

## **RITE OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS (RCIA 48-74)**

This ceremony is used when **unbaptised** adults are asking for the sacraments. This is when you formally hear and accept their intentions. This is the beginning of their preparation for baptism.

**Do not omit this ceremony.** The ceremony may be scheduled more than once a year.

There is no provision for a lay person to lead this rite.

The rite is best incorporated into Sunday Eucharist, (ideally when nothing else is going on!)

However, it may be celebrated during a Liturgy of the Word, with a “group of the faithful”.

The rite begins the Mass; it takes the place of the Introductory Rites.

Let parishioners know of the rite beforehand through information in the parish bulletin.

It is useful for you, or the Team leader, to have practised the sponsors beforehand. They in turn should aid the inquirers with their responses to the questions that will be asked of them.

A key symbol of the rite is the crossing of the threshold of the church.

The visibility and audibility of the inquirers and sponsors is important.

*At the church door-the unbaptised inquirers wait with their sponsors (and family members).*

*After the entrance hymn and Greeting, the community is invited to gather outside the church.*

*Once everyone has assembled, you greet the candidates “in a friendly manner”.*

*You speak sincerely about the journey of the inquirers and the joy of the local church which welcomes them.*

*The sponsor stands next to the enquirer with a hand on her/his shoulder.*

*Sample words of introduction:*

Dear friends, I ask you to welcome among us those who have, for several weeks been meeting with the RCIA team and members of the parish community to inquire about our Catholic faith. They have already begun the journey of faith and seek to continue, with the care and support of this faith community.

N.... are ready to take their first step in becoming Christians.

**Celebrant**

I invite our sponsors to introduce our inquirers.

*(Sponsors give a brief statement, which informs the community on who the inquirers are.)*

**Celebrant**

N. ....you have already begun the journey of discovery and hope. We, the community of St. Josephs are here to encourage you, to pray for you and support you.

*You then enter into dialogue with the inquirers. It is a marvelous opportunity to put before the inquirers questions that can illicit very deep responses, if they have been given time to work with the questions. The rite allows for this spontaneity.*

*Questions are asked individually. The focus of the dialogue is between you and the inquirer, but the community needs to hear every word.*

**Celebrant**

Name..., what do you ask of God's Church?

R: Faith (or, I want to know Christ better, I want more meaning in my life...)

**Celebrant**

Name..., what does faith offer you?

R: Eternal life

**FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL**

*Option A*

God gives light to everyone who comes into this world; though unseen he reveals himself through the works of his hand, so that all people may learn to give thanks to their Creator.

You have followed God's light and the way of the Gospel now lies open before you. Set your feet firmly on that path. Walk in the light of Christ and learn to trust in his wisdom. Commit your life daily to his care, so that you may come to believe in him with all your heart.

This is the way of faith along which Christ will lead you in love toward eternal life. Are you prepared to begin this journey today under the guidance of Christ?

**Inquirer: I am.**

**AFFIRMATION BY SPONSORS AND ASSEMBLY**

*Turn to the sponsors and the assembly and ask them in these or similar words.*

Sponsors, you now present these candidates to us; are you, and all who are gathered here with us, ready to help these candidates find and follow Christ?

**R.** We are.

*With hands joined, say:*

Father of mercy,

we thank you for these your servants.

You have sought and summoned them in many ways  
and they have turned to seek you.

You have called them today  
and they have answered in our presence:  
we praise you, Lord, and we bless you.

*All sing or say (There needs to be some cue e.g. by cantor for this acclamation)*

We praise you, Lord and we bless you.

## **SIGNING OF THE INQUIRERS WITH THE CROSS**

*The inquirer's forehead is signed. There are choices-either you do it individually, or if the group is large, you say the words while the sponsor signs. Make the signing **bold**.*

### **Celebrant**

N., receive the cross on your forehead. It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with the sign of his love. Learn to know and follow him.

All sing: Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

## **SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES**

*This is optional, but its inclusion makes a big impression on all concerned. Celebrant speaks the words, sponsors now do the signing*

Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,  
that you may hear the voice of the Lord. R.

Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,  
that you may see the glory of God. R

Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,  
that Christ may be known in the work that you do. R

Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,  
that Christ may dwell there by faith. R

Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,  
that you may respond to the word of God. R.

Receive the sign of the cross on your heart,  
that you may walk in the way of Christ. R.

Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders,  
that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ. R.

*Celebrant makes the sign of the cross over all candidates*

I sign you with the sign of eternal life  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Catechumens: AMEN**

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** *This is the first time the enquirers are addressed as catechumens*

Lord, we have signed these catechumens with the sign of Christ's cross. Protect them by its power, so that, faithful to the grace which has begun in them, they may keep your commandments and come to the glory of rebirth in baptism.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**AMEN**

**INVITATION TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

N., come into the church to share with us now at the table of God's Word.

**Liturgy of the Word**

**Homily**

**PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE**

*This can be given by a catechist. Make the presentation meaningful.*

**Celebrant**

Receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

May it be a source of life for you and a sign of this Parish's support for you.

**INTERCESSIONS**

**PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS**

*Option A*

Let us pray.

God of our forebears and God of all creation,  
we ask you to look favourably on your servants N. and N.;  
make them fervent in spirit, joyful in hope, and always ready to serve your name.

Lead them, Lord, to the baptism of new birth,  
so that, living a fruitful life in the company of your faithful,  
they may receive the eternal reward that you promise.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

**R.** Amen.

**DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS**

**Celebrant**

My dear catechumens: you have listened to God's Word. You will now continue to reflect with your catechist on how God's Word can come to life in you. Go in peace and may the Lord remain with you always.

All: Thanks be to God.

*You may or may not recite the Creed.*