



# **The Journey to Fullness of Life in Christ**

## **Guidelines for the Implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for the Diocese of Sacramento**

### ***Executive Summary***

The process of Christian Initiation is focused on introducing the catechumens and candidates into the Sacramental life of the Church and Eucharist.

- The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is normative in the Diocese of Sacramento and achieves its goal through the implementation of the text.
- Participation is intended for unbaptized adults and children of catechetical age, baptized adults and children of catechetical age and baptized Roman Catholic adults and children of catechetical age.
- Initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized and takes place in the midst of the community.
- Bishops, priests, deacons, catechists, sponsors, godparents, Christian witnesses, and initiation coordinators each have specific responsibilities in the initiation process.
- The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process marked by four continuous periods: Pre-catechumenate; catechumenate; purification and enlightenment; and mystagogy.
- There are three major ritual celebrations: The Rite of Acceptance; Rite of Election; and Rite of Initiation.
- Discernment of readiness precedes each of these ritual celebrations.
- The major rites provided for catechumens cannot be omitted because the liturgies of the RCIA are integral to the whole initiation process.
- Essential to the process of initiation is the careful preparation and celebration of the various rites that mark the progress of catechumens and candidates in their journey to initiation.
- In each of these steps and rites, the distinction between the baptized and the unbaptized must always be maintained.

- After at least one year in the catechumenate and discernment for readiness, catechumens celebrate the sacrament of initiation at the Easter Vigil. Candidates are received into the Church at any appropriate time during the year.
- The distinctive spirit and power of the period of mystagogy derive from the new personal experience of the sacraments and of the community; its main setting is Sunday Masses of the Easter season. This can only be achieved if there has been sufficient formation in the catechumenate proper.
- Reception of the sacrament of penance is expected for those baptized and being initiated.
- Pastors must use great care when dealing with marriage issues: Catechumens are entitled to celebrate marriage in the Church; annulments and irregular marriage issues must be resolved before celebrating the Rite of Election.
- Sacraments of initiation are recorded in the parish register of baptism, confirmation and first communion.

### ***Introduction: A Vision of Sacramental Life***

The restoration of the Baptismal Catechumenate, mandated by the Second Vatican council, has been a source of grace for the Church. Indeed, the pattern of ritual, catechesis, and reflection, which constitutes this Rite, has provided a model for all Sacramental activity of the Christian Church.

The implementation of the Rite of Christian initiation can, however, be a challenging undertaking for the Parish community. This is truly an undertaking of the entire Parish, requiring a commitment of not only the pastoral and professional staff and volunteers, but of all those who come together to worship and be formed in the Christian life. Likewise, the power and the grace found in the Rite have much to offer the community as a whole, not only to those who will come to be full participants in the Church's Sacramental life.

These guidelines, drawn entirely from the official text of the Rite itself, are offered to assist the parish to reflect on opportunities for a fuller, more faithful and more fruitful experience of Christian initiation for the entire faith community.

The sacraments of Christian initiation — Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—lay the foundations of every Christian life. “The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew in Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation and receive in Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they receive in increasing measure the treasures of divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.” (Catechism #1212)

From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. The journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, an overview of the teachings of the Church, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to the Eucharistic communion. (Catechism #1229)

## ***Policies and Procedures***

### **101 Norms of the Rite**

#### **101.1 Policy**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is normative in the Diocese of Sacramento. Every Parish shall be prepared to minister to those who seek Christ and initiation into the Church through the implementation of the complete text of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

#### **Procedure**

- a. The parish pastoral council and the people of God, as represented by the entire parish community, should understand and show their concern that the initiation of adults be the responsibility of all the baptized. (RCIA # 9)
- b. The parish should provide a complete and thorough formation for all participants. This includes evangelization that can lead to genuine conversion, a systematic catechesis covering the major dogmatic and moral teachings of the Church as well as a lectionary-based catechesis accommodated to the liturgical year and the devotional riches of the Church, familiarity with the Christian way of life, celebration of the rites and sacraments, opportunity for spiritual counsel or direction, formation in private prayer and public worship, including the devotional life of the Church, and the opportunity to “learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the church.” (RCIA # 75)
- c. In smaller parishes, or when language, cultural or special needs of candidates suggests, the parish is urged to collaborate with another parish or other parishes to provide one well-developed process of initiation for the area. In these cases, the rites are still ordinarily celebrated in the parish of the catechumen or candidate.

*NOTE: Catechumen—One who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil (of the following year) through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.*

*Candidate—One who is already baptized in another Christian faith and who now is preparing to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. At the time of full communion, he or she will make a profession of faith, be confirmed and receive the Eucharist.*

*According to the Ritual text the term candidate is also used for those participating in the pre-catechumenate, both baptized and unbaptized.*

*NOTE: Before the profession of faith and reception take place, the candidate should be fully instructed in participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance, and actually receive this Sacrament of God's mercy, 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. (RCIA # 482)*

## **101.2 Policy**

Participation in the RCIA is principally intended for unbaptized adults and unbaptized children of catechetical age, but baptized Christian (non-Catholic) adults and children of catechetical age, and baptized Roman Catholic adults and children of catechetical age who are uncatechized (never made their First Communion) who are preparing to complete their initiation may participate in the RCIA as well, but the length of time they participate in the RCIA will often be shorter than for unbaptized participants.

*NOTE: Children under the age of seven, baptized in another Christian church, whose parents are to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church are received with their parents but do not participate in the RCIA. They prepare to complete initiation—Confirmation and Eucharist—with their peers.*

*NOTE: Baptized and catechized Roman Catholic adults who have received their First Communion do not participate in the RCIA. They are to be prepared and confirmed when the bishop confirms at the parish or at the annual diocesan celebration of Confirmation for adults.*

## **101.3 Policy**

To be initiated, a child of catechetical age but under fourteen years of age requires the permission of at least one parent and/or guardian.

## **102 Ministries and Offices**

### **102 Policy**

Because the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized, pastors shall form and collaborate with the lay faithful of the parish who, as catechists, sponsors, and in other roles, participate in the formation and initiation of new members. (RCIA # 9)

## **102.1 Faith Community**

### **Policy**

The Christian initiation of adults and children of catechetical age takes place in the midst of the community. Pastors need to remind the faithful again and again of their spiritual kinship with those who are to be initiated. They should be encouraged to support and pray for catechumens and candidates, infants and their parents.

## **102.2 Bishops**

### **Policy**

The bishop, in person or through his delegate, sets up, regulates, and promotes the program of pastoral formation for catechumens and admits the candidates to their election and to the sacraments.

### **102.2.1 Policy**

Bishops have the authority to depute properly prepared catechists to preside at the minor exorcisms and blessings; and at celebrations of the Word of God. (RCIA #12, 16, 34.5, 81-89, 96; Blessings)

## **102.3 Pastors/Priests**

### **102.3.1 Policy**

Pastors have full responsibility for Christian initiation in the Parish according to the rites of Christian initiation.

### **102.3.2 Policy**

Pastors and parochial vicars are, by training and office, the chief teachers of the faith and thus have primary responsibility for teaching the RCIA.

### **102.3.3 Policy**

It is the pastor's responsibility to see that those who assist in the initiation process have been properly trained and prepared.

### **102.3.4 Policy**

Pastors are to ensure that adaptations are consistent with the spirit of the ritual text. (CCL # 843.2, 851.1)

## **102.4. Catechists**

### **102.4.1 Policy**

Catechists whether they minister to adults or children, shall be well instructed in the teachings of the church and in catechetical methodology. (cf. General

Directory for Catechesis, the National Directory for Catechesis and Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us.)

Catechists are to be certified, in accordance with the minimum norms required by the California Catholic Bishops.

**102.5 Sponsors**

**102.5.1 Policy**

A sponsor accompanies any person seeking admission as a catechumen or candidate. (RCIA # 10)

**Procedure**

It is the responsibility of the parish to assign an active participating member as the sponsor who may or may not be chosen later as the godparent or Christian witness.

The role of the sponsor is: to be a friend and companion, guide to parish life, witness to discernment of readiness, model of Christian living and participant in the rites.

**102.6 Godparents**

**102.6.1 Policy**

Before the Rite of Election, the catechumen, in consultation with the parish priest and the initiation team, chooses a godparent in accord with the ritual norms of the order of initiation. (RCIA # 11, 123, 404)

**102.6.2 Policy**

To be admitted to the role of godparent, a person must:

- Be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the one who takes their place or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing this role.
- Have completed their sixteenth year. (The pastor may make an exception for a just cause.)
- Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the sacrament of the Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken. For example: If married, the marriage is valid before the Church.
- Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
- Not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized. (CCL 874.1)

**102.7 Christian Witness**

### **102.7 Policy**

The candidate chooses a Christian witness for the celebration of Confirmation in keeping with the general norms of the Church (see godparent).

### **102.8 Initiation Coordinators**

#### **102.8 Policy**

Parish initiation coordinators are designated by the pastor to assist him in overseeing the organization and pastoral implementation of the order of initiation. They are to be well prepared for this role. They are to minister in close collaboration with the pastor, parochial vicar, pastoral staff and organizations, parish pastoral council, parish liturgy committee, school principal and director of religious education. The coordinator's role is not a permanent one, but is ordinarily for a term of three years, renewable.

### **102.9 Diocesan Committee on Christian Initiation**

#### **102.9 Policy**

The Diocesan Committee on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, advisory to the ministries of Worship and Catholic Faith Formation and giving support to the Bishop in his ministry of initiation, acts as a catalyst for the full implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults throughout the diocese of Sacramento.

### **103 Celebrating the Rites — Periods and Rites of the RCIA Process**

#### **103 Policy**

The careful preparation and spiritual celebration of the ritual components, which constitute the RCIA and mark the stages of the faith journey of those to be initiated is of the greatest importance. These rites provide for the catechumens and candidates a deeper experience of the initiation process, and allow the faith community the opportunity to journey with and come to know those whom God has called to be united with them.

The major rites provided for catechumens cannot be omitted because the liturgies of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults are integral to the whole initiation process.

Optional rites are provided for baptized but uncatechized adults in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Part II, #4. Pastors, in consultation with initiation ministers will want to discern which of these rites are beneficial to their candidates and faith community. Optional rites for baptized but uncatechized adults can be celebrated along with the rites for the unbaptized as provided in the appendix to the RCIA, Additional Combined Rites. When such combined rites are utilized, it is important that the distinction between the baptized and the unbaptized is evident. (RCIA # 505-594)

## **103.1 The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate/Inquiry**

### **103.1.1 Policy**

This Period is a time of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to the Gospel message.

#### **Procedure**

The period includes: Welcoming, answering questions, sharing of personal journeys, listening, evangelizing, community building, and introduction to prayer.

### **103.1.2 Policy**

At the beginning of this period, there is to be an exchange of information between the Pastor, RCIA coordinator, and/or team members and the inquirer to determine placement in the process and issues that need to be addressed during the process, such as marriage status and need for an annulment.

#### **Procedure**

The information from the inquirer is to include: baptismal status, marriage information (inquirer and spouse) baptismal status of children (under age of 14), and catechetical background. The coordinator should provide information regarding the process.

*NOTE: If baptized, does the baptism meet the Trinitarian formula? If baptized as Catholic, is it Eastern or Roman Rite?*

*NOTE: Are they married or is there an intention to marry? Is there a marriage issue because the inquirer or inquirer's spouse has had a previous marriage?*

### **103.1.3 Policy**

Discernment of readiness of the individual inquirer to move to the next stage of the process occurs before the Rite of Acceptance or the Rite of Welcoming

#### **Procedure**

a. Discernment of readiness for the Rite of Acceptance or the Rite of Welcoming is made by the Pastor or parochial vicar, assisted by the deacons, coordinator, catechists and sponsors, who judge the inquirers' evidence of first faith, initial conversion and intention to change their lives, the first stirrings of repentance, a beginning practice of calling on God in prayer, a sense of church and some association with members of the community. (RCIA # 42)

b. A discernment dialogue with the inquirers includes an explanation of the rite, an explanation of the second period of the process and a review of marriage issues identified in the initial interview.

## **103.2 The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens/the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates**

### **103.2.1 Policy**

The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens is celebrated with unbaptized adults and unbaptized children of catechetical age. (RCIA # 41, 74, 260-276) The Rite of Welcoming the Candidates may be celebrated with baptized, uncatechized adults or children of catechetical age, who are seeking to complete their Christian initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist or to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. (RCIA # 411-433)

#### **Procedure**

The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and/or the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates are celebrated in the parish church in the presence of the assembly during ordinary time and may be celebrated several times a year.

## **103.3 The Period of the Catechumenate**

### **103.3.1 Policy**

The period of the catechumenate is an extended (at least one year in the catechumenate proper) period during which the catechumens are given suitable catechetical and pastoral formation and guidance aimed at training them in the Christian life. (RCIA # 35)

### **103.3.2 Policy**

The period of the catechumenate, beginning at acceptance into the order of catechumens and including both the catechumenate proper and the period of purification and enlightenment after election or enrollment of names, should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction and probation. Ordinarily this period should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extends until Easter of the following year. (RCIA National Statute # 6)

### **103.3.3 Policy**

The instruction that the catechumens receive during this period is 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. (RCIA # 75, 78)

#### **Procedure**

In practice the instruction consists of two parts: Breaking of the Word and Extended Catechesis

Breaking of the Word is liturgically based and uses the Lectionary as the Catechist's primary source document.

Extended Systematic Catechesis uses a Catechism as the catechist's primary source document.

#### **103.3.4 Policy**

When catechumens are present within the assembly of the faithful, they are to be kindly dismissed before the assembly prays the Creed. (RCIA # 67, 75.3, 83.2; CCL # 1230-1233)

#### **103.3.5 Policy**

The minor rites for this period include: Celebrations of the Word, including celebrations held especially for the catechumens, participation in the liturgy of the word at the Sunday Mass and celebrations held in conjunction with catechetical instruction. (RCIA # 81)

Also included are minor exorcisms, blessings of the catechumens and anointing of the catechumens. The presiding celebrant for anointing is a priest or a deacon. (RCIA # 90-93, 95-97, 98-101)

#### **103.3.6 Policy**

On behalf of the bishop, the pastor, assisted by the RCIA team (parochial vicar, deacons, coordinator, sponsors, catechists) will discern readiness of individual catechumens for election.

##### **Procedure**

The following questions will be addressed for each catechumen: have they faithfully listened to God's word proclaimed by the Church; have they responded to the word and begun to walk in God's presence; have they shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined them in prayer? (RCIA # 552B)

### **103.4 The Period of Preparation for Baptized Christians prior to Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church**

#### **103.4.1 Policy**

The rite is so arranged that no greater burden than necessary is required before candidates are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church and complete their initiation through Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA # 473). This means that the candidates period of preparation may often be shorter than that required for catechumens.

##### **Procedure**

For the candidates, the parish team will address the questions: have they faithfully listened to the apostles' instruction proclaimed by the Church; have

they come to a deeper appreciation of their baptism in which they were joined to Christ and his Church; have they reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer: have they advanced in a life of love and service of others? (RCIA # 555B)

#### **103.4.2 Policy**

Candidates, by right of baptism, may remain with the assembly for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### **103.5 The Rite of Election and of the Call to Continuing Conversion**

#### **103.5.1 Policy**

The combined Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion is celebrated annually with a Bishop at the beginning of Lent. It is recommended that the Rite of Sending be celebrated at the parish. (RCIA # 530-545) All parishes receive an annual invitation to participate in the Diocesan Rite of Election and of the Call to Continuing Conversion.

#### **103.5.2 Policy**

Candidates (baptized Christians) who will be received at the Easter Vigil are encouraged to participate in the Call to Continuing Conversion but are not obliged to do so.

#### **Procedure**

When, for pastoral reasons (e.g. extreme weather or distance) it is not possible for catechumens to attend the diocesan celebration of the Rite of Election, delegation for a pastor to celebrate the rite in the catechumens' parish may be obtained from the Office of the Bishop. Catechumens who will be baptized at the next Easter Vigil celebration are expected to participate in the Rite of Election.

### **103.6 The Period of Purification and Enlightenment**

This period is a time meant "for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the paschal mystery." It is to consist more of "interior reflection than catechetical instruction." (RCIA # 138-139) (This is in part why it is so important that those to be initiated spend a full year as Catechumens, so that by this time immediately preceding reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, they have already been well formed in the life and teachings of the Church.) During this period the scrutinies and the presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer take place.

#### **103.6.1 Policy**

The three Lenten scrutinies assigned to the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent are all to be celebrated with the Elect. (RCIA # 20; Roman Missal # 38) At the Masses at which the scrutinies are celebrated, the readings from the Lectionary cycle A for the given Sunday are to be proclaimed, in accordance with Church law. (The Church also provides the option of using these readings at any other parish Masses on these Sundays, if desired.)

### **103.6.2 Policy**

Presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer are to be done as described in the ritual text. (RCIA # 147, 157, 178)

#### **Procedure**

Once the Creed has been presented the Elect remain with the assembly to pray the Creed before dismissal.

### **103.6.3 Policy**

Preparation Rites, including Recitation of the Creed, Ephphetha Rite, Choosing a Baptismal Name and Concluding Rites are to be carried out according to the ritual text. (RCIA # 185, 186)

## **103.7 Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation**

### **103.7.1 Policy**

The prescribed time for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation is the Easter Vigil for adults and children of catechetical age.

### **103.7.2 Policy**

The Christian Initiation of adults and children of catechetical age includes at one celebration: Baptism, Confirmation, and the first sharing in Eucharist. In accord with the ancient practice of the Church, these sacraments are to be received together and in their proper order. (RCIA # 215; CCL # 866)

### **103.7.3 Policy**

Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament and, therefore, provision should be made for its more frequent use in the Baptism of adults. (RCIA National Statutes # 17)

*NOTE: Immersion does not necessarily mean submersion; but rather standing in water and water poured over the head of the elect three times while pronouncing the Trinitarian formula of Baptism, is completely acceptable. (Note also that the same minister—bishop, priest or deacon—who pours the water is the one who pronounces the formula.)*

### **103.7.4 Policy**

It is unlawful to separate the confirmation and reception of Eucharist of any adult or child of catechetical age from Baptism. (CCL # 866)

## **103.8 Reception of Baptized Christians Into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church**

### **103.8.1 Policy**

Adults and children of catechetical age who were baptized in a non-Catholic Christian church are formally received into the Church through the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. (RCIA Part II Section 5)

### **103.8.2 Policy**

The pastor, assisted by the RCIA team (parochial vicar, deacons, coordinator, sponsors, catechists) will discern readiness of individual candidates for Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. (RCIA Part II Section 5)

### **103.8.3 Policy**

It is preferable that reception into full communion take place at a celebration other than the Easter Vigil lest there be any confusion of such Christians with the candidates for Baptism, possible misunderstanding, of or even reflection upon, the sacrament of Baptism celebrated in another Church or ecclesial community, or any perceived triumphalism in the liturgical welcome into the Catholic Eucharistic community. (RCIA National Statutes # 33)

### **103.8.4 Policy**

Candidates can be received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church at any time during the year preferably within the Sunday assembly.

### **103.8.5 Policy**

Any appearance of triumphalism should be carefully avoided. (RCIA # 475.2)

### **103.8.6 Policy**

Inclusion at the Easter Vigil of the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion may also be opportune liturgically, when the candidates have undergone a lengthy period of catechetical instruction and spiritual formation concluding with Lent. (RCIA # 563)

### **103.8.7 Policy**

Candidates, including children of catechetical age, who are received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church, are to be confirmed at the same celebration at which they make the profession of faith and partake of the

Eucharist, their Confirmation is not to be deferred. (RCIA National Statutes # 35)

### **103.9 Uncatechized Catholics**

#### **103.9 Policy**

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 Baptized, receive the sacrament of Confirmation, take part in the Eucharist and receive First Communion. (RCIA # 409)

#### **Procedure**

The celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation with candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist is to be carried out at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of Confirmation and the Eucharist. (RCIA National Statutes #27)

### **103.10 Period of Post-Baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy**

#### **103.10.1 Policy**

This is a time for the community, the neophytes newly received and those who have completed initiation all 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. (RCIA # 244)

#### **103.10.2 Policy**

A suitable period of mystagogy or post baptismal catechesis needs to be offered to neophytes the newly received and those who have completed initiation so that they might live more deeply the mysteries they have celebrated. Post-baptismal catechesis and pastoral care is to extend for one year. (RCIA National Statutes #2-24)

#### **Procedure**

- a. Following the initiation sacraments, the homily and the general intercessions are to take into account the presence and needs of the neophytes. (RCIA # 248)
- b. During this period of mystagogy, transition is to be made to active sharing in the mission of the church.
- c. Each year the neophytes, newly received and those who have completed initiation are invited to celebrate a special Mass of Thanksgiving with the Bishop during the Easter season.

## **104 Special Pastoral Considerations**

### **104.1 The Sacrament of Penance and Christian Initiation**

#### **104.1.1 Policy**

Catechumens (both children and adults) do not celebrate the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation prior to baptism.

#### **104.1.2 Policy**

Candidates (both children and adults) are to receive a thorough catechesis on the sacrament of Penance and are to receive the sacrament of Penance before completing their initiation. (RCIA # 482, National Statutes # 27, 36)

#### **Procedure**

The celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation with candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist is to be carried out at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of Confirmation and the Eucharist. (RCIA National Statutes # 27)

### **104.2 The Sacrament of Marriage and Christian Initiation**

#### **104.2.1 Policy**

Because catechumens are already joined to the church as part of the household of Christ, they are entitled to celebrate marriage in the church. (RCIA # 47, National Statutes # 10)

#### **Procedure**

a. If two catechumens marry or a catechumen marries a non-Catholic Christian or unbaptized person, no dispensation needs to be granted. The prenuptial questionnaire is to be completed and filed with the parish marriage records. A note is to be made on the questionnaire that the marriage involves a catechumen.

b. When a catechumen marries a Catholic, the Catholic party is required by church law to request a dispensation (disparity of cult). (CCL # 1125)

#### **104.2.2 Policy**

Any person who needs a declaration of nullity from a previous marriage cannot be accepted for the Rite of Election or Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion.

#### **104.2.3 Policy**

A catechumen or candidate who is divorced and not remarried and does not intend to remarry is not in need of a declaration of nullity to be accepted for the Rite of Election, the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing

Conversion, or, consequently, the sacraments of initiation. The implications of future attempts to remarry without a declaration of nullity must be carefully explained before the discernment for the rite is completed.

**104.2.4 Policy**

When the Church must validate a marriage, the validation ceremony shall take place before celebration of the initiation sacraments. One cannot enter the full sacramental life of the Church unless one is completely free to receive the sacraments.

**104.2.5 Policy**

The initiation process shall not be rushed merely to allow for initiation before a marriage is celebrated.

**104.3 Receiving Eastern Non-Catholic Christians into the Catholic Church**

**104.3.1 Policy**

Eastern non-Catholic Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church become members of the Eastern Catholic Church that corresponds to the non-Catholic Church from which they are received, i.e. a Ukrainian Orthodox person becomes a member of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, a Greek Orthodox person becomes a member of the Greek Catholic Church.

**Procedure**

Because of the extreme complexity and sensitivity of these pastoral issues, parish ministers should consult with the Office of the Vicar Episcopal for Theological Affairs.

**104.3.2 Policy**

In the case of eastern non-Catholic Christians who enter into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith. (RCIA # 474)

**104.4 Persons with Special Needs**

**104.4.1 Policy**

It is appropriate that persons with disabilities be initiated or received into the full communion of the Catholic Church and that catechesis and celebrations be adapted to their needs.

**104.5 Christian Burial of Catechumens and Candidates**

**104.5.1 Policy**

Catechumens and candidates, as members of the household of Christ, have the right to Christian burial in the Catholic Church. (RCIA # 47, National Statutes # 9; CCL # 1183)

**105 Record Keeping**

**105.1 Policy**

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 date and place of the celebration.

**105.2 Policy**

Sacraments of initiation are recorded in the parish sacramental registers of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion.

**105.3 Policy**

Baptized children younger than catechetical age become members of the Church at the same time their parents do. The child's original baptism is recorded in the parish baptismal register, with a note of their being joined to the Catholic Church through the act of their parent's initiation.

**105.4 Policy**

The record of the Confirmation of baptized Catholics who complete their initiation is forwarded to the parish of their Baptism.

**105.5 Policy**

The marriages of catechumens are to be properly recorded in the parish marriage record book and in the parish book of catechumens.

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*In the guidelines, RCIA followed by a number refers to the paragraph number in the Rite of Christian Initiation. CCL followed by a number refers to the Code in the Code of Canon Law.*

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