

# Father's Notes

March 16, 2025

This past week I had the joy and privilege of accompanying those from our two parishes who are preparing to enter the Catholic Church, to St. James Cathedral for the Rite of Election. They are part of what was formerly known as Rites of Christian Initiation to now officially referenced as Order of Christian Initiation (for Adults or for Children). Thus, more simply, OCIA or OCIC. The name change by the U.S. Bishops, is intended to translate more accurately, the verbiage used from the Latin resource from which it's translated.

Those entering the Church fall into either of two categories: those who are unbaptized and those who were validly baptized in another Christian tradition (these are called Candidates). We actually have a third group, in that we have some in our program who were baptized Catholic but never received sufficient formation in the faith in the years that followed. We've found it helpful to have them attend the OCIA classes, which cover much of the basics of understanding our Catholic faith.

Because of the importance of baptism and the preparation that precedes it, those who are unbaptized, go through a series of steps. When they began in the fall, in their first period of formal discernment, they were Inquirers. Their next formal step was at the Rite of Welcoming and Acceptance, which took place at our parish. In this rite, the Inquirers publicly express their desire to enter the Church and are formally welcomed by the parish community. At this point, they came to be known as Catechumens.

The formal step which followed occurred near the start of Lent, the Rite of Sending. This also occurred at our parish church. In this step, the Catechumens were publicly recognized, as attested by their sponsors, to be ready to be sent to appear before the Archbishop for the Rite of Election.

And so it was, that the Catechumens and Candidates were presented to Bishop Elizondo this past week. In addition to meeting the Bishop, the Catechumens signed the Book of the Elect, again, giving testimony that they are called by God to receive the sacraments. In this rite, they came to be known as the Elect.

The Elect now enter the period of Purification and Enlightenment. In this, they will undergo three more rites in the upcoming weeks. These rites, known as the Scrutinies, are intended to help prepare the Elect for the encounter with Jesus that awaits them in the Easter Sacraments. As we rejoice in their trust and desire for this faith that is ours, please to pray for our Elect, our Candidates, and those, already Catholic, who are to be Confirmed and to receive their First Holy Communion.



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