

Dear Friends in Christ,

This Sunday we begin the period of three Sundays (11:15am Masses), called Scrutinies. This is an important period in the process of preparation of our RCIA candidates for their main celebration of full reception into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil Liturgy. Let me give you some information about this special time.

The "Scrutinies of the Elect" take place during the three Sundays before Palm Sunday. Scrutiny is a word that means "to search", to look for. In modern English it is used to mean, "a critical observation or examination." That's exactly what it's meant to be.



From the RCIA Guide:

"141 The scrutinies, which are solemnly celebrated on Sundays and are reinforced by an exorcism, are rites of self-searching and repentance and have above all a spiritual purpose. The scrutinies are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good. For the scrutinies are celebrated in order to deliver the elect from the power of sin and Satan, to protect them against temptation, and to give them strength in Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. These rites, therefore, should complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all."

During the Scrutinies, the Elect are expected to take an intense look at their lives. During the First Scrutiny (third Sunday of Lent), the Elect have hands laid upon them and are prayed over them that they may reject everything in their lives that is contrary to Christ.

Again, from the RCIA Guide:

"143 In order to inspire in the elect a desire for purification and redemption by Christ, three scrutinies are celebrated. By this means, first of all, the elect are instructed gradually about the mystery of sin, from which the whole world and every person longs to be delivered and thus saved from its present and future consequences. Second, their spirit is filled with Christ the Redeemer, who is the living water (gospel of the Samaritan woman in the first scrutiny), the light of the world (gospel of the man born blind in the second scrutiny), the resurrection and the life (gospel of Lazarus in the third scrutiny). From the first to the final scrutiny the elect should progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation."



The whole community is not there just to observe. This is a great opportunity for all of us to take a deep look into our own lives. The prayers of the Elect should become everyone's prayers. The purifying of the Elect should become the purifying of the whole community.

In Christ,
Fr. Waldemar Podlasz SDS