

Why do the Mass readings change during the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent?

Lent is a time when the elect are making their final preparation for baptism and those who are already baptized are preparing to renew their baptismal promises. This period of preparation for the unbaptized is called purification and enlightenment. During this time, the elect will go through a series of rites called Scrutinies. A scrutiny is a rite “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. (RCIA # 141). In other words, the elect are called to conversion. The scripture readings during this time call the elect to reflect on how their personal actions and choices might affect the larger issues in our community and world. While the scrutinies are only for the unbaptized, the community has an important role to play. The community is to provide an example through their own spirit of conversion and prayer with and for the elect. To share in this journey we listen to the stories of the Samaritan Woman at the Well (What do we thirst for?) the Man Born Blind (what sin are we blind to in our personal and communal lives?) and the raising of Lazarus (how is God calling us to healing and do we trust that God has power over sin and death?)