

Over 700 Prepare Throughout the Archdiocese to Enter the Catholic Church

The Archdiocese of Baltimore will welcome a total of 715 catechumens and candidates expected to enter the Catholic Church this Easter at a Rite of Election on Sunday, February 10, 2008 at:

Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Baltimore, 3:00 PM

St. Ann, Hagerstown, 3:00 PM

St. John Neumann, Annapolis, 2:45 PM

Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop Emeritus of Baltimore, will welcome 155 catechumens (those seeking Baptism), and 327 candidates (those already baptized Christian) at the Cathedral, while Bishop W. Francis Malooly will welcome 22 catechumens and 51 candidates at St. Ann Church, Hagerstown, and Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski will welcome 41 catechumens and 119 candidates at St. John Neumann in Annapolis.

For the catechumens, the Rite of Election closes the lengthy period of formation of the catechumen's minds and hearts. It marks the beginning of the period of final, more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation. At this time, 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 are ready to receive the sacraments of initiation.

The days of Lent are the final period of purification and enlightenment leading up to the celebration of initiation at the Easter Vigil. During the Easter Vigil Liturgy on Holy Saturday, the catechumen will receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

For candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church and for candidates preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist, it is the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion. They, too, are affirmed by their sponsors and recognized by the Church.

For more information, go to www.archbalt.org and click on Evangelization and Catechesis.