



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

OFFICE OF WORSHIP

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TO: RCIA Team Leaders & Parish Representatives
FROM: Sue A. Huett, Director
RE: Rite of Election

On the first Sunday of Lent, churches throughout the world will celebrate the “rite of election.” As you are aware, this rite is among the last steps the catechumens and candidates take before they pass through the waters of Baptism, are sealed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, and take their place at the Eucharistic table. Like all of the liturgies of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, this “election” is rich in meaning for all who take part.

Because this is a day to celebrate, as on all festive occasions, it is a day to dress up. While trying to be sensitive to all situations, I would like to encourage you to simply ask the catechumens and candidates to dress modestly for this special occasion. Jeans, low-cut or high rise tops, and flip flop shoes or sandals would not be appropriate for the day.

Your catechumens and candidates have looked to you for direction throughout this time of preparation. It may be the first time they have visited the Cathedral, the mother Church of the diocese, or met with our Bishop. They may not know what type of clothing would be proper for an occasion such as this. Giving them some direction and suggestions regarding clothing that would be fitting for the day would simply be an extension of the commitment you have made to them and the responsibility you have of guiding a new Christian along the path of discipleship.

Thank you for preparing your catechumens and candidates for this exciting moment on their spiritual journey. I look forward to seeing you on February 21.

Peace and all good things.

WELCOME TO THE RITE OF ELECTION AND CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION!

In order to make this a joy-filled and meaningful event for everyone involved, a few reminders are provided for your information and comfort.

CATECHUMENS AND GODPARENTS

After the homily, the CATECHUMENS (*those who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil*) will be asked to stand. They will be presented to Bishop Braxton, who will ask them to come forward with their Godparent when their name is called. The Parish representatives will begin reading the names of the catechumens. When your parish name is announced, both catechumen and Godparent should move to the center aisle and begin proceeding to the bishop's chair where Bishop Braxton will be standing. If you are seated in a side aisle, you will still approach the Bishop by the center aisle. Please walk down the side aisle and move to the rear of the center aisle and then proceed up the center aisle. Please do not move from your pew until your parish name is called.

Godparents, as you proceed down the center aisle, place your hand on the right shoulder of your catechumen to direct and support them. When you come before Bishop Braxton, briefly introduce yourself and then your catechumen to him. You may greet the Bishop as "Bishop Braxton" or "Your Excellency" and then proceed with introductions. After the Bishop greets your catechumen, the catechumen will be guided by one of the Masters of Ceremony to stand in the sanctuary. **Godparents should return the same way they came by walking down the steps in the center of the sanctuary and returning to his/her pew by using the side aisle.**

Godparents and Catechumens, the appropriate response to "Peace be with you" or "Peace of Christ" is "And also with you."

Catechumens, when your Godparent introduces you to the Bishop, the appropriate greeting would be "Bishop Braxton" or "Your Excellency." During the Act of Election (after everyone has greeted the Bishop), Bishop Braxton will address you the first time by beginning with "And now, my dear catechumens. . ." He will ask you, "Therefore, do you wish to enter fully into the life of the Church through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist?" and **you will respond** "WE DO." Bishop Braxton will then say to all of you, "I now declare you to be members of the elect, to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the next Easter Vigil." **Your response** is "Thanks be to God."

CANDIDATES AND SPONSORS

After the catechumens/elect have returned to their seats, the CANDIDATES will be asked to stand. They will be presented to Bishop Braxton, who will ask them to come forward with their sponsor when their name is called. The Parish representatives will begin reading the names of the candidates. When your parish name is announced, both candidate and sponsor should move to the center aisle and begin proceeding to the bishop's chair where Bishop Braxton will be standing. If you are seated in a side aisle,

you will still approach the Bishop by the center aisle. Please walk down the side aisle and move to the rear of the center aisle and then proceed up the center aisle. Please do not move from your pew until your parish name is called.

Sponsors, as you proceed down the center aisle, place your hand on the right shoulder of your candidate to direct and support him/her. When you come before Bishop Braxton, briefly introduce yourself and then your candidate. You may greet the Bishop as “Bishop Braxton” or “Your Excellency” and then proceed with introductions. After the Bishop greets your candidate, the candidate will be guided by one of the Masters of Ceremony to stand in the sanctuary. **Sponsors should return the same way they came by walking down the steps in the center of the sanctuary and returning to his/her pew by using the side aisle.**

Sponsors and Candidates, when you greet Bishop Braxton and he says to you “Peace be with you” or “Peace of Christ” the appropriate response is “And also with you.”

Candidates, when your Sponsor introduces you to the Bishop, the appropriate greeting would be “Bishop Braxton” or “Your Excellency.” During the Act of Recognition (after everyone has greeted the Bishop), Bishop Braxton will say to all of you, “My dear candidates, the Church recognizes your desire to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and to have a place at Christ’s eucharistic table. Join with us this Lent in a spirit of repentance. Hear the Lord’s call to conversion and be faithful to your baptismal covenant.” **Your response** is “Thanks be to God.”

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Photographers should refrain from coming into the sanctuary before, during or after the rite. This area is reserved for prayer and liturgy. Anyone taking pictures should do so discreetly, so as not to distract others in the assembly. After the ceremony, pictures may be taken near the first step in the center aisle.
- Please refrain from chewing gum in the Cathedral and during the celebration.
- Traditionally, as the Bishop leaves the sanctuary and processes out, he blesses the assembly. The appropriate gesture in response to the Bishop’s blessing is to bless yourself with the Sign of the Cross.

