

CHAPTER 22

Services for a New Beginning

Rites marking transition into stages of the catechumenal process

A Service of Welcome and Admission of Catechumens

The admission of catechumens may take place at any time of the year, within the principal Sunday Eucharist.

This rite may be adapted to the particular circumstances.

After the sermon (or after the Affirmation of Faith) the presider uses these or other appropriate words.

God calls us to fullness of life in Christ.

Therefore let us welcome N,N who come to join us in following the good news of Jesus Christ.

Those to be admitted as catechumens come forward with their companions. The presider addresses the candidates who respond individually as their name is called.

Presider What do you seek?

Candidate Life in Christ.

The presider then continues addressing the candidates using these or other appropriate words. The candidates respond together.

Presider This is eternal life:
to know the one true God
and Jesus Christ whom God has sent.
God gives the light of life
to everyone who comes into this world
and promises that all who seek God will find God.

Either

Presider As you seek life in Christ, will you share in worshipping God regularly with us and explore the life and mission of God's people?

Candidates Yes, I will.

Presider Will you be attentive to the scriptures and to God's living word in Jesus Christ?

Candidates I will, with God's help.

Or

Presider How then will you seek life in Christ?

Candidates I will share in worshipping God regularly with you all and explore the life and mission of God's people.

With God's help I will be attentive to the scriptures and to God's living word in Jesus Christ.

The presider then continues by addressing the companions

Will you who companion *these persons* encourage *them* by prayer and example?

The companions respond

Yes, I will.

The presider says to the congregation

Will you the members of _____ offer them your support?

People **We will, with God's help.**

The presider says

Let us pray for these persons (N,N) in silence.

Those to be admitted may kneel. The companions remain standing, and place a hand upon the shoulder of the one they are companioning. The congregation prays in silence for the candidates and the presider may lay hands on the head of each candidate in turn. Then with hands extended over the candidates the presider says these or other appropriate words.

Blessed are you God, our gracious Creator,
you put the desire into our hearts
to seek the fullness of life in Christ.
Strengthen your servants (N,N) by your Holy Spirit
to grow in your knowledge, love, and service.
We ask this in the name of Jesus
who is alive with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

The presider marks a cross on the forehead of each candidate, saying

N, receive the sign of the cross on your forehead and in your heart, in the name of God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Giver of Life. **Amen.**

The companions also mark a cross on the foreheads of the one they are companioning.

The catechumens may be welcomed informally with applause as appropriate. They may be presented with a Bible (with words such as "Receive the Good News of Jesus Christ"), or other gifts may be given. Someone may speak on behalf of the congregation.

The catechumens and companions then return to their places.

The Eucharist continues with the Prayers of the People which includes prayer for the new catechumens by name.

This rite may be adapted to take place at the entrance of the church at the beginning of the Gathering of the Community.

It may be appropriate for some candidates to give personal witness to their faith immediately following the first question and answer. If any of the candidates, after consultation with the parish priest, wishes to renounce a former way of worship, an appropriately worded renunciation may be included at that point.

Enrolment of Candidates for Baptism

The enrolment of candidates for baptism at the Great Vigil of Easter normally takes place on the First Sunday in Lent.

This rite may be adapted to the particular circumstances.

After the sermon (or after the Affirmation of Faith) the presider uses these or other appropriate words.

E te whanau a te Karaiti / Dear friends in Christ.

God is love, God gives us life.

We love because God first loves us.

In baptism God declares that love;

in Christ God calls us to respond.

Therefore let us welcome N,N who come to be received as candidates for Holy Baptism.

The catechumens to be enrolled come forward with their companions. A Catechist, or other lay representative of the congregation, presents them with the following or other suitable words.

I present *these catechumens* (N,N) who *have* been strengthened by God's Spirit and encouraged by the example and prayers of this congregation, and I ask that *they* be accepted as *candidates* for baptism. *They have* shared in worshipping God regularly with us and explored the faith and mission of God's people.

The presider asks the companions

Are they seeking by prayer, study, and example to follow the good news of Jesus Christ?

The companions reply

They are.

The presider addresses the catechumens who may respond individually as their name is called.

Presider Do you desire to be baptised?

Catechumen Yes, I do.

The presider says to the people

E te whanau/ People of God,
are you willing that *these persons* (N,N) be *candidates* for baptism?

People **We are.**
In the name of God
we welcome you as candidates for baptism.

The candidates publicly write their names in the book in which the candidates for baptism are recorded. This may be the baptism register which will be completed at the baptism. Each name may be said aloud at the time of writing. The companions may also sign the book. The companions normally will be the sponsors at the baptism.

The candidates remain together at the front of the church while the deacon, or other person appointed, leads the following or other appropriate Prayers of the People.

Gracious God, we pray for *these candidates for baptism* (N,N), that *they* may remember with thanksgiving this day when *they* were chosen.

God of love
grant our prayer.

Fountain of wisdom, we pray for their companion(s) and all those who will journey with *these candidates*, that together they may share the riches of the Word of God and follow the good news of Jesus Christ.

God of love

grant our prayer.

God our companion, we pray for *the families* and friends of *these candidates* that they may help *them* to follow the leading of the Spirit.

God of love

grant our prayer.

God of renewal, we pray for this congregation, that during this Lenten season we may all grow in love and persevere in prayer.

God of love

grant our prayer.

Covenant God, we pray for N our bishop, and for all Christian people.

God of love

grant our prayer.

God our creator, we pray for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority.

God of love

grant our prayer.

Compassionate God, we pray for the sick and the suffering, and for those in need.

God of love

grant our prayer.

Faithful God, we pray for all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for those whose faith is known to you alone.

God of love

grant our prayer.

In union with (N and) all the saints, we commit ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ our God. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

The presider says

Let us pray for *these candidates* (N,N) in silence.

The companions place a hand upon the shoulder of the one they are companioning. The congregation prays in silence for the candidates and the presider may lay hands on the head of each candidate in turn. Then with hands extended over the candidates the presider says these or other appropriate words.

Blessed are you, caring God,
the fountain of all life and goodness.
You come to us before we turn to you
and run to meet us when we seek you.
Pour your abundant grace on your *servants* (N,N)
who *thirst* for new birth
by water and the Spirit
and help us all to know our need for you.
Praise be to you, O Holy One,
who was, and is, and shall be for ever and ever.
Amen.

The candidates may be welcomed informally with gifts and applause as appropriate. Someone may speak on behalf of the congregation.

The candidates and companions then return to their places.

The Eucharist continues with the Ministry of the Sacrament.

It may be appropriate for some catechumens to give personal witness to their faith immediately following the question and answer, "Do you desire to be baptised? Yes, I do."

Additional Directions

It is appropriate that the Apostles' (or Nicene) Creed be given to the candidates for baptism on the Third Sunday in Lent. The Apostles' Creed is preferable as it is recited on the occasion of their baptism at the Great Vigil of Easter.

Immediately after the sermon, the candidates and their companions are called forward. The candidates may kneel or bow their heads. The companions place a hand upon the shoulder of the one they are companionshiping.

One of the catechists says

Let the candidate(s) for baptism now receive the Creed from the Church.

The people and presider say the Creed standing. The presider concludes

May God remain with you always. **Amen.**

The candidates and companions may be prayed for and then return to their places or they are dismissed.

It is appropriate that the Lord's Prayer be given to the candidates for baptism on the Fifth Sunday in Lent in a similar way. The Lord's prayer may be given with the words

As Christ teaches us we pray

Our Father...

A Celebration of New Beginnings in Faith

This rite may take place at any time of the year, within the principal Sunday Eucharist. It is provided for baptised persons who have returned to the life of the Church after a time away and for members baptised in other traditions. Those who wish to pursue a disciplined exploration of the implications of Christian living are recognised by the community and welcomed to begin this process. Prayer may also be offered within this rite for active baptised members of this Church who are preparing to affirm their baptism.

This rite may be adapted to the particular circumstances.

After the sermon (or after the Affirmation of Faith) the presider uses these or other appropriate words.

As the community of faith we rejoice in our baptism.

We are called to meet regularly

to grow in appreciation of what we have received:

a delight in prayer, a love for the word of God,

a desire to follow the way of Christ,

and food for the journey.

Therefore let us welcome N,N who *come* to celebrate with us a new beginning in faith.

The baptised come forward with a Church Warden or other representative of the congregation who presents them with the following or similar words.

We present *these persons* (N,N) who *are baptised members* of the Body of Christ as *they* celebrate this new beginning in faith.

The presider addresses the baptised who respond individually as their name is called.

What do you seek?

The baptised reply

Renewal of my life in Christ.

The presider then continues addressing the baptised who respond together.

Either

Presider In baptism you were made a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. Will you strive to grow in the knowledge, love, and service of God?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Presider Will you share in the life and mission of this family of God's people, worshipping God regularly with us, and participating in a life of service to those in need.

Answer I will, with God's help.

Presider Will you seek to recognise the ministry to which God is calling you and the gifts that God has given you in baptism?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Or

Presider In baptism you were made a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. How will you seek renewal of your life in Christ?

Answer With God's help I will strive to grow in the knowledge, love, and service of God.

I will share in the life and mission of this family of God's people,
worshipping God regularly with you all,
and participating in a life of service to those in need.
I will seek to recognise the ministry to which God is calling me
and the gifts that God has given me in baptism.

The presider then continues by addressing the companions.

You have been chosen by this community to be companions. Will you encourage these persons (N,N) by prayer and example?

They respond

We will, with God's help.

The presider says to the congregation

Will you the members of _____ offer them your support as we share together in the life and mission of Christ?

People **We will, with God's help.**

The presider says

Let us pray for *these persons* (N,N) in silence.

Those making this new beginning may remain standing. The companions place a hand upon the shoulder of the one they are companioning. The congregation prays in silence and the presider may lay hands on the head of each in turn. Then with hands extended over those making this new beginning the presider says these or other appropriate words.

Blessed are you, faithful God,
through baptism you gather us into your Church.
We thank you for this congregation of your people

and rejoice in all you have done in the *lives of your servants* (N,N).

Renew them in your Holy Spirit.

Strengthen our love and care for each other

through Jesus Christ the servant,

our friend and brother,

who is alive with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Those making this new beginning may write their names in the church's register of baptised persons. The deacon or a companion may call out the names as they are written.

Those making this new beginning may be welcomed informally with applause as appropriate. They may be presented with a Bible (with words such as "Receive the Good News of Jesus Christ") or other gifts may be given. Someone may speak on behalf of the congregation.

Those making the new beginning and their companions then return to their places. They may bring forward the bread and wine or perform other particular functions within the rest of the service.

The Eucharist continues with the Prayers of the People which includes prayer by name for those making the new beginning.

It may be appropriate for some making this new beginning to give personal witness to their faith immediately following the first question and answer.

A Celebration of Lenten Preparation

This rite is appropriately used at the principal service on Ash Wednesday. Because of particular circumstances, it may be used on the First Sunday in Lent. In this rite, baptised persons who, as participants in the catechumenal process, have been exploring the implications of their baptism and are preparing to affirm it at the coming Easter Vigil are recognised by the congregation. They are a reminder of the journey of conversion and renewal to which all are called.

This rite may be adapted to the particular circumstances.

Immediately before the blessing of ashes, or at another suitable point in the service, the presider uses these or other appropriate words.

Let us welcome N,N who have been growing in an understanding of *their* call as *Christians* among us and now *desire* to undertake a more intense preparation to renew *their* baptism this coming Easter.

The participants come forward with a Church Warden or other representative of the congregation who presents them with these or other suitable words.

We present *these persons* (N,N) who *have* been growing in the knowledge, love, and service of God. *They are* sharing in the life and mission of this family of God's people, worshipping God regularly, and serving those in need. *They are* seeking to recognise the ministry to which God is calling *them* and the gifts that God has given *them* in baptism.

The presider says to the participants

Will you so live the gospel that you challenge us with the demands of love?

Each participant as her/his name is called responds

I will, with God's help.

Presider Your turning to Jesus Christ is an encouragement for us all
People **May God keep you in the way you have chosen.**

The presider says to the companions

Presider Will you continue to serve as companions on this journey of conversion, encouraging by prayer and example?

Companions We will, with God's help.

The presider says

Let us pray for *these persons* (N,N) in silence.

The participants may kneel or bow their heads. The companions remain standing and place a hand upon the shoulder of the one they are companionship. The congregation prays in silence and the presider may lay hands on the head of each in turn.

Then with hands extended over the participants the presider says these or other appropriate words.

Blessed are you, God our redeemer,
you love and care for each of us.
When we rebel against your love
you do not abandon us
but again and again you call us back to yourself

In your *servants* (N,N) we recognise the movement of your Spirit
and pray that you renew them in your life.

May we all turn to you
as we prepare to celebrate
Christ's passing from death to fullness of life with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

At the imposition of ashes, after receiving ashes themselves, the participants may join the presider in imposing ashes on the congregation.

Maundy Thursday Rite of Preparation for the Paschal Holy Days

This rite is used at the principal service on Maundy Thursday. In it, baptised persons who, as participants in the catechumenal process, have been preparing to affirm their baptism at the Easter Vigil are invited to join in this public witness of the Christian life of discipleship.

This rite may be adapted to the particular circumstances. Further suggestions may be found under "Maundy Thursday" in Chapter 20 of this book.

Before participating in this rite, those for whom it is appropriate will have taken part in the Reconciliation of a Penitent in which they are assured of God's pardon.

When this rite is used, the appropriate Gospel is John 13:1-15.

Before the foot-washing the presider uses these or other appropriate words.

Fellow servants of Christ,
on this night Jesus set an example for the disciples
by washing their feet, an act of humble service.

The participants and their companions stand. The presider addresses them.

(N,N) you have been living the gospel among us in such a way that you challenge us with the demands of love.

Tonight you are invited to follow Christ more closely.

I wash your feet so that I may recall whose servant I am.

You in turn are called to join in this symbol of discipleship.

(N,N) will you share this life of service?

The participants reply

Yes, we will.

The participants' feet are washed.

When all are ready, the presider distributes basins, ewers, and towels to the participants, saying to each

May Christ strengthen you in the service to which you are called.

The presider invites the congregation saying

I invite you to come forward.
As your feet are washed
remember that strength and growth in God's reign
come by lowly service such as this.

The participants in turn wash the feet of other members of the congregation.

The Eucharist may continue with the Prayers of the People or with the Ministry of the Sacrament.

Affirming Baptism at the Easter Vigil

When participants in the catechumenal process are affirming their baptism at the Easter Vigil their particular renewal needs to be recognised alongside that of the rest of the assembly. Some suggestions follow.

When the bishop is present, the Liturgy of Baptism and the Laying on of Hands for Confirmation and Renewal (page 387) can be followed after the Sermon. When the bishop is not present and there are baptisms, that liturgy may be adapted as follows.

The Presentation for the Laying on of Hands (page 387) may be replaced with the participants being presented to the presider with these words

I present N to renew her/his baptism.

The presider says to the participants

(N,N) we welcome you as you come to renew your baptism.
Do you renounce all evil influences and powers that rebel against God?

The participants reply

I renounce all evil.

The presider says

Do you trust in Christ's victory which brings forgiveness, freedom and life?

The participants reply

In faith I turn to Christ my way, my truth, my life.

The presider addresses the congregation, saying

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support *these persons* (N,N) in *their* life in Christ?

The people reply **We will.**

The Affirmation (page 387) and the Commitment to Christian Service (page 390) follow. The Laying on of Hands (page 391) may be replaced with the following.

The presider says

Let us pray for *these persons* (N,N) in silence.

The participants may kneel or bow their heads. The companions remain standing and place a hand upon the shoulder of the one they are companioning. The congregation prays in silence and the presider may lay hands on the head of each in turn (anointing with chrism if desired).

Then with hands extended over the participants the presider says these or other appropriate words.

Blessed are you, eternal God,
 by water and the Holy Spirit
 you bestowed upon your *servants* (N,N)
 the forgiveness of sin, and have raised *them* to new life.
 Sustain *them*, O God, in your Holy Spirit.
 Give *them* an inquiring and discerning heart,
 the courage to persevere,
 a spirit to know, love, and serve you,

and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works,
through Jesus Christ the light of the world
who is risen and alive with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The service continues with the Celebration of Faith (page 394). The Ministry of the Sacrament follows.

When the bishop is not present and there are no baptisms, the following order may be used after the Sermon

- from the presentation to the people's "we will" in the rite above*
- **A Renewal of Baptism** follows for all, this can be found as part of the Great Vigil of Easter in this book*
- the above rite continues with the invitation to pray for the participants*
- when the prayer over the participants has been concluded the service continues with the Ministry of the Sacrament.*

The participants may receive applause, gifts, and certificates as appropriate.