

COMBINED RITES OF SENDING CATECHUMENS FOR ELECTION & CANDIDATES FOR RECOGNITION BY THE BISHOP

This combined rite is used where there are both catechumens and candidates, and it is not possible to separate the catechumens from the candidates (e.g., there is only one weekend Mass).

PRESENTATION OF CATECHUMENS (RICA #537-539)

After the homily and an appropriate period of silence, a catechist addresses the assembly:

Catechist: Fr. _____, members of the Church, today, I present our catechumens, who are beginning their final period of preparation and purification leading to their initiation at the Easter Vigil. They have found strength in God's grace, and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that they be recognized for the progress they have made in their spiritual formation, and that they receive the assurance of our blessings and prayers as they go forth to the rite of election, celebrated [on _____ by Bishop _____ at _____ in _____].

Priest: Those who are to be sent to the celebration of election in Christ, please stand and come forward, together with your godparents, as your name is called.

Catechist: (reads the names of the catechumens N____)¹

AFFIRMATION BY GODPARENTS AND THE ASSEMBLY

Priest: People of God, these catechumens who have been preparing for the sacraments of initiation hope that they will be found ready to participate in the rite of election, and be chosen in Christ for the Easter sacraments. It is the responsibility of this community to inquire about their readiness before they are presented to the bishop.

¹ Especially if there are several catechumens, have them stand throughout the assembly. This gives the assembly an opportunity to "surround them with prayer" in the course of the rite. Consider dedicating the center aisle for catechumens, and other aisles for candidates (to clearly distinguish between them).

They do as instructed, each sponsor placing the right hand on the catechumen's right shoulder.

Priest: I turn to you, godparents, for your testimony about these catechumens represents the discernment of the Church community. Have these catechumens taken their formation in the Gospel and in the Catholic way of life seriously?

Godparents: They have.

Priest: Have they given evidence of their conversion by the example of their lives?

Godparents: They have.

[Optional Testimony:

Priest: Then I ask one of the godparents to speak to this assembly about the example of conversion they have given.]

[One or more of the godparents may offer a brief testimony to their example of conversion².]

Priest: Do you judge them to be ready to be presented to the bishop for the rite of election?

Godparents: We do

Priest: My brothers and sisters of this assembly: are you ready to support the testimony about these catechumens – which has been expressed in your name by these godparents -- and to include these catechumens in your prayers and affection, as we move toward the Easter Triduum?

Assembly: We are.

² This can be a powerful moment, witnessing how a particular catechumen has shown evidence of her/his turning to Christ.

SIGNING OF THE BOOK OF THE ELECT

He addresses the catechumens:

P: My dear catechumens, your own godparents, your catechists, and this entire community have spoken in your favor and recommends you to the bishop, who in the name of Christ, will call you to the Easter sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. May God bring to completion the good work which he has begun in you. Then, as a sign of your commitment to live as faithful followers of Christ, and your desire to be initiated sacramentally into the life of the Catholic Church, I ask you to offer your names for enrollment.

Each catechumen announces her or his name clearly, and then enters it in the Book of the Elect.

During this and the rest of the rite, the godparent places her or his right hand on the catechumen's right shoulder.

Then, as an appropriate song is sung³ the Book of the Elect is processed through the Church, showing the names to the assembly,

The catechumens remain standing with their sponsors.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES (RCIA # 540-542)

Catechist: Fr. _____, members of the Church, today, I also present our candidates, who are beginning their final period of preparation for the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist and thus preparing for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. They have found strength in God's grace, and support in our community's prayers and example.

Now they ask that they be recognized for the progress they have made in their spiritual formation, and that they receive the assurance of our blessings and prayers as they go forth for recognition [by Bishop _____ on _____].

Priest : Those who are to be recognized, please stand and come forward, with your sponsor, as your name is called.

Catechist: (Reads the names of the candidates).

³ e.g., "Who Calls You by Name" by David Haas. Found in *Who Calls You by Name: Music for Christian Initiation* (GIA, 1988).

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND ASSEMBLY

When all are standing, the priest continues:

Priest: People of God, these candidates, already one with us by reason of their baptism in Christ, have asked to be able to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Those who know them have judged them to be sincere in their desire. During the period of their catechetical formation, they have listened to the word of Christ, and endeavored to follow his commands more perfectly; they have shared the company of their Christian sisters and brothers, and joined with us in prayer.

And so I announce to all of you here that our community supports these candidates in their desire. Therefore, I ask their sponsors to state their opinion once again, so that all of you may hear.

The priest continues:

Sponsors, your testimony is witness to the community's discernment. As God is your witness, do you consider these candidates to be ready to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church, and celebrate the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist with us [at the Easter Vigil]?

Sponsors: WE DO.

Priest: Brothers and sisters of the assembly: are you ready to support the testimony expressed in your name by these sponsors about these candidates, and to include them in your prayers and affection, [as we move toward the Easter Triduum]?

Assembly: WE ARE.

Priest: Candidates, your own sponsors and this entire community have spoken in your favor. The Church, in the name of Christ, accepts their testimony, and sends you to Bishop _____, who will exhort you to live in deeper conformity to the life of Christ.

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

(RCIA # 543)

The priest addresses the assembly:

Priest: My sisters and brothers, we look forward to celebrating at the Triduum the life-giving mysteries of our Lord's suffering, death and resurrection. As we journey together to the Easter sacraments, these catechumens and candidates will look to us for an example of Christian renewal. Let us pray to the Lord for them and for ourselves, that we may be renewed by one another's efforts, and together come to share the joys of Easter.

Catechist: That these catechumens and candidates may be freed from selfishness, and learn to put others first. We pray to the Lord:

Assembly: Lord, hear our prayer

Catechist: That their godparents and sponsors may be living examples of the Gospel. We pray to the Lord:

Assembly: Lord...

Catechist: That their catechists may always convey to them the beauty of God's word. We pray to the Lord:

Assembly: Lord...

Catechist: That these catechumens and candidates may share with others the joy they have found in their friendship with Jesus. We pray to the Lord:

Assembly: Lord...

Catechist: That, our community, during the coming Lenten season, may grow in charity and be constant in prayer. We pray to the Lord:

Assembly: Lord...

PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES (RCIA # 544)

*The priest extends his hands over the catechumens and candidates
[and invites the members of the assembly also to do the same]:*

**Priest: God of love and power,
it is your will to establish everything in Christ,
and to draw us into his all-embracing love.**

**Guide our catechumens and candidates
in the days and weeks ahead:
strengthen them in their vocation,
build them into the kingdom of your Son,
and seal them with the Spirit of your promise.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

Assembly: Amen.

DISMISSAL OF CATECHUMENS (RCIA # 546)

The catechumens are dismissed:

**Priest: My dear catechumens, you are about to set out on the road
that leads to the glory of Easter. Christ will be your way,
your truth, and your life. In his name we send you forth
from this community to celebrate with Bishop _____ the
Lord's choice of you to be numbered among his elect. Until
we meet again for the scrutinies, walk always in his peace,**

CATECHUMENS: Amen.

*As an appropriate song is sung, they go from the assembly, led by the Book of the Elect.
NOTE: ONLY THE CATECHUMENS ARE DISMISSED; the candidates remain with
the assembly. After they have left, the priest continues:*

**Priest: My dear candidates, although you cannot yet participate
fully in the Lord's Eucharist, stay with us, as a sign of our
hope that all God's children will eat and drink with the
Lord, and work with his Spirit to re-create the face of the
earth.**

They take their places with the assembly. The Liturgy of the Eucharist continues.