

# More than 700 initiated into Catholic Church

**By Elizabeth Skalski**

*eskalski@catholicreview.org*

More than 700 new Catholics entered the church April 7 at Easter Vigil services throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

More than 252 catechumens, those who have not been baptized, entered the church and more than 450 candidates, those who have been baptized but have not received the sacraments of Communion and/or confirmation, entered full communion with the church, said Michael Ruzicki, coordinator of Adult and Sacramental Formation and RCIA coordinator for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The number of newly baptized Catholics is up 10 percent from last year, according to the archdiocese.

However, the overall number of new Catholics being received into the church at the Easter Vigil is down from 2011 because parishes receive new Catholics into the church year-round, Ruzicki said.

In 2011 the Catholic Review reported that nearly 800 new Catholics participated in the celebration of initiation and in 2010 the Review reported that nearly 1,000 people entered the church at the Easter Vigil in both 2009 and 2010.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults begins the process of joining the Catholic Church.

During the Rite of Election, godparents gathered with catechumens and sponsors with their candidates. Catechumens signed the Book of the Elect at their home parishes during Masses Feb. 25 and 26.

More than 400 candidates and catechumens from 52 parishes filled the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland Feb. 26 for the annual Rite of Election.

Similar services were held in Crofton and Libertytown. In Crofton, there were 57 candidates and 32 catechumens from 13 parishes, and in Libertytown, there were 56 candidates and 42 catechumens from 15 parishes, Ruzicki said. Not all catechumens and candidates entering the church attended one of the three Feb. 26 services.

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