

## §100 THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

### Introduction: A Vision for Sacramental Life

*There is no greater joy for a parish community than to experience the initiation of new members at the Easter Vigil. On this night, "most blessed of all nights, chosen by God to see Christ rising from the dead" (Exultet), the community encounters the risen Christ in the initiation of new members; they hear the Easter Gospel proclaimed anew as they see men and women rise with Christ to a new life of grace.*

*The font of baptism is like a tomb; in these waters Christians imitate the death of Christ as they leave behind their old selves. The font of baptism is like a womb; here new Christians, freed from the power of darkness, are chosen by God as sons and daughters, who claim eternal life as their promised inheritance. This sacramental sharing in Christ's dying and rising becomes the pattern for the Christian's life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1212-1419)*

*Before the community calls catechumens and candidates to the sacraments of initiation, it must do all that it can to foster a genuine conversion in those to be initiated. What is seen and experienced in the sacraments of initiation ought to be a reflection of a genuine conversion of mind and heart in response to the challenging word of God. It may require a radical refashioning of one's life, thinking, values and commitment.*

*The process of conversion is life long and uniquely connected to different levels of human development. Christian initiation presumes that the word of God has already begun to transform the life of the individual, that there has been a spirit of cooperation on the part of the person to put into practice what one believes and the desire to pattern one's life on the teaching of Christ.*

*When celebrating infant baptism, the Church looks to the parents whose home must become the place where faith and conversion will be nurtured in the child. While the initiation of infants may be celebrated at different times during the year, the celebration always reflects the spirit of the Easter Mystery.*

*The Rite of Baptism for Children is used exclusively for the initiation of infants. At the same time, the Church's theology and pastoral care of infants and their parents is influenced by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. For that reason and to support a pastoral and theological synthesis, this document will treat infant baptism and adult initiation side by side.*

## §100 *The Sacraments of Initiation*

*The whole Christian community is called to take responsibility for preparing men, women, and children for the sacraments of initiation. As the Introduction to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults states:*

*The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized. Therefore, the community must always be fully prepared in the pursuit of its apostolic vocation to give help to those who are searching for Christ. In the various circumstances of daily life, even as in the apostolate, all the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities. (RCIA #9)*

*As the Introduction to the Rite of Baptism for Children states: "Before and after the celebration of the sacrament, the child has a right to the love and help of the community." (Rite of Baptism for Children #4)*

*By actively participating in the formation and initiation of new members, the faithful themselves are gradually renewed in their own baptismal vocation. The deeper their own conversion, the more effective they will be in leading others to mature faith.*

*Conversion of mind and heart, a sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching, as well as a spirit of faith and charity, (RCIA #120), obviously take time to achieve. The formation envisioned in the order of initiation must be spread over a time frame that allows for a consistent hearing and reflection on the word of God, spiritual counsel or direction, a thorough catechesis, learning to pray with the Church, sharing in the Church's apostolic work and through association with the faithful learning from them the values, morals and spirit of the Catholic community.*

*While the process of Christian initiation as outlined in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults may at first appear to be difficult to implement, its vision for fostering a mature Christian life is essential to every parish's well being. In other words, the paradigm of formation for ministering to new members becomes the model for the parish's life and mission.*

*All Christians are called to an ongoing conversion, to a more intimate participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, to a fuller appreciation of the Christian tradition of prayer, creed, an ongoing faith formation, and a more active role in the Church's mission. Consequently, all pastoral efforts to fully implement the order of Christian initiation will inevitably affect the life of the parish.*

*The implementation of this sacramental vision may point out inconsistencies in parish priorities or ways of doing things that need to be reevaluated. This understandably does not happen over night. But parish renewal demands that we earnestly review our priorities, our parish structures, and systems in order to refashion the parish for more effective service in the future.*

*The process of Christian initiation then is not just one more thing a parish is expected to provide. It lies at the heart of its vocation. The ministry of evangelization and initiation influences every area of parish life and indeed provides a theological and sacramental vision that holds all the rest together.*

*The pastoral challenge is to review how consistent our overall sacramental and catechetical parochial practice is with the theological and sacramental principles encapsulated in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the Rite of Baptism for Children. These documents provide a picture of what it means to be Church. This does not imply that we can do without religious education programs and Catholic schools, but rather that these institutions can receive direction from the vision found in these documents.*

*What follows here is intended to assist parish communities in the full implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the Rite of Baptism for Children. The initiation of new members is a ministry to persons which presumes a pastoral sensitivity and respect for the unique background and personal history of individuals. It is difficult to provide absolute norms or pre-set programs that will apply in every situation. Initiation is a process that demands flexibility on the part of all and a humility that enables us to see the Holy Spirit working in our midst.*

*These policies and procedures are also intended to respect the cultural diversity in the Archdiocese which must naturally be considered in establishing parish practice. Parishes that share common cultural experiences are encouraged to reflect upon the implications of specific cultural values and customs and collaboratively move toward a consistent practice.*

*While respecting the need for pastoral adaptation, there are nevertheless pastoral norms that need to be honored. These policies and procedures attempt to enumerate a number of these and to clarify what has already surfaced as questions from pastoral practice. These policies and procedures are not exhaustive nor do they dispense of the need to carefully study the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the Rite of Baptism for Children, and other relevant Church documents.*

*The Archdiocesan Christian Initiation Board, consisting of several Archdiocesan agencies in a collaborative style of ministry, exists to serve parish communities in the ongoing implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the Rite of Baptism for Children, and these policies and procedures. It is committed to the development of the vision and direction which these documents represent.*

§100 *The Sacraments of Initiation*

*What is provided here is intended to highlight some key areas of concern for our local Church. In promoting a consistent practice in regard to the sacraments of initiation, the hope is that the vision behind these rites will be strengthened. Through mutual support and accountability it is hoped that all parishes will find it easier to implement and sustain a common vision.*

## §101 PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

### §101.1. Ministry to Adults

**101.1.1. Policy** The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is normative in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Every parish shall be prepared to minister to those who seek Christ and initiation into the Church through the implementation of the current order of initiation mandated for the Universal Church.

#### *Procedures*

- a) The parish pastoral council, which shares the pastoral concern for the life of the entire parish, should make every effort to see that the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults becomes a consistent and well integrated part of the life of the parish.
- b) The parish should provide a complete and thorough formation for catechumens (unbaptized persons). This includes evangelization that can lead to genuine conversion, a suitable catechesis accommodated to adults and the liturgical year, familiarity with the Christian way of life, the celebration of rites, the opportunity for spiritual counsel or direction, formation in private prayer and public worship, and the opportunity to "learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church." (RCIA #75 and Archdiocesan Religious Education Policies)
- c) When a parish's resources do not permit them to maintain their own catechumenal process, the parish may collaborate with another parish or other parishes to provide one well-developed process of initiation for the area. This is especially helpful either when first implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults or in smaller parishes or when language, cultural or disability needs dictate. In these cases, the rites are still ordinarily celebrated in the catechumen's parish. (National Statutes #4)

**101.1.2. Policy** The term "catechumen" is only to be used for the unbaptized who have been admitted into the order of catechumens. Baptized Christians being received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church are referred to as "candidates." (National Statutes #2)

**101.1.3. Policy** The integrity of the Church's rites is to be maintained. When extraordinary circumstances prevent the catechumen from completing all the steps of the catechumenate; when the catechuman has reached a depth of Christian conversion and a degree of religious maturity; or when it is a question of disability, advanced age or serious illness (RCIA #381-389); the parish may receive the Archbishop's permission to use the abbreviated form of the order of initiation as given in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Part II, #2, by contacting the Office for Divine Worship or the Office for Canonical Services.

**101.1.4. Policy** The following persons may be invited to participate in the catechumenal process with the unbaptized to whatever extent may be helpful to their spiritual formation:

- 1) candidates who were baptized as Roman Catholics but are uncatechized and now wish to complete their initiation through confirmation and the eucharist;
- 2) adults who were baptized in non-Catholic Christian denominations and are preparing to be received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church.

***Procedures***

- a) The scope of formation necessary for the baptized candidates will depend upon their background and need. Part II, #4 and #5 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, should be studied carefully to see how best to provide for the needs of these candidates.
- b) In ministering to baptized candidates, extremes should be avoided. We ought not presume someone baptized as an infant possesses a mature faith and fully comprehends the meaning and responsibilities of the Christian life. However, candidates who have had a solid Christian upbringing and who give evidence of mature faith and Christian practice, should not be expected to follow the same formation process as those who are first coming to faith.
- c) A clear distinction must always be made between those who are unbaptized and those who are already baptized but completing their initiation through the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist or being received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church. This is important so that the unique and irrevocable gift of baptism is respected and its significance in no way overlooked. (National Statutes #30)

**§101.2. Ministry to Children of Catechetical Age**

**101.2.1. Policy** The formation of children of catechetical age, including adolescents, shall follow the general pattern of the catechumenate as far as possible. Part II, #1, of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults pertains specifically to children of catechetical age. (Canon 852.1 and National Statutes #18)

***Procedures***

- a) Pastors are reminded that once a child has reached catechetical age (approximately seven years old) the Rite of Baptism for Children is no longer the proper ritual to use. Unbaptized children of catechetical age should be welcomed into a children's catechumenate (RCIA #252-330), which takes the children's age and background into account. The approval and cooperation of the parents or legal guardians should always be sought.
- b) The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults provides a theological, liturgical, and pastoral framework for ministry to children preparing for the initiation sacraments. It presumes that the children will be joined by their peers who can support them in their journey of faith. (RCIA #254)
- c) The initiation of children must be understood within the larger picture of the parish community. The parish staff and pastoral council will want to work closely with parents to provide a healthy and effective environment within which young children can grow in age, wisdom, and grace. Parish efforts in religious education, youth and family ministry and liturgy need to be coordinated in order to provide a consistent and well-integrated vision and pastoral approach.
- d) The Offices for Divine Worship, Evangelization, Catholic Education, Religious Education, and Special Religious Development (Spred) can assist parishes who are developing suitable programs to meet local pastoral needs in ministering to children.

**101.2.2. Policy** The permission of at least one parent (legal guardian) is required before a child is accepted into the catechumenate and before the child is initiated into the Church. Parents are encouraged to participate in the process of formation to whatever extent they are able and to offer the support and example the children need. (RCIA #254) In the absence of parental support, sponsors are to be chosen to take the place of the parents. (RCIA #260)

**101.2.3. Policy** The needs of children preparing for reception into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church may be similar to children who are catechumens. Consequently, their formation and preparation for confirmation and eucharist may be accomplished together with children who are catechumens.

### §101.3. Ministry to Infants and Their Parents

**101.3.1. Policy** Catholic parents preparing for the baptism of their infant are expected to participate in a process of sacramental preparation before the baptism of their child. Godparents may also be encouraged to participate.

**101.3.2. Policy** Every parish or group of parishes shall ensure sacramental preparation for parents prior to the baptism of their first child. Appropriate catechesis for parents with additional children should also be offered.

#### *Procedures*

- a) Baptismal preparation of parents may take a variety of forms, but it should include some of the faithful and never be considered only the priest's or deacon's responsibility.

Some form of adaptation may be necessary for parents participating in a preparation program who have already participated in a baptismal preparation program for their first child.

- b) This ministry to parents should be viewed as spiritual guidance or formation and pastoral care as well as catechesis. The preparation of parents for their child's baptism should be characterized by a sincere love and concern for the family, a desire to deepen their relationship to the Church and assist them in arriving at a deeper appreciation of baptism and their own vocation as Christian parents.

In the case where parents have not been fully initiated in the celebration of baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist, a ministry to parents may be an opportunity to encourage the parents to complete their initiation.

What we expect for adults and children of catechetical age through the order of initiation we hope to see begun and developed at home as parents provide an environment and the personal example that will foster and nurture the child's faith. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1250-1255)

- c) A request for infant baptism cannot ordinarily be refused. However, a baptism can be delayed until such a time as the parents or at least one of the parents are ready and able to assume the responsibility entrusted to Christian parents in the rite. This occasion should be viewed as an opportunity for evangelization, not placing an undue burden on the parents but helping them to grow in the spiritual life from whatever level of faith they may be.

## §102 MINISTERS OF INITIATION

*The Christian initiation of adults, children, and infants takes place in the midst of the community. Pastors need to remind the faithful again and again of their spiritual kinship with those who are to be initiated. They should be encouraged to support and pray for catechumens and candidates, infants and their parents.*

*By living lives of charity and justice and by taking an active part in the mission of the Church and its worship, members of the faithful give a convincing witness to all who are preparing for Christian initiation or growing up Christian.*

*In reaching out to catechumens and candidates, members of the faithful may be selected as sponsors or spiritual guides or chosen to introduce the catechumens and candidates to the various apostolates of the Church through a period of apostolic apprenticeship.*

### §102.1. Collaboration

**102.1.1. Policy** Because the initiation of adults is "the responsibility of all the baptized" (RCIA #9), pastors shall associate with themselves men and women of the parish who, as catechists, sponsors, and in other roles, collaborate with them in the formation and initiation of new members. It is the pastor's responsibility to see that those who assist in the initiation process have been properly trained.

**§102.2. Catechists**

**102.2.1. Policy** Catechists who minister to adults and children shall be well trained in the role of presiding at prayer and in catechetical methodology according to Sharing the Light of Faith and Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community. Their instruction should be filled with the spirit of the Gospel; adapted to the liturgical signs and cycle of the Church year; suited to the needs of catechumens and candidates; and, as far as possible, enriched by local traditions.

**102.2.2. Policy** Catechists who are properly deputed by their pastors may preside at the minor exorcisms and blessings (RCIA #12, 16, 34.5, 91, 96; the Book of Blessings #519-521) and at celebrations of the Word of God. (RCIA #81-89)

**§102.3. Sponsors and Godparents**

**102.3.1. Policy** Catechumens and candidates need the support and spiritual companionship of a sponsor during their formation. This role is ordinarily filled by a parish sponsor who may be chosen later as the godparent for the sacraments of initiation. (RCIA #10)

**102.3.2. Policy** At the time of election the catechumen, in consultation with the parish priest and the initiation team, chooses a godparent in accord with the ritual norms of the order of initiation. The godparent can be the catechumen's spouse. (RICA #11, 123, & 404)

**102.3.3. Policy** At the beginning of Lent the candidate chooses a sponsor for the celebration of confirmation in keeping with the general norms of the Church. The confirmation sponsor can be the candidate's spouse, but cannot be the candidate's parent. (Canons 892 and 893)

**102.3.4. Policy** In the baptism of infants parents take responsibility for choosing a godparent or godparents who will serve as good examples for living the Catholic way of life. A godparent can later serve as the sponsor of the child when he/she is confirmed.

**102.3.5. Policy** Although the selection of two godparents is customary, only one godparent is required for baptism. A godparent can be either male or female. If two godparents are chosen, one must be male and one female. (Canon 873) A godparent must also be a fully initiated Roman Catholic who is free to celebrate the sacraments. (Canons 892 and 893) A baptized non-Catholic Christian can be chosen as a Christian witness provided there is at least one Catholic godparent. (Canon 874.2)

**102.3.6. Policy** A godparent must have completed his or her 16th year unless, for just cause, the pastor or minister of the sacrament makes an exception. Each godparent must be a confirmed Catholic who has also received first communion and is leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and the role of a sponsor. A godparent cannot be a parent of the one to be baptized and/or confirmed and cannot be bound by any canonical penalty.

In addition to the explicit canonical requirements (Canon 874), sponsors and godparents should be ready to commit the time and personal care necessary to nurture and support the candidate, whether a child or an adult. Ideally, they should be willing and available to participate in the catechumenate with their candidate or in the special preparations designed for the parents and family of an infant. One's godparents can never be changed since they were the historical witnesses to the baptism and entered a permanent spiritual relationship with the baptized.

#### §102.4. Pastors

**102.4.1. Policy** Pastors and associate pastors have a special responsibility to oversee the rites of Christian initiation, to preside and preach at them, and to prepare the faithful by an appropriate catechesis.

**102.4.2. Policy** Pastors and associate pastors in the Archdiocese of Chicago have the authority to depute properly prepared catechists to preside at the minor exorcisms and blessings (RCIA #12, 16, 34.5, 91, 96; the Book of Blessings, #519-521) and at celebrations of the Word of God. (RCIA #81-89; Responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the Christian Initiation of Adults for the Province of Chicago, #20)

**§102.5. Catechumenate Directors**

**102.5.1. Policy** Parish catechumenate directors oversee the organization and pastoral implementation of the order of initiation. They are to be well prepared for their ministry and are to minister in close collaboration with the pastor, pastoral staff, parish pastoral council, parish liturgy committee, and the director of religious education.

**Special Note:**

A parish minister other than the catechumenate director may be delegated to oversee the pastoral care of parents preparing for the baptism of their children. This person should be encouraged to collaborate with the catechumenate director to insure that the parish develops a consistent pastoral vision for Christian initiation.

**§102.6. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons**

**102.6.1. Policy** The ordinary ministers of baptism are bishops, priests, and deacons. In imminent danger of death, when no priest or deacon is available, any member of the faithful, indeed anyone with the right intention, may and sometimes must administer baptism. (Christian Initiation, General Introduction, #11 & 16)

**102.6.2. Policy** Any bishop or priest who baptizes an adult or a child of catechetical age should also confer confirmation. The celebration of confirmation and reception of eucharist should not be deferred. (RCIA #14, Canon 885.2) (See Faculties 802.1., herein)

**102.6.3. Policy** When a priest receives a Christian into full communion with the Catholic Church, he receives from the law itself (Canon 883.2) the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it for the sake of the candidate. (Canon 885.2) The confirmation of such candidates for reception should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to the eucharist until they are confirmed. (National Statutes #35) (See Faculties 802.1., herein)

**102.6.4. Policy** Priests who do not have Archdiocesan faculties require a mandate from the the Office for Canonical Services if they are to baptize an adult. Thereafter, no additional mandate or authorization to confirm is required as such priests possess this faculty from the law, as do priests who baptize adults in the exercise of their pastoral office. (National Statutes #12)

**102.6.5. Policy** According to the norms issued by the Holy See, a priest must obtain special delegation in order to validly confirm a baptized Catholic, even if the candidate was uncatechized and participated in the catechumenate. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, this is obtained from the the Office for Canonical Services or the Director of the Office for Divine Worship. (See Faculties 802.1. Note, herein)

## §103 CELEBRATING THE RITES

*One of the most important components of the order of initiation is the careful preparation and celebration of the various rites that mark the progress of catechumens and candidates in their journey to initiation. The full impact of the experience of initiation cannot be felt without these necessary ritual moments being given the proper attention that they deserve.*

### §103.1. Rites for Catechumens Integral

**103.1.1. Policy** The major rites provided for catechumens cannot be omitted because the liturgies of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults are integral to the whole initiation process. They should be well prepared so that they will inspire the faithful and effectively touch the lives of the catechumens.

### §103.2. Optional Rites for Baptized But Uncatechized Adults

**103.2.1. Policy** Pastoral staffs are encouraged to use the optional rites for baptized but uncatechized adults as found in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Part II, #4. These can be celebrated along with the rites for the unbaptized as provided in the Appendix to the RCIA, Additional Combined Rites. (RCIA #505-594)

#### **Special Note:**

Although the Rite of Baptism for Children does not provide preparatory rites, parish ministers should be encouraged to pray with the parents and to make use of the rites provided in the Book of Blessings, e.g. "Orders for the Blessing of a Mother Before Childbirth and After Childbirth" and the "Order for the Blessing of a Child Not Yet Baptized" (#236-278, 156-173).

**§103.3. Celebrating the Appropriate Rites**

**103.3.1. Policy** The *Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens* (RCIA #41-74, 260-276) is celebrated with unbaptized candidates.

The *Rite of Welcoming the Candidates* (RCIA #411-433) is celebrated with baptized but previously uncatechized adults or children of catechetical age who are seeking to complete their Christian initiation through the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist or to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

When unbaptized children have received a preliminary catechetical formation and have shown signs of initial faith and conversion appropriate to their age, they are to celebrate the *Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens*. (RCIA #260-276)

***Procedures***

- a) The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates are celebrated in the parish church at a time when a good number of the parishioners can participate.
- b) The names of those accepted into the Order of Catechumens should be recorded in a parish register of catechumens. (RCIA #46)
- c) Once accepted as catechumens, these men and women are considered part of the household of Christ. Consequently, they are entitled to celebrate their marriage in the Catholic Church. One who dies as a catechumen receives a Christian burial. (RCIA #47)
- d) Children, who are catechumens or candidates, may participate in the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens or the Rite of Welcoming Candidates along with their parents who are celebrating these rites. (RCIA #505-529)
- e) In the case of children, the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens or of Welcoming the Candidates may take place in a community of the children's peers.

**§103.4. Combined Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion**

**103.4.1. Policy** In the Archdiocese of Chicago, the combined Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion is celebrated annually with a bishop at the Cathedral at the beginning of Lent.

**Procedures**

All parishes receive an annual invitation to participate in the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion at the cathedral. The names of the catechumens and candidates are sent to the Office for Divine Worship by the parish. Catechumens who will be baptized at the next Easter Vigil celebration are expected to participate in the Archdiocesan celebration of the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion. Candidates (baptized Christians) are encouraged to participate but are not obliged to do so.

**§103.5. Celebration of the Rite of Election at the Parish**

**103.5.1. Policy** When for pastoral reasons it is not possible for one or several catechumens to attend the Archdiocesan celebration of the Rite of Election, delegation for a pastor to celebrate the rite in a catechumen's parish may be obtained from the Office for Divine Worship or the the Office for Canonical Services.

**Procedures**

- a) A record of the catechumens' election should be kept at the parish, listing their name, their godparent's name, the presider and the date of the celebration. This record is kept at the parish of the elect.
- b) The names of those who participated in the Calling of Candidates to Continuing Conversion may also be recorded in the parish record book, clearly indicating their status as baptized candidates.
- c) The Rite of Calling Candidates to Continuing Conversion is optional. It may be celebrated at the Cathedral or in the parish. No delegation is necessary for the parish priest to preside at this rite.

**§103.6. Rite of Election for Children**

**103.6.1. Policy** The Rite of Election for Children (RCIA #277-290), an optional rite, would ordinarily be celebrated in a separate celebration among the children's peers or at a parish community celebration at the beginning of Lent.

***Procedures***

- a) Pastors do not need to obtain delegation to celebrate the Rite of Election for Children in the parish.
- b) Children who are catechumens may accompany their parents who are also catechumens in the cathedral celebration of the Rite of Election.

**§103.7. Lenten Scrutinies**

**103.7.1. Policy** All three Lenten Scrutinies are to be used for the unbaptized catechumens.

***Procedures***

- a) In celebrating the Lenten Scrutinies, the Cycle A readings of the Lectionary may be used during cycles B and C.
- b) If for some reason one or more of the major scrutinies and exorcisms could not be celebrated at the appropriate Lenten Sunday Mass, it may be celebrated during the week at a Mass or, if necessary, a liturgy of the Word.
- c) The penitential rites (scrutinies) provided for children of catechetical age (RCIA #291-302) are to be celebrated during the final preparation of the children for baptism.

### §103.8. Reception of Sacraments at One Celebration and In Proper Order

**103.8.1. Policy** The Christian initiation of adults and children of catechetical age includes at one celebration: baptism, confirmation and the first sharing in eucharist. In accord with the ancient practice of the Church, these sacraments are to be received together and in their proper order. (RCIA #215, Canon 866, and Policy 103.12., herein)

#### **Procedures**

The newly baptized may receive a baptismal garment immediately after their baptism. The use of a stole, the symbol of an ordained minister, is not appropriate.

### §103.9. Site for Baptisms

**103.9.1. Policy** The celebration of baptism is to take place in the parish church. Baptisms in private homes are not permitted except in cases of emergency. Anyone who baptizes in a case of emergency is obliged to notify the baptized's pastor so that the baptism is recorded in the appropriate register. (See §900 *Sacramental Records*, Policy 902.2.1., herein)

Infants who were baptized in an emergency situation may be brought to the church at a later time to complete the baptismal ceremony, but omitting the pouring of the water. (See "Chapter VI: The Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church" in the *Rite of Baptism for Children*).

### §103.10. Baptism by Immersion and Partial Immersion

**103.10.1. Policy** "Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament and, therefore, provision should be made for its more frequent use in the baptism of adults. The provision of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for partial immersion, namely, immersion of the candidate's head, should be taken into account." (National Statutes #17)

**103.10.2. Policy** In the Archdiocese of Chicago, whenever a new church is erected, provision must be made for a font that allows for immersion. When a church is renovated, the font should be constructed to allow for the immersion of infants at least, and for the immersion of adults, if possible. (See Environment and Art in Catholic Worship #76; Rite of Baptism for Children #19, 22; RCIA #213, Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1214, 1239, 1262, 628)

***Procedures***

In the building of a new church or the renovation of an existing church, the parish should consult with the Archdiocesan Building and Renovation Commission of the Office for Divine Worship regarding the construction of the font.

**§103.11. Confirmation of Adults**

**103.11.1. Policy** Baptized and catechized Roman Catholics who, for whatever reason, have not had the opportunity to be confirmed, shall be invited to complete their initiation after an appropriate catechesis. These adults may be confirmed either at the next visit of the bishop to the parish for confirmation, at deanery or vicariate confirmations designed specifically for these adults, or at the Easter Vigil by the priest who has received the necessary delegation to confirm from the the Office for Canonical Services or the Director of the Office for Divine Worship. (See Faculties 802.1.c, herein)

**§103.12. Confirmation of Children of Catechetical Age**

**103.12.1. Policy** All children of catechetical age are to be confirmed and receive the eucharist at the time of their baptism. (National Statutes #14,18,19) The integrity and unity of the sacraments of initiation are maintained by not delaying the reception of confirmation or eucharist. (RCIA #215) (See Canon 883,2° and Faculties 802.1., herein)

***Procedures***

- a) Pastors should see to it that the above policy is carefully explained to parents and their children who have been baptized in infancy and are following the customary course of delaying confirmation until a later date. Care should be taken to avoid confusion in the community regarding readiness to receive the sacrament of confirmation.
- b) The resources of the Catholic school, religious education program, specialized catechesis, and youth ministry should be drawn upon in preparing children for Christian initiation. Their sacramental preparation should be distinct from and complementary to their course of study in the Catholic school, religious education program, and youth ministry. However, children and adolescents with special needs are more fruitfully catechized after the sacraments of initiation (Canon 777).
- c) After children are fully initiated, their Christian formation should be continued.

- d) At the time when their peers are confirmed, they should be asked to renew their baptismal promises with their peers. When the bishop is present, he may greet them in a special way.

### §103.13. Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

**103.13.1. Policy** Adults and children of catechetical age who were baptized in a non-Catholic Christian denomination are formally received into the Church through the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. (RCIA, Part II, #5)

#### *Procedures*

- a) Children of parents being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church are ordinarily received into the Church with their parents.
- b) The reception of children and adults into full communion needs to be recorded both in the baptismal and the confirmation registers. Baptized children younger than the catechetical age do not go through any ceremony to be received into the Catholic Church. They become members of the Church at the same time as their parents do. (See §902.2.3., herein)
- c) The child's original baptism is recorded in the parish baptismal register with a note of their being joined to the Catholic Church through the act of their parents' initiation.

**103.13.2. Policy** Candidates, including children of catechetical age, who are received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church are to be confirmed at the same celebration at which they make their profession of faith and partake of the eucharist. Their confirmation is not to be deferred. (National Statutes #35)

**§103.14. Age of Confirmation**

**103.14.1. Policy** In the Archdiocese of Chicago, children baptized in infancy as Roman Catholics are ordinarily confirmed at the age determined by the USCCB. (Canon 891)

**Special Note:**

Catechists and other pastoral ministers should be cautious about attaching an exaggerated expectation of Christian maturity on youth in order to receive the sacrament of confirmation. Care should also be taken not to impose so many requirements for confirmation that confirmation appears to be a reward or graduation. Confirmation is not something that someone achieves or earns, but rather is a gift of God, as are all the sacraments. More emphasis should be placed on the eucharist as the repeatable sacrament of initiation.

Because a move to a younger age (i.e., before first communion) requires special pastoral planning, the Office for Divine Worship, Office for Catechesis, and Office of Catholic Schools should be consulted in the development of such a parish plan or policy.

A person with a developmental disability who has been baptized cannot be denied confirmation as long as he/she desires to belong to the community of faith.

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for an adult who has mental retardation should be age appropriate, ie. they should not be made to feel awkward by being placed at the end of the celebration planned for children.

In some cases it may be appropriate for the parish priest to seek delegation to confirm individuals with disabilities during the Easter season. When the developmentally disabled person is known by the parish priest, the individual is apt to be more comfortable and secure, thus ensuring a more fruitful and dignified celebration.

## §104 THE RECEPTION OF FIRST COMMUNION

*One of the goals in restoring the original order of the sacraments of initiation (baptism followed by confirmation followed by first communion) is to foster a greater appreciation for the eucharist as a sacrament of initiation. Each time we share in the eucharist, we are initiated more deeply into the saving death and resurrection of the Lord. Our participation in the eucharist renews our commitment as baptized Christians to carry on Christ's ministry in the world.*

*The understanding of eucharist as an initiatory sacrament should be carefully taught.*

### §104.1. Preparation for Eucharist Integral Part of Catechumenate Process

**104.1.1. Policy** The preparation of adults for reception of first eucharist is an integral part of the catechumenate process and should strive to fulfill the goals of a contemporary catechesis for the eucharist outlined in the National Catechetical Directory. (See Sharing the Light of Faith, #121-122)

### §104.2. Concentrated Preparation for Each Sacrament

**104.2.1. Policy** "Catechesis for First Communion is conducted separately from introductory catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance since each sacrament deserves its own concentrated preparation. Continued catechesis is given yearly in all catechetical programs for children, inasmuch as the sacraments require lifelong participation and study." (Sharing the Light of Faith; National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States, #122; See also §107 *The Sacrament of Penance and Christian Initiation*, herein)

#### **Special Note:**

In preparing children for their first reception of eucharist, parish communities should remember that the reception of eucharist is a sacrament of initiation. Even if the traditional order (baptism, confirmation, and eucharist) is not followed when children are confirmed after first eucharist, the celebration of first communion should retain the spirit and meaning of Christian initiation. (See Sharing the Light of Faith, no. 122)

**§104.3. Readiness of Candidates**

**104.3.1. *Policy*** Pastors, in consultation with parents, the director of the parish catechumenate, catechists, and other appropriate ministers, are to determine the readiness of the candidates to receive their first communion in keeping with the goals of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the norms of the National Catechetical Directory. This readiness must include a sufficient familiarity with the nature of the eucharist in order for the candidate to participate actively and with awareness.

***Procedures***

A person with developmental disabilities within a small community of faith can indicate readiness for first communion by the following: relationships with people who share faith and prayer, a sense of the sacred as manifested in behavior, and desire for communion. If those with disabilities cannot use words to express their understanding of communion, they can show their awareness by their manner, the expression in their eyes, their gestures, and the quality of their silence. (From *Access to the Sacraments of Initiation*, p. 9)

## §105 TIMES AND SCHEDULES

*The rites of Christian Initiation reach their climax in the celebration of the Easter Vigil. The sacraments of initiation draw their fullest meaning and significance from the solemn celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death. "Those who are baptized are united to Christ in a death like his; buried with him in death, they are given new life again with him, and with him they rise again. For baptism recalls and makes present the paschal mystery itself, because in baptism we pass from the death of sin into life." (Christian Initiation, General Introduction, #6)*

*The entire initiation process and our celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist must respect the integrity of the liturgical year, looking toward the Triduum as the source and climax of the initiation process.*

### §105.1. Rite of Acceptance

**105.1.1. Policy** The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens may be celebrated whenever there are unbaptized inquirers who are ready to take this step. This rite may be celebrated a number of times throughout the year according to pastoral need.

### §105.2. Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

**105.2.1. Policy** The usual time for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation is the Easter Vigil. The recommendations of the documents regarding initiation outside the usual times should be followed. Even when Christian initiation is celebrated outside the usual times indicated in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the texts for the Sunday Masses of the Easter Season, including the readings from year A, may be used. (RCIA #247)

**§105.3. Infant Baptism**

<p><b>105.3.1. Policy</b> The celebration of infant baptism should ordinarily take place on Sunday.</p>
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***Procedures***

- a) Infant baptisms are ordinarily celebrated once on a particular Sunday, while honoring ethnic traditions for alternative days for celebrating baptism. The fullest expression of Baptism as incorporation into the church is best achieved through a communal celebration that includes all who are to be baptized at one ceremony with members of the faithful participating.
- b) Infant baptisms may be celebrated at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass on a schedule accepted by the pastor in consultation with the parish pastoral council and the liturgy committee. The frequency of celebration at Sunday Mass must take into account the sensitivities of the members of the community. Appropriate days on the liturgical calendar or in the life of the parish should be chosen.
- c) Parishes need not schedule the baptism of infants every Sunday. The number of baptisms in the parish and the limitations of space and staff should determine parish scheduling policy.
- d) Unless there is a genuine pastoral need, baptisms should not be scheduled during Lent, lest the approaching celebration of Easter with its strong baptismal focus be diminished.
- e) The baptismal liturgy should be celebrated according to all the appropriate norms for worship (i.e. participation of the assembly, inclusion of lay ministries, music, etc.)
- f) It may be more pastorally suitable to celebrate infant baptism at an Easter Sunday Mass when adults are baptized at the Easter Vigil, unless the infants are the children of the adult candidates.

**§105.4. Post-Baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy**

**105.4.1. Policy** A suitable period of mystagogy or post-baptismal catechesis needs to be offered the newly baptized so that they might live more deeply the mysteries they have celebrated. Ordinarily, post-baptismal catechesis and pastoral care should extend for one year. (See National Statutes #24)

***Procedures***

- a) Each year the newly baptized are invited to celebrate a special Mass of Thanksgiving with the Archbishop during the Easter Season.
  
- b) Pastoral care of the newly baptized beyond the time of initiation is strongly encouraged. During this period of mystagogy, transition should be made to active sharing in the mission of the Church. Of course, the need for ongoing catechesis is presumed.

## §106 SPECIAL PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS

*There are a number of pastoral issues that continue to arise in the ministry of Christian initiation. The following policies and procedures are intended to assist pastoral ministers in resolving some of the most common issues.*

### §106.1. Christian Marriages Involving Catechumens

**106.1.1. Policy** Because catechumens are already joined to the Church as part of the household of Christ, they are entitled to celebrate their marriage in the Church. (RCIA #47, National Statutes #10) (See Policy 404.8.1., herein)

#### ***Procedures***

- a) If two catechumens marry or a catechumen marries a non-Catholic Christian or unbaptized person, no dispensation needs to be granted for the catechumen. However the prenuptial questionnaire should still be completed and filed with other parish marriage records. It should be noted on the prenuptial questionnaire that the marriage involved a catechumen. Where there is doubt about the proper procedure, one should consult the the Office for Canonical Services.
- b) The same kind of pastoral care should be provided for catechumens preparing for marriage as for any individuals who marry in the Church.
- c) The marriage should be celebrated at a Liturgy of the Word. Chapter III of the Rite of Marriage is to be used.
- d) The marriage should be properly recorded in the parish marriage record book and in the parish book of catechumens. (See §902.4. *Illegitimacy*, herein)

**106.1.2. Policy** When a catechumen marries a Catholic, the Catholic party is required by Church law to request a dispensation (disparity of cult). (See §300 *Christian Marriage*, Policy 304.11., herein)

**§106.2. Declarations of Nullity**

**106.2.1. Policy** Non-baptized persons who need a declaration of nullity from their previous marriage are free to enter into the catechumenate. Such persons cannot, however, be accepted for the Rite of Election. Until the declaration of nullity is granted candidates who need a declaration of nullity cannot be accepted for the Rite of Calling candidates to Continuing Conversion. Pastoral staffs should uncover the need for a declaration of nullity through personal interviews early in the process. Non-baptized persons in need of a declaration of nullity who are received into the catechumenate must clearly understand at the outset that they may not be initiated at the approaching Easter.

**106.2.2. Policy** A catechumen or a candidate who is divorced and not remarried and does not intend to remarry is not in need of a declaration of nullity to be accepted for the Rite of Election, the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion, or, consequently, the sacraments of initiation. However, the implications of future attempts to remarry without a declaration of nullity must be carefully explained before the discernment for the rite is completed. Consultation on this matter and presentation of marriage cases should be made to the Archdiocesan matrimonial tribunal which is prepared to give special attention to these cases.

**§106.3. Validation of Marriages**

**106.3.1. Policy** When a marriage must be validated in the Church, the validation ceremony shall take place prior to celebrating the initiation sacraments. One cannot enter the full sacramental life of the Church unless one is completely free to receive the sacraments. It is pastorally advisable to validate the marriage in the church as early in the process as possible.

#### §106.4. Marriage Preparation and Christian Initiation

**106.4.1. Policy** When a catechumen or candidate is engaged to be married, the initiation process shall not be rushed merely to allow for initiation before the marriage is celebrated.

##### ***Procedures***

- a) Because Christian marriage is a serious vocation, its preparation should not be neglected or weakened because of one's participation in the catechumenate. If it is not possible to participate fully in both processes, preparation to celebrate Christian marriage takes precedence over preparation for Christian initiation. It may be more appropriate to concentrate on the preparation for Christian marriage and postpone or extend the catechumenate.
- b) It is always pastorally prudent and wise to refer the newly married couple to their respective pastor who can then assume the responsibility for seeing that the non-baptized person, catechumen, or candidate has the opportunity to complete their initiation.
- c) Pastoral ministers are reminded that candidates (baptized non-Catholics) need not participate in a complete catechumenal process, as would catechumens (unbaptized persons). (National Statutes #30)

#### §106.5. Christian Burial of Catechumens and Candidates

**106.5.1. Policy** Because they are already part of the household of Christ, catechumens and candidates have the right to Christian burial in the Catholic Church. (See Canon 1183, National Statutes #9 and §701.1.c *Entitlement to Church's Ministry at Time of Death*, herein)

##### ***Procedures***

The funeral liturgy, including the funeral Mass, should be celebrated as usual, omitting only language referring directly to the sacraments which the catechumen or candidate has not received in the Catholic Church. In view of the sensibilities of the immediate family of the deceased catechumen or candidate, the funeral Mass may be omitted. (National Statutes #9)

**§106.6. Orthodox Christian Candidates**

**106.6.1. *Policy*** Ordinarily, an Orthodox Christian can only be received into the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church. It may be possible to obtain permission to be received into the Latin Rite.

***Procedures***

Because of the extreme complexity and sensitivity of these pastoral issues, parish ministers should consult with the the Office for Canonical Services.

## §107 THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

### **Special Note:**

Although not a sacrament of initiation, there are often questions about celebrating the Sacrament of Penance in conjunction with the process of initiation. These policies are provided here for the sake of completeness.

### **§107.1. Candidates' Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance**

**107.1.1. Policy** Candidates are to receive a thorough catechesis on the Sacrament of Penance and to be encouraged in the frequent celebration of the sacrament. (National Statutes #27 & 36) They shall be invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance prior to their reception into full communion, but not at the same liturgy. Candidates are required to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance prior to their reception into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church if they are guilty of serious sin. All candidates should be encouraged to do so in any case. (RCIA #482)

### **§107.2. Catechumens' Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance**

**107.2.1. Policy** Catechumens preparing for baptism (both children and adults) do not celebrate the Sacrament of Penance prior to baptism. They are to be invited to participate in non-sacramental penitential rites as found in the RCIA #291-303 so that they may come to understand the reality of sin and appreciate the comforting message of God's pardon.

### **§107.3. Children's Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance**

**107.3.1. Policy** **Non-Catholic** children who are baptized in infancy but preparing for reception into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church should be adequately prepared and encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance some time prior to their formal reception into the Catholic Church. (RCIA #482, National Statutes #27)

## **RESOURCES**

### **Official Documents**

#### **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**

1. ICEL & BCL, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Study Edition. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1988.
2. ICEL & BCL, Liturgy Documentary Series 4: Christian Initiation of Adults, Revised. Washington: Office of Publishing Services, 1988. Publication No. 895-9.
3. BCL, Study Text 10: Christian Initiation of Adults: A Commentary. Washington: Office of Publishing Services, 1985. Pub. No. 934.

#### **Infant Baptism**

1. ICEL & BCL, Rite of Baptism for Children. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1977.

#### **Rite of Penance**

1. ICEL & BCL, The Rite of Penance. New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1975.
2. ICEL & BCL, Liturgy Documentary Series 7: Penance and Reconciliation in the Church. Washington: Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 1986. Publication No. 104.

### **Rite of Marriage**

1. ICEL & BCL, The Rite of Marriage. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1970.

### **National and International Guidelines**

1. USCCB, Sharing the Light of Faith, National Catechetical Directory for the Catholics of the United States. Washington: USCC, 1979.
2. International Council for Catechesis, Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community. Washington: USCC, 1992.
3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992.

### **Archdiocesan Guidelines**

1. Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Religious Education, Archdiocesan Religious Education Policies, 1990.
2. Responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age for the Province of Chicago, Catholic Conference of Illinois, 1991.