

**RITE OF ELECTION OF CATECHUMENS
AND CALLING THE CANDIDATES TO
CONTINUING CONVERSION**

2026 Resource Booklet

Saint Benedict Cathedral
Sunday, February 22, 2026
2:00 PM CDT
1st Sunday of Lent



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This, then, is the third call to conversion: a call to hope, to trust in God and his great promise of eternal life. Let us ask ourselves: Am I convinced that the Lord forgives my sins? Or do I act as if I can save myself? Do I long for salvation and call upon God’s help to attain it? Do I concretely experience the hope that enables me to interpret the events of history and inspires in me a commitment to justice and fraternity, to care for our common home and in such a way that no one feels excluded? Sisters and brothers, thanks to God’s love in Jesus Christ, we are sustained in the hope that does not disappoint (cf. *Rom 5:5*). Hope is the “sure and steadfast anchor of the soul”. It moves the Church to pray for “everyone to be saved” (*1 Tim 2:4*) and to look forward to her being united with Christ, her bridegroom, in the glory of heaven.

—Pope Francis, *Message for Lent 2025*

On the First Sunday of Lent, the people of the Diocese of Evansville gather with those seeking either Baptism or full communion with the Church to celebrate another step on the journey. In the Rite of Election of Catechumens and of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion, “the Church makes her ‘Election,’ or the choice and admission of catechumens, who by their dispositions are fit to take part in the next celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation” (*Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* [OCIA], 119). In addition, those baptized Christians who seek to “bring to completion their Christian formation and incorporation into the community...” (OCIA, 410) come before the bishop who, on behalf of the Church, officially recognizes their “desire to have a place at Christ’s eucharistic table” (OCIA, 454).

The Rite and Call stands not only as ratification of the catechumens’ and candidates’ readiness for the sacraments but most especially as a witness to everyone’s need and longing for communion with our God and the Church’s call to bring them into the fold. In this liturgy we find expressed in the questions posed by the bishop of those present what the Church is hoping of those seeking Baptism and full communion and what the Church is asking of its members in bringing them along.

This liturgy also recognizes the distinction the Church makes between a catechumen and a candidate. As a baptized Christian, a candidate is already a member of the elect and, therefore, does not need to sign the Book of the Elect. The Church affirms this initial incorporation into the Body of Christ while acknowledging the need to be brought into full communion. Catechumens, responding to the calling of God, seek to be numbered among the “Elect,” to become adopted sons and daughters of the Father. The same God calls them, but they are in different places on the journey. This difference is remembered in this rite as well as the other rites of the OCIA. Since the Church prays as she believes, it is important that the liturgy express what the Church holds to be true.

In preparing catechumens and candidates to celebrate the rites, it would be beneficial to look at the questions the bishop will ask of the godparents and sponsors, catechumens and candidates, and the faithful gathered for the celebration. Can these questions be answered affirmatively? Are the catechumens and candidates ready? Can others testify to their readiness? Are all prepared to assist them through prayer and action? This is another way to ensure that what is expressed in the liturgy is authentic.

CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING THE BAPTIZED AND OCIA

There are often questions regarding the proper participation of the baptized in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. The following outline hopes to address some of the more common concerns.

- ✧ Baptized Christians (non-Catholic) are allowed to participate in the rites as outlined for them in the OCIA (Part II: Chapter 5):
 - Rite of Welcoming the Candidates
 - Rite of Sending the Candidates for the Calling to Continuing Conversion
 - Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion
 - Penitential Rite (Scrutiny)

- ✧ Baptized Catholics (uncatechized) are allowed to participate in the rites as outlined in the OCIA (Part II: Chapter 5):
 - Rite of Welcoming the Candidates
 - Rite of Sending the Candidates for the Calling to Continuing Conversion
 - Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion
 - Penitential Rite (Scrutiny)

- ✧ Catholics at the Easter Vigil
 - Baptized Catholics, be they catechized or uncatechized, are not to complete their sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. This should happen at another time – another Sunday in the Easter Season, Pentecost, etc.

- ✧ Baptized Christians seeking Full Communion and the Easter Vigil
 - If a parish does not have elect to be baptized at the Vigil and only has candidates seeking full communion, then those seeking full communion should do so at a time outside of the Vigil (another Sunday in the Easter Season, Pentecost, etc.)
 - ◊ The initiation rites of the Easter Vigil are primarily intended for the unbaptized, but a combined rite for both the Elect and candidates is provided in the OCIA (Appendix I: 4) and is permitted
 - ◊ However, the stand-alone “Order of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church of Those Already Baptized” (Part II: Chapter 6) is not intended to be celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

- ✦ Please send in information regarding names of catechumens and candidates, as well as numbers for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, no later than February 9 (see page 15 of this booklet for more details).
- ✦ There will be reserved seating by parish for catechumens/godparents, candidates/sponsors, and one parish representative. A tag identifying the parish will be on the end of the pew. Any seats not reserved are open seating for family/friends.
- ✦ The *Book of the Elect* is not be carried up from the pew as in past years. The person designated to read the names of the catechumens should bring the Book with them to their seat in the sanctuary. See page 7 of order of service for more details.
- ✦ Prepare the godparents and sponsors according to the ritual outline included in this booklet. Especially take time to review the questions that will be addressed to them.
- ✦ Attendance by godparents and sponsors is of utmost importance. No catechumen or candidate should come alone.
- ✦ Prepare the parish representative who will present the names of the catechumens and/or candidates. Share the list of names with them ahead of time, and give them a copy of the instructional sheet found in this booklet. Ask them to arrive at least twenty minutes prior to the start of the rite.
- ✦ The parish celebration for sending catechumens for election (OCIA nos. 106-117) and candidates for recognition by the bishop (OCIA nos. 438-445) is to be celebrated earlier in the parish. (The combined rite for sending catechumens and candidates together can be found in OCIA nos. 536-546)
- ✦ The catechumens should sign the *Book of the Elect* at the parish celebration prior to the Rite of Election. Candidates do not sign the *Book of the Elect*.
- ✦ The bishop does not sign the *Book of the Elect* as part of the Rite of Election.
- ✦ The bishop will be available for parish group pictures in the cathedral following the liturgy. Those parishes who would like a picture with the bishop should queue up in the center aisle after the Rite.

**RITE OF ELECTION OF CATECHUMENS
AND OF
CALLING THE CANDIDATES TO CONTINUING CONVERSION**

ORDER OF SERVICE

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE

The Bishop and other ministers (Deacon, server with processional cross, servers for miter/crosier) enter the church while the Entrance is sung.

GREETING

COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

All are seated.

FIRST READING

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

GOSPEL

HOMILY

CELEBRATION OF ELECTION

PRESENTATION OF THE CATECHUMENS

After the homily, the catechumens are presented to the Bishop.

A parish representative with the *Book of the Elect* reads the names.

Representative: Bishop, we the parish of N. present to you the following catechumens for Election.

As names are read, catechumens/godparents come to the sanctuary. Catechumens/godparents should come up and greet the bishop, and then move to stand on the steps of the sanctuary in their parish group (facing the Bishop). Name reader with the *Book of the Elect* lines up in front of the altar at the direction of the MC.

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS AND THE ASSEMBLY

The Bishop then questions the godparents as to the readiness of the catechumens.

Bishop: The holy Church of God now wishes to ascertain whether these catechumens are sufficiently prepared to be received into the order of the elect for the solemn paschal celebrations to come.

And so, first I ask you their godparents to testify. Have they faithfully listened to God's word proclaimed by the Church?

Godparents: **They have.**

Bishop: Have they begun to walk in God's presence, treasuring the word they have received?

Godparents: **They have.**

Bishop: Have they persevered in fraternal communion and in the prayers?

Godparents: **They have.**

The Bishop then questions the assembly as to their willingness to support and pray for the catechumens.

Bishop: Now I ask you, the members of this community: Are you willing to affirm the testimony expressed about these catechumens and include them in your prayer and affection as we move toward Easter?

All: **We are.**

INVITATION AND ENROLLMENT OF NAMES

The Bishop then addresses the catechumens and invites them to present their names for enrollment.

Bishop: And now, my dear catechumens, I address you. Your godparents, catechists, and the entire community have testified favorably on your behalf. Trusting in their judgment, the Church calls you in the name of Christ to the Paschal Sacraments. Now it falls to you who have long listened to the voice of Christ to respond in the presence of the Church by stating your intentions.

Is it your will to be initiated into Christ's Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist?

Catechumens: **It is.**

ACT OF ADMISSION OR ELECTION

The Bishop then declares the catechumens to be members of the Elect.

Bishop: My dear elect, you have been chosen for Initiation into the sacred mysteries at the forthcoming Easter Vigil.

Elect: **Thanks be to God.**

Bishop: Now, with divine help, your duty, like ours, is to be faithful to God, who is faithful to his call, and to strive with generous spirit to reach the full truth of your Election.

The Bishop then addresses the godparents.

Bishop: Godparents, you have spoken in favor of these elect; receive them now as chosen in the Lord and accompany them with your help and example, until they come to share in the sacraments of divine life. I now invite the godparents to extend a sign of welcome to the elect under their care.

Godparents exchange a sign of greeting and peace with the elect, and then all return to their seats.

CELEBRATION OF THE CALLING TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

The candidates are then presented to the Bishop.

A parish representative reads the names of the candidates of their parish.

Representative: Bishop, we the parish of **N.** present the following candidates for full communion with the Catholic Church.

As names are read, candidates and sponsors come into sanctuary and greet the bishop, and then move to stand on the steps of the sanctuary in their parish group (facing the Bishop)

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY

The Bishop then questions the sponsors as to the readiness of the candidates.

Bishop: The Christian life and the demands that flow from the sacraments cannot be taken lightly. Therefore, before granting these candidates their request to share fully in the Church's Sacraments, it is important that the Church hear the testimony of their sponsors about their readiness.

Sponsors, have these candidates faithfully listened to the apostles' instruction proclaimed by the Church?

Sponsors: They have.

Bishop: Have they come to a deeper appreciation of their Baptism, in which they were joined to Christ and his Church?

Sponsors: They have.

Bishop: Have they reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church, which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer?

Sponsors: They have.

Bishop: Have they advanced in a life of love and service of others?

Sponsors: They have.

The Bishop then questions the assembly as to their willingness to support and pray for the candidates.

Bishop: Now I ask you, the members of this community: Are you willing to affirm the testimony expressed about these candidates and include them in your prayer and affection as we move toward Easter?

Assembly: **We are.**

ACT OF RECOGNITION

The Bishop recognizes the candidates' desire for full communion.

Bishop: My dear candidates, the Church recognizes your desire to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and to have a place at Christ's eucharistic table. Join with us this Lent in a spirit of repentance. Hear the Lord's call to conversion and be faithful to your baptismal covenant.

Candidates: **Thanks be to God.**

Bishop: Sponsors, continue to support these candidates with your guidance and concern. May they see in you a love for the Church and a sincere desire for doing good. Lead them this Lent to the joys of the Easter mysteries. I now invite the sponsors to extend a sign of welcome to the candidates under their care.

Candidates return to their seats. The sponsors exchange a sign of greeting and peace with the candidates. Then all present give their assent to the candidates.

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE ELECT AND THE CANDIDATES

All stand as the Bishop introduces the intercessions. The intercessions are proclaimed by the Deacon.

PRAYER OVER THE ELECT AND CANDIDATES

The Bishop then extends hands over the Elect and candidates and prays.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

The Bishop and other ministers reverence the altar and process from the church.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CATECHUMENS AND GODPARENTS

This instruction sheet will be helpful for you to know your role in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

PROCEDURE

- ✧ When your parish representative says, **“Bishop, we the parish of N. present to you the following catechumens for Election,”** please be ready to exit the pew and approach the sanctuary.
- ✧ As the names of the catechumens are read, catechumens and their godparents should come to the sanctuary. The bishop will be standing at the bottom of steps of the sanctuary.
- ✧ Once you reach the steps of the sanctuary, greet the bishop at his place, and then move at the direction of the MC to stand on the sanctuary steps. Please stand facing the bishop while the other catechumens are being presented.
- ✧ The bishop then questions the godparents, the assembly, and then the catechumens.
- ✧ After the bishop’s instructions to the godparents, please move with your group back to your seats and be seated.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES AND SPONSORS

This instruction sheet will be helpful for you to know your role in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

PROCEDURE

- ✘ The *Book of the Elect* is not used when the candidates for full communion are called.
- ✘ Your parish representative will say, **“Bishop, we the parish of N. present the following candidates for full communion with the Catholic Church.”**
- ✘ As the names from your parish are read, candidates with their sponsors will come forward to the sanctuary. The bishop will be standing at the bottom of steps of the sanctuary.
- ✘ Once you reach the steps of the sanctuary, move to greet the bishop at his place, and then move at the direction of the MC to stand on the sanctuary steps. Please stand facing the bishop while the other candidates are being presented.
- ✘ Please remain in place in the sanctuary while the bishop addresses the sponsors and the rest of the assembly.
- ✘ After the bishop’s instructions to the sponsors, please move with your group back to your seats and remain standing for the Intercessions.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARISH PRESENTERS OF CATECHUMENS AND/OR CANDIDATES

This instruction sheet will be helpful for you to know your role in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. Please note—the parish presenter of catechumens is also the person who carries the *Book of the Elect*. If your parish has catechumens, please bring the Book of the Elect with you.

PROCEDURE

- ✘ Arrive at the church at least 20 minutes early for instructions. Please gather in the sanctuary behind the altar.
- ✘ If your parish has catechumens for election, please bring the *Book of the Elect* with you.
- ✘ A list of your catechumens and/or candidates will be provided for you. This list is based off of the names submitted prior to the rite. You may need to make changes to list if someone is not in attendance or other circumstances have changed.

- ✘ Catechumens are presented first.
- ✘ When the bishop says, **“Those who are to be chosen in Christ, come forward, together with your godparents, as your names are called,”** the first presenter should approach the microphone, carrying the *Book of the Elect*.
- ✘ The parish representative says, **“Bishop, we the parish of N. present to you the following catechumens for Election.”**
- ✘ When reading the list of names, there is no need to wait for each catechumen to begin to move forward before moving to the next name. At the same time, there is no need to rush through the list of names, either. The list should be read deliberately, clearly, and forcefully.
- ✘ If you do not have catechumens, just remain in your seat.
- ✘ Once you have finished reading the names for your parish, line up with the *Book of the Elect* in front of the altar (MC will direct you).
- ✘ After the catechumens have become elect, you may return to your seat.

- ✘ Candidates are presented after catechumens.
- ✘ When the bishop says, **“Those who desire to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church, come forward with your sponsors as your names are called,”** the first presenter should approach the microphone (do not carry the *Book of the Elect*).
- ✘ The parish representative says, **“Bishop, we the parish of N. present the following candidates for full communion with the Catholic Church.”**
- ✘ When reading the list of names, there is no need to wait for each candidate to begin to move forward before moving to the next name. At the same time, there is no need to rush through the list of names, either. The list should be read deliberately, clearly, and forcefully.
- ✘ If you do not have candidates, just remain in your seat.
- ✘ Once you have finished reading the names for your parish, return to your seat.

