



Norms for the Celebration of the Rite of Christian Initiations of Adults Within the Diocese of St. Petersburg *Revised July 8, 2018*

In July 2017, Bishop Gregory Parkes issued RCIA norms for the Diocese of St. Petersburg. This revision is an update to those norms in order to bring further clarity to the previous document.

1. **Regarding Catechumens (the unbaptized):** These are individuals who have been admitted into the Order of Catechumens and seek to be baptized, confirmed and receive first Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.
 - a. Their process of formation into the Catholic faith normally follows what is indicated in Part I of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA nos. 36-251) and in the National Statutes on the Catechumenate for the Dioceses of the USA (NS nos. 1-24). While there is no set timeframe to becoming Catholic, parishes must provide sufficient time to immerse the catechumen in a holistic process of formation that includes catechesis, communal experience, worship/prayer and apostolic service (cf. RCIA no 75). For some, the timeframe might be a year and for others, it may be longer.
 - b. The *Rite of Election of Catechumens* will continue to be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent at the Cathedral of St. Jude. To prepare the catechumens, the *Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election* is to be celebrated at the parish on the First Sunday of Lent (RCIA nos. 106-117). [**NOTE:** The *Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates Who Are Preparing for Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church* may be celebrated at the parish on the First of Sunday of Lent. This rite may be celebrated in conjunction with the *Rite of Sending of Catechumens for Election* or at a separate liturgy.]
 - c. Exceptional circumstances may arise requiring catechumens be fully initiated into the Church outside the Easter Vigil. Pastors are required to obtain the permission of the Bishop in these individual circumstances. (RCIA nos. 331-339)
2. **Regarding Previously Baptized Christians:** These candidates seek to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church by a profession of faith and through the reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Some may have received relatively little Christian upbringing (“**uncatechized**”) and some may have lived as active and engaged Christians (“**catechized**”). Therefore, care must be taken to discern what formation process is necessary for each individual to assure both their readiness and desire to enter the Church (NS no. 31).

- a. Care must be taken to ensure that each candidate has been validly baptized.
 - b. The process of formation to full communion follows the instructions found in RCIA nos. 400-410; 473-486 and the National Statutes (NS nos. 30-36).
 - c. Previously baptized Christians are to be received into full communion of the Catholic Church after a period of formation that includes both doctrinal and spiritual preparation adapted to their individual needs (RCIA no. 477; NS no. 30). For some, the timeframe may be relatively short, and for others it could be as long as a catechumen.
 - d. The celebration of the *Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church* (RCIA nos. 473-498) may take place at any Sunday Mass throughout the liturgical year as needed (NS no. 32).
 - e. The priest entrusted with the celebration of this rite is given by law both the faculty and the obligation to fully initiate (i.e. confirm and provide First Eucharist) the previously baptized Christian within this rite of reception (cf. Code of Canon Law nos. 883.2 & 885:2; RCIA no. 481).
 - f. The reception of candidates into full communion with the Catholic Church should not be delayed in order to be received at the Easter Vigil (NS no. 33). By celebrating this rite throughout the year, a candidate's baptismal status is respected and they are invited to celebrate fully with the Church at the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter.
3. **Regarding Children of Catechetical Age:** Children of catechetical age (age 7 and up) should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual (NS no. 18).
- a. Rituals for unbaptized children of catechetical age are found in Part II, No. 1 in the RCIA ritual (cf. nos. 252- 330).
 - b. Special attention is to be given to the length of the catechumenal process and the variety of catechesis used with children of catechetical age so that an age appropriate amount of time is given to the individual child to be formed in the Catholic Christian life. The catechumenal process as described in NS no. 6 presumes a process that extends for a minimum of one full year of formation and instruction, beginning prior to the Lent-Easter season of one year and extending to the Easter of the following year.
 - c. Previously baptized children of catechetical age follow the norms mentioned #2. (a-f) above and adapted to their age appropriate needs. As with adults, their reception into full communion with the Catholic Church may take place at any Sunday Mass and the two sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist are to be received together.

Canon Law and the National Statutes state that children of catechetical age should receive the three sacraments of initiation in a single celebration (cf. Canon no. 842:2; NS nos. 14 & 18); therefore, Confirmation and/or First Holy Communion should not be separated/delayed to another time (i.e. when the bishop is coming to the parish or to be with their First Communion and/or Confirmation class).

4. **Regarding Baptized Catholic Adults Seeking Confirmation:** Presuming an appropriate formation process, inspired by the catechumenal model that includes catechesis and evident participation in the Christian life and worship of the Church, Bishop Parkes is offering to pastors these options for adult Catholics seeking the sacrament of Confirmation:
 - a. Adult Catholics may be included with the youth when the Bishop comes to the parish for Confirmation or check with a neighboring parish.
 - b. The Bishop emeritus, Vicar General, Dean or St. Leo Abbot could be invited to confirm these adult Catholics.
 - c. Write the Bishop asking for the faculty to confirm these adult Catholics yourself at a parish liturgy.

5. **Regarding Families with Varied Sacramental Needs:** When embracing families of varied sacramental needs, every effort should be made to initiate the family together. If one or more family member is seeking baptism, the entire family may be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil, even those members that are already baptized. A year round intergenerational catechumenal process may be the best model to employ in forming and keeping families together.

There will always be exceptional circumstances to these norms and the RCIA ritual book addresses some of them in Part II, 2 & 3 (cf. RCIA nos. 331-397; NS nos. 20-21, 37). If you believe you have a particular situation that might preclude you from following these diocesan norms, please contact the Office of Worship at (727) 341-6828.