in all their activities the expectation of Christ, to

follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds, and to exercise charity toward neighbor to the point of selfrenunciation. Thus formed, "new converts set out on a spiritual journey. Already sharing through faith in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, they pass from the old to a new nature made perfect in Christ. This transition, which brings with it a progressive change of outlook and conduct, should become evident together with its social consequences and should be gradually effected during the time of the catechumenate. Since the Lord in whom they believe is a sign of contradiction, converts often experience divisions and separations, but they also taste the joy that God gives without measure." [10]

By suitable liturgical rites, the Church like a mother helps the catechumens on their journey, cleanses them little by little and strengthens them with God's blessing. It is recommended that celebrations of the word be arranged for their benefit and they may also attend the liturgy of the word with the faithful, thus better preparing themselves for participation in the eucharist in time to come. Ordinarily, however, when they are present in the assembly of the faithful, they should be dismissed in a friendly manner before the liturgy of the eucharist begins, unless there are difficulties in this. For they must await their baptism, which will bring them into the priestly people and empower them to participate in Christ's new worship.

Since the Church's life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the testimony of their lives and the profession of their faith. [11]

20. The period of time appropriate for the catechumenate depends on the grace of God and on various circumstances, such as the program of instruction for the catechumenate, the number of catechists, deacons, and priests, the cooperation of the individual catechumens, the means necessary to reach the place of the catechumenate and to spend time there, and the help of the local community. Nothing, therefore, can be settled a priori. The bishop has the responsibility of setting the period of time and directing the discipline of the catechumenate. It is recommended that the conferences of bishops, after considering the conditions of their people and region, [12] regulate this matter in greater detail.

### C. PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT (LENTEN PREPARATION)

21. The time of purification and enlightenment of the catechumens customarily coincides with Lent. Both in its liturgy and in its liturgical catechesis, Lent is a commemoration of baptism or a preparation for it and a time of penance; [13] it renews the community of the faithful together with the catechumens and makes them ready to celebrate the paschal mystery, which the sacraments of initiation apply to each individual. [14]

22. The second stage of initiation begins the period of purification and enlightenment, marked by a more intense preparation of heart and spirit. At this stage the Church makes the "election," that is, the choice and admission of the catechumens who because of their dispositions are worthy to take part in the next celebration of the sacraments of initiation. This stage is called election because the admission made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts. It is also called the enrollment of names because the candidates, as a pledge of fidelity, write their names in the book of those who have been elected.

23. Before the election is celebrated, the candidates are expected to have a conversion of mind and conduct, a sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching, and a sense of faith and charity.

A decision on their suitability is also required. Later, in the actual celebration of the rite, the manifestation of their intention and the decision of the bishop or his delegate should take place in the presence of the community. It is thus clear that the election, which enjoys such great solemnity, is the turning point in the whole catechumenate.

24. From the day of their election and admission, catechumens are called the "elect." They also are called competentes ("competitors"), because they vie with each other or compete to receive Christ's sacraments and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are also called illuminandi ("those to be enlightened"), because baptism itself has the name "illumination" and sheds the light of faith on the newly baptized. In our times other terms may be used that, depending on regions and cultures, are better suited to popular understanding and the idiom of the language.

25. During this period, a more intense spiritual preparation, which involves interior recollection more than catechesis, is intended to purify hearts and minds by the examination of conscience and by penance and also to enlighten those hearts and minds with a deeper knowledge of Christ the Savior. This is accomplished in various rites, especially in the scrutinies and presentations.

The "scrutinies," which are celebrated solemnly on Sundays, have the twofold purpose mentioned above: to reveal anything that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect, so that it may be healed, and to reveal what is upright, strong, and holy, so that it may be strengthened. For the scrutinies are intended to free from sin and the devil and to give strength in Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life of the elect.

The "presentations," by which the Church hands on to the elect its ancient texts of faith and prayer, namely, the creed and the Lord's Prayer, are intended to enlighten the elect. The creed, recalling the wonderful works of God for the salvation of the human race, suffuses the vision of the elect with the light of faith and joy. In the Lord's Prayer, they recognize more fully the new spirit of adoption by which they will call God their Father, especially in the midst of the eucharistic assembly.

26. In immediate preparation for the sacraments:

The elect should be instructed to rest from their ordinary work as far as possible on Holy Saturday, spend the time in prayer and inner recollection, and fast according to their ability. [15] That same day, if there is a meeting of the elect, some of the immediately preparatory rites may be celebrated, such as the recitation of the creed, the ephphetha rite, the choosing of a Christian name, and, if it is to be done, the anointing with the oil of catechumens.

#### D. SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

27. The sacraments of baptism, **confirmation**, and eucharist are the final stage in which the elect come forward and, with their sins forgiven, are admitted into the people of God, receive the adoption of the children of God, are led by the Holy Spirit into the promised fullness of time, and, in the eucharistic sacrifice and meal, have a foretaste of the kingdom of God.

#### A. CELEBRATION OF THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

28. The celebration of baptism, which reaches its high point in the washing with water and invocation of the Holy Trinity, is preceded by the blessing of the water and the profession of faith, which are intimately linked to the rite of washing with water itself.

29. The blessing of the water expresses the religious meaning of water as God's creation and shows forth to all present the beginnings of God's saving mystery; it recalls the unfolding of the paschal mystery and the use of water for its sacramental accomplishment, while during it the Holy Trinity is invoked for the first time.

30. In the rites of renunciation and profession of faith the same paschal mystery, already commemorated in the blessing of the water and soon to be professed briefly by the celebrant in the words of baptism, is proclaimed in the active faith of those to be baptized. For adults are not saved unless, coming forward of their own accord, they have the will to accept God's gift by their belief. They are receiving the sacrament of faith, which is not only the faith of the Church, but also the faith of each one of them; and it is expected that it will be active in each one of them. As they are baptized, far from receiving so great a sacrament merely passively, they enter into a covenant with Christ by an act of their own will, renouncing error and holding fast to the true God.

31. After professing in living faith Christ's paschal mystery, they come forward immediately to receive that mystery as expressed in the washing with water; upon their professing faith in the Holy Trinity, the Trinity, invoked by the celebrant, acts to number the elect among the adopted children of God and to make them part of the people of God.

32. Therefore the washing with water should be given its full importance in the celebration of baptism: it is the sign of the mystical sharing in Christ's death and resurrection that brings about in those who believe in his name death to sin and rising to eternal life. Accordingly, either immersion or infusion should be chosen for the rite, whichever suits individual cases better, so that in different traditions and circumstances there will be a clear understanding that this washing is not just a purification rite but the sacrament of being joined to Christ.

33. The anointing with chrism after baptism is a sign of the royal priesthood of the baptized and their enrollment into the company of the people of God. The white garment is a symbol of their new dignity and the lighted candle shows their vocation to live as befits children of light.

#### B. CELEBRATION OF THE CONFIRMATION OF ADULTS

34. According to the ancient practice preserved in the Roman liturgy, adults are not to be baptized without receiving confirmation immediately afterward (see no. 44), unless serious reasons prevent this. This combination signifies the unity of the paschal mystery, the link between the mission of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the connection between the two sacraments through which the Son and the Spirit come with the Father to those baptized.

35. Accordingly, confirmation is conferred after the explanatory rites of baptism, the postbaptismal anointing being omitted (no. 224).

#### C. THE NEOPHYTES' FIRST SHARING IN THE EUCHARIST

36. Lastly, the eucharist is celebrated. For the first time and with full right the neophytes take part in it. This is the culminating point of their initiation. For in this eucharist the neophytes, who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood, have an active part in both the general

intercessions and, as far as possible, in the presentation of the gifts. With the whole community they take part in the celebration of the sacrifice and they say the Lord's Prayer, thus giving expression to the spirit of adoption as God's children that they have received in baptism. Then, by receiving the body that was given and the blood that was shed, they confirm the gifts they have received and have a foretaste of the eternal banquet.

#### E. PERIOD OF POSTBAPTISMAL CATECHESIS OR MYSTAGOGY

37. After this last stage has been completed, the community along with the neophytes grows in perceiving more deeply the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives by meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing works of charity. This is the final period of initiation, the time of the neophytes' mystagogy or postbaptismal catechesis.

38. The neophytes acquire a truly more complete and more fruitful grasp of the "mysteries" by the newness of what they have heard and above all by the experience of the sacraments they have received. For they have been renewed in mind, tasted more deeply the good word of God, received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and discovered the beauty of the Lord. Out of this experience, which belongs to Christians and grows as it is lived, they derive a new sense of the faith, the Church, and the world.

39. just as the freshness with which they come to the sacraments enlightens the neophytes' understanding of the Scriptures, so also it increases their knowledge of other people and thus has an impact on their experience of community. As a result their interaction with the rest of the faithful is made easier and more beneficial. The period of postbaptismal catechesis is of utmost importance so that the neophytes, with the help of their godparents, may enter into closer ties with the other faithful and bring to the others a renewed vision and fresh energies.

40. Since the distinctive character and force of this period issue from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community, the chief setting for the postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy is the Masses called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season. In these celebrations, besides meeting with the community and sharing in the mysteries, the newly baptized will find the readings of the Lectionary particularly appropriate for them, especially the readings of Year A. For this reason, the whole local community should be invited to these Masses, along with the neophytes and their godparents. The texts of these Masses may be used even when Christian initiation is celebrated outside the usual time.

#### II. Ministries and Offices

41. The people of God, represented by the local Church, besides attending to what is stated in the General Introduction to Christian Initiation no. 7, should always understand and show that the initiation of adults is its concern and the business of all the baptized. [16] Therefore the community must always be fully prepared in the pursuit of its apostolic vocation to give help to those who are searching for Christ. In the various circumstances of daily life, even as in the apostolate, all the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities. [17] Hence, the entire community must help the candidates and catechumens throughout the whole period of their initiation, during the precatechumenate, the catechumenate, and the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. In particular:



During the period of evangelization and precatechumenate, the faithful should remember that for the Church and its members the supreme purpose of their apostolate is to bring Christ's message to the world by word and deed and to communicate his grace. [18] They should therefore show themselves ready to open up the spirit of the Christian community to the candidates and to welcome them into their homes, personal conversation, and some community gatherings.

The faithful should seek to be present at the celebrations of the catechumenate whenever possible and should take an active part in the responses, prayers, singing, and acclamations.

On the day of election, because it is a day of growth for the community, the faithful should be sure to give honest and carefully considered testimony about the catechumens.

During Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, the faithful should be present at and attentive to the rites of the scrutinies and presentations and give the catechumens the example of their own renewal in the spirit of penance, faith, and charity. At the Easter Vigil, they should attach great importance to renewing their own baptismal promises.

The faithful should take part in the Masses for neophytes during the period immediately after baptism, welcome the neophytes with open arms in charity, and help them to feel more at home in the community of the baptized.

42. Any candidate seeking admission as a catechumen is accompanied by a sponsor, that is, a man or woman who has known and assisted the candidate and stands as a witness to the candidate's moral character, faith, and intention. It may happen that this sponsor is not the one who will serve as godparent for the periods of purification, enlightenment, and mystagogy; in that case, another person takes the sponsor's place in the role of godparent.

43. But on the day of election, at the celebration of the sacraments, and during the period of mystagogy the candidate is accompanied by a godparent. [19] This is a person chosen by the candidate on the basis of example, good qualities, and friendship, delegated by the local Christian community, and approved by the priest. It is the responsibility of the godparent to show the candidate how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life and to be for the candidate a bearer of Christian witness and a guardian over growth in the baptismal life. Chosen before the candidate's election, the godparent fulfills this office publicly from the day of the election, testifying to the community about the candidate. The godparents continue to be important during the time after reception of the sacraments when the neophyte needs to be assisted to remain true to the baptismal promises.

44. The bishop, [20] in person or through his delegate, sets up, regulates, and promotes the pastoral formation of catechumens and admits the candidates to their election and to the sacraments. It is to be hoped that, presiding if possible at the Lenten liturgy, he will himself celebrate the rite of election and, at the Easter Vigil, the sacraments of initiation. Finally, as part of his pastoral care, the bishop should depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to celebrate the minor exorcisms. [21]

45. Priests, besides their usual ministry exercised in any celebration of baptism, **confirmation**, and the eucharist, [22] have the responsibility of attending to the pastoral and personal care of the catechumens, [23] especially those who seem hesitant and weak. With the help of deacons and catechists, they are to provide instruction for the catechumens; they are also to approve the choice of godparents and gladly listen to and help them. Finally, priests should be diligent in the

correct celebration and adaptation of the rites throughout the entire course of Christian initiation (see no. 67).

46. The priest who baptizes an adult or a child of catechetical age should, when the bishop is absent, also confer **confirmation**, unless this sacrament is to be given at another time (see no. 56). [24]

When there is a large number to be confirmed, the minister of **confirmation** may associate priests with himself to administer the sacrament.

These priests:

must have a particular function or office in the diocese, that is, they must be vicars general, episcopal vicars or delegates, district or regional vicars, or those who by mandate of the Ordinary hold equivalent offices;

or must be the parish priests (pastors) of the places where **confirmation** is celebrated, pastors of the places where the candidates belong, or priests who did special work in the catechetical preparation of those to be confirmed. [25]

47. Deacons, if they are available, should be ready to help. If the conference of bishops has decided in favor of having permanent deacons, it should see to it that there are enough of them to ensure that the stages, periods, and exercises of the catechumenate take place in all the places where pastoral needs require. [26]

48. Catechists have an important office for the progress of the catechumens and for the growth of the community. As often as possible, they should have an active part in the rites. When they are teaching, they should see that their instruction is filled with the spirit of the Gospel, adapted to the liturgical signs and the cycle of the Church's year, suited to the needs of the catechumens, and as far as possible enriched by local traditions. When deputed by the bishop, they may perform the minor exorcisms (see no. 44) and the blessings [27] contained in the ritual nos. 113-124.

### III. Time and Place of Initiation

49. As a general rule, pastors should make use of the rite of initiation in such a way that the sacraments themselves are celebrated at the Easter Vigil and the election takes place on the First Sunday of Lent. The rest of the rites are spaced on the basis of the arrangement already described (nos. 6-8, 14-40). For pastoral needs of a more serious nature, however, it is lawful to arrange the schedule for the entire rite differently, as will be detailed later (nos. 58-62).

#### A. LAWFUL OR CUSTOMARY TIMES

50. The following should be noted about the time of celebrating the rite of entrance into the order of catechumens:

It should not be too early, but should be delayed until the candidates, according to their own dispositions and situation, have had sufficient time to conceive an initial faith and to show the first signs of conversion (see no. 15).

In places where the number of candidates is smaller than usual, there should be a delay until a large enough group is formed for catechesis and the liturgical rites.

Two dates in the year, or three if necessary, are to be fixed as normally the best times for carrying out this rite.

51. The rite of election or enrollment of names should as a rule be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent. For convenience it may be anticipated somewhat or even celebrated during the week.

52. The scrutinies should take place on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, or, if necessary, on the other Sundays of Lent or even on more convenient weekdays. Three scrutinies should be celebrated. The bishop may dispense from one of them for serious reasons or even from two in extraordinary circumstances. When, for lack of time, the election is held early, the first scrutiny is also to be held early; in this case, however, care is to be taken not to prolong the period of purification and enlightenment beyond eight weeks.

53. By ancient usage, the presentations, since they take place after the scrutinies, are part of the same period of purification and enlightenment. They are celebrated during the week. The presentation of the creed to the catechumens takes place during the week after the first scrutiny; the presentation of the Lord's Prayer during the week after the third scrutiny. For pastoral reasons, however, to enrich the liturgy in the period of the catechumenate, the presentations may be transferred and celebrated during the catechumenate as a kind of "rite of passage" (see nos. 125-126).

54. On Holy Saturday, when the elect refrain from work (see no. 26) and spend their time in recollection, the various, immediately preparatory rites may be celebrated: the catechumen's recitation of the creed, the ephphetha rite, the choosing of a Christian name, and even the anointing with the oil of catechumens (see nos. 193-207).

55. The sacraments for the initiation of adults are to be celebrated at the Easter Vigil itself (see nos. 8, 49). If there is a large number of catechumens, the sacraments are given to the majority that night and may be given to the rest on days within the Easter octave, whether at the principal church or at a mission station. In this case either the Mass of the day or the ritual Mass for Christian Initiation may be used with the readings from the Easter Vigil.

56. In certain cases, **confirmation** may be postponed until near the end of the period of postbaptismal catechesis, for example, Pentecost Sunday (see no. 237).

57. On all the Sundays of Easter after the first, the "Masses for neophytes" are to be celebrated. The entire community and the newly baptized with their godparents should be urged to attend (see no. 40).

## B. OUTSIDE THE CUSTOMARY TIMES

58. The rite of initiation is normally arranged so that the sacraments will be celebrated during the Easter Vigil. Because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, however, the rite of election and the rites during the period of purification and enlightenment may be held outside Lent and the sacraments may be celebrated outside the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday. Even in ordinary circumstances, but only for serious pastoral needs (for example, if there is a very large number of

persons to be baptized), it is lawful to choose another time, especially the Easter season, to celebrate the sacraments of initiation. The program of initiation during Lent, however, must be maintained. When this is done, even though the time of its insertion into the liturgical year is changed, the structure of the entire rite, with its properly spaced intervals, remains the same. But the following adjustments are to be made.

59. As far as possible, the sacraments of initiation are to be celebrated on Sunday, using, as occasion suggests, the Sunday Mass or the proper ritual Mass (see no. 55).

60. The rite of entrance into the order of catechumens is to take place when the time is right, as explained in no. 50.

61. The election is to be celebrated about six weeks before the sacraments of initiation so that there is sufficient time for the scrutinies and the presentations. Care should be taken that the celebration of the election does not fall on a solemnity of the liturgical year. The readings assigned in the ritual itself are to be used and the Mass texts will be those of the day or of the ritual Mass for Election or Enrollment of Names.

62. The scrutinies should not be celebrated on solemnities, but on Sundays or even on weekdays, with the usual intervals and use of the readings given in the ritual itself. The Mass texts will be those of the day or of the ritual Mass (see no. 374).

63. The rites should be celebrated in the places appropriate to them as indicated in the ritual. Consideration should be given to special needs that arise in secondary stations of mission territories.

#### IV. Adaptations by Conferences of Bishops Using This Roman Ritual

64. In addition to the adaptations envisioned in the General Introduction to Christian Initiation nos. 30-33, the rite of initiation of adults allows for the conferences of bishops to decide on other adaptations.

65. The conferences have discretionary power to make the following decisions:

to establish, where it seems advisable, some method of receiving well-disposed inquirers ("sympathizers") prior to the catechumenate (see no. 12);

to insert, where paganism is widespread, the first exorcism and the first renunciation into the rite of entrance into the order of catechumens (nos. 79-80);

to decree that the tracing of the sign of the cross upon the forehead be replaced by making that sign before the forehead, in areas where the act of touching may not seem proper (no. 83);

to decree that in the rite of entrance into the order of catechumens (no. 88) candidates receive a new name wherever it is the practice of non-Christian religions to give a new name to initiates immediately;

to allow within the same rite (no. 89), according to local customs, subsidiary rites that symbolize reception into the community;

to establish during the period of the catechumenate, in addition to the usual rites (nos. 106-124), "rites of passage": for example, anticipating the presentations (nos. 125-126), the ephphetha rite, the catechumens' recitation of the creed, or even the anointing with the oil of catechumens (nos. 127-129);

to decree the omission of the anointing with the oil of catechumens (no. 218) or its transferral to the immediately preparatory rites (nos. 206-207) or its use during the period of the catechumenate as a kind of "rite of passage" (nos. 127-132);

to make the formularies of renunciation more specific and detailed (see nos. 80,217).

## V. Adaptations by the Bishop

66. It pertains to the bishop for his own diocese:

to set up the formation program of the catechumenate and to lay down norms according to local needs (see no. 44);

to decree whether and when, as circumstances warrant, the whole rite of initiation may be celebrated outside the customary times (see no. 58);

to dispense, on the basis of some serious obstacle, from one scrutiny or, in extraordinary circumstances, even from two (see no. 240);

to permit the simple rite to be used in whole or in part (see no. 240);

to depute catechists who are truly worthy and properly prepared to give the exorcisms and blessings (see nos. 44, 48);

to preside at the rite of election and to ratify, personally or through a delegate, the admission of the elect (see no. 44).

## VI. Adaptations by the Minister

67. It is for the celebrant to use fully and intelligently the freedom which is given to him either in the General Introduction to Christian Initiation no. 34 or in the rubrics of the rite itself. In many places the manner of acting or praying is intentionally left undetermined or two alternatives are offered, so that the celebrant, according to his prudent pastoral judgment, may accommodate the rite to the circumstances of the candidates and others who are present. The greatest freedom is left in the introductions and intercessions, which may always be shortened, changed, or even expanded with new intentions in order to fit the circumstances or special situation of the candidates (for example, a sad or joyful event occurring in a family) or of the others present (for example, joy or sorrow common to the parish or civic community).

The celebrant will also adapt the texts by changing the gender and number as required.

## Endnotes

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1. See SC art. 64-66; AG no. 14; CD no. 14..
  2. See SC art. 109.
  3. This amends CIC can. 790.

4. See AG no. 13.
5. See AG no. 14.
6. See AG no. 13.
7. See LG no. 14; AG no. 14.
8. See Rite of Marriage nos. 55-56.
9. See AG no. 14.
10. See AG no. 13.
11. See AG no. 14.
12. See SC art. 64.
13. See SC art. 109.
14. See AG no. 14.
15. See SC art. 110.
16. See AG no. 14.
17. See LG no. 17.
18. See AA no. 6.
19. See General Introduction to Christian Initiation no. 8.
20. See *ibid.* no. 12.
21. In this case CIC can. 1153 is abrogated.
22. See General Introduction to Christian Initiation nos. 13-15.
23. See PO no. 6.
24. See Rite of **Confirmation**, Introduction no. 7, b.
25. See *ibid.* no. 8.
26. See LG no. 26; AG no. 16.
27. See SC art. 79.