**RITE OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS**

**OUTLINE OF THE RITE:**

**RECEIVING THE CANDIDATES:**

* Greeting
* Opening Dialogue
* Candidates’ first acceptance of the gospel
* Affirmation by the Sponsors and the Assembly
* Signing of the Candidates with the Cross
* Signing of the forehead
* Signing of the other senses
* Concluding Prayer
* Invitation to the Celebration of the Word of God

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

* Instruction
* Readings
* Homily
* Presentation of a Bible
* Intercessions for the Catechumens
* Prayer over the Catechumens
* Dismissal of the Catechumens

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

**RITE OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS**

**RECEIVING THE CANDIDATES:**

The candidates, their sponsors, and a group of the assembled community gather outside the Church, or in the entrance foyer. The priest or deacon goes out to meet them and they process into the Church.

**GREETING:**

The Celebrant greets the candidates and acknowledges their sponsors, and the community gathered together. He then invites candidates to come forward with their sponsors.

**OPENING DIALOGUE:**

The Celebrant calls the name of each candidate, and candidate acknowledge their presence by stating: **‘Present’**

**The Celebrant then asks the Candidates:**

What do you ask of God’s Church?

**Candidates respond: Faith.**

**Celebrant:** What does faith offer you?

**Candidates:** Eternal life.

**CANDIDATES’ FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL:**

**Celebrant:**

God gives light to everyone who comes into this world; though unseen, he reveals himself through the works of his hand, so that all people may learn to give thanks to their Creator.

You have followed God’s light and the way of the Gospel now lies open before you. Set your feet firmly on that path and acknowledge the living God, who truly speaks to everyone. Walk in the light of Christ and learn to trust in his wisdom. Commit your lives daily to his care, so that you may come to believe in him with all your heart.

This is the way of faith along which Christ will lead you in love toward eternal life. Are you prepared to begin this journey today under the guidance of Christ?

**Candidates**: I am.

**Celebrant:**

Sponsors, you now present these candidates to us; are you, and all who are gathered here with us, ready to help these candidates find and follow Christ?

**All:** We are.

**Celebrant:**

God of mercy, we thank you for these your servants.

You have sought and summoned them in many ways

And they have turned to seek you.

You have called them today

And they have answered in our presence:

We praise you, Lord, and we bless you.

**SIGNING OF THE CANDIDATES WITH THE CROSS:**

**SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD**

**The Celebrant invites candidates and their sponsors to come forward, using words similar to the following: The Celebrant says:**

Come forward now with your sponsors to receive the sign of your new way of life as catechumens.

**The cross is traced on the forehead of each candidate and the Celebrant says:**

N. receive the cross on your forehead.

It is Christ himself who now strengthens you

With this sign of his love.

Learn to know him and follow him.

All of the Assembly sings or says the following acclamation:

**Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**\*\*\***

**SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES:**

**Note:**

***At the discretion of the celebrant the signing of one, several, or all of the senses may follow. The celebrant alone says the words accompanying each signing.***

**The signing is carried out by catechists or sponsors; the signing of each sense may be followed by an acclamation in praise of Jesus Christ, e.g. “Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”**

**While the ears are being signed, the Celebrant says:**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,**

**That you may hear the voice of the Lord.**

**While the eyes are being signed:**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,**

**That you may see the glory of God.**

**While the lips are being signed:**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,**

**That you may respond to the word of God.**

**While the breast is being signed:**

**Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,**

**That Christ may dwell there by faith.**

**While the shoulders are being signed:**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders, that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.**

**The Celebrant makes the sign of the cross over all of the Candidates, saying:**

I sign you with the sign of eternal life in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Catechumens: Amen.**

**\*\*\***

**CONCLUDING PRAYER:**

**Celebrant: Let us pray.**

**Lord,**

We have signed these Catechumens with the sign of Christ’s cross.

Protect them by its power,

so that, faithful to the grace which has begun in them,

they may keep your commandments

and come to the glory of rebirth in baptism.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen**

**INVITATION TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**The Celebrant invites the catechumens and their sponsors to enter the church, using words similar to the following:**

N. and N., come into the church, to share with us at the table of God’s word.

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**READINGS:**

**FIRST READING**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL**

**GOSPEL**

**HOMILY**

**PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE**

**INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS:**

**Celebrant:**

These catechumens, who are our brothers and sisters, have already travelled a long road. We rejoice with them in the gentle guidance of God who has brought them to this day. Let us pray that they may press onwards, until they come to share fully in our way of life.

That God our Father may reveal his Christ to them more and more with each passing day, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That they may undertake with generous hearts and souls whatever God may ask of them, let us pray to the Lord.

R.

That they may have our sincere and unfailing support every step of the way, let us pray to the Lord.

R.

That they may find in our community compelling signs of unity and generous love, let us pray to the Lord.

R

That their hearts and ours may become more responsive to the needs of others, let us pray to the Lord.

R.

That in due time, they may be found worthy to receive the baptism of new birth and renewal in the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

R.

**PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS:**

**Celebrant:**

Almighty God, source of all creation, you have made us in your image.

Welcome with love those who come before you today.

They have listened among us to the word of Christ;

By its power renew them and by your grace re-fashion them,

So that in time they may assume the full likeness of Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**All**: Amen.

**DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS**

**Celebrant:**

Catechumens, go in peace.

**Catechumens:** Thanks be to God.

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**AND THE RITE OF WELCOMING CANDIDATES INTO FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**Receiving those for the Catechumenate**

**Celebrant:**

Dear friends, the Church joyfully welcomes today those who will be received into the order of Catechumens. In the months to come they will prepare for their initiation into the Christian faith by Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

We also greet those who, already one with us by Baptism, now wish to complete their initiation through Confirmation and Eucharist or be received into full communion of the Catholic Church.

**OPENING DIALOGUE WITH CANDIDATES FOR FULL COMMUNION**

(The celebrant then addresses the following questions to the individual candidates for post-baptismal catechesis.)

**Celebrant** What do you ask of God's Church?

**Candidate:**

To be accepted as a candidate for catechetical instruction leading to Confirmation and Eucharist

**Celebrant:**

What does this period of formation offer you?

**Candidate:**

A fuller sharing in the life of the Church

**CATECHUMEN'S FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL**

**Celebrant**

God is our Creator and in him all living things have their existence. He enlightens our minds, so that we may come to know and worship him. He has sent his faithful witness, Jesus Christ, to announce to us what he has seen and heard, the mysteries of heaven and earth.

Since you acknowledge with joy that Christ has come, now is the time to hear his word, so that you may possess eternal life by beginning, in our company, to know God and to love your neighbor. Are you ready, with the help of God, to live this life?

**Catechumens:** I am.

**CANDIDATES' DECLARATION OF INTENT**

**Celebrant** Those of you who seek to complete your Christian initiation (or: be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church), are you prepared to listen to the apostles' instruction, gather with us for prayer, and join us in the love and service of others?

**Candidates:** I am.

**AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY**

**Celebrant** Sponsors, you now present these catechumens and candidates to us; are you, and all who are gathered about us, ready to help these catechumens and candidates follow Christ?

**All:** We are.

**Celebrant**

Father of mercy,

we thank you for these your servants.

You have sought and summoned them in many ways and they have turned to seek you.

You have called them today

and they have answered in our presence: we praise you, Lord, and we bless you.

**Signing of the Catechumens and of the Candidates with the Cross**

**SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD OF THE CATECHUMENS**

**Celebrant:**

Catechumens, come forward now with your sponsors to receive the sign of your new way of life as catechumens.

**Celebrant**

**N**, receive the cross on your forehead.

It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of his love. Learn to know him and follow him.

**SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD OF THE CANDIDATES**

**Celebrant:**

Candidates for Confirmation and the Eucharist, come forward now with your sponsors to receive the sign of your life in Christ.

**N**, receive the cross on your forehead as a reminder of your baptism

into Christ's saving death and resurrection.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER**

**Celebrant**

Let us pray.

Almighty God,

by the cross and resurrection of your Son you have given life to your people. Your servants have received the sign of the cross: make them living proof of its saving power

and help them to persevere in the footsteps of Christ.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen.

**Prayer over the Catechumens and Candidates**

**Celebrant**

Almighty God,

source of all creation,

you have made us in your image.

Receive with love those who come before you.

Lead our catechumens to the baptism of new birth, and our candidates to a deeper share in the paschal mystery, so that, living a fruitful life in the company of your faithful, they may receive the eternal reward that you promise.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord .

**All** Amen.

**DISMISSAL OF THE CATHECHUMENS**

**Celebrant**

My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more deeply upon the word of God which you have shared with us today. Be assured of our loving support and prayers for you. We look forward to the day when you will share fully in the Lord’s Table.