

The Book

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* contains the following:

Christian Initiation, General Introduction

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Introduction

PART I: CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

- Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate
- First Step: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens
- Period of the Catechumenate
- Second Step: Election or Enrolment of Names
- Period of Purification and Enlightenment
- Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation
- Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

PART II: RITES FOR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Christian Initiation of Children who have reached Catechetical Age
2. Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances
3. Christian Initiation of a person in danger of death
4. Preparation of Uncatechised Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist
5. Reception of Baptised Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

Part 1 is intended for the initiation of unbaptised adults into the Church. It presents the rite in its complete and usual form. It includes the texts for the celebration of the major steps as well as the prayer and liturgy that mark the periods of the catechumenate and purification and enlightenment. The introduction to each period describes the character of the stage and the nature of the catechesis.

In the first 3 sections of **Part 2** texts and guidance for the celebration of the rite according to various circumstances.

Sections 4 & 5 offer guidance on how the rite is adapted according to the needs of those who are already baptised. The following can be identified as principles:

- Their baptism is foundational (376, 378, 391).
- Confusion with catechumens (unbaptised) should be avoided (376, 391).
- The process is marked by liturgical rites (379–386).
- Adaptation of the process and catechesis should be made according to individual pastoral need (378, 391).
- Paragraph 75 may assist in the discernment of the need for adaptation.

In particular for Reception:

- Any appearance of triumphalism should be avoided (389).
- No greater burden than necessary is required for the establishment of communion and unity (387).

This is one of a series of resources produced by the Liturgy Office to help parishes make best use of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* © 2007 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/RCIA

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Rite of Christian Initiation of *an overview* Adults

The rite of Christian initiation is for unbaptised 'adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. By God's help they will be strengthened spiritually during their preparation and at the proper time will receive the sacraments fruitfully'

RCIA 1

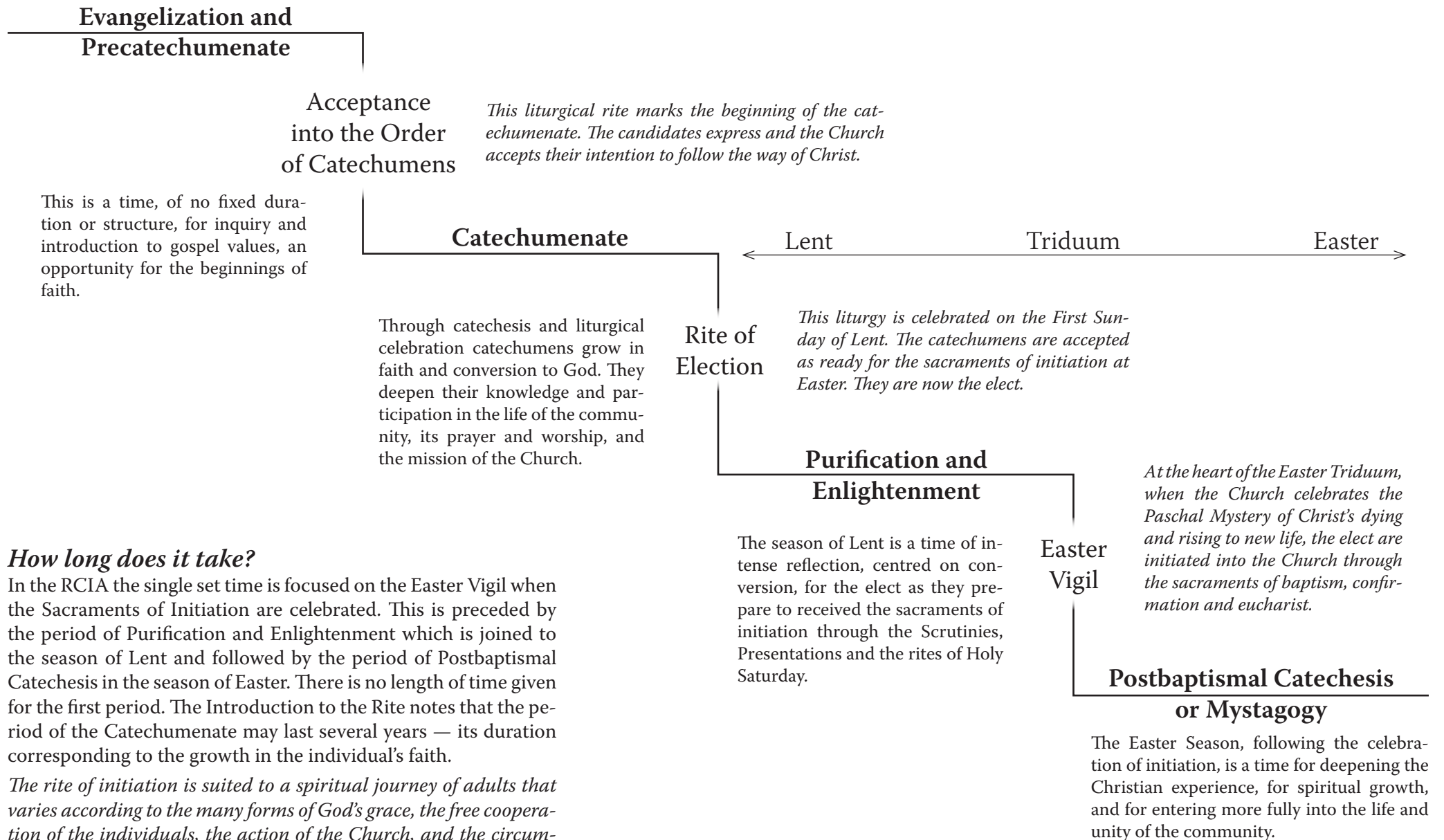
The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) is:

- a gradual process (4)
 - that takes place within the community of the faithful (4);
- a spiritual journey (5)
 - that is marked by periods and stages (6–7);
- markedly paschal in character — sharing in Christ's dying and rising
 - leading to the full celebration of the seasons of Lent – Triduum – Easter (8);
- the responsibility of all the baptised in the local Church (9)
 - this responsibility is principally exercised through love and prayer (379);
- a way of faith and conversion (1)
 - suited to the needs of participants (16).
- a process of formation which:
 - enlightens faith
 - directs the heart towards God,
 - fosters participation in the liturgy,
 - inspires apostolic activity,
 - and nurtures a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ (78 cf. 75)

The numbers in brackets refer to paragraphs in the Rite.

Periods & Steps — the Structure of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The initiation of adults is made up of a series of periods and steps. The periods are times of inquiry and growth; they can also be seen as preparing for the following step. The steps mark the progress of the catechumens as they pass to the next level. The steps are the major, more intense moments of initiation and are marked by liturgical rites.



How long does it take?

In the RCIA the single set time is focused on the Easter Vigil when the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated. This is preceded by the period of Purification and Enlightenment which is joined to the season of Lent and followed by the period of Postbaptismal Catechesis in the season of Easter. There is no length of time given for the first period. The Introduction to the Rite notes that the period of the Catechumenate may last several years — its duration corresponding to the growth in the individual's faith.

The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place.