

**VOICES OF HOPE:
RESPONSES TO THE CARA SURVEY
AND THE
CONSULTATION ON THE NATIONAL STATUTES**



**AN INITIAL REPORT TO THE
BISHOPS' COMMITTEE ON DIVINE WORSHIP**

NOVEMBER 9, 2014

FROM THE FDLC NATIONAL MEETING
OCTOBER 1-3, 2014

RITA THIRON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE FDLC

◆ INTRODUCTION

History of Survey

Original request from Canonical Affairs, asked Msgr. Hilgartner to survey
FDLC and Evangelization and Catechesis also draft and sponsor survey

Nature of National Meeting and Consultation

Who was at the meeting – Directors of Diocesan Offices of Worship, members of
Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, diocesan catechetical leaders, and former team
members from the North American Forum on the Catechumenate
CARA Report followed by a Pastoral Response (Father Ron Lewinski) and a Theological
Response (Father Paul Turner)
Participants respond during table discussions, oral reports, individual diaries

Relationship of the CARA survey to the National Statutes

Survey was drafted in harmony with the Rite, Statutes, and Canons

◆ TWO BRIEF PRESENTATIONS TODAY

Reactions to CARA Survey

Most of our concerns will not surprise you; they are probably your concerns as well
The CARA Survey solicited data from parish-level personnel; our responses come from a
diocesan-level perspective.

Liturgical Concerns
Catechetical Concerns
Formation Concerns
Pastoral Concerns

All issues are intertwined, e.g., formation affects liturgical practice

Parish open-ended comments are found in the Survey Appendix II– pages 113-144
CARA provided absolutely no analysis, simply copied in alphabetical order
Many comments were enlightening, others gave cause for grave concern

Some of our members were concerned about the response rate of the survey and,
therefore, the conclusions drawn from the statistics

Consultation on National Statutes

Methodical examination of each statute
Affirmations/What is “working” well?
Corrections/What might be improved?
Omissions/what should be added?

◆ NEXT STEPS

Further details and narratives
Future dialogue on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
Additional consultation before the revision of the National Statutes
Formation opportunities – now and with the revised rite
Review, approval, recognition, and promulgation of revised RCIA and Statutes
Ask that this be included among USCCB Priorities and Planning Initiatives

LITURGICAL CONCERNS

In General

General lack of concern about the normative nature of the rites and the laws regarding them
Varied and inconsistent celebration of the rites; not universally implemented
Ignorance of the national statutes or too much pastoral “discretion”
Primacy of the individual over the collective
Rites not widely used, not done completely

Full Initiation of Children – by far the greatest concern

47% receive all three sacraments of initiation
“Why are we tolerating 53% non-compliance?” -- Turner

“You may think that the three initiation sacraments together would force a rethinking of the meaning and age of confirmation for those baptized Catholic as infants. However, the reverse has happened. The rising age of confirmation has forced a rethinking of celebrating the three initiation sacraments together for children of catechetical age. This has called into question the integrity of the sacraments that are meant to exemplify the unity of the paschal mystery: (Paul Turner). [cf. NS 19, RCIA 254, 256, 293, 308, 329]”

Rites not being celebrated

“Rites that aren’t done can’t catechize”
53% celebrate the Preparation Rites
Only 64% do Celebrations of the Word
46% skip Minor Exorcisms
Many of the public rites not celebrated during Lent/Easter
Infrequent anointings during the Catechumenate period
Few Celebrations of the Word – 13% yearly
Rate of use of Dismissal rite not asked
Confusion about Presentation of Creed and Lord’s Prayer
Presentations of Creed and Lord’s Prayer (26%)
2 in 3 do not offer Mass for those in process
Yet high percentage of participation in the Rite of Election

Rite of Acceptance

Needs to be more frequently celebrated; status in Church
75% celebrate this once per year

Uncatechized Adult Catholics

59% of uncatechized, baptized Catholics get confirmed at Easter Vigil
Is there serious confusion about delegation and proper ministers?
When are the other 41% being confirmed and by whom?
Some cite celebration of the sacrament of confirmation during Holy Week
Number of baptized Catholics confirmed at Easter Vigil

Treatment of Candidates for Reception into Full Communion

Infrequency of the rite of reception
Only 20% bring into full communion on a Sunday (outside Easter Vigil)
Delay of Confirmation for candidates – deferred for another “event”
Use of combined rites effect catechetical formation
Call to Continuing Conversion
77% received candidates at Easter Vigil
Number of baptized candidates received at Easter Vigil -- it seems to be a time when all “graduate”
Number of Catholics confirmed at Easter Vigil

Method of Baptism

6 in 10 are doing baptism on the forehead... disappointing
62% water on forehead, rather than infusion or immersion
“Does this minimalism apply to every aspect of the process? This is initiation into the death and resurrection of Jesus!”
Anointing (RCIA 216, 228, 33.7) is inconsistent with Roman Missal, Easter Vigil #48
What is “other form of baptism”? 5%
Yet 8 in ten do paschal fast!

Conditional Baptism

60% of parishes use conditional baptism
Conditional Baptism publicly
29% at Easter Vigil, 2% at Sunday Mass
See Canon 869.2, RCIA 393, NS 37
Directory for the Application and Norms on Ecumenism 99d.NS 37

Lack of Mystagogia

CARA—39% offer weekly; 66% do not have Masses for Neophytes
Lack of awareness of Easter Season texts and gathering with the Sunday assembly
Neophytes as sponsors or catechists
“Period of pre-catechumenate also arid; we need more reflection and discussion on the nature of these periods.”

Combined Rites

Combine rites of initiation/reception at Easter Vigil
CDW decision to not permit Rite of Reception at Easter Vigil (June 20, 1986)
While they do have pastoral value, 77% of parishes celebrate combined rites “with abandon”
See NS 31, 32, 33, 2

Proper Ministers

Deacons celebrating initiation Rites?
Delegation for confirmation of uncatechized Catholics

Confusion about the Anointing before Baptism

RCIA 33.7 and NS 16 not done at Easter Vigil in USA; see RCIA 216 and 228
Particular law for USA not in harmony with Roman Missal, Easter Vigil, no. 48
Does confirmation supersede the post-baptismal anointing
Do the drafters assume more frequent anointing during the Catechumenate Period?

U.S. Adaptations in the revised rite (not in the *editio typica*)

Will the Bishops ask for them?
Will we retain current editorial changes, e.g., ordering of the paragraphs, inclusion of outlines

CATECHETICAL CONCERNS

“We tend to become slaves to our systems instead of developing systems that reflect our values and beliefs.”
- Father Ron Lewinski

Duration of the Formation Process

75% say formation is accomplished in nine months
Less than one liturgical year for catechumenate period -- “the nine-month program”
Continuing use of the school year model
Few parishes using a year-round process
“nine months and done” programming; not ongoing;
75% don’t do a multi-year cycle [year round?]
Turner—“credits transfer” some type of formation before formation

Catechism as primary source for catechesis, only 15% lectionary-based

“Accommodated to the liturgical year” includes presidential prayers, Office of Readings, and seasonal devotions
So many parishes use CCC –cannot be mutually exclusive
Strong doctrinal focus at the expense of Scriptural/lectionary basis of formation
Doctrine/dogma resources during catechumenate/ adult catechism
Is there attention paid to conversion to Christ
Not a larger connection between Lectionary and Catechesis
“The formation process should lead to holiness and a deeper spiritual life: the prominence of CCC/adult catechism as formation tools seems to focus on doctrinal teaching.”
Catechism is based on the Creed – a fine source of catechesis
Does this imply a lack of liturgical catechesis through the liturgical year?
Lectionary/rites are primary source of catechesis.
What approved resources were used? How were resources used?
“CCC seems too deep for an inquirer or catechumen.”
Continued focus on facts and a step-by-step curriculum
Still mystagogy (as a method and a period) is lacking; even Lent used for catechesis.
Is there a variance between small parishes and large parishes?

I am surprised that the lectionary is used less frequently than catechisms and that celebrations of the word are also at a low usage. Yet Bible study appears in the mystagogy! I am deeply concerned that this is still seen as a program and not a process deepening a living relationship with Christ, with the liturgical calendar as the curriculum (Rev. Robert Kennedy).

Ignoring Paragraph 75

Focused only on pedagogy; “Classes”
Learning about the faith/doctrine rather than understanding par #75 as four equally important elements in the process of conversion
Adult formation principles are lacking; too much classroom, too little rite
Clear choice of instruction rather than formation

Catechesis for Children

Children’s participation in the catechetical process—both those baptized as infants and those of catechetical age
Need training of teams for RCIA and Children
Not enough formation/resources for children

On the finding that 64% of the children of catechetical age are being prepared for baptism in less than one year, Father Ron Lewinski noted that “we cannot arbitrarily plan to foster conversion, catechize, teach prayer, and form young people as missionary disciples in nine months.”

Who is catechizing?

22% of neophytes offer catechetical instruction the next year
Neophytes drafted as catechists, channeled into RCIA teams
Putting neophytes in RCIA leadership too soon

Lack of Post-Baptismal Catechesis

21% have no mystagogy
5% do mystagogy for a year
Lack of mystagogical formation, ongoing pastoral support
Do we join RCIA instead of the parish?
“No Mystagogy in 20% of parishes – which leads one to question what readings and orations they are using during the Easter season.”
Difficulties with mystagogical catechesis reflects our diocesan practices post-confirmation
Only 25% of sponsors engaged in outreach

60% do not offer Celebrations of the word

Does this imply no dismissal?
So little use of celebrations of the word. Did they understand the question?
Concerned about small percentage of breaking open the word (Bishop Seitz)

Who's in the catechetical sessions?

- 13% include Catholics in process with catechumens
- 94% mixed baptized with unbaptized for instruction
- RCIA is never a “refresher course” for practicing Catholics
- Lack of sorting fish...lack of understanding of baptism and its impact on practice
- Mixing catechumens, candidates, and children in parish when you lack resources
- Children's formation as part of Religious Ed program
- Adult confirmation combined with catechumenate

Lack of interviews

- Substituting checked boxes for a real discernment process
- Lack of effective and regular interviews leads to poor discernment

FORMATION CONCERNS

“The disconnect of the liturgy to catechesis is probably due to the poor formation of clergy and lay leaders.”

The Rites of Christian Initiation are not adequately taught in seminary formation

The RCIA is rarely addressed in deacon formation

Foreign-born clergy are not well-schooled in these rites, so they choose to see them as optional or unnecessary. This affects pastoral practice, especially in the Western United States.

“The survey should have asked how many RCIA ministers have actually read the RCIA text!”

Priests do not seem to know what to do in the process of initiating children of catechetical age. This encompasses canonical, liturgical, and catechetical aspects.

At the diocesan level, there seems to be an increasing approach to RCIA as a catechetical rather than a liturgical ministry of the Church.

There are limited formation opportunities for parish RCIA teams.

Everyone is scrambling to come up with the “best” approach to bring people to the faith – Does this confusion arise from the tension between catechetical and ritual aspects of RCIA?

PASTORAL CONCERNS

Still, the richness of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is so inconsistently implemented.

Inadequate formation of children seeking full initiation or reception.

Implementation varies in small vs. large parishes, depending on personnel and resources.

Still a lack of respect for the sacramental status of baptized Catholic and those baptized in other Christian Communities.

Lack of adequate interviews, especially when they do not identify irregular marriages.

We need to engage our youth and a team approach aids that.

The survey seems to indicate that inquiry isn't really evangelization, but rather that individuals have already made up their mind before they arrived. Does this mean we just "sit in church and wait?"

There are still priests giving private instruction.

Not all pastors are involved in the formation process.

High percentage of baptized Christians who complete initiation at Easter Vigil instead of welcoming them within the Sunday assembly all through the year.

Actually surprised at how many parishes surveyed use RCIA teams and volunteers.

The lack of an effective, informal, and meaningful pre-catechumenate -- how few offered regular hospitality and welcome to inquirers.

Surprised at the confusion regarding adult confirmation "classes" versus reception of baptized, but uncatechized adults (those baptized in other traditions)

Rites used as "commencement steps" after knowledge transferred, instead of hearts transformed. This certainly affects the retention rate of our new Catholics.

NATIONAL STATUTES ON THE CATECHUMENATE

On October 3, 2014, the participants at the FDLC national meeting conducted a systematic review of the thirty-seven national statutes. They were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What should be affirmed in the current National Statutes? That is, what is working and therefore should be retained?
2. What difficulties have been encountered in implementing the current National Statutes that recommend modifications to the norms?
3. Based on your experience implementing the current National Statutes, what is missing? What guidance should be added to the Statutes to better assist the dioceses of the United States?

A summary of their answers follow.

REGARDING THE NATIONAL STATUTES, IN GENERAL

Omissions

- Statutes were written in 1986, two years before implementation of the 1988 rite; parish experiences will now better inform their effectiveness.
- The statutes lacks clear instruction on marriage issues
- In general, the statutes lack treatment of multi-cultural issues
- A revised edition would benefit from cross references to RCIA text, relevant canons

Pastoral Sensitivities

- Parishes would benefit from pastoral notes in addition to laws; rationales in addition to rules
- Values expressed in the RCIA may not be showing up strongly enough in the Statutes; i.e., why this is done this way.
- Perhaps a “commentary” similar to codes of Canon Law
- How might each period look in a small rural parish vs. a large, urban parish? Similar, we hope.
- Affirm the role of the parish assembly.
- Specific mention of proper minister(s) at each rite.

Editorial Changes

- Organize the statutes in harmony with the RCIA
- Separate statutes for non-baptized, baptized
- Move to the front of the book
- Perhaps place USA adaptations within the text, e.g. “in the dioceses of the USA...”
- Perhaps incorporate the statutes into the introduction(s) to the RCIA chapters

Terminology

- Please use “process” instead of “program” throughout
- Though it is a traditional term, the use of “candidates” for inquires/catechumens/elect is confusing.

NS 1 PRE-CATECHUMENATE

NS 1; RCIA 36, 37, 38, 39, 42-43

Affirmed

- This period is never to be omitted (RCIA 36)
- Informal, evangelizing
- Affirmed the concepts, but needs editing.

Difficulties

- Confusion of terms (candidates, catechumens, elect, etc.) used for different persons at different times
- “Should” more than must
- Reception sounds like a rite
- “Informal” may mean unimportant to some cultures

What’s missing? What should be added?

Content of this period

- Focus on Christ
- This period is rightfully called Period of Evangelization and the Pre-Catechumenate
- Focus on basic evangelization, not “meetings”
- Too often a rush to start “teaching” – should name God’s invitation thru life experience
- Enriched with experiences of prayer and word
- Inquirer’s questions form basis of content; not a time to have a prepared syllabus
- Emphasize that this is not a doctrine class

Advice for Parish Teams

- These statutes might emphasize what we should do, not what is not done
- Need a process to form and train inquiry teams; how to help inquirers verbalize their thinking
- More on discernment – first stirrings of faith, prompted by God to inquire
- Presume nothing
- One size does not fit all
- Do not anticipate a decision; set no dates on calendar
- Advice for multi-cultural parish realities

Prayer options

- Perhaps add options for simple prayer services in the RCIA text
- Clarify informal prayer service

Duration of this period

- May be brief or long, depending on knowledge of Christ and incidental formation before they approached the parish
- No fixed dates on calendar; open-ended, ongoing, not one session
- Not reduced to an interview

NS 2-7 CATECHUMENATE

RCIA 44-46, 75, 81-89, 90, 95, 98, 104, 106, 119, 120, 157-162, 434, 186, 505, 506; Canons 851.1 and 865.1

Affirmed

- Formation in the catechumenate period should be one year in length in harmony with the liturgical year (6).
- Catechumens should be integrated into a parish setting (even if formation takes place elsewhere) (2). Need to specify that initiation takes place in the parish as opposed to other “centers” (religious or otherwise); the catechumens need to be developing a relationship with the parish assembly and on the Lord’s Day particularly
- All references to ecumenical sensitivity
- Formation must be comprehensive, not merely doctrinal (RCIA 75)

Pastoral Situations

- The meeting for the catechumenal sessions can rival the Lord’s Day for individuals
- How to get those in that catechumenal community to bond with the larger parish
- Need to specify proper ministers of rites proper to the catechumenate
- Forming them in the rhythm of the Lord’s Day as the pulse-point of the Christian week
- These statutes do not address the reality of those community who regularly must celebrate Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest
- No mention of family realities, e.g. children of various ages, sacramental status, etc.
- Still faced with the unfortunate reality of “private instruction” by priests
- There are no references to the role of sponsors in this section (nor other sections of the National Statutes) (RCIA 80)

Clarifications/Additions/ Corrections

Stress the importance of the celebration of the rites during this period

- they are not optional, nor unimportant
- Dismissals
- Celebration of the Word
- Minor exorcisms and blessings
- Presentations of Lord’s Prayer and Creed (if not done in Period of Purification and Enlightenment)

NS 2 – use of “convert” reserved for those converted from unbelief to belief

- Strike “convert” even for the non-Baptized (no. 2)

NS 3 -- elements of catechumenal formation may be appropriate for others who are not catechumens

- Distinguish formation needs as well as sacramental status
- See the French model for this formation
- Confuses the issue of formation
- Combined rites muddies the issue of formation, catechesis

- Move this statute to section on baptized/uncatechized Catholics or those seeking full communion with the Church

NS 4 – introduced into a parish community from the beginning

- Address the needs of those in the military, in prison
- Emphasize parish for those on college campuses
- Size of parish may impact effectiveness; methodology
- Gradual integration into the Christian community motivates them to love and serve others
- What would catechesis in a non-parochial setting look like?

NS 5 – additional rites added to the *Rite of Acceptance* determined by the diocesan bishop

- Remove this statute, RCIA 34 covers it

NS 6 -- Period of Catechumenate [with Period of Purification and Enlightenment] should extend for at least one year...formation, instruction, and probation...

- More should be said about “discernment” more than a time period
- Remove the word “ordinarily”
- Give reasons for the importance of this duration; the fullness of the liturgical year
- No enforcement of this statute; what are allowable exceptions
- “Probation” sounds punitive
- Recording the date of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens gives basis to one year of formation.

NS 7 – thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic Doctrine and moral life, aided by approved catechetical texts...

- Stress lectionary-based as the guiding principle of formation
- “approved catechetical texts “ implies doctrine only
- Approved by whom – the local ordinary?
- Stress formation in the Christian way of life; formation not information
- Rewrite this statute to echo RCIA 75, don’t just add it parenthetically
- Highlight the Creed, Lectionary/Sacred Scripture , and liturgical texts as basis for formation
- Discipleship as well as doctrine
- Little guidance for the formation of children of catechetical age
- Throughout the Rite is mentioned “accommodated to the liturgical year”, but never explained why. This needs to be better enunciated.

NS 8-10 CATECHUMENS

RCIA 46-47, 48-74; 81-89, 90-117; Canons 206, 788, 851.1 and 865.1, 1183

Affirm

- Encourage celebration of the rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate
- This is a life-long process
- The Church's affection for her catechumens

Difficulties/ Changes

- Address family realities, e.g. adults catechumens who want their infants baptized
- Address issue of discernment and possible delay
- Move National Statute 2 to this section

What's missing?/ Additions

- Clarify how to record the names of those accepted into the Order of Catechumens
- Clarify – What would prohibit someone from participating in the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens?
- What obstacles would prevent a person from participating in the Rite of Election?
- Place specific solutions in a pastoral companion or pastoral introduction
- NS 8 – Blessings
 - Suggest that 8b become the first sentence of NS 9
 - While one usually requests a blessing, could 8a be rewritten to read that the parish ministers should frequently use blessings...”?
 - Seek blessings and other suffrages (better define suffrages for parish staffs)
- NS-9 -- Catechumens and Funerals
 - Citations in Order of Christian Funerals; funeral liturgy outside Mass
- NS 10 – Catechumens and Marriage Rite
 - add specific canon(s)
 - Order of Celebrating Matrimony (revised)
- “Household of Christ” – names specific rites which may be used
- Don't allude to non-catechumens here

NS 11-13 PROPER MINISTERS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

NS 11, 12, 13, 14, 28, 29, 35; Canons 883.2, 884, 885.2, 887, 863; RCIA 12, 43, 85, 98, 145, 121

Affirmed

- Strongly affirmed -- The elect, both adults and children of catechetical age, are to receive all three sacraments of Initiation in a single Eucharistic celebration (NS 14)
- Strongly affirmed – Children of catechetical age should receive all three sacraments of initiation; confirmation is to be celebrated before Eucharist; and the confirmation is never to be delayed until they “make it with their class.”
- Strongly affirmed – the priest who receives a candidate into full communion receives from the law itself the faculty to confirm and is obliged to use it (Canon 883.2, Canon 885.2, and NS 35)
- Strongly affirmed – The confirmation of candidates for reception should not be deferred nor should they be admitted to the eucharist until they have been confirmed (NS 35)
- A bishop who wishes to confirm should also reserve the Rite of Reception or baptism to himself (NS 35, NS 13, canon 863)
- NS 11 – Bishop presides at the Rite of Election
- A deacon is prohibited from administering baptism to adults and children of catechetical age because he cannot confirm
- The priest who baptizes must confirm. If the numbers are large, the pastor may be assisted by other priests, but the same priest who baptizes should also confirm.
- The National Statutes are in harmony with Canon Law and liturgical law
- Affirm the role of the Bishop in moderating Mystagogy and the role of his pastors in celebrating fully the Masses of Easter Season, with an appreciation of the readings, orations, and homilies which are aimed at the neophytes and all the baptized.

Clarifications/Difficulties

- Identify all the proper ministers of each of the rites in the RCIA process
- Better define a priest who does not exercise a pastoral office
- Make it easier for pastors to confirm Catholics who simply missed the usual timeline
- Clarify the times when a priest may confirm a baptized Catholic (NS 28-29)
- When an apostate returns to the faith
- When a baptized Catholic was instructed in a non-Catholic religion through no fault of their own
- “But not in the case of a baptized Catholic who... never put the faith into practice” -- emphasize that a priest must receive delegation to confirm a baptized Catholic (NS 29, canon 842.2, 884.1)
- Bishops should not give “dispensation” from these national statutes to postpone confirmation
- Break apart NS 35 in order to make its provisions clearer
- NS 12 – strike the word “program”

NS 14-17 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

NS 14, 15, 16, 17; CIGI 25; RCIA 185-205; 207-208; RCIA 566-594; Canons 842, 851, 854, 856, 865, 866, 869, 872

Affirmed

- Strongly affirmed -- The elect, both adults and children of catechetical age, are to receive all three sacraments of Initiation in a single Eucharistic celebration (NS 14)
- Strongly affirmed—Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament and, therefore, is preferred (NS 15)

Changes/ Difficulties

NS 14 -- Adults and Children of catechetical age must receive all three sacraments of initiation at a single celebration

- “if necessary” should be removed or changed; maybe should say “in exceptional circumstances” or specify when another appropriate time might be [outside Easter Vigil]
- Use the term “Elect” or “catechumens” here
- Is emphasis in no. 14 children and adults in one celebration, or that the order of celebration is to be followed regardless of age
- “interrelation or coalescence” seems too much (just “unity”)
- See contradiction in RCIA 256 (Turner)

NS 15 -- Paschal Fast of Good Friday and Holy Saturday (cf, Canon 1251, SC 110)

- “Elect” not “candidates for initiation” -- confusing terminology at end of Lent
- No. 15 difference between paschal fast and Lenten fast
- Delete no. 15 or cross reference to RCIA 185
- “Those who assist them” is not in the rite

NS 16 - Oil of Catechumens omitted at Easter Vigil

- Anointing with Oil of Catechumens is not mentioned in initiation for adults, but it is for children
- helpful to tie all of mention of anointings together (cross-referenced to RCIA 33.7)
- Use of oil of catechumens differs from the Roman Missal (see Easter Vigil, 48)
- Add a positive statement about why this is done earlier during the Catechumenate Period (RCIA 98-101)

NS 17 -- Baptism by immersion is the fuller sign of the sacrament, preferred

- Better define and distinguish among immersion, infusion, submersion, and pouring
- Strengthen preference for immersion
- Add references to RCIA 226; Built of Living Stones (nos. 66-69); See also CIGI (nos. 22, 25)
- Concern about full immersion because not all church’s are set up for this and to create a full immersion can be makeshift; perhaps a caveat for churches which don’t have a font which can accommodate full immersion
- Why is the word “adult” even there when we’re supposed to be initiating everyone this way
- Refer to practices in the Early Church
- Strike last sentence? It may have been necessary in 1986.

What's missing?

- Offer pastoral guidance on why a teen should receive all three sacraments and not defer confirmation until “he makes it with his class.”
- Define a “serious” reason to defer confirmation
- How could catechists assist in the rites?
- Emphasize the Preparation Rites for Holy Saturday morning (not “rehearsals”)

NS 18-19 CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

NS 6, 14, 18, 19; RCIA 252-259, 260, 261; Canon 852.1;

Affirmed

- Strongly affirm -- Reception of all three sacraments of initiation for children of catechetical age
- Paragraph 18—general pattern of ordinary catechumenate
- Reception of sacraments of initiation with adults
- NS 19 affirms sequence of initiation sacraments

Difficulties

- Concerned about dioceses withholding full initiation for this group.
- Should be clearer re: what we mean by “age of reason”; including those with disabilities; not so much an age range, but more clarity
- “rite of baptism for children” is a confusing title
- Places where “should” needs to be stronger “ought to be” or “must be”
- Need more formation on restored order of sacraments – see models from Bishops Aquila, Cooney, Untener

National Statute 18

- Remove “should” – use “must” or “are to” receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist; “should is too equivocal
- “As far as possible” needs to be clarified
- Strengthen -- that children should celebrate the rites with adults and not in a separate celebration
- Appropriate adaptations not defined
- Reference RCIA 257

National Statute 19

- Clarify beginning of no. 19 to follow the general pattern of the adult catechumenate
- Share catechetical instruction with baptized children preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist; No. 19:
- “catechetical instruction” seems to give an “out”, better to say “catechesis”
- Careful distinction of sacramental status

Omissions/ Proposed Additions

- Whole section on the children's catechumenate should be moved up to follow no. 10 to show similarities
- More clarification on the age of reason
- Stress continued formation with peers
- Discernment -- clarify requirements to be elected to sacraments; what should staff look for?
- Children may require a longer period of formation; year-long especially applies here but will fall victim to school year mentality (cf. RCIA 253)
- Uniform age of confirmation in USA?
- Add similar paragraphs about baptized children who are to be received into full communion
- RCIA 256—last sentence is being used to delay confirmation to a later age, but actually assumed earlier confirmation of the Catholic peers
- Varied diocesan practices for confirmation and how the children should be treated; including the relationship to religious education; does this differ in comparison to other children; how to resolve tension among the peers (my son has to wait, but yours gets confirmed...)
- We have grown in our understanding of the rites with children. Yet adapted and optional use of these rites tend to be watered down and convoluted. Children benefit from celebrating the rites as they are outlined in the adult rites. Texts may be adapted, but the symbols and fullness of rites speak across the ages.

Family Issues

- Provide some pastoral guidelines on families who have children of mixed ages (some below catechetical age)
- Make mention of role of godparents, sponsors, mentor families
- Catechesis needed for parents – sacraments are not rites of passage
- Parental preferences are not always well informed
- Children are on their own journey; no need to rush to initiate them with parents
- Could add some pastoral notes about learning abilities or disabilities of children

NS 20-21 ABBREVIATED CATECHUMENATE

NS 20-21; RCIA 331-339; Canon 851.1, 865, 866

Affirmed

- Affirm its use only in exceptional circumstances and only with the permission of the bishop
- Affirm no. 20 because of military and detention centers (including those who could be deported), homebound

Difficulties

- Following section on mystagogy might be section “particular circumstances” that would include: abbreviate catechumenate, uncatechized Catholics, and reception into full communion [cf. “Part II” of RCIA]
- Giving it its own headline is too much; should emphasize its limited nature
- “abbreviated” and “substantial” is difficult to reconcile

National Statute 20

- seems to repeat what is in RCIA 331 and 332

National Statutes 21

- Use term: “catechumens” or “elect”
- 18-21: no. 256 is sometimes used to delay the proper order of the sacraments (wrongfully citing “exceptional circumstances”)

What’s missing

- A clear delineation of exceptional circumstances may be helpful

NS 22-24 MYSTAGOGY

NS 4, 22, 23, 24; RCIA 244-251

Affirmed

Strongly affirm that the period of post-baptismal catechesis is essential

Strongly affirm that the liturgical texts of the Sundays of the Easter Season are key

Strongly affirm the role of the homily based upon the readings and orations of those liturgies

Strongly affirm that mystagogy should deepen an awareness of the mysteries of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, especially Eucharist

Strongly affirm the role of the Bishop in this period

Difficulties

National Statute 22

- Drop “should”
- Principle liturgy is confusing in this text, but important to gather as a body
- Perpetuates the neophytes as a separate group
- In addition to special, include other signs such as special clothing (*Dominica in albis*)

National Statute 23

- Allude to role of godparents in deepening the mystery of sacraments
- Allude to RCIA 244-251

National Statute 24

- Not a ‘program’ –it’s the lived experience of the neophyte
- Allude to resources and activities in RCIA 244 [parallel to RCIA 75]

What’s missing

- Make a distinction between period of mystagogy versus style of mystagogical formation
- The assembly’s role is ongoing pastoral support; articulate better the assembly’s role; and this would be a good place to emphasize that
- Change heading “mystagogy” to what’s in the rite “Period of post baptismal catechesis (mystagogy)”; reference 244-247)
- This is not a time to introduce the neophytes to “parish activities” –this should have been done in the catechumenate
- “My Mystagogy” is a problem because the period is ill defined
- Alert to what mystagogy is not – including joining the RCIA team as catechist
- Support the idea of an anniversary Mass

NS 25-29 UNCATECHIZED ADULT CATHOLICS

NS 25, 26, 27, 28, 29; Canons 842.2, 883.2, 884.1

Affirmed

- That uncatechized adult Catholics need pastoral care
- That their baptismal status needs to be respected and rites distinguished
- NS 29 respects the sequence of the sacraments of initiation

Difficulties

National Statute 25

- Needs stronger definition of uncatechized
- Is not just a matter of whether they have received First Communion
- Need some guidelines for discernment here
- differentiate adult confirmation programs from RCIA

National Statute 26

- RCIA 409 is related to NS 26; these two are in conflict with each other. One says “high point”; other says “not generally recommended”; recommend in favor of 409.
- Recommend strongly that these sacraments be celebrated at Sunday Masses and not at Easter Vigil with proper delegation from Bishop
- The *editio typica* seems to say that uncatechized adults do appropriately receive confirmation at the Vigil

National Statute 27

- RCIA 482 refers to “according to his/her own conscience” for reconciliation; should this be added here?
- Good to stress frequent celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation

National Statutes 28 and 29

- When priest has permission to confirm, he can do “a” and “b, but needs clarification on “c”
- Place NS 28c in NS 29
- What happens if delegation is not granted? What are the other scenarios for the celebration of Eucharist and Confirmation?
- Canonically more should be said about (marriages, tribunals)
- How do we “readmit” someone who was not admitted
- Does lack of proper delegation affect validity/licity?
- Put 28 and 29 in “Proper Ministers” section?

Missing

- Need clarity of definition of catechized – this is not a matter of classes or testing but of careful discernment of his/her knowledge of Jesus Christ and his/her living a Christian life
- Basic knowledge of Catholic teaching regarding morals, Scripture, spirituality, doctrine
- Can there “elements of catechetical formation” similar to those baptized in other Christian communities (see NS 30-31), e.g., penitential rite. Others are wholly inappropriate, e.g., Scrutinies, Presentations
- What rites are recommended? See conflict between NS 25 and RCIA 407.
- “Should we be devising fresh ways to catechize Catholics?”
- This section makes no mention/distinction for children who are baptized, uncatechized Catholics

NS 30-37 RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION

NS 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37; RCIA 400-405, 482, 562-565; Canons 883.2; 845.2, 869, 876

Affirmed

Strongly affirmed – that the reception of Baptized Christians may take place at Sunday Eucharist

Strongly affirmed—that ecumenical sensitivities are to be respected (NS 34)

Strongly affirmed – that the confirmation of those who have been received “should not be deferred nor should they be admitted to the eucharist until they are confirmed” (NS 35).

Strongly affirmed – that “the priest receives from the law itself the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it” (NS 35).

Strongly affirmed --that the readiness of candidates should be discerned on an individual basis and that those who have lived a Christian life should receive catechesis as necessary and not be asked to “undergo a full program parallel to the catechuminate” (NS 31)

Strongly affirmed -- That conditional baptisms are always celebrated privately and never at Sunday Mass nor the Easter Vigil!

Difficulties

National Statute 31

- Language is unclear; what are the best practices for these appropriate rites
- No. 30-31 “should” should be replaced... “must”?
- Should the last sentence be its own statute and thus make it stronger
- “program” should be replaced with “process”
- “probation” should be replaced with “discernment” or “preparatory period”
- Perhaps begin 31 with the last sentence
- Add a note about the dismissal of the candidates from the Sunday assembly? It is not proper/necessary to do so.

National Statute 32

- What does “if they have not been confirmed” refer to?
- The confirmation of Orthodox Christians is respected, but they would be coming into the parallel Catholic Rite *sui juris*.
- A listing of any valid confirmations may be helpful
- Should “catechumenal formation” actually read “catechetical formation”

National Statute 33

- Support this statute and its ecumenical sensitivities
- NS 34 seems to undercut NS 33
- Contrast NS 33 and NS 34 with RCIA 409, 562, 563

National Statute 34

- This statute encourages combined rites and, therefore, combined catechesis
- It correctly identifies the combined rite; add RCIA number
- “The celebration of their reception at the Easter Vigil provides the candidates with a privileged opportunity to recall and reaffirm their own baptism, ‘the sacramental bond of unity [and] foundation of communion between (sic.) all Christians’ (RCIA 563).
- Since so many parishes are “doing it all” at the Vigil, add specific commentary on how this is to be done (but encourage a separate Sunday)

National Statute 35

- This statute is very well written and often quoted. Breaking it apart might give emphasis to each of its important elements.

National Statute 36

- RCIA 482 does not mandate, but refers to “according to his or her own conscience.”

National Statute 37

- Encourage early investigation into sacramental status
- What options for investigation must be exhausted?
- “If after serious investigation, still reasonable and prudent doubt, then why wouldn’t better response be to put them into the catechumenate?”
- Each diocesan bishop is to determine the proper form for this rite; can we offer a sample? [Lansing]

Missing

- Need a paragraph similar to NS 1 which describes welcome and discernment for baptized Christians
- Clarification needed about children of catechetical age and what we need to be doing with them
- What do we do with kids who are 11 or 12, baptized in another tradition; can this be clarified in the statutes; because often no rite of reception done, but only a profession of faith
- What catechesis and rites are appropriate for a baptized Christian below catechetical age, whose parents are coming into the Church?
- Need formation of clergy on matters pertaining to the formation and reception of baptized Christians
- Sometimes we have the situation of catechized “cultural Catholics” who are not baptized
- Important for those coming into full communion to experience the Church not as congregational but as centered around the Bishop in the cathedral

NEXT STEPS

What can/will the members of the FDLC do to promote formation and to provide leadership in the authentic implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults?

FORMATION

- Have regional resource teams for the RCIA around the country who could be available within the region more easily
- Put together a practical workshop of this FDLC meeting that could tour the country
- Local/regional resource teams with resources and workshops
- Maybe special attention focused on methods to establish a year-round catechumenate in the parish or parish cluster
- Be resources to each other
- Make it as easy as possible for dioceses to provide good, ongoing formation for pastors (PLC, RCIA Directors)
- FDLC needs to pick up where Forum left off
- Prepare best resources/workshops (similar to Roman Missal and Marriage workshops)
- Encourage ongoing certification of catechumenal ministers through local liturgical ministers institute coordinated by Alliance
- Prepare clergy formation programs for diocesan offices, seminaries, or presbyteral convocations

PUBLICATIONS/ FREE RESOURCES

- Develop a pastoral companion to the RITE b/c there are so many questions
- Need more resources for Spanish; the rites are there, but not the practical things
- A pastoral companion that fleshes out strategies for the RCIA by Pastoral Formation Committee
- Pastoral companions to the Rites –translate, so can be used in bi-lingual groups –at least Spanish, but Vietnamese, Korean, Igbo, and others would be helpful.
- Publish an article written by a priest for his brother priests
- Suggest, encourage, promote etc. a pastoral companion to the RCIA that will go into details that are important, but do not belong in the list of statutes
- Compile a list of resources for RCIA teams
- A synopsis of the RCIA and applicable law for Bishops and priests
- Could we create a table that lists difficult cases we deal with and a quick answer with reference to the fuller explanation in the rite and statutes?
- Publish the talks of PT, RL, KWI
- We need two documents –Statutes for the Catechumenate; Guideline for Uncatechized Catholics and the Reception into Full Communion
- From this year's talks, create podcasts for the future
- Provide instructional material/resources for priests, deacons, and catechists on how to form RCIA teams
- Provide "pastoral notes" on experiences, difficulties, and case histories, best practice
- Ensure that everything is produced in two languages (English/Spanish)
- Develop a kit for formation
- Share the creative adaptations that meet the requirements yet respond to local culture and circumstances. There must be many. Sharing this will be helpful.
- Prepare and extensive list/resource materials which list/describe best practices of the initiation process with adults and children of catechetical age; perhaps this could be an online resource that gets continually updated

FDLC STRUCTURE

- Special interest section on the FDLC website
- Blog/Facebook page for sharing comments, a forum to meet
- Create a subsection for catechumenal teams; special membership
- Speakers Bureau of FDLC members /Forum Team for various audiences

COLLABORATIONS

- Ask the US Bishops to write a pastoral letter on the RCIA
- Continue work with the BCDW in reformulation of the National Statutes
- Develop, authorize multi-cultural resource(s) for realistic implementation in different cultural communities; invite Bishops and priests to write, reflect
- Start networking for catechumenal teams in the parishes
- Could FDLC collaborate with other to create a new national group? (Sherman)
- Reach out to all other dioceses in region to see what Christian initiation looks like; how can we model, promote, and share best practices?
- Harness the expertise of former Forum team members
- Continue collaboration with diocesan catechetical office personnel. It was excellent of you to invite us into this conversation. Greatly appreciated! May God bless you!
- Could FDLC work toward a collaborative model with other organizations, then FDLC handle the liturgical rites, and not take on the entire issue
- How can we better support our bishops and communicate the process better to the priests

RITUAL

- Promote the vision of the Rite of Christian Initiation back in our diocese
- Implement proper sequencing of the Sacraments of Initiation for Catholics of all ages.
- Separate catechumens and candidates
- Only fully initiate at Easter Vigil
- The RCIA should be its own book; the rites for candidates in a separate book
- Eliminate the combined rites
- Call to Continuing conversion should be in a parish, but perhaps add a bi-annual celebration of baptism/Mass of Christian Unity to meet and greet soon to be or just received
- How can we address issues of the rites in parishes where there is no Sunday Eucharist, especially in remote villages (Alaska)?
- Need to bring emphasis to NS #6—length of formation should be at least one year.
- Raise the issue of restored order. It would help resolve several of the sticky issues and bring our catechetical and liturgical procedures more in sync.
- Editorial change— statutes should harmonize with the structure of the RCIA.
- Make clear where adaptations can be made; make clear when they cannot be made.