



The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Thunder Bay

Diocesan Norms for RCIA

December 2009

Catechumens – Those not Baptized

1. The normal and recommended journey for an adult or a child of catechetical age to become a Roman Catholic in the Diocese of Thunder Bay, is through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).
2. A child of catechetical age, who is a minor according to Canon Law, (canon 93) v.g. someone under the age of 18 years, is to follow the RCIA journey with the permission and consent of his/her parents, parent or legal guardian. In some cases a special design for this journey is to be established by the parish to better assist the younger person in discussions, directions and understanding etc. According to diocesan custom, a child may request Confirmation at a later stage and reception of Confirmation may be delayed until Grade 6, 7 or 8. Parental consent is recommended for this decision.
3. For pastoral reasons, a decision, (by the pastor and/or the team) may be made that an adult, or a child of catechetical age, may be baptized into the Catholic faith without following the RCIA journey, however, sufficient instruction must be given to the person concerning the Catholic faith, its teachings and the community life of the Church.
4. Each parish is to establish a RCIA team to assure that this journey is possible for an inquiring adult seeking baptism. At least one person should be designated and capable to answer an inquirer's questions.
5. The period of inquiry, or evangelization and precatechumenate may be a year-long period in the parish, structured in such a way that an inquirer may enter this stage at any time of the year. (v.g. a meeting once a month, twice a month or weekly)
6. The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens normally takes place from the First Sunday of Advent and extends to the First Sunday of Lent in most parishes. This period may be extended or adjusted according to pastoral need.
7. The Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names takes place at the Cathedral Church with the bishop on the First Sunday of Lent. All adults and children of catechetical age who are journeying in the RCIA are encouraged to attend. Parishes of great distance from the Cathedral Church will conduct their own enrollment of names in the parish community. It is strongly encouraged however, that all Catechumens attend the Cathedral ceremony with the bishop when possible.
8. The Scrutinies are to be conducted at their appropriate times, in any parish where the RCIA journey is taking place with a catechumen or catechumens.
9. Initiation into the faith with the three sacraments of initiation normally takes place at the Easter Vigil Mass in the parishes where RCIA is held.
10. The period of Post Baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy takes place after the Easter Vigil and should continue as long as is felt necessary for the newly initiated to feel comfortable and integrated into the Catholic Faith Community. This period of Mystagogy could be open to other members of the faithful in the parish community for their own edification and deepening of their faith knowledge and experience.

11. A proper and thorough interview with all prospective catechumens is to be done after or during the inquiry stage, to determine that there exists no canonical impediment for the person to be baptized into the Catholic faith.
12. All proper recording and records in the prescribed books, of the newly initiated is to be done according to the norms of canon law.

Candidates – Those already Baptized

1. Candidates do not participate in the Rite of Election. However, some other form of acceptance or welcome by the bishop and/or the parish community may be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent.
2. Candidates (adults) are normally fully initiated into the Catholic faith on any Sunday or at any time during the year after proper preparation.
3. Candidates who journey with catechumens in the RCIA, may be admitted to full communion in the Church with Confirmation and First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil Mass. This is a pastoral decision for the parish priest and the RCIA team, since normally only catechumens are initiated at this Mass. The Easter celebrations are to be considered as a 'priority' for this celebration.
4. Children who are of catechetical age, who are minors, and who are already baptized may be admitted to full communion in the Catholic Church with the request and permission of their parents, parent or legal guardian. Sufficient instructions, where appropriate are to be given.
5. Young people, (14 years - 18 years of age) who are already baptized may be admitted to full communion in the Catholic Church upon their own request and after proper preparation. Consent of parents or legal guardians is advisable but not necessary.
6. A proper and thorough interview with all prospective Candidates is to be done after or during the inquiry stage, to determine that there exists no canonical impediment for the person to be fully initiated into the Catholic faith.
7. All proper recording and records in the prescribed books of the newly initiated is to be done according to the norms of canon law.