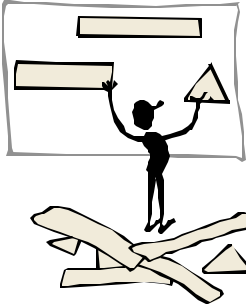


RCIA



Lent is about change. Lent is a time to focus on the changes in the life of Jesus and on Lent's insistent call to change our own lives. Change is never easy; Lent challenges us to change for the better. It is an invitation to look long and deep into God by reflecting on the words and actions of Jesus.

In a recent letter from the Office of the Archbishop, Bishop O'Brien discussed new guidelines, a "CHANGE" for those catechumens and candidates participating in the RCIA Program.

What are these changes? We begin with the difference between Catechumens and Candidates. Catechumens are those who have not received the Sacrament of Baptism, while Candidates have been baptized. Over the years, in many parishes, the two groups have been combined for convenience. The existing Rite (combined) was an adaptation.

In the National Statutes the Rite of Election and Scrutinies are primarily for the Catechumens (the unbaptized). Candidates (the baptized), either in the Catholic tradition or from other denominations, are receiving instruction, so as to be received into full communion in the Catholic Church. There's is the call to conversion, which is centered in the baptism they have already received.

So what changes?

- The Rite of Acceptance changes to the Rite of Welcoming which is done on the First Sunday of Advent.
- The Rite of Election and Lenten Scrutinies are ONLY for the unbaptized, and not for Candidates.
- The Rite of Reception into full communion for the unbaptized takes place at the Easter Vigil.
- The Rite of Reception for Candidates moves to Sundays in the year (except Lenten Sundays). This takes place after an appropriate time of formation in the RCIA program. Baptized Candidates in the RCIA program after having been catechized in the Catholic Tradition, and a more spiritual journey for adults are brought to full communion by reception of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation when they are ready.

This year we do not have Catechumens, so there will be no Rite of Election or Lenten Scrutinies. There will be moments of recognition and prayers for the Candidates as we accompany them on their journey of continuing conversion within the Sunday Liturgy. This year will be the last year that Candidates become full members of the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

Change can result in feelings of uneasiness, confusion; hopefully this has not been the case. This change comes at an appropriate time. For Lent is closely associated with the change from winter to spring, from death to life in Jesus.

God is faithful in inviting us to renewed faith. Let us continue to pray for the Candidates to be fully initiated at St. Matthew's this year.

Sr. Andre
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