



*Reception of Baptized Christians*  
into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

# Table of Contents

FOREWORD	3
CATECHIZED OR UNCATECHIZED?	4
• CATECHIZED	4
• UNCATECHIZED	4
• DISCERNMENT	5
FORMATION PROCESS	6
• PROCESS FOR BAPTIZED UNCATECHIZED CHRISTIANS	7
• PROCESS FOR BAPTIZED AND CATECHIZED CHRISTIANS	7
• MARRIAGE ISSUES	8
rites for the Rite of Reception	9
• CATECHIZED CANDIDATES	9
• UNCATECHIZED CANDIDATES	9



## Foreword

January 18, 2011

PASTORAL MINISTERS AND CLERGY,

Over the last 25 years, the Catholic Church in Canada has become familiar with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) through the use of the “Blue Book.”

This information package, prepared by the Office of Liturgy and Diocesan Forum on Initiation, draws your attention to a less understood portion of the process: “Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.” The authors of this package hope that you will take time to familiarize yourself with the contents of the “Blue Book” on this matter, while using the package for clarification and resources.

Inside you will find:

- I. A guide to distinguish the uncatechized from the catechized Christian
- II. A guide to determine the processes of formation for uncatechized and catechized Christians
- III. A guide to the rituals for receiving baptized Christians

We invite you to use this resource as you continue your important work of hospitality and catechesis with baptized Christians seeking full communion with the Catholic Church.

If you have any questions about the material presented in this package or about the process, please contact the Office of Liturgy directly.

In Christ,

- Documents prepared by:
- Diocesan Forum for Reception & Initiation
  - Office of Liturgy  
Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Calgary



Most Rev. Frederick Henry  
Bishop of Calgary

## Catechized or Uncatechized?

All decisions about formation and ritual for a validly baptized individual seeking initiation rest upon whether the candidate is catechized or uncatechized.

### Catechized

There are two dimensions to being catechized:

- living a Christian life
- living that life in the tradition of the Catholic faith

To be catechized is to be in an intimate relationship with Christ. It is to proclaim the reign of God, to believe that we are sent to live in discipleship as the Body of Christ, and to do what the Master does in the midst of ordinary life. Someone who knows the Catechism of the Catholic Church, yet does not live the life of Christ, is not catechized. It is not expected that one live the life of Christ “perfectly” because there we all falter. Still, a catechized Christian recognises the ideal of living in imitation of Christ and desires to live that ideal.

**RCIA 75.2** gives a portrait of the Christian life. Although this section addresses the unbaptized, it applies equally to discerning the catechized from uncatechized. The catechized bear witness to the faith, hope in Christ, see miracles, love their neighbour and suppress their egos. According to the General Directory for Catechesis (**GDC**) 85 and 86, catechesis for the catechumenate includes knowledge of Christ, prayer, liturgy, Christian community life, moral formation, and missionary initiation. Someone who is catechized will reflect this knowledge in his or her life and have an awareness of the basic doctrines of the Catholic Church.

### Uncatechized

Those who are baptized but uncatechized, lack an intimate relationship with Christ even though they are united with Christ through a Christian baptism. They may not know, understand, or live the life of Christ. They may not know prayer, liturgy, Christian life, catholic morality, community life or discipleship, or may be only marginally familiar with these things.

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF A BAPTIZED AND CATECHIZED CHRISTIAN INCLUDE:

- A minister’s son or daughter
- A Protestant minister
- A Christian who attends church regularly and participates in the mission of Christ
- A Christian who may already be involved in a service ministry in your parish
- A Christian who may have attended sacramental preparation classes for his or her children
- A Christian who is married to a Catholic and has worshiped weekly in the Catholic Church for years



## Discernment

Pastoral ministers and clergy must discern with candidates where they have come from, the life they have been living, what they believe, and where they wish to go in the spiritual life. This discernment will determine what process will provide the candidate with a catechetical foundation to build upon. The liturgy and the community will continue to form the candidates for the rest of their lives after their initiation.

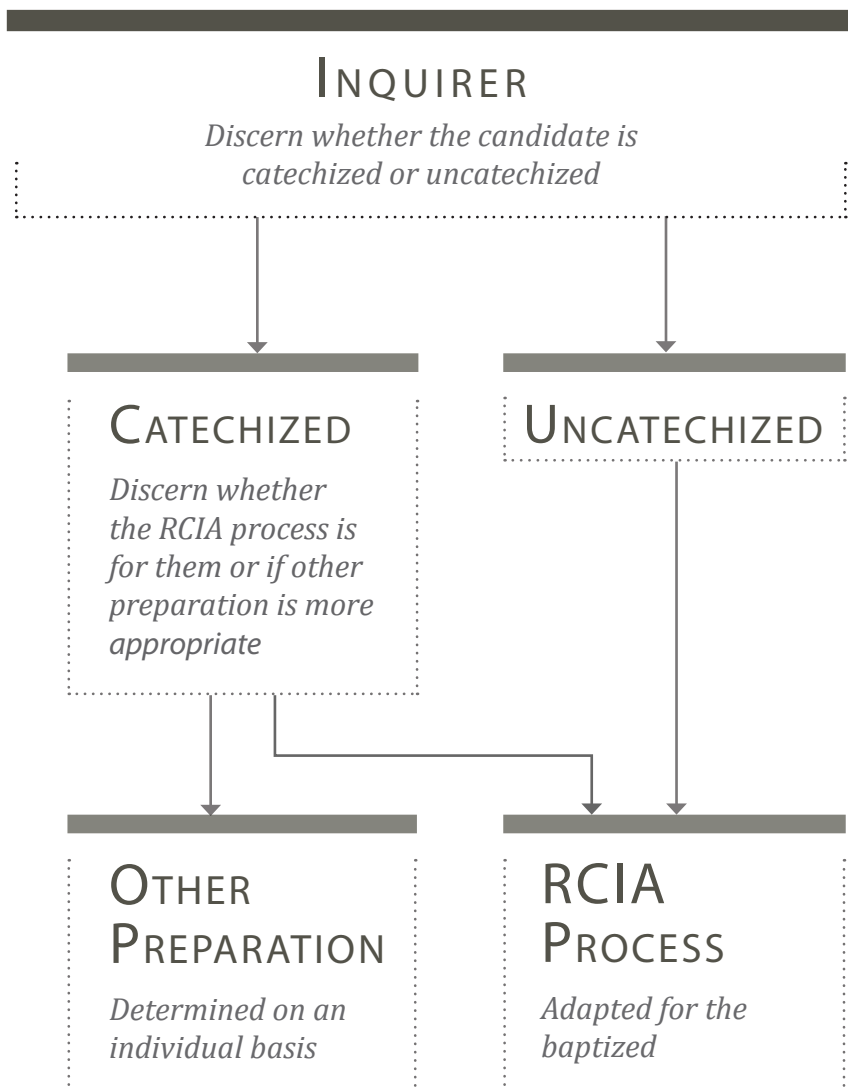
*The spirit of the Lord  
shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and  
understanding, the spirit  
of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge  
and the fear of the Lord.  
His delight shall be in  
the fear of the Lord.*

ISAIAH 11:2-11:3

# Formation Process for Baptized Christians

*The instruction . . . should be of a kind that while presenting Catholic teaching in its entirety also enlightens faith, directs the heart toward God, fosters participation in the liturgy, inspires apostolic activity, and nurtures a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ. (RCIA 78)*

## Overview of the Process



## Valid Baptism

In Catholicism, a valid baptism involves the following:

- **INTENTION** | the baptism must be “into Christ”
- **FORM** | the formula must invoke Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **MATTER** | water must be used and must flow over some part of skin

While most baptisms conform to these requirements, a few do not. If there is any question about the validity of a baptism, fax a copy of the baptismal certificate to the Chancellor of the diocese and request further direction.

*“The baptized Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, adapted to individual pastoral requirements”*



RCIA #391

## Process for Baptized Uncatechized Christians

It is imperative to respect the baptism of baptized candidates, even though they may be uncatechized, by distinguishing the candidates from the catechumens in ritual and formation.

### RITUAL

The catechumens receive pre-baptismal rites while the baptized participate in a simpler process that completes their initiation.

### FORMATION

The catechumens receive a preparation for baptism while the baptized use the process to explore the meaning of the baptism that is already theirs. The process may be formally the same, but the difference in intent should be made clear to the candidates and to all catechists.

## Process for Baptized and Catechized Christians

Sometimes, the baptized Christian interested in becoming Catholic is already catechized; this person already has an intimate relationship with Christ and exhibits the life of discipleship indicative of a catechized person. The RCIA process is not required for these candidates.

The baptized Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, adapted to individual pastoral requirements” (RCIA 391). It is up to the parish to respond to these baptized Christians with utmost respect and dignity for their baptisms. Yet, since the period of the Catechumenate is inappropriate for their preparation, some creativity is required. While much depends on the resources of the parish, ideally, a catechist should be available to meet with a candidate and provide individualized formation. In some instances, it may be suitable for the candidate to participate in one or more of the parish’s catechumenal sessions. In the Rite of Reception, these candidates that are catechized will profess “I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to

be revealed by God.” Formation should enable candidates to make this profession confidently and with love.

### **WHEN THE BAPTIZED, CATECHIZED CANDIDATE COULD BENEFIT FROM THE CATECHUMENATE PERIOD**

Although the catechumenate process is designed for the unbaptized and the baptized/uncatechized, it may at times be suitable also for catechized candidates. Some candidates desire and benefit from the formal structure of the RCIA: the more intimate community of prayer, the examples of service and faith practiced by the sponsors and initiation team, the study and discussion of liturgy and doctrine, and breaking-open of the Word through the liturgical year.

## **Marriage Issues**

At the earliest stage of the process, the pastoral minister must determine whether it is necessary to refer the inquirer to the pastor or minister responsible for connecting individuals with the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal. Due diligence at the start will prevent pain and disappointment for the inquirer later in the process. Few of us are trained in the complexities of marriage law in the Catholic Church and we should therefore refrain from giving information that may be false, misleading, or confusing to the inquirer. It is important that inquirers with marriage issues speak with someone who has both the theological and pastoral expertise to explain the law properly and with sensitivity.

Ask only these two questions to determine if it is necessary to refer the inquirer to the pastor or minister responsible for connecting individuals with the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal:

1. *Have you ever been divorced or are you currently separated?*
2. *If you are engaged to be married, has your fiancé ever been legally married?*

If the inquirer says yes to either of these questions, contact your parish pastor or minister responsible for connecting individuals with the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal.

*It is important that inquirers with marriage issues speak with someone who has both the theological and pastoral expertise to explain the law properly and with sensitivity.*





## Rites for the Rite of Reception

### Catechized Candidates

For baptized and catechized individuals who are not going through a long process of initiation, the only rite that properly applies to them is the Rite of Reception (described below), preceded by a confession of sins according to his or her own conscience (RCIA 395). While the catechumens and uncatechized are dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word, the catechized candidate may remain with the assembly to celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist even though he or she may not receive communion until the initiation is complete. It is important for these Christians to profess and pray along with the community the Creed and Lord's Prayer by which they already live their lives of discipleship. As described above, sometimes it is advisable for the catechized candidate to undergo a longer process along with the uncatechized.

### Uncatechized Candidates

#### RITE OF WELCOMING CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST

- For adults and children who are baptized (Catholic or other Christian) (RCIA 376-399).
- Do not celebrate the Rite of Welcoming along with the Rite of Acceptance (RCIA 465-466, 476-487).

#### THE DISMISSAL

- Catechumens and candidates going through the RCIA process join the faithful on Sunday for the Liturgy of the Word and are then dismissed (RCIA 75.3).
- Adults (and possibly children) are sent from the assembly after the homily. Sponsors do not leave; they join the catechumens and candidates after mass.

Children preparing for the sacraments may participate in the parish's Liturgy of the Word for Children (RCIA 244.1).

### **RITE OF CALLING CANDIDATES TO LENTEN RENEWAL**

- In the Diocese of Calgary, this rite currently occurs along with the Rite of Election on the first weekend of Lent. The candidates will not sign the Book of the Elect.
- Participants include baptized but uncatechized candidates (RCIA 494) and baptized Catholic adults preparing to complete their initiation (RCIA 495).

### **PRESENTATIONS**

- Some of the rites belonging to the catechumenate, such as the presentation of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and a book of the Gospels, can be used to spiritual advantage with baptized but uncatechized adults (RCIA 383).

### **PENITENTIAL SERVICES**

- Penitential services are intended for candidates—baptized children or adults. These services avoid any allusion to original sin (RCIA 522-527) and replace the scrutinies, which are only for those preparing for baptism.
- The distinction between scrutinies and penitential rites is somewhat confused by the use of both terms in the adaptation for children (RCIA 267-270); distinguish carefully.

### **RITE OF RECEPTION**

- The reception of a catechized candidate can occur at any time throughout the year. Some parishes reserve the Easter Vigil for the initiation of the elect adults and children only and receive candidates into full communion at Pentecost.
- You may combine the Rite of Reception with the Sacraments of Initiation into a single celebration (RCIA 418-452). Avoid anything that equates catechumens with candidates (RCIA 391, 421). Choreograph the celebration of the reception so that the candidates remain visible to the assembly, yet visually distinct from the neophytes (RCIA 441-443).



## Ideas

Ideas for integrating newly received candidates into the community

- Invite new Catholics to become involved in parish ministry
- Provide additional opportunities to gather and reflect for a full year
- Plan an anniversary celebration for the end of that year
- Invite new Catholics, catechists, godparents, and sponsors to share a reflection about the initiation process with the community

- After the baptism of the elect, the candidates hold lighted candles and join the rest of the assembly in the renunciation of sin and profession of faith (RCIA 437).

### MYSTAGOGY

- The period of mystagogy proper is a post-baptismal catechesis intended for the neophytes, the newly baptized. For the already baptized, their entire period of formation is an unpacking of their earlier baptism and is considered mystagogical.
- Just as the newly baptized go through the period of mystagogia, it is important to facilitate an integration of the newly received candidates into the community (RCIA 386).

Adapted from Bill Corcoran, *Preparing the Rites of Initiation with Adults and Children of Catechetical Age*. Ottawa: Novalis, 1997.

*You are a chosen race,  
a royal priesthood,  
a holy people;  
praise God who called you  
out of darkness and  
into his marvelous light*

**1 PETER 2:9**



ALL OF YOU ARE ONE  
UNITED IN CHRIST JESUS

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY | *Office of Liturgy*  
120 17th Avenue SW | Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2S-2T2  
Phone: (403) 218-5500 | Fax: (403) 264-0526

