

RITE OF SENDING CATECHUMENS FOR ELECTION BY THE BISHOP

This rite is used in parishes where there are only Catechumens (those who have not been baptized).

CALLING OF CATECHUMENS

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

Cat: Fr. _____, members of the Church, today, we present our catechumens, who are beginning their final period of preparation and purification leading to their baptism 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 [this Saturday by Bishop _____ at _____].

P: Those who are to be sent to the celebration of election in Christ, please stand as your name is called.

Cat: (reads the names of the catechumens : N,)¹

As each name is called, the catechumen stands, and steps into their place throughout the assembly. When all are standing, the priest continues:

AFFIRMATION OF THE GODPARENTS AND THE ASSEMBLY

P: People of the Church, 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 on Saturday, 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.

Godparents, please stand, and join your catechumens.²

¹ Especially if there are several catechumens, have them stand in the center aisle throughout the assembly. This gives the assembly an opportunity to "surround them with prayer" in the course of the rite.

² For a distinction between sponsors and godparents, see *RCIA General Introduction*, 8-4, and *RCIA*, 10-11. In brief, a *sponsor* is a representative of the community who assists in the inquirer/catechumen's preparation up to the Rite of Election. The *godparent(s)* chosen by the catechumen "on the basis of

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

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

G: They have.

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

G: They have.

[optional:

P: Then I ask one of the Godparents [sponsors] to speak to this assembly about the examples of conversion they have seen in these catechumens [or, in (name)].]

[One or more of the Godparents/sponsors may offer a brief testimony to their example of conversion³.]

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

G: We do

P: 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?

A: We are.

SIGNING OF THE BOOK OF ELECT

He addresses the catechumens:

P: My dear catechumens, your own Godparents, catechists, and this entire community have spoken in your favor.

example, good qualities, and friendship,” but must be “delegated by the local Christian community, and approved by the priest” (RCIA, 11). The sponsor and godparent may in fact be the same person, although the title of godparent is used exclusively through the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. If they are, in fact, two distinct persons, the RCIA assumes the presence of the godparent for the Rite of Election, as well as all the Lenten Rites and the Easter Vigil itself.

³ This can be a powerful moment, witnessing how a particular catechumen has shown evidence of her/his turning to Christ in their life. Remember to craft this testimony to be brief; the catechumens remain standing throughout it!

Since you have already heard the call of Christ, you must now express your response to that call clearly and in the presence of the Church.

Therefore, do you wish to enter fully into the life of the Church through the sacraments of Baptism, confirmation and the eucharist?

C: WE DO.

P: 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 Roman Catholic Church, I ask you to offer your names for enrollment.

A minister with the Book, and another with a pen (and a microphone), go to each catechumen. The catechumen announces her or his name clearly, and then enters it in the Book of the Elect.

The book is taken to each of the catechumens until all have signed.⁴

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 sung⁵ the Book of the Elect is processed through the Church, showing the names to the assembly, and then is taken to the priest, as the song ends and the minister says,

M: Father, these are the names of the catechumens from the Church of _____ who seek the sacraments of initiation.

He looks at the names, then says:

P: My dear catechumens, the community gladly recommends you to the bishop, who, in the name of Christ and His Church, will call you to the Easter sacraments. May God bring to completion the good work begun in you.

The minister continues holding the book, standing near the ambo.

⁴ Depending on your space, the signing may need to be adapted (e.g., have each come to a place in the sanctuary), but be sure to include the procession afterwards in any case.

⁵ e.g., "Who Calls You by Name" by David Haas. Found in *Who Calls You by Name: Music for Christian Initiation* (GIA, 1988).

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS⁶

The priest addresses the assembly:

P: 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 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.

Please stand, and face the catechumens [in the center aisle].

C: That our catechumens may be freed from selfishness, and learn to put others first.

We pray:

A: Lord, hear our prayer.

C: That their godparents may be living examples of the Gospel.

We pray:

A: Lord...

C: That their catechists may always convey to them the beauty of God's word.

We pray:

A: Lord...

C: That these Catechumens may share with others the joy they have found in their friendship with Jesus.

We pray:

A: Lord...

C: That, with the poor and hungry of the world, we may pray, fast and give alms as the gospel teaches, making this (coming) Lent the springtime of salvation,

⁶ If it is not your usual custom to sing the intercessions, consider doing so for this rite.

We pray:

A: Lord...

PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS

The priest extends his hands over the catechumens [and invites the assembly to do so as well]:

**P: 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 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.**

A: Amen.

DISMISSAL OF CATECHUMENS

The catechumens are dismissed:

P: 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 DiLorenzo the Lord's choice of you to be numbered among His elect. Until we meet again for the scrutinies, walk always in His peace, for He is Lord for ever and ever.

A: Amen.

As an appropriate song is sung, they go from the assembly, led by the Book of the Elect. After they have left, the assembly continues with the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful.