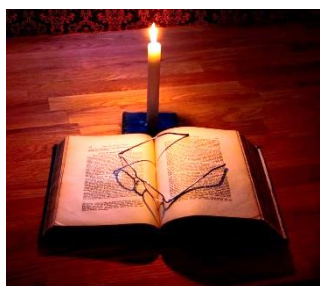


# Did You Know?

March 7, 2021

Last week, the “Did You Know?” column went through the stages of the RCIA/RCIAC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults/Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults Adapted for Children) process those becoming Catholic at the Easter Vigil go through. Today, we will focus on the last stage, the Purification and Enlightenment Stage that is always set in Lent.

Lent. A season for reflection. A time for a renewal of mind and spirit. “Lent” means ‘lengthening of days’. We are given this season each year to journey through the darkness into light, symbolically and literally, as the dark days of winter lend themselves to the lighter days of spring. If we journey through Lent wisely, we can have a strengthening of commitment to our faith as we work toward a conversion of heart, a rebirth through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving – all with the intent of a deeper relationship with God.



This makes Lent the perfect time for the last stage of the RCIA/RCIAC process, the Purification and Enlightenment Stage. This stage also calls our Elect to a deeper

conversion of heart as they prepare to receive the Easter sacraments of initiation into the Church: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

During Lent, our Elect will be presented with prayer cards of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. These statements of our Christian faith and worship that we recite at every Sunday Liturgy, proclaim the core of what we believe as a Christian people, and of our relationship with our God who loves and cares for us.

On the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent the Elect experience rites called scrutinies during Sunday Masses. The intent of the

scrutinies is to pray for the protection of the elect from evil and temptation, and to give them strength in Christ.

Before we move on, a brief explanation. The Church has three cycles of readings for Sunday Masses; A, B, and C (we are currently in Year B), and two cycles for daily Masses; 1 and 2 (we are in Year 1). The cycles were created after Vatican II to expose the laity – us – to more of the bible, God’s Word. Now back to the scrutinies.

No matter what cycle we are in, the gospel for the Mass where each of the three scrutinies is celebrated comes from Year A. In the gospel for the third Sunday, Jesus meets the woman at the well. In the gospel for the fourth Sunday, Jesus heals the man born blind. And in the gospel for the fifth Sunday, Jesus raises his friend Lazarus from the tomb.

These stories not only help the Elect understand where they are going, they are to remind us of where we have come from. These gospel stories are meant to remind us that in baptism we are given to drink of life-giving waters, that we are given new eyes of faith, and that we are given new life in Christ. And they are meant to remind us that Christ is the living water, the light of the world, the resurrection and the life.

