St. Augustine saw it as his duty to pass on four essential “sacraments” to the elect. These were

1. the Creed
2. the Lord’s Prayer
3. the font
4. the table

He would teach them about the table after their initiation; he would explore the meaning of the font with them on Holy Saturday, before the Vigil.

And the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer would be handed over in Lent. Augustine’s motivation was the same as ours as expressed in RCIA 147 (Canada, 134). Open your RCIA text to that paragraph and read what it says. The church lovingly entrusts these ancient texts to the elect because they “have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church’s faith and prayer.”

As I wrote in The Way of Faith, my preference is to celebrate the Presentation of the Creed and the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer during the catechumenate stage, before Lent (see RCIA 104-105; Canada, 103-104). However, many parishes prefer to celebrate the presentations in Lent.

In that case, the Presentation of the Creed is celebrated during the week following the first scrutiny and the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer is celebrated after the third scrutiny.

**LENTEN PRESENTATIONS**

The reason the Creed is presented either late in the catechumenate or during the period of purification and enlightenment is because it is like a summary chapter in a textbook. If the catechumen is truly ready for initiation, there should be nothing surprising in the Creed. As the RCIA says, the Creed “recalls the wonderful deeds of God for the salvation of the human race...” (147; Canada, 134).

The catechumens (or elect) are expected to commit the Creed to memory and there will be a test! They recite the Creed publicly on Holy Saturday, before the Vigil. (I let them use cheat sheets if they need them, but I don’t tell them they have that option until just before they have to proclaim it.)

The reason for presenting the Lord’s Prayer is also crucial. “The Lord’s Prayer fills them with a deeper realization of the new spirit of adoption by which they will call God their Father, especially in the midst of the eucharistic assembly” (147; Canada, 134).
There are a few things to note about these presentations.

1. In many parishes, it is common to present a scroll or written text of the Creed and Lord’s Prayer. This is not what Augustine did, however, nor is it in the RCIA. **The rite has the Creed and Lord’s Prayer “presented” orally** by the presider and the assembly.

2. **There is no combined rite** for these presentations. The baptized candidates have already made a profession of faith (or their godparents made it for them) at their baptism, and a ritual presentation of the Creed diminishes their original profession of faith. The candidates should absolutely be required to memorize the Creed if they don’t know it. Their participation in the handing on and reciting back rituals, however, would be as members of the baptized faithful and not as members of the unbaptized.

3. Similarly with the Lord’s Prayer. Many baptized candidates already know the Lord’s Prayer. For those who don’t, it is still a “sacrament” that was entrusted to them at their baptism. **It is redundant to hand it over to them again ritually.**

4. It is not a strict requirement that the presentations be celebrated at all. If they are not celebrated, be sure to omit the recitation of the Creed during the Holy Saturday preparation rites (see RCIA 186; Canada, 173).

5. If the presentations were not celebrated previously, you can still celebrate the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer on Holy Saturday (see RCIA 185; Canada, 172).

In *The Way of Faith*, I wrote more about celebrating the presentations. Please take a moment to read through pages 67-70. And also, please head over to the online forum to share your thoughts about handing on these important “sacraments.”