

SCRUTINIES

The Scrutinies are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. They are a key moment in the journey of Christian initiation, as the Church takes seriously both the profound love of God and God's desire to bring all people to full freedom and salvation. They are especially directed toward the catechumen, who is preparing for the sacraments of initiation.

As catechumens grow in awareness of the graciousness of God's love, they also become more attentive to the realities that resist that love and hinder its transforming power in human life. These include the barriers of personal sin as well as the presence of systemic evil—racism, sexism, ageism, and other forms of discrimination and oppression. Whatever their source, these realities are not rooted in the reconciling and healing love of God.

The Scrutinies name and unmask sin and evil for what they are: realities that distort human life and diminish authentic freedom. At the same time, they also highlight those dimensions of life that are open to grace—virtues and gifts that witness to God's life already at work within the person and that open the way to deeper conversion. In this sense, the Scrutinies are oriented toward life, toward freedom, and toward salvation. They take with full seriousness the transforming love of God at work in the human person. Precisely because God's love is taken seriously, the reality of sin is also taken seriously—but never as the first word of creation or the final word of human destiny.

The Scrutinies, therefore, stand as an expression of the Church's conviction that God's transforming and saving love is both the beginning and the end of the Christian life.