THE RITE OF ELECTION

The catechumens have gathered with the bishop at the cathedral with the other catechumens in the diocese. After reflecting on the word of God, the bishop has called the catechumens forward to declare their intention. Based on the witness of sponsors, godparents and members of the community, the bishop invites the catechumens to sign the book of the elect. He then proclaims: “I now declare you to be members of the elect, to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the next Easter Vigil".

The rite of election brings to an end the period of the catechumenate and inaugurates the period of purification. The act of election by the bishop - the proclamation of admission for reception of sacraments - is a significant turning point in the catechumenate process. It celebrates the transition in the life of the catechumen from one who is seeking to one who is ready to stand firm in a commitment (while remaining a seeker). The election is the announcement that the community has discerned the catechumen is indeed ready to celebrate the Easter sacraments. This transitional rite is usually, celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent.

The appropriate place for the rite of election is at the cathedral church, celebrated by the bishop. Some dioceses celebrate the rite of' election in regional gatherings throughout the diocese, especially in those dioceses that cover a large geographical region. The 1988 ritual edition for use in the United States also provides in addition to a combined rite for the unbaptized and the baptized seeking full communion, a parish rite to send catechumens for election by the bishop.