

## RCIA: THE TRIDUUM

### Rites for Holy Saturday

The RCIA does contain specific Rites to be celebrated on Holy Saturday. A number of options are possible for the Elect, including the Recitation of the Creed, the Ephphetha Rite, and the Choosing of a Baptismal Name (RCIA #185-205). Candidates for Full Communion and Confirmation should celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (if not celebrated at some other point during Lent; see RCIA #408 and 482; *National Statutes* #27).

### The Easter Vigil

The order of service varies slightly if the Vigil is celebrated with candidates, catechumens (elect), or both. It is preferable, however, that the reception and confirmation of candidates take place at a Mass different from the Vigil (see *National Statutes* #26). After the homily:

Elect only (RCIA #206-243)	Candidates only (RCIA #473-498)	Elect and Candidates (RCIA #566-594)
1. Baptism 2. Confirmation 3. Renewal of Baptismal Promises and sprinkling with baptismal water 4. Prayer of the Faithful	1. Renewal of Baptismal Promises and sprinkling with baptismal water (at the Vigil this replaces the Creed) 2. Celebration of Reception 3. Celebration of Confirmation 4. Prayer of the Faithful	1. Baptism of the Elect 2. Renewal of Baptismal Promises and sprinkling with baptismal water 3. Celebration of Reception 4. Confirmation of Elect and Candidates 5. Prayer of the Faithful

When the new Missal was published, it was noted that one of the rubrics for the Easter Vigil (#48) mentions the use of the Oil of Catechumens. This contradicted RCIA #33.7, which mentions that in the US anointing with OC at the Vigil is omitted. So what are we to do? The USCCB has now offered this guidance:

Numbers 48 to 53 of the rubrics for the Easter Vigil of the *Missale Romanum* describe the initiation process. As was mentioned before, it is important to closely consult the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults on this matter. Number 48 of the rubrics for the Easter Vigil mentions that after the renunciation and profession of faith “if the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens did not take place beforehand, as part of the immediate preparatory rites, it takes place at this moment.” Of course no. 33 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults points out: “The National Conference of Catholic Bishops approves the omission of the anointing with the oil of catechumens both in the celebration of baptism and in the optional preparation rites for Holy Saturday. Thus, anointing with the oil of catechumens is reserved for use in the period of the catechumenate and in the period of purification and enlightenment, and is not to be included in the purification rites on Holy Saturday or in the celebration of initiation at the Easter Vigil or at another time.”

The norms in the new Missal do not replace the RCIA and National Statutes because universal law does not replace particular law unless it specifically states that it is doing so (canon 20). When the next version of the RCIA (which will be called the *Order* of Christian Initiation of Adults, or OCIA) should definitively address the issue.

Bottom line: catechumens should be anointed with the OC during the catechumenate as called for in the RCIA. Such anointing can be repeated through the period of the catechumenate and the period of purification and enlightenment (Lent); they should *not* take place on Holy Saturday (Preparatory rites) or at the Easter Vigil (celebration of the sacraments of initiation).