

R.C.I.A. – The Ceremonies of Lent

1st Sunday of Lent – Rite of Sending

Celebrated in the local Church during the Sunday Mass. The godparents and the community request that the catechumen (preparing for Baptism) and the candidates (preparing to be received into the Church) be sent to the bishop – the catechumen to be elected by the bishop as ready for initiation into the Church and the candidates for recognition by the bishop. The catechumen and candidates are accepted by the community and sent in their name for election and recognition in the Cathedral at the ritual that afternoon.

1st Sunday of Lent - Rite of Election

Celebrated in the Cathedral by the bishop of the diocese together with the priests of those who are seeking entry into the Church. The catechumens from all over the diocese are presented to the bishop. Catechists affirm that they are dedicated in their desire to walk in the path of the Gospel through the Church. The bishop ‘elects’ them to receive the sacraments of initiation into the Church. They become the ‘elect’. The bishop receives the candidates for reception and confirmation and recognises their readiness to enter the final phase of their preparation to enter the full communion of the Catholic Church.

3rd Sunday of Lent – 1st Scrutiny

Celebrated in the local Church with the community during the Sunday Mass. Through the rite, the elect are prepared by the action of the Holy Spirit to receive the graces of Baptism. The Gospel of the Samaritan woman at the well focuses attention on Christ’s promise to give living water, welling up to eternal life.

3rd Week of Lent – Presentation of the Creed

Celebrated in the local Church with the community. During Mass, the Church entrusts to the elect the text of the Creed, symbolically handing over the whole Catholic faith, as it has been transmitted to us throughout the centuries and contained in summary form in the Apostles Creed.

4th Sunday of Lent – 2nd Scrutiny

The elect is again prayed over in the midst of the assembly during the Sunday Mass in the local Church, that through the Holy Spirit his eyes may be opened as were the eyes of the man born blind, whose cure is read in the Gospel of the Sunday

5th Sunday of Lent – 3rd Scrutiny

Celebrated in the local Church with the community during the Sunday Mass. The final Scrutiny – drawing on the Gospel of the raising of Lazarus, the Church prays over the

elect that he may be prepared to die to the old life and be raised to new life through the gift of rebirth in baptism.

5th Week of Lent – Presentation of the Our Father

During Mass in the local Church, the Church hands to the elect the text of the Our Father, symbolically giving the whole Catholic experience of prayer, summarised in the great prayer of the adopted children of God, the Our Father.

Wednesday of Holy Week – Mass of the Oils

Celebrated in the Cathedral by the bishop, with the priests from all over the diocese. He blesses and consecrates the three holy oils that will be used throughout the year in the administration of the sacraments. Two of the holy oils will be used at the Easter Vigil – the oil of Catechumens is used to anoint the elect before Baptism, and the oil of Chrism is used in the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Holy Saturday – Preparation Rites

Celebrated in the local Church at a special ceremony. A brief celebration only hours before Baptism: the elect proclaims before the whole assembly the Creed that was entrusted to him in the third week of Lent. The ears and mouth of the elect are blessed that they may hear God's word more clearly and proclaim the Church's faith more powerfully.

Holy Saturday – Easter Vigil Mass

Celebrated in the local Church with the whole community on the evening of Holy Saturday, the first moments of the new day, Easter Sunday. The elect receive the three great sacraments of initiation into the family of God - Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion. This is celebrated in the Church's great feast to celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death when he rose from the dead. These three sacraments apply Christ's victory to the elect by incorporating them in the Body of Christ, the Church.