

Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

The Rite of Welcoming the Candidates

And Combined Rites

Introduction

The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (Rite of Acceptance) is the first of the “threshold rites” of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), and the first public liturgical ritual. In the Rite of Acceptance, a change of identity takes place: those previously known as “inquirers” become “catechumens.” They are officially welcomed by the Church as members (albeit not full members) of the household of faith.

Before the Rite of Acceptance, it is crucial that there has been a sufficient precatechumenate period for each inquirer, and that discernment has taken place that they are ready for this step. The criteria for their readiness may be found in RCIA 42:

- Evidence of first faith
- Intention to change their lives and enter into a relationship with Christ
- Evidence of the first stirrings of repentance
- A start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer
- A sense of Church
- Some experience of the company and spirit of Christians

Three Options

The templates provided here offer three options for the Rites of Acceptance and Welcome:

- A. Parish Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens
- B. Parish Rite of Welcoming the Candidates
- C. Parish (Combined) Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and of the Rite of Welcoming Baptized but Previously Uncatechized Persons

These templates are presented here only as a model of how individual parishes might celebrate these rites. Celebrations will be different from parish to parish, if for no other reason than physical space is a crucial factor in designing any ritual. Other important factors include the number of inquirers and the size of the assembly.

To celebrate these rites effectively, it is recommended that the pastor, those responsible for liturgical preparation and the RCIA Coordinator form a rite planning team who will design the rite carefully, and produce your own leaders’ guide (script) similar to these templates. Working directly from the ritual book, with its multiple options and rubrics, is challenging in the best of circumstances.