



Excerpt from *Christ Our Pascha*

Growth in Faith: Catechumenate, Illumination, Sacramental Initiation

In the first centuries, the catechesis of non-baptized adults in the church took place in three stages: Catechumenate, Illumination, Sacramental Initiation. The Catechumenate (from the Greek *katekhounous*, meaning one being instructed) began with a presentation of the new candidate to the Christian community. With the agreement of the community, the candidate became a catechumen. The name of this person was announced to the community; and now, the Holy Scriptures would be announced to the catechumen. Such catechumens sometimes remained in the narthex of the church, which served as an outward symbol of the catechumens' inner spiritual state: they were leaving the world behind, but had not yet fully entered into the Church, the temple of the faithful. Having listened to the Word of God and the homily at the Divine liturgy, the catechumens were obliged to leave the church after the prayer of the church community for them - the Litany for the Catechumens. (#63)