

## Overview of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults

Rites are Celebrations of the Church as progress is made for each step by the catechumens (not baptized) and the candidates (already baptized but not confirmed)

### Godparents and Sponsors

Each catechumen must have a sponsor to accompany them as they seek admission as a catechumen. The sponsor stands as a witness to the candidates' moral character, faith, and intention. The sponsor only accompanies the catechumen at the Rite of Acceptance.

Each catechumen must also have a Godparent(s) who will accompany the catechumen at the Rite of Sending, the Rite of Election, and the celebration of the sacrament of initiation. The Godparent must be a Catholic other than a spouse who will support the newly baptized in their Christian life.

Each candidate is required to have a sponsor to stand as a witness as per above who will accompany them to the Rites of Welcoming, Sending, Call to Continuing Conversion, and the celebration of the sacrament of initiation.

### First Sunday of Advent (late November/early December)

- *Rite of Acceptance (catechumens), Rite of Welcome (candidates)*

#### Purpose:

Assembling publicly (Mass at IHM) for the first time, the catechumens and candidates declare their intention to the Church. The Church accepts them as persons who intend to become its members. The sponsors join the catechumens and candidates as their names are called out. They are asked if they are prepared to begin the journey to membership under the guidance of Christ. The sponsors are asked if they are ready to help the candidates. Upon their assent, the sign of the Cross is traced on the forehead of the catechumens and candidates by the celebrant and the sponsor.

### Sunday before Ash Wednesday (February / March)

- *Rite of Sending*

#### Purpose:

This rite is performed the Sunday before Ash Wednesday during Mass at IHM. It is to announce the names of the catechumens and the candidates who are going to Dover the following Saturday. The Godparent(s)/sponsors accompany them.

## Overview of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults

### First Saturday of Lent (February/March)

- *Rite of Election* (catechumens), *Call to Continuing Conversion* (candidates)

Purpose:

The second step in Christian initiation is the election or enrollment of catechumen names and the verbal announcement of candidate names, and is performed on the First Saturday of Lent during Mass at Holy Cross in Dover (time to be announced).

(Candidates are already part of the elect and so their names are not inscribed in the book of the elect). In this rite the Church chooses to admit the catechumens and candidates to take part in the sacraments of initiation at Easter Vigil. The catechumens are first called forward to confirm their intent by writing their names in the book of the elect. The candidates are then called to stand when their names are called and verbally confirm their intent. The rite is performed by the Bishop (Francis Malooly) at Holy Cross Church in Dover, De.

This is a much more solemn rite and is the focal point of the Church's concern for the catechumens. The bishop declares in the presence of the community the Church's approval of the catechumens and candidates. The sponsors/godparents participate in the rite by confirming their suitability for entrance into the Church. The bishop then formally carries out the act of admitting them as the elect. After this rite the catechumens are called "the (newly) elect" by the Church.

### Sundays during Lent (March / April)

- *The Scrutinies*

- o These are performed the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Lent at various Masses at IHM. These rites are for the newly elect with the support of the candidates in attendance. Godparents attendance is optional.

Purpose:

To inspire in the Elect a desire for purification and redemption by Christ. These scrutinies focus on the mystery of sin, from which the whole world and every person

## Overview of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults

longs to be delivered and thus saved from its present and future consequences. The spirit is filled with Christ the Redeemer. In the first scrutiny Christ is revealed as the living water (the gospel of the Samaritan woman at the well). In the second He is revealed as the light of the world (gospel of the man born blind). In the third scrutiny Christ is revealed as the resurrection and the life (gospel of raising Lazarus). From the first to the final scrutiny the elect should progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation.

The Elect and their godparents are called forward after the homily. The celebrant says prayers of intercession for them and prayers over them. The (newly) elect are then dismissed (before the Eucharistic Prayers of the Liturgy). The (newly) elect and members of RCIA team will meet in one of the rooms in the Church to discuss the Scriptural readings for the day and then as Mass is ending leave ourselves. Candidates should stay for the completion of the Mass but should not receive the Eucharist.

### Retreat at IHM (March / April)

- *Preparation Rites* Saturday before Palm Sunday
  - o Sponsors and Godparents are invited to attend

Starts with the 9:00 AM Mass in the church at IHM. (Agenda to be provided, normally it lasts until 2:00 PM). At the Mass the Creed is presented to the (newly) elect. During these rites the Church lovingly entrusts to them the Creed-the ancient texts that have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church's faith and prayer. The Creed recalls the wonderful deeds of God for the salvation of the human race, suffuses the vision of the elect with the sure light of faith.

### Holy Week Rites (March / April)

- *Chrism Mass* at Holy Cross in Dover (optional, no RCIA rites) – Monday
- *Mass of the Lord's Supper* Holy Thursday

## Overview of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults

- First Day of the Easter Triduum, arrive at 7:00 PM for 7:30 PM Mass
- Presentation of Oils by Elect and Washing of Feet (including godparents and sponsors)
  
- *Passion of the Lord* (Good Friday)
  - Second Day of the Easter Triduum, arrive at 7:00 PM for 7:30 PM Mass
  - Elect carry Cross forward and bring up Community “gifts” Consecration
  
- *Easter Vigil* – Holy Saturday
  - Sacrament of Initiation for newly elect
  - Sponsors and Godparent(s) attend
  - Reception into Full Communion for candidates
  - Third Day of the Easter Triduum,
    - Morning Prayer at 9:00 AM,
    - Rehearsal at 10:00AM,
    - Initiation - arrive at 7:00 PM for 7:30 PM Mass

### Purpose:

The third step in the Christian initiation of adults is the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist (Holy Communion) at IHM. Through this final step the Elect, receiving pardon for their sins, are admitted into the people of God. They are graced with adoption as children of God and are led by the Holy Spirit into the promised fullness of time begun in Christ and, as they share in the Eucharistic sacrifice and meal, even to a foretaste of the kingdom of God.

The Baptism of the elect takes place after the homily when the elect are called forward with their godparents. The candidates make their profession of faith and then, accompanied by their godparent(s), are baptized by the celebrant with the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” while pouring water on the heads of the elect. The newly baptized put on a white garment on loan from the parish signifying the new dignity they have received. They are presented with a lighted candle which shows that they are called to walk as befits the children of the light, or receiving the light of Christ.

## Overview of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults

The newly baptized and the candidates are confirmed immediately afterwards signifying the close link between the mission of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the connection between the two sacraments through which the Son and the Holy Spirit come with the Father to those who are baptized.

The celebrant prays, and with the godparents and sponsors in attendance anoints them with Holy Chrism oil with the sign of a cross on their forehead with the words “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit”.

Following the Liturgy of the Eucharist the newly confirmed (neophytes), together with their sponsor/godparents, parents, spouses, and catechists, receive communion under both kinds. The celebrant may briefly remind the neophytes of the preeminence of the Eucharist, which is the completion of their initiation and the center of the whole Christian life.