

# 306 Special Pastoral Situations

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### 306.1 Returning Catholics:

When Catholics return to the Church after a long absence, seeking to be reconciled, priests are to be sensitive to their personal history and unique spiritual needs. Through the Sacrament of Penance, the returning Catholics are welcomed back to the Eucharistic table.

### 306.2 Sensitivity Needed:

Pastoral leaders should be sensitive to the needs of returning Catholics and be aware of various methods and programs to assist in the process of welcoming them back.

### 306.3 Returning Catholics not included in the Catechumenate:

Ordinarily, returning Catholics should not be included in the Catechumenate with the unbaptized or with Christians seeking full communion with the Church. (See also §308 The Sacrament of Penance and Christian Initiation, herein)

### 306.4 Rite of Welcoming Not Appropriate:

Though the process of welcoming back returning Catholics may parallel aspects of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA), they do not belong in the RCIA process. The Rite of Welcoming is not appropriate for fully initiated Catholics returning to the Church. (RCIA #411, RCIA National Statute #36. See Policy 307, herein.)