

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
First Sunday of Lent • Year C • March 9, 2025

*Almighty, eternal God,  
your new Covenant  
sheds light  
on the miracles of old:  
the Red Sea  
prefigures Baptism,  
and the nation  
you freed from slavery  
is a sign of  
your Christian people.  
May every nation share  
in the faith and privilege  
of Israel  
and come to new birth  
in the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*



## Sunday Word

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalms 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

### Adopted by God

From the many peoples and nations of the earth, God looked upon the Israelites enslaved in Egypt and delivered them from oppression. He chose Israel as his own people. Therefore, the Chosen People of Israel confess faith in the one true God who saves them. They offer to him the firstfruits of the harvest in acknowledgment of God's goodness and mighty deeds.

### In Our Hearts and On Our Lips

Jesus is Lord! Christians proclaim their faith in the loving kindness of God, which has been fully revealed in Jesus. From the depths of our being to the words we speak, we confess our faith in Christ, who brings Salvation to the world.

### Tempted Yet True

Jesus is tested in the desert. Tempted by the devil, he remains true to his heavenly Father. He cannot be swayed by the allure of pleasure, riches, or power. Jesus relies on God alone, overcomes temptation, and stays true to his calling and mission. He teaches us the correct response to God's election.

## Church Teaching: Divine Election

### The Old Leads to the New

Understanding divine election starts with the ancient Scriptures of Israel and Israel's own faith in their being set apart, which is illustrated in those sacred pages. The Old Testament is clear: God does the choosing. Israel is not elected or set apart because of some intrinsic characteristic as a people. The choice happens because God is totally gracious, despite Israel's repeated betrayals through idolatry and other sinfulness.

Israel experienced divine election in historical events. A loving God repeatedly pursued this people, insignificant to her neighbors. This special election as God's Chosen People is not

for their own sake but for the purpose of manifesting divine grace, glory, and power to the whole world.

Jesus stands at the apex of this historical unfolding of divine election. The New Testament attests that he is God's Elected One (see Luke 9:35, 23:35, and 1 Peter 2:4, 6). What occurred in the past to elevate Israel as a Chosen People served as preparation for and to prefigure the way in which God acts uniquely in Jesus, his Chosen One. In Christ, God saves humanity and institutes the new and eternal Covenant—a relationship by which he calls together a priestly, prophetic, and royal People of God, the Church.

### *People of God*

The Church inherits Israel's ancient election. We still regard the Jewish people as "chosen," for God does not go back on his promises. Nevertheless, divine care and grace are opened up in a new, definitive way in Christ. He calls together a race made up of Jews and Gentiles united as one, not according to the flesh, but in the Holy Spirit.

Called by God, we enter this people by Baptism. Our head is Jesus. Our status is that of adopted sons and daughters of the Father. And our law is the New Commandment of love taught to us and exemplified by Christ himself.

### *Distinctiveness of Church Teaching*

God acts and chooses, and in so doing, human pride is confounded. So too the pride of Satan is overturned. The entire life of Jesus points to God, and God alone, whose reign has overtaken this world. In Christ the faithful are gathered up, given membership in God's kingdom, and presented to the Almighty in a new and everlasting Covenant.



## **Key Terms**

### **PEOPLE OF GOD**

Phrase describing the Church. An image taken from the Old Testament people of Israel, whom God chose. Christ established the new and eternal Covenant out of which a new People of God was formed (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 781).

### **CHOSEN PEOPLE**

The promises made by God to Noah, Abraham, and Moses culminated in Israel's election, which set them apart as God's own, as indicated in this phrase. This choice, in turn, prepared for that day when God would gather all his children into the unity of the Church (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 60).

### **ISRAEL**

Refers to the Jewish people, named after Israel (Jacob), from whose twelve sons the tribes of Israel descended. God formed them as they were delivered from slavery in Egypt, establishing with them the first, or old, Covenant and giving them the Law through Moses (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 62).

## **Voices of Faith**

[Christ] could have kept the devil from himself; but if he were not tempted he could not teach you how to triumph over temptation.

—Saint Augustine

What did Jesus actually bring, if not world peace, universal prosperity, and a better world? What has he brought? The answer is very simple: God. He has brought God. He has brought the God who formerly unveiled his countenance gradually, first to Abraham, then to Moses and the Prophets, and then in the Wisdom Literature. . . . It is this God . . . the true God, whom he has brought to the nations of the earth.

—Pope Benedict XVI

## **Further Reading**

***Catechism of the Catholic Church*:** 205 (God acts and intervenes in history), 303 (God's care is concrete and immediate), 804 (the one family, the People of God)

### ***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*:**

Chapter 10 (The Church: Reflecting the Light of Christ), especially the section entitled "The Church Is the People of God," pages 116–117

### ***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church*:**

8 (stages of God's Revelation), 9 (definitive Revelation in Christ), 153 (why the Church is the People of God)