

## RCIA AND THE RITE OF ELECTION



On Sunday, February 14th, our catechumens joined hundreds of fellow catechumens and candidates at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston to celebrate the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. The celebration was presided over by Cardinal Séan Francis O'Malley who was assisted, among others, by St. Augustine's own Dcn. Lou Piazza and altar server Leah Dennett. In his homily, Cardinal Séan noted that the catechumens were joining over 150,000 other catechumens in the 200 cathedrals throughout the country celebrating the Rite on this day and reminded those present that Lent is a time to prepare not just for Baptism and the renewal of Baptismal vows, but for eternal life. He encouraged the catechumens to be disciples of the Lord and to bring God's loving mercy into a broken world.

During the Celebration of Election, each catechumen was called by forward name to the foot of the Sanctuary accompanied by their Godparents. The Godparents testified that the catechumens had listened to God's Word proclaimed by the Church, begun to walk in God's presence and shared with their Christian brothers and sisters in prayer. The Cardinal then asked the assembly for their prayerful support and he asked the catechumens to confirm their desire to enter into the life of the Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. After affirmation on all counts, the Cardinal declared the Church's "election" of the catechumens and invited them to offer their names for enrollment in the *Book of the Elect*.

By signing the *Book of the Elect*, with their Godparent's hand on their shoulder, the catechumens, now known as the "elect", enter the final stage of the RCIA, the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. The focus of this period will transition from catechesis to reflection, as the elect are encouraged to prayerfully examine their lives to discern their need for repentance and to reject sin in preparation for accepting God's mercy and grace. As we continue to accompany our elect on their journey to the sacraments of initiation, let us continue to keep in our prayers all of the elect and candidates throughout the country and the world.