

1/6/12

Dear Pastors, RCIA Coordinators, and RCIA Team Members:

Greetings from the Office of Liturgy!

Lent fast approaches – which means that it is almost time to celebrate the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion. As you know, the Rite will be celebrated twice: February 26 at 3pm (at the Cathedral) and March 4 at 3pm (St. Mary of the Visitation, Ottumwa). I just want to take a moment to highlight a few points:

- The Rite of Election is *not optional*. In order to receive the Easter Sacraments, a catechumen must be elected by the Bishop—a sign of the catechumen’s election by God (see RCIA #119, 121). While the Bishop may delegate presidency of the Rite to another priest, the Rite itself is not optional. Therefore, to the extent possible, catechumens are to attend one of the two scheduled Rites. Attendance at the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion, while strongly encouraged, is not required.
  - If inclement weather prevents attendance of *an entire group from a parish* on the day they were scheduled to attend the Rite presided over by the Bishop (Davenport on February 26, Ottumwa on March 4), the Bishop will grant the faculty to preside over the Rite of Election in the parish to the pastor. Please see the second page for details.
  - If, for a serious reason, *an individual* is unable to attend the Rite of Election presided over by the Bishop, then the pastor is asked to request permission from the Bishop in writing to celebrate the Rite of Election *for that individual* at the parish. Those who are able to attend the Rites in Davenport or Ottumwa are still to do so.
- In order to assist in planning, we are asking—to the extent possible— that parishes in the Iowa City, Keokuk, Clinton, and Davenport Deaneries attend the 3pm Rite of Election in Davenport and that parishes in the Grinnell and Ottumwa Deaneries attend the Rite of Election in Ottumwa. We are only suggesting this approach as a way to help in planning and to “spread” attendance among the two celebrations; this is not a requirement. If the choice is between attending the Rite at another time or place, or not attending at all, we would rather you attend. If, for some reason, a last-minute change in which Rite you will attend is necessary, please do let us know as soon as possible.
- The Parish Information Form is attached. We are asking only for counts; we will get names from you later for inclusion in the *Messenger* as usual. You can either print it out and mail the completed form in (c/o Laurie Hoefling at the diocese), or you can save the form to your hard drive (change the file name to include your parish), fill it out, and then e-mail it back to Laurie at [Hoefling@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:Hoefling@davenportdiocese.org) by January 30.

**Before completing the form, please make sure that all impediments to receiving the Easter Sacraments have been removed prior to sending a candidate or catechumen to these rites.** Please also make sure that your catechumens and candidates know in which group they belong; in the past, we have had individuals come up in both lines! Also, we must in no way ever detract from the baptism that the candidates received in the past. Therefore, it is crucial that you *not* include their names in the Book of the Elect: as the baptized, they have already been elected!

Questions, comments, or concerns, may be directed to Deacon Frank Agnoli at 563-888-4257. An outline of the Rite will be sent out once it has been finalized.

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## INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING INCLEMENT WEATHER and the RITE OF ELECTION

Poor weather at this time of year may make it difficult or dangerous for individuals or parish groups to make it to the Rite of Election, or may force a cancellation of the celebration of the Rite altogether.

If inclement weather prevents attendance of *an entire group from a parish* on the day they were scheduled to attend the Rite presided over by the Bishop, he will grant the faculty to preside over the Rite of Election in the parish to the pastor.

### For those attending the Rite on the First Sunday of Lent

If by Sunday morning there is a doubt as to whether or not travel will be possible, you should celebrate the Rite of Sending—and then, if prevented from attending the Rite of Election later that day, celebrate the Rite of Election in your parish the following weekend. Alternatively, you may choose to celebrate the Rite with the Bishop in Ottumwa on the Second Sunday of Lent.

### For those attending the Rite on the Second Sunday of Lent

If by Sunday morning it is clear that travel will likely be impossible, you may omit the Rite of Sending and celebrate the Rite of Election instead. The celebration of the Scrutinies on the Third Sunday precludes moving the Rite to the following weekend.

### Rites to be used

The orders of service are found in the RCIA ritual text, §§118-137 (Rite of Election), §§ 446-458 (Rite of Calling Candidates to Continuing Conversion), and §§ 547-561 (combined rite). A copy of the combined rite is included with this e-mail.

### Notifications

If you will not be able to attend the Rite of Election, please call me at 563-349-2577.

If the weather seems severe enough that the Rite might be cancelled, please check the following (you may want to check more than one source in case we are having technical issues):

1. Dial (563) 324-1912 and press three during any part of the receptionist's message.
2. Check the Diocesan website home page – [www.davenportdiocese.org](http://www.davenportdiocese.org)
3. Check the Diocesan Facebook page – [www.facebook/diodav](http://www.facebook/diodav)

In addition, I will try to e-mail the parishes once a decision to cancel has been made. Also, please feel free to call me before heading out if you want to double check.

Deacon Frank Agnoli