



# The RCIA: Rites and Processes

## Liturgy and Life

Presented by:

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# Prayer

*Loving God,*

you called us each by name and gave your only Son to redeem us. In your faithfulness, you sent the Holy Spirit to complete the mission of Jesus among us.

Open our hearts to Jesus. Give us the courage to speak his name to those who are close to us and the generosity to share his love with those who are far away.

We pray that every person throughout the world be invited to know and love Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. May they come to know his all-surpassing love. May that love transform every element of our society.

We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.






## Romans 6:3-7

Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin.





# Correlation of Experience and Sacrament

How do we help Catholics correlate what is happening in their lives with sacramental celebration?

How do we help catechumens and candidates see the unfolding RCIA as correlative with their growing faith experience?

- Baptism of Infants
- Place and time of Confirmation
- Stages of RCIA and personal experience
- Reception of candidates into the Church



# RCIA Stages

Inquiry

Catechumenate

Election


Initiation

Mystagogy

How does this sequence apply to the **personal lives** of unbaptized catechumens and even of baptized candidates?



## RCIA Process (#6)

- First step: “reaching the point of initial conversion and a desire to become Christians”
  - Second step: “having progressed in faith and nearly completed the catechumenate, they are accepted into a more intense preparation” for initiation
  - Third step: “having completed their spiritual preparation, they receive the sacraments of Christian initiation”
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# Inquiry (#7-1)




- Inquiry on part of seeker
- Evangelization and precatechumenate on part of the Church
- Leads to entry into catechumenate

A time for the candidate's ongoing discovery of her or his desires as a person in relationship with God and the presentation of the fundamentals of the Kerygma.




## Inquiry: Correlation

- Who am I as a person? What am I seeking? Why am I seeking?
  - What does my seeking have to do with the Kerygma, the basic proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ?
  - How does my seeking find meaning in the death and resurrection of Jesus?
  - What is the heart of the preaching of Jesus? How could it apply to my life?
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# Kerygma

- Creation
    - What does it say about me, my experience, my hopes, my incompleteness?
    - What does it say about the God we believe in?
  - Disruption of Creation: Sin and Alienation
    - How have I experienced distance from God? Alienation from goodness, from God? What does restoration look like in my life?
  - Paschal Mystery
    - How do the death and resurrection of Jesus relate to personal conversion and transformation?
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# Kerygma (cont'd)

- Who am I?
- Who is God?
- Who is Jesus?
- Who is the Spirit?
- The mystery of grace as the generous outpouring of love by God
- The mystery of mercy and reconciliation
- The mystery of the incarnation as God's outreach to humankind
- The mystery of living in union with God



## Kerygma (cont'd)

How is the Kerygma experienced by people?

How is the Kerygma more than “doctrine” that we learn?

How do we allow for diversity in the way people appropriate the Kerygma?

How does prayer and Scripture help to open the process of self-discovery and the search for God?





# Correlation

Inquiry

Kerygma

**How am I helping the  
catechumen/candidate  
become more aware about who  
they are and more aware of  
Jesus' Good News?**

# Catechumenate (#7-2)



- Begins with Rite of Acceptance
- Of indefinite amount of time
- Catechesis and rites of catechesis
- Leads to period of election

How does a sense of belonging begin to happen in the candidate?

How does catechesis expand and deepen the reception of the Kerygma?

How does doctrinal learning get integrated into ongoing growth?



# Liturgical Rite: Acceptance

- First Acceptance of the Gospel
- Affirmation by Sponsors and Assembly
- Signing with the cross on forehead (and other senses)
- What is your name?
- What do you ask of God's Church? **Faith**
- What does faith offer you? **Eternal Life**
- Are you prepared to begin this journey today under the guidance of Christ? **I am.**
- Presentation of the Sponsors
- Receiving the sign of the Paschal Mystery—the cross
- Presentation of the Scriptures



# Catechumenate


- Ongoing meetings with sponsors and other catechumens and candidates
- Ongoing introduction to the life of the parish
- Ongoing growth in doctrinal and spiritual formation

A time of strengthening union between catechumens and candidates themselves and the broader Christian community of the parish

A time of sharing with the RCIA team and sponsors about what is happening to the person through the process




## Catechumenate: Correlation

- **Personal growth** of the candidate
    - Ongoing questions, points of internal resistance, discovery, experience of joy
  - **Integration** of catechumen with the Christian community
    - *De facto* membership in the Church
    - Rites celebrated within the community
    - Finding one's personal experience echoed in the Church community
  - **Growth** in the **knowledge** of the Mysteries of faith
    - Ongoing questions, discovery, and spiritual maturation
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# Readiness

- When has a catechumen grown enough in the knowledge of faith, in personal growth, and in belonging to the community?
  - What do we think is the objective of knowing doctrine? What is the difference between catechesis and, say, theological or scriptural study given that we have never finished studying?
  - How do we affirm sufficient growth in faith experience through learning of doctrine and growth in virtue?
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# Liturgical Rite: Election or Enrollment of Names

- Presentation of Catechumens
- Affirmation by Godparents and Assembly
- Invitation and Enrollment of Names
- Act of Admission or Election
- Intercession for, Prayer over, and Dismissal of the Elect

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.

Therefore, do you wish to enter fully into the life of the Church through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist?

**We do.**

I now declare you to be members of the elect, to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the next Easter Vigil.

# Election (#7-3)



- Much shorter period of time: more “interior reflection” than “catechetical instruction” (#139)
- Coincides with Lenten preparation for Easter for Initiation
- Purification and Enlightenment

Lent: a time when, using prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we intensify our sense of unity with Christ and conversion in the Holy Spirit

Purification: Scrutinies

Enlightenment: Presentations

Readiness: Paschal Mystery



# Scrutinies

- Celebrated throughout Lent
- Exorcism
- Self-searching and repentance
- Spiritual purpose and resolve
- Uncover and heal what is weak
- Strengthen what is upright
- Delivery from power of sin, protection from temptation, strengthen in Christ (#141)

A time that affirms readiness but also tests readiness, leading to greater personal insight about weaknesses and strengths, and acknowledging the special power needed to overcome the forces of evil in life and the building up of what is “upright”




## Time Before Scrutinies

### First Sunday of Lent: Temptation of Jesus

- Catechumen/candidate identifies with the ongoing battle over the seductions of our false illusions
- How do catechumens/candidates articulate their greatest temptations, testings in life?

### Second Sunday of Lent: Transfiguration

- Catechumen/candidate identifies both with the doubts of the disciples and with the presentation of Christ's glory
  - How do catechumens/candidates deal with both the darkness of fear and the light of promised glory?
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# First Scrutiny (Third Sunday of Lent): Samaritan Woman—*Christ, the Living Water*

- Exorcism: acknowledge the sins and weakness that weigh people down but also to turn to hear God's word as the Samaritan Woman thirsted
- "They open their hearts and confess their faults, lay bare their hidden wounds"
- Prayers for healing and conquest over evil

*The affirmation of sin and weakness is the basis for a clearer crying out to God for strength and grace.*

*This rite clarifies the state in which Christians will continue to live for no one can "claim to be without sin, for you alone are the Holy One of God."  
(#154)*



# Presentation of the Creed

- Takes place during Third Week of Lent
- “Listen carefully to the words of [faith] by which you will be justified.” (#160)
- Make candidates responsive to God’s love so they can receive pardon and life in Christ

*What is the grace of being able to find words that summarize faith? How does the summary of the Paschal Mystery also capture the transformation happening in hearts and lives?*



# Second Scrutiny (Fourth Sunday of Lent): Man Born Blind--*Christ, the light of the world*

- Exorcism: “Free these elect from the false values that surround and blind them. Set them firmly in your truth . . .” (#168)
- Freedom from being enslaved by the father of lies
- Rejoice in God’s light
- Jesus’ reception of Spirit in his baptism, our reception of the Spirit

*This period still presumes that there are elements of darkness and deception in our hearts.*

*The Elect assess those parts in their lives that still prefer the darkness; the Church acknowledges a lifelong quest for light and enlightenment.*





# Third Scrutiny (Fifth Sunday of Lent): Raising of Lazarus—*Christ, our Eternal Life*

- Exorcism: freedom from the death-dealing power of the spirit of evil; we are “[snatched] from the realm of death.” (#175)
- Freedom from death is tied to waiting for life-giving sacraments
- “Do not let the power of death hold them back for, by their faith, they will share in the triumph of your resurrection . . .” (#175)

*Death remains the always present temptation for life and faith: the death of cynicism and living without hope, the death of seeing life as meaningless.*

*Death is overcome but still continues to need overcoming in Christian life.*



# Presentation of the Lord's Prayer

- During Fifth Week of Lent
- Prayer gives the basic spirituality of Jesus:
  - The Kingdom and our relation to it
  - The need for sustenance
  - The need for forgiveness
  - The need for ultimate redemption
- Prayer is a participation in Lazarus' rising: a paschal prayer

*The basic prayer of disciples, and discipleship, now comes to the Elect as a sign of their readiness to accept Christian life and identify with Jesus Christ.*

*A well-known prayer that always needs to be better known in its depth of meaning*

# Liturgical Rites: Sacraments of Initiation



## **Celebration of Baptism**

- Litany of the Saints
- Prayer over the Water
- Baptismal Promises
- Baptism
- Explanatory rites: anointing after baptism, white garment, lighted candle

## **Celebration of Confirmation**

- Laying on of Hands
- Anointing with Chrism

## **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

>Service of Light

>Liturgy of the Word

**WHAT ARE THE WAYS  
THOSE RECEIVED INTO  
THE CHURCH  
EXPERIENCE:**

- **RECONCILIATION**
- **ACCEPTANCE OF SELF**
- **BELONGING IN A COMMUNITY**
- **MOVEMENT TO A NEW WAY OF LIVING**
- **UNION WITH GOD IN JESUS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

# Mystagogy (#7-4)



- Extends through whole Easter season
- Postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy
- Deepening Christian experience, spiritual growth, unity with Christian community

What does the neophyte experience in initiation?

How does the neophyte gain fuller entry into the community of believers?

How does the neophyte join the whole Church in its desire to grow in discipleship?

How are we always neophytes?



# Correlations: A Summary

Inquiry

- Decision to open hearts to search

Rite of Acceptance

- Decision to step forth

Rite of Election




- Decision to fully commit oneself

Rites of Initiation

- Acceptance of belonging and discipleship

Mystagogy

- Life of ongoing discipleship



Part 3:  
Next Tuesday,  
2 PM Eastern

**How do we strengthen our  
processes of inviting people  
into the Catechumenal process?**

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