

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

PRESENTER: OSCAR CRUZ

- The **OCIA** is the name of the ritual book.
- The **Catechumenate** is the name of the process.
- HISTORY:
 - Vatican Council 2 called for the restoration of the Catechumenate
 - The Catechumenate was restored in 1972
 - In 1988 the USCCB published the RCIA ritual text
 - In 2024 the USCCB published a new version: the OCIA ritual text

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS - THE CATECHUMENATE -

The Catechumenate (OCIA) is the official process of initiation / formation / preparation for:

Chapter One:

Unbaptized adults seeking to become Catholic ... ages 14+ (*baptism, confirmation, eucharist*)

Chapter Two:

Unbaptized children seeking to become Catholic ... ages 7 – 13 (*baptism, confirmation, eucharist*)

Chapter Five:

Baptized Catholic adults seeking to receive Confirmation and First Eucharist ..Ages 14+ (*confirmation, eucharist*)

Chapter Six:

Baptized Protestant adults and children seeking to become Catholic ...ages 7+ (*reception, confirmation, eucharist*)

THE RITUAL BOOK:

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, 2024

CONTENTS:

- - Christian Initiation: General Introduction (I – 35)
- - National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults (Norms I – 18)
- - The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults: Introduction (OCIA I – 35)
- - **Chapter One:** Order of the Catechumenate (OCIA 36 – 251) UNBAPTIZED Ages 14 +
- - **Chapter Two:** Order of Initiation of Children (OCIA 252 – 330) UNBAPTIZED Ages 7 - 13
- - **Chapter Three:** Simpler Order of Adult Initiation (OCIA 331 – 369) UNBAPTIZED Sickness / Travel
- - **Chapter Four:** Shorter Order of Adult Initiation (OCIA 370 – 399) UNBAPTIZED Danger of Death
- - **Chapter Five:** Preparing Adults for Confirmation & Eucharist (OCIA 400 – 472) Baptized Catholics Ages 14 +
- - **Chapter Six:** Order of Reception into the Full Communion (OCIA 473 – 504) Baptized Protestants Ages 7+
- - Appendix 1: Combined Rites (OCIA 505 – 594)
- - Appendix 2: Acclamations, Hymns, and Chants (OCIA 595 – 597)

THE VISION OF THE CATECHUMENATE

- **Conversion:** Change of Life / Living the Christian Life / Discipline of Prayer / Discipline of Charity / Missionary Disciple of Jesus Christ / Active Member of Catholic Church
- **Communal Experience:** Accompaniment / Parish and Apostolic Life
- **Catechesis:** Evangelization / Pastoral Formation / Spiritual Formation
.... Kerygma / Scripture / Liturgical Year / Liturgy of the Word / Dogmas / Doctrines
- **Liturgical Process:** Major and Minor Rites / Liturgy of the Word / Sunday Mass
- **Adaptability:** Unbaptized & Baptized / Year-Round Catechumenate / Adults & Children
Pastoral Issues: Marriage / Change of Lifestyle / Education / Culture

THE CATECHUMENATE

The Order for the UNBAPTIZED

1. Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

... begins with a “knock on the door”

2. Period of the Catechumenate

...begins with a Major Rite: *Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate*

3. Period of Purification and Enlightenment (Lent)

... begins with a Major Rite: *Rite of Election*

4. Period of Mystagogy (Easter)

... begins with a Major Rite: *The celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Bapt./Conf./Eucharist)*



THE CATECHUMENATE

The Order for the **BAPTIZED**

1. **Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate**

... begins with a “knock on the door”

2. **Period of the Catechumenate**

...begins with a Major Rite: *Rite of Welcoming the Candidates*

3. **Period of Purification and Enlightenment (Lent)**

... begins with a Major Rite: *Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion*

4. **Period of Mystagogy (Easter)**

... begins with a Major Rite: *The celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Confirmation & Eucharist)*

PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE

- **Participants:** INQUIRERS
- **Goal:** Encounter with Christ / Awaken Initial Faith Life
- **Process:** *INFORMAL FORMATION*
Hospitality / Build Trust / Dialogue / Listen / Share faith (personal / bible / church stories /
Witness faith life / Introduce to Parish Community / Introduce to Prayer / Evangelize /
Proclaim the Kerygma ... **One-to-One ..and/or.. Group Gatherings**
- **Time:** As long as it takes
- **Rites:** NONE

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

STARTS WITH RITE OF ENTRANCE / RITE OF WELCOMING

- **Participants:** Catechumens (unbaptized) / Candidates (baptized)
- **Goal:** Deepen Initial Conversion / Train in Catholic Christian Life (Prayer and Charity) / Discipleship
- **Process:** **PASTORAL FORMATION** ... see **OCIA, 75**
 1. **Prayer** (Sunday Mass) (Major and Minor Rites)
 2. **Catechesis** (based of the Liturgical Year)
 3. **Accompaniment and Community Life** (OCIA Sponsor)
 4. **Participation in Apostolic Life**
- **Time:** At least one liturgical year (skip an Easter) ... as long as it takes.... Many years if necessary.
- **Rites:** Catechumen: Rite of Entrance / Liturgy of the Word / Minor Rites
Candidate: Rite of Welcome / Sunday Mass / Sacrament of Reconciliation

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

PASTORAL FORMATION / PRAYER:

For the **UNBAPTIZED**:

Major Rites:

- + *Rite of Entrance into the Catechumenate* (OCIA 41 – 74)
- + *LITURGY OF THE WORD* (OCIA 81 – 89) ... First part of the Sunday Mass with Dismissal Rite
- + *Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election (optional)* (OCIA 106 – 117)

Minor Rites:

- + Minor Exorcisms (OCIA 90 – 94)
- + Blessing of the Catechumens (OCIA 95 – 97)
- + Anointing of the Catechumens (OCIA 98 – 103)

For the **BAPTIZED**:

Major Rites:

- + *Rite of Welcoming the Candidates* (OCIA 411 – 433)
- + *LITURGY OF THE WORD AND LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST* (no communion)
- + *Rite of Sending the Candidates for the Calling to Continuing Conversion* (OCIA 434 – 445)

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

PASTORAL FORMATION / CATECHESIS:

1. *Sunday Mass*

- + Catechumens: Liturgy of the Word and **Dismissal Catechesis**
- + Candidates: Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist (no communion)

2. **Extended Catechesis**

- + Catechumens and Candidates
- + based on the Sunday Readings / Liturgical Year

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

PASTORAL FORMATION / CATECHESIS:

Dismissal Catechesis

1. After the Sunday Mass Homily ... catechumens are dismissed with a catechist
2. Catechumens with Catechist gather in a separate room for faith sharing:
 - a. Call to Prayer (Spontaneous)
 - b. Proclamation of the Gospel Reading (or additional Sunday Mass readings)
 - c. Reflection Questions:
 - What did you hear in the reading? What touched you?
 - How can you respond to the Word of God you heard today?
 - d. Closing Prayer: e.g. Minor Rites / Petitions

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

PASTORAL FORMATION / CATECHESIS:

Extended Catechesis

1. Catechumens and Candidates gather with a catechist on a regular basis to study the doctrines/dogmas of the Catholic faith.

The Sunday readings and the liturgical year give us the content for our teaching.

2. Can be on Sunday after the Mass or any day/evening after the Sunday Mass.

3. Appropriate-age faith formation teaching principles should be followed.

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

PASTORAL FORMATION / COMMUNITY:

Accompaniment:

1. OCIA Sponsor (OCIA,10)
 - assigned by the parish
 - serves as a companion, consultant, guide
 - helps the catechumen/candidate feel part of the parish
 - offers encouragement, prayer, clarification, witness
 - invites and accompanies to parish events / prayer opportunities
2. Parishioners

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

PASTORAL FORMATION / APOSTOLIC LIFE:

Missionary Discipleship

Guiding Principles:

- Love of God / Love of Neighbor / Love of Self
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Charity
- Catholic Social Teachings
- “Thy Kingdom Come on Earth”
- Matthew Chapter 25: 31 – 46 (The Final Judgment)

PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

STARTS WITH ... RITE OF ELECTION / RITE OF CONTINUING CONVERSION

- **Participants:** Elect (unbaptized) Candidates (baptized)
- **Goal:** Become aware of what is sinful / what is holy Examination of Conscience
- **Process:** *SPIRITUAL FORMATION*
 1. Prayer (Sunday Mass) (Major and Minor Rites) (Retreat / Day of Prayer and Reflection)
 2. Catechesis
 3. Accompaniment and Community Life (Godparent)
 4. Participation in Apostolic Life
- **Time:** The season of Lent
- **Rites:** Elect: Rite of Election / Scrutiny 1, 2, 3 / Handing On of the Creed / Handing On of the Lord's Prayer
Candidate: Rite of Continuing Conversion / Sacrament of Reconciliation

PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGY

STARTS WITH ... THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

- **Participants:** Neophytes (newly baptized) Newly Confirmed (Catholics) Newly Received (Protestants)
- **Goal:** Continued growth in faith and charity / better understanding of Sacred Mysteries
- **Process:** **ONGOING FORMATION**
 1. Prayer (Sunday Neophyte Masses) (Neophyte Mass with the Bishop)
 2. Catechesis
 3. Community Life (Godparent)
 4. Participation in Apostolic Life
- **Time:** The season of Easter
- **Rites:** *Sacraments of Christian Initiation / Sacrament of Reconciliation*

PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGY

STARTS WITH ... THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

1. ***THE ELECT:***

Easter Vigil Mass

.....receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist (OCIA 206 – 243)

2. ***THE CATHOLIC CANDIDATES:***

Either at the Easter Vigil or Any other Day (with Bishop permission)

.... receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist (OCIA 587 – 591)

3. ***THE CANDIDATES FOR FULL COMMUNION:***

On any day of the year

....celebrate the Rite of Reception & receive Confirmation and Eucharist (OCIA 487 - 498)



PASTORAL ISSUES WITH THE OCIA

- Four different and distinct periods of formation:
 1. Precatechumenate
 2. Catechumenate
 3. Purification & Enlightenment
 4. Mystagogy
- Year-Round Catechumenate
- What topics to teach / The Liturgical Year / It's a Liturgical Process
- Adults and Children
- Community Involvement... We need Sponsors / Catechists / Ministers of Hospitality
- Apostolic Life opportunities
- Marriage Issues
- Discernment – How do you know they are ready for the next step?
- Children and Teens ... what to do?

WHAT ABOUT UN-BAPTIZED CHILDREN?

- Unbaptized children ages 0 – 6 are to be baptized (only) according to the ***Order of Baptism for Children***.
 - + their Confirmation and First Eucharist are deferred until a later age according to **diocesan / parish policy**.
- Unbaptized children ages 7 – 13 are to be fully initiated (baptism, confirmation and first Eucharist) according to the ***Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (chapter 2)***
 - + all three sacraments of initiation are celebrated at the same Mass.

WHAT ABOUT BAPTIZED *PROTESTANT* CHILDREN?

- Baptized Protestant children ages 0 - 6 with **at least one Catholic parent...**
The children ***must wait*** to become Catholic at the celebration of their First Eucharist according to **diocesan / parish policy**.
- Baptized Protestant children ages 0 – 6 with **at least one Protestant parent becoming Catholic...**
The ***children immediately*** become Catholic at the same time their parent becomes a Catholic.
No rite is required of them.
 - + their Confirmation and First Eucharist are deferred until a later age according to **diocesan / parish policy**.

WHAT ABOUT BAPTIZED ***PROTESTANT*** CHILDREN?

- Baptized Protestant children ages 0 - 6 with **Protestant parents remaining Protestant ...**
The children ***must wait*** until catechetical age (ages 7 – 13) and with parental permission:

Option 1: be enrolled in the **OCIA** (chapter VI) and be fully initiated.

Option 2: prepare and receive **First Eucharist and Confirmation**
according to diocesan and parish policy.

QUESTIONS

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