

# Sacramental Guidelines

Diocese of Pueblo



## The Initiation of Persons Over the Age of Reason

*Overall Norms*

*Rite of Christian Initiation for Uncatechized and Unbaptized Adults*

*Rite of Christian Initiation for Uncatechized and Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age*

*Rite of Reception into Full Communion for Non-Catholic Christians*

*Rite of Completing Initiation for Uncatechized Adult Catholics*

Spring 2010

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Enclosed you will find Diocese of Pueblo Sacramental Guidelines for the initiation of persons over the age of reason. These norms are partial, a supplement to the sacramental guidelines currently in place. I promulgate them at this time to assist you in your initiation ministry.

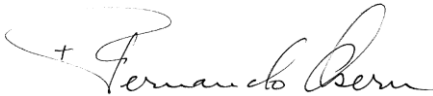
These guidelines are the result of recommendations by the Council for Lifelong Catechesis and extensive consultations across the Diocese of Pueblo with priests, deacons and catechetical leaders. They have been reviewed as well by members of the diocesan staff. The guidelines mark for us a solid start to what will be over the next years a thorough review of all guidelines for our Pueblo Church's sacramental life.

I am grateful to the Council for Lifelong Catechesis for spearheading this effort. I offer my heartfelt thanks especially to all those who participated in the consultations. Your reflection, discernment and insight have made this work practical and helpful, even as they have already begun to bear fruit in initiation ministry. That essential fruit emerges from the guiding principle of these guidelines: the governing determinant of the Church's initiation process is always the candidate, never a parish's program.

At their heart, these supplemental guidelines call us to embrace a life of transformation not only for catechumens and candidates, but for the whole parish community and the entire Church of Pueblo. My prayer is that we will hear that call as the Church urges us, through the initiation process, strongly forward on our journey to Christ.

Much remains to be done, thus supplements to our sacramental guidelines will continue as the months and years pass. Meanwhile, with this letter I add these norms to the *Sacramental Guidelines for the Diocese of Pueblo* published in 2002.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, starting with a cross symbol and the name "Fernando Isern".

Most Reverend Fernando Isern, D.D.  
Bishop of Pueblo

# ***Overall Norms Initiation<sup>1</sup> of Persons Over the Age of Reason***

## **POLICY<sup>2</sup>**

### *Initiation:*

1. The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is normative for the Universal Church and for the Diocese of Pueblo (can. 851:1).
2. Initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized and takes place in the midst of the community (can. 843:2).
3. Initiation and the process of preparation and formation are to be readily accessible to all interested persons. Every parish, mission and/or parish-and-mission cluster is required to establish – in itself or in collaboration with adjacent parishes, missions or clusters – the full initiation process with all of its rites.

### *Candidates for Initiation:*

4. Persons 14 years of age and older are considered to be adults in canon law and are to be initiated into the Christian faith in accord with the norms of the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* (can. 852:1).
5. The initiation of children who have reached the age of reason (ordinarily considered to be 7 years of age) is governed by all of the requirements of the norms for the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* (can. 852:1).
6. A minor under the age of reason is considered to be an infant in canon law, as is anyone who habitually lacks the use of reason (can. 97, 99), therefore their initiation is governed by the norms for infant baptism, confirmation, First Eucharist, etc.
7. For adults to be baptized, they must:
  - manifest the intention to receive baptism,
  - be sufficiently instructed in the truths of the faith,
  - be sufficiently instructed in the Christian obligations,
  - be tested in the Christian life through the catechumenate (can. 865:1).

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<sup>1</sup> These norms pertain to all persons over the age of reason, all persons beyond what the Church legally considers infancy.

<sup>2</sup> Beyond Diocese-wide consultation in 2009, five sources are used for the policies in this area and they are indicated in parentheses in the text. They are:

1. the *Code of Canon Law* (can. ---);
2. the *National Statutes for the Catechumenate* (NSC --) issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1986;
3. the norms found in *The Rites: Initiation* (CI --) and (RCIA --) published in 1988 and approved by the USCCB;
4. Huels, J.C.D., John M. *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 2002), indicated in the text by (PC, p. --).
5. Woestman, OMI, William H. *Canon Law of the Sacraments for Parish Ministry*. Ottawa: St. Paul University, 2007.

*Terms:*

8. The term *convert* is reserved strictly for those persons converted from unbelief to Christian belief (NSC 2). It does **not** pertain to Christians from other Churches or ecclesial communities entering into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
9. The term *catechumen* is reserved exclusively for the unbaptized who have been admitted to the order of catechumens through the Rite of Acceptance (NSC 2, 30).
10. After the Church has celebrated the rite of election, catechumens are called *the elect*. They are no longer called catechumens.
11. The term *candidate* is reserved for
  - unbaptized persons in the pre-catechumenate,
  - baptized persons who are being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church,
  - baptized Catholics who are uncatechized and being prepared for full initiation.

*Choosing a Name:*

12. The elect may choose a new name provided that it is a Christian name and not a name that is foreign to Christian sensibility (RCIA 203, can. 855).

*Celebration of Baptism:*

13. Except for a good reason, baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church (CI 27).
14. At all times the celebration of baptism should have a markedly paschal character (CI 28).
15. Taking into account existing circumstances and other needs, as well as the wishes of the faithful, the minister of baptism should make full use of the various options allowed in the rite (CI 34).
16. For the dialogue and blessings of the rites, the minister may make adaptations for special circumstances in addition to those provided in the Roman Ritual (CI 35).

*Sponsors:*

17. A sponsor accompanies any candidate seeking admission as a catechumen (RCIA 10). Indeed, it is ancient practice of the Church that adults are not admitted to baptism without sponsors (CI 8,9).  
*Pastoral note: Though the Latin term is translated differently in various documents, Canon law recognizes no difference between a sponsor and a godparent.*
- *The sponsor in infant baptism is the “fall back” position that founds the hope a child will be raised in the faith;*
  - *the sponsor in adult baptism serves to prepare (assist and testify) the catechumen for reception of the sacrament and to remain supportive of growth in faith.*
- This distinction is without difference in law. In both cases, sponsorship is presumed to be a lifetime relationship grounded in the community’s life of faith and in ongoing sharing of personal faith.*
18. Sponsors are members of the Christian community who
- assist the catechumens in the final preparation for baptism,
  - testify to the faith of the catechumen in the rites,
  - help the neophytes after baptism persevere in faith,
  - help the neophytes after baptism persevere in the Christian life (CI 8, 9).
19. Sponsors
- represent the expanded spiritual family of the one to be baptized,
  - represent the role of the church as Mother,
  - profess in the rites the Church’s faith,
  - in the case of children, help the parents so the children will come to profess the faith and live up to it (CI 8, 9).
20. To qualify to serve, a sponsor must
- be 16 years of age;
  - be fully initiated into the Catholic Church through baptism, confirmation and Eucharist;
  - be living a life consistent with faith and the responsibility of a sponsor;
  - have the capability and intention of carrying out the responsibility of a godparent;
  - have the maturity to do so (CI 10, can. 874),
  - not be the father or mother of the one being baptized,
  - not be bound by any canonical penalty.
- Pastoral Note 1: The base-line considerations for persons to serve as a sponsor are as follows:*
- *For a child, the sponsor must offer solid support for a founded hope that the child would be reared in the Catholic faith.*
  - *For an adult, the sponsor’s life ought to testify to the Catholic faith and the sponsor should be committed to assisting the candidate to persevere in the Catholic faith.*
- Pastoral Note 2: Because they are not bound by canonical penalty, the following persons are not prohibited from being initiation sponsors:*
- *divorced persons*
  - *persons divorced and remarried without an annulment*
  - *Catholics married outside the Church*
  - *cohabiting persons.*

Pastoral Note 3: *The Diocese of Pueblo discourages pastors from permitting persons*

- *divorced and remarried without an annulment,*
- *Catholics married outside the Church*
- *cohabiting persons*

*from serving as sponsors because they ought not to receive Eucharist. If, however, these persons provide **the** founded hope for perseverance in faith, then the Diocese urges pastors to use the sponsorship discussion as an opportunity to call these persons to conversion of life.*

21. For an adult preparing for initiation, a sponsor is also a person who:

- has known the candidate
- has assisted the candidate
- stands as witness to the candidate's
  - moral character
  - faith
  - intention

Pastoral Note: *All of these above qualifications in number 20 and 21 need to be considered together before a pastor affirms the selection of sponsors for initiation.*

22. Depending on circumstances, sponsors may be designated by the catechumen, the parents or guardians, the minister of baptism or the pastor (CI 10), in that order of priority.

Pastoral Note: *In all instances, the Pastor holds ultimate approval or disapproval authority to determine whether or not a person qualifies to serve as a sponsor. See the pastoral notes in number 20 above.*

23. Catechumens or candidates may have a female sponsor, a male sponsor, or one of each.

24. It is strongly discouraged that a spouse would serve as an initiation sponsor.

25. It may happen that the sponsor for the rite of acceptance and period of the catechumenate differs from the sponsor for the period of purification and enlightenment and the mystagogical catechesis (RCIA 10).

26. It is desirable that the sponsor at baptism be the sponsor for confirmation (can. 893:2).

27. If parents request, a baptized and believing Christian not belonging to the Catholic Church may act as a Christian witness along with a sponsor (CI 10; can. 873, 874:1-2).

Pastoral Note 1: *A Christian witness is understood to be a faithful and practicing man or woman from another Christian Church or denomination. His or her purpose, like the sponsor's, would be to offer assurance of founded hope that the candidate would persevere in the Catholic faith.*

Pastoral Note 2: *Because baptism governs all roles within the faith community, a non-practicing Catholic, or a Catholic living a life inconsistent with faith is not to be considered and may not serve as Christian witness.*

*Ministers of Baptism:*

28. The ordinary ministers of baptism are bishops, priests and deacons (CI 11, can. 861).
29. Except in the case of grave necessity, these ministers are not to confer baptism outside their own territory, even on their own subjects, without the requisite permission (CI 11, can. 862).

*Ministers of Confirmation:*

30. The ordinary minister of confirmation is the bishop (can. 882:1).
31. A presbyter may administer the sacrament of confirmation by reason of his office
  - when he baptizes one who is no longer an infant
  - when he admits a person into the full communion of the Catholic Church
  - when a person is in danger of death (can 883:2, 3)
  - in the case of the readmission to communion of a baptized Catholic who has been an apostate from the faith (NSC 28)
  - in the case of a baptized Catholic who has without fault been instructed in a non-Catholic religion or adhered to a non-Catholic religion (NSC 28).

*Pastoral Note 1: In the above five circumstances, a presbyter need not ask the bishop for permission to confirm.*

*Pastoral Note 2: A presbyter may not confirm a baptized Catholic who without his or her fault never put the faith into practice without delegation from the bishop.*

*Requirements for the Celebration of Baptism:*

32. The water for baptism must be true water, pure and clean (CI 18).
33. Except in the case of necessity, the water used for the sacrament should be the water blessed within the rite (CI 20).
  - The water blessed at the Easter Vigil should be kept throughout the season to signify the connection between baptism and the paschal mystery.
  - Outside the Easter season water should be blessed for each occasion.
  - In the case of a baptistery with running water, the water is to be blessed as it flows.
34. Immersion is the more suitable way of baptizing because it symbolizes more fully participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Pouring may lawfully be used (CI 22).
35. The font or vessel used for baptism should be spotlessly clean and of pleasing design (CI 19).
36. The baptistery or place where the font is located should be
  - reserved for baptism,
  - worthy to serve as the place where Christians are reborn in water and the Holy Spirit,
  - easily seen by the faithful,
  - a location which can easily accommodate the reverent placement of the Easter candle (CI 25).

37. The parts of the rite to be celebrated outside the baptistery should be carried out in the different areas of the church that suit the size of the assembly and the several parts of the baptismal liturgy (CI 26).

*Sacramental Records and Proof of Baptism*

38. The pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated must carefully and without delay record in the baptismal book the names of those baptized making mention of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses if any and the place and date of the conferral of baptism, together with an indication of the place and date of birth (cans. 535:2, 877).
39. The names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and date of the conferral of confirmation are to be noted in a book kept in the parish archive; the pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation so that notation be made in the baptismal register (cans. 535:2, 895).
40. If it is not prejudicial to anyone, to prove the conferral of baptism, the declaration of a single witness who is above suspicion suffices, or the oath of the baptized person, if the baptism was received at an adult age (can. 876).



***Rite of Christian Initiation  
for Uncatechized and Unbaptized Adults (RCIA)***

**POLICY**

*The Rite:*

1. The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is normative for the Universal Church and for the Diocese of Pueblo (can. 851:1).
2. The whole initiation process must bear a markedly paschal character since initiation is the Christian's first sacramental sharing in the dying and rising of Jesus Christ.
3. The period of purification and enlightenment ordinarily coincides with Lent.
4. The period of mystagogical catechesis ordinarily coincides with the Easter season (RCIA 8).

*Ministries:*

5. The entire community must always be fully prepared in the pursuit of its apostolic vocation to help the catechumens throughout the process of initiation (RCIA 9).
  - During the period of pre-catechumenate, the faithful should
    - give the candidates evidence of the spirit of Christian community,
    - welcome the candidates into their homes,
    - invite candidates into personal conversation,
    - welcome candidates to community events.
  - During the period of the catechumenate, the faithful should
    - be present for the rites whenever possible,
    - participate fully in the rites.
  - On the day of election, the faithful should
    - be present,
    - give honest and carefully considered testimony about the catechumens.
  - During the period of purification and enlightenment, the faithful should
    - participate in the rites of the scrutinies and presentations,
    - give the elect an example of their own renewal, including apostolic activity.
  - At the Easter Vigil the faithful should attach great importance to the renewal of their own baptismal vows.
  - During the period of the mystagogical catechesis, the faithful should
    - participate in Eucharist with the neophytes,
    - welcome the neophytes with open arms,
    - help the neophytes feel more at home in the community of faith (RCIA 9).
    - inspire apostolic activity

6. The bishop
  - oversees the rites of initiation across the Diocese,
  - assures that the candidates and catechumens receive proper instruction,
  - celebrates the rite of election at the Cathedral during the first week of Lent (RCIA 12).
7. The priests have the responsibility to
  - attend to the pastoral and personal needs of the catechumens,
  - judge the outward indications of the requisite inward dispositions necessary for moving from one period of the RCIA to another (RCIA 43),
  - provide instruction for the catechumens,
  - approve the choice of godparents,
  - willingly listen to and help the godparents,
  - be diligent in the correct celebration and adaptation of the rites (RCIA 13).
8. Deacons should be ready to assist in ministry to the catechumens (RCIA 15).
9. Catechists should see to it that their instruction is
  - filled with the spirit of the Gospel,
  - adapted to the liturgical signs,
  - tailored to the cycle of the Church year,
  - suited to the needs of the catechumens,
  - enriched by local traditions (RCIA 16).

*The Period of the Precatechumenate:*

10. The period of precatechumenate extends for whatever time is necessary to discern the requisite dispositions for
  - celebrating the rite of acceptance,
  - moving into the catechumenate.
11. During the period of precatechumenate, the faithful should
  - give the candidates evidence of the spirit of Christian community,
  - welcome the candidates into their homes,
  - invite candidates into personal conversation,
  - welcome candidates to community events.
12. Any service of welcome or prayer for inquirers at the beginning of or during precatechumenate must be entirely informal (NSC 1).

*The Rite of Acceptance:*

13. Acceptance into the order of catechumens is to be discerned, not presumed (NSC 1).

*Pastoral Note: Following the spirit of number 30 below, this discernment is understood to be a group discernment process.*

14. The rite of acceptance is of the utmost importance. To become catechumens, the candidates must therefore manifest
  - the first stirrings of repentance,
  - a start of the practice of calling on God in prayer,
  - a sense of the Church,
  - some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with a priest and/ or community members (RCIA 42).
15. Sufficient time should be set aside to
  - evaluate the candidates motives and dispositions
  - and, if necessary, to purify them.

*The Rights of Catechumens:*

16. When catechumens marry, even two catechumens to one another, the appropriate rite is to be used (RCIA 47).
 

*Pastoral Note 1: Members of the Order of the Catechumenate (catechumens) are considered to be part of the household of Christ because the Church*

  - *nourishes them with the word of God*
  - *sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations (RCIA 47).*

*Pastoral Note 2: Baptism governs whether or not a marriage is sacramental; sacramental marriage is entered into between the baptized. The marriage between a catechumen and a baptized person or between two catechumens is not a sacrament, but it is a valid marriage. The marriage becomes sacramental upon the baptism of the catechumen.*

*Pastoral Note 3: Marriage of catechumens ought to be celebrated in a liturgy of the word only (NSC 10).*
17. Catechumens have the right to burial according to the funeral liturgy of the Church, including the funeral Mass (NSC 8-9).

*The Period of the Catechumenate:*

18. An adult who intends to receive baptism should be admitted to the catechumenate and should be led gradually to sacramental initiation through the various stages (can. 851:1).
19. Catechumens should be introduced into the Christian life of a parish from the beginning of the catechumenate so they will not find themselves isolated from the ordinary life of the Christian people (NSC 4).
20. The period of the catechumenate should be long enough – years if necessary – for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong (RCIA 76).
 

*Pastoral Note: The Diocese of Pueblo recommends for children between the ages of 7 and 14 that the catechumentate be structured for a two year period. See below, page 18.*
21. The order of the catechumenate, beginning at the rite of acceptance, including the periods of purification and enlightenment after election, should extend for a minimum of one year of formation, instruction and probation; preferably it should begin at least before Lent in one year and extend until Eastertide of the following year (NSC 6).

22. A thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of catholic doctrine and moral life is to be provided the catechumens (NSC 7). This catechesis should be
- gradual and complete in its coverage,
  - accommodated to the liturgical year,
  - solidly supported by celebrations of the word (RCIA 75:1),
  - inclusive of instruction about how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith (RCIA 75:4).
- This catechesis should lead to appropriate acquaintance with
- Christian dogmas,
  - Catholic precepts,
  - a profound sense of the mystery of salvation.
- It should also
- enlighten faith,
  - direct the heart toward God,
  - foster participation in the liturgy,
  - inspire apostolic activity,
  - nurture a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ.
- Pastoral Note 1: Following ancient practice, sacramental catechesis ought to be reserved for the period of mystagogy and begin with deep, prayerful reflection on the experience of the initiation sacraments.*
- Pastoral Note 2: Catechesis and preparation for the Sacrament of Penance, and celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, belong within the period of mystagogical catechesis.*
23. The anointing of the catechumens with the oil of catechumens
- may take place several times during the catechumenate period, whenever it is deemed beneficial (RCIA 98).
  - has as its purpose the need of the catechumens for God's help and strength so they might
    - let go of past bonds,
    - overcome the opposition of the devil,
    - forthrightly take the step of profession their faith,
    - hold fast to faith unfalteringly for the rest of their lives.
- Pastoral Note 1: In the spirit of number 30 below, the appropriateness of additional anointing is to be discerned by the part of the parish community preparing the catechumens for initiation.*
- Pastoral Note 2: For the first exorcism rite, the pastor or, by his delegation, another priest or a deacon, are the ordinary ministers of the anointing.*
- Pastoral Note 3: If the oil used is not that which has been blessed by the bishop, a priest must preside at the anointing in order to bless the oil.*
- Pastoral Note 4: For subsequent exorcism anointing, a priest, deacon or catechist appointed by the bishop may preside at the exorcism rites (RCIA 16).*

24. When catechumens are present for the Sunday assembly, they should ordinarily be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the Eucharist begins.
- Dismissal occurs after the homily and before the intercessions.
  - After the Creed is given, dismissal occurs after the Creed and before the intercessions.

*Abbreviation of the Catechumenate:*

25. The catechumenate may be abbreviated only with the permission of the diocesan bishop, and that permission may be granted (NSC 20)
- if for a serious reason the catechumen has been unable to go through all the stages of the catechumenate (sickness, old age, lengthy absence due to travel, etc.), or
  - if the catechumen already displays sincere Christian conversion and is religiously mature as judged by the local Ordinary.

*Time and Place of Initiation:*

26. As a general rule, pastors should make use of the rite in such a way that
- the rite of election takes place the first Sunday of Lent,
  - initiation takes place at the Easter Vigil (RCIA 17).
27. Because of unusual circumstances or pastoral needs
- the rite of election and the period of purification and enlightenment may be held outside Lent,
  - the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday (RCIA 26).
28. When the usual time is observed, it is permissible only for serious pastoral reasons to choose a day other than the Easter Vigil or Easter season to celebrate the sacraments of initiation.
- The alternate day must be during the Easter season.
  - The program of initiation during Lent must be maintained (RCIA 26).
29. If schedule change is made, the structure of the rite with its appropriately spaced intervals remains the same.
- The sacraments of initiation are celebrated on Sunday.
  - The rite of acceptance takes place when the time is right.
  - The rite of election is celebrated about six weeks prior to initiation, but not on a solemnity.
  - The scrutinies are celebrated on Sundays or weekdays, but not on solemnities (RCIA 27-30).

*The Rite of Election/Enrollment of Names:*

30. Before the rite of election takes place, the priests, deacons, catechists, godparents and the entire community should
- consider carefully the matter of a catechumen moving to election,
  - arrive at a judgment about the catechumen's state of formation and progress (RCIA 121).

31. Readiness for the rite of election requires of the catechumens that they
  - have undergone a conversion in mind and in action,
  - have developed sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching,
  - have developed a spirit of faith,
  - have developed a spirit of charity,
  - have the intention to receive the sacraments of the Church (RCIA 120).
32. From the time of their election, the catechumens are called *the elect* (RCIA 124).
33. The rite of sending (to the rite of election) is optional, but strongly encouraged for the benefit of
  - the parish community
  - the catechumens' deepening sense of welcome and prayerful support from the parish community (RCIA 106).

*The Period of Purification and Enlightenment:*

34. The period of purification and enlightenment customarily coincides with Lent (RCIA 138).
35. If this period does not coincide with Lent, it should extend for six weeks and contain within it all the usual rites (RCIA 27-30).
36. During this period, the elect
  - must have the intention of achieving an intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church,
  - are expected particularly to progress in genuine self-knowledge through serious examination of their lives and true repentance (RCIA 143).
37. The scrutinies
  - should ordinarily take place within the ritual Masses for the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sunday of Lent;
  - should take place on Sundays and in the usual intervals if the period of purification and enlightenment is outside Lent.
38. When the elect are present for the Sunday assembly, they should ordinarily be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the Eucharist begins.
  - Dismissal occurs after the homily and before the intercessions.
  - After the Creed is given, dismissal occurs after the Creed and before the intercessions.
  - Beginning with the Easter Vigil the elect are present for the intercessions.

*Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation:*

39. Ordinarily full initiation is celebrated only after completion of the catechumenal process (PC 41).
40. Unless a serious reason prevents it (danger of death, the sacred chrism or sacred species is unavailable, or when a deacon baptizes in the case of an emergency), an adult to be baptized
  - is to be confirmed immediately after baptism
  - is to participate in the Eucharistic celebration and receive communion (can. 842:2, 866; NSC 14, 18; RCIA 215).

41. In anticipation of the Easter Vigil, the elect, as well as those who assist them, are encouraged to extend the paschal Good Friday fast until the Easter Vigil itself (NSC 15).
42. Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament, and is therefore to be preferred (NSC 17). Pouring water is permitted.
43. If the celebration of the sacraments of initiation happens outside the usual time, care should be taken to ensure that it has a markedly paschal character (RCIA 208).

*The Mystagogical Catechesis (Mystagogy):*

44. After the completion of initiation, the neophytes should participate in the Sunday Eucharist, and ideally do so together and with those who have prepared them (NSC 22).
45. Following ancient tradition, the mystagogical catechesis should embrace a deeper understanding of baptism, confirmation and especially Eucharist (NSC 23).
46. Neophytes, while they should be admonished to be sorry for their sins, are not ordinarily instructed about or admitted to the Sacrament of Penance until after their initiation (can 865). This instruction should happen within the mystagogical catechesis.
47. To formally close the period of post-baptismal catechesis, some sort of celebration should be held at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday (RCIA 249).
48. Following the Easter season and the formal close of the mystagogical catechesis, the initiation process for the neophytes should continue with monthly meetings until at least the first anniversary of their initiation (NSC 24).
49. On the anniversary of their baptism the neophytes should be brought together to
  - give thanks to God,
  - share with one another their spiritual experiences,
  - renew their commitment.

***Rite of Christian Initiation  
for Unbaptized and Uncatechized Children of Catechetical Age  
(RICCA)***

**POLICY**

*Candidates for Initiation:*

1. The initiation of children who have reached the age of reason (ordinarily considered to be 7 years of age) is to be governed by all of the requirements of the norms for the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* (can. 852:1).
2. Children between the ages of 7 (or earlier if they have attained the use of reason) and 13 may be admitted to the RICCA
  - if their parents or legal guardians bring them for Christian initiation,
  - or if the children request it of their own accord with parental or legal guardian permission (RCIA 306).

*Pastoral Note:* *In Colorado, the permission of both the custodial and non-custodial parent are required to proceed through initiation without fear of legal intervention.*

3. A minor under the age of 7 (the age of reason) is considered to be an infant in canon law, as is anyone who habitually lacks the use of reason (can. 97, 99), therefore their initiation is governed by the norms for infant baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

*Catechesis:*

4. The formation of children of catechetical age should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual (NSC 18).

*Pastoral Note:* *The Diocese of Pueblo recommends for children between the ages of 7 and 14 that the catechumenate be structured for at least a two year period.*
5. Some elements of the ordinary preparation instruction for reception of confirmation and Eucharist may be appropriately shared with catechumens of catechetical age. Their condition and status as catechumens, however, should not be compromised or confused (NSC 19).

*Celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation:*

6. Unless a serious reason prevents it (danger of death, the sacred chrism or sacred species is unavailable, or when a deacon or lay person baptizes in the case of an emergency [PC, p. 43]), a child of catechetical age to be baptized
  - is to be confirmed immediately after baptism
  - is to participate in the Eucharistic celebration and receive communion (can. 866, NSC 14).
7. Children of catechetical age who are received into the full communion of the Church should not receive the sacraments in any other sequence than that determined in the ritual of Christian initiation (NSC 19)



# *Rite of Reception into Full Communion for Non-Catholic Christians*

## **POLICY**

### *Candidates for Initiation:*

1. Candidates for full reception are those who have been baptized in another church or ecclesial communion, or those who have made a public profession of faith in another church or ecclesial communion after their baptism.
2. Those baptized or who have publicly professed their faith in another Church or ecclesial communion are not catechumens and ought not be treated as such (NSC 30).
3. Persons of this status are ordinarily called *candidates* for initiation.
4. By virtue of their baptism candidates for reception into full communion ought not be dismissed from the Sunday assembly.

### *Rites:*

5. The period of preparation is made holy by means of celebrations. The first of these is the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates, by which the adults:
  - are welcomed into the community
  - acknowledge themselves to be part of the community (RCIA 405).
6. Some of the rites belonging to the catechumenate, especially suited to the condition and spiritual needs of these baptized adults, can be used to advantage. Among these are the presentation of the Creed, of the Lord's Prayer and the Book of the Gospels (RCIA 407).
7. Any additional rites should be used in accord with the needs and circumstances of the candidates (RCIA 407).

### *Catechesis:*

8. With regard to catechesis and formation toward reception, no greater burden than necessary is required for the establishment of communion and unity (RCIA 473).
9. Preparation for those baptized in another Church or ecclesial communion should
  - be determined according to the individual case,
  - depend on the extent to which the individual led a Christian life within a community of faith,
  - depend on the extent to which the individual has been appropriately catechized to deepen internal adherence to the Church (NSC 30).
10. Those who have lived the Christian life,
  - need instruction in the Catholic tradition,
  - require a modest period of probation within the Catholic community,
  - should not be asked to undergo a full program parallel to the catechumenate (NSC 31).

11. The baptized who have received relatively little catechesis may participate in elements of catechumenal formation (NSC 31).
  - They should not participate in the rites intended for the unbaptized.
  - They may be included in celebrations of the word together with catechumens.
  - They may be included in rites that would be celebrated with uncatechized adult Catholics.
12. One who was born and baptized outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church is not required to make an abjuration of heresy but simply a profession of faith (RCIA 474).
13. In the case of Eastern Orthodox Christians, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of the Catholic faith (RCIA 474).
14. The period of catechesis for these adults ought to be properly coordinated with the liturgical year (RCIA 408).

*Celebration of the Rite of Full Reception:*

15. The reception of candidates into full communion ought to be celebrated in the Sunday Eucharist (NSC 32).
16. The reception of candidates into full communion ought not be celebrated in the Easter Vigil lest there be:
  - confusion of such baptized Christians with the elect for baptism,
  - possible misunderstanding of or reflection upon baptism celebrated in another Church or ecclesial communion,
  - perceived triumphalism (NSC 33).
17. If, nevertheless, there are both catechumens and candidates at the Easter Vigil
  - for pastoral reasons
  - and because the Easter Vigil is the principal annual celebration of the Church, then
  - a clear distinction must be made in the rites between catechumens and candidates,
  - ecumenical sensitivities should be carefully respected (NSC 34).

*Initiation Sacrament Integrity:*

18. The “Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church” respects the traditional sequence of confirmation before Eucharist.
19. If the “Rite of Reception” has been entrusted to the presbyter, he receives from the law itself the faculty to confirm (can. 833:2) and is obliged to use it (NSC 35).
  - Confirmation should not be deferred.
  - The newly received ought **not** be admitted to Eucharist before being confirmed (NSC 35).

*Pastoral Note: These norms for full initiation pertain to all persons over the age of reason.*

*The Sacrament of Penance:*

20. The celebration of Penance with candidates should occur
  - prior to reception into full communion,
  - separate from that rite (NSC 36).
21. Candidates should be encouraged to celebrate the sacrament of penance frequently (NSC 36).

*Conditional Baptism:*

22. If there is reasonable and prudent doubt about the validity or fact of the baptism of such candidates because
  - water may not have been used,
  - the Trinitarian formula may not have been used,
  - the minister may not have had the proper intentions,then conditional baptism may be performed, but
  - only privately,
  - and with the rite including only the gift of robe and candle, not the anointing with chrism.Reception into the full communion of the Church should take place later,
  - after conditional baptism
  - and in the Sunday assembly (can 869:1, see can. 845:2; NSC 37).

# *Rite of Completing Initiation for Uncatechized Adult Catholics*

## **POLICY**

### *Candidates for Initiation:*

1. Since, in virtue of their baptism, baptized but uncatechized adults have already become members of the Church and children of God, their conversion is based on the baptism they have already received, the effects of which they must develop in the process of their formation (RCIA 400).
2. Although baptized Catholics who have never received catechetical instruction or the sacraments of Eucharist and confirmation are not catechumens, some elements of the usual catechumenal formation may be appropriate to their preparation for the sacraments (NSC 25).
3. Uncatechized adult Catholics ought **not** be
  - treated as catechumens
  - dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word with the catechumens (can. 213, 1247).
4. Persons of this status are ordinarily called *candidates* for initiation.
5. The catechesis for these persons in preparation for the sacraments of initiation must be systematic and complete.

### *Rites:*

6. The period of preparation is made holy by means of celebrations. The first of these is the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates, by which the adults:
  - are welcomed into the community
  - acknowledge themselves to be part of the community (RCIA 405).
7. Some of the rites belonging to the catechumenate, especially suited to the condition and spiritual needs of these baptized adults, can be used to advantage. Among these are the presentation of the Creed, of the Lord's Prayer and the Book of the Gospels (RCIA 407).
8. Any additional rites should be used in accord with the needs and circumstances of the candidates (RCIA 407).

### *The Sacrament of Penance:*

9. Baptized Catholics who are being prepared to receive Eucharist and confirmation should
  - be prepared for the sacrament of penance,
  - celebrate the sacrament of penance before the completion of their initiation (NSC 15).

*Celebrating the Initiation Sacraments:*

10. Readiness is the primary standard for the reception of the sacraments of initiation for baptized candidates.
11. It is strongly recommended that the sacraments of initiation for adults who were baptized but uncatechized be celebrated separate and apart from initiation of the unbaptized elect (NSC 26).
12. If the sacraments of initiation are to be celebrated together, the status and condition of the already baptized should be carefully respected and distinguished (NSC 27).

*The Minister of Confirmation*

13. The ordinary minister of confirmation is the bishop (can. 882). Therefore, the baptized Catholic candidate has the right to be confirmed by the bishop and must have the freedom to exercise that choice.
14. The pastor of the parish is required to request from the Bishop of Pueblo delegation to validly confirm formerly uncatechized adult Catholics; absent this delegation conferral of the sacrament of confirmation is invalid.
15. A presbyter may administer the sacrament of confirmation by reason of his office
  - when a person is in danger of death (can 883:3)
  - in the case of the readmission to communion of a baptized Catholic who has been an apostate from the faith (NSC 28)
  - in the case of a baptized Catholic who has without fault been instructed in a non-Catholic religion or adhered to a non-Catholic religion (NSC 28).

*Pastoral Note 1: In the above three circumstances, a presbyter need not ask the bishop for permission to confirm.*

*Pastoral Note 2: A presbyter may not confirm without the bishop's delegation a baptized Catholic who without his or her fault never put the faith into practice (see #14 above).*