



Diocese of Buffalo

Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

A member of the Division for Evangelization and Catechesis

Discernment of Readiness for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

Although discernment is an integral and ongoing feature of catechumenate formation, there are certain key moments when it is essential to intentionally discern the movement of the Holy Spirit. At the *Rite of Election*, catechumens publicly declare their intention to be baptized and fully initiated into the Church and the bishop receives them as members of “the Elect,” chosen by God for the sacraments of initiation. Likewise for baptized candidates, the *Call to Continuing Conversion* is a public statement of intention and ratification by the Church.

Discernment is a collaborative effort shared by the catechumen or candidate, pastor, RCIA coordinator, team members, catechists and sponsor. Discernment invites the individual to reflect upon his or her spiritual life through prayer, conversation and attentive listening to the voice of God. Conversations that explore one’s commitment to follow Christ as a baptized Christian and to continue to grow in this relationship over one’s lifetime assist in ascertaining readiness to celebrate the *Rite of Election* or *Call to Continuing Conversion*. The catechumen or candidate must intend to receive the sacraments and choose them of his/her own free will.

Indicators of readiness include a growing faith, a deepening relationship with Jesus and growth in prayer and love of neighbor. (*RCIA*, 75.2) At this point in their formation those preparing should feel an attachment to Jesus, desire to receive the Easter Sacraments and understand the basic doctrines of Catholicism. (See *RCIA*, 120) It is not necessary or expected that the person knows EVERYTHING about the Catholic faith before initiation – faith formation is ongoing and lifelong for all of us. Most importantly, is the person coming to know and love Jesus – through worship with the parish community, reflection on scripture, personal prayer, acts of service and other expressions of Catholic life?

These questions, which the bishop asks during the *Rite of Election*, can help RCIA ministers to identify signs of conversion: (see *RCIA*, 131B)

- “Have they faithfully listened to God’s word proclaimed by the Church?”
- “Have they responded to that word and begun to walk in God’s presence?”
- “Have they shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer?”

When discerning readiness to celebrate the *Rite of Election* or *Call to Continuing Conversion*, invite the catechumens and candidates to reflect upon where they have come from and where they are going in their journey of faith. Open-ended questions that center on one’s relationship

with God and the experiences of the catechumenate process are most helpful. Sharing may take place through:

- A face-to-face discussion between the catechumen and one or more team members
- A take home self-assessment that is shared with one or more team members
- Another means that invites person-to-person dialogue

Questions such as these may be helpful for either a face-to-face discussion or take home self-assessment:

- What have you learned about yourself since you began this process? What is different for you?
- Who is Jesus for you?
- How are you listening to and responding to the Word of God?
- How are you praying?
- What have you learned about the Church and your place in it?
- What does living as a Catholic mean to you?
- Describe your experiences of service within the parish or community. What have you learned through these experiences – about yourself and others?
- Do you have any questions or concerns about the sacraments, Church teaching or the RCIA process?
- Do you wish to continue on this journey? Why or why not?
- How can the RCIA team be helpful to you as you prepare for initiation?
- Is there anything else you wish to share?

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