



FACT
OF FAITH

Who are the Catechumens?



Catechumens and others attend the Easter Vigil Mass in 2016 at St. Paul Church in Wilmington, Del.

“First, the name of the Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—is invoked upon the catechumens. Thus, from the outset, a synthesis of the journey of faith is provided. The God who called Abraham and wished to be called his God, the God who revealed his name to Moses, the God who, in giving us his Son, revealed fully the mystery of his Name, now bestows upon the baptized a new filial identity.” (*Lumen Fidei*, no. 42)

This Lent, you may see people preparing for baptism and initiation into the Church. These people, called Catechumens, are on a journey of spiritual growth. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the formal process that guides that journey, and during Lent, there are particular markers along that road.

On some of the Sundays of Lent, the catechumens are presented with the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed. They are also asked to publicly give witness to their

desire for full communion with the Church, through rites that have the somewhat intimidating name of “Scrutinies.” These scrutinies usually happen at a Sunday mass, in front of the assembled congregation.

It may seem odd, but the catechumens are usually dismissed from the mass after the homily. Since they don’t yet participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, they are dismissed to study the word of God and to continue their preparation for baptism and initiation.

In most places, the catechumens will be received into the Church during the Easter Vigil. Because they are becoming Catholic as adults, they generally receive all of the sacraments of initiation at once: they are baptized, confirmed, and receive their first Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.



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