

WALKING IN FAITH - RITE OF ELECTION FOR OUR CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATE

On Sunday, February 14, our catechumens (those preparing for Baptism) and candidate (Baptized Christian preparing for first Communion and Confirmation) will join hundreds of fellow catechumens and candidates from throughout the Archdiocese to celebrate the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion with Cardinal Séan O'Malley at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston. This Rite marks an important step in their preparation to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

Their journey began when, in response to God's call, they began to consider their relationship with God and inquired about becoming members of the Catholic Church. This initial step is known as the period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate; our catechumens began their formal catechesis in this period by starting their weekly meetings with our RCIA team last October.

The next step, known as the Period of the Catechumenate, took place December 20th, when Bishop Hennessey visited our Parish to celebrate the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens at the 11:30am Sunday Mass. The Bishop greeted our Catechumens and their sponsors at the entrance of the Church, introduced them to the assembly, and processed with them to the steps of the Sanctuary. He asked them to publically declare that they were prepared to begin their journey of faith, allowing Christ to lead them, and invited their sponsors and the assembly to accompany them on their journey. He then prayed over them, as their sponsors made the sign of the cross on their foreheads, eyes, ears, lips, hands, shoulders, and feet, as a sign of their new way of life.

This Sunday opens the final preparatory period in the RCIA, with the celebration of the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion which is traditionally celebrated throughout the world on the First Sunday of Lent in each Diocesan cathedral, with the bishop presiding. In our Archdiocese, there are so many catechumens and candidates that there will be two celebrations, with the Central and Merrimack Regions at 1:30 pm and the remaining regions at 4:00 pm.

At this celebration, the catechumens will publically declare their desire for Baptism and the candidates their desire as baptized Christians to become members of the Church and Cardinal Sean will invite the catechumens to each sign their names in the *Book of the Elect*, signifying their "election" by the Church to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. At this point they become known as "the elect." The candidates will also be invited forward where Cardinal Sean will give thanks for their conversion to the Catholic Church and pray over them and their sponsors.

Please continue to pray for our catechumens, **Ruth Canonico, and Anthony and Julian Sanchez**, and our candidate **Mareidith Guerrieri** and all catechumens and candidates throughout the world as they enter this final stage of preparation for reception of the Sacraments of Initiation.

