



Preparing for Life at the Table of the Lord

A Newsletter from the Christian Initiation Committee
of the Ontario Liturgical Conference

Lent 2019

Lent in the Parish

We know that the season of Lent in a parish is a special time of year. There is an intensity and purpose to the season, and many things change – outwardly and inwardly. In the church building we see flowers removed, and purple vestments and banners appear.

People are marked with ashes to begin this sacred/solemn time, and the practices of the season: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving are embraced. Whether there is a parish mission or some other kind of devotion - Lent is not the “Same old – Same old”.

This season prepares the Elect for Initiation, and the balance of the parish to renew their Baptismal promises at the great feast of Easter.

For those already baptized, the season of Lent needs to be different in the process of preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation as well. It is an ideal time for a retreat for families preparing for a child to come to the Table and share in Holy Communion for the First time. It is a great time for Confirmation Candidates to work with their sponsor on a plan of outreach, having been informed of the disciplines of Lent, and the joy of being baptized.

Lent for the Elect

The time of Lent also needs to be different for those Catechumens who become the Elect on the First Sunday of Lent.

This time is not a time of catching up on matters from the period of the Catechumenate; it is a wonderful 40-day retreat centered on the rites of the season.

In the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* the time of Lent is referred to as the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. The two types of ritual actions that happen in this period are the Scrutinies and the Presentations of the Creed and the Our Father.

**Scrutiny → Purification
Presentation → Enlightenment**

On the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent we celebrate a Scrutiny. The scrutiny is meant to uncover then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the Elect, and then strengthen all that is upright, strong and good. Looking at Jesus as the living water, the light of the world, and the resurrection and the life, these Scrutinies are preparing and purifying the elect for Initiation.

In the third week we present the Creed, and in the fifth week we present the Our Father. Since they celebrated the Rite of Acceptance, our catechumens have been dismissed so they have not prayed these ancient texts which express the heart of the Church's faith and prayer in the midst of the assembled community.

Thus the Rites belonging to Lent are very closely related to the name of this period in the Church's ritual text!

The Ontario Liturgical Conference is a consultative body to the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario in liturgical matters. The Christian Initiation Committee supports the OLC in matters pertaining to the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and other issues of Christian Initiation in Ontario, Canada. One of the primary goals of the Christian Initiation Committee is to promote the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* as it applies to adults, children of catechetical age and those baptized in infancy. **Email:** olcncia@gmail.com