

# RITE OF ELECTION – *the beginning of the final preparation to become Catholic*

**New Ulm** - On Sunday, March 5, the first Sunday of Lent, Bishop John C. Nienstedt presided at the celebration of the Rite of Election and Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion which was held at the Church of St. Mary in New Ulm. Seven catechumens and fifty candidates from twenty-eight parishes took part in the rite. All have either participated in the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens or the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates at their parish liturgy.

The Rite of Election is the second step in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The Rite of Election closes the lengthy period of formation for those seeking baptism into the Catholic Church, the period of the catechumenate. Through the Rite of Election, these catechumens are declared “elect”. It marks the beginning of the final, more intense preparation for reception of the sacraments of initiation which are baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist which they receive at the Easter Vigil.

Candidates (those already baptized but not fully initiated) express their desire to continue their journey of faith during the Rite of Calling

Candidates to Continuing Conversion. Candidates may be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church through confirmation and first Eucharist at the Easter Vigil by the local priest (see Canon 883.2). In the Diocese of New Ulm, however, the candidates are confirmed by Bishop John C. Nienstedt during the rite of confirmation when he is present in the parish for the sacrament. “May they see in you a love for the Church and a sincere desire for doing good. Lead them this Lent to the joys of the Easter mysteries.” (RCIA, Call to Continuing Conversion).

*(photos by Kathy Huebert)*

