



St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

5323 East County Road 462

Wildwood, FL 34785

(352) 330-0220

RCIA: Glossary of Common Terms

BOOK OF THE ELECT: The book the Catechumens for election sign at the Rite of Sending in their parish. This book is presented to the bishop at the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent. From there they are sent to the Easter sacraments.

CANDIDATE: Generally anyone preparing to become a Catholic, but the term is often used more specifically for a person baptized in another Christian tradition, who is preparing for reception into full communion of the Roman Catholic Church.

CANON LAW: The body of law that governs church practice and protects the rights and privileges of individuals and the community.

CATECHESIS: The instruction and spiritual formation of catechumens, neophytes and candidates.

CATECHUMEN: An unbaptized person who is seeking initiation into the church and who has been accepted into the order of catechumens.

CATECHUMENATE: The process by which the Catholic Church brings unbaptized children and adults to Christian initiation. It is also the period of time during which an unbaptized person prepares for Christian initiation.

CHRISM: A combination of oil and sweet balsam or perfume that is mixed and consecrated by the bishop and used to anoint newly baptized people and newly ordained priests and bishops. Chrism is also used in the consecration of churches and altars.

DOCTRINE: The formal teachings of the church.

ELECT: Catechumens who have been found ready by the community of faith to take part in the next celebration of the sacraments of initiation.

ELECTION: The process of selecting those catechumens who are considered ready to take part in the next celebration of the sacraments of initiation. The celebration of the Rite of Election takes place the first Sunday of Lent. The bishop declares in the name of the church that particular catechumens are ready and chosen for the sacraments at Easter. The Book of the Elect is presented to the bishop at this celebration.

ENLIGHTENMENT (or ILLUMINATION or PURIFICATION): The Lenten period during which the elect take part in the final stage of preparation for celebrating the rites of initiation. (Also called *illumination and purification*.)

ENROLLMENT: The rite of inscribing into the Book of the Elect the names of those catechumens elected to take part in the next celebration of the sacraments of initiation. It is usually done at the Rite of Sending in the parish, although it can be done at the Rite of Election in some dioceses.

EPHPHETHA: The rite at which the presider touches the ears and the mouth of the elect and prays that they be open to hear and proclaim the word of God in faith. It may be celebrated as part of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

EXORCISMS: Prayers for deliverance from the powers of evil and for the reception of the gifts of the Lord, especially the Holy Spirit. Exorcisms are part of the rites of scrutiny.

EVANGELIZATION: The activity by which the church proclaims the gospel in word and in deed. It is also the period during which the inquirers prepare for the catechumenate.

FASTING: A form of sacrifice in which faithful Christians join with the suffering and death of Jesus by foregoing food for a specific period of time. On Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday Catholics are obliged to fast in a modified way. Many Christians fast from Holy Thursday evening until after the Easter Vigil in anticipation of the Lord's resurrection.

GODPARENT(S): The person who will accompany the catechumen on his/her journey through the rites and periods of the catechumenate through the time of Mystagogy (the time after Easter). The sponsor is selected by the catechumen with the approval of the pastor.

IMMERSION: Baptism in which the person is partially or entirely submerged in the baptismal waters.

INFUSION: Baptism by pouring water over the head of the person.

INITIATION: The process by which a person enters the faith life of the church. It extends from the person's first inquiry through the completion of Mystagogy.

INQUIRERS: Persons who sincerely seek to learn about the faith of the church.

LECTIONARY: A book containing the assigned scripture readings for the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments.

MYSTAGOGY (MYSTAGOGIA): The period of time following initiation, usually the Easter season, which focuses on the meaning and experience of the mysteries of baptismal faith.

NEOPHYTE: Newly baptized person who is in the final period of Christian initiation, Mystagogy.

OIL OF CATECHUMENS: The blessed oil used in anointing catechumens as a sign of their need for and God's offer of strength in overcoming all opposition to the faith they will profess throughout their lives.

PASCHAL TRIDUUM: The three days from Holy Thursday evening through Easter Sunday during which Christians celebrate the Passover of Israel from slavery to freedom, the Resurrection Passover of Jesus Christ from death to life, our own Passover from sin to grace and the world's Passover from darkness to light.

PERIODS (STAGES): Times of growth in the initiation process: (1) Inquiry or Precatechumenate; (2) Catechumenate; (3) Purification and Enlightenment; (4) Mystagogy.

PRECATECHUMENATE (PRE-CAT): The period of inquiry prior to acceptance into the order of catechumens; the time of initial evangelization.

PRESENTATIONS: The rites during the period of purification and enlightenment through which the church passes on to the elect the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the cherished documents of the church, and the traditions they represent: how Christians believe and pray.

SCRUTINIES: Rites celebrated with the elect, usually at the Sunday liturgy on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent, petitioning for the spirit of repentance, an understanding of sin, and the experience of the true freedom of the children of God.

SPONSORS: Also called Parish companions, persons (from this parish) who accompany the inquirers when they seek acceptance into the order of catechumens and who remain with them as companions during the catechumenate until the rite of election. The candidate may choose to have this person as their sponsor at the Easter services also.