

Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens Outside of Mass

(For use in 2020 while the pandemic prevails)

(to be celebrated by a Priest or a Deacon)



“Inquirers of Faith” who by now have been duly instructed and have begun to pray and attend the Sunday Mass regularly, may take part in the “Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens” In view of the pandemic, parishes may celebrate the “Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens Outside of Mass” in small groups on any day (Sunday or weekday) and at any time before the coming Solemnity of Christ the King. (Cf. Chancery Notice, 11 June 2020).

“Inquirers of Faith” (candidates), their sponsors, catechists or teachers, friends and acquaintances, representatives of the faithful, and the pastor(s) are to take part in this Rite.

The Rite consists of: Receiving the Candidates, Liturgy of the Word, and Dismissal.

RECEIVING THE CANDIDATES

The candidates, their sponsors, and a group of the faithful gather outside the church (or inside the entrance or elsewhere) or at some other site suitable for this rite.

As the priest or deacon, wearing suitable liturgical vestment, goes to meet them, the assembly of the faithful may sing a psalm or an appropriate song.

GREETING

The celebrant greets the candidates in a friendly manner. He speaks to them, their sponsors, and all present, point out the joy and happiness of the Church. He may also recall for the sponsors and friends the particular experience and religious response by which the candidates, following their own spiritual path, have come to this first step.

A catechist or teacher calls out the name of each candidate.

The candidate answers: Present.

OPENING DIALOGUE

The celebrant continues with the following questions for the individual candidates, or, when there are a large number, for the candidates to answer as a group.

Celebrant: What do you ask of God’s Church?

Candidate: Faith.

Celebrant: What does faith offer you?

Candidate: Eternal life.

The celebrant may use other words than those provided in asking the candidates about their intentions and may let them answer in their own words.

CANDIDATES' FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL

The celebrant address the candidates, adapting the following formularies or similar words to the answers received in the opening dialogue.

Celebrant: 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 upon before you. Set your feet firmly on that path and acknowledge the living God, who truly speaks to everyone. Walk in the light of Christ and learn to trust in his wisdom. Commit your lives 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?

Candidates: I am.

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY

Then the celebrant turns to the sponsors and the assembly and asks them:

Celebrant: 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?

All: We are.

Celebrant: Let us pray.

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*: We praise you, Lord, and we bless you.

SIGNING OF THE CANDIDATES WITH THE CROSS

Celebrant: Dear candidates, receive the cross on your forehead. It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of his love (victory). Learn to know him and follow him.

The celebrant makes the sign of the cross over all the candidates at once, while the candidates sign themselves:

Celebrant: 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.

All sing or say the following or another suitable acclamation: Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

PRAYER

(The celebrant extends his hands over the catechumens)

Celebrant: Let us pray.

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.

R. Amen.

OR

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Almighty God, by the cross and resurrection of your Son, you have given life to your people.

Your servants have received the sign of the cross: make them living proof of its saving power, and help them to persevere in the footsteps of Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.



INVITATION TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

The celebrant invites the catechumens and their sponsors to enter the church.

Celebrant: Dear catechumens, come into the church, to share with us at the table of God's word.

With some gesture of invitation the celebrant escorts the catechumens and sponsors to their places.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

INSTRUCTION

After the catechumens have reached their places, the celebrant speaks to them briefly, helping them to understand the dignity of God's word, which is proclaimed and heard in the church.

READING *(Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk to a land that I will show you.)*

A reading from the Book of Genesis (12:1-4a)

The Lord said to Abram: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.

"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you."

Abram went as the Lord directed him. —The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (33(32):12-13, 18-19, 20, 22)

R. Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own. (Ps 33(32):12b)

Blessed the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen for his own inheritance. From heaven the Lord looks down; he sees all humankind. (R)

See, the eyes of the Lord are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness, to deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine. (R)

Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and our shield. May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our hope in you. (R)



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Jn 8:12)

R. Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. (R)

GOSPEL (*Behold, the Lamb of God. We have found the Messiah.*)

Deacon/Priest: The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Deacon/Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
(1:35-42)

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God.”

The two disciples of John heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi”—which translated means Teacher—“where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah”—which is translated Christ. Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas”—which is translated Peter.—The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

HOMILY



PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE

*A book containing the Gospels may be given to the catechumens by the celebrant;
The celebrant may use words suited to the gift presented:*

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

Catechumen: Thanks be to God. *(or another appropriate response)*

A cross may also be given.

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS

Celebrant: These catechumens, who are our brothers and sisters, have already traveled a long road. We rejoice with them in the gentle guidance of God who has brought them to this day. Let us pray that they may press onwards, until they come to share fully in our way of life..

Reader: That God our Father may reveal his Christ to them more and more with every passing day, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That they may undertake with generous hearts and souls whatever God may ask of them, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That they may have our sincere and unfailing support every step of the way, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That they may find in our community compelling signs of unity and generous love, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That their hearts and ours may become more responsive to the needs of others, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That in due time, they may be found worthy to receive the baptism of new birth and renewal in the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

LORD'S PRAYER

The celebrant invites all to recite the Lord's Prayer.

R. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

OR

R. Our Father in heaven, holy be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us; do not bring us to the test, but deliver us from evil.

PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS

Celebrant: Let us pray.

(with hands out-stretched over the catechumens)

God of all creation, we ask you to look favorably on these catechumens; 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 through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

OR

Celebrant: Let us pray.

(with hands out-stretched over the catechumens)

Almighty God, source of all creation, you have made us in your image. Welcome with love those who come before you today.

They have listened among us the word of Christ; by its power renew them and by your grace refashion them, so that in time they may assume the full likeness of Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

R. And with you spirit.

Celebrant: May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

The celebrant recalls briefly the great joy with which the catechumens have just been received and urges them to live according to the word of God they have just heard.

Celebrant: Go in peace, keep steadfast in prayer and in following the Christian way of living.

R. Thanks be to God.

An appropriate song may conclude the celebration.



Released by the Hong Kong Diocesan Liturgy Commission

Imprimatur: Cardinal John Tong, Apostolic Administrator of Hong Kong, 19 June 2020