



DIOCESE OF
ST. PETERSBURG

Norms for the Celebration of the Rite of Christian Initiations of Adults Within the Diocese of St. Petersburg

At the conclusion to the May 23, 2017 Diocesan RCIA Leadership Forum, Bishop Gregory Parkes offered some final thoughts regarding the celebration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (and children of catechetical age) in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. In order to more clearly distinguish between the main categories of individuals seeking initiation with the Church, some modifications will be necessary to the way in which the initiation process is conducted. The following is what will be considered normative for the Diocese of St. Petersburg:

1. **Regarding Catechumens:** These are unbaptized 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).
 - b. Beginning in 2018, only a *RITE OF ELECTION OF CATECHUMENS* will be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent at the Cathedral of St. Jude. We will no longer celebrate multiple “combined” celebrations of *THE RITE OF ELECTION OF CATECHUMENS AND OF THE CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION OF CANDIDATES WHO ARE PREPARING FOR RECEPTION INTO THE FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*.

2. **Regarding Previously Baptized Christians:** Previously baptized in another Christian tradition, these candidates seek to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church by a profession of faith and through the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist. Some may have received relatively little Christian upbringing (i.e., uncatechized) and some may have lived as active and engaged Christians (i.e., catechized), therefore, care is to be taken with the approach to their formation (NS no. 31).
 - a. Care must be taken to ensure that each candidate has been validly baptized.
 - b. Their 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).
 - d. The celebration of the *RECEPTION OF BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS INTO THE FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH* (RCIA nos. 473-498) is to take place at 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 confirm the previously baptized Christian for full communion within this rite of reception (cf. Code of Canon Law nos. 883.2 & 885:2; RCIA no. 481).
 - f. Bishop Parkes prefers that the reception of candidates into full communion with the Catholic Church not be delayed in order to be received at the Easter Vigil (NS no. 33). Rather, by receiving them any time during the year when it is discerned that they are ready, we respect their baptism and invite them to celebrate fully with the Church 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 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 recommends 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. 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 unless for some appropriate pastoral reason.
4. **Regarding Baptized Catholic Adults Needing Confirmation:** The blanket faculty to confirm at the Easter Vigil those baptized Catholics who are in need of Confirmation will no longer be given. Bishop Parkes is offering to pastors these options:
- 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. Write the Bishop to inquire about his availability to come to confirm these adult Catholics at a later date.
 - c. The Vicar General or Dean could be invited to confirm these adult Catholics.
 - d. Write the Bishop asking for the faculty to confirm these adult Catholics.

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.