



*AN ADAPTED CELEBRATION OF THE RITE OF  
ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS  
AND OF THE RITE OF WELCOMING BAPTIZED BUT  
PREVIOUSLY UN-CATECHIZED ADULTS  
WHO ARE PREPARING FOR CONFIRMATION AND/OR  
EUCHARIST OR RECEPTION INTO THE FULL COMMUNION  
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH:  
DURING COVID-19*

## CONTEXT

This adapted Rite [based on the Combined Rite, RCIA 505-529] is for *Unbaptized Catechumens* and *Baptized Candidates for Full Initiation into the Church* [Baptized Roman Catholics] or those who are seeking *Full Communion* [Baptized Un-Catechized Non Catholics].

*The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens* is required of an unbaptized adult and an unbaptized child of catechetical age. The combined Rite is *recommended* for a baptized, un-Catechized Catholic; a baptized un-Catechized Christian; and, if helpful, a baptized Catechized Christian.

During Covid 19 with restrictions such as social distancing, touching and masking, it is recommended that Instead of doing all the Rite during Sunday Mass, this adaptation would be done in two parts, **Rite One** and **Rite Two**.

**RITE ONE** could be celebrated in this order:

- Greeting of the Catechumen(s) and baptized Candidate(s) and Sponsor(s) at the Church door. [RCIA 507-508]
- Opening Dialogue: [RCIA 509-512]
- Liturgy of the Word [ RCIA 521-523 could include readings such as:
  - Genesis 12: 1-4a
  - Psalm 33: 4-5, 12-13, 18-19, 20 and 22
  - John 1: 35-42Brief homily. [RCIA 524]
- Presentation of Bible [RCIA 525] [**OR** leave this to **RITE TWO**]
- Signing of the Catechumens :[ RCIA 514-516] *AND* Signing of Baptized Candidates [RCIA 518-519] leaving last signing [RCIA 516/ RCIA 519] to be done during **Rite Two** at the Sunday Rite]. Only team and sponsors would do signing –without touching, and all being masked.
- Intercessions for Catechumens and Candidates [RCIA 526-]
- Concluding Prayer [RCIA 527 ]

**Rite One** is done with the Priest or Deacon presiding, team and sponsor present only. **Rite One** could be done in Church, without an Assembly, or in the RCIA team meeting room or classroom.

The priest or deacon would wear Alb, stole, and if desired a cope of festive colors.

**RITE TWO** could be celebrated in this order:

- Celebrated within a Sunday Mass after **Rite One** has been completed.
- After the Homily the Priest would introduce the Unbaptized Catechumens/ Baptized Candidates to the Assembly and invite Unbaptized Catechumen and Baptized Candidate to come receive the *Lectionary [or Gospels]* using [RCIA 525]
- The Unbaptized Catechumen and Baptized Candidate would then [socially distanced] face Assembly and the priest, [standing with his back to the Assembly,]. Priest would introduce the Universal Prayers for that day which would include a petition for the Unbaptized Catechumen and Baptized Candidate.
  - *a. That God our Father may reveal his Christ to our Unbaptized Catechumen(s) and Baptized Candidate(s) \_\_\_\_\_ more and more with every passing day....*
  - At the end of the Universal Prayers, the priest alone would sign the Catechumen's and Candidate's entire body, using [RCIA 519, last *Signing of the Senses*]
    - *a. I sign you with the sign of eternal life in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*
- The Presider would conclude the Universal Prayers with : RCIA 527

*Almighty God, source of all creation,  
you have made us in your image.  
Receive with love those who come before you.  
Lead our Catechumen(s) to the baptism of new birth,  
and our Candidate(s) to a deeper share in the paschal mystery ,  
so that, living a fruitful life in the company of your faithful,  
they may receive the eternal reward that you promise.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.*

The Unbaptized Catechumen would then be dismissed from the Assembly for the *Breaking Open of the Word*. [RCIA 528 ABC]

The Catechumen and Candidates would be remembered by name in the Universal Prayers each weekend forward.

## **RITE ONE:**

### **RECEIVING THE UNBAPTIZED AND BAPTIZED**

Those who are to be accepted into the Order of Catechumens, along with those who are Candidates for the sacraments of confirmation AND Eucharist, their sponsors gather outside of the Church, or inside at the entrance or at some other site suitable for this rite. As the priest or deacon, wearing an Alb or surplice, a stole and if desired a cope of festive color, goes to meet them there may be an appropriate psalm or song. All are masked and socially distanced.

### **GREETING:**

The Presider greets the people in a friendly manner. He speaks to them, their sponsors pointing out the joy and happiness of the Church. He may also recall for them the particular experiences and religious response by which these Unbaptized and Baptized persons, following their own spiritual path, have come to this celebration. He uses these or similar words.

#### **Presider:**

Dear Friends, the Church joyfully welcomes today those who will be received into the Order of Catechumens. In the months to come they will prepare for their initiation into the Christian faith by baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

We also greet those Candidates who, already one with us by baptism, now wish to complete their Christian initiation through confirmation and Eucharist, to be received into full initiation or full communion with the Catholic Church.

For all of these, we give thanks and praise to God who has led them by various paths to oneness of faith. My dear friends, you are welcome in the name of Christ.

The Presider invites the Unbaptized, the Baptized and their sponsors to come forward. As they are taking their place before the Presider an appropriate song may be sung or Psalm 63: 1-8.

### **OPENING DIALOGUE WITH UNBAPTIZED AND WITH BAPTIZED CANDIDATES WHO SEEK POST BAPTISMAL CATECHESIS**

Unless the people are known to all present, the Presider asks for their given names. The names of the Unbaptized are given first, followed by the Baptized Candidates. The people answer one by one, even if the following questions are asked only once for each group. You may use these or similar words.

Presider: What is your name?

Unbaptized/ Baptized: N

The Presider continues with the following questions for the individuals who seek entrance into the Catechumenate. When there are a large number the persons may answer as a group. The Presider may use other words than those provided in asking the person about their intentions and may let them answer in their own words. The Presider phrases his next question according to the answer received.

Presider: What do you ask of God's Church ?

Unbaptized: Faith [or own answer]

Presider: What does faith offer you?

Unbaptized: Eternal life [ or own answer]

The Presider then addresses the following question to the individual Candidates for post-baptismal catechesis. Again, if a large number, the Candidates may answer as a group. The Presider may use other words than those provided and phrase his next question according to the answer received.

Presider: What do you ask of God's Church ?

Candidate: To be accepted as a candidate for catechetical instruction leading to confirmation and Eucharist.

Presider: What does this period of formation offer you? Or how can this community of faith help you?

Candidate: A fuller sharing in the life of the Church

## UNBAPTIZED FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL

The Presider addresses the Unbaptized, adapting the following to the answers received in the opening dialogue.

Presider;

God is our Creator and in him all living things have their existence. God enlightens our minds, so that we may come to know and worship him. God has sent his faithful witness, Jesus Christ, to announce to us what he has seen and heard, the mysteries of heaven and earth. Since you acknowledge with joy that Christ has come, now is the time to hear his word, so that you may possess eternal life by beginning in our company to know God and to love your neighbor. Are you ready, with the help of God, to live this life?

Unbaptized; I am.

## BAPTIZED CANDIDATES DECLARATION OF INTENT

The Presider then addresses the Candidates for post baptismal catechesis, adapting the following to the answers received in the opening dialogue:

Presider:

Those of you who seek to complete your Christian initiation, are you prepared to listen to the apostles' instructions, gather with us for prayer, and join us in the love and service of others?

Candidate: I am

## AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY

Presider:

Sponsors, you now present these people to us, some of them are Unbaptized and some are Baptized. Are you, and all who are gathered with you, ready to help these presented to us to follow Christ?

All: We are.

Presider:  
Father of mercy,  
we thank you for these your servants.  
You have sought and summoned them in many ways  
and they have turned to seek you.  
You have called them today  
and they have answered in our presence.  
And so we [sing] pray : *We praise you, Lord , and we bless you.*

All[ sing or say] *We praise you, Lord, and we bless you.*

The Presider invites all to go the place for the Liturgy of the Word

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

Genesis: 12: 1-4a

Psalms 33: 4-5, 12-13, 18-19, 20 and 22

John 1: 35-42

Brief Homily

## PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE : [OR YOU MAY LEAVE TO RITE TWO]

A book containing the Gospels may be given to the Unbaptized and Baptized by the Presider.  
The Presider may use these words or similar words:

Presider: *Receive the Word, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Son of God”*

as the book is given. These or similar words can also be sung. The end in mind is not just the “book” but the contents of what is being passed on to the Unbaptized person and deepened in the Baptized person by the Church. The sponsor, socially distanced, offers support to the Unbaptized and Baptized person. The sponsor would now guide the Unbaptized and Baptized person to stand in the appropriate place for the signings that follow. The sponsor would stand before the Unbaptized person or Baptized person, socially distanced, and all masked.

## SIGNING OF THE CATECHUMENS AND OF THE CANDIDATES WITH THE CROSS

## SIGNING OF THE UNBAPTIZED WITH THE CROSS

Next the cross is to be traced on the forehead of the Unbaptized person, [or during COVID in front of the forehead and in front of the other senses]. The Presider alone says the formularies accompanying each signing. At the discretion of the Presider, the signing of one, several or all of the senses may follow. [ During COVID it is recommended that all but the final signing over the whole body be done in **RITE ONE**]

## SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD

Presider: Dear Unbaptized: you wish to share our life and hope in Christ. To admit you as Catechumens I now mark you with the sign of Christ's cross and call upon your catechists and sponsors to do the same. Our whole community welcomes you with love and stands ready to help you.

Receive the cross of Christ on your forehead. It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of his love.  
Learn to know and follow him.

All: *Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.* [Sung or spoken]

## SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD OF THE CANDIDATES

The presider then speaks to the Candidates for confirmation and the Eucharist and their sponsors in these or similar words.

Presider:  
Candidates for confirmation and Eucharist, receive the cross on your forehead as a reminder of your baptism into Christi's saving death and resurrection.

All: [sung or said] *Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!*

## SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES:

The signing is carried out by the sponsors or catechists, socially distanced. The signing of each sense may be followed by an acclamation in praise of Christ, such as "*Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*"

While the ears are being signed:

Presider:

Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,  
that you may hear the voice of the Lord.

While the eyes are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,  
that you may see the glory of God.

While the lips are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,  
that you may respond to the word of God.

While the breast is being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,  
that Christ may dwell there by faith.

While the shoulders are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders,  
that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.

While the hands are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your hands  
that Christ may be known in the work which you do.

While the feet are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your feet,  
that you may walk in the way of Christ.

[The final signing would be done in RITE TWO]

## INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS:

You may use these or similar intercessions.

Presider:

These Catechumens and Candidates , who are our brothers and sisters, have already traveled a long road. We rejoice with them in the gentle guidance of God who has brought them to this day. Let us pray that they may press onwards, until they come to share fully in our way of life;

Minister: That God our Father may reveal his Christ to them more and more with every passing day, we pray to the Lord..... Lord hear our prayer.

Minister: That they may undertake with generous hearts and souls whatever God may ask of them, we pray to the Lord...

Minister: That they may have our sincere and unfailing support every step of the way, we pray to the Lord....

Minister: That they may find in our community compelling signs of unity and generous love, we pray to the Lord.....

Minister: That their hearts and ours may become more responsive to the needs of others, we pray to the Lord...

Minister: That in due time, they may be found worthy to receive the baptism of new birth and renewal in the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord.....

## PRAYER OVER THE CATCHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

[With hands outstretched]

Presider: Almighty God, source of all creation,  
you have made us in your image.

Receive with love those who come before you.

Lead our Unbaptized Catechumens to the baptism of new birth,  
and our Baptized Candidates to a deeper share  
in the paschal mystery,  
so that, living a fruitful life  
in the company of your faithful,  
they may receive the eternal reward that you promise.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

## DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS

*These or similar words can be used:*

Presider:  
Catechumens, go in peace, and may the Lord remain with you always.

All: Thanks be to God.

**OR**

Presider:  
My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more  
deeply upon the word of God which you have shared with us. Be  
assured of our loving support and prayers for you. We look forward to  
the day when you will share fully in the Lord's Table.

*An appropriate song may conclude the celebration.*

## RITE TWO

After the celebration of Rite One, Rite Two could be celebrated as follows within a Sunday Mass.

After the homily the Presider would introduce the Unbaptized Catechumen(s) and Baptized Candidates to the Assembly and then invite the Unbaptized Catechumen and Baptized Candidate to come receive the Bible or Lectionary :

### PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE : [IF NOT DONE IN RITE ONE ]

A book containing the Gospels may be given to the Unbaptized and the Baptized by the Presider. The Presider may use these words or similar words:

*Presider: Receive the Word, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Son of God”*

as the book is given. These or similar words can also be sung. The end in mind is not just the “book” but the contents of what is being passed on to the Unbaptized Catechumen and deepened within the Baptized Candidate by the Church. The sponsor, socially distanced, offers support to the Unbaptized person. The sponsor would now guide the Unbaptized Catechumen and Baptized Candidate to stand in the appropriate place for the signings that follow. The sponsor would stand before the Unbaptized Catechumen or Baptized Candidate , socially distanced, and all masked.

The Presider would then introduce the Universal Prayers for that day with these or similar words:

*Presider: Let us address the Lord God with the needs of our world.....*

One of the Universal Prayers would include a petition for the Unbaptized Catechumen (s) and Baptized Candidate(s)

- *a. That God our Father may reveal his Christ to our Unbaptized Catechumen(s) and Baptized Candidate(s) \_\_\_\_\_ more and more with every passing day....*
- At the end of the Universal Prayers, the Presider alone would sign the Catechumen’s entire body, using [RCIA 519, last *Signing of the Senses*]
  - *a. I sign you with the sign of eternal life in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

- Then, the Presider would conclude the Universal Prayers with :

*Almighty God, source of all creation,  
you have made us in your image.  
Receive with love those who come before you.  
Lead our Catechumen(s) to the baptism of new birth,  
and our Baptized Candidate(s) to a deeper share in the paschal  
mystery ,  
so that, living a fruitful life in the company of your faithful,  
they may receive the eternal reward that you promise.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.*

The Unbaptized Catechumen would then be dismissed from the Assembly for the *Breaking Open of the Word*. [RCIA 528 ABC]

The Catechumens and Candidates would be remembered by name in the Universal Prayers each weekend forward.