



NETWORK NEWS

AUTUMN 2017

Christian Initiation
Australia Network

Words from the Chair

Dear friends,



Welcome to the first edition of *Network News* in 2017. For various factors (we need a new editor) there has been long gap since the last edition.

Network News is the channel for communicating all things Catechumenate around

Australia and with our friends in Aotearoa (NZ). For the communication to be mutual we need to hear from you. What is happening in your RCIA team? Parish? deanery? diocese?

I was present at the one of the first Easter Vigil with catechumens in Australia – Goodna in 1980. The ‘birth’ of the RCIA in Australia was also occurring in the parish of Whyalla Norrie in SA. From those early days – of the ‘RCIA baby’ finding her feet – to growing into ‘mature adulthood’, much has changed, developed, morphed and evolved. New parishes are embarking on the catechumenate journey with gusto and enthusiasm, while some ‘older catechumenate parishes’ are struggling with volunteers, commitment and mission.

The Christian Initiation Australia Network (CIAN) has also had a long history of providing resources, information and conferences to support and promote the Catechumenate. But this also is changing and can only be sustained by the goodwill and dedication of members and dioceses.

At the national conference in Perth, a huge success, three members of the executive had served two consecutive terms (the maximum under our constitution). We are all indebted to their generosity of time, talent and wisdom: Darren McDowell (Chair); Cheryl Rens (Secretary) and Mary McPhee. We are also deeply appreciative for the four members who have joined the executive: Mandy Robinson (Melbourne, Treasurer), Max Nordern (Wollongong), Deacon Michael Moore (Adelaide) and Kate Bell (Palmerston North, Aotearoa).

You will ‘meet’ these four new members of your executive in the pages of this edition.

At our national conference there were five attendees who had come from Aotearoa. The kiwi participants acknowledged the gracious

CONTENTS

<i>Words from the CIAN Chair</i> — Rob Cosgrove	1
<i>Journey to the Source: National Conference — Highlights</i>	3
<i>Online Resources</i> — by Max Nordern	6
<i>Journey towards the Light of Easter</i>	10
<i>Ministry in the RCIA</i> — Paul Turner	9
<i>Meet the team</i> — Stewart, Mandy, Ross, Kate, Michael, Tony and Max ..	14
<i>Celebrating the Scrutinies</i> — UK RCIA Network	16

Christian Initiation Australia Network seeks to support all those who share the vision of the RCIA

hospitality and welcome of the conference and sang a traditional *waiata* or spiritual song of accomplishment 'Te Aroha' ... 'it is love and faith that binds us together in peace'.

It is wonderful to have Kate on the executive and to learn from our sisters and brothers from the land of the long white cloud. The Aotearoa (New Zealand) bishop's conference has published excellent guidelines for parishes implementing the RCIA: *National Policy on the RCIA*.

Check out the link in Kate's article (p 15).

By the time you read this we will be at the end the hearings for Case Study 50 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statistics have been horrendous.

Research shows however that many, many crimes of child abuse go unreported so we know that these numbers are probably far lower than the reported data. And of course numbers never reveal the searing damage that has been caused to the victims (both those survivors and those who have succumbed to death through suicide), their families, friends and faith communities.

I know many of the people reading this have given generously to the ministry of the Church over many, many years. Questions relating to the Royal Commission and reports in the media will no doubt be a topic of conversation amongst Catholics and perhaps even with inquirers, catechumens and candidates. This will indeed be a long period of searching in the wilderness of the Sinai.

The only positive I see on the horizon is the wisdom, humility, integrity and deep insight shown to us by Francis Sullivan (chairperson of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council). His words and actions can be a model for us as we deal with questions and challenges that are put to us. I have also read and heard the words of Dr Maureen Cleary and Dr Neil Ormerod at the Case Study 50 hearing. I have known Neil since my student days and Maureen from her days working in adult faith education with Mons Tony Doherty. Both have significant academic and practical experience of the Church in Australia.

Let us hope and pray that as the Church in Australia prepares for the Plenary Council meeting voices such as those of Francis, Maureen and Neil are heard and listened to.

Despite the horrendous facts and details being revealed at the Royal Commission that affect us and create a sense of disappointment, and even anger, at the way some of our Church members and leaders have behaved, the Spirit is active and ever busy in the lives of people everywhere. Some of these people 'knock on our parish doors'. These inquirers see and desire something well beyond our human frailty; may we continue to welcome them with deep humility and respect.

Rob

PS For a wonderful example of the last paragraph watch Isabelle Kime's 'Good News People' story (5 mins) at www.lentprogram.com/story



WE NEED YOU ... AND YOUR MONEY!

No seriously, we really do! For the last two national conferences we had overseas speakers. While this was wonderful our bank balance has taken a dent! To pay your bi-annual membership fees please [click here](#) (then click button 'Become a member'). If you did not attend the Perth conference you are not a 'paid-up' member.

We also need your time! We desperately need a new editor of this erstwhile publication. Please contact [Rob Cosgrove](#) for more information.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT



Rev Fr Peter Whitely, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Perth, opened the National Conference by first respectfully acknowledging the Noongar-Whadjuk people and welcoming those delegates from the Perth, Geraldton and Bunbury Dioceses and then all those from the Eastern States and New Zealand.

Fr Peter personally shared his own experience in the RCIA Ministry, which began nearly 30 years ago, using the Catholic Inquiry Centre 20 lesson plan. As the demands of RCIA steadily increased, Fr Peter began by establishing a team to assist him to develop the importance of relationship building with those seeking to become Catholic, that extended beyond receiving the Sacraments of Initiation and recognised the ongoing journey of discipleship. The Parish developed an atmosphere of welcome and support through the building of relationships in the RCIA ministry that networked with other parish ministries.

To explain the primacy of faith being nurtured within community, Fr Peter offered an analogy on the importance of receiving the Sacraments of Initiation as more than a mere 'pit-stop' for a quick conversion change, to welcoming people with a 'Rolls-Royce' approach, that is 'more expensive in time and energy, in planning and commitment, Fr Peter in his role as Vicar General misses several aspects of RCIA Parish life and ministry. In particular:

- 'accompanying people on their journey of faith;
- hearing the stories of how God has been leading them and guiding them through their life to this point and seeing the joy they experience in finding answers to the

deep personal questions they have in their hearts.

- hearing their hopes and dreams, their worries and their concerns, their heart yearnings, and the joy of seeing them grow in faith, faith in Jesus and in his Church'.
- The Conference was also pleased to hear Fr Peter's priestly responding to 'celebrating the sacrament of Penance for the first time,' especially 'the peace and relief that comes to them as they welcome the forgiveness of those sins and burdens they have carried for so long'.
- Most importantly, he missed celebrating the 'Sacraments of Initiation, especially if held during the Holy Saturday night Vigil Mass' and witnessing to the catechumens first reception of Holy Communion.

The Very Reverend Fr Tony Chiera, Vicar General of the Bunbury Diocese was the local WA Keynote Speaker, exploring the Conference theme: Journey to the Source. He began by reminding us all that we, in the ministry of RCIA, follow in the footsteps of John the Baptist, always pointing to Christ. We are also blessed with the support of each other.

Many dimensions of the journey were explored, through examples of the 'nitty-gritty' mysteries we encounter in life; remembering those who have taken us to the source, since once we journey to the source, we never come back the same. Journey is written into our spiritual DNA.

Fr Tony offered Scriptural context to the RCIA journey, reminding us of God's navigational plan for Abraham 'Leave your country'!!! (Gen 12:1) We also by faith, like Abraham and Sarah, obey the call to set out in the ministry of RCIA, often not knowing where we are going. Trusting God is the compass of our faith. Fr Tony then related us to Mary's 'yes', which began her journey of obedience that included many highs and lows of human emotion, which we too often experience through the initiation process. Hope fuels our journey.

Fr Tony asked: Where does the journey begin? RCIA is rooted in restoring a people in community – we reverently know this to be

true. He continued to explore five steps in the RCIA process, always 'a journey with others', and we all have to help!

1. (RCIA 4) 'a gradual process within the community of faith.' We have a heartfelt obligation to support converts in this delicate time of transition; it is a vulnerable period requiring special care.
2. The heart of the journey is conversion. The point of conversion is credo – to give my heart into the mystery of God. Do we reverence each person's uniqueness of how they are travelling or force them to follow our itinerary?
3. The journey is an apprenticeship into the whole Christian life: 'to experience the bone marrow of our life, living and sharing'.
4. The journey needs the story with context and connection that is reverent, creative, respectful and real to their lives! 'with subtle and not so subtle change' (GDC 150).
5. Rites, in the very real sense of our physical being, through community, symbolism, signs and rituals are the flesh and blood of language. God speaks to us in a language we understand, after all didn't 'The Word become flesh' for us (John 1:1). Where is the journey taking us? 'Journey is written into our spiritual DNA.' '...to share their joy ... and invite others to a delicious banquet'.

International Keynote 1

Nick Wagner, with his wife Diana Macalintal of the USA, and creators of TeamRCIA, offered the international Keynote Address. We were asked to consider the powerful moments of the 'mountain top' experiences in our lives, when we know Jesus has touched us

From the beginning the Church has always used the best technology of its era: St Paul used the trade routes, the Gospels shared by the early Church in fellowship and the breaking of the bread, while also serving the poor. In fact the early Church lived the catechumenate with converts participating fully in the life of the Church. We continued to tell the great story through medieval manuscripts, stain glass, art, Fulton Sheen spread the message using radio, Jesuit Cinematic films, the use of video,

DVD. Even the Pope uses twitter to deliver his message

We were cautioned not to lose the story in the tools we use to tell the story. Every generation is challenged to tell the story in new and effective ways. We must remember that a shift in culture is emerging in our midst. It is our responsibility to make this new culture understandable using a language for the people of that culture

Nick and Diana unpacked six core principles from the Rite 75.4-5:

- I. RCIA is a gradual process
- II. Within community
- III. Involves the Paschal Mystery
- IV. Conversion to Christ
- V. Is an adult process
- VI. Varies for each person

In the digital age all is new with Nick using the Google term: 'smart creatives'. We are thereby challenged to be 'spiritual creatives'.

As pilgrims we are always guests in places and must inculturate ourselves into the new place. Nick and Diana were deeply touched by the Aboriginal relationship to country that is a powerful connection of land, language, and place of origin God has called us out of 'country' to be missionary disciples, to be pilgrims sharing the Good News.

International Keynote 2

In 2007 Nick Wagner and Diana Macalintal identified the need to create an online resource to connect those involved in the ministry of RCIA who were struggling and feeling disconnected.

They creatively sought out successful business leaders in the USA, who had used the internet as a great tool to build their businesses and applied it to a spiritual model for the Church.

For example John Kotter of *Leading Change* inspired ideas for leading change in faith based communities; Steve Jobs slogan, *design matters and communicates*, influenced the language and design of the parish as to how do we welcome those knocking on the door? TeamRCIA offers us key areas of interest such as: converting the

heart, building thriving parishes, going beyond our (perceived) limits, and much more. By keeping the message consistent and constant in the discipline of our faith, we move forward in a steady and incremental way. Most importantly we are able to evaluate progress, and any change needed, and most significantly link with others in the evangelical mission of RCIA ministry

Nick and Diana offered us an example of creating a profile of the person we market to. For example: 'Louise' is a committed Catholic lacking support, open to learning, willing to update in an age demographic of 40–50 years, and able access

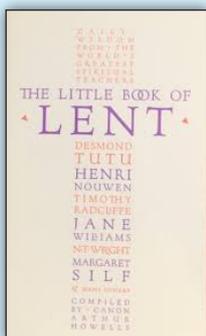
I.T. With Louise in mind, the resource must consider: how will what is offered be liked, used, needed, understood? We are challenged to design the message for a specific target. Moreover, to foster conversion we need to remember that Louise will be influenced by, and network to, the RCIA Team, parish and other catechumens. Remember the process is gradual and designed for their needs not ours.

Thanks to Western Australia RCIA committee for this article from their State newsletter.

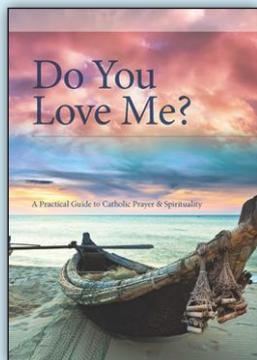
BOOK REVIEWS



The Little Book of Lent



Well we're well into the season of Lent but this 'little' book is really a treasure at any time. by retired Anglican priest Canon Arthur Howells has Compiled a wonderful collection of two page Reflections from a diverse range of authors such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Henri Nouwen, Margaret Silf, Timothy Radcliffe OP and Kathy Galloway. The reflection is complemented by a Scripture reading and and very beautiful, short and inspiring prayers. It is not that 'little' at 166 pages, but does have a little price tag. \$12.



Do You Love Me? A Practical Guide to Catholic Prayer and Spirituality

Published by the Catholic Truth Society but a very different publication to what we normally

see from CTS. This is a very engaging and attractive full colour book – and not that *little* at slightly larger than A5 size and 86 pages.

It was written by a working party of the Spirituality Committee of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales after many requests for a handbook on Christian spirituality. The six chapters cover the universal themes of: Searching, Recognising, Experiencing, Conversing, Following, Choosing.

This is not a dense theological work but as the title suggests it is a highly 'practical', hands-on text. The language is highly accessible and the 'Way-In' opening section gets the reader thinking about an experience or photos in the book to begin the chapter. Wonderful for an individual or a group. (The 'All Together' section provides questions for reflection or group discussion).

The book margins are full of short quotes such as:

A prayer in which a person is not aware of whom he [or she] is speaking to, what he is asking, who it is who is asking and of whom, I don't call prayer ... however much the lips may move.

(Teresa of Avila, 1515–1582)

This is an ideal resource for RCIA and any parishioner seeking to deepen their prayer life and spirituality.

\$14.95



We often get asked by newly formed parish RCIA teams for information on online resources. These inquiries can generally be divided into two groups: some more specific sites for helping prepare dismissal and catechetical discussion sessions, and, general information on the RCIA.

Dismissal session assistance

The RCIA area that has the least amount of 'off the shelf' books or manuals to help team members is the weekly Sunday Mass dismissal (it's also the least understood aspect of RCIA and its importance to the catechetical session). There are a few quality online sites to help prepare for a dismissal discussion.

When running a dismissal session our aim is to keep the catechumens in the spiritual environment of the liturgy of the word. Consequently, we are usually looking for a broad range of discussion on the readings to help the dismissal leader have a clear understanding of the content and spiritual message of the readings. Having clarified our own thinking, we can then develop discussion starter questions to stimulate the catechumens into a deeper understanding of the readings as they apply to their current life and help them develop an action plan of deeper spirituality based on those readings.

My recommendation is to read the commentaries on these sites, maybe even using some material from them for a simple handout summary (don't forget to acknowledge the site for copyright purposes in your handout). I do use a simple handout summary each week and always include in it my discussion starter questions so that catechumens can go through it later with their sponsor.

Catechetical sessions

Using online resources for assisting in preparing catechetical may not be as important as dismissal preparation for many teams. If you are using resources like *At home with God's people*, *Foundations in Faith*, or similar books, much of the support material for catechetical sessions are included in these books.

However, if your catechetical session is based exclusively on linking some aspect from the Sunday readings and the dismissal session to Catholic teaching and tradition, rather than to a predetermined syllabus style format, then you may find the resources below useful.

The sites

<https://www.catholicireland.net/sunday-homily/>

The CatholicIreland.net is part of the support group for the Catholic Church in Ireland. This site has the Jerusalem translation of the Sunday gospel followed by 3 or 4 commentaries. The regular contributors to this site include Michel DeVerteuil, A Trinidadian Holy Ghost Priest, Specialist in Lectio Divina; Thomas O'Loughlin, Professor of Historical Theology, University of Wales, Lampeter; John Littleton, Director of the Priory Institute Distant Learning, Tallaght (and author of several books on the gospels); and, Donal Neary SJ, Editor of *The Sacred Heart Messenger*. This site only provides commentary on the gospel.

<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

This is an American administered by Larry Broding. Larry describes it as 'a lectionary resource for Catholics'. This is a particularly good site as Larry provides commentary on all the readings including the psalm. Often in his commentary he will draw a link between the reading and the Catechism or other aspect of Catholic teaching or tradition. Usually the commentary for each reading opens and closes with reflection questions; a very useful resource for helping prepare your own questions for reflection. The Gospel discussion page includes two translations of the passage; popular and literal.

<http://liturgy.slu.edu/index.html>

This website is a service of the Catholic Studies Program at Saint Louis University, David Meconi SJ, Director, Eleonore Stump, Coordinator, and John Foley SJ, Editor. After selecting the relevant Sunday, the site opens with 5 sub-

options. The two most useful to RCIA are Spirituality of the Readings and Getting to know the Readings. Each of those pages has up to 6 short commentaries, including some suggested discussion questions (higher level questions that you would expect from a Jesuit website!).

<http://www.donghanh.org/suyniem/reflection/>

The Đông Hành Christian Life Community is a Vietnamese Catholic group in America. A warning about the opening page; dates are in US format, i.e., month then day, so 4/2 means April 2. Useful aspects of this site are the comments in the sections 'Interesting Details', 'One Main Point' and the reflection questions.

Some additional useful sites

<http://www.lectorprep.org/>

For those who are proclaimers/lectors at Mass, then this site is very useful. Lector's Notes try to serve the Church by helping lectors prepare to proclaim the Scriptures in our Sunday assemblies. For each day's first and second readings (and occasionally for the gospel), the Notes give the historical and theological background, plus suggestions on oral interpretation.

<http://paulturner.org/>

Fr Paul Turner was the keynote speaker for the 2014 national conference in Townsville (text on page 9). Fr Paul is a well-known speaker, particularly on RCIA, and author. He serves as a facilitator for the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and as the

Ecumenical Officer for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. On his <http://paulturner.org/talks/> pages you will find his notes from Townsville along with many others on RCIA, Mission, Mass, Ministry among many. Fr Paul also has a YouTube channel.

<http://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/>

Edited by Joe Paprocki from Loyola Press. A useful site if you are also a school catechist or working with children in the RCIA. It is a daily blog that you can subscribe to (free) or read online.

<http://teamrcia.com/>

Finally, but certainly not least is Nick Wagner's TeamRCIA website containing many free short articles on almost any aspect of RCIA that you can think of. Nick also offers fee for service membership of TeamRCIA (several levels) to access discounted online training modules. I am a member and can highly recommend Nick's training. Subscribe to the newsletter (free) to stay informed on new articles and upcoming free webinars. Nick is so generous that if you register for a free webinar but can't actually go online live because of time difference between USA and Australia, you will automatically be given a link to download and listen/watch the webinar at your convenience.

I trust these online resources will be of assistance to your ministry. Feel free to write to the editor with a list of your own useful online resources that you use to support your RCIA ministry.



Journey towards the Light of Easter



Many diocese around Australia publish Lenten resources that are ideal for catechumenate groups. Some of the materials are available free online.



Brisbane

Up From the Waters: Reflecting, Sharing and Living the Gospel

As the name suggests this resource focuses specifically on baptism and assisting parishioners and the elect as they prepare for Easter. Gospel reflections were written by Fr Tony Chiera (Vicar General Bunbury diocese) and Dr Jason McFarland (Assistant Director, ACU Centre for Liturgy).

Six people were asked: 'What does your baptism mean to you? What is your baptismal call?' Their responses (5-6 mins) are available on Youtube. For everyone involved with RCIA the first story is a 'must-see'. Isabelle recounts her journey from a fundamentalist church, through the RCIA to today, as a leader in her parish in the areas of adult faith and the catechumenate.

[Videos six Gospel Reflections](#)
[Videos six Good News People](#)

Broken Bay

Reading Scripture in a way that leads to prayer and transformation. The Broken Bay Diocese lectio divina Lent 2017 Resource includes contributions by Australian Bishops: Paul Bird, CSsR; Eugene Hurley; Peter Ingham; Columba Macbeth-Green, OSPPE; Michael McCarthy; Greg O'Kelly, SJ; Anthony Randazzo.



This resource can be accessed in two ways:

1. As a PDF booklet or individual weekly sessions for printing.
2. As an online weekly resource for Lent, which includes the video recording of the bishops' reflections.

[Download Resource](#)

Canberra-Goulburn

Welcoming Jesus in Lent

2017 Lenten Program from the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, featuring filmed Gospel reflections by Archbishop Christopher Prowse. The Weekly Lenten Program is a great resource for parish based groups, prayer companions, staff reflections, families and individuals.

\$5.50 (downloadable MP4 video) or \$10.00 (DVD)

[View Samples and Order Online](#)



Melbourne

Opening Our Hearts & Minds

An accessible Lenten resource from the Archdiocese of Melbourne for parish/school groups or for anyone seeking some personal reflection time.

Each weekly reflection follows three steps: Be Still; The Gospel; Respond. The reflections also come with music suggestions and short prayers to draw together the thoughts arising from the Gospel reflection.

[Download copy](#)



Wollongong

Hope · Lenten Program 2017

Continuing the tradition from past years, Hope is a weekly program, produced by the Diocese of Wollongong, primarily for group use, based on the Sunday Scripture readings during Lent (Year A).

The reflections for Lent are led by Mr Shane Dwyer (Director of the National Centre for Evangelisation for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference) and Sr Hilda Scott OSB (Vocations Director, Jamberoo Abbey).

This year's program consists of book and triple CD.
[Buy now](#)



Ministry in the RCIA

by Fr Paul Turner

(text of address at national conference at Townsville, 2014)



All catechumens will be invited into ministry in the parish community. In this presentation I'll speak about why this is so important and how it can be done. First, though, let us recall that you would not be inviting anyone else into ministry if you were not personally involved in ministry already. So, I'd like to ask you to reflect for a moment upon your own call to serve. Think back about how you first got involved with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. How did you hear about it? Why did this appeal to you? If you were to thank someone for your participation in this ministry – or blame someone – who would it be? What would you like to say to that person?

Why do you stay involved in this ministry? How has it rewarded you? When you look back over the past year of RCIA ministry, how does it make you feel? Satisfied? Grateful? Frustrated? Hopeful? Why?

Have you ever told someone about your work with RCIA? What did you say? Have you ever invited someone to share this ministry with you? If so, why? If not, why not?

After baptizing an infant, the priest or deacon makes this declaration: '(God) now anoints you with the chrism of salvation, so that, united with his people, you may remain for ever a member of Christ who is Priest, Prophet, and King.' He then anoints the crown of the infant's head with chrism. In baptism, we are all given a share not only in the membership, but also in the mission of Jesus Christ. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, 'Based on this common priesthood and ordered to its service, there exists another participation in the mission of Christ: the ministry conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders, where the task is to serve in the name and in the person of Christ the Head in the midst of the community' (1591). However, the catechism also says that 'The whole church is a priestly people' (Ibid.) – the whole Church. Even you. You have priestly responsibility. Your responsibility is also prophetic and royal.

Priests serve. Priests offer sacrifice. Priests render thanks to God. Priests give God praise. Prophets receive the word of God. Prophets speak difficult things to people who need to hear them. Kings and queens have the responsibility of leadership. They also enjoy the service of others. We receive all three of these roles when we are baptised. We all suffer the temptation to settle into the third role, to act like royalty. We like it when other people render service, especially service to us.

When I first became a pastor, we offered a Lenten mass at noon as an option for the working community. Attendance was pretty good, drawing people from several parishes who did not know one another, and who had no other ties to our parish. None of them stepped up to help as a cantor, a reader or a communion minister. No one was willing to sign up, to promise to be there tomorrow so that others could be served. They all wanted the option of attending that mass, but not the responsibility of leadership. That was the only year we offered a Lenten mass at noon.

Serving others is part of our Christian responsibility. This should not be a drudgery; it should be our joy. Pope Francis wrote in his apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, 'In union with Jesus, we seek what he seeks and we love what he loves' (267). And 'If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realize that every person is worthy of our giving' (274). When you are in love, you will serve the person you love not out of obligation or responsibility, but out of desire. Think of the way that parents love children; yes, they have an obligation to serve their kids, but their desire to serve them is even stronger. Think of the way that people in the armed forces serve their country. They are willing to lay down their lives in service to national ideals. They do it out of love.

Jesus asked us to love one another, to love the Church. From that love comes the necessity of ministry. It is a desirable imperative.

When you have that love in your heart, you cannot understand why anyone else doesn't have it. We get frustrated when others don't share the same enthusiasm for ministry that we have, or when they don't even come to church as often as we do. Sometimes we have a point; but sometimes our vision is not clear.

When our commitment to serve is strong, we stride along spiritual highways that are both rewarding and lonely. Other people may be committed at some level – perhaps not as much as we are, but they may be committed. From our perspective they may look like slackers. In reality, they may not be. Just because they are doing less than we are at church doesn't mean they're not serving at all. They may have active interests with their families and organizations that we never see. At some level, everyone feels the need to serve. The reason we have ministry is because we are baptised.

Ministering is different from volunteering. When you hear someone say, 'I need a volunteer,' that person is probably not looking for a particular person with a specific skill. Any person will do – any volunteer. Ministry is different. It is a part of who we are. We get involved not just because of someone else's need but because of the specific gifts we received from God. Catechumens will learn this, and they will hunger for ministry as completely as they thirst for the waters of baptism. How do they get involved?

The New Testament gives an example of putting some members of the community into a specialized ministry. From Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6, we learn about the establishment of deacons. You remember the story: The Hellenists complained that the Hebrews were neglecting their widows in the daily distribution of food. The Twelve, not wanting to get bogged down in internal disputes, appealed to their job description: 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food.' They wanted seven men filled with the Holy Spirit to perform this task. Even to distribute food, they wanted people filled with the Holy Spirit. These guys did much more, of course. They

joined in the proclamation of the word and catechesis, and Stephen their model suffered martyrdom.

The story makes several points about ministry in the Church:

- More ministers are better than fewer. If you find yourself burdened with too many responsibilities, share them with others.
- Community discernment is better than individual discernment. If you know something is wrong, consult other leaders to see what should be done.
- Know your vocation. Stay focused on why God made you. What gifts did God give you? Why did God do that? Stay with your gifts, and let those with other gifts use them.
- Come up with a job description. The Twelve needed more than table waiters. These helpers also had to negotiate disputes between Hellenists and Hebrews, disputes grounded in the feeding of widows, an emotional topic that was dividing a community. The Twelve decided that one trait they needed in the new recruits was people 'of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom.'

Parishes can follow a similar process. Before recruiting catechumens to serve as ministers, the community ought to know what ministers it needs. This requires discipline. Parish leaders should have a clear idea of what they are capable of providing, and stay fixed on that. Nearly every parish has some organizations that have endured for many years but are struggling to find new members. It could be that the organization has served its purpose and now needs to end. If so, parish leaders should know what other ministry they still need, and how to get people involved.

One way to establish a matrix for evaluating parish activities is to review the methods of formation that catechumens are to receive and to ask if these are vibrant in the community. For catechumenate geeks, paragraph 75 is the John 3:16 of the RCIA. It speaks about four different ways of providing formation. You are probably familiar with these:

- a suitable catechesis is provided
- catechumens become familiar with the Christian way of life

- the Church helps by means of suitable liturgical rites
- catechumens learn to spread the gospel

... These methods can be used as templates not only for the formation of catechumens, but also to characterize parish ministry. The only way we can offer all four methods to catechumens is if we are practicing all four methods already. So, here are some questions for parish leaders:

- How does your parish provide suitable catechesis? Do you offer sacramental preparation? For which sacraments? How do you make it available? Is there year-round religious formation? For what age groups? Over the course of the year, how does adult faith formation take place?
- How does your community express the Christian way of life? What social events are important to the parish? Who is invited to them? Do visitors receive a welcome? Does the parish leadership model Christian moral codes? Are members of your parish trusted as a morally upright community?
- What liturgical rites does your parish offer? Are they sufficient or too many? How do people get involved with these? Is it difficult for new people to break into some ministries?
- How does the parish spread the gospel? What outreach does it do? Are Catholics in your community known as promoters of social justice? How? How do members of the broader community receive a specific invitation to come to events at your church? How personal is it? Is your evangelisation passive? Or active?

Do all four of these cylinders work in your parish? Or do one or two misfire? How does the budget set priorities in these four areas?

With that review in the background, parish leaders can begin to discern what ministries they still need, and who might help fulfil them. If you don't have enough people, you may not have the right ministries, or God may not yet have sent you the people you need. Or you could have the right people in the wrong places. Especially if some groups or ministries are faltering, it is important to know if that

ministry still fits the overall vision of the parish. If so, then help it out. If not, then consider inviting some of the people involved there into a different kind of service

For many years in our parish we had a group called the Men's Club, a charitable and fraternal organization. Over the years, attendance at meetings dropped to only two or three people. Eventually the members stopped meeting all together. They discovered that all the men in the club were also members of the Knights of Columbus. The Knights had a more active organization, so the guys decided on their own to stop the other group. They had one interesting problem – the dues they were collecting still sat in a separate parish checking account. I talked with the former leaders of the Men's Club, and we all agreed to put the money toward improvements to the church building that everyone could enjoy. The organization is gone; its assets have been liquidated; but the members are still active in the parish – every one of them. And they basically did it themselves

If ministries are worth preserving, we need people to serve in them. We should also offer people the training they need, the support they require, and the affirmation they crave. When ministers feel cared for, they are more likely to serve

Some people stay too long in a ministry. They lack the skills the parish needs, but they have earned respect for the years of service they have offered, and no one has told them it's time to step down. These are always difficult situations. But sometimes, for the good of the entire parish, some people with certain duties need to share them with others and consider taking up other activities. They may create space for catechumens to take a new role. A priest I know says that parishes often suffer from what he calls 'the reverse Caiaphas principle.' Do you remember this character from the trial of Jesus in John's gospel (18:14)? Caiaphas counselled that they may have to put Jesus to death because it was better for one person to die rather than have all the people suffer. In our parishes, we often work on the reverse Caiaphas principle: It's better for everyone else to suffer rather than just one person. Normally if we can move someone from a misfit ministry into one where he or she can flourish, everyone will benefit. Catechumens will be more likely to offer their services if they feel that in

general the parish has worked hard at matching people's gifts with the ministries they have.

When you think about involving catechumens, often people think immediately of liturgical ministry. 'Maybe you could become a reader,' someone will suggest. 'You could become a communion minister.' In many parishes in the US, the hardest liturgical ministry to break into is the ushers. You almost have to wait for someone to die before the others will consider letting another person into the club. In some US parishes males have as firm a grasp on the ministry of ushers as they do on the priesthood. In my parish, whenever we have a second collection, I like to have a second set of ushers take it up a few seconds after the first collection has begun, the second set following the first set by about three or four pews. That way all the sacrifice can be brought to the altar before the eucharistic prayer begins. But to do it this way means that our ushers have to change what they have been doing for centuries. Sometimes they'll tell me, 'We don't have enough ushers,' and they use it as an excuse for the same ushers to take up both collections, the second one beginning only after the first one has been entirely completed, thus delaying the liturgy and punishing the priest. If the ushers tell me before mass they don't have enough ministers, I look around.

There are plenty of people in the building. I recruit a few extra ushers myself. Even some women!

Liturgical ministry appeals to some people for the same reason it disinterests others: It's public. My father occasionally served as a lector, but he never enjoyed it. He would proclaim the passage as quickly as he could just so he could sit back down in his pew. Some people like the spotlight. Others don't.

However, a parish offers other ways that people can serve. Through catechesis, hospitality, and evangelisation, people can always get involved.

Also valuable is to review the ways that catechumens already give service in their daily lives. Are they married? Do they have children? Talk with them about the sacrifice they are making for their family. Do they take care of their neighbours? Ask them about why they do that. Is their job more than a job? Is it making the community a better place? Does it feel in some ways that they are working right where

they belong? What does that tell them about the way God made them, the opportunities for service they have, and the satisfaction they receive? Are they involved in their children's schools and other activities? I have a friend who announces major league baseball games on television and radio. He's very active with his church because he doesn't want sports to rule his life. But I feel that even his job is providing a ministry to people like me who enjoy baseball as a break, so that we can return to our work with more vigour.

When you review these activities with your catechumens, what do you learn? Do they feel fulfilled? Or do they wish they weren't doing some service any more? Do they feel that they aren't doing enough? Do they feel drawn to other demands? Are they just too busy to add one more thing to their lives? Are the RCIA sessions eating up so much time that they cannot do anything else? Are they secretly counting the days when they'll have Tuesday nights free again? Is the same true of the RCIA team? What does this say?

Sometimes people don't need to do a whole lot more than what they presently do. They may just need the affirmation that they are serving the body of Christ in different ways, and we may have to admit that this is enough. They are serving. It may be less visible, but it's for real.

To return to the earlier point, ministry is a part of Christianity not just as a burdensome duty but as a welcome opportunity. When our hearts are filled with love for the community, we want to serve. We look for ways to help out. Your parish probably has lots of ministries going on. But if after reviewing what's happening there, you discern that there is a lack of ministry, then ask this hard question: If we lack ministry, do we also lack love? I'm not talking about commitment to a cause as some abstract ideal – but about real heartfelt love. Does the community love one another?

Jesus himself lifted this heavy concern at the end of his life. One of his most pointed commands shows up only in John's gospel. In the other gospels Jesus says things like, 'Love your neighbour.' OK, I can do that. 'Love your enemy.' Wow. Sounds hard. But I realize that my enemy is a person too. So I'll try. In John's gospel, though, Jesus looks around the room at the Last Supper, sizes up the group

of disciples before him, thinks about how these friends of his have fought with each other and misunderstood his teachings, and he lays one final command onto that group. 'Hey, you guys, love one another' (cf. 15:12). He addressed those words to his disciples for his disciples. Some future disciples would find it easier to love their enemy than to love someone else at the same church. Love one another. Would you please just get along? Would you please look out for each other. No one will listen to this gospel if the community preaching it doesn't have love in its heart.

Two final practical points about this theme, how to help catechumens see ministry as part of their Christian lives. One is to involve the sponsor. Be sure the sponsor gets tips on how to connect the catechumens with the rest of the parish. If the sponsor notices that the catechumen is absent from Sunday mass, from the parish festival, or from catechumenate sessions, the sponsor should speak up. The sponsor can introduce the catechumen to organizations and individuals – not just at the end of their formation, but from the beginning; and not just once, but throughout the period of preparation. Sometimes catechumens decline these invitations, and sponsors feel helpless. But their role is to invite.

Second, if there's one ministry I wish everyone would learn, whether they are catechumens or faithful, whether they have been members of the parish for 6 weeks or 60 years, it's this: Meet people. Learn names. Parishes solidify when parishioners make friends of the people with whom they worship and serve. Once the community starts to form, they will feel more connected to the whole. I've heard many people say, 'I'm just not good at names.' Well, OK, but you have to improve this. At work you are probably very good at some parts of your job and not so good at others, but you still have to do the whole job.

As priestly people, called to serve, called to be members of the body of Christ, it would help if we learned who the other members are. I know how hard this can be. Two years ago I moved from a parish where I served for 11 years to a new community with more than twice the number of members. It has been hard and remains hard for me to learn names. It takes time, but I'm still working at it, and I know it will get better. Once I learn names, I make



sure that other people learn them too. If I see parishioners standing near each other but not talking to each other, I may say, 'John, have you met Bill?' Sometimes, John says, 'Well, I've seen him around, but I never knew his name.' Whenever a group of parishioners is gathered for a meeting or social event, I make sure we all introduce ourselves at the beginning, so that everyone hears everyone's name. People know if you don't know who they are. They love it when you do. Visitors will come back if we've made an effort to offer them this very basic ministry within the body of Christ: the ministry of the name.

You got into catechumenate ministry because of some wonderful reason, something that connected your gifts with your faith and your desire to serve. You know how terrific it can be to make ministry a part of your life. Share that good news. Let others grow in Christ and as persons by encouraging their commitment to ministry. They will thank you for it because they know inside that because of their baptism, they are called to serve.

Paul Turner is pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Kansas City, Missouri and director of the Office of Divine Worship for the Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph. He holds a doctorate in sacred theology from Sant' Anselmo in Rome.

Many of his presentations can be read on his website:
paulturner.org

Meet the New eTeam



Executive meeting at Lower Plenty, Melbourne. Left to right: Ross Privitelli (Secretary); Tony Cunningham, Kate Bell, Michael Moore, Mandy Robinson (Treasurer), Max Norden (Rob Cosgrove is the very unsteady photographer). Stewart Bazzicca (Vice-Chair) was unable to attend the meeting but we were able to hook-up for an electronic meeting Saturday afternoon.

Your national executive recently met face to face instead of over the telephone. We were grateful to Mandy Robinson and Ross Privitelli for all the ground work they had done to prepare for this gathering.

As these two members of the national executive lived in Melbourne it was decided to meet there to decrease the cost of air fares. Ross found a great spot to stay and work that was very reasonable cost-wise and an excellent space to work (Amberley House, Christian Brothers property at Lower Plenty). Mandy did an amazing job with catering to keep costs down.

Normally at a national conference 'the baton' (candle) is handed on to the diocese that has committed to host the next bi-annual conference. For various reasons (budget cutbacks, staff lay-offs, etc, etc) this did not occur at the Perth conference.

This was the major agenda item for the national executive meeting. We will have more information in the next edition but at this stage we can say that it will be in mid-October 2018 and the title will be: *Ignite the Spark -- Evangelisation and the RCIA.*

We need a new editor of *Network News* (this publication) as our past (present) editor is now chairperson! (Ed: *I am prepared to continue doing the layout and design.*)

After our two days of meetings I was able to catch-up with Mons Tony Ireland (Gregory the Great parish, Doncaster) for a pizza on Sunday night after 5:00pm Mass (a wonderful celebration of the Eucharist; this church has a beautiful interior designed by architect Graeme Law).

The following day I was able to meet with all the staff from the Archbishop's Office for

Evangelisation: Cathy Jenkins (Director), Joy Adriaanse (RCIA), Mary Ryan (Adult Faith Formation, attended national conference in Townsville), Tiffany Davis (Communications & Events), and had lunch with Dr Paul Taylor (ACBC, Executive Secretary Commission for Liturgy).

Rob Cosgrove (chairperson, CIAN).
Below is information on new members of the national executive.

Michael Moore



Michael has been involved with the RCIA for 10 years. For the last 7 years, he has been the Parish Coordinator. As an RCIA Catechist he has been actively involved in the Diocesan RCIA coordinating committee and has assisted in the planning and running of State RCIA conferences. Michael is an Ordained Deacon of the Adelaide Diocese.

Mandy Robinson



Mandy Robinson, from Melbourne, has over twenty-five years' experience with the RCIA in parishes in both Australia and New Zealand. As a mother of four children, and now also a grandmother of eight, her passion is the development of faith in children. Married to globe-trotting David (who has just retired), she has lived in India and New Zealand,

where she worked as volunteer setting up sewing programs for underprivileged teenagers. A contributor to various diocesan resources, she has developed a process of adapting the RCIA, for families with unbaptised children, emphasising the use of the Children's Liturgy of the Word as a model. Mandy owns a small business, in partnership with her brother and works part-time keeping the accounts. Along with writing and sewing, her favourite activity is singing and is currently a member of a local community choir.

Max Norden



Max Norden is RCIA coordinator for Lumen Christi pastoral region in the diocese of Wollongong. The pastoral region incorporates the parishes of St Francis Xavier Cathedral Wollongong, St John Vianney parish Fairy meadow (and co-cathedral), and St Brigid parish

Gwynneville. The combined parishes of the Pastoral Region now make it the 35th largest parish in Australia. Each parish within the pastoral region has its own RCIA.

Max's involvement in RCIA is more than 15 years. He started his parish ministry involvement at St Francis Xavier cathedral as an acolyte in 1983. Apart from his role as RCIA coordinator Max has served several periods on the Pastoral Council. He is currently chairperson of the Pastoral Council.

Max has an ongoing commitment to training and development. In 2016 he completed the Diocese of Wollongong's certificate in pastoral liturgy. He has an active involvement with Nick Wagner's TeamRCIA as a platinum circle member and regular webinar participant. He is a founding member of Diocese of Wollongong's Facebook discussion group "Forming Disciples". He has led workshops at the CIAN conferences; 2014 - Dismissal is mystagogical, and 2016 - Teaching Liturgy and Mystagogical catechesis.

Kate Bell

For the last four years I have been employed 20 hours a week as the catechist in the Cathedral Parish of the Holy Spirit Palmerston North.

Responsible for sacramental preparation, most things liturgical, pastoral coordination and any other loose balls that come flying our way - like this year's Year of Mercy ... I have been involved with the catechumenate for over a decade and at present work with a wonderful team of catechists.

Mark and I have been married over twenty years and we have three sons, Edward Bede, John Ignatius and Leo Francis, just at that really exciting stage of leaving home and growing their own lives!

I grew up in Wellington, my mum was a nurse and my dad worked for the Justice department as a Superintendent at the local prison, which occasioned our family's formative years within in prison grounds.

I studied English and assorted Arts subjects at Massey University and subsequently went down to Otago University and Holy Cross Seminary to study Theology.

After completing the BTheol, I was fortunate to secure a position as a University Chaplain back at Massey.



In 2012 the Bishop's Conference of Aotearoa New Zealand published the [National Policy on the RCIA for the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand](#).

(type RCIA in Search bar)

Celebrating the Scrutinies

One of many excellent resources on the [UK RCIA NETWORK SITE](#)

Free these elect
from the death-dealing power
of the spirit of evil,
so that they may bear witness
to their new life in the risen Christ,
for he lives and reigns for ever.

Introduction

The Scrutinies are significant liturgies in the Period of Purification and Enlightenment which coincides with the Season of Lent.

After the Rite of Election Catechumens are called the Elect - following the testimony of their godparents, they are elected by the Bishop to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation at the next Easter Vigil

The language of the Rite (Scrutiny, Exorcism) can be challenging to some. It reflects that This is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they search their consciences and do penance. (126)

This should be understood within the context of the whole Church's marking of Lent and preparation for Easter. In the liturgy and liturgical catechesis of Lent the reminder of baptism already received or the preparation for its reception, as well as the themes of repentance, renew the entire community along with those being prepared to celebrate the paschal mystery, in which each of the elect will share through the sacraments of initiation. For both the elect and the local community, therefore, the Lenten season is a time of spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebrations of the paschal mystery. (125)

Background

Who is the liturgy for?

The Scrutinies are celebrated by the Elect, that is those who have been to the Rite of Election and are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) at the next Easter Vigil.

For Children of Catechetical Age who seek the Sacraments of Initiation there is a corresponding Penitential Rite — more details under Adaptation below.

The Scrutinies are not celebrated with those who are already baptised and seek Reception into full communion and/or the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

Contents

- Introduction
- Background
- Looking at the Liturgy
- Adaptation
- Preparation
- Mystagogy
- What happens next

Note

As a rule 'Rite' refers to the whole liturgical book — the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; whereas 'rite' refers to the liturgical text of the Scrutinies.

When does the liturgy happen?

The Scrutinies take place on the 3rd, 4th and 4th Sundays of Lent.

They are intimately connected with the readings for Year A, particularly the Gospels, the texts of which are always used.

Common practice is that the Scrutinies are celebrated within Sunday Mass. (However, the Rite allows for them to be celebrated outside Mass and led by a Deacon, if necessary.)

The Rite presumes that all 3 Scrutinies will be celebrated — there is a progression across the weeks.

The length of the liturgy should be borne in mind. Though the Scrutiny itself is not that long the Gospel on each Sunday is extended and it would be against the spirit of the rite to use the shorter form of the readings. This would suggest that the homily is succinct, perhaps directing people to the ways in which the rite might help them in their own preparation for Easter and also taking the option to omit the Creed and Intercessions.

Where does the liturgy happen?

The Scrutinies take place in the local parish community.

Where the Community has more than one Sunday Mass it may be suggested to celebrate the Scrutinies at different liturgies over the 3 weeks — however practice suggests otherwise.

One of the aims of the period of the Catechumenate should be the integration of Catechumens into the pattern of Sunday Mass — i.e. well before the celebration of the Scrutinies each member of the Elect entering more deeply into what it means to be a 'disciple' of Christ, including encouragement to regular attendance at Sunday Mass, and thereby becoming known to other members of the congregation.

This would suggest that the Scrutinies take place at Sunday Masses which the Elect regularly attend — which may be more than one.

The whole Community can be introduced to the Elect (who will be the focus of their common Easter Vigil) possibly through invitation to come to the Sunday Masses where the scrutinies are being celebrated. In addition, regular 'updates' in the parish bulletin, with names and requests for prayerful accompaniment, would also keep the Community informed and actively involved.

Looking at the Liturgy

Structure of the Rite

Each scrutiny follows the same structure:

Liturgy of the Word

- Readings
- Homily
- Invitation to Silent Prayer
- Intercessions for the Elect
- Exorcism
- Dismissal of the Elect

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Rite presumes that all 3 Scrutinies will be celebrated — there is a progression across the weeks, intended to gradually uncover the deepest thirst (3rd Sunday, Woman at the Well), any remaining areas of darkness (4th Sunday, the Man born blind), and anything that continues to 'hold' them in a binding grip (5th Sunday, raising of Lazarus), in order to heal all that is weak or 'sinful' in the hearts of the elect, and to bring out and strengthen all that is strong and good. The scrutinies are celebrated in order to free the elect from the power of sin, and protect them from temptations, and at the same time, give them strength in Christ, 'the way, the truth and the life'. The experience of the scrutinies helps to complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their desire to trust and hold fast to Christ.

Ministry

Assembly

The role of the Assembly is to:

- Listen to the readings proclaimed
- Hear the homily and take its message to heart
- Pray for the Elect
- In preparation for Easter
- Reflect on their own baptism
- Recognise their failings and seek reconciliation.

Priest

The usual minister of the rite is a priest. As noted above the Scrutinies can be celebrated outside Mass with a deacon.

The Priest should, in the normal course of events, be known to the elect.

Godparents

Godparents stand with the elect, close enough so that

they can place a hand on their shoulder during the Intercessions.

Readings

When the Scrutinies are celebrated the readings are taken from Year A. They are integral to the rite and should not be changed.

The themes of the readings, in particular the Gospel, are picked up in the rite and the other texts of the liturgy.

First Scrutiny

Reading 1 Exodus 17:3–7

Give us water to drink.

Psalm Ps 94:1–2, 6–9

O that today you would listen to his voice:

'Harden not your hearts.'

Reading 2 Romans 5:1–2, 5–8

The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.

Gospel John 4:5–42

A spring of water welling up to eternal life.

In the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman Jesus reveals himself as the water of the life.

Second Scrutiny

Reading 1 1 Samuel 16:1, 6–7, 10–13

David is anointed king of Israel.

Psalm Ps 22 r. 1

The Lord is my shepherd;

there is nothing I shall want.

Reading 2 Ephesians 5:8–14

Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Gospel John 9:1–41

He went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

In the Gospel of the Man born blind Jesus reveals himself as the light of the world.

Third Scrutiny

Reading 1 Ezekiel 37:12–14

I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.

Psalm Ps 129 r. 7

With the Lord there is mercy

and fullness of redemption.

Reading 2 Romans 8:8–11

The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you.

Gospel John 11:1–45

I am the resurrection and the life.

In the Gospel of the raising of Lazarus Jesus reveals himself to Martha as the resurrection and the life.

Rite

Invitation to Silent Prayer

The Scrutiny begins with the Priest inviting the Elect and their Godparents to stand and come forward. He then invites the assembly to pray for the Elect. The Elect are invited to pray and may either kneel or bow their heads.

After a period of silent prayer all stand

Intercessions for the Elect

Godparents place their right hand on the shoulders of the Elect.

The texts in the rite may be adapted to include general intercessions (where these are later omitted).

The Elect do not respond to the Intercessions, firstly because the prayers are them, secondly as intercessions are the prayer of the baptised.

It is suggested below that the Intercessions, or at least the response, is sung.

Exorcism

First of all the priest prays with hands joined, then he lays hands on each of the Elect, for the second part of the prayer he prays with hands outstretched over the Elect.

The prayer, which may be sung, should be prayed with clarity and not rushed so that all may hear and understand what is being prayed for (given people's misapprehensions about 'exorcisms').

Dismissal of the Elect

The expected norm is that the Elect are kindly dismissed before the Eucharist continues. Many parishes even if they do not practice dismissal for the rest of the year choose to for the Scrutinies. The merits of Dismissal will be the subject of a separate resource.

Where the Eucharist is celebrated after the dismissal of the Elect there may be the Prayer of the Faithful and then the Creed (note order). They may both be omitted for pastoral reasons and it is noted above that the length of the whole celebration may suggest this option.

Other texts

The Ritual Mass for the Celebration of the Scrutinies (RM 1177–81) replaces the texts of the Sundays of Lent.

Interpolations in the Eucharistic Prayer

The 2010 Missal includes for many of the Ritual Masses texts to be inserted into the Eucharist Prayers.

Texts are provided for Eucharistic Prayers I-III

The texts pray primarily for the Godparents (The Elect having been dismissed)

Music

Apart from the usual music for a Lenten Sunday there are places for singing in the rite:

Though not indicated in the rite a song or simple chant following the homily might be appropriate to 'set the scene' — remembering the comment about the length of the whole rite. This might be something that takes a key phrase from the gospel, expresses penitence or self examination.

The response to the Intercessions might be sung. Indeed the intercessions might be as well. Experience suggests a short response with some sense of urgency.

The Exorcism might also be sung. Singing will add to the solemnity of the occasion.

At the end of the rite it suggests that a song maybe sung and gives a number of psalms (the list is the same for each Scrutiny). They are:

Psalm 6: *Lord, do not reprove me in your anger*

Psalm 25 (26): *Give judgment for me, O Lord*

Psalm 31 (32): *Happy the man whose offence is forgiven.*

Psalm 37 (38): *O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger*

Psalm 38 (39): *I said, 'I will be watchful of my ways'*

Psalm 39 (40): *I waited, waited for the Lord.*

Psalm 50 (51): *Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness*

Psalm 114 (116a): *I love the Lord for he has heard*

Psalm 129 (130): *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord*

Psalm 138 (139): *O Lord, you search me and you know me*

or Psalm 141 (142): *With all my voice I cry to the Lord*

These suggest songs about penance and reconciliation, mercy and compassion, reflection and examination.

It would be quite possible, and appropriate, to use the same music for each scrutiny. This might be balanced with the element of progression that characterises the 3 weeks.

Silence is also an important element within the rite and whatever the possible pressures of time the liturgy should not feel rushed.

Space

Consideration should be given to where the elect and their godparents stand. Whether they stay in the places or come before the sanctuary

Posture and gesture are important aspects of the rite and should not be done halfheartedly.

Adaptation

Children

The Rite provides a distinct Penitential Rite for children seeking initiation.

It proposes that it might be done with children celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time.

Candidates for Reception

As stated above the Scrutinies are not intended for those who have already been baptised.

Outside Lent

The Rite allows for the celebration of the Scrutinies outside Lent when the Sacraments of Initiation are deferred. This would take place in the weeks preceding the Sacraments

Such is the intimate connection between the Scrutinies and Lent that such an arrangement would have to be exceptional

Preparation

Team

An essential role of the team, and the whole community, is to pray for the elect

To help the Elect prepare team members may wish to reflect on the aspects of their own lives that need the water of life, light of the world or raising from the dead, and be prepared to share these in the catechetical session with the elect in preparation for the scrutinies.

Though the rite is short and simple it needs careful preparation as indicated above to be effective for both elect and community.

The team should be familiar with both the rite and the Lectionary readings.

During the period of purification and enlightenment the group's time together should be different to that which has come before.

The team should be comfortable with the language of the Scrutinies and appreciate the development of understanding and intensity over the three weeks as key to the preparation for Easter.

As noted with the Rite of Election the group should be familiar at early stage of the distinctiveness of those preparing for baptism and those already baptised.

Catechists support the elect with preparation sessions for the scrutinies, through engagement with the Gospels for each scrutiny in the week prior to the celebration. They also have the opportunity to explain the background and purpose, as well as the language of the scrutinies, for the elect, allaying any concerns, and affirming the benefit for the elect and the whole community who participate.

The catechists will also offer opportunity for reflection on the experience, either after the Mass, or in the week following the celebration.

Catechumens

As suggested above the team should be ready to explain the language and purpose of the rites so that the elect are ready to celebrate the Scrutinies

It will be helpful to listen to the Gospel and reflect on it as a group, as well as providing some further questions for people to take away.

Some questions that help the elect to identify those parts of their lives which will be 'scrutinised' will also be helpful.

These questions might be usefully shared with the godparent.

Liturgy Office

ENGLAND
EAST WEST

This one of a series of resources produced by the Liturgy Office with the RCIA Network looking at the celebration of the liturgies of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults © 2015 www.rcia.org.uk

Autumn 2017

Candidates

Though candidates may not be included in the Scrutinies they should support and pray for the elect and, along with the whole of the community, they may experience the rite and its benefits for self-examination and gaining of renewed strength and hope, and later, as appropriate, be invited to take part in the parish's Lenten penitential service. Penance is a normal part of our preparation for Easter, and therefore it is important for candidates who are to be received at Easter, or at another time of year, to be offered the opportunity, should they wish, for examination of conscience and confession of sins, towards and state of readiness for their profession of faith in the Rite of Reception into full communion. (RCIA 395)

Parish

All the parish should be invited to pray for the elect as they approach the Sacraments of Easter

The liturgies of RCIA are intended to be part of the pattern of parish life celebrated in the course of the year. This suggests that though the Scrutinies may be special and significant they should not be treated as rare and unusual.

Establishing patterns of celebration, e.g. through use of space and music, will help this.

That said the elect should be focus of the community throughout Lent

Mystagogy

Given the riches of the scriptures and the intensity of the liturgy it will be important that when the group meet following a scrutiny there is mystagogical reflection on the experience.

Different members of the group will make their own connections between what they heard proclaimed in the word and what they experienced in the rite

A possible starting point might be through the imagination — 'If you met the Samaritan Woman, what questions would you ask her?'

What next?

The Period of Purification and Enlightenment also contains the following rites:

- Presentation of the Lord's Prayer
- Presentation of the Creed
- Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday

Each has its importance but Lent must not become an end in itself but a pathway leading to the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.





Christian Initiation
Australia Network

www.cianetwork.net

Network News is the quarterly bulletin of the Christian Initiation Network Australia.

The Christian Initiation Australia Network (CIAN) is a support network of those who share the vision of the catechumenate. Its purpose is to promote the practice of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) through sharing ideas and challenges.

CIAN Membership is open to all Australians who have a commitment to and/or work with the RCIA in Australia.

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue of *Network News*.

To send feedback or get further information about items in *Network News*, contact the editor:

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The next issue will be circulated in **June 2017**.

Please send stories to share, news or events to publicise, articles to contribute or resources to recommend by 15th May, 2017 to the editor, Rob Cosgrove, (contact details above).

Christian Initiation Australia Network seeks to support all those who share the vision of the RCIA