

Diocese of Sacramento RCIA Committee Presents:

Journey toward Mission 2020

A Virtual RCIA Retreat to Prepare for Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation

Journey to Mission 2020 Diocesan Virtual RCIA Elect Retreat Outline

Introduction:

Goal: To provide you spiritual preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. To refocus your minds and hearts as the Elect prepare to become children of God and members of the Body of Christ in Baptism; and as ALL of you prepare to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, and receive His precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist - in order to *go out into mission* in the world.

Underlying Theme: Becoming Catholic (or completing your Sacraments of Initiation) is not the “end goal.” You are not “done.” The reception of the Sacraments of Initiation is the *beginning of your new life* in Christ and your *mission* with Him and with us - in His Church and in the world.

Retreat Introduction: As you begin this retreat, take a few moments and reflect on Romans 8:25 “...if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.”

These words spoken by St. Paul to the Romans, aptly apply to you RCIA elect and candidates who have been waiting with endurance since the Covid-19 pandemic caused our lives to change abruptly during Lent.

At the Rite of Election on Feb. 29, Bishop Soto declared you who are unbaptized to be “members of the elect to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the coming Easter Vigil,” when you were to receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

For you candidates who are baptized and either waiting to be received into the fullness of the Faith or complete you Sacraments of Initiation, we recognized “your desire to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and to have a place at Christ’s Eucharistic table” and we exhorted you to “hear the Lord’s call to conversion and be faithful to your baptismal covenant.”

Easter Vigil has come and gone, and still you wait with endurance and hope for what you do not yet see. As you move through this retreat in preparation to receive these holy Sacraments of Initiation, it is important to emphasize that your journey does not come to an end once you’ve become Catholic and received the sacraments. In fact, your journey up to this point has been preparing you to begin! With your reception of the sacraments you will begin to live your new life in Christ by serving as His disciples in mission together with all of us in the Body of Christ.

We are baptized not only into our Lord’s life, but also into His mission. Your mission field will be that of your families, workplaces, parishes, communities, and wherever He takes you. God will work through you, His disciples, as His instruments to bring others into relationship with Him. He will give all the grace needed for the unique mission He has for each one of you, and the majority of that grace will come from the sacraments He instituted in the Catholic Church.

Ask the Lord to guide you, His chosen ones and to strengthen you in your vocations as you build the kingdom of God. Prayers are being offered for you as you enter into this retreat in preparation to receive a share in the divine life of the Trinity in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Opening Song and Prayer: (6 min.)

This retreat will begin with a meditation song: (Please click on the link):

I Arise (Video-time 4:00min)

<https://vimeo.com/saccatholic/review/424261514/ecab1cdee4>

(please pray)

Anima Christi by Cardinal Newman
Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within Your wounds hide me.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
From the evil one, protect me.
At the hour of my death call me,
And bid me come to You.
That with Your saints
I may praise You forever and ever. Amen.

Section 1 - Reflection on the Creed Presented Fr. Avram Brown (video is 11:39 minutes – spend about 15 minutes on points to ponder)

Video

There are two parts to this section. First you will watch Fr. Avram give a reflection on the Creed, talk about your Profession of Faith, hear the words of the creed and the prayers that are prayed at the presentation of the Creed..

Click on this link to watch Fr. Avram's video (time 11:42min):

<https://vimeo.com/saccatholic/review/421759302/da26f8ca3f>

Points to Ponder:

Now that you have watched the video, you are invited to Think, Reflect, Pray or Write on the following points to ponder. You may click on this resource ([*Retreat Journal*](#)) to bring up a journal to type your responses, or if you would rather write them in your own journal, that's ok too. The questions will be listed by section. The questions below are in Section 1 of the journal.

1. When Jesus asked his disciples, "who do people say that I am?", there were many responses. Then Jesus asked, "Who do YOU say that I am?" What is your answer to that question?
2. What reality is the Profession of Faith based on?
3. There are many points professed in the Creed... which point resonates with you the most?

On the next page you will find copy of the Nicene Creed you may print out if you wish.



The Creed

*I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.*

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.*

*For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand
of the Father.*

*He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father
and the Son,*

*who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.*

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

*I confess one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen*

Section 2 - Ephphetha Rite Presented by Deacon Ken Crawford

In this next video, Deacon Ken Crawford will read Scripture from Mark 7:31-37 and will talk about how we need to be open to hear Christ speaking to us. Just prior to receiving your sacraments there are preparation rites that will take place. The preparation rites include the Ephphetha Rite, an anointing rite for the Elect and also, the Elect will recite the Creed. The reason that the Elect are anointed and not the Candidates is because the baptismal rite on its own includes an anointing. However, baptism combined with Confirmation and Eucharist does not include the Baptismal anointing. (Primarily because of the anointing within the Confirmation Rite).

Listen to what Deacon Ken has to say about this very special Rite. If you are doing this retreat with your sponsor, spend a few minutes discussing why this is an important Rite. Or, jot down a few notes in your [Retreat Journal](#) under Section 2.

To watch the video, click on the following link:

<https://vimeo.com/saccatholic/review/424267625/b397d0997a>

Section 3 - Baptism Reflection Presented by Michelle Knox

The next video is presented by Michelle Knox. She will be talking about Baptism and the symbols that go with this Sacrament. This is the Sacrament that opens the door to all of the other Sacraments. Some of you are already baptized. This will be a refresher to help you recall your own baptism. If you were just an infant, you probably won't remember the actual baptism, but looking at the symbols, try to recall the importance of each of them. To watch the video, click on this link:

<https://vimeo.com/saccatholic/review/421765875/ee8a8a7d2a>

Below is a list of all of the symbols of Baptism. Think about each symbol and what it means. Then take a moment and reflect on what they mean to you personally. Go to your [Retreat Journal](#) and jot down your thoughts in Section 3.

SYMBOLS OF BAPTISM		
SIGN OF CROSS		
PRAYERS		
OIL		
PROMISES		
WATER		
WHITE GARMENT		
CANDLE		
NAME		
EASTER CANDLE		
BLESSINGS		

Section 4 - Presentation of the Our Father presented by Rita Schillin

During Lent, there are normally Three Scrutinies, the Presentation of the Creed, and the Presentation of the Our Father. Sometime after the First Scrutiny, but before the Second Scrutiny, is the Presentation of the Creed. The Presentation of the Our Father is done after the Third Scrutiny. Normally, the Scrutinies are required for all Elect unless they are dispensed by the Bishop in extenuating circumstances. Bishop Soto did dispense with two Scrutinies. If you did not receive the First Scrutiny prior to the 'lock down,' your Coordinator will schedule one of the Scrutinies prior to your receiving your sacraments.

This short video reflection talks about the Presentation of the Our Father and what the Lord's Prayer means to us as a Community. On the next page is a copy of the Our Father that you can copy and print if you'd like. After you view the video, take a few moments to reflect on what this prayer means to you. Then jot down your thoughts in your *Retreat Journal* under Section 4.

The link to this video is: <https://vimeo.com/424262317>



An artistic illustration of a church interior. Tall, fluted columns line the sides, receding into the distance. In the upper center, a faint, glowing figure with outstretched arms is visible against a warm, golden light. The overall atmosphere is serene and spiritual.

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in Heaven
Hallowed be thy Name.*

*Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,*

On Earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.


And forgive us our trespasses,

*As we forgive those
who trespass against us.*

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

Amen

A small illustration of a person in a white robe, standing with arms raised in prayer, positioned in the lower right foreground. The person is set against a background of soft, white clouds.

Section 5 - Confirmation Presented by Lori Smith

This next presentation by Lori Smith is on the Sacrament of Confirmation. This presentation is not so much to tell you about Confirmation, but to remind you of the gifts of the Holy Spirit you will be receiving when you are confirmed, and the call to use those gifts. The video link is here:

<https://vimeo.com/421764200>

Points to Ponder:

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit that you will receive at your Confirmation are: Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety, and Fear of the Lord.



You are invited to Think, Reflect, Pray or Write on the following points to ponder under Section 5 in Retreat Journal. You may find the next two pages on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit helpful as you reflect.

1. Using a situation you have recently experienced, how could you have used any (or all) of the Seven Gifts to respond to the situation in order to build the Kingdom of God by helping those involved to meet the Risen Lord through you?
2. Write a sentence or two about how you think God might be using you now, or how he might use you in the future to build His Kingdom.
3. Have you noticed any ways in which God might have used you to bring Him to others in your life so far? If so, write a sentence or two about an experience you can think of where you have responded to His call.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. ~ Isaiah 11:2

ST. PAUL TELLS US that the Church becomes "a holy temple in the Lord ... a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph 2:21-

22). St. Augustine, the great Doctor of Grace, adds: "What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the Church" (CCC 797). The Holy Spirit works in us through the bestowal of his gifts, which are permanent dispositions that render us able to be obedient to the promptings of his grace. These gifts are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord (some translations of Isaiah, as that shown above, combine the last two; by tradition, however, there are seven).

The Purpose of the Gifts

Each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit has special significance for the soul in its progress toward holiness. **Wisdom** detaches us from the world, and in doing so makes the soul more responsive to the things of God. We have deeper insight into the value of our faith. **Understanding** helps us to grasp more clearly what the truths of our faith really mean to us and our salvation. Understanding enables us to see; it gives eyes to our faith. **Counsel** is the gift that makes us aware of the guidance that the Spirit makes available to us; it helps our conscience distinguish what good to do and what evil to avoid, and helps us choose to do the good. **Fortitude** is the gift of the courage to seek God, who is our goal, and to reject everything that stands in the way of God or bars us from him, including ridicule, malice, and outright persecution by others. **Knowledge** tells us the path of virtue and warns us of the dangers that we face in seeking and attaining Heaven. **Piety** is the confidence in God that a child feels for a lov-

"His gifts render us able to be obedient to the promptings of his grace."

ing parent, so that we can serve our Heavenly Father with joy. Finally, **fear of the Lord** is the solemn respect of God that fills us with a horror and dread of

offending him, not because he is a God who will punish us with wrath, but because we would never hurt the one who loves us so completely.

How the Gifts are Related to Each Other

In the Old Testament, these gifts are often linked to each other (see, for example, Jb 28:28; Prv 1:7; Prv 2:6; Prv 8:12-14; Dn 2:21-23), so that one is the beginning or the completion of another. The most significant link is between the gifts that begin and end the list, that is, between wisdom and fear of the Lord. "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*" (Ps 111:10). This is not a quaking terror such as that taught by the "hellfire and brimstone" school of preaching. Instead, the "*fear of the Lord is like a garden of blessing, and covers a man better than any glory*" (Sir 40:27). The prophet Isaiah said of the Messiah that "*his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord*" (Is 11:3), and we, too, should take delight in the proper reverence and awe of the God who made us out of love alone: "*The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation, and gladness and a crown of rejoicing. The fear of the Lord delights the heart, and gives gladness and joy and long life. With him who fears the Lord it will go well at the end; on the day of his death he will be blessed*" (Sir 1:11-13).

Fear of the Lord is our "*instruction in wisdom*" (Prv 15:33); "*wisdom is the fulfillment of the fear of the Lord*" (Sir 21:11). This wisdom is not wisdom as the world understands it, as St. Paul tells us: "*If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God*" (1 Cor 3:18-19). We seek not worldly wisdom, but that bestowed by



The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred

God himself. In the book of Wisdom, we hear this beautiful hymn to supernatural wisdom: "[I]n her there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent and



Priest and parents celebrate a newly-baptized child

pure and most subtle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. Though she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets; for God loves nothing so much as the man who lives with wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior; for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail" (Wis 7:22-30). The Apostle James also tells us that "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity" (Jas 3:17). Supernatural wisdom is the gift through which we attain the purity of heart that, Jesus tells us, will allow us to see God (see Mt 5:8).

How the Gifts are Related to the Human Virtues

There is a close relationship between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the human virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance (see handout on Virtuous Living). The gifts of the Holy Spirit give supernatural value to the human virtues, completing and perfecting them. Understanding, counsel, and knowledge help us see the spiritual value of things, an aid to the virtue of prudence. Piety is related to justice, which renders to others what is due them. Piety gives to God the love and obedience that is due him just because he is our God and is infinitely lovable and deserves our obedience. Fortitude is obviously directly

related to the moral virtue of the same name. Finally, fear of the Lord is akin to the virtue of temperance. Temperance helps us curb our tendency to seek material things that can upset the balance of our priorities, which should put God first as he is the most desirable and lovable. Fear of offending our God by giving emphasis to anything other than

him is a valuable gift that helps keep us on the right path, and prioritizes our efforts to attain true holiness and union with him. To need this gift speaks volumes about the weakness of our humanity, which can so readily slip from the pursuit of our true happiness, which is God.

Effects of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to enable us to grow in the life of grace, to become truly holy. They are given to all the faithful at Baptism, and increased in the sacrament of Confirmation. We become partakers of the special love of the Holy Spirit, who is the sanctifier of the Church. All of these gifts, along with the theological and moral virtues and the fruits of the Spirit, give concrete reality to the effects of being in the state of grace, in friendship with God. To be free of sin is to be truly free — free to approach God, to be united with him and to share his treasures even here on earth. Whoever is in the state of grace has all these wonderful treasures — gifts and virtues — bestowed by a God whose love never ends. We must, however, use our free will to develop these treasures in cooperation with God's grace. And, since "wisdom is justified by her deeds" (Mt 11:19), these gifts show themselves in daily acts of love of God and love of neighbor. These treasures are outpourings upon us of the love of the Holy Spirit, in whom rests the vitality of our spiritual lives and the mission of our holy Mother Church. They are not treasures to be kept in secret, but to create holiness and, as instruments of the Holy Spirit, to renew the face of the earth (see Ps 104:30).

(CCC 797, 1303, 1830-1831)

"These gifts are treasures to create holiness and, as instruments of the Holy Spirit, to renew the face of the earth."

Section 6 - Optional Activity presented by Helen Gomez

In this next short video, Helen is going to suggest you write a letter to God. If you choose to do this activity, listen to her instructions and use your *Retreat Journal* to write your letter.

The instruction video link is: <https://vimeo.com/saccatholic/review/421766703/e614da6658>

Closing - Adoration

This next video is a five-minute adoration video. Sit back, relax, and let your mind worship the God who loves you so very much.

Adoration link: <https://vimeo.com/saccatholic/review/421769463/c4f55ed28e>

Closing Prayer – Deacon Ken Crawford

Our last video, closes this self-guided retreat. We hope you have enjoyed this virtual retreat and will share your thoughts and experiences with your Sponsor and fellow Elect and Candidates.

Closing Prayer link: <https://vimeo.com/saccatholic/review/424275866/8cb5475086>