



SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

March 15, 2019

Dear Parishioners:

During the time of Lent, we as a community of faith embark upon a journey of reflection and renewal of our lives as Catholic Christians. Part of that experience is walking alongside those preparing to be received into the Church—either by Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, or those already one in baptism with us by profession of faith, confirmation, and Eucharist.

Those who are to be baptized this Easter are called the Elect, “the Chosen,” for on the First Sunday of Lent at the Cathedral, they were “chosen” by Archbishop Gomez to be initiated into the Catholic Church. Central to this Lenten time of preparation are three rituals which occur these three weeks on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. These rituals are called the Scrutinies. 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.

The scrutinies are the simplest in structure of the rituals from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The gospels for these Sundays are very familiar texts from the Gospel of John: the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus’ healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. At the conclusion of the homily, the Elect are called forward and asked to kneel. With their sponsors standing behind them with a hand on a shoulder of the elect, we join together in our prayers of the faithful. A special prayer, or exorcism, is prayed over the elect and then they are dismissed to reflect upon and explore what they have just experienced.

We not only witness these rites but also are called to enter into these ritual moments ourselves. At the first scrutiny, we are invited to question what we thirst for in our lives. At the second, we are asked to uncover the obstacles and personal faults that blind us to the presence of God in our midst. And, finally, at the Third Scrutiny, we are called to discern how we are called to rise to new life with Christ.

As we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ’s death and resurrection, may we enter ourselves into the spirit of Lent by overcoming our obstacles of sin and blindness and be born anew into the life of the paschal mystery.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork
Pastor