

Eager to Tag Along

Before the Second Vatican Council, the adult baptismal ceremony included a daisy chain of sorts.

The priest met those to be baptized at the entrance to the church, where they waited outside.

After many prayers, he led them inside. He had two choices for this procession. He could place his left hand on the right arm of the one to be baptized, or he could put the left end of his stole into the person's hands. If many were baptized, the first person then put his or her left hand in the right hand of the next, and so on.

We no longer have this daisy chain, but in the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, the celebrant meets candidates at the entrance of the church, and after the opening ceremonies he uses some gesture of invitation to move them inside.

The original custom revealed people so eager to enter the church that they could grab the outermost part of the priest's vestments to find their way inside.

When exiled Israel returned home, the prophet Zechariah envisioned that others would want to tag along. He foresaw that ten people, representing ten nations, would grab the outermost part of every Jew's garment and follow. "Let us go with you," they would say, "for we have heard that God is with you."

Sometimes when we are walking away, people call our name or grab the edge of our cloak. We should not feel annoyed. They may have heard that God is with us.

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