

**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
Reverend Gerald Dennis Gill, Director**

**CHRISTIAN INITIATION INFORMATION
PERIODIC MAILING
JUNE 2015**

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

The Office for Divine Worship has the responsibility for direction, guidance and support of pastors and those who collaborate with them in the formation of adults for Christian Initiation. Additional information on Christian Initiation for adults can be found on the website for the Office for Divine Worship, under the heading *Christian Initiation*:

<http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/sacred-liturgy/christian-initiation/>

Please contact the Office for Divine Worship at 215-587-3537 or worship@archphila.org with any questions.

**If there has been a change in the parish Christian Initiation Coordinator,
please inform the Office for Divine Worship.**

Send email to: worship@archphila.org

MARKING DATES AND PLANNING THE CHRISTIAN INITIATION CALENDAR

2015-2016 INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Session I – October 17, 2015

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM Neumann Room, Cathedral

Overview of Adult Christian Initiation and Period of Pre-Catechumenate

Session II – November 14, 2015

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM Auditorium, Archdiocesan Pastoral Center

Rite of Acceptance and Period of the Catechumenate/
Rite of Election and Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Session III – January 16, 2016

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM Auditorium, Archdiocesan Pastoral Center

Sacred Paschal Triduum and the Period of Mystagogy and
Reception of Baptized Adults and Children into Full Communion

TRAINING WORKSHOP WITH THE AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE

SYMBOLON FORMATION PROGRAM

November 6, 2015

9:30 AM – 3:30 PM St. Charles Borromeo Seminary – College Auditorium

This workshop offers comprehensive training in how to form life-long disciples of Jesus Christ. It equips parish leaders to implement effectively the Christian Initiation process or develop a strategic pastoral plan for adult faith formation in the parish.

Information & Registration: phillyevang.org/training

2016 RITE OF ELECTION AND OF THE CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

Please note new time for celebration of the Rites in 2016!

- **Saturday, February 13, 2016** 11:00 AM Chester and Bucks
- **Saturday, February 13, 2016** 3:00 PM Delaware and Philadelphia South
- **Sunday, February 14, 2016** 3:00 PM Montgomery and Philadelphia North

POPE FRANCIS ANNOUNCES JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

This “Jubilee of Mercy” will commence with the opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter’s on **December 8, 2015**, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, and will conclude on **November 20, 2016** with the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. At the start of the new year, the Holy Father had stated: “This is the time of mercy. It is important that the lay faithful live it and bring it into different social environments. Go forth!” [Read more...](#)

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.

- An [Inquirer’s Interview/Information Form](#) can be found on-line in English and Spanish for one of the initial meetings with someone seeking Baptism.
- All marriage irregularities must be resolved before someone can be accepted into the Order of Catechumens. Any marriage questions are to be directed to Monsignor Paul A. DiGiralomo of the Metropolitan Tribunal of the Archdiocese at 215-587-3750. Inquirers should be informed that the resolution of marriage irregularities requires time and should be addressed without delay.

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.

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. [...] Because of the effect of baptism once validly received, it is the duty of parish priests (pastors) to see to it that no baptized person seeks for any reason whatever to be baptized a second time (RCIA, no. 43).

Only Catechumens are dismissed from the celebration of the Eucharist with the use of forms given in the ritual book (RCIA, nos. 67 A or B).

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.

The period of 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 extend until Easter of the following year (National Statutes for the Catechumenate, no. 6).

Resources for catechesis: The *Lectionary for Mass* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are foundation sources for the catechetical formation of catechumens. See the website of the Office for Divine Worship for a listing of additional resources for Christian Formation.

Special attention should be given to the use of the minor exorcisms, blessings and anointing of catechumens during the Period of the Catechumenate.

rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate

All throughout the course of the Period of the Catechumenate there should be scheduled **celebrations of the Word of God**. In addition to these celebrations, the **Minor Exorcisms** [RCIA, nos. 90-94], **Blessings of the Catechumens** [RCIA, nos. 95-97] and or **Anointing of the Catechumens** [RCIA, nos. 98-103] should also be scheduled frequently during the Period of the Catechumenate. The use of these rites belongs only to those who will be baptized. A **Model for the Celebration of the Word of God** [RCIA, nos. 85-89], found in the ritual book, provides the manner for the combination of these rites with the celebration of the Word.

Sending of the Catechumens for Election (Optional) [RCIA nos. 106-117] or Parish Celebration for Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop (Optional) [RCIA, nos. 530-546]

At the conclusion of the Period of the Catechumenate, the **Rite of Sending** is celebrated in the parish only for those going to the Cathedral Basilica for the Rite of Election of Catechumens and of the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates. The Rite of Sending recognizes the role of the parish community to judge the state of formation of the catechumens and candidates and approves them for election for the Easter Sacraments and the completion of sacramental initiation. The Rite of Sending, whether as part of a celebration of the Word of God or at Mass, should be scheduled in the parish before the Rite of Election of Catechumens and of the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates. *In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, this is the occasion for signing the Book of the Elect.*

SECOND STEP: ELECTION OR ENROLLMENT 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

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. 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 Savior (nos 138-139, from the ritual book, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

If catechumens were unable, for one reason or another, to participate in the Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent, the pastor should elect them, keeping in mind numbers 127-128 of the ritual book, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

rites belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment

- The **scrutinies** for the elect during Lent are not optional and should be carried out with a proper explanation to the elect and to the faithful. The description of the scrutinies, as found in nos. 141-143 of the ritual book, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, can be helpful explanations for the elect and the faithful. Typically, the scrutinies are celebrated with the proper ritual Mass in the *Roman Missal, For the Celebration of the Scrutinies*, on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The Year A readings are always used for the scrutinies. If the scrutinies cannot be celebrated on the proper Sunday, then a weekday celebration is possible with the same ritual Mass and the proper Year A readings.

The First Scrutiny takes place on the Third Sunday of Lent.

The Second Scrutiny takes place on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

The Third Scrutiny takes place on the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

- The **presentations** are very much tied into the scrutinies and follow their schedule. The presentations of the Creed and the Our Father aid in the enlightenment of the elect. The presentation of the Creed follows the First Scrutiny. The elect are to commit the Creed to memory and they will recite it publicly on Holy Saturday morning prior to their evening Baptism. The presentation of the Our Father with the proclamation of the Gospel follows the third scrutiny. The elect recite the Our Father publicly for the first time when they are assembled among the baptized at the Eucharist of the Easter Vigil. These weekday presentations should include the participation of some of the faithful. The handing out of parchments with these living expressions of the Faith is discouraged.
- A **retreat** should be arranged during Lent for the Elect. Also, the candidates for Full Communion and Catholic Adult candidates for Confirmation and Communion may also be part of this retreat. The retreat should include a presentation on Lent and its relationship to the celebration of the Easter Sacraments and the Christian Life, focused prayer and guided reflection sessions. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation could be made available to the already baptized candidates. An Archdiocesan Retreat for Adults in Sacramental Formation will take place at the Malvern Retreat House on 31 March 2012. Click **here** more information.
- The **preparation rites on Holy Saturday** should be observed, in some part, according to numbers 185 to 204 in the ritual book, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Most of all, the elect should be encouraged to participate in the paschal fast all through Holy Saturday.

Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

*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 fullness of time begun in Christ and, as they share in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and meal, even to a foretaste of the kingdom of God (no. 206, from the ritual book, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*).*

PLEASE NOTE:

In accord with the US National Statutes for the Catechumenate (11 November 86) no. 33, Archbishop Chaput asks that you note:

Only the adult elect, that is, the unbaptized catechumens elected at the Rite of Election, are to be fully initiated with Baptism, Confirmation and reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord at the Easter Vigil, according to the rites outlined in the *Roman Missal*. Children may also be baptized at the Easter Vigil.

Baptized non-Catholic Christians are to be received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday or any Sunday of Easter Time. In fact, this reception can take place almost any time during the Church Year according to the rite outlined in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (cf. RCIA, nos. 473-504).

For many parishes, this represents an innovation that will require catechesis on the dignity of Baptism and the avoidance of any confusion between candidates for Baptism and baptized Christians.

SIMPLIFICATION OF THE PERIODS AND STEPS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

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, more complete Rite (no. 331, from the ritual book, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). This is sometimes the circumstance when an Elect cannot be present for the Easter Vigil. Permission for the use of this simpler form should be directed to Archbishop Chaput through the Office for Divine Worship.

Numbers 331-367 in the ritual book, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, describe arrangements for an adapted form for Baptism, Confirmation and 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 pertinent catechesis and particularly by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic Celebration.

This period should not be overlooked. Plans should be made to assemble the neophytes, their godparents and others associated with their Christian Initiation for the celebration of Mass, with a particular celebration near Pentecost (cf. RCIA, no. 249). Neophytes should be given the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in the weeks following their Christian Initiation.

AN OUTLINE OF THE SUNDAY AND WEEKLY CATECHETICAL SESSIONS

The catechetical session is an indispensable component of the formation of catechumens and those already baptized but uncatechized to know the teachings of the Church as well as have a profound appreciation of the mystery of salvation revealed in God's Word and celebrated in the Sacraments. For a more complete presentation of the catechetical session, see the ritual book [RCIA, nos. 75-80].

What follows are sample patterns for the Sunday Session for the Catechumens and Elect after their dismissal from Mass and for the Weekly Catechetical Session:

SAMPLE SUNDAY SESSION FOR CATECUMENS AND ELECT

- **Dismissal of the Catechumens (only) from Mass using formulas in the ritual book** [RCIA, nos. 67, A and B]
- **Brief recap of the biblical texts and homily**
- **Illustrate points associated with Church teaching, tradition and practice**
- **Response by the catechumens and elect**
- **Closing Prayer**

SAMPLE WEEKLY CATECHETICAL SESSION APART FROM SUNDAY

- **Celebration of the Word of God (See RCIA, nos. 81-89)**

The celebration of the Word of God should conclude alternately with the Minor Exorcisms, Blessings of the Catechumens, and the Anointing of the Catechumens (See, RCIA, nos. 90-103). The parish priest or deacon should conduct the celebration of the Word of God with the concluding rites.

- **Catechesis**

A systematic sequential presentation of the truths of Catholic doctrine as laid out in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: The Profession of Faith, The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Life in Christ, and Christian Prayer.

- **Reflection and Response to the Catechesis**
- **Night Prayer (Compline)**

Two excellent resources for year-round catechesis are the following:

http://church.st-thomasmore.org/uscca_catechumenate.htm

<http://tinyurl.com/liturgyw-kidsRCIA>

SAMPLE PARISH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is a sacramental preparation for the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. In some instances, the bulletin invitation to participate in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is identified as an opportunity for adult faith formation or enrichment for Catholics or a welcoming to returning Catholics. These are important ministries in every parish, but should not be confused with the nature and purpose of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Bulletin announcements can also serve as a catechetical tool to instruct the faithful about Christian Initiation of adults. In other words, parish bulletin editors are encouraged to have a distinct announcement for those who want to know more about the Faith and the celebration of the Sacraments and an announcement for Catholics interested in faith formation.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS

Before the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates, the baptisms should be determined as valid. For assistance in this regard, see Pastoral Guidance Regarding the Conditional Baptism of Those Seeking Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

<http://archphila.org/evangelization/worship/pdf/ConditionalBaptism.pdf>

Orthodox Christians are Received into Full Communion of the Catholic Church with a Profession of Faith. For assistance in this regard, see Admission of an Orthodox Christian into the Catholic Church in Other than their Parallel Ritual Church

<http://archphila.org/evangelization/worship/pdf/AdmissionofOrthodoxChristian.pdf>

Invalid Marriages: Every effort should be made for all canonical impediments to the celebration of the Sacraments be resolved before someone is accepted into the Order of Catechumens or welcomed as a Candidate. Validation is to take place before the celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. For assistance in this regard, please contact the Metropolitan Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

<http://archphila.org/evangelization/worship/pdf/ImportantInformationfromtheTribunal2012.pdf>

COMMUNICATION WITH THE OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

DEANERY COORDINATORS FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION

A deanery coordinator for Christian Initiation represents one of the twelve deaneries within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for the Office for Divine Worship. As a representative, the deanery coordinator collects and relays helpful information for parishes and institutions within the deanery for the ministry of Christian Initiation at all levels.

WHAT INFORMATION IS COLLECTED AND RELAYED?

(All liturgical celebrations take place in proper parish.)

- Weekly Catechetical Sessions for Catechumens and Candidates
- Modified Catechetical Sessions for Baptized Catholic Adults
- Mystagogia Sessions during the Easter Season
- Baptism Preparation Sessions
- Parent and Godparent Instructions Sessions for Penance, Confirmation and First Holy Communion
- Retreats for Catechetical Age Candidates
- Retreats for Adult Catechumens and Candidates
- Assemblies and Masses for the Neophytes

HOW IS THIS INFORMATION COLLECTED AND RELAYED?

Each deanery coordinator contacts each parish and institution within the respective deanery and inquires about and collects the Christian Initiation resources scheduled and available. This information is then collated and shared with the Christian Initiation Coordinator in the parish and the Director of Religious Education. This information is also shared with the Office for Divine Worship as a reference. Parishes and institution will be encouraged to share resources when desired and necessary.