

LITURGY PREPARATION FOR THE

Celebration at the Easter Vigil of the Sacraments of Initiation and the Rite of Reception

(see RCIA 562ff)

The following questions are based on the combined celebration of the sacraments of initiation and Rite of Reception at the Easter Vigil. For the celebration of the sacraments of initiation for elect ONLY see RCIA 206ff, and the applicable questions below; for the Rite of Reception for Candidates ONLY see RCIA 487ff, and the applicable questions below.

Questions to Prepare for the Liturgy

BEFORE THE LITURGY

1. Where will the elect (and candidates, if present) be before the Vigil begins?

Will they be gathered where the fire will be lit? In pews at the front of church? In a separate space awaiting the beginning of the Vigil?

2. Who will have candles?

Technically, since the elect have not yet been baptized, they would not hold candles, while the candidates, if present, who have been baptized, would hold candles. Practically, many parishes have all participants in the Mass hold candles. When will the candles be extinguished?

3. Will the elect and their godparents, and candidates and their sponsors, be in the procession from where the fire is lit into the church?

4. Where will the elect, godparents, candidates and sponsors (if present), and families of the initiates be seated?

CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

5. Where will the Baptisms take place?

In the sanctuary or at a separate baptistery/font?

6. How will the elect be presented?

The presentation of the elect is dictated by the way in which they will be baptized (see RCIA 568 for options).

7. Will the elect and candidates' patron saints (if candidates are present) be included in the Litany of the Saints?

If so, compile a list and inform the musicians prior to the Vigil.

8. Which option will be used for the Renunciation of Sin?

Will you use Option A, B, or C (RCIA 573)?

9. How will the Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith be made?

Individually by each of the elect or by all of the elect together (see RCIA 573-574)? If each of the elect is questioned individually, does the celebrant know each of their names? It may be a good idea for them to wear name tags, or to have the godparent present them.

10. What form will be used for the Baptisms?

Immersion or pouring may be used (see RCIA 575). In the case of immersion or if a large amount of water is poured, provision will need to be made for a place for the newly-baptized to change into dry clothes.

11. Will an acclamation be sung after each Baptism?

The musicians can lead a short alleluia or other acclamation after each Baptism (see RCIA 575).

12. Which Explanatory Rites within the Baptism liturgy will be celebrated?

The Anointing after Baptism (RCIA 577) is only celebrated if Confirmation does not take place. The Clothing with a Baptismal Garment (RCIA 578) is optional. The Presentation of a Lighted Candle (RCIA 579) is always to be celebrated.

13. If the Clothing with a Baptismal Garment will be celebrated, how will it be done?

What sort of garment will be used? How will it be given to each godparent? How will the godparent give the garment to the newly-baptized? Will the newly-baptized keep the garment or return it to the parish?

14. How will the godparents light the baptismal candles from the Easter candle?

Is the candle near the font? Will the godparents go to the candle or will the candle be brought to the font? If it is in its stand, the height of the Easter candle may make lighting candles from it difficult for some people. It may be helpful to remove the candle from its stand so that this may be done.

15. How will the godparents present the candle to the newly-baptized?

The godparents could say a simple phrase such as “Receive the light of Christ” as they hand the candle to the newly-baptized.

16. Where will the newly-baptized and their godparents go at the conclusion of this Rite?

Following the renewal of baptismal promises by the candidates (if present) and assembly, the newly-baptized will be called for the sacrament of Confirmation, so they could stay in the sanctuary or be seated in their pews. If Baptism by immersion has been celebrated, they should depart during this renewal of promises to change into dry clothes.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

17. If the assembly’s candles are to be re-lit, will the newly-baptized assist in lighting the assembly’s candles?

The newly-baptized could pass through the Church lighting the assembly’s candles from their own in preparation for the renewal of baptismal promises (see RCIA 580). Since the candidates (if present) are already baptized, they would hold lighted candles and join the rest of the community in renewing their own baptismal promises.

18. Which option for the Renunciation of Sin will be used?

Will you use Option A or B?

CELEBRATION OF RECEPTION, IF DONE

19. How will the candidates for reception into full communion be called forward (RCIA 584)?

Will they be called as a group or individually?

20. How will the Profession by the Candidates take place (RCIA 585)?

Will they recite the text from cards, repeat the profession after the celebrant, or answer “I do” to a question form of the profession?

21. How will the Act of Reception take place (RCIA 586)?

Where will the celebrant be located? How will the candidates come to him? Does he know their names? It may be a good idea for them to wear name tags, or to have the sponsor present them.

22. Where will the newly-received and their sponsors go at the conclusion of this Rite?

They will be confirmed with the newly-baptized and those Catholics preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist. Do the newly-received need to move to make room for these others to join them?

CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

23. How will the newly-baptized and baptized but uncatechized Catholics be called forward to join the newly-received?

Will they be called as a group or individually?

24. How will the candidates for Confirmation and their sponsors be arranged?

Will they face the congregation?

25. How will the laying on of hands take place (RCIA 590)?

The rubrics suggest that the celebrant and any concelebrants simply extend their hands over the entire group. If the size of the group permits it, the celebrant might lay hands on each of the confirmandi individually (see *Rite of Confirmation* 25).

26. How will the Anointing with Chrism take place (RCIA 591)?

The confirmandi can come to the celebrant or the celebrant can go to each of the confirmandi.

27. How will the celebrant know the name/patron saint name of the confirmand?

Will the confirmand wear a name tag with the name printed on it? Will the sponsor tell the celebrant the confirmand's name/patron saint name?

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

28. How will the new Catholics be included in the presentation of the gifts (RCIA 592)?

All the new Catholics can participate in the procession, even if there are more of them than there are gifts to be brought forward.

29. There are special interpolations (texts) that can be included in Eucharistic Prayer I. Will the celebrant use them (RCIA 593)?

These interpolations are marked "From the Easter Vigil to the Second Sunday of Easter Inclusive" in the Roman Missal.

30. Will the celebrant make a brief comment about the reception of the Eucharist prior to the Lamb of God (RCIA 594)?

The celebrant could say the following or similar words: "Before celebrating Communion, I wish to address the neophytes and those who have been received into full communion with the Church tonight. You have traveled a long road in preparation to receive this sacrament, which signifies your union with Christ and with his Church, a sacrament in which Jesus feeds his Church with his Body and Blood. May the Eucharist always be the center of your life as a Christian."

31. How will the newly-baptized, newly-received, and all those involved in their formation, receive Communion?

The Rite suggests that they receive under both forms (RCIA 594). In what order will new Catholics, and their godparents or sponsors go forward? Will the new Catholics be offered the opportunity to go forward with family members instead?

Checklist

- Reserved pews for elect, godparents, candidates, sponsors, and families
- Candles for the Service of Light
- Worship aids (with texts, for example the *Exsultet* and responses that may not be familiar to the elect and candidates, and some explanations for guests who are not Catholic)
- List of the names of patron saints the elect and candidates have chosen for musicians handling the Litany of Saints
- Towels (for after the Baptisms)
- White baptismal garments
- Baptismal candles
- Text for "Profession by the Candidates" (see question 21 above and RCIA 585)
- Chrism oil, soap, and water for the celebrant to wash his hands after Confirmation has been administered
- Special text for Eucharistic Prayer I (see question 30 above and RCIA 593)
- Name tags for elect and candidates to make it easier for the celebrant to remember their names in the Baptism and Confirmation liturgies (see question 10 and 28 above)