



RECEPTION INTO THE FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Implementation of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) – Chapter VI

FOR THE BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN NON-CATHOLIC

By the sacrament of baptism, one is truly incorporated into Christ and into his Church and is reborn to a sharing of the divine life. Baptism is the beginning in acquiring the fullness of life in Christ. Therefore, it is ordered to the profession of faith, to the full integration into the economy of salvation, and to Eucharistic communion. Jesus, Himself, instituted the sacrament of baptism, by which one participates in the mystery of his death and resurrection. Furthermore, it involves conversion, faith, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of grace.

A baptized Christian is received into the Catholic Church as the result of a personal journey pursued in freedom according to a person's conscience and deepest desires. Thus, "[e]very Christian has the right for conscientious religious reasons, freely to decide to come into full Catholic communion. The work of preparing the reception of an individual who wishes to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church is of its nature distinct from ecumenical activity. The [Order] of Christian Initiation of Adults provides a formula for receiving such persons into full Catholic communion. However, the Catholic authority may consider it necessary to inquire as to whether the baptism already received was validly celebrated. The following recommendations should be observed in carrying out this inquiry.

- a) There is no doubt about the validity of baptism as conferred in the various Eastern Churches. It is enough to establish the fact of the baptism. In these Churches the sacrament of confirmation (chrismation) is properly administered by the priest at the same time as baptism. There it often happens that no mention is made of confirmation in the canonical testimony of baptism. This does not give grounds for doubting that this sacrament was also conferred.
- b) With regard to Christians from other Churches and ecclesial Communities, before considering the validity of baptism of an individual Christian, one should determine whether an agreement on baptism has been made by the Churches and ecclesial Communities of the regions or localities involved and whether baptism has in fact been administered according to this agreement. It should be noted, however, that the absence of a formal agreement about baptism should not automatically lead to doubt about the validity of baptism.
- c) With regard to these Christians, where an official ecclesiastical attestation (e.g. Agreements between the Catholic Church and the Anglicans, Lutherans, or Episcopalians) given, there is no reason for doubting the validity of the baptism conferred in their Churches and ecclesial Communities unless, in a particular case, an examination clearly shows that a serious reason exists for having a doubt about one of the following: the matter and form and words used in the conferral of baptism, the intention of an adult baptized or the minister of the baptism.
- d) If, even after careful investigation, a serious doubt persists about the proper administration of the baptism and it is judged necessary to baptize conditionally, the Catholic minister should show proper



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regard for the doctrine that baptism may be conferred only once by explaining to the person involved, both why in this case he is baptizing conditionally and what is the significance of the rite of conditional baptism. Furthermore, the rite of conditional baptism is to be carried out in private and not in public.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, no. 99).

Who:

Baptized non-Catholic (Candidate) who received the valid sacrament of Baptism in a non-Catholic church and who now seeks to become Catholic (to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church):

- A person that was validly baptized (typically with water and the Trinitarian formula: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"), and was not baptized in the Catholic Church (e.g., from Protestant, Anglican, Evangelical, or Orthodox backgrounds),
- Now desire full union with the Catholic Church, embracing Her teachings, sacraments, the Pope's authority, and the Creed.
- They are **NOT** catechumens since they are already baptized. Instead, they are:
 - Candidates for Full Communion, or
 - Simply referred to as candidates in the OCIA process (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults).

Formation Process:

Where pastoral resources permit, the formation and act of reception of baptized Christians should be done apart from those seeking all three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (catechumens).

In fact, the formation process may be divided (and adapted when permitted), into three different age groups:

- Children Initiation process should include children 7 – 12 years old.
- Teens Initiation process should include children 13 – 17 years old.
- Adult Initiation process (18 years old and older).

Candidates for Reception are to be received when they are deemed ready. In other words, there is no prescribed timeline of when candidates are received into full communion. Each case is different: some may require the same formation as catechumens, or others may require very little additional catechesis (OCIA, 473).

Candidates' needs in preparation should be carefully assessed by those in charge of their formation, and a formation process should be constructed so that it attends to the needs of each individual being received. In other words, formation should be personalized, adapted to each person (OCIA nos. 477, 478).

If a parish is not able to provide a separate formation process different from those seeking baptism (catechumens)—those to be received into full communion into the Catholic Church (candidates), and uncatechized adults (candidates) seeking First Communion and Confirmation—the parish formators must work extra hard to ensure the distinction between groups is maintained.

What Does "Reception into Full Communion" Involve?

Candidates undergo:

- Catechesis (formation in Catholic teaching)



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- Participation in the rites
 - Rite of Welcoming the candidates (OCIA, 411).
 - Rite of Calling to Continued Conversion.
 - Candidates do not sign the Book of the Elect
 - Candidates are not dismissed during Masses.
- Sacramental Confession (prior to reception),
- Profession of Faith (public affirmation of the Catholic faith),
- Receive Confirmation and First Holy Communion at the same Mass.

Confirmation within Ecclesial Communities:

“In the present state of our relations with the ecclesial Communities of the Reformation of the 16th century, we have not yet reached agreement about the significance or sacramental nature or even of the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore, under present circumstances, persons entering into full communion with the Catholic Church from one of these Communities are to receive the sacrament of Confirmation according to the doctrine and rite of the Catholic Church before being admitted to Eucharistic communion” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, no. 101).

When:

The individual is received into Full Communion of the Catholic Church by making a **Profession of Faith** (see OCIA, 473-486, 491-492), celebrates, and receives the sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion at the same Mass any Sunday, especially during the Easter Season. The Easter Vigil should be avoided for this celebration.

The reception of baptized Christians should clearly be distinguished from the those seeking the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (catechumens) because those being received have already become members of the Body of Christ through their baptism.

Timing of Rites

- Reception can occur at any time of year—especially to take place on a Solemnity or on a Sunday. When it takes place at a weekday Mass, the *Mass for the Unity of Christians* may be used (no. 17. For the Unity of Christians, Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions, *Roman Missal*)
- Rubrics support celebration outside Lent (OCIA nos. 442, 448, 451, 453–455, 469).
- Liturgical prayers may optionally include Lenten references.

Minister of the Sacraments:

The sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion are to be administered by a parish priest with faculties in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

By law, the priest who administers the Profession of Faith then confirms the candidate. In other words, the priest does not need to seek delegation from the bishop in order to confirm.



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Additionally:

The sacrament of Penance is celebrated at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist (see OCIA, 482).

Sacramental Records:

Information about the individual, the date and celebrant of reception into full communion should be recorded by the parish in the Confirmation, Communion (if applicable), and Reception into Full Communion Church Registers.

ORDER OF RECEPTION WITHIN MASS (OCIA, 487–498)

Introductory Rites

- Entrance hymn, Sign of the Cross, Penitential Act or Sprinkling Rite, Gloria (if it is prescribed by the liturgical day when it is celebrated), Collect

Liturgy of the Word

- The biblical readings may be taken from the Mass of the day when the Reception is celebrated, or Mass for the Unity of Christians, or The Ritual Mass for Christian Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil (OCIA, no. 488)
- Homily connects readings to the candidate's journey.

Celebration of Reception (after Homily)

Invitation (490):

- After the homily, the priest invites candidates forward.
- Celebrant: "Would the candidate(s) for full communion in the Catholic Church please come forward with their sponsor(s)."

The welcoming of the candidate by the presider and the name of the community and the profession of faith is what confer a new ecclesial identity on the candidate.

Profession of Faith (491):

- They proclaim the Profession of Faith (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed) ... **"I believe in one God..."**
- After profession candidates continue with the following statement: **"I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God."**

Formula for Reception (492):

- Celebrant: "N., the Lord receives you into the Catholic Church. His loving kindness has led you here, so that in the unity of the Holy Spirit you may have full communion with us in the faith that you have professed in the presence of his family."



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Celebration of Confirmation (493-494):

- Laying on of hands and anointing with Sacred Chrism:
 - "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - Response: "Amen."
- Sponsors accompany candidates and may place a hand on their shoulder.
- Exchange of peace.

Celebrant's Sign of Welcome (Handshake) (495)

Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

Some of the petitions should be tailored to the experience of the one being received. See examples in OCIA, 496.

Liturgy of the Eucharist (498)

- Mass proceeds as usual.
- Newly received Catholics participate fully in the Eucharist. During the Offertory, the newly received members may be invited to bring up the gifts of bread, wine, and food for the poor.

Holy Communion (485-486):

- The candidates receive the Eucharist for the first time as Catholics.
- Both Eucharistic species, if possible, should be offered.
- Before the *Agnus Dei*, the celebrant may address the fully received members with the following: **"May the Body and Blood of Christ the Lord, help you to grow deeper in his friendship and communion with the entire Church: may it be your constant food for the journey of life and a foretaste of the eternal banquet of heaven."**
- Behold the Lamb of God...

It is the reception of the Eucharist that sacramentally manifests the fullness of "full communion."

Concluding Rite

Valid Baptism Reference:

<https://lacatholics.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Valid-Invalid-Baptisms-Revised-February-2025.pdf>

Conditional Baptism:

In regards for conditional baptism, please see OCIA resource page at <https://lacatholics.org/ocia-resources/>