



## *Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton* ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholic Church for men and women who are baptized Christians but not Roman Catholics. These individuals make a profession of faith but are not baptized again. To prepare for this reception, the people, who are called "candidates," usually participate in a formation program to help them understand and experience the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. Some preparation may be with catechumens preparing for baptism, but the preparation for candidates is different since they have already been baptized and committed to Jesus Christ, and many have also been active members of other Christian communities.

What is the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday like?

The Easter Vigil takes place on Holy Saturday, the evening before Easter Sunday. This is the night that "shall be as bright as day" as proclaimed by an ancient church hymn as we joyfully anticipate Christ's Resurrection. The Holy Saturday Liturgy begins with the Service of Light, which includes the blessing of the new fire and the Paschal candle which symbolizes Jesus, the light of the World. The second part consists of the Liturgy of the Word with a number of scripture readings. After the Liturgy of the Word, the catechumens and candidates are presented to the parish community, who pray for them and join in the Litany of the Saints. Next, the priest blesses the water, placing the Easter or Paschal candle into the baptismal water. Those seeking baptism then renounce sin and profess their faith after which they are immersed into the baptismal water three times with the clergy pronouncing the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In some situations the water may be poured over the head of those seeking baptism while the clergy pronounces the words of Baptism.

After the baptism the newly baptized are dressed in white garments and presented with a candle lighted from the Paschal Candle. They are then confirmed by the priest or bishop who lays hands on their heads, and invokes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He then anoints them with the oil called Sacred Chrism. The Mass continues with the newly baptized participating in the general intercessions and in bringing gifts to the altar. At Communion, the newly baptized receives the Eucharist, Christ's Body and Blood, for the first time.

What does the white robe symbolize?

The newly baptized are dressed in a white garment after baptism to symbolize that they are washed clean of sin and that they are called to continue to walk in this newness of life.

What does the candle symbolize?

A small candle is lit from the Easter candle and given to the newly baptized as a reminder to them always to walk as children of the Light and to be the light of Christ to the world.

What does the Sacred Chrism symbolize?

The Sacred Chrism, or oil, is a sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit being given to the newly baptized. It is also a sign of the close link between the mission of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who comes to the recipient with the Father in Baptism.

Why was this ancient rite restored?

It was restored in the Church to highlight the fact that the newly baptized are received into a community of faith, which is challenged to realize that they too have become different because of this new life in the community.

Is there a ceremony or preparation for baptized Catholics who never or seldom have practiced the faith?

For Catholics who have been Baptized, Confirmed and made First Communion but then drifted from the faith, the way they return is through the Sacrament of Penance. Catholics who were baptized but never received Confirmation and/or Eucharist can participate in the process of continuing conversion. This process is completed with the reception of the sacraments of confirmation and Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil or during the Easter Season.

What is the role of a godparent for an adult being baptized?

Godparents, also called sponsors, accompany the candidates through the RCIA process. They are called to show the candidates good example of the Christian life, sustain the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, bear witness, and guide the candidate's progress in the baptismal life.