

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Introductory Material

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For pastoral use the text of the Latin editio typica was rearranged for the English edition. Reference to the original paragraph number is noted by ^[1] at the end of a paragraph.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

INTRODUCTION

1 The rite of Christian initiation presented here 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. ^[1]

2 This rite includes not simply the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist, but also all the rites belonging to the catechumenate. Endorsed by the ancient practice of the Church, a catechumenate that would be suited to contemporary missionary activity in all regions was so widely requested that the Second Vatican Council decreed its restoration, revision, and adaptation to local traditions.¹ ^[2]

3 So that the rite of initiation will be more useful for the work of the Church and for individual, parochial, and missionary circumstances, the rite is first presented in Part I of this book in its complete and usual form (nos. 36-241). This is designed for the preparation of a group of candidates, but by simple adaptation parish priests (pastors) can devise a form suited to one person.

Part II provides rites for special circumstances: the Christian initiation of children (nos. 242-306), a simple form of the rite for adults to be carried out in exceptional circumstances (nos. 307-345), and a short form of the rite for those in danger of death (nos. 346-375). Part II also includes guidelines for preparing un catechized adults for confirmation and eucharist (nos. 376-386), the rite of reception of baptised Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church (nos. 387-417), and a rite combining this reception with celebration of Christian initiation at the Easter Vigil (nos. 418-451). ^[3]

STRUCTURE OF THE INITIATION OF ADULTS

4 The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery and by renewing their own conversion, the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously. ^[4]

5 The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that 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. ^[5]

6 This journey includes not only the periods for making inquiry and for maturing (see no.: 7), but also the steps marking the catechumens' progress, as they pass, so to speak, through another doorway or ascend to the next level.

1. The first step: reaching the point of initial conversion and wishing to become Christians, they are accepted as catechumens by the Church.
2. The second step: having progressed in faith and nearly completed the catechumenate, they are accepted into a more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation.

3. The third step: having completed their spiritual preparation, they receive the sacraments of Christian initiation.

These three steps are to be regarded as the major, more intense moments of initiation and are marked by three liturgical rites: the first by the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (nos. 41-74); the second by the rite of election or enrolment of names (nos. 105-124); and the third by the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation (nos. 198-233). ^[6]

- 7 The steps lead to periods of inquiry and growth; alternatively the periods may also be seen as preparing for the ensuing step.
 1. 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 the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens.
 2. The second period, which begins with the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens and may last for several years, includes catechesis and the rites connected with catechesis. It comes to an end on the day of election.
 3. The third and much shorter period, which follows the rite of election, ordinarily coincides with the Lenten preparation for the Easter celebration and the sacraments of initiation. It is a time of purification and enlightenment and includes the celebration of the rites belonging to this period.
 4. The final period extends through the whole Easter season and is devoted to the postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. It is a time for deepening the Christian experience, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the community.

Thus there are four continuous periods: the precatechumenate, the period for hearing the first preaching of the Gospel (nos. 36-40); the period of the catechumenate, set aside for a thorough catechesis and for the rites belonging to this period (nos. 75-104); the period of purification and enlightenment (Lenten preparation), designed for a more intense spiritual preparation, which is assisted by the celebration of the scrutinies and presentations (nos. 125-197); and the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy, marked by the new experience of sacraments and community (nos. 234-241). ^[7]

- 8 The whole initiation must bear a markedly paschal character, since the initiation of Christians is the first sacramental sharing in Christ's dying and rising and since, in addition, the period of purification and enlightenment ordinarily coincides with Lent² and the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy with the Easter season. All the resources of Lent should be brought to bear as a more intense preparation of the elect and the Easter Vigil should be regarded as the proper time for the sacraments of initiation. Because of pastoral needs, however, the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at other times (see nos. 26-30). ^[8]

MINISTRIES AND OFFICES

- 9 In light of what is said in *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (no. 7), the people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptised.³ 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.⁴ Hence, the entire community must help the candidates and the catechumens throughout the process of initiation: during the period of the precatechumenate, the period of the catechumenate, the period of purification and enlightenment, and the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. In particular:

1. During the period of evangelization and precatechumenate, the faithful should remember that for the Church and its members the supreme purpose of the apostolate is that Christ's message is made known to the world by word and deed and that his grace is communicated.⁵ They should therefore show themselves ready to give the candidates evidence of the spirit of the Christian community and to welcome them into their homes, into personal conversation, and into community gatherings.
 2. At the celebrations belonging to the period of the catechumenate, the faithful should seek to be present whenever possible and should take an active part in the responses, prayers, singing, and acclamations.
 3. On the day of election, because it is a day of growth for the community, the faithful, when called upon, should be sure to give honest and carefully considered testimony about the catechumens.
 4. During Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, the faithful should take care to participate in the rites of the scrutinies and presentations and give the elect 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.
 5. During the period immediately after baptism, the faithful should take part in the Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season (see no. 25), welcome the neophytes with open arms in charity, and help them to feel more at home in the community of the baptised. [41]
- 10 A sponsor accompanies any candidate seeking admission as a catechumen. Sponsors are persons who have known and assisted the candidates and stand as witnesses to the candidates' moral character, faith, and intention. It may happen that it is not the sponsor for the rite of acceptance and the period of the catechumenate but another person who serves as godparent for the periods of purification and enlightenment and of mystagogy. [42]
- 11 Their godparents (for each a godmother or godfather, or both) accompany the candidates on the day of election, at the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, and during the period of mystagogy.⁶ Godparents are persons chosen by the candidates 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 godparents to show the candidates how to practise the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness, and to guide the candidates' progress in the baptismal life. Chosen before the candidates' election, godparents fulfil this office publicly from the day of the rite of election, when they give testimony to the community about the candidates. They continue to be important during the time after reception of the sacraments when the neophytes need to be assisted so that they remain true to their baptismal promises. [43]
- 12 The bishop,⁷ in person or through his delegate, sets up, regulates, and promotes the programme of pastoral formation for catechumens and admits the candidates to their election and to the sacraments. It is 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, at

least for the initiation of those who are fourteen years old or older. Finally, when pastoral care requires, the bishop should depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to celebrate the minor exorcisms (nos. 90-94) and the blessings of the catechumens (nos. 95-97). ^[44]

- 13 Priests, in addition to their usual ministry for any celebration of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist,⁸ have the responsibility of attending to the pastoral and personal care of the catechumens,⁹ especially those who seem hesitant and discouraged. 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 willingly listen to and help them; they are to be diligent in the correct celebration and adaptation of the rites throughout the entire course of Christian initiation (see no. 35). ^[45]
- 14 The priest who baptises an adult or a child of catechetical age should, when the bishop is absent, also confer confirmation,¹⁰ unless this sacrament is to be given at another time (see no. 24). When there are a large number of candidates to be confirmed, the minister of confirmation may associate priests with himself to administer the sacrament. It is preferable that the priests who are so invited:
1. either have a particular function or office in the diocese, being, namely, either vicars general, episcopal vicars, or district or regional vicars;
 2. or be the parish priests (pastors) of the places where confirmation is conferred, parish priests (pastors) of the places where the candidates belong, or priests who have had a special part in the catechetical preparation of the candidates.¹¹ ^[46]
- 15 Deacons should be ready to assist in the ministry to catechumens. Conferences of bishops that have decided in favour of the permanent diaconate should ensure that the number and distribution of permanent deacons are adequate for the carrying out of the steps, periods, and formation programs of the catechumenate wherever pastoral needs require.¹² ^[47]
- 16 Catechists, who have an important office for the progress of the catechumens and for the growth of the community, should, whenever possible, have an active part in the rites. When deputed by the bishop (see no. 12), they may perform the minor exorcisms and blessings contained in the ritual.¹³ When they are teaching, catechists 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. ^[48]

TIME AND PLACE OF INITIATION

- 17 As a general rule, parish priests (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 rite of election takes place on the First Sunday of Lent. The rest of the rites are spaced on the basis of the structure and arrangement of the catechumenate as described previously (nos. 6-8). For pastoral needs of a more serious nature, however, it is lawful to arrange the schedule for the entire rite of initiation differently, as will be detailed later (nos. 26-30). ^[49]

Proper or Usual Times

- 18 The following should be noted about the time of celebrating the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (nos. 41-74).

1. 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. 42).
 2. In places where the number of candidates is smaller than usual, the rite of acceptance should be delayed until a group is formed that is sufficiently large for catechesis and the liturgical rites.
 3. Two dates in the year, or three if necessary, are to be fixed as the usual times for carrying out this rite. [50]
- 19 The rite of election or enrolment of names (nos. 105-124) should as a rule be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent. As circumstances suggest or require, it may be anticipated somewhat or even celebrated on a weekday. [51]
- 20 The scrutinies (nos. 137-143, 151-157, 158-164) should take place on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, or, if necessary, on the other Sundays of Lent, or even on convenient weekdays. Three scrutinies should be celebrated. The bishop may dispense from one of them for serious reasons or, in extraordinary circumstances, even from two (see nos. 34, 3, 307). When, for lack of time, the election is held early, the first scrutiny is also to be held early; but in this case care is to be taken not to prolong the period of purification and enlightenment beyond eight weeks. [52]
- 21 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 (nos. 144-150) takes place during the week after the first scrutiny; the presentation of the Lord's Prayer (nos. 165-171) during the week after the third scrutiny. For pastoral reasons, however, to enrich the liturgy in the period of the catechumenate, each presentation may be transferred and celebrated during the period of the catechumenate as a kind of 'rite of passage' (see nos. 79, 103-104). [53]
- 22 On Holy Saturday, when the elect refrain from work and spend their time in recollection, the various preparation rites may be celebrated: the recitation or 'return' of the Creed by the elect, the ephphetha rite, the choosing of a Christian name, and even the anointing with the oil of catechumens (nos. 172-197). [54]
- 23 The celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation (nos. 198-233) should take place at the Easter Vigil itself (see nos. 8, 17). But if there are a great many catechumens, the sacraments are given to the majority that night and reception of the sacraments by the rest may be transferred to 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 one of the ritual Masses 'Christian Initiation: Baptism' may be used and the readings are chosen from those of the Easter Vigil. [55]
- 24 In certain cases when there is serious reason, confirmation may be postponed until near the end of the period of postbaptismal catechesis, for example, Pentecost Sunday (see no. 239). [56]
- 25 On all the Sundays of the Easter season after Easter Sunday, the so-called Masses for neophytes are to be scheduled. The entire community and the newly baptised with their godparents should be encouraged to participate (see nos. 237-238). [57]

Outside the Usual Times

- 26 The entire rite of Christian 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 belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment may be held outside Lent and the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday.

Even when the usual time has otherwise been observed, it is permissible, but only for serious pastoral needs (for example, if there are a great many people to be baptised), to choose a day other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, but preferably one during the Easter season, to celebrate the sacraments of initiation; the programme of initiation during Lent, however, must be maintained.

When the time is changed in either way, even though the rite of Christian initiation occurs at a different point in the liturgical year, the structure of the entire rite, with its properly spaced intervals, remains the same. But the following adjustments are made. ^[58]

- 27 As far as possible, the sacraments of initiation are to be celebrated on a Sunday, using, as occasion suggests, the Sunday Mass or one of the ritual Masses ‘Christian Initiation: Baptism’ (see nos. 23, 200). ^[59]
- 28 The rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens is to take place when the time is right (see no. 18). ^[60]
- 29 The rite of 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 not to schedule the celebration of the rite of election on a solemnity of the liturgical year. ^[61]
- 30 The scrutinies should not be celebrated on solemnities, but on Sundays or even on weekdays, with the usual intervals. ^[62]

Place of Celebration

- 31 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. ^[63]

ADAPTATIONS BY THE CONFERENCES OF BISHOPS

IN THE USE OF THE ROMAN RITUAL

- 32 In addition to the adaptations envisioned in *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (nos. 30-33), the rite of Christian initiation of adults allows for other adaptations that will be decided by the conference of bishops. ^[64]
- 33 Each conference of bishops has discretionary power to make the following decisions:
1. to establish for the precatechumenate, where it seems advisable, some way of receiving inquirers who are interested in the catechumenate (see no. 39);
 2. to insert into the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens a first exorcism and a renunciation of false worship, in regions where paganism is widespread (see nos. 69-72);

3. to decide that in the same rite the tracing of the sign of the cross upon the forehead (nos. 54-55) be replaced by making that sign in front of the forehead, in regions where the act of touching may not seem proper;
4. to decide that in the same rite candidates receive a new name in regions where it is the practise of non-Christian religions to give a new name to initiates immediately (no. 73);
5. to allow within the same rite, according to local customs, additional rites that symbolize reception into the community (no. 74);
6. to establish during the period of the catechumenate, in addition to the usual rites (nos. 81-97), 'rites of passage': for example, early celebration of the presentations (nos. 144-150, 165-171), the ephphetha rite (nos. 184-186), the catechumens' recitation of the Creed (nos. 180-183), or even an anointing of the catechumens (nos. 98-102);
7. to decide on the omission of the anointing with the oil of catechumens (no. 218) or its transferral to the preparation rites for Holy Saturday (nos. 190-194) or its use during the period of the catechumenate as a kind of 'rite of passage' (nos. 98-100);
8. to make more specific and detailed the formularies of renunciation for the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (nos. 70-72) and for the celebration of baptism (no. 217). [65]

ADAPTATIONS BY THE BISHOP

34 It pertains to the bishop for his own diocese:

1. to set up the formation programme of the catechumenate and to lay down norms according to local needs (see no. 12);
2. to decide whether and when, as circumstances warrant, the entire rite of Christian initiation may be celebrated outside the usual times (see no. 26);
3. to dispense, on the basis of some serious obstacle, from one scrutiny or, in extraordinary circumstances, even from two (see no. 307);
4. to permit the simple rite to be used in whole or in part (see no. 307);
5. to depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to give the exorcisms and blessings (see nos. 12, 16);
6. to preside at the rite of election and to ratify, personally or through a delegate, the admission of the elect (see no. 12);
7. in keeping with the provisions of law,¹⁴ to stipulate the requisite age for sponsors (see *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 10,2). [66]

ADAPTATIONS BY THE MINISTER

35 Celebrants should make full and intelligent use of the freedom given to them either in *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (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 ministers, according to their prudent pastoral judgment, may accommodate the rite to the circumstances of the candidates and others who are present. In all the rites the greatest freedom is left in the invitations and instructions, and the intercessions 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, sorrow or joy common to the parish or civic community).

The minister will also adapt the texts by changing the gender and number as required. ^[67]

- 1 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 64.66; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14; Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops *Christus Dominus*, no. 14.
- 2 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 109.
- 3 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14.
- 4 See Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, no. 17.
- 5 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 6.
- 6 See *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 8 and 10, 1.
- 7 See *ibid.*, no. 12.
- 8 See *ibid.*, nos. 13-15.
- 9 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 6.
- 10 See *Rite of Confirmation*, Introduction, no. 7, b.
- 11 See *ibid.*, no. 8.
- 12 See Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, no. 26; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 16.
- 13 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 79.
- 14 See *Codex Iuris Canonici*. can. 874, §1, 2°.

PART I: CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

OUTLINE FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

This is a time, of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to gospel values, an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.

First Step: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on some annual date or dates, marking the beginning of the catechumenate proper, as the candidates express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God's call to follow the way of Christ.

Period of the Catechumenate

This is the time, in duration corresponding to the progress of the individual, for the nurturing and growth of the catechumens' faith and conversion to God; celebrations of the word and prayers of exorcism and blessing are meant to assist the process.

Second Step: Election or Enrolment Of Names

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the sacraments of initiation and the catechumens, now the elect, express the will to receive these sacraments.

Period of Purification and Enlightenment

This is the time immediately preceding the elects' initiation, usually the Lenten season preceding the celebration of this initiation at the Easter Vigil; it is a time of reflection, intensely centred on conversion, marked by celebration of the scrutinies and presentations and of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

This is the liturgical rite, usually integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist.

Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

This is the time, usually the Easter season, following the celebration of initiation, during which the newly initiated experience being fully a part of the Christian community by means of both pertinent catechesis and particularly by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday eucharistic celebration.

PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE

*I, the light, have come into the world, so that whoever believes in me
need not remain in the dark anymore*

- 36 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 who is the way, the truth, and the life fulfils all their spiritual expectations, indeed infinitely surpasses them.¹ [9]
- 37 From evangelization, completed with the help of God, come the faith and initial conversion that 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. [10]
- 38 During this period, priests and deacons, catechists and other laypersons are to give the candidates a suitable explanation of the Gospel (see no. 42). The candidates are to receive help and attention so that with a purified and clearer intention they may cooperate with God's grace. Opportunities should be provided for them to meet families and other groups of Christians. [11]
- 39 It belongs to the conference of bishops to provide for the evangelization proper to this period. The conference may also provide, if circumstances suggest and in keeping with local custom, a preliminary manner of receiving those interested in the precatechumenate, that is, those inquirers who, even though they do not fully believe, show some leaning toward the Christian faith (and who may be called 'sympathisers').
1. 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.
 2. The reception will be adapted to local conditions and to the pastoral situation. Some candidates may need to see evidence of the spirit of Christians that they are striving to understand and experience. For others, however, whose catechumenate will be delayed for one reason or another, some initial act of the candidates or the community that expresses their reception may be appropriate.
 3. The reception will be held at a meeting or gathering of the local community, on an occasion that will permit friendly conversation. An inquirer or 'sympathiser' is introduced by a friend and then welcomed and received by the priest or some other representative member of the community. [12]
- 40 During the precatechumenate period, parish priests (pastors) should help those taking part in it with prayers suited to them, for example, by celebrating for their spiritual well-being the prayers of exorcism and the blessings given in the ritual (nos. 94, 97). [13, 111, 120]

I See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 13.

FIRST STEP: ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you

- 41 The rite that is called the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens is of the utmost importance. Assembling publicly for the first time, the candidates who have completed the period of the precatechumenate declare their intention to the Church and the Church in turn, carrying out its apostolic mission, accepts them as persons who intend to become its members. God showers his grace on the candidates, since the celebration manifests their desire publicly and marks their reception and first consecration by the Church. [14, 15, 68]
- 42 The prerequisite for making this first step is that the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidates.¹ Thus there must be evidence of the first faith that was conceived during the period of evangelization and precatechumenate and 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, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church, and some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with a priest or with members of the community. The candidate should also be instructed about the celebration of the liturgical rite of acceptance. [15, 68]
- 43 Before the rite is celebrated, therefore, sufficient and necessary time, as required in each case, should be set aside to evaluate and, if necessary, to purify the candidates' motives and dispositions. With the help of the sponsors (see no. 10), catechists, and deacons, parish priests (pastors) have the responsibility for judging the outward indications of such dispositions.² Because of the effect of baptism once validly received (see Christian Initiation, General Introduction, no. 4), it is the duty of parish priests (pastors) to see to it that no baptised person seeks for any reason whatever to be baptised a second time. [15, 69]
- 44 The rite will take place on specified days during the year (see no. 18) that are suited to local conditions. The rite consists in the reception of the candidates, the celebration of the word of God, and the dismissal of the candidates; celebration of the eucharist may follow. By decision of the conference of bishops, the following may be incorporated into this rite: a first exorcism and renunciation of false worship (nos. 70-72), the giving of a new name (no. 73), and additional rites signifying reception into the community (no. 74). [65, 69, 72]
- 45 It is desirable that the entire Christian community or some part of it, consisting of friends and acquaintances, catechists and priests, take an active part in the celebration. The presiding celebrant is a priest or a deacon. The sponsors should also attend in order to present to the Church the candidates they have brought. [70, 71]
- 46 After the celebration of the rite of acceptance, the names of the catechumens are to be duly inscribed in the register of catechumens, along with the names of the sponsors and the minister and the date and place of the celebration. [17]
- 47 From this time on the Church embraces the catechumens as its own with a mother's love and concern. Joined to the Church, the catechumens are now part of the household of Christ,³ since the Church nourishes them with the word of God and sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations. The catechumens should be eager, then, to take part in

celebrations of the word of God and to receive blessings and other sacramentals. When two catechumens marry or when a catechumen marries an unbaptised person, the appropriate rite is to be used.⁴ One who dies during the catechumenate receives a Christian burial.

- 1 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14.
- 2 See *ibid.*, no. 13.
- 3 See Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, no. 14; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14.
- 4 See *Rite of Marriage*, nos. 55-66.

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

Leave your country, and come into the land I will show you

- 75 The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life.¹ In this way, the dispositions manifested at their acceptance into the catechumenate are brought to maturity. This is achieved in four ways.
1. A suitable catechesis is provided by priests or deacons, or by catechists and others of the faithful, planned to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word. This catechesis leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate.
 2. As they become familiar with the Christian way of life and are helped by the example and support of sponsors, godparents, and the entire Christian community, the catechumens learn to turn more readily to God in prayer, to bear witness to the faith, in all things to keep their hopes set on Christ, to follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds, and to practise love of neighbour, even at the cost of self renunciation. Thus formed, the newly converted 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. Since this transition brings with it a progressive change of outlook and conduct, it should become manifest by means of its social consequences and it should develop gradually during the period of the catechumenate. Since the Lord in whom they believe is a sign of contradiction, the newly converted often experience divisions and separations, but they also taste the joy that God gives without measure;²
 3. The Church, like a mother, helps the catechumens on their journey by means of suitable liturgical rites, which purify the catechumens little by little and strengthen them with God's blessing. Celebrations of the word of God are arranged for their benefit, and at Mass they may also take part with the faithful in the liturgy of the word, thus better preparing themselves for their eventual participation in the liturgy of the eucharist. Ordinarily, however, when they are present in the assembly of the faithful they should be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the eucharist begins (unless their dismissal would present practical or pastoral problems). For they must await their baptism, which will join them to God's priestly people and empower them to participate in Christ's new worship.
 4. 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 witness of their lives and by professing their faith.³ [19]
- 76 The duration of the catechumenate will depend on the grace of God and on various circumstances, such as the programme of instruction for the catechumenate, the number of catechists, deacons, and priests, the cooperation of the individual catechumens, the means necessary for them to come to the site of the catechumenate and spend time there, the help of the local community. Nothing, therefore, can be settled a priori.

The time spent in the catechumenate should be long enough — several years if necessary — for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong. By their formation in the entire Christian life and a sufficiently prolonged probation the catechumens are properly initiated into the mysteries of salvation and the practise of an evangelical way of life. By means of sacred rites celebrated at successive times they are led into the life of faith, worship, and charity belonging to the people of God. [20, 98]

- 77 It is the responsibility of the bishop to fix the duration and to direct the programme of the catechumenate. The conference of bishops, after considering the conditions of its people and region,⁴ may also wish to provide specific guidelines. At the discretion of the bishop, on the basis of the spiritual preparation of the candidate, the period of the catechumenate may in particular cases be shortened (see nos. 307, 308-311); in altogether extraordinary cases the catechumenate may be completed all at once (see nos. 308, 312-345). [20, 98]
- 78 The instruction that the catechumens receive during this period should be of a kind that while presenting Catholic teaching in its entirety also enlightens faith, directs the heart toward God, fosters participation in the liturgy, inspires apostolic activity, and nurtures a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ. [99]
- 79 Among the rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate, then, celebrations of the word of God (nos. 81-89) are foremost. The minor exorcisms (nos. 90-94) and the blessings of the catechumens (nos. 95-97) are ordinarily celebrated in conjunction with a celebration of the word. In addition, other rites may be celebrated to mark the passage of the catechumens from one level of catechesis to another: for example, an anointing of the catechumens may be celebrated (nos. 98-102) and the presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may be anticipated (see nos. 103-104). [103]
- 80 During the period of the catechumenate, the catechumens should give thought to choosing the godparents who will present them to the Church on the day of their election (see no. 11; also *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 8-10).

Provision should also be made for the entire community involved in the formation of the catechumens – priests, deacons, catechists, sponsors, godparents, friends and neighbours – to participate in some of the celebrations belonging to the catechumenate, including any of the optional 'rites of passage' (nos. 98-104). [104, 105]

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- 1 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14.
 - 2 Ibid., no. 13.
 - 3 Ibid., no. 14.
 - 4 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 64.

rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate

CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD

- 81 During the period of the catechumenate there should be celebrations of the word of God that accord with the liturgical season and that contribute to the instruction of the catechumens and the needs of the community. These celebrations of the word are: first, celebrations held specially for the catechumens; second, participation in the liturgy of the word at the Sunday Mass; third, celebrations held in connection with catechetical instruction. ^[100]
- 82 The special celebrations of the word of God arranged for the benefit of the catechumens have as their main purpose:
1. to implant in their hearts the teachings they are receiving: for example, the morality characteristic of the New Testament, the forgiving of injuries and insults, a sense of sin and repentance, the duties Christians must carry out in the world;
 2. to give them instruction and experience in the different aspects and ways of prayer;
 3. to explain to them the signs, celebrations, and seasons of the liturgy;
 4. to prepare them gradually to enter the worship assembly of the entire community. ^[106]
- 83 From the very beginning of the period of the catechumenate the catechumens should be taught to keep holy the Lord's Day.
1. Care should be taken that some of the special celebrations of the word just mentioned (no. 82) are held on Sunday, so that the catechumens will become accustomed to taking an active and practised part in these celebrations.
 2. Gradually the catechumens should be admitted to the first part of the celebration of the Sunday Mass. After the liturgy of the word they should, if possible, be dismissed, but an intention for them is included in the general intercessions. ^[107]
- 84 Celebrations of the word may also be held in connection with catechetical or instructional meetings of the catechumens, so that these will occur in a context of prayer. ^[108]

Model for a Celebration of the Word of God

- 85 For the celebrations of the word of God that are held specially for the benefit of the catechumens (see no. 82), the following structure (nos. 86-89) may be used as a model.
- 86 **SONG:** An appropriate song may be sung to open the celebration.
- 87 **READINGS:** One or more readings from Scripture, chosen for their relevance to the formation of the catechumens, are proclaimed by a baptised member of the community.
- 88 **HOMILY:** A brief homily that explains and applies the readings should be given.
- 89 **CONCLUDING RITES:** The celebration of the word may conclude with a minor exorcism (no. 94) after the homily or with a blessing of the catechumens (no. 97) or with both; if a rite of anointing (nos. 101-102) is adopted as an option, it may replace the minor exorcism and may also be followed by one of the blessings (no. 97).¹

1 Celebrations of the word that are held in connection with instructional sessions may include, along with an appropriate reading, a minor exorcism (no. 94) or a blessing of the catechumens (no. 97) or both. The meetings of the catechumens after the liturgy of the word of the Sunday Mass may also include a minor exorcism (no. 94) or a blessing (no. 97) or both.

MINOR EXORCISMS

- 90 The first or minor exorcisms have been composed in the form of petitions directly addressed to God. They draw the attention of the catechumens to the real nature of Christian life, the struggle between flesh and spirit, the importance of self-denial for reaching the blessedness of God's kingdom, and the unending need for God's help.
- 91 The presiding celebrant for the minor exorcisms is a priest, a deacon, or a qualified catechist appointed by the bishop for this ministry (see no. 16).
- 92 The minor exorcisms take place within a celebration of the word of God held in a church, a chapel, or in a centre for the catechumenate. A minor exorcism may also be held at the beginning or end of a meeting for catechesis. When there is some special need, one of these prayers of exorcism may be said privately for individual catechumens.
- 93 The formularies for the minor exorcisms may be used on several occasions, as different situations may suggest.

BLESSINGS OF THE CATECHUMENS

- 95 The blessings of the catechumens are a sign of God's love and of the Church's tender care. They are bestowed on the catechumens so that, even though they do not as yet have the grace of the sacraments, they may still receive from the Church courage, joy, and peace as they proceed along the difficult journey they have begun.
- 96 The blessings may be given by a priest, a deacon, or a qualified catechist appointed by the bishop (see no. 16). The blessings are usually given at the end of a celebration of the word; they may also be given at the end of a meeting for catechesis. When there is some special need, the blessings may be given privately to individual catechumens.

OPTIONAL RITES DURING THE CATECHUMENATE

ANOINTING OF THE CATECHUMENS

- 98 During the period of the catechumenate, a rite of anointing the catechumens, through use of the oil of catechumens, may be celebrated wherever this seems beneficial or desirable. The presiding celebrant for such a first anointing of the catechumens is a priest or a deacon. [103, 127]
- 99 The anointing ordinarily takes place after the homily in a celebration of the word of God (see no. 89), and is conferred on each of the catechumens; this rite of anointing may be celebrated several times during the course of the catechumenate. Further, for particular reasons, a priest or a deacon may confer the anointing privately on individual catechumens. [128]
- 100 The oil used for this rite is to be the oil blessed by the bishop at the chrism Mass, but for pastoral reasons a priest celebrant may bless oil for the rite immediately before the anointing.¹ [129]
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1 See *Rite of Blessing of Oils, Rite of Consecrating the Chrism*, Introduction, no. 7.

PRESENTATIONS

- 103 The presentations normally take place during Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, after the first and third scrutinies. But for pastoral advantage and because the period of purification and enlightenment is rather short, the presentations may be held during the period of the catechumenate, rather than at the regular times. But the presentations are not to take place until a point during the catechumenate when the catechumens are judged ready for these celebrations. [125]
- 104 Both the presentation of the Creed and the presentation of the Lord's Prayer may be anticipated; each may be concluded with the ephphetha rite.¹ When the presentations are anticipated, care is to be taken to substitute the term 'catechumens' for the term 'elect' in all formularies. [126]

Presentations

Presentation of the Creed: see nos. 144-149.

Presentation of the Lord's Prayer: see nos. 165-170.

Ephphetha Rite: see nos. 184-186.

1 But if the rite of recitation of the Creed (nos. 180-183) is also anticipated as one of the 'rites of passage' (see no. 33,6), the ephphetha rite is used only to begin this rite of recitation and not with the presentations.

SECOND STEP: ELECTION OR ENROLMENT OF NAMES

Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant

105 The second step in Christian initiation is the liturgical rite called both election and the enrolment of names, which closes the period of the catechumenate proper, that is, the lengthy period of formation of the catechumens' minds and hearts. The celebration of the rite of election, which usually coincides with the opening of Lent, also marks the beginning of the period of final, more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation, during which the elect will be encouraged to follow Christ with greater generosity. ^[134]

106 At this second step, on the basis of the testimony of godparents and catechists and of the catechumens' reaffirmation of their intention, the Church judges their state of readiness and decides on their advancement toward the sacraments of initiation. Thus the Church makes its 'election,' that is, the choice and admission of those catechumens who have the dispositions that make them fit to take part, at the next major celebration, in the sacraments of initiation.

This step is called election because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts. The step is also called the enrolment of names because as a pledge of fidelity the candidates inscribe their names in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation. ^[22, 133]

107 Before the rite of election is celebrated, the catechumens are expected to have undergone a conversion in mind and in action and to have developed a sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching as well as a spirit of faith and charity. With deliberate will and an enlightened faith they must have the intention to receive the sacraments of the Church, a resolve they will express publicly in the actual celebration of the rite. ^[23]

108 The election, marked with a rite of such solemnity, is the focal point of the Church's concern for the catechumens. Admission to election therefore belongs to the bishop, and the presiding celebrant for the rite of election is the bishop himself or a priest or a deacon who acts as the bishop's delegate (see no. 12).

Before the rite of election the bishop, priests, deacons, catechists, godparents, and the entire community, in accord with their respective responsibilities and in their own way, should, after considering the matter carefully, arrive at a judgment about the catechumens' state of formation and progress. After the election, they should surround the elect with prayer, so that the entire Church will accompany and lead them to encounter Christ. ^[135]

109 Within the rite of election the bishop celebrant or his delegate declares in the presence of the community the Church's approval of the candidates. Therefore to exclude any semblance of mere formality from the rite, there should be a deliberation prior to its celebration to decide on the catechumens' suitability. This deliberation is carried out by the priests, deacons, and catechists involved in the formation of the catechumens, and by the godparents and representatives of the local community. If circumstances suggest, the group of catechumens may also take part. The deliberation may take various forms, depending on local conditions and pastoral needs. During the celebration of election, the assembly is informed of the decision approving the catechumens. ^[23, 137]

- 110 Before the rite of election godparents are chosen by the catechumens; the choice should be made with the consent of the priest, and the persons chosen should, as far as possible, be approved for their role by the local community (see no. 11). In the rite of election the godparents exercise their ministry publicly for the first time. They are called by name at the beginning of the rite to come forward with the catechumens (no. 117); they give testimony on behalf of the catechumens before the community (no. 118); they may also write their names along with the catechumens in the book of the elect (no. 119). ^[136]
- 111 From the day of their election and admission, the catechumens are called ‘the elect.’ They are also described as *competentes* (‘co-petitioners’), because they are joined together in asking for and aspiring to receive the three sacraments of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They are also called *illuminandi* (‘those who will be enlightened’), because baptism itself has been called *illuminatio* (‘enlightenment’) and it fills the newly baptised with the light of faith. In our own times, other names may be applied to the elect that, depending on regions and cultures, are better suited to the people’s understanding and the idiom of the language. ^[24]
- 112 The bishop celebrant or his delegate, however much or little he was involved in the deliberation prior to the rite, has the responsibility of showing in the homily or elsewhere during the celebration the religious and ecclesial significance of the election. The celebrant also declares before all present the Church’s decision and, if appropriate in the circumstances, asks the community to express its approval of the candidates. He also asks the catechumens to give a personal expression of their intention and, in the name of the Church, he carries out the act of admitting them as elect. The celebrant should open to all the divine mystery expressed in the call of the Church and in the liturgical celebration of this mystery. He should remind the faithful to give good example to the elect and along with the elect to prepare themselves for the Easter solemnities. ^[138]
- 113 The sacraments of initiation are celebrated during the Easter solemnities, and preparation for these sacraments is part of the distinctive character of Lent. Accordingly, the rite of election should normally take place on the First Sunday of Lent and the period of final preparation of the elect should coincide with the Lenten season. The plan arranged for the Lenten season will benefit the elect by reason of both its liturgical structure and the participation of the community. For urgent pastoral reasons, especially in secondary mission stations, it is permitted to celebrate the rite of election during the week preceding or following the First Sunday of Lent.
- When, because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, the rite of election is celebrated outside Lent, it is to be celebrated about six weeks before the sacraments of initiation, in order to allow sufficient time for the scrutinies and presentations. The rite is not to be celebrated on a solemnity of the liturgical year (see no. 29). ^[139]
- 114 The rite should take place in the church or, if necessary, in some other suitable and fitting place. ^[140]
- 115 The rite is celebrated within Mass, after the homily, and should be celebrated within the Mass of the First Sunday of Lent. If, for pastoral reasons, the rite is celebrated on a different day, the texts and the readings of the ritual Mass ‘Christian Initiation: Election or Enrolment of Names’ may always be used. When the Mass of the day is celebrated and its readings are not suitable, the readings are those given for the First Sunday of Lent or others may be chosen from elsewhere in the Lectionary.

When celebrated outside Mass, the rite takes place after the readings and the homily and is concluded with the dismissal of both the elect and the faithful. ^[140, 141]

PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The water that I shall give will turn into a spring of eternal life

- 125 The period of purification and enlightenment, which the rite of election begins, customarily coincides with Lent. In the liturgy and liturgical catechesis of Lent the reminder of baptism already received or the preparation for its reception, as well as the theme of repentance, renew the entire community along with those being prepared to celebrate the paschal mystery, in which each of the elect will share through the sacraments of initiation.¹ For both the elect and the local community, therefore, the Lenten season is a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the paschal mystery. ^[21, 152]
- 126 This is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they search their own consciences and do penance. This period is intended as well to enlighten the minds and hearts of the elect with a deeper knowledge of Christ the Saviour. The celebration of certain rites, particularly the scrutinies (see nos. 128-133) and the presentations (see nos. 134-136), brings about this process of purification and enlightenment and extends it over the course of the entire Lenten season. ^[22, 153]
- 127 Holy Saturday is the day of proximate preparation for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation and on that day the rites of preparation (see nos. 172-179) may be celebrated. ^[26]

1 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14.

rites belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment

Scrutinies

- 128 The scrutinies, which are solemnly celebrated on Sundays and are reinforced by an exorcism, are rites for self-searching and repentance and have above all a spiritual purpose. The scrutinies are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good. For the scrutinies are celebrated in order to deliver the elect from the power of sin and Satan, to protect them against temptation, and to give them strength in Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. These rites, therefore, should complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all. [25, 154]
- 129 Because they are asking for the three sacraments of initiation, the elect must have the intention of achieving an intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church, and they are expected particularly to progress in genuine self-knowledge through serious examination of their lives and true repentance. [155]
- 130 In order to inspire in the elect a desire for purification and redemption by Christ, three scrutinies are celebrated. By this means, first of all, the elect are instructed gradually about the mystery of sin, from which the whole world and every person longs to be delivered and thus saved from its present and future consequences. Second, their spirit is filled with Christ the Redeemer, who is the living water (gospel of the Samaritan woman in the first scrutiny), the light of the world (gospel of the man born blind in the second scrutiny), the resurrection and the life (gospel of Lazarus in the third scrutiny). From the first to the final scrutiny the elect should progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation. [157]
- 131 In the rite of exorcism (nos. 141, 155, 162), which is celebrated by a priest or a deacon, the elect, who have already learned from the Church as their mother the mystery of deliverance from sin by Christ, are freed from the effects of sin and from the influence of the devil. They receive new strength in the midst of their spiritual journey and they open their hearts to receive the gifts of the Saviour. [156]
- 132 The priest or deacon who is the presiding celebrant should carry out the celebration in such a way that the faithful in the assembly will also derive benefit from the liturgy of the scrutinies and join in the intercessions for the elect. [158]
- 133 The scrutinies should take place within the ritual Masses ‘Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies,’ which are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent; the readings with their chants are those given for these Sundays in the Lectionary for Mass, Year A. When, for pastoral reasons, these ritual Masses cannot be celebrated on their proper Sundays, they are celebrated on other Sundays of Lent or even convenient days during the week.

When, because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, the period of purification and enlightenment takes place outside Lent, the scrutinies are celebrated on Sundays or even on weekdays, with the usual intervals between celebrations. They are not celebrated on solemnities of the liturgical year (see no. 30).

In every case the ritual Masses ‘Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies’ are celebrated and in this sequence: for the first scrutiny the Mass with the gospel of the Samaritan woman; for the

second, the Mass with the gospel of the man born blind; for the third, the Mass with the gospel of Lazarus. [159]

PRESENTATIONS

- 134 The presentations take place after the celebration of the scrutinies, unless, for pastoral reasons, they have been anticipated during the period of the catechumenate (see nos. 79, 103–104). Thus, with the catechumenal formation of the elect completed, the Church lovingly entrusts to them the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, the ancient texts that have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church’s faith and prayer. These texts are presented in order to enlighten the elect. The Creed, as it recalls the wonderful deeds of God for the salvation of the human race, suffuses the vision of the elect with the sure light of faith. The Lord’s Prayer fills them with a deeper realization of the new spirit of adoption by which they will call God their Father, especially in the midst of the eucharistic assembly. [25, 181]
- 135 The first presentation to the elect is the presentation of the Creed, during the week following the first scrutiny. The elect are to commit the Creed to memory and they will recite it publicly (nos. 180–183) prior to professing their faith in accordance with that Creed on the day of their baptism. [183, 184]
- 136 The second presentation to the elect is the presentation of the Lord’s Prayer, during the week following the third scrutiny (but, if necessary, this presentation may be deferred for inclusion in the preparation rites of Holy Saturday; see no. 172). From antiquity the Lord’s Prayer has been the prayer proper to those who in baptism have received the spirit of adoption. When the elect have been baptised and take part in their first celebration of the eucharist, they will join the rest of the faithful in saying the Lord’s Prayer. [188, 189]

PREPARATION RITES ON HOLY SATURDAY

- 172 In proximate preparation for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation:
1. The elect are to be advised that on Holy Saturday they should refrain from their usual activities, spend their time in prayer and reflection, and, as far as they can, observe a fast.
 2. When it is possible to bring the elect together on Holy Saturday for reflection and prayer, some or all of the following rites may be celebrated as an immediate preparation for the sacraments: the presentation of the Lord's Prayer, if it has been deferred (see nos. 136, 165-167), the 'return' or recitation of the Creed (nos. 180-183), the ephphetha rite (nos. 184-186), the choosing of a baptismal name (nos. 187-189), and the anointing with the oil of catechumens (nos. 190-194; for the rite of anointing the celebrant is a priest or deacon). [26, 193]
- 173 The choice and arrangement of these rites should be guided by what best suits the particular circumstances of the elect, but the following should be observed with regard to their celebration:
1. In cases where celebration of the presentation of the Creed was not possible, the recitation of the Creed is not celebrated.
 2. When both the recitation of the Creed and the ephphetha rite are celebrated, the ephphetha rite immediately precedes the 'Prayer before the Recitation' (no. 182).
 3. When included as a preparatory rite, the anointing with the oil of catechumens (nos. 190-194), which may be celebrated separately, may also be combined with the recitation of the Creed, either beforehand to prepare for the recitation or afterward to reinforce it. [195, 197, 206]

MODEL FOR A CELEBRATION OF THE PREPARATION RITES

- 174 **SONG:** When the elect have gathered, the celebration begins with a suitable song.
- 175 **GREETING:** After the singing, the celebrant greets the elect and any of the faithful who are present, using one of the greetings for Mass or other suitable words.
- 176 **READING OF THE WORD OF GOD:** Where indicated in the particular rites, the reading of the word of God follows; the readings may be chosen from those suggested for each rite. If more than one reading is used, a suitable psalm or hymn may be sung between the readings.
- 177 **HOMILY:** Where indicated in the particular rites, a brief homily or an explanation of the text follows the reading of the word of God.
- 178 **CELEBRATION OF THE RITES CHOSEN:** See nos. 180-194.
- 179 **CONCLUDING RITES:** The celebration may be concluded with the prayer of blessing and dismissal given in nos. 196-197.

RECITATION OF THE CREED

- 180 The rite of recitation of the Creed prepares the elect for the profession of faith they will make immediately before they are baptised (no. 219); the rite also instructs them in their duty to proclaim the message of the Gospel. [194]

EPHPHETHA RITE

- 184 By the power of its symbolism the ephphetha rite, or rite of opening the ears and mouth, impresses on the elect their need of grace in order that they may hear the word of God and profess it for their salvation. [200]

CHOOSING A BAPTISMAL NAME

- 187 The rite of choosing a baptismal name may be celebrated on Holy Saturday, unless it was included in the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (see no. 73). The elect may choose a new name, which is either a traditional Christian name or a name of regional usage that is not incompatible with Christian beliefs. Where it seems better suited to the circumstances and the elect are not too numerous, the naming may consist simply in an explanation of the given name of each of the elect. [203]

ANOINTING WITH THE OIL OF CATECHUMENS

- 190 If the conference of bishops has not decided on its omission altogether (see no. 33,7), the anointing with the oil of catechumens that ordinarily forms part of the liturgy of baptism (no. 218) may be anticipated on Holy Saturday to save time in the celebration of the Easter Vigil. The presiding celebrant is a priest or a deacon. [206]
- 191 When this anointing is anticipated, care is to be taken that the elect who are to be baptised understand its significance. The anointing with oil symbolizes their need for God's help and strength so that, undeterred by the bonds of the past and overcoming the opposition of the devil, they will forthrightly take the step of professing their faith and will hold fast to it unfalteringly throughout their lives. [212]
- 192 The oil used for this rite is to be the oil blessed by the bishop at the chrism Mass, but for pastoral reasons a priest celebrant may bless oil for the rite immediately before the anointing. [207]

THIRD STEP: CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

*When we were baptised we joined Jesus in death
so that we might walk in the newness of his life*

- 198 The third step in the Christian initiation of adults is the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist. Through this final step the elect, receiving pardon for their sins, are admitted into the people of God. They are graced with adoption as children of God and are led by the Holy Spirit into the promised fulness of time begun in Christ¹ and, as they share in the eucharistic sacrifice and meal, even to a foretaste of the kingdom of God. [27]
- 199 The usual time for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation is the Easter Vigil (see no. 23), at which preferably the bishop himself presides as celebrant, at least for the initiation of those who are fourteen years old or older (see no. 12). As indicated in the Roman Missal, ‘Easter Vigil’ (no. 44), the conferral of the sacraments follows the blessing of the water. [208]
- 200 When the celebration takes place outside the usual time (see nos. 26–27), care should be taken to ensure that it has a markedly paschal character (see *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 6). Thus the texts for one of the ritual Masses ‘Christian Initiation: Baptism’ given in the Roman Missal are used, and the readings are chosen from those given in the Lectionary for Mass, ‘Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil.’ [209]

Celebration of Baptism

- 201 The celebration of baptism has as its centre and high point the baptismal washing and the invocation of the Holy Trinity. Beforehand there are rites that have an inherent relationship to the baptismal washing: first, the blessing of water, then the renunciation of sin by the elect, their anointing with the oil of catechumens, and their profession of faith. Following the baptismal washing, the effects received through this sacrament are given expression in the explanatory rites: the anointing with chrism (when confirmation does not immediately follow baptism), the clothing with a white garment, and the presentation of a lighted candle. [28, 33]
- 202 PRAYER OVER THE WATER: The celebration of baptism begins with the blessing of water, even when the sacraments of initiation are received outside the Easter season. Should the sacraments be celebrated outside the Easter Vigil but during the Easter season (see no. 26), the water blessed at the Vigil is used, but a prayer of thanksgiving, having the same themes as the blessing, is included. The blessing declares the religious meaning of water as God’s creation and the sacramental use of water in the unfolding of the paschal mystery, and the blessing is also a remembrance of God’s wonderful works in the history of salvation.

The blessing thus introduces an invocation of the Trinity at the very outset of the celebration of baptism. For it calls to mind the mystery of God’s love from the beginning of the world and the creation of the human race; by invoking the Holy Spirit and proclaiming Christ’s death and resurrection, it impresses on the mind the newness of Christian baptism, by which we share in his own death and resurrection and receive the holiness of God himself. [29, 210]

203 **RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH:** In their renunciation of sin and profession of faith those to be baptised express their explicit faith in the paschal mystery that has already been recalled in the blessing of water and that will be connoted by the words of the sacrament soon to be spoken by the baptising minister. Adults are not saved unless they come forward of their own accord and with the will to accept God's gift through their own belief. The faith of those to be baptised is not simply the faith of the Church, but the personal faith of each one of them and each one of them is expected to keep it a living faith.

Therefore the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith are an apt prelude to baptism, the sacrament of that faith by which the elect hold fast to God and receive new birth from him. Because of the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith, which form the one rite, the elect will not be baptised merely passively but will receive this great sacrament with the active resolve to renounce error and to hold fast to God. By their own personal act in the rite of renouncing sin and professing their faith, the elect, as was prefigured in the first covenant with the patriarchs, renounce sin and Satan in order to commit themselves for ever to the promise of the Saviour and to the mystery of the Trinity. By professing their faith before the celebrant and the entire community, the elect express the intention, developed to maturity during the preceding periods of initiation, to enter into a new covenant with Christ. Thus these adults embrace the faith that through divine help the Church has handed down, and are baptised in that faith. ^[30, 211]

204 **ANOINTING WITH THE OIL OF CATECHUMENS:** The anointing with the oil of catechumens takes place between the renunciation and the profession of faith, unless this anointing has been anticipated in the preparation rites of Holy Saturday (see no. 190) or the conference of bishops has decreed its omission from the baptismal rites (see no. 33,7). This anointing symbolizes the need of the elect for God's help and strength so that, undeterred by the bonds of the past and overcoming the opposition of the devil, they will forthrightly take the step of professing their faith and will hold fast to it unfalteringly throughout their lives. ^[212]

205 **BAPTISM:** Immediately after their profession of living faith in Christ's paschal mystery, the elect come forward and receive that mystery as expressed in the washing with water; thus once the elect have professed faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, invoked by the celebrant, the divine persons act so that those they have chosen receive divine adoption and become members of the people of God. ^[31]

206 Therefore in the celebration of baptism the washing with water should take on its full importance as the sign of that mystical sharing in Christ's death and resurrection through which those who believe in his name die to sin and rise to eternal life. Either immersion or the pouring of water should be chosen for the rite, whichever will serve in individual cases and in the various traditions and circumstances to ensure the clear understanding that this washing is not a mere purification rite but the sacrament of being joined to Christ. ^[32]

207 **EXPLANATORY RITES:** The baptismal washing is followed by rites that give expression to the effects of the sacrament just received. The anointing with chrism is a sign of the royal priesthood of the baptised and that they are now numbered in the company of the people of God. The clothing with the baptismal garment signifies the new dignity they have received. The presentation of a lighted candle shows that they are called to walk as befits the children of the light. ^[33]

Celebration of Confirmation

208 In accord with the ancient practise followed in the Roman liturgy, adults are not to be baptised without receiving confirmation immediately afterward, unless some serious reason stands in the way. The conjunction of the two celebrations signifies the unity of the paschal mystery, the close 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 Holy Spirit come with the Father to those who are baptised. ^[34]

209 Accordingly, confirmation is conferred after the explanatory rites of baptism, the anointing after baptism (no. 222) being omitted. ^[35]

The Neophytes' First Sharing in the Celebration of the Eucharist

210 Finally in the celebration of the eucharist, as they take part for the first time and with full right, the newly baptised reach the culminating point in their Christian initiation. In this eucharist the neophytes, now raised to the ranks of the royal priesthood, have an active part in both the general intercessions and, to the extent possible, in bringing the gifts to the altar. With the entire community they share in the offering of the sacrifice and say the Lord's Prayer, giving expression to the spirit of adoption as God's children that they have received in baptism. When in communion they receive the body that was given for us and the blood that was shed, the neophytes are strengthened in the gifts they have already received and are given a foretaste of the eternal banquet. ^[36]

1 Vatican Council II. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, no. 48; also Ephesians 1:10.

PERIOD OF POSTBAPTISMAL CATECHESIS OR MYSTAGOGY

*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people; praise God
who called you out of darkness and into his marvellous light*

- 234 The third step of Christian initiation, the celebration of the sacraments, is followed by the final period, the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and doing the works of charity. To strengthen the neophytes as they begin to walk in newness of life, the community of the faithful, their godparents, and their parish priests (pastors) should give them thoughtful and friendly help. ^[37]
- 235 The neophytes are, as the term ‘mystagogy’ suggests, introduced into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message they have learned and above all through their experience of the sacraments they have received. For they have truly been renewed in mind, tasted more deeply the sweetness of God’s word, received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and grown to know the goodness of the Lord. Out of this experience, which belongs to Christians and increases as it is lived, they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world. ^[38]
- 236 Just as their new participation in the sacraments enlightens the neophytes’ understanding of the Scriptures, so too it increases their contact with the rest of the faithful and has an impact on the experience of the community. As a result, interaction between the neophytes and the faithful is made easier and more beneficial. The period of postbaptismal catechesis is of great significance for both the neophytes and the rest of the faithful. Through it the neophytes, with the help of their godparents, should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful. The faithful, in turn, should derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook. ^[39, 235]
- 237 Since the distinctive spirit and power of the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy derive from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community, its main setting is the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season. Besides being occasions for the newly baptised to gather with the community and share in the mysteries, these celebrations include particularly suitable readings from the Lectionary, especially the readings for Year A. Even when Christian initiation has been celebrated outside the usual times, the texts for these Sunday Masses of the Easter season may be used. ^[40]
- 238 All the neophytes and their godparents should make an effort to take part in the Masses for the neophytes and the entire local community should be invited to participate with them. Special places in the congregation are to be reserved for the neophytes and their godparents. The homily and, as circumstances suggest, the general intercessions should take into account the presence and needs of the neophytes. ^[236]
- 239 To close the period of postbaptismal catechesis, some sort of celebration should be held at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday; festivities in keeping with local custom may accompany the occasion. ^[237]

- 240 On the anniversary of their baptism the neophytes should be brought together in order to give thanks to God, to share with one another their spiritual experiences, and to renew their commitment. [238]
- 241 To show his pastoral concern for these new members of the Church, the bishop, particularly if he was unable to preside at the sacraments of initiation himself, should arrange, if possible, to meet the recently baptised at least once in the year and to preside at a celebration of the eucharist with them. At this Mass they may receive holy communion under both kinds. [239]

PART II: RITES FOR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES

1 CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE REACHED CATECHETICAL AGE

Do not keep the children from me

- 242 This form of the rite of Christian initiation is intended for children, not baptised as infants, who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age. They seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians or, with parental permission, on their own initiative. Such children are capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience. But they cannot yet be treated as adults because, at this stage of their lives, they are dependent on their parents or guardians and are still strongly influenced by their companions and their social surroundings. ^[306]
- 243 The Christian initiation of these children requires both a conversion that is personal and somewhat developed, in proportion to their age, and the assistance of the education they need. The process of initiation thus must be adapted both to their spiritual progress, that is, to the children's growth in faith, and to the catechetical instruction they receive. Accordingly, as with adults, their initiation is to be extended over several years, if need be, before they receive the sacraments. Also as with adults, their initiation is marked by several steps, the liturgical rites of acceptance into the order of catechumens (nos. 250–266), penitential rites or scrutinies (nos. 267–279), and the celebration of the sacraments of initiation (nos. 280–305); corresponding to the periods of adult initiation are the periods of the children's catechetical formation that lead up to and follow the steps of their initiation. ^[307]
- 244 The children's progress in the formation they receive depends on the help and example of their companions and on the influence of their parents. Both these factors should therefore be taken into account.
1. Since the children to be initiated often belong to a group of children of the same age who are already baptised and are preparing for confirmation and eucharist, their initiation progresses gradually and within the supportive setting of this group of companions.
 2. It is to be hoped that the children will also receive as much help and example as possible from the parents, whose permission is required for the children to be initiated and to live the Christian life. The period of initiation will also provide a good opportunity for the family to have contact with priests and catechists. ^[308]
- 245 For the celebrations proper to this form of Christian initiation, it is advantageous, as circumstances allow, to form a group of several children who are in this same situation, in order that by example they may help one another in their progress as catechumens. ^[309]
- 246 In regard to the time for the celebration of the steps of initiation, it is preferable that, if possible, the final period of preparation, begun by the second step, the penitential rites, coincide with Lent and that the final step, celebration of the sacraments of initiation, take place at the Easter Vigil (see no. 8). Nevertheless before the children are admitted to the sacraments at Easter, it should be established that they are ready for the sacraments. Celebration at this time must also be consistent with the programme of catechetical instruction they are receiving,

since the candidates should, if possible, come to the sacraments of initiation at the time that their baptised companions are to receive confirmation or eucharist. [310]

- 247 For children of this age, at the rites during the process of initiation, it is generally preferable not to have the whole parish community present, but simply represented. Thus these rites should be celebrated with the active participation of a congregation that consists of a suitable number of the faithful, the parents, family, members of the catechetical group, and a few adult friends. [311]
- 248 Each conference of bishops may adapt and add to the form of the rite given here, in order that the rite will more effectively satisfy local needs, conditions, and pastoral requirements. The rites for the presentation of the Creed (nos. 144-149) and the Lord's Prayer (nos. 165-170), adapted to the age of the children, may be incorporated. When the form of the rite of initiation for children is translated, the instructions and prayers should be adapted to their understanding. Furthermore, in addition to any liturgical text translated from the Latin *editio typica*, the conference of bishops may also approve an original, alternative text that says the same thing in a way more suited to children (see *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 32). [312]
- 249 In following this form of the rite of Christian initiation the celebrant should make full and wise use of the options mentioned in *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (nos. 34-35), in the *Rite of Baptism for Children*, Introduction (no. 31), and in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Introduction (no. 35). [313]

FIRST STEP: ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS

Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own

- 250 It is important that this rite be celebrated with an actively participating but small congregation, since the presence of a large group might make the children uncomfortable (see no. 247). When possible, the children's parents or guardians should be present. If they cannot come, they should indicate that they have given consent to their children and their place should be taken by 'sponsors' (see no. 10), that is, suitable members of the Church who act on this occasion for the parents and present the children. The presiding celebrant is a priest or deacon. [314]
- 251 The celebration takes place in the church or in a place that, according to the age and understanding of the children, can help them to experience a warm welcome. As circumstances suggest, the first part of the rite, 'Receiving the Children,' is carried out at the entrance of the place chosen for the celebration, and the second part of the rite, 'Liturgy of the Word,' takes place inside.

The celebration is not normally combined with celebration of the eucharist. [315, 329]

SECOND STEP: PENITENTIAL RITES (SCRUTINIES)

Create in me a new heart and a new spirit

- 267 These penitential rites, which mark the second step in the children's Christian initiation, are major occasions in their catechumenate. They are held within a celebration of the word of God as a kind of scrutiny, similar to the scrutinies in the adult rite. Thus the guidelines given for the adult rite (nos. 128-133) may be followed and adapted, since the children's penitential rites have a similar purpose. [330]
- 268 Because the penitential rites normally belong to the period of final preparation for baptism, the condition for their celebration is that the children are approaching the maturity of faith and understanding requisite for baptism. [331]
- 269 Along with the children, their godparents and their baptised companions from the catechetical group participate in the celebration of these penitential rites. Therefore the rites are to be adapted in such a way that they also benefit the participants who are not catechumens. In particular, these penitential rites are a proper occasion for baptised children of the catechetical group to celebrate the sacrament of penance for the first time. When this is the case, care should be taken to include explanations, prayers, and ritual acts that relate to the celebration of the sacrament with these children. [332]
- 270 The penitential rites are celebrated during Lent, if the catechumens are to be initiated at Easter; if not, at the most suitable time. At least one penitential rite is to be celebrated, and, if this can be arranged conveniently, a second should follow after an appropriate interval. The texts for a second celebration are to be composed on the model of the first given here, but the texts for the intercessions and prayer of exorcism given in the adult rite (nos. 140-141, 154-155, 161-162) are used, with the requisite modifications. [333]

THIRD STEP: CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Wake up and rise from death: Christ will shine upon you

- 280 In order to bring out the paschal character of baptism, celebration of the sacraments of initiation should preferably take place at the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday, the day that the Church devotes to the remembrance of Christ's resurrection (see *Rite of Baptism for Children*, Introduction, no. 9). But the provisions of no. 246 should also guide the choice of time for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. [343]
- 281 At this third step of their Christian initiation, the children will receive the sacrament of baptism, the bishop or priest who baptises them will also confer confirmation, and the children will for the first time participate in the liturgy of the eucharist. [344]
- 282 If the sacraments of initiation are celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, the Mass of the day or one of the ritual Masses in the Roman Missal, 'Christian Initiation: Baptism' is used. The readings are chosen from those given in the Lectionary for Mass, 'Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil' (Vol. III, pp. 18-47); but the readings for the Sunday or feast on which the celebration takes place may be used instead. [345]
- 283 All the children to be baptised are to be accompanied by their own godparent or godparents, chosen by themselves and approved by the priest (see no. 11; *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 10). [346]
- 284 Baptised children of the catechetical group may be completing their Christian initiation in the sacraments of confirmation and the eucharist at this same celebration. When the bishop himself will not be the celebrant, he should grant the faculty to confirm such children to the priest who will be the celebrant.¹ For their confirmation, previously baptised children of the catechetical group are to have their own sponsors. If possible, these should be the persons who were godparents for their baptism, but other qualified persons may be chosen.²

I See *Rite of Confirmation*. Introduction, no. 7, b.

2 See *ibid.*, nos. 5 and 6.

PERIOD OF POSTBAPTISMAL CATECHESIS OR MYSTAGOGY

The Father chose us to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ

- 306 A period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy should be provided to assist the young neophytes and their companions who have completed their Christian initiation. This period can be arranged by an adaptation of the guidelines given for adults (nos. 234-241). [369]

2 CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

He gave power to become children of God to all who believe in his name

307 Exceptional circumstances may arise in which the local bishop, in individual cases, can allow the use of a form of Christian initiation that is simpler than the usual, complete rite (see no. 34,4).

The bishop may permit this simpler form to consist in the abbreviated form of the rite (nos. 316-345) that is carried out in one celebration. Or he may permit an expansion of this abbreviated rite, so that there are celebrations not only of the sacraments of initiation but also of one or more of the rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate and to the period of purification and enlightenment (see nos. 308-311).

The extraordinary circumstances in question are either events that prevent the candidate from completing all the steps of the catechumenate or a depth of Christian conversion and a degree of religious maturity that lead the local bishop to decide that the candidate may receive baptism without delay. [240]

EXPANDED FORM

308 Extraordinary circumstances, for example, sickness, old age, change of residence, long absence for travel, may sometimes either prevent a candidate from celebrating the rite of acceptance that leads to the period of the catechumenate or, having begun the catechumenate, from completing it by participation in all the rites belonging to the period. Yet merely to use the abbreviated form of the rite given in nos. 316-345 could mean a spiritual loss for the candidate, who would be deprived of the benefits of a longer preparation for the sacraments of initiation. It is therefore important that, with the bishop's permission, an expanded form of initiation be developed by the incorporation of elements from the complete rite for the Christian initiation of adults. [274]

309 Through such an expansion of the abbreviated rite a new candidate can reach the same level as those who are already advanced in the catechumenate, since some of the earlier elements from the full rite can be added, for example, the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (nos. 48-74) or the minor exorcisms (no. 94) and blessings (no. 97) from the period of the catechumenate. The expansion also makes it possible for a candidate who had begun the catechumenate with others, but was forced to interrupt it, to complete the catechumenate alone by celebrating, in addition to the sacraments of initiation (see nos. 198-210), elements from the full rite, for example, the rite of election (see nos. 105-115) and rites belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment (see nos. 128-136). [275]

310 Parish priests (pastors) can arrange this expanded form of initiation by taking the abbreviated form as a basis, then choosing wisely from the full rite to make adaptations in any of the following ways:

1. supplementing the abbreviated form: for example, adding rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate (nos. 81-102) or adding the presentations (nos. 144-149; 165-169);

2. making the rite of 'Receiving the Candidate' or the 'Liturgy of the Word' in the abbreviated rite separate or expanded celebrations. As to 'Receiving the Candidate' (nos: 316-321), this can be expanded by replacing no. 318 and using elements from the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (nos. 48-74); or, depending on the candidate's state of preparation, by celebrating the rite of election (nos. 116-124) in place of nos. 319-320. As to the 'Liturgy of the Word,' after the readings, the intercessions, penitential rite, and prayer of exorcism, nos. 325-327, can be adapted by use of the elements in the scrutinies (nos. 139-141, 153-155, 160-162).
 3. replacing elements of the complete rite with elements of the abbreviated form; or combining the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens (nos. 48-74) and the rite of election (nos. 116-124) at the time of receiving a properly disposed candidate (which is comparable to the time of receiving interested inquirers in the period of the precatechumenate; see no. 39,3). [276]
- 311 When this expanded form of initiation is arranged, care should be taken to ensure that:
1. the candidate has received a full catechesis;
 2. the rite is celebrated with the active participation of an assembly;
 3. after receiving the sacraments the neophyte has the benefit of a period of postbaptismal catechesis, if at all possible. [277]

ABBREVIATED FORM

- 312 Before the abbreviated form of the rite is celebrated the candidate must have gone through an adequate period of instruction and preparation before baptism, in order to purify his or her motives for requesting baptism and to grow stronger in conversion and faith. The candidate should also have chosen godparents or a godparent (see no. 11) and become acquainted with the local Christian community (see nos. 39 and 75,2). [241]
- 313 This rite includes elements that express the presentation and welcoming of the candidate and that also express the candidate's clear and firm resolve to request Christian initiation, as well as the Church's approval of the candidate. A suitable liturgy of the word is also celebrated, then the sacraments of initiation. [242]
- 314 Normally the rite is celebrated within Mass. The choice of readings should be in keeping with the character of the celebration; they may be either those of the day or those in the Lectionary for Mass: ritual Mass, 'Christian Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil' (Vol. III, pp. 18-47). The other Mass texts are those of one of the ritual Masses 'Christian Initiation: Baptism' (Vol. III, pp. 59-73) or of another suitable Mass. After receiving baptism and confirmation, the candidate takes part for the first time in the celebration of the eucharist. [243]
- 315 If at all possible, the celebration should 'take place on a Sunday (see no. 27), with the local community taking an active part. [244]

3 CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF A PERSON IN DANGER OF DEATH

*By becoming coheirs with Christ, we share in his sufferings;
we will also share in his glory*

346 Persons, whether catechumens or not, who are in danger of death but are not at the point of death and so are able to hear and answer the questions involved may be baptised with this short rite. [278]

347 Persons who have already been accepted as catechumens must make a promise that upon recovery they will complete the usual catechesis. Persons who are not catechumens must give serious indication of their conversion to Christ and renunciation of pagan worship and must not be seen to be attached to anything that conflicts with the moral life (for example, ‘simultaneous polygamy’). They must also promise that upon recovery they will go through the complete programme of initiation as it applies to them. [279]

348 This shorter rite is designed particularly for use by catechists and laypersons; a priest or a deacon may use it in a case of emergency. But normally a priest or a deacon is to use the abbreviated form of Christian initiation given in nos. 316–345, making any changes required by circumstances of place and time.

The minister of baptism who is a priest should, when the chrism is at hand and there is time, confer confirmation after the baptism; in this case there is no postbaptismal anointing.

The minister of baptism who is a priest, a deacon, or a catechist or lay-person having permission to distribute communion should, if this is possible, give the eucharist to the newly baptised person. In this case before the beginning of the celebration of the rite the blessed sacrament is placed reverently on a table covered with a white cloth. [280]

349 In the case of a person who is at the point of death, that is, whose death is imminent, and time is short, the minister, omitting everything else, pours natural water (even if not blessed) on the head of the sick person, while saying the usual sacramental form (see *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 23). [281]

350 If persons who were baptised when in danger of death or at the point of death recover their health, they are to be given a suitable formation, be welcomed at the church in due time, and there receive the other sacraments of initiation. In such cases the guidelines given in nos. 376–386 for baptised but uncatechized adults are followed, with the necessary changes. The same guidelines should be applied when sick persons recover after receiving not only baptism but also confirmation and eucharist as viaticum. [282, 294]

4 PREPARATION OF UNCATECHIZED ADULTS FOR CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God

- 376 The following pastoral guidelines concern adults who were baptised as infants but did not receive further catechetical formation nor, consequently, the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist. These suggestion, may also be applied to similar cases, especially that of an adult who recoven after being baptised in danger of death or at the point of de<:,th (see no. 350) Even though uncatechized adults have not yet heard the message 01 the mystery of Christ, their status differs from that of catechumens, since by baptism they have already become members of the Church and children of God. Hence their conversion is based on the baptism they have already received, the effects of which they must develop. ^[295]
- 377 As in the case of catechumens, the preparation of these adults require! a considerable time (see no. 76), during which the faith infused in baptism must grow in them and take deep root through the pastoral formation they receive. A programme of training, catechesis suited to their needs, contact with the community of the faithful, and participation in certain liturgical rites are needed in order to strengthen them in the Christian life. ^[296]
- 378 For the most part the plan of catechesis corresponds to the one laid down for catechumens (see no. 75,1). But in the process of catechesis the priest, deacon, or catechist should take into account that these adults have a special status because they are already baptised. ^[297]
- 379 Just as it helps catechumens, the Christian community should also help these adults by its love and prayer (see nos. 4 and 75,2) and by testifying to their suitability when it is time for them to be admitted to the sacraments (see nos. 107, 108). ^[298]
- 380 A sponsor presents these adults to the community (see no. 10). During the period of their catechetical formation, they all choose godparents (a godfather, a godmother, or both) approved by the priest. Their godparents work with these adults as the representatives of the community and have the same responsibilities as the godparents have toward catechumens (see no. 11). The same persons who were the godparents at the baptism of these adults may be chosen as godparents at this time, provided they are truly capable of carrying out the responsibilities of godparents. ^[299]
- 381 The period of preparation is made holy by means of liturgical celebrations. The first of these is a rite by which the adults are welcomed into the community and acknowledge themselves to be part of it because they have already been marked with the seal of baptism. ^[300]
- 382 Once a rite of reception has been celebrated, these adults take part in celebrations of the word of God, both those of the entire Christian assembly and those celebrations arranged specially for the benefit of the catechumens (see nos. 81-84). ^[301]
- 383 As a sign of God's activity in this work of preparation, some of the rites belonging to the catechumenate, especially suited to the condition and spiritual needs of these baptised adults, can be used to advantage. Among these are the presentation of the Creed (nos. 144-149) and of the Lord's Prayer (nos. 165-169) or also a presentation of a book of the Gospels (no. 64). ^[302]

- 384 The period of catechesis for these adults should be properly coordinated with the liturgical year. This is particularly true of its final phase, which should as a rule coincide with Lent. During the Lenten season penitential services should be arranged in such a way as to prepare these adults for the celebration of the sacrament of penance. ^[303]
- 385 The high point of their entire formation will normally be the Easter Vigil. At that time they will make a profession of the faith in which they were baptised, receive the sacrament of confirmation, and take part in the eucharist. If, because neither the bishop nor another authorized minister is present, confirmation cannot be given at the Easter Vigil, it is to be celebrated as soon as possible and, if this can be arranged, during the Easter season. ^[304]
- 386 These adults will complete their Christian formation and become fully integrated into the community by going through the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy with the newly baptised members of the Christian community. ^[305]

5 RECEPTION OF BAPTISED CHRISTIANS INTO THE FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

All of you are one, united in Christ Jesus

- 387 This is the liturgical rite by which a person born and baptised in a separated ecclesial Community is received, according to the Latin rite,¹ into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The rite is so arranged that no greater burden than necessary (see Acts 15:28) is required for the establishment of communion and unity.² [R.1]
- 388 In the case of Eastern Christians who enter into the fulness of Catholic communion, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith, even if such persons are permitted, in virtue of recourse to the Apostolic See, to transfer to the Latin rite.³ [R.2]
- 389 In regard to the manner of celebrating the rite of reception:
1. The rite should appear clearly as a celebration of the Church and have as its high point eucharistic communion. For this reason the rite should normally take place within Mass.
 2. Any appearance of triumphalism should be carefully avoided and the manner of celebrating this Mass should be decided beforehand and with a view to the particular circumstances. Both the ecumenical implications and the bond between the candidate and the parish community should be considered. Often it will be preferable to celebrate the Mass with only a few relatives and friends. If for a serious reason Mass cannot be celebrated, the reception should at least take place within a liturgy of the word, whenever this is possible. The person to be received into full communion should be consulted about the form of reception. [R.3]
- 390 If the rite of reception is celebrated outside Mass, the Mass in which for the first time the newly received will take part with the Catholic community should be celebrated as soon as possible, in order to make clear the connection between the reception and eucharistic communion. [R.4]
- 391 The baptised Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, adapted to individual pastoral requirements, for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The candidate should learn to deepen an inner adherence to the Church, where he or she will find the fulness of his or her baptism. During the period of preparation the candidate may share in worship in conformity with the provisions of the *Ecumenical Directory*.
- Anything that would equate candidates for reception with those who are catechumens is to be absolutely avoided. [R.5]
- 392 One who was born and baptised outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church is not required to make an abjuration of heresy, but simply a profession of faith.⁴ [R.6]
- 393 The sacrament of baptism cannot be repeated and therefore it is not permitted to confer it again conditionally, unless there is a reasonable doubt about the fact or validity of the baptism already conferred. If serious investigation raises such prudent doubt and it seems necessary to confer baptism again conditionally, the minister should explain beforehand the reasons why this is being done and a nonsolemn form of baptism is to be used.⁵

- The local Ordinary is to decide in each case what rites are to be included or excluded in conferring conditional baptism. [R.7]
- 394 It is the office of the bishop to receive baptised Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church. But a priest to whom the bishop entrusts the celebration of the rite has the faculty of confirming the candidate within the rite of reception,⁶ unless the person received has already been validly confirmed. [R.8]
- 395 If the profession of faith and reception take place within Mass, the candidate, according to his or her own conscience, should make a confession of sins beforehand, first informing the confessor that he or she is about to be received into full communion. Any confessor who is lawfully approved may hear the candidate's confession. [R.9]
- 396 At the reception, the candidate should be accompanied by a sponsor and may even have two sponsors. If someone has had the principal part in guiding or preparing the candidate, he or she should be the sponsor. [R.10]
- 397 In the eucharistic celebration within which reception into full communion takes place or, if the reception takes place outside Mass, in the Mass that follows at a later time, communion under both kinds is permitted for the person received, the sponsor, the parents and spouse who are Catholics, lay catechists who may have instructed the person, and, if the number involved and other circumstances make this feasible, for all Catholics present. [R.11]
- 398 The conferences of bishops may, in accord with the provisions of the Constitution on the Liturgy, art. 63, adapt the rite of reception to various circumstances. The local Ordinary, by expanding or shortening the rite, may arrange it to suit the particular circumstances of the persons and place involved.⁷ [R.12]
- 399 The names of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church should be recorded in a special book, with the date and place of their baptism also noted. [R.13]

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- 1 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 69, b; Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*. no. 3. Secretariat for Christian Unity, *Ecumenical Directory* 1, no. 19: AAS 59 (1967), 581.
- 2 See Vatican Council II, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio* no. 18.
- 3 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, nos. 25 and 4.
- 4 See Secretariat for Christian Unity, *Ecumenical Directory* I, nos. 19 and 20: AAS 59 (1967), 581.
- 5 See *ibid.*, nos. 14-15: AAS 59 (1967), 580.
- 6 See *Rite of Confirmation*, Introduction, no. 7, b.
- 7 See Secretariat for Christian Unity, *Ecumenical Directory* I. no. 19: AAS 59 (1967), 581.

APPENDIX I

CELEBRATION AT THE EASTER VIGIL OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION AND OF THE RITE OF RECEPTION INTO THE FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- 418 Pastoral considerations may suggest that along with the celebration of the sacrament; of Christian initiation the Easter Vigil should include the rite of reception of already baptised Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church. But such a decision must be guided by the theological and pastoral directives proper to each rite. The model provided here simply arranges the ritual elements belonging to such a combined celebration. But the model can only be used properly in the light of nos. 198-210, regarding celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation, and of nos. 387-399, regarding the rite of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
- 419 Inclusion at the Easter Vigil of the rite of reception into full communion may also, be, opportune liturgically, especially when the candidates have undergone a lengthy period of spiritual formation coinciding with Lent. In the liturgical year the Easter Vigil, the preeminent commemoration of Christ's paschal mystery, is the preferred occasion for the celebration in which the elect will enter the paschal mystery through baptism, confirmation, and eucharist. Candidates for reception, who in baptism have already been justified by faith and incorporated into Christ,¹ are entering fully into a community that is constituted by its communion both in faith and in the sacramental sharing of the paschal mystery. The celebration of their reception at the Easter Vigil provides the candidates with a privileged opportunity to recall and reaffirm their own baptism, 'the sacramental bond of unity [and] foundation of communion between all Christians.'² At the Easter Vigil these candidates can make their profession of faith by joining the community in the renewal of the baptismal promises, and, if they have not yet been confirmed, they can receive the sacrament of confirmation, which is intimately connected with baptism. Since of its nature baptism points to complete entrance into eucharistic communion,³ the baptismal themes of the Easter Vigil can serve to emphasize why the high point of the candidates' reception is their sharing in the eucharist with the Catholic community for the first time (see no. 389,1).
- 420 The decision to combine the two celebrations at the Easter Vigil must be guided by the provision in the *Rite of Reception*, Introduction (no. 389,2). The decision should, then, be consistent in the actual situation with respect for ecumenical values and be guided by attentiveness both to local conditions and to personal and family preferences. The person to be received should always be consulted about the form of reception (see no. 389,2).
- 421 In its actual arrangement the celebration itself must reflect the status of candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church: such candidates have already been incorporated into Christ in baptism and anything that would equate them with catechumens is to be absolutely avoided (see no. 391).

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- I See Secretariat for Christian Unity, *Ecumenical Directory* I, no. 11: AAS 59 (1967), 578-579 Vatican Council II, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 3.
 - 2 See *Ecumenical Directory* I, no. 11: AAS 59 (1967), 578. Vatican Council II, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 22.
 - 3 See Vatican Council II, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 22.