

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO



Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation August 2011

| SITUATION | RESPONSE | PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|--|
| <p>A. (Catechumen)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unbaptized ▪ Uncatechized ▪ Age of Reason | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RCIA 2. Receive Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist at the same celebration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Normative Pastoral Practice. ▪ Unless a grave reason prevents it, a Priest who baptizes such a person <i>must</i> also confer the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. There is no pastoral discretion permitted to confer only Baptism, or only Baptism and Eucharist, and then to defer either Eucharist and Confirmation or just Confirmation to a later date. (<i>Canon Law #842:2, 866, 883. RCIA #305, National Statutes #14, 18, 35</i>). |
| <p>B. (Catechumen)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unbaptized ▪ Various levels of Catechization ▪ Age of Reason | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RCIA 2. Receive Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist at the same celebration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Normative Pastoral Practice. <p>A Priest may determine that such a person (for instance, one who was raised Catholic, but for whatever reason was never sacramentalized) is sufficiently catechized so as to need only an abbreviated RCIA process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Even for a catechized person, because the person is unbaptized, and over the age of reason, a priest is required to confer all three Sacraments of Initiation at the same celebration, unless a grave reason prevents it. There is no pastoral discretion permitted to confer only Baptism, or only Baptism and Eucharist, and then to defer either Eucharist and Confirmation or just Confirmation until a later date. (<i>Canon Law #842:2, 866, 883. RCIA #305, National Statutes #14, 18, 35</i>). |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p><i>C.</i> <i>(Candidate)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baptized ▪ Non-Catholic ▪ Uncatechized ▪ Age of Reason | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RCIA 2. Using the Rite of Full Communion he/she is to receive Confirmation and Eucharist at the same celebration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Normative Pastoral Practice. ▪ “The “Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church” respects the traditional sequence of confirmation before Eucharist. When the bishop, whose office it is to receive adult Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, no. 481 [R8]) entrusts the celebration of the rite to a presbyter, the priest receives from the law itself (Canon 883:2) the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it (Canon 885:2); he may not be prohibited from exercising the faculty. The confirmation of such candidates for reception should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to the Eucharist until they are confirmed. A diocesan bishop who is desirous of confirming those received into full communion should reserve the rite of reception to himself (<i>National Statutes for the Catechumenate #35; RCIA #475, 2</i>). |
| <p><i>D.</i> <i>(Candidate)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baptized ▪ Non-Catholic ▪ Various levels of Catechization ▪ Age of Reason | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RCIA 2. Receive Confirmation and Eucharist at the same celebration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Normal Pastoral Practice. ▪ A <i>Pastor</i> may determine that such a person is sufficiently catechized so as to need only an abbreviated RCIA process and can then be received into the Church through the Rite of Full Communion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -“The doctrinal and spiritual preparation for those who have already baptized in another Church or ecclesial community and are seeking reception into full Catholic communion “should be determined according to the individual case, that is, it should depend on the extent to which the baptized person has led a Christian life within a community of faith and been appropriately catechized to deepen his or her inner adherence to the Church” (<i>National Statutes #30</i>). -“Those baptized persons who have lived as Christians and need only instruction in the Catholic tradition and a degree of probation within the Catholic community should not be asked to undergo a full program parallel to the catechumenate” (<i>National Statutes #31</i>). ▪ If such a person is within the age-appropriate range and has been practicing the Catholic faith even though he/she is not a Catholic (i.e. a child who was baptized in a Protestant Church but has been attending a Catholic school and is Catechized in the Catholic faith as a Catholic of the same age would be) a Pastor may decide that such a person is sufficiently catechized in the Catholic faith and permit him/her to make a Profession of Faith and then to enter the regular religious education program in the parish deferring the reception of |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | <p>Eucharist and Confirmation until the usual ages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the RCIA process, the distinction that such a person is seeking <i>Full Communion</i> with the Catholic Church should be maintained both during the formation process and at the liturgical rites. <p>“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 #478).</p> |
| <p>E. (Like Candidate)</p> <p>-Baptized Catholic Uncatechized Age of reason</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concerning a person who is older than the parish’s Confirmation age, he/she may receive Confirmation and Eucharist at the same celebration using the Rite of Full Communion with delegation from the Bishop. 2. Concerning a person who is younger <i>than the usual age of Confirmation</i> in the parish, please refer to the pastoral Implementation Column. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pastor may decide that a person who is <i>younger than the usual age of Confirmation and has never formally left the Church</i> may either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ receive sufficient training through the Rite of Full Communion and then be given both Confirmation and Eucharist at the same celebration, or ▪ be catechized through the regular religious education program of the parish and be sacramentalized with his/her peers (See Note Below & Appendix II: Delaying Confirmation). <p>Note: The pastor has the discretion to make such a decision because a child, of the age of reason, who was baptized Catholic in infancy <i>already, has</i> a relationship with the Catholic Church. However, a child who was baptized in another ecclesial community <i>has no</i> relationship with the Catholic Church. His/her relationship is established through full sacramental initiation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person who was baptized Catholic as an infant, but never catechized or fully initiated into the Church <i>because he/she had formally left the Catholic Church and joined another church or ecclesial community after his/her own Catholic Baptism</i> must seek readmission to the Catholic Church through the Rite of Full Reception, and may be confirmed by a priest at the time of their reception as long as they were never <i>confirmed</i> in the Catholic Church. (National Statutes # 28 a & b). • Those who have never left the Catholic Church formally by admission to another church or ecclesial community have the right to be confirmed by a bishop. However, the National Statues clearly address the most common pastoral situation requiring pastors to seek the faculty to confirm from the diocesan bishop in order to maintain the interrelationship and sequence of confirmation and eucharist as defined in canon 842:2. The diocesan Bishop in accord with canon 884:1 may grant the faculty if he judges it necessary (National Statutes, #29). |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>F. <i>(Like candidate)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Baptized Catholic ▪ Various levels of Catechization ▪Age of reason | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concerning a person who is <i>older</i> than the parish's Confirmation class, he/she is to receive confirmation and Eucharist at the same celebration using the Rite of Full Communion. See pastoral discretion column explaining "age appropriate level". 2. Concerning a person who is <i>younger than the usual age of Confirmation</i> in the parish, please refer to the pastoral discretion Column. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some pastoral discretion. ▪ A pastor may decide that a person who is <i>younger than the usual age of Confirmation and has never formally left the Church</i> may either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -receive sufficient formation (as needed at age appropriate level) through the Rite of Full Communion and then be given both Confirmation and Eucharist at the same celebration; or -be catechized (as needed at age appropriate level) through the regular religious education program of the parish and be sacramentalized with his/her peers (See note in section <i>Baptized Catholic Uncatechized</i> referring to <i>National Statutes #28 & 29 & Appendix II: Delaying Confirmation</i>). <p><i>"As needed at age appropriate level" refers to the catechetical formation needed reflecting age and maturity of each candidate. A child may have been thoroughly catechized in early adolescence (first or second grade) and may return to the Church in later adolescence or high school and so needs age appropriate formation in preparation for completing Sacramental initiation. They may have been catechized appropriately at age appropriate level, but that cannot suffice for needed catechesis at later age.</i></p> |
| <p>G. Confirmandi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Baptized Catholic ▪Received Eucharist ▪Uncatechized ▪Seeking Confirmation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After sufficient formation through the parish's Confirmation program, the person is to be given the sacrament of Confirmation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Those who have never left the Catholic Church formally by admission to another church or ecclesial community have the right to be confirmed by a bishop, and may not be confirmed by a priest without delegation by the Archbishop. ▪ The RCIA <i>is not</i> the appropriate place for someone who is seeking only confirmation. A parish should have a Confirmation program for such a person, however, if there is a pastoral need for similar formation offered in the RCIA a pastor may choose to use the RCIA for the needed formation. Care must be given to this particular situation. Both the formation for and celebration of Confirmation should be done in a manner which does not confuse them with candidates or catechumens. Confirmation should be celebrated at another liturgy other than the Easter Vigil. |

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. A Pastor always has the option to instruct privately for *serious reasons* such as an illness, handicap, or serious schedule conflict which prevents the inquirer/candidate/catechumen from attending the normal RCIA process. “The extraordinary circumstances in question are either events or circumstances that inhibit the candidate from completing all the steps of the catechumenate or a depth of Christian conversion and a degree of religious maturity that lead the local bishop to decide that the candidate may receive the sacraments of initiation without delay. Extraordinary circumstances, for example, sickness, old age, change of residence, long absence for travel, may sometimes either prevent a candidate from celebrating the rite of acceptance that leads to the period of the catechumenate or, having begun the catechumenate, from completing it by participation in all the rites belonging to the period”. (*RCIA #331-332*). However, the National Statutes clarifies it a bit further: “The abbreviated catechumenate, which the diocesan bishop may permit only in individual and exceptional cases...should always be as limited as possible... The catechumenate of persons who move from one parish to another or from one diocese to another should not on that account alone be abbreviated” (*National Statutes #20*).
2. A person who is in a second (or second +) “marriage” without having their previous marriage(s) annulled (and whose previous spouse is still living) may not be fully initiated until the impediment of prior bond (*Canon 1085*) is resolved. Such a person has an impediment to receiving the Sacraments and should not be given the impression that they will be able to receive them at the next Easter season with the majority of those in the RCIA process. “It is necessary that those living in irregular marital situations who seek initiation into the Church (non-baptized) or admission into full communion with the Catholic Church (previously baptized) be reconciled in their marital unions in accord with the procedures of Church law before they are fully initiated.” Note there are exceptions to this, and each case must be looked at individually. For instance: 1) A divorced person who has not received an annulment and who does not desire to remarry *may* be initiated (Note: if, of course, that person later changes his/her mind and decides to seek marriage, an annulment must be sought); 2) A divorced person who has not received an annulment, but is planning to marry during the course of the Catechumenate, or even after the Sacraments of Initiation are received but before an annulment is granted, should *not* be permitted to enter the Catechumenate. The previous marriage must be given a declaration of nullity for such a person to be free to marry (See Appendix IV).
3. “Requests for the permission to omit a scrutiny are to be submitted in writing by the Pastor to the Archbishop. The scrutinies must be celebrated on Sundays in Lent according to the ritual Masses provided in the sacramentary with the “A” cycle reading only (see Lectionary for Mass, #745-747).
4. “In the case of Eastern Christians who enter into the fullness of Catholic communion, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith, even if such persons are permitted, in virtue of recourse to the Apostolic See, to transfer to the Latin rite.” (RCIA #474).

IMPORTANT NOTES

BAPTISM

- Stoles are not to be used in any celebration designed for the laity because stoles represent the ordained ministry.
- No pastor has the option of altering the sequence of the administration of the sacraments of initiation for children who have reached the age of reason. It is the catechumen's *right* to receive all three sacraments of initiation, and the priest's *responsibility* to administer all three at one Eucharistic celebration.

CONFIRMATION

- A Priest who baptizes an adult or a child of the age of reason must also give the other two sacraments of initiation: Confirmation and Eucharist.

RECONCILIATION

- A baptized non-Catholic *may* receive the sacrament of reconciliation as frequently as desired before his/her immediate reception into the Church, given that he/she understand the sacrament and desires to receive it.
- An unbaptized person cannot receive the sacrament of reconciliation before his/her reception into the Church.

FOSTER CHILDREN

- A foster child may not be admitted to the RCIA or the RCIA adapted for children *unless* the child's parents or legal guardian (possibly the State) give permission.

EXTREME SITUATIONS JUST BEFORE RECEPTION INTO THE CHURCH

- In unusual situations circumstances can arise (such as an imprisonment, certain charges against the elect, or disparaging remarks against the faith made by the elect, or disparaging remarks against the faith made by the elect) which merit postponing a person's reception into the Church, even immediately before the celebration. Although spiritual warfare is aggressive towards those desiring the sacraments of initiation, prudence may dictate a delay of the reception until a more peaceful time. Such a decision to postpone reception should be made by the pastor.

APPENDIX I: Canonical and Liturgical Law References

Canon 852:1. The provisions of the canons on adult baptism apply to all those who, having ceased to be infants, have reached the use of reason.

Canon 97:2. A minor who has not completed the seventh year of age is called an infant and is considered incapable of personal responsibility; on completion of the seventh year, however, the minor is presumed to have the use of reason.

Can. 842-§2. The sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the blessed Eucharist so complement one another that all three are required for full Christian initiation.

Can. 866-Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, immediately after receiving baptism an adult is to be confirmed, to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist and receive holy communion.

Can. 883-The following have, by law, the faculty to administer confirmation:

1° within the confines of their jurisdiction those who in law are equivalent to a diocesan Bishop;

2° In respect of the person to be confirmed, the priest who by virtue of his office or by mandate of the diocesan Bishop baptizes one who is no longer an infant or admits a person already baptized into full communion with the catholic Church;

3° in respect of those in danger of death, the parish priest or indeed any priest.

RCIA 305 At this third step of their Christian initiation, the children will receive the sacrament of baptism, the bishop or priest who baptizes them will also confer confirmation, and the children will for the first time participate in the liturgy of the Eucharist.

NSC: 14. In order to signify clearly the interrelation or coalescence of the three sacraments which are required for full Christian Initiation (canon 842:2), adult candidates, including children of catechetical age, are to receive baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist in a single Eucharistic celebration, whether at the Easter Vigil or if necessary, at some other time.

NSC: 18. Since children who have reached the use of reason are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon 852:1), their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the older catechumens.

NSC: 35. The “Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church” respects the traditional sequence of confirmation before Eucharist. When the bishop, whose office it is to receive adult Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, no. 481 [R8]) entrusts the celebration of the rite to a presbyter, the priest receives from the law itself (Canon 883:2) the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it (canon 885:2); he may not be prohibited from exercising the faculty. The confirmation of such candidates for reception should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to the Eucharist until they are confirmed. A diocesan bishop who is desirous of confirming those received into full communion should reserve the rite of reception to himself.

RCIA #475, 2

2. Any appearance of triumphalism should be carefully avoided and the manner of celebrating this Mass should be decided beforehand and with a view to the particular circumstances. Both the ecumenical implications and the bond between the candidate and the parish community should be considered. Often it will be preferable to celebrate the Mass with only a few relatives and friends. If for a serious reason Mass cannot be celebrated, the reception should at least take place within a liturgy of the word, whenever this is possible. The person to be received into full communion should be consulted about the form of reception.

National Statutes #30

Those who have already been baptized in another Church or ecclesial community should not be treated as catechumens or so designated. Their doctrinal and spiritual preparation for reception into full Catholic communion should be determined according to the individual case, that is it should depend on the extent to which the baptized person has led a Christian life within a community of faith and been appropriately catechized to deepen his or her inner adherence to the Church.

National Statutes #31

Those who have been baptized but have received relatively little Christian upbringing may participate in the elements of catechumenal formation so far as necessary and appropriate, but should not take part in rites intended for the unbaptized catechumens. They may, however, participate in celebrations of the word together with catechumens. In addition they may be included with uncatechized adult Catholics in such rites as may be appropriate among those included or mentioned in the ritual in Part II, 4, “Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist.” The rites of presentation of the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the book of the Gospels are not proper except for those who have received no Christian instruction and formation. Those baptized persons who have lived as Christians and need only instruction in the Catholic tradition and a degree of probation within the Catholic community should not be asked to undergo a full program parallel to the catechumenate.

RCIA #478

During the period of their doctrinal and spiritual preparation individual candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church may benefit from the celebration of liturgical rites marking their progress in formation. Thus, for pastoral reasons and in light of the catechesis in faith which these baptized Christians have received previously, one or

several of the rites included in Part II, “4. Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for confirmation and Eucharist,” may be celebrated as they are presented or in similar words. In all cases, however, discernment should be made regarding the length of catechetical formation required for each individual candidate for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

National Statutes # 28-29

28. Priests mentioned in canon 883:2 also have the faculty to confirm (a) in the case of the readmission to communion of a baptized Catholic who has been an apostate from the faith and also (b) in the case of a baptized Catholic who has without fault been instructed in a non-Catholic religion or adhered to non-Catholic religion, but (c) not in the case of a baptized Catholic who without his or her fault never put the faith into practice.

29. In the instance mentioned in no. 28 c, in order to maintain the interrelationship and sequence of confirmation and eucharist as defined in canon 842:2, priests who lack the faculty to confirm should seek it from the diocesan bishop, who may, in accord with canon 884:1, grant the faculty if he judges it necessary.

National Statutes #20

The abbreviated catechumenate, which the diocesan bishop may permit only in individual and exceptional cases, as described in nos. 331-332 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, should always be as limited as possible. It should extend over a substantial and appropriate period of time. The rites prior to sacramental initiation should not be unduly compressed, much less celebrated on a single occasion. The catechumenate of persons who move from one parish to another or from one diocese to another should not on that account alone be abbreviated.

RCIA #474

In the case of Eastern Christians who enter into the fullness of Catholic communion, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith, even if such persons are permitted, in virtue of recourse to the Apostolic See, to transfer to the Latin rite.

APPENDIX II : Delaying Confirmation

It must be stressed that it is *not* a sufficiently serious reason to delay confirmation merely to allow children to have more catechesis for confirmation or to enable them to be confirmed with older classmates. These pastoral considerations, while they appear to some ministers, parents and educators to have a certain merit, are not serious enough to overcome the important doctrinal, liturgical and canonical reasons for maintaining the integrity of the initiation rite and the proper sequence for reception of the sacraments. Moreover, if a child seven or older is judged to have adequate catechesis for baptism, ipso facto he or she has adequate catechesis for confirmation. Baptism is the more important of the two sacraments; it is necessary for salvation and makes one a member of the church (canon 849). Appropriately, the canonical requirements for preparation and catechesis for adult baptism are far more demanding than those for confirmation. For adult baptism, the law requires the lengthy period of the catechumenate and progression through its various stages (canon 851, 1°; RCIA, 253); for confirmation, the law merely requires that one be “suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew one’s baptismal promises: (canon 889, §2). Thus, delaying confirmation not only is a violation of canon law and the liturgical books, it also may appear to diminish the primacy of baptism by implying that greater readiness and maturity is needed for confirmation than for baptism.

The NCCB Statutes state (#28 & 29) that when the diocesan bishop wants to reserve the celebration of confirmation to himself, he also should reserve adult baptisms and the rite of reception into full communion (NCCB Statutes, 13, 35). It is clear from this norm that the desire to preserve the bishop’s role as ordinary minister of confirmation (canon 882) is of itself not a sufficient reason to delay confirmation after adult baptism or after the profession of faith of a baptized person seeking full communion (John Huels: *The Catechumenate & the Law*, 1994, pgs 34-35).

APPENDIX III : Catechism of the Catholic Church on Confirmation

1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity," we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need "ratification" to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this:

Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says: "For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years. "Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood."¹²⁴

1309 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit - his actions, his gifts, and his biddings - in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.¹²⁵

1310 To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.¹²⁶

APPENDIX IV: Divorced and Remarried Persons

Divorced and Remarried Person: Catechumenate and Sacraments (S.c. Doct. Fid., 11 July, 1983) Private.

Presented here is a letter to the Bishop of Honolulu from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on various questions concerning divorced and remarried persons.

On 24 March, 1981, your predecessor wrote to the S. Congregation for the Sacraments regarding three questions he had having to do with the admission of divorced and remarried persons to the catechumenate. After some time, that inquiry was transmitted to this Congregation since the issues raised pertained more to this Congregation's jurisdiction. I would like to express our regret for any inconvenience the delay [2 and 1/3 years!!!!] of our response may have caused.

I would like to address the questions individually.

The first asked whether a divorced and remarried person may be admitted to the catechumenate. The Congregation's reply would be affirmative, but with the precaution that such a person would almost invariably experience considerable distress when taught in such a program about the Catholic Church's position regarding the indissolubility of marriage. Obviously, the Church's position would have to be presented clearly and candidly despite the presence of divorced and remarried persons.

The second question asked whether it is correct to say that such persons would not be admissible to the Sacraments of Initiation if their first marriage could not, for some reason, be considered invalid. Our response would be the affirmative.

Thirdly, it was asked whether there would be a possibility of admitting such persons to the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Our response would be negative.

We would nevertheless, recommend that each case be studied individually by those with a good knowledge of canon law. We would further indicate the possibility of pursuing a petition for a dispensation in *favorem fidei*, in those cases where the catechumen was not the cause of the break-up of the first union. We could not exclude the possibility, in particular circumstances, that the Supreme Pontiff may be disposed to dissolve the previous union in cases where the catechumen was responsible in some degree for the separation, but we should emphasize the absolute necessity of the individual examination of each case before making such a petition to the Holy See. Care should likewise be taken to avoid raising false hopes in some instances that such a solution would be forthcoming. (Divorced and Remarried Persons: Catechumenate and Sacraments (S.C. Doct. Fid., 11 July, 1983) Private).