

Dear Co-laborers in the vineyard,

Happy New (Liturgical) Year! In this newsletter, we begin to look at this new year—and Lent with its associated rites. Next time, we'll delve into the Triduum.

May you have a quiet and expectant Advent and joyous Christmas Season!

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

Confirmation and the RCIA

(See the *Code of Canon Law* cc.882-888; also see *Priest Faculties for the Diocese of Davenport*)

Please note that permission must be requested for priests to confirm particular candidates at the Easter Vigil. A short letter asking for this permission should include a list of those people to be confirmed and a short explanation of the circumstances of each candidate.

All priests must ask for permission to confirm: 1. *Baptized Catholics who were instructed in or adhered to another faith by their own fault*, 2. *Baptized Catholics who were not raised as Catholic but who never belonged to any other church*, 3. *Baptized Catholics who have never left the Church but were never confirmed*.

Pastors may confirm (without asking for permission) in the following circumstances: 1. *When he baptizes an adult (see comments below re: children)*, 2. *When he receives a previously baptized non-catholic into full communion*, 3. *When he readmits into full communion a previously baptized Catholic who apostacized from the faith*, 4. *When he readmits into full communion a baptized Catholic who through no personal fault was instructed in or adhered to a non-Catholic religion*.

Priests who will be presiding at the Easter Vigil outside the territory of their assignment, or if they are not assigned a pastoral charge, are reminded that they need the written permission of the bishop in order to baptize and confirm any adult (see cc.530, 862, 883, 887; ref: *Empowerment for Ministry* by John Huels). A letter from the pastor of the place should be sent to the bishop requesting such delegation (N.B. unlike marriage, the pastor himself cannot delegate the faculty to confirm).

In order to respect the integrity of the three Sacraments of Initiation, the priest who presides over Eucharist and Confirmation is also the one who is to baptize. Therefore, another minister (e.g., a deacon or even another priest) must not baptize in this situation (see c.883.2; for an exception if large numbers are involved, see RCIA # 226).

Children who have reached the use of reason (around 7 years of age) are considered, for the purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults. Therefore, if someone who is to be baptized is deemed ready (i.e., old enough) to receive Eucharist they *must* be confirmed. Likewise, if someone seeking to come into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church is old enough to make their own profession of faith and receive Eucharist, they must be confirmed.

The following is provided by way of documentation:

The *National Statutes for the Catechumenate* (approved by the US Bishops and ratified by the Vatican) states:

13. Since those who have the faculty to confirm *are bound to exercise it* in accord with canon 885.2 (“A presbyter who has this faculty *must use it* for those in whose favor the faculty was granted.”), and may not be prohibited from using the faculty, a diocesan bishop who is desirous of confirming neophytes should reserve to himself the baptism of adults in accord with canon 863.

14. In order to signify clearly the interrelation or coalescence of the three sacraments which are required for full Christian initiation (canon 842.2), *adult candidates, including children of catechetical age, are to receive baptism, confirmation, and eucharist in a single Eucharistic celebration*, whether at the Easter Vigil or, if necessary, at some other time.

18. Since children who have reached the use of reason are considered, for the purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon 852.1: “What is prescribed in the canons on the baptism of an adult is applicable to all who are no longer infants but have attained the use of reason.”), their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. *They should receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist at the Easter Vigil*, together with the older catechumens.

19. Some elements of the ordinary catechetical instruction of baptized children before their reception of the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist may be appropriately shared with catechumens of catechetical age. Their condition and status as catechumens, however, should not be compromised or confused, *nor should they receive the sacraments of initiation in any sequence other than that determined by the ritual of Christian initiation*.

The Rite itself presumes confirmation at the time of baptism (RCIA # 14, 215, 252-3; Rite of Confirmation #7b), though in the extremely rare case that it is postponed, it must be celebrated by the end of the period of postbaptismal catechesis [mystagogy]—for example, Pentecost (RCIA #24). There is *no provision* for “long-term” prolongation, say, until the catechumen reaches the age of confirmation for those baptized Catholic as infants.

See also the *National Directory for Catechesis* #36A (p. 119).

Diocesan Choir

I have received only one response regarding any interest in this venture, so until I hear that there is more interest I will shelve this proposal.

UPCOMING EVENTS

RCIA: THE PERIOD OF PURIFICATION

As the name implies, the *Rite* of Christian Initiation of Adults is marked by the liturgical celebration of the journey towards full initiation through the Easter Sacraments. Lent is also known as the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, and is marked by the celebration of several important rites.

For Catechumens

Typically on the First Sunday of Lent, the Rite of Election is celebrated. In order to be admitted to the Easter Sacraments, individuals must be elected by the bishop (or his delegate). By this rite, catechumens become “the elect” and enter the “period of purification and enlightenment” that culminates in the sacraments of initiation (see RCIA # 118-28). The Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election should be celebrated in the parish prior to the Rite of Election.

Please remember that only catechumens (not candidates) sign the Book of the Elect.

On the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent, the Scrutinies are celebrated. These required rites should take place within the ritual Mass “Christian Initiation: the Scrutinies” and use the Lectionary readings for Year A (see RCIA #146).

Only the bishop “may dispense from one of them for serious reasons or, in extraordinary circumstances, even from two” (RCIA #20). Requests to dispense an individual from a Scrutiny must be made in writing to the bishop, explaining the reason for the request.

The Presentations of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer take place during the 3rd and 5th weeks of Lent, respectively.

For Candidates

Typically on the First Sunday of Lent, Candidates take part in the diocese’s celebration of the Call to Continuing Conversion—which is preceded by the Rite of Sending Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop, celebrated at the parish. Usually, these rites are combined with those for the catechumens (see RCIA # 530-561).

A special Penitential Rite (similar to the Scrutinies) may be celebrated on the 2nd Sunday of Lent; it is not combined in any way with the rites for catechumens (see RCIA #459-63).

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion in our Diocese

Along with this mailing, you should have received an information letter regarding the celebration of the Rite of Election in our diocese this year, as well as an electronic PDF form that is to be used to reserve seating at those liturgies.

The Rites will be celebrated at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Davenport at 3PM and 6PM on Sunday, March 5 and again at St. Mary's in Ottumwa at 3PM on March 12. Please remember that the Rite of Election is not optional: one must be "elected" for the Easter Sacraments by the Bishop (or his delegate). I would hope that we would see this as not just a "legal hoop" to jump through, but as a living sign of our unity as a diocesan church. Please see the accompanying information letter for details—and for what should be done if someone is unable to attend one of the scheduled celebrations with the bishop.

LITURGY PREPARATION

INTERCESSIONS

Intercessions for Life

These intercessions are provided by the USCCB for your use. Please adapt them as you see fit.

Dec 4th SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

For those who have grown very old, and especially those abandoned by their families, that our parish might recommit ourselves to love and cherish them this Christmas; we pray to the Lord:

Dec 11th THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

For all mothers who are pregnant, that this season of expectant joy might deepen within them a sense of awe at the mystery of life stirring within them; we pray to the Lord:

Dec 18th FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

For those whose work contradicts the Gospel of Life, that we might love them enough to speak the truth in charity and love; we pray to the Lord:

Dec 25th CHRISTMAS

That on this feast of newborn love, all men and women might recommit themselves to the defense of all human life from conception to natural death; we pray to the Lord:

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Preparing for Lent

The following are guidelines for Lent from the GIRM:

1. No Gloria is sung (#55)
2. We abstain from "Alleluia" during Lent, especially during the Gospel Acclamation (#62)
3. It is forbidden for the altar to be decorated with flowers (*Laetare* Sunday [4th], solemnities and feasts are an exception (#305))
4. The playing of the organ and other musical instruments is allowed only to support the singing. (*Laetare* Sunday [4th], solemnities and feasts exceptions) (#313)
5. Violet or purple is the color of sacred vestments. Rose may be used where it is the custom on *Laetare* Sunday (#346)
6. In the diocese of the United States, crosses in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for the Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the end of the

celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. Images in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the beginning of the Easter Vigil. (*This is simply an option; there is no need to implement this practice if not already part of parish life.*)

Time for the Start of the Easter Vigil

I will write more about the Triduum in January, but I thought it would be helpful for folks to know as soon as possible what the earliest time for starting the Easter Vigil would be this year.

The *Missale Romanum* states that the Easter Vigil is to take place in darkness, after nightfall. Traditionally in this diocese, and according to the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy in 2003, that has been calculated as 45 minutes to an hour after sunset. Therefore, for the Diocese of Davenport, the Vigil on April 15, 2006, may not begin before 8:30 PM. (The same is true for the Archdiocese of Dubuque.)

For those interested in the details...

The data I used are from the tables of sunset and astronomical twilight available from the U.S. Naval Observatory at http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneYear.html. The tables use Standard Time – an hour must be added to the times given if accounting for Daylight Savings Time (on April 2, we change from Central Standard Time [CST] to Central Daylight Savings Time [CDST].)

On April 15, sunset in Davenport takes place at 7:43 PM CDST, and in Des Moines it takes place at 7:55 PM CDST. Adding 45 minutes to the Davenport time gives us the start time above. Obviously, the later you wait, the darker it will be—especially important the further west in the diocese you are. If you want to make sure that it is completely dark, wait for “astronomical twilight” (the time after which “the Sun does not contribute to sky illumination”). On April 15, astronomical twilight takes place at 9:23 PM CDST in Davenport and 9:35 PM CDST in Des Moines. Therefore, liturgically, 9:30 PM may be a better starting time for the Easter Vigil.