



DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

WORSHIP OFFICE

TO: Pastors, Administrators, DRE's and RCIA Coordinators
FROM: David Wood, Director of the Office of Worship
SUBJECT: Rite of Election 2021
DATE: 1/8/2021

Due to the pandemic and the need for social distancing, Bishop Vásquez is delegating the Rite of Election's celebration to pastors and administrators. I offer the following summary hoping that it may be useful to you in explaining to your catechumens.

There is historical evidence of a Rite of Election and Enrollment of Names in the early Church, presided over by the bishop. In the early Church, the bishop was the usual celebrant of all initiation within his local church. We see this still reflected in the RCIA and even the Roman Missal.

Concerning the Rite of Election, RCIA 119 states, "This step is called election because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts." The godparents and catechists, representing the Church, offer testimony and the catechumens affirm their desire for initiation. By witnessing the catechumens' lives within the community of faith, the Church discerns God's election of the Catechumens for initiation at the Easter Vigil. As the chief steward of God's mysteries and leader of the local church's entire liturgical life, the bishop or his delegate (RCIA 122 and 125) declares the Church's approval. Discernment by the priests, deacons, catechists, godparents, and local parish community representatives is essential before the rite.

While some may be disappointed that there will be no diocesan celebration, it is helpful to note that the rite is not about meeting the bishop or experiencing the larger local Church. Instead, the actual focus is God's call and election of the catechumens.

To assist your parish preparation, I will post the Rite of Election in Spanish and English to the Worship Office portion of the diocesan website by Friday afternoon, January 8. <https://www.austindiocese.org/rite-of-election>

Some considerations for the celebration of the Rite:

- First, in reading through the rite, it is not uncommon to become confused as references are made to candidates within the rubrics for the Rite of Election. This rite is for catechumens only, who are candidates for election. See no. 130, for example.
- Omit the optional Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election.
- The Rite of Election begins at RCIA no. 129, with its introduction at no.118.



- I do not recommend the combined rite as it perpetuates candidates for full communion completing their initiation at the Easter Vigil and blurs the distinction between the unbaptized catechumens and the baptized candidate. It is preferred that baptized candidates completing their initiation do so as soon as they are ready rather than waiting for Easter (see US Statutes nos 32 and 33 in Appendix III of the rite). The Call To Continuing Conversion is optional for those previously baptized.
- The Rite of Election is celebrated on the First Weekend of Lent, with the day's readings.
- Two options are given for the Affirmation of the Godparents, depending on how involved the celebrant has been in the deliberation of the catechumens' readiness, no. 131.
- The catechumens may inscribe their name in the Book of the Elect, or this may be done for them. See the instruction at the end of no. 132.
- The Intercessions for the Elect may be combined with the universal prayers of the community. See no. 134.
- The description of the combined "Rite of Election of Catechumens and of the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates who are Preparing for Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church" is found beginning at no. 547. If this rite is used, please make a careful distinction between the catechumens and the baptized. The Candidates for Full Communion do not inscribe their names into the Book of the Elect.
- Please send the following information to the Worship Office by email at liturgy@austindiocese.org. Please do not send names.

Parish Name, City	Between 7 and 17	17 and older
Catechumens (never baptized)		
Candidates for Full Communion		