



DECREE OF PROMULGATION

On November 15, 2023, the Latin Church members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved *National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults* implementing canon 788 §3 of the Code of Canon Law for the dioceses of the United States of America.

In accord with Article 110 of the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis, *Praedicate Evangelium*, the approved Statutes were granted *recognitio* by the Apostolic See, in a decree dated January 9, 2024 (Prot. N° 778/2005) signed by Robert Cardinal Prevost, O.S.A., Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, and His Excellency Most Reverend Ilson de Jesus Montanari, Secretary of the Dicastery.

Wherefore, as President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I hereby decree that the effective date of the *National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults* in the dioceses of the United States of America will be December 1, 2024, the First Sunday of Advent. Following the effective date, the National Statutes for the Catechumenate approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 11, 1986 are abrogated.

Given at the offices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in the city of Washington, the District of Columbia, on April 25, 2024, Feast of Saint Mark, Evangelist.

✠ Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Reverend Michael J.K. Fuller
General Secretary, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
NATIONAL STATUTES FOR THE CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE

Norm 1 The evangelization of unbaptized persons during the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate will lead them through Scripture, prayer, and friendly conversation to an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ as the fullness of God’s revelation.

Norm 2 Early in the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate, a parochial minister will meet inquirers individually to hear of their “first faith” (see *The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* [OCIA] 42), discern the continuing impact of their encounter with the Lord, and discuss any issues (e.g., an irregular marriage) that could affect their eventual celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

Norm 3 The term “catechumen” is to be strictly reserved for the unbaptized who have entered the catechumenate and who are joined to the Church in a special way while they strive to lead a life of faith, hope, and charity (CIC c. 206 §1).

Norm 4 Ordinarily, a person who has entered the catechumenate is to remain in it from at least the Easter Time of one year until the beginning of the Easter Time of the next year; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.

Norm 5 §1. As a general rule, the preparation of catechumens for the Sacraments of Initiation takes place in a parochial setting or its equivalent.

§2. Catechumens prepared at a center, school, prison, or other institution are to be introduced into the Christian life of a parish or similar community, insofar as possible from the very beginning of the catechumenate, so that after their Initiation and Mystagogy they will not find themselves isolated from the ordinary life of the Christian people.

Norm 6 The formation of catechumens is to be comprehensive. It is to be:

- 1° suited to the liturgical year and supported by the Church’s liturgy;
- 2° rooted in Sacred Scripture, the truths of Catholic doctrine and the moral life, and aided by catechetical texts, such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, texts based upon that Catechism, such as the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, and other texts approved by the local ordinary;
- 3° exercised in works of service and charity (OCIA 75).

Norm 7 While unbaptized persons in irregular marriages can enter the catechumenate, they are not to celebrate the Rite of Election until they are free to enter a canonical marriage.

Norm 8 Upon entry into the catechumenate, catechumens incur the following obligations:

- 1° They are to participate in the Liturgy of the Word, preferably on Sundays and

- other holy days of obligation, with the community if possible (see OCIA 81);
- 2° They will continually purify their motivation for Baptism, live an upright life, and be ready to witness to their conversion to Christ, as they seek to grow in their knowledge of and assent to what the Church believes and teaches (CIC cc. 206 and 865 §1).

Norm 9 §1. In addition to the prerogatives granted in universal law (see CIC cc. 1170 and 1183 §1 and OCIA 47), catechumens may:

- 1° participate in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church, especially works of mercy;
 - 2° take advantage of opportunities given to Catholic parents in the parish or region concerning the enrollment for their children in Catholic schools;
 - 3° be buried in a Catholic cemetery.
- §2. If it seems appropriate, the diocesan bishop can establish other prerogatives.

Norm 10 It is praiseworthy that catechumens be dismissed from the liturgical assembly, at least on Sundays, after the Homily and before the Creed to reflect on the Word of God just proclaimed.

Norm 11 Because liturgical ministries arise from Christian Baptism, it is inappropriate for catechumens to proclaim the Word of God or serve at the altar during the liturgy.

PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Norm 12 The Elect, as well as those who assist them and participate in the celebration of the Easter Vigil with them, are encouraged to keep and extend the paschal fast of Good Friday, as determined by CIC canon 1251, throughout the day of Holy Saturday until the end of the Vigil itself (see *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 110, and OCIA 185/1).

PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGY

Norm 13 Following the Period of Mystagogy, and to the extent possible, neophytes may benefit from meeting periodically to deepen their Christian formation, especially through opportunities that enhance their participation in the life of the parish or similar community (see OCIA 244 and 245).

REGISTRATION OF INITIATION-RELATED ACTS

Norm 14 §1. The register of those who have entered the catechumenate is to be kept in the parish archive.

§2. In addition to those things required by OCIA 46, the pastor is to see that the date and place of birth of the catechumens are inscribed in the register.

Norm 15 The Book of the Elect, in which the catechumens enroll their names in anticipation of the Sacraments of Initiation (OCIA 119), is to be kept in the archives of the parish or of the diocese, unless diocesan law directs otherwise.

Norm 16 §1. The register of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church is to be kept in the parish archive.

§2. In addition to those things required by OCIA 486, the pastor is to see that the date and place of birth of the candidate are inscribed in the register, with mention made of the minister, parents, sponsors, and the date and place of Reception into full communion.

§3. If married, a notation of the spouse, date and place of marriage should be noted in the register. Any future marriage is also to be noted in the register.

RITES FOR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES

Norm 17 It is for the diocesan bishop:

- 1° to appoint a qualified person to promote, direct, and coordinate the Christian Initiation of Adults in his diocese;
- 2° to issue norms concerning the qualifications for and training of catechists;
- 3° to approve the use of catechetical texts for the formation of catechumens and candidates for Reception into full communion (see Norm 6, 2° above);
- 4° to issue norms for the Simpler Order of Adult Initiation and for the preparation of baptized but uncatechized adults for Confirmation and Eucharist and for the reception of validly baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

Norm 18 The term “convert” is reserved strictly for those converted to Christian belief and never used of those baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

When these statutes take effect on December 1, 2024, the National Statutes for the Catechumenate approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 11, 1986, and confirmed by the Congregation for Divine Worship on June 26, 1988, are abrogated.