

HOLY
COMFORTER-
SAINT CYPRIAN
PARISH

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DATES

Bible Study
Wednesdays
11 am

@ school with
Fr. Gancayco

Bible Study
Wednesdays
7 pm

Parish Rectory
Msgr. Pope

AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY MONTH

Friends and Family
Day

Sunday, February 17

NO CCD on
Sunday, February 17

Faith Formation

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Lent:

Purification and Enlightenment

Lisa M. Gulino

"The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve." (Mat 4:11)

These words, spoken by Jesus to the devil at the conclusion of the third temptation can be for us a perfect guide to how we plan our season of Lent. The liturgical season of Lent offers us a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need. In other words Lent is a time to recommit ourselves to the

worship and service of God and neighbor. Lent then is a period of purification and enlightenment.

This day, Sunday, February 10th at the 11:00 a.m. Mass we



will celebrate the Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election. Our faith community will be sending two women for the Rite of election. They are: **Vuanya T. Cyrus** and **Kenya Dixon**. And we will send three women for the Call to Continuing Conversation. They are:

Pamela Mills, Kendra Carter and **Jacqueline Johnson**. This sending forth from our faith community to the Archbishop for election and recognition is an important moment in their journey in faith. It is a moment that our local community expresses its approval of the catechumens and candidates. By their going for election and recognition the catechumens and candidates witness to us their commitment to the faith, their eagerness to walk in the way of the Lord, and their earnest efforts toward spiritual growth.

The catechumens and candidates remind all of us that the sacramental life ought to be in the forefront of our consciousness, what we ought most to desire, and that we are willing to take time to learn more about the rich realities we have

contained within the sacraments of the Church. For the catechumens, after the Rite of Election they will now be called the Elect. From “this time on the Church embraces the catechumens as its own with a mother’s love and concern.” (RCIA, 47)

Starting the third week of Lent we will celebrate with the Elect, **the Scrutinies**. The purpose of these rites are for the Elect, (but by extension all of us) to have a serious time for self-searching and repentance. The Scrutinies are intended “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 25, 154). The first scrutiny is centered around the **Gospel reading of the Samaritan woman** at the well. This reading and the prayer that follows reminds the Elect and all of us that we are to thirst for living water, turn to the Lord to hear his word, acknowledge our sins and weakness and then like the Samaritan woman bring the Good News of Jesus home with us.

We read for the second scrutiny the **Gospel of the man born blind**. It is a reminder that we are born blind to the kingdom of light. We need the gift and light of faith! Within our world or even our own inner self there are many struggles, many things that threaten the flame of faith such as: false values, temptations toward power, instant gratification, greediness, gossip, dishonesty or lack of integrity in the small things, materialism, and so on. The prayers of the Scrutiny warns us to guard the gift of faith, fan its flame through personal and communal prayer, the practice of virtues, frequent reception of the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation. How often are we like those in this Gospel who point out another’s sin, but remain blind to our own. Lent is that time to pray for God’s healing light to see that which we need to change, rejoice in the good we discover within us as truly God’s work, and humility to ask for grace and mercy all the days of our lives. Like the blind man

healed by Jesus, we are to courageously give witness even in the face of disbelief or ridicule.

For the third scrutiny, the Church reads the account of **the resurrection of Lazarus**. Jesus, the Son of the Father and revealer of the Father’s love, comes to proclaim life, to rescue us from the power of death and to lead us to the resurrection. How gracious, good, and loving is our Lord.

Though these Scrutinies are intended for the Elect, it can prove spiritually beneficially to **take the Scriptures and the prayers of the Scrutinies** and allow them to effect in our souls and in our lives a change of heart, a “metonia” (turning away from sin and turning toward God). The Church’s prayers are powerful reminders of what is necessary to become the person God intends us to be. We, all of us, are called to be a person of faith and grace, of holiness and service, and of love and life. Jesus comes to give us life in abundance. His message is to repent, believe the Good News, to have faith and life, and to witness to the “good work God has begun in you.”

What better Lenten program could we follow than to:

- reflect on who we are without God’s grace and love,
- who we become through the participation in and reception of the Sacraments
- and what we are destined to — eternal life with God.

We will then become people who worship God alone and serve God and our neighbor with generous and holy hearts.

With gratitude, love, and a promise of support, encouragement and joy we send Vuanya, Kenya, Kendra, Pamela and Jacqueline to celebrate the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion with the Archbishop. With eagerness we await the Easter Vigil when each of you will be received into the life-giving, healing life of the Sacraments. Vuanya, Kenya, Kendra, Pamela and Jacqueline our faith community is richer because of your YES to God’s invitation of faith. Thank you for your witness.