

Dear Friends,

We are now halfway through the Lenten Season and I would like to write about an important matter regarding this season: the Scrutinies that are being celebrated on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent.

This year we have two men in the RCIA program, Michael Sargeant and Cameron Davekos, who are preparing to be baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. In January, Michael and Cameron were anointed with the Oil of the Catechumens. On Sunday, March 1, they were enrolled into the Rite of the Elect at the Cathedral in Rockford. They are going to join us as members of the Body of Christ as they receive the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion. They have been going through the RCIA classes since last September. They have been learning a great deal about our faith and what it means to be Catholics. They will receive the Sacraments of Initiation on Saturday night, April 11, at the Easter Vigil, the greatest night of entire liturgical year.

On the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent, they will experience the First, Second and Third Scrutinies at Mass. This weekend the First Scrutiny is being done at the 8:00 Mass. Next weekend the Second Scrutiny will be at the 5:00 Mass. The following Sunday, March 29, the Third Scrutiny will be at the 10:30 Mass. During these liturgies we will hear different readings than the ones we normally hear for the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent in year B. The readings we hear at these particular Masses with the Scrutinies will be from Year A because they have such powerfully baptismal themes. After the homily they will come up to the sanctuary and I will question, or scrutinize them about their intentions. Are they truly ready to follow Christ as Roman Catholics? Are they freely choosing to be Christian disciples in the Roman Catholic faith? Do they consider themselves worthy of being called to be one with us in our faith?

During these Scrutinies we will pray for Michael and Cameron, and for all the Elect from around the world who will be entering into the Church this coming April 11. When people come into the Church as adults, they need to carefully discern what it is they are doing. Part of that discernment process is a public expression of their intentions. We are greatly privileged to be able to hear them express their desire to be one with us in our faith. However, as they are scrutinized, we can listen to questions that are being asked and reaffirm our own intentions as well. We can make a renewed commitment to living the baptismal call to Christian discipleship as we encourage the Elect to walk with us on our journey to salvation.

In joyful hope,

Fr. Tim Seigel