

Comparing the 2024 National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults with the 1986 National Statutes for the Catechumenate

By Nicholas Hardesty, Assoc. Dir. of Adult Evangelization & OCIA, Center for the New Evangelization, Archdiocese of Cincinnati

2024 and 1986 National Statutes Side-by-Side

2024 National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults	1986 National Statutes for the Catechumenate	Comments
Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate	Precatechumenate	The more descriptive titles reiterate that these are “periods”, not “stages,” as they are often called in everyday discussion, and perhaps also that “catechumenate” is no longer an appropriate umbrella term for the entire process.
<p>Norm 1 The evangelization of unbaptized persons during the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate will lead them through Scripture, prayer, and friendly conversation to an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ as the fullness of God’s revelation.</p>	<p>1 Any reception or service of welcome or prayer for inquirers at the beginning or during a precatechumenate (or in an earlier period of evangelization) must be entirely informal. Such meetings should take into account that the inquirers are not yet catechumens and that the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens, intended for those who have been converted from unbelief and have initial faith, may not be anticipated.</p>	<p>Each paragraph number now has the word “Norm” in front of it. This reminds us that the National Statutes are regulatory. These are instructions that must be followed, not just commentary or suggestion.</p>
<p>Norm 2 Early in the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate, a parochial minister will meet inquirers individually to hear of their “first faith” (see The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults [OCIA] 42), discern the continuing impact of their encounter with the Lord, and discuss any issues (e.g., an irregular marriage) that could affect their eventual celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.</p>		

Period of the Catechumenate	Catechumenate	
<p>Norm 3 The term “catechumen” is to be strictly reserved for the unbaptized who have entered the catechumenate and who are joined to the Church in a special way while they strive to lead a life of faith, hope, and charity (CIC c. 206 §1).</p>	<p>2 The term “catechumen” should be strictly reserved for the unbaptized who have been admitted into the order of catechumens; the term “convert” should be reserved strictly for those converted from unbelief to Christian belief and never used of those baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>	
<p>Norm 4 Ordinarily, a person who has entered the catechumenate is to remain in it from at least the Easter Time of one year until the beginning of the Easter Time of the next year; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.</p>	<p>3 This holds true even if elements of catechumenal formation are appropriate for those who are not catechumens, namely, (a) baptized Catholic Christians who have not received catechetical instruction and who Christian initiation has not been completed by confirmation and eucharist and (b) baptized Christians who have been members of another Church or ecclesial community and seek to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>	
<p>Norm 5 §1. As a general rule, the preparation of catechumens for the Sacraments of Initiation takes place in a parochial setting or its equivalent. §2. Catechumens prepared at a center, school, prison, or other institution are to be introduced into the Christian life of a parish or similar community, insofar as possible from the very beginning of the catechumenate, so that after their Initiation and Mystagogy they will not find themselves isolated from the ordinary life of the Christian people.</p>	<p>4 If the catechumenal preparation takes place in a non-parochial setting such as a center, school, or other institution, the catechumens should be introduced into the Christian life of a parish or similar community from the very beginning of the catechumenate, so that after their initiation and mystagogy they will not find themselves isolated from the ordinary life of the Christian people.</p>	
<p>Norm 6 The formation of catechumens is to be comprehensive. It is to be: 1° suited to the liturgical year and supported by the Church’s liturgy;</p>	<p>5 In the celebration of the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens, it is for the diocesan bishop to determine whether the additional rites listed in no. 74, <i>Rite of Christian</i></p>	

<p>2° rooted in Sacred Scripture, the truths of Catholic doctrine and the moral life, and aided by catechetical texts, such as the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>, texts based upon that Catechism, such as the <i>United States Catholic Catechism for Adults</i>, and other texts approved by the local ordinary;</p> <p>3° exercised in works of service and charity (OCIA 75).</p>	<p><i>Initiation of Adults</i>, are to be incorporated (see no. 33.5).</p>	
<p>Norm 7 While unbaptized persons in irregular marriages can enter the catechumenate, they are not to celebrate the Rite of Election until they are free to enter a canonical marriage.</p>	<p>6 The period of catechumenate, beginning at acceptance into the order of catechumens and including both the catechumenate proper and the period of purification and enlightenment after election or enrollment of names, should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation. Ordinarily this period should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.</p>	
<p>Norm 8 Upon entry into the catechumenate, catechumens incur the following obligations:</p> <p>1° They are to participate in the Liturgy of the Word, preferably on Sundays and other holy days of obligation, with the community if possible (see OCIA 81);</p> <p>2° They will continually purify their motivation for Baptism, live an upright life, and be ready to witness to their conversion to Christ, as they seek to grow in their knowledge of and assent to what the Church believes and teaches (CIC cc. 206 and 865 §1).</p>	<p>7 A thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life, aided by approved catechetical texts, is to be provided during the period of the catechumenate (see RCIA, no. 75).</p>	
<p>Norm 9 §1. In addition to the prerogatives granted in universal law (see CIC cc. 1170 and 1183 §1 and OCIA 47), catechumens may:</p>		

<p>1° participate in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church, especially works of mercy;</p> <p>2° take advantage of opportunities given to Catholic parents in the parish or region concerning the enrollment for their children in Catholic schools;</p> <p>3° be buried in a Catholic cemetery.</p> <p>§2. If it seems appropriate, the diocesan bishop can establish other prerogatives.</p>		
<p>Norm 10 It is praiseworthy that catechumens be dismissed from the liturgical assembly, at least on Sundays, after the Homily and before the Creed to reflect on the Word of God just proclaimed.</p>		
<p>Norm 11 Because liturgical ministries arise from Christian Baptism, it is inappropriate for catechumens to proclaim the Word of God or serve at the altar during the liturgy.</p>		
	Catechumens	
	<p>8 Catechumens should be encouraged to seek blessings and other suffrages from the church, since they are of the household of Christ; They are entitled to Christian burial should they die before the completion of their initiation.</p>	
	<p>9 In this case, the funeral liturgy, including the funeral mass, should be celebrated as usual, omitting only language referring directly to the sacraments which the catechumen has not received. In view of the sensibilities of the immediate family of the deceased catechumen, however, the funeral Mass may be omitted at the discretion of the pastor.</p>	
	<p>10 The marriages of catechumens, whether with other catechumens or with baptized</p>	

	Christians or even non-Christians, should be celebrated at a liturgy of the word and never at the eucharistic liturgy. Chapter III of the <i>Rite of Marriage</i> is to be followed, but the nuptial blessing in Chapter I, no. 33, may be used, all references to eucharistic sharing being omitted.	
	Minister of Baptism and Confirmation	
	11 The diocesan bishop is the proper minister of the sacraments of initiation for adults, including children of catechetical age, in accord with canon 852:1. If he is unable to celebrate the sacraments of initiation with all the candidates of the local church, he should at least celebrate the rite of election or enrollment of names, ordinarily at the beginning of Lent, for the catechumens of the diocese.	
	12 Priests who do not exercise a pastoral office but participate in a catechumenal program require a mandate from the diocesan bishop if they are to baptize adults; they then do not require any additional mandate or authorization in order to confirm, but have the faculty to confirm from the law, as do priests who baptize adults in the exercise of their pastoral office.	
	13 Since those who have the faculty to confirm are bound to exercise it in accord with canon 885.2, and may not be prohibited from using the faculty, a diocesan bishop who is desirous of confirming neophytes should reserve to himself the baptism of adults in accord with canon 863.	

	Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation	
	14 In order to signify clearly the interrelation or coalescence of the three sacraments which are required for full Christian initiation (canon 842:2), adult candidates, including children of catechetical age, are to receive baptism, confirmation, and eucharist in a single eucharistic celebration, whether at the Easter Vigil or, if necessary, at some other time.	
	15 Candidates for initiation, as well as those who assist them and participate in the celebration of the Easter Vigil with them, are encouraged to keep and extend the paschal fast of Good Friday, as determined by canon 1251, throughout the day of Holy Saturday until the end of the Vigil itself, in accord with the Constitution of the Liturgy, <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , art. 110.	
	16 The rite of anointing with the oil of catechumens is to be omitted in the baptism of adults at the Easter Vigil.	
	17 Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacraments and, therefore, provision should be made for its more frequent use in the baptism of adults. The provision of the <i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i> for partial immersion, namely, immersion of the candidate's head, should be taken into account.	
	Children of Catechetical Age	

	<p>18 Since children who have reached the use of reason are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon 852:1), their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the older catechumens.</p>	
	<p>19 Some elements of the ordinary catechetical instruction of baptized children before their reception of the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist may be appropriately shared with catechumens of catechetical age. Their condition and status as catechumens, however, should not be compromised or confused, nor should they receive the sacraments of initiation in any sequence other than that determined in the ritual of Christian initiation.</p>	
	<p>Abbreviated Catechumenate</p>	
	<p>20 The abbreviated catechumenate, which the diocesan bishop may permit only in individual and exceptional cases, as described in nos. 331-332 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, should always be as limited as possible. It should extend over a substantial and appropriate period of time. The rites prior to sacramental initiation should not be unduly compressed, much less celebrated on a single occasion. The catechumenate of persons who move from one parish to another or from one</p>	

	diocese to another should not on that account alone be abbreviated.	
	21 Candidates who have received their formation in an abbreviated catechumenate should receive the sacraments of Christian initiation at the Easter Vigil, if possible, together with candidates who have participated in the more extended catechumenate. They should also participate in the period of mystagogy, to the extent possible.	
Period of Purification and Enlightenment		
Norm 12 The Elect, as well as those who assist them and participate in the celebration of the Easter Vigil with them, are encouraged to keep and extend the paschal fast of Good Friday, as determined by CIC canon 1251, throughout the day of Holy Saturday until the end of the Vigil itself (see <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> 110, and OCIA 185/1).		The new statutes now contain a section on Purification and Enlightenment, which was absent from the previous version. This content was in the main body of the RCIA text, but it's now been isolated as a norm, perhaps out of a desire to see more Elect enter into the penitential character of the Triduum.
Period of Mystagogy	Mystagogy	
Norm 13 Following the Period of Mystagogy, and to the extent possible, neophytes may benefit from meeting periodically to deepen their Christian formation, especially through opportunities that enhance their participation in the life of the parish or similar community (see OCIA 244 and 245).	22 After the completion of their Christian initiation in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist, the neophytes should begin the period of mystagogy by participating in the principal Sunday eucharist of the community throughout the Easter season, which ends on Pentecost Sunday. They should do this as a body in company with their	

	godparents and those who have assisted in their Christian formation.	
	23 Under the moderation of the diocesan bishop, the mystagogy should embrace a deepened understanding of the mysteries of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist, and especially of the eucharist as the continuing celebration of faith and conversion.	
	24 After the immediate mystagogy or postbaptismal catechesis during the Easter season, the program for the neophytes should extend until the anniversary of Christian initiation, with at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community.	
	Uncatechized Adult Catholics	
	25 Although baptized adult Catholics who have never received catechetical instruction or been admitted to the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist are not catechumens, some elements of the usual catechumenal formation are appropriate to their preparation for the sacraments, in accord with the norms of the ritual, "Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist."	
	26 Although it is not generally recommended, if the sacramental initiation of such candidates is completed with confirmation and eucharist on the same occasion as the celebration of the full Christian initiation of candidates for baptism, the condition and status of those	

	already baptized should be carefully respected and distinguished.	
	27 The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation with candidates for confirmation and eucharist is to be carried out at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of confirmation and the eucharist. As part of the formation of such candidates, they should be encouraged in the frequent celebration of this sacrament.	
	28 Priests mentioned in canon 883:2 also have the faculty to confirm (a) in the case of the readmission to communion of a baptized Catholic who has been an apostate from the faith and also (b) in the case of a baptized Catholic who has without fault been instructed in a non-Catholic religion or adhered to a non-Catholic religion, but (c) not in the case of a baptized Catholic who without his or her fault never put the faith into practice.	
	29 In the instance mentioned in no. 28 c, in order to maintain the inter-relationship and sequence of confirmation and eucharist as defined in canon 842:2, priests who lack the faculty to confirm should seek it from the diocesan bishop, who may, in accord with canon 884:1, grant the faculty if he judges it necessary.	
	Reception into Full Catholic Communion	
	30 Those who have already been baptized in another Church or ecclesial community should not be treated as catechumens or so	

	<p>designated. Their doctrinal and spiritual preparation for reception into full Catholic communion should be determined according to the individual case, that is, it should depend on the extent to which the baptized person has led a Christian life within a community of faith and been appropriately catechized to deepen his or her inner adherence to the Church.</p>	
	<p>31 Those who have been baptized but have received relatively little Christian upbringing may participate in the elements of catechumenal formation so far as necessary and appropriate, but should not take part in rites intended for the unbaptized catechumens. They may, however, participate in celebrations of the word together with catechumens. In addition they may be included with uncatechized adult Catholics in such rites as may be appropriate among those included or mentioned in the ritual in Part II, 4, "Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist." The rites of presentation of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the book of the Gospels are not proper except for those who have received no Christian instruction and formation. Those baptized persons who have lived as Christians and need only instruction in the Catholic tradition and a degree of probation within the Catholic community should not be asked to undergo a full program parallel to the catechumenate.</p>	
	<p>32 The reception of candidates into the communion of the Catholic Church should</p>	

	<p>ordinarily take place at the Sunday Eucharist of the parish community, in such a way that it is understood that they are indeed Christian believers who have already shared in the sacramental life of the Church and are now welcomed into the Catholic eucharistic community upon their profession of faith and confirmation, if they have not been confirmed, before receiving the eucharist.</p>	
	<p>33 It is preferable that reception into full communion not take place at the Easter Vigil lest there be any confusion of such baptized Christians with the candidates for baptism, possible misunderstanding of or even reflection upon the sacrament of baptism celebrated in another Church or ecclesial community, or any perceived triumphalism in the liturgical welcome into the Catholic eucharistic community.</p>	
	<p>34 Nevertheless if there are both catechumens to be baptized and baptized Christians to be received into full communion at the Vigil, for pastoral reasons and in view of the Vigil's being the principal annual celebration of the Church, the combined rite is to be followed: "Celebration at the Easter Vigil of the Sacraments of Initiation and of the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church." A clear distinction should be maintained during the celebration between candidates for sacramental initiation and candidates for reception into full communion, and ecumenical sensitivities should be carefully respected.</p>	

	<p>35 The “Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church” respects the traditional sequence of confirmation before eucharist. When the bishop, whose office it is to receive adult Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, no. 481 [R8]) entrusts the celebration of the rite to a presbyter, the priest receives from the law itself (canon 883:2) the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it (canon 885:2); he may not be prohibited from exercising the faculty. The confirmation of such candidates for reception should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to the eucharist until they are confirmed. A diocesan bishop who is desirous of confirming those received into full communion should reserve the rite of reception to himself.</p>	
	<p>36 The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation with candidates for reception into full communion is to be carried out at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of the rite of reception. As part of the formation of such candidates, they should be encouraged in the frequent celebration of this sacrament.</p>	
	<p>37 There may be reasonable and prudent doubt concerning the baptism of such Christians which cannot be resolved after serious investigation into the fact and/or validity of baptism, namely, to ascertain whether the person was baptized with water and with the Trinitarian formula, and whether the minister and the recipient of the sacrament</p>	

	had the proper requisite intentions. If conditional baptism then seems necessary, this must be celebrated privately rather than at a public liturgical assembly of the community and with only those limited rites which the diocesan bishop determines. The reception into full communion should take place later at the Sunday Eucharist of the community.	
Registration of Initiation-Related Acts		
<p>Norm 14 §1. The register of those who have entered the catechumenate is to be kept in the parish archive.</p> <p>§2. In addition to those things required by OCIA 46, the pastor is to see that the date and place of birth of the catechumens are inscribed in the register.</p>		The bishops have added a section on proper record keeping. Some of this was in the former RCIA text, but some of it wasn't. Perhaps the bishops aren't happy with the current state of our record keeping!
<p>Norm 15 The Book of the Elect, in which the catechumens enroll their names in anticipation of the Sacraments of Initiation (OCIA 119), is to be kept in the archives of the parish or of the diocese, unless diocesan law directs otherwise.</p>		
<p>Norm 16 §1. The register of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church is to be kept in the parish archive.</p> <p>§2. In addition to those things required by OCIA 486, the pastor is to see that the date and place of birth of the candidate are inscribed in the register, with mention made of the minister, parents, sponsors, and the date and place of Reception into full communion.</p> <p>§3. If married, a notation of the spouse, date and place of marriage should be noted in the register. Any future marriage is also to be noted in the register.</p>		

Rites for Particular Circumstances		
<p>Norm 17 It is for the diocesan bishop:</p> <p>1° to appoint a qualified person to promote, direct, and coordinate the Christian Initiation of Adults in his diocese;</p> <p>2° to issue norms concerning the qualifications for and training of catechists;</p> <p>3° to approve the use of catechetical texts for the formation of catechumens and candidates for Reception into full communion (see Norm 6, 2° above);</p> <p>4° to issue norms for the Simpler Order of Adult Initiation and for the preparation of baptized but uncatechized adults for Confirmation and Eucharist and for the reception of validly baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>		<p>There’s also now a new section emphasizing the rights of the bishop. As we’ll see, almost all of this is new.</p>
<p>Norm 18 The term “convert” is reserved strictly for those converted to Christian belief and never used of those baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>		<p>I’m not sure why this was tacked on at the end, instead of added to Norm 3 on who is properly a “catechumen,” like the old statutes did.</p> <p>Also, note that there are now only 18 norms instead of 37. I imagine much of the minutiae that the older norms covered has been moved to the introductions (to the Rite itself, and to the Periods and Steps)</p>

Norms from the 2024 Statutes with at Least Some Parallel in the 1986 Statutes

Red Font indicates an element that is still new to the whole book, despite the parallel

Bold Font indicates an element that is new to the Norms, but not to the RCIA main text

Colored Font indicates where the parallels exist

2024 National Statutes	1986 National Statutes	Comments
<p>Norm 3 The term “catechumen” is to be strictly reserved for the unbaptized who have entered the catechumenate and who are joined to the Church in a special way while they strive to lead a life of faith, hope, and charity (CIC c. 206 §1).</p>	<p>2 The term “catechumen” should be strictly reserved for the unbaptized who have been admitted into the order of catechumens; [...]</p>	<p>The new norm does call this period “the catechumenate” instead of “the order of catechumens” here, but that is not a new phrase. Also, the RCIA text did indicate that catechumens are joined to the Church in a special way (no. 47) and striving to live a life of faith, hope, and charity (no. 75.2, 76), but it’s now in the norms.</p>
<p>Norm 4 Ordinarily, a person who has entered the catechumenate is to remain in it from at least the Easter Time of one year until the beginning of the Easter Time of the next year; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.</p>	<p>6 The period of catechumenate, beginning at acceptance into the order of catechumens and including both the catechumenate proper and the period of purification and enlightenment after election or enrollment of names, should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation. Ordinarily this period should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.</p>	<p>The new norm refers to the Easter “Time” instead of the Easter “season,” but the change is inconsequential.</p> <p>Also, the old norm indicated that the period of the catechumenate included the period of purification and enlightenment. The new norm has removed that clarification. But, I would think that, since the year should preferably begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year, that P&E would still be included.</p>
<p>Norm 5 §1. As a general rule, the preparation of catechumens for the Sacraments of Initiation takes place in a parochial setting or its equivalent. §2. Catechumens prepared at a center, school, prison, or other institution are to be introduced into the Christian life of a parish or similar</p>	<p>4 If the catechumenal preparation takes place in a non-parochial setting such as a center, school, or other institution, the catechumens should be introduced into the Christian life of a parish or similar community from the very beginning of the catechumenate, so that after their initiation and mystagogy they will not</p>	<p>I think the old norm implies that the parochial setting is the typical one when it tells us what to do if this is not the case. The new norm just makes this explicit.</p> <p>Also, since “prison” was added as a possible non-parochial setting, that probably</p>

<p>community, insofar as possible from the very beginning of the catechumenate, so that after their Initiation and Mystagogy they will not find themselves isolated from the ordinary life of the Christian people.</p>	<p>find themselves isolated from the ordinary life of the Christian people.</p>	<p>necessitated the “insofar as possible” regarding introduction into the life of the parish.</p>
<p>Norm 6 The formation of catechumens is to be comprehensive. It is to be:</p> <p>1° suited to the liturgical year and supported by the Church’s liturgy;</p> <p>2° rooted in Sacred Scripture, the truths of Catholic doctrine and the moral life, and aided by catechetical texts, such as the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>, texts based upon that Catechism, such as the <i>United States Catholic Catechism for Adults</i>, and other texts approved by the local ordinary;</p> <p>3° exercised in works of service and charity (OCIA 75).</p>	<p>7 A thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life, aided by approved catechetical texts, is to be provided during the period of the catechumenate (see RCIA, no. 75).</p>	<p>Before, the catechesis during the Catechumenate period was to be “thoroughly comprehensive.” Now, it’s just “comprehensive.”</p> <p>The new norm gives us examples of “approved catechetical texts.” It also indicates who approves them: the local ordinary.</p> <p>That the catechumen’s formation would be suited to the liturgical year and supported by the liturgy was indicated in RCIA 16; 75.1, 3, but it is explicit in the norms now. That it would be “rooted in Sacred Scripture” is inferred by RCIA 75.1, where it says that a suitable catechesis is “solidly supported by celebrations of the word,” but, this is spelled out in a norm now, too. Works of charity are not new to the RCIA text, (RCIA 75.2, 76) but they are to the norms. The phrase “works of service” is entirely new.</p>
<p>Norm 9 §1. In addition to the prerogatives granted in universal law (see CIC cc. 1170 and 1183 §1 and OCIA 47), catechumens may:</p> <p>1° participate in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church, especially works of mercy;</p> <p>2° take advantage of opportunities given to Catholic parents in the parish or region concerning the enrollment for their children in Catholic schools;</p>	<p>8 Catechumens should be encouraged to seek blessings and other suffrages from the church, since they are of the household of Christ; They are entitled to Christian burial should they die before the completion of their initiation.</p> <p>9 In this case, the funeral liturgy, including the funeral mass, should be celebrated as usual, omitting only language referring directly to the sacraments which the catechumen has not</p>	<p>The new norms introduce the phrase “works of mercy.” Even the word “mercy” does not exist in the RCIA text or statutes.</p> <p>Participation in apostolic and charitable works was in RCIA 75, 76, 78, but this is now an explicit norm. The special consideration for the children of catechumens is definitely new, and very pastoral. The authority of the bishop in §2. was probably understood, but this is explicit now.</p>

<p>3° be buried in a Catholic cemetery. §2. If it seems appropriate, the diocesan bishop can establish other prerogatives.</p>	<p>received. In view of the sensibilities of the immediate family of the deceased catechumen, however, the funeral Mass may be omitted at the discretion of the pastor.</p>	<p>The old norm included further instruction on the funeral liturgy for a catechumen, but this is absent from the new norm.</p>
<p>Norm 12 The Elect, as well as those who assist them and participate in the celebration of the Easter Vigil with them, are encouraged to keep and extend the paschal fast of Good Friday, as determined by CIC canon 1251, throughout the day of Holy Saturday until the end of the Vigil itself (see <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> 110, and OCIA 185/1).</p>	<p>15 Candidates for initiation, as well as those who assist them and participate in the celebration of the Easter Vigil with them, are encouraged to keep and extend the paschal fast of Good Friday, as determined by canon 1251, throughout the day of Holy Saturday until the end of the Vigil itself, in accord with the Constitution of the Liturgy, <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>, art. 110.</p>	<p>Note the change from “Candidates for initiation” to “The Elect.” This is a main feature of the OCIA, in which the term “candidate” is reserved for baptized, non-Catholic Christians and is no longer used to refer to catechumens preparing for a Step (or “major rite”).</p> <p>Note also that no. 185 in the OCIA is the same as no. 185 in the RCIA. The numbering of the paragraphs has not changed in the new translation.</p>
<p>Norm 13 Following the Period of Mystagogy, and to the extent possible, neophytes may benefit from meeting periodically to deepen their Christian formation, especially through opportunities that enhance their participation in the life of the parish or similar community (see OCIA 244 and 245).</p>	<p>24 After the immediate mystagogy or postbaptismal catechesis during the Easter season, the program for the neophytes should extend until the anniversary of Christian initiation, with at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community.</p>	<p>The new norm on ministry to neophytes reads as less obligatory. Instead of saying that the post-Mystagogy program for neophytes “should extend ... with at least monthly assemblies”, neophytes now “may benefit from meeting periodically.” The old norm also indicated how long these post-Mystagogy meetings should occur (“until the anniversary of Christian initiation”), but this has been removed in the new norms. Since this was the only place where consistent ministry during a “neophyte year” was mentioned, this is a big change.</p>
<p>Norm 18 The term “convert” is reserved strictly for those converted to Christian belief and never used of those baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>	<p>2 [...] the term “convert” should be reserved strictly for those converted from unbelief to Christian belief and never used of those baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>	<p>The elaboration in para. 3 regarding uncatechized, partially initiated Catholics and baptized Christians from other ecclesial communions has been removed, probably because Norm 18 covers them, too.</p>

	<p>3 This holds true even if elements of catechumenal formation are appropriate for those who are not catechumens, namely, (a) baptized Catholic Christians who have not received catechetical instruction and who Christian initiation has not been completed by confirmation and eucharist and (b) baptized Christians who have been members of another Church or ecclesial community and seek to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>	<p>The phrase “from unbelief” has been removed as well, probably because the connotation is “atheist,” whereas a Hindu or a Muslim does have belief, it’s just not Christian belief.</p>
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Norms from the 2024 National Statutes that Have No Parallel in the 1986 National Statutes, but at Least Some Parallel in the 1988 RCIA Text

Red Font indicates an element that is still new to the whole book, despite the parallel

Colored Font indicates where the parallels exist

2024 National Statutes	1988 RCIA Text	Comments
<p>Norm 1 The evangelization of unbaptized persons during the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate will lead them through Scripture, prayer, and friendly conversation to an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ as the fullness of God’s revelation.</p>	<p>RCIA 9.1 During the period of evangelization and precatechumenate, the faithful should remember that for the Church and its members the supreme purpose of the apostolate is that Christ’s message is made known to the world by word and deed and that his grace is communicated. They should therefore show themselves ready to give the candidates evidence of the spirit of the Christian community and to welcome them into their homes, into personal conversation, and into community gatherings.</p> <p>RCIA 38 During this period, priest and deacons, catechists and other laypersons are to give the candidates a suitable explanation of the Gospel (see no. 42). [...].</p> <p>RCIA 40 During the precatechumenate period, parish priests (pastors) should help those taking part in it with prayers suited to them, for example, by celebrating for their spiritual well-being the prayers of exorcism and the blessings given in the ritual (nos. 94, 97).</p> <p>RCIA 42 [...] Thus there must be evidence of the first faith that was conceived during the period of evangelization and precatechumenate and of an initial conversion and intention to change</p>	<p>The focus on prayer, friendly conversation, and an encounter with Jesus is not new to the RCIA text, but the focus on Scripture is unique. There’s no mention of the Bible in the RCIA until the Catechumenate period. But, this is probably not new to the typical RCIA experience. Since the encounter is with Jesus “as the fullness of God’s revelation,” I would think that the “leading through Scripture” would consist of leading inquirers through the Story of Salvation History, which is a common feature of the Precatechumenate in practice.</p>

	<p>their lives and to enter into a relationship with God in Christ. Consequently, there must also be evidence of the first stirrings of repentance, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church, and some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with a priest or with members of the community. [...]</p>	
<p>Norm 2 Early in the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate, a parochial minister will meet inquirers individually to hear of their “first faith” (see The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults [OCIA] 42), discern the continuing impact of their encounter with the Lord, and discuss any issues (e.g., an irregular marriage) that could affect their eventual celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.</p>	<p>RCIA 42 The prerequisite for making this first step is that the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidates. Thus there must be evidence of the first faith that was conceived during the period of evangelization and precatechumenate and of an initial conversion and intention to change their lives and to enter into a relationship with God in Christ. Consequently, there must also be evidence of the first stirrings of repentance, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church, and some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with a priest or with members of the community. [...]</p> <p>RCIA 43 Before the rite is celebrated, therefore, sufficient and necessary time, as required in each case, should be set aside to evaluate and, if necessary, to purify the candidates’ motives and dispositions. With the help of the sponsors (see no. 10), catechists, and deacons, parish priests (pastors) have the responsibility for judging the outward indications of such dispositions. [...]</p>	<p>What we’re basically talking about here is a “threshold conversation”! This is in the RCIA text, if you look hard enough, but it’s good to see it isolated now as a norm.</p> <p>As for the new part, beginners to initiation ministry typically learn the hard way the importance of checking for canonical issues at the beginning of the process. It’s good to have this finally spelled out as a norm, and surprising to learn that it was never mentioned in the RCIA text or in the 1986 Statutes.</p>

<p>Norm 8 Upon entry into the catechumenate, catechumens incur the following obligations:</p> <p>1° They are to participate in the Liturgy of the Word, preferably on Sundays and other holy days of obligation, with the community if possible (see OCIA 81);</p> <p>2° They will continually purify their motivation for Baptism, live an upright life, and be ready to witness to their conversion to Christ, as they seek to grow in their knowledge of and assent to what the Church believes and teaches (CIC cc. 206 and 865 §1).</p>	<p>RCIA 75 The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life. In this way, the dispositions manifested at their acceptance into the catechumenate are brought to maturity. This is achieved in four ways.</p> <p>1. A suitable catechesis is provided by priests or deacons, or by catechists and others of the faithful, planned to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word. This catechesis leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate.</p> <p>2. As they become familiar with the Christian way of life and are helped by the example and support of sponsors, godparents, and the entire Christian community, the catechumens learn to turn more readily to God in prayer, to bear witness to the faith, in all things to keep their hopes set on Christ, to follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds, and to practice love of neighbor, even at the cost of self-renunciation. [...] Since this transition brings with it a progressive change of outlook and conduct, it should become manifest by means of its social consequences and it should develop gradually during the period of the catechumenate. [...]</p> <p>3. The Church, like a mother, helps the catechumens on their journey by means of suitable liturgical rites, which purify the</p>	<p>Previously, the only mention of “obligation” concerned “all the followers of Christ” who “have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities” (RCIA 9) and priests with the faculty to confirm, who are “obliged to us it” in the Rite of Reception into Full Communion (NS 1986, no. 35). Now catechumens incur obligations upon entry into the Catechumenate period. This is new, and it reinforces the increased expectations we place on people as they progress through the process.</p> <p>Regarding the obligations in question, before, the onus was on the initiation ministers to ensure that the different color-coded actions would occur, but now the onus appears to be on the catechumen!</p> <p>Also, regarding the Liturgy of the Word, before it was said that they “may” participate with the faithful (RCIA 75.3), but now, they are obliged to, they “are to” participate, and with the community “if possible,” which is a new caveat. Holy Days of Obligation are now included as well, instead of just on Sunday.</p>
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	<p>catechumens little by little and strengthen them with God’s blessing. Celebrations of the word of God are arranged for their benefit, and at Mass they may also take part with the faithful in the liturgy of the word, thus better preparing themselves for their eventual participation in the liturgy of the eucharist. [...]</p> <p>4. Since the Church’s life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith.</p> <p>RCIA 76 The time spent in the catechumenate should be long enough — several years if necessary — for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong. By their formation in the entire Christian life and a sufficiently prolonged probation the catechumens are properly initiated into the mysteries of salvation and the practice of an evangelical way of life. By means of sacred rites celebrated at successive times they are led into the life of faith, worship, and charity belonging to the people of God.</p> <p>RCIA 81 During the period of the catechumenate there should be celebrations of the word of God [...] These celebrations of the word are: first, celebrations held specially for the catechumens; second, participation in the liturgy of the word at the Sunday Mass; [...]</p>	
<p>Norm 10 It is praiseworthy that catechumens be dismissed from the liturgical assembly, at least on Sundays, after the Homily and before</p>	<p>RCIA 75.3 [...] Ordinarily, however, when they are present in the assembly of the faithful they should be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of</p>	<p>With the new norms, it’s obligatory that they would participate in the Liturgy of the Word, but only “praiseworthy” that they would be</p>

<p>the Creed to reflect on the Word of God just proclaimed.</p>	<p>the eucharist begins (unless their dismissal would present practical or pastoral problems) [...]</p> <p>RCIA 83 From the very beginning of the period of the catechumenate the catechumens should be taught to keep holy the Lord's Day.</p> <p>1. Care should be taken that some of the special celebrations of the word just mentioned (no. 82) are held on Sunday, so that the catechumens will become accustomed to taking an active and practiced part in these celebrations.</p> <p>2. Gradually the catechumens should be admitted to the first part of the celebration of the Sunday Mass. After the liturgy of the word they should, if possible, be dismissed, but an intention for them is included in the general intercessions.</p> <p>RCIA 85 For the celebrations of the word of God that are held specially for the benefit of the catechumens, the following structure may be used as a model.</p> <p>RCIA 88 Homily: A brief homily that explains and applies the readings should be given.</p>	<p>dismissed afterward. Before, this was "ordinarily" what would happen.</p> <p>Also, in the RCIA you had to connect a lot of dots to get to what the catechumens would actually do after the dismissal. Basically, since "care should be taken that some of the celebrations of the word ... are held on Sunday," it made sense to do this once the catechumens were dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word on Sunday. Now, it is spelled out: they are dismissed "to reflect on the Word of God just proclaimed." While this is not <i>technically</i> new (celebrations of the word include "A brief homily that explains and applies the readings"), it is very helpful.</p>
<p>Norm 14 §1. The register of those who have entered the catechumenate is to be kept in the parish archive.</p> <p>§2. In addition to those things required by OCIA 46, the pastor is to see that the date and place of birth of the catechumens are inscribed in the register.</p>	<p>RCIA 46 After the celebration of the rite of acceptance, the names of the catechumens are to be duly inscribed in the register of catechumens, along with the names of the sponsors and the minister and the date and place of the celebration.</p>	<p>We have a new set of information that has to be recorded in the register for catechumens now. That's good to know. These registers now also have to be kept in a parish archive.</p>

<p>Norm 15 The Book of the Elect, in which the catechumens enroll their names in anticipation of the Sacraments of Initiation (OCIA 119), is to be kept in the archives of the parish or of the diocese, unless diocesan law directs otherwise.</p>	<p>RCIA 119 [...] 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.</p>	<p>The importance of a parish (or, in this case, diocesan) archive is repeated.</p>
<p>Norm 16 §1. The register of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church is to be kept in the parish archive. §2. In addition to those things required by OCIA 486, the pastor is to see that the date and place of birth of the candidate are inscribed in the register, with mention made of the minister, parents, sponsors, and the date and place of Reception into full communion. §3. If married, a notation of the spouse, date and place of marriage should be noted in the register. Any future marriage is also to be noted in the register.</p>	<p>RCIA 486 The names of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church should be recorded in a special book, with the date and place of their baptism also noted.</p>	<p>My sense is that most parishes don't have a "register for those received into full communion," so it's helpful to have this as a norm. There's a lot of new information to record now and, as with the previous register, this one is to be kept in the parish archive.</p>
<p>Norm 17 It is for the diocesan bishop: 1° to appoint a qualified person to promote, direct, and coordinate the Christian Initiation of Adults in his diocese; 2° to issue norms concerning the qualifications for and training of catechists; 3° to approve the use of catechetical texts for the formation of catechumens and candidates for Reception into full communion (see Norm 6, 2° above) 4° to issue norms for the Simpler Order of Adult Initiation and for the preparation of baptized but uncatechized adults for Confirmation and Eucharist and for the</p>	<p>RCIA 12 The bishop, in person or through his delegate, sets up, regulates, and promotes the program of pastoral formation for catechumens and admits the candidates to their election and to the sacraments. [...] Finally, when pastoral care requires, the bishop should depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to celebrate the minor exorcisms (nos. 90-94) and the blessings of the catechumens (nos. 95-97). RCIA 16 Catechists, who have an important office for the progress of the catechumens and for the growth of the community, should, whenever possible, have an active part in the</p>	<p>Para. 7 from the 1986 NS mentions "approved catechetical texts," but it doesn't say that the diocesan bishop approves them (as opposed to the USCCB Doctrinal Committee). While surely understood, it's nowhere mentioned in the RCIA that the bishop has the authority to determine the formation program for those who have already been baptized, so that is added to the new norms as well. In RCIA 77, no. "369" is a mistake in the RCIA text. It's supposed to be "339."</p>

<p>reception of validly baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church.</p>	<p>rites. When deputed by the bishop (see no. 12), they may perform the minor exorcisms and blessings contained in the ritual.</p> <p>RCIA 34 It pertains to the bishop for his own diocese:</p> <p>1. to set up the formation program of the catechumenate and to lay down norms according to local needs (see no. 12); [...]</p> <p>4. to permit the simple rite to be used in whole or in part (see no. 331); [...]</p> <p>5. to depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to give the exorcisms and blessings (see nos. 12, 16);</p> <p>RCIA 77 It is the responsibility of the bishop to fix the duration and to direct the program of the catechumenate. [...] At the discretion of the bishop, on the basis of the spiritual preparation of the candidate, the period of the catechumenate may in particular cases be shortened (see nos. 331-335); in altogether extraordinary cases the catechumen ate may be completed all at once (see nos. 332, 336-369).</p>	
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Norms from the 2024 National Statutes with no Parallel in the 1988 RCIA Text or the 1986 National Statutes

Norm 7 While unbaptized persons in irregular marriages can enter the catechumenate, they are not to celebrate the Rite of Election until they are free to enter a canonical marriage.

Norm 11 Because liturgical ministries arise from Christian Baptism, it is inappropriate for catechumens to proclaim the Word of God or serve at the altar during the liturgy.