

The Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names



DISCUSSION GUIDE

part 4 of 7



The Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names

At the end of the catechumenate, those chosen by God are enrolled among the "elect" in the Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names. In this rite of passage, the godparents and representatives of the community present the catechumens by name to the bishop and assembly and give testimony about their readiness. The catechumens themselves then personally express their intention to receive the sacraments and live as missionary disciples. With these testimonies the bishop accepts the judgement of the Church and invites the catechumens to offer their names for enrollment. One by one they inscribe their names as a pledge of fidelity in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation. From this day until they receive the sacraments of initiation they are now called "the elect."



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FOR YOUR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

WHO DISCERNS?

What exactly are we discerning when we discern a catechumen's readiness for the Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names? It is the call and election of God, who himself invites each person to the paschal sacraments. In this discernment, the testimony of godparents and catechists, as well as the dispositions present in the catechumen and his or her clear, explicit desire for the sacraments all bear witness to God's choice to call that person to the sacraments of initiation. Each parish community must consider these elements and prayerfully determine the catechumen's readiness.

- The OCIA envisions that discernment for this rite is a communal act, involving priests, deacons, godparents, catechists, members of the local community, and the catechumens themselves. How are you involving each of these persons in your discernment for this rite?
- What dispositions do you look for in the life of the catechumen to see whether they're ready to take this final step toward the sacraments of initiation?

TESTIFYING FOR THE CATECHUMENS

Godparents provide a public testimony of the catechumens' readiness at the Rite of Election. This questioning by the local bishop provides a glimpse into the role of the godparent during the previous Period of the Catechumenate. For months, the godparent practices the art of accompaniment and walks alongside the catechumen. In order to serve as a witness to the way in which catechumens treasure God's Word and join the community in prayer and service, the godparent is invited to embrace of ministry of presence and mentorship.

- In which ways does (or can) your parish provide formation for godparents of adult catechumens?
- How is the godparent's ministry of presence, accompaniment, and mentorship supported by initiation ministry leaders?

NAMES MATTER

Names matter. While choosing a Christian name is optional, what isn't optional is the presentation of catechumens for election by name. It is so important that if it cannot occur at the rite, it must be done in a special ceremony beforehand. But that is not all! Once the godparents have testified and the catechumens themselves have declared their will to receive the sacraments, the celebrant invites them to enroll their names, physically, by hand, into the Book of the Elect. Now they are no longer "catechumens" but "elect," as they have been chosen by God for initiation into the sacred mysteries.

- Recall and share a memorable time when your name, title, or status changed. What did that mean to you?
- How did you feel about your name when a substitute teacher did role call in school? If you didn't attend a classroom, how did you feel about your name when you were growing up?