

RCIA: SESSION NINETEEN

RITE OF ELECTION AND CATECHESIS ON THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

Week: 20/02/23-26/02/23

1. The Rite of Election/Enrolment: The celebration of the *Rite of Election*, which usually coincides with the opening of Lent, also marks the beginning of the period of final, more intense preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation, during which the elect will be encouraged to follow Christ with greater generosity.

This step is called election because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts. The step is also called the *Enrolment of Names* because as a pledge of fidelity the candidates inscribe their names in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation. Before the rite of election is celebrated, the catechumens are expected to have:

- Undergone a conversion in mind and in action.
- To have developed a sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching.
- To have developed a spirit of faith and charity.
- To have the intention to receive the Sacraments of the Church, a resolve they will express publicly in the actual celebration of the rite.

The catechumens will be instructed about the celebration of the liturgical rite of election/enrolment. The rite will be celebrated in the cathedral in Mullingar.

We will use and practise the “Rite of Election or Enrolment of Names” which we had last year. The names will be entered into the “Book of the Elect” – same as last year.

2. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*¹ notes that this sacrament has five different names: *The sacrament of conversion, the sacrament of Penance, the sacrament of confession, the sacrament of forgiveness and the sacrament of Reconciliation*. The various titles of the sacrament illustrate various aspects of the sacramental encounter with Christ.

Why is Confession Necessary? We need the Sacrament of Penance because each of us, from time to time, sins. When we recognise that we have offended God, who is all deserving of our love, we sense the need to make things right. Like the prodigal son in the Gospel, we long to know again the loving forgiveness of God who patiently waits for us.

What is sin? “Sin is an offence against God as well as against reason, truth and right conscience; it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbour caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods.”²

What is a penance? A penance may be a prayer, an offering, works of mercy, sacrifices or service to another, through which the penitent desires to make amends and to repair something of the disorder, damage or harm their actions have brought into the world.

How to celebrate the Sacrament:

- **Greeting:** The priest welcomes you warmly and greets you with kindness.
- **Sign of the Cross:** Then the penitent makes the Sign of the Cross, which the priest may also make.
- **Confession of Sins:** The priest invites the penitent to have trust in God. The penitent begins: “Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (state how long) since my last confession and these are my sins ...” The penitent confesses his/her sins honestly and openly. The penitent may wish to discuss the circumstances and the root causes of their sins with the priest and ask for advice and/or direction.
- **Penance:** The priest will then propose a penance as an outward sign of the penitent’s desire to make amends for sins against God and others.
- **Prayer of Sorrow:** The penitent then prays an Act of Sorrow.
- **Absolution:** The priest then prays the Prayer of Absolution, to which the penitent responds: “Amen.”

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1423 and 1424.

² Irish Episcopal Conference, *Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults*, p. 568.

- **Dismissal:** The priest then dismisses the penitent, saying: “The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.” The penitent responds: “Thanks be to God.”
- **Thanksgiving:** The penitent spends some time with the Lord, thanking and praising Him for the gift of his mercy. If possible, the penance that was received is discharged now. If not it is discharged as soon as possible.

Act of Sorrow:

O my God, I thank you for loving me.
 I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving
 others and not loving you.
 Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again.
 Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

O my God, thank you for forgiving me.
 Help me to love others.
 Help me to live as Jesus asked me to.
 Amen.

Examination of Conscience

Before a penitent receives the Sacrament of Penance, he/she should spend some time in quiet reflection, preparing themselves in mind and heart. Part of this preparation is an ‘Examination of Conscience’, where sins against God and against others may be identified. The following is offered as an aid:

- **Regarding your love for God (ask yourself):**

Do I really love God above all things, or have I made other things – money, clothes, sports, TV, music, mobile phone, video games – more important than God?

Have I missed Sunday Mass without a legitimate excuse?

Do I arrive late for Mass or leave early?

Do I receive Holy Communion regularly and reverently?

Have I forgotten to pray regularly?

Have I shown disrespect for any religious objects, places or people?

Have I used the words ‘God’ or ‘Jesus’ carelessly?

- **Regarding your love for Others (ask yourself):**

Have I been selfish or angry?

Have I been honest in my work?
Have I been disrespectful to others?
Have I been unfair in my dealings/sports?
Have I been violent towards another person?
Have I spread gossip or lies about another person?
Have I stopped speaking to anyone?
Do I hold grudges and fail to forgive?
Have I posted negative material about others on social media?
Have I harmed animals, littered or been destructive to the environment?
Have I spoken in an obscene way?
Have I looked at inappropriate material?
Have I told lies?
Have I stolen anything or cheated another person?
Have I misused or damaged the property of others?
Have I been jealous of others – their looks, popularity, possessions, work?
Have I encouraged others to do wrong in any way?

3. Gospel Reflection Sunday 26th February is the First Sunday of Lent, Year A (Mt. 4:1-11).

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion. The following questions may be helpful: What does this mean to me? How does it make me feel? Do I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing? What images of God emerge for me? What do I think that God is saying in this text? What impact does this have on my life?

GOSPEL READING

Reader: The Lord be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him,

'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves'.



But he replied, *'Scripture says: 'Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'.*

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple.

'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for scripture says: 'He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone'.

Jesus said to him, *'Scripture also says: 'You must not put the Lord your God to the test'.*

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. *'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.'*

Then Jesus replied, *'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: 'You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'*

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.