

Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

The bridge between the precatechumenate and the catechumenate for the unbaptized.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

English title of Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum. The latest English translation edition was published in 1985.

Rite of Welcome

The bridge between the inquiry period and the period of pastoral formation that coincides with the catechumenate. It is for those already baptized.

Rite of Election

Presided over by the Bishop, the rite inaugurates the final period of preparation before initiation.

It is the bridge between the catechumenate, and purification and enlightenment.

Rite of Call to Continuing Conversion

Coincides with rite of Election, but is the rite for candidates, the already baptized.

Rite of Scrutiny

Three rites of exorcism for the Elect during Lent.

Rite, Penitential

Celebration for candidates, similar to the rite of scrutiny.

Rite of the Sacraments of Initiation

Rites usually celebrated at the Easter Vigil which are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Sunday

The first day in the Christian liturgical week, the original feast day, the heart of the calendar, the basis and nucleus of the liturgical year.

Triduum

The three days of the celebration of Easter which begins with sundown on Holy Thursday evening and ends with evening prayer on Easter Sunday evening. It includes the liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday.

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RCIA Glossary of Terms

Advent

A period of four weeks prior to Christmas. It has a twofold theme: preparing for the Second Coming of Christ and preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

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 reception, he or she will make a profession of faith, be confirmed, and receive the Eucharist.

Catechumen

One who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist.

Catechumenate

Second period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which involves intense preparation in word, worship, community life, and apostolic works.

Cycle A, B, C

The three-year cycle of liturgical readings: A Cycle - Matthew; B Cycle - Mark; C Cycle - Luke. All three cycles incorporate John.

Easter Season

A period of seven weeks beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the feast of Pentecost.

Elect

The name given to catechumens who celebrate the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent signifying their being chosen for the initiation sacraments.

Evangelization

The task of the Church during the precatechumenate which involves the inviting, the welcoming, the witness, the sharing of faith, and the proclamation of the gospel to inquirers/candidates.

Inquirers

Those who participate in the precatechumenate of a parish. They are “inquiring” into the Christianity in the Catholic Tradition.

Lectionary

The book used in liturgical celebrations that contains all the scripture readings of the liturgical year.

Lent

A six week period extending from Ash Wednesday to sundown on Holy Thursday. It is a retreat time in preparation for the Easter Triduum.

Liturgical Year

The seasons and cycles of the Christian year. It is the instrument and means for leading God’s people along the way to the Lord. The readings introduce and invite us into the Paschal Mystery. It includes: Christmas Cycle (the first Sunday of Advent through the Baptism of the Lord), Easter Cycle (Ash

Wednesday through Pentecost), and Ordinary Time.

Minor Rites

Rites during the period of the catechumenate which include exorcisms, blessings, and anointings.

Mystagogy

The final period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which is from Easter to Pentecost. The National Statutes for implementation in the USA also recommend and extended mystagogy for one year.

National Statutes

Particular law for the implementation of the order of Christian initiation of adults in the United States presented by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Neophyte

One who is initiated at the Easter Vigil. The term comes from the Greek word meaning new plant, as in a new sprout on a limb/branch.

Ninety Days

Occasionally used to mean the combination of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, and the Period of Mystagogy which corresponds with Lent (40 days) and the Easter Season (50 days).

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

This is the official collection of rites of the Roman Catholic Church for initiation of adults (including children of catechetical

age), and the reception of baptized candidates.

Ordinary Time

The cycle within the liturgical year that is outside the liturgical seasons (Advent, Lent, Easter). This time provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of God’s gift to us in Christ, our attitudes, our prayer life, and our service to others.

Precatechumenate

The first period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which is the initial introduction of an inquirer into the Christian way of life in the Catholic Tradition. It is also the period of evangelization on the part of the Church.

Presentations

During the period of purification and enlightenment, the elect are presented with the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer through special rites. Both presentations can be anticipated during the period of the catechumenate when it is more convenient.

Purification and Enlightenment

This, the third period of the order of Christian initiation of adults which usually coincides with the Lenten season. It is the final period of preparation for initiation at the Easter Vigil.

RCIA

Acronym for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for use in scholarly reference to identify the paragraph. The term RCIA is discouraged for popular usage.