

What Happens in Lent (the Period of Purification and Enlightenment)

THE GOAL:

“The goal and focus of catechesis during the **period of purification and enlightenment** is different from that during the period of the catechumenate. This is a time for **SPIRITUAL FORMATION**.

During the period of the catechumenate, the focus of catechesis was immersion into the fullness of the Christian community as expressed in the Catholic Tradition – scripture, doctrine, worship, community and service. The period of purification and enlightenment presumes such immersion and the readiness to make the commitment of baptism.

NOW THE FOCUS IS AKIN TO A RETREAT.

The elect and candidates, firm in their resolve to embrace the gospel, experience a time set apart for deepened reflection on this gospel way of life, seeking the prayers of the community during these final days of preparation.... This, then, is a time of prayer and reflection. This is not the time to cover materials that they may have forgotten during the catechumenate period.

Rather, it is a time of focusing on God’s gifting presence, and how that presence uncovers and reveals attitudes and lifestyles that are contrary to relationship with God – namely, sin – as well as raising up those attitudes and gifts that deepen the relationship with God.”

(Morris, Thomas, The RCIA, Transforming the Church, pp 170 - 171, Paulist Press, 1997)

THE SCRUTINIES:

The Scrutinies are celebrated on the **Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent**.... They are celebrated with the Elect only (those that are NOT-BAPTIZED). Candidates (those BAPTIZED) would be invited to participate in the Penitential Rite (RCIA # 461) and the sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Scrutinies raise up and expose whatever keeps the transforming love of God from liberating all forms of oppression.... The scrutinizes unmask the deception of evil and sin for what they really are: robbers of true and authentic life.... The scrutinizes also raise up those dimensions of life that welcome the loving presence of God, thus encouraging full life.... Thus, the focus of the scrutinizes is toward life, toward freedom, toward salvation. They take very seriously the transforming love of God. ... The best preparation for the celebration of the Scrutinizes is to help the Elect identify and name their areas of strength and weakness in relationship to life with God.... One way of doing this could be to provide a retreat experience with the Elect during which time they could raise and address the issues of their life.... The symbols of the Scrutinies are: living waters, light of the world, new life. (Morris, Thomas, The RCIA, Transforming the Church, pp 171 - 172, Paulist Press, 1997)

The Lectionary Text for the celebration of the Scrutinies – Year A

Third Sunday of Lent RCIA 150-156 First Scrutiny	Exodus 17:3 – 7 Israel grumbling in the desert; God gives water to drink.	Psalm 95	Romans 5 : 1 – 2, 5 – 8 The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.	John 4: 5 – 42 The Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well.
Fourth Sunday of Lent RCIA 164-170 Second Scrutiny	1 Samuel 16: 1, 6 – 7, 10 – 13 David is chosen and anointed.	Psalm 23	Ephesians 5: 8 – 14 Live as children of the light.	John 9: 1 – 41 The man who had been blind from birth
Fifth Sunday of Lent RCIA 171-177 Third Scrutiny	Ezekiel 37: 12 – 14 I will put my spirit in you that you may live.	Psalm 130	Romans 8: 8 – 11 If the Spirit of Christ is in you, you will have life.	John 11: 1 – 45 The raising of Lazarus from the dead.