

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent (1<sup>st</sup> Scrutiny)  
Homily by Deacon Jim Olshefski  
March 24, 2019**

**Homily**

You may have noticed that we didn't hear the anticipated readings from the Gospel of Luke, but rather we heard the readings from Year A, which is from the Gospel according to Matthew. We're doing this, only at the 11:00am Mass this weekend as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation, as today we begin the Scrutinies. This year, we have the great privilege of welcoming 3 new members, the elect, into the Church.

As part of this RCIA process, the elect are asked to undergo the Scrutinies. The term "scrutiny" is frequently used as something done to a person, as in being closely monitored by an employer. In Catholic theology, the Scrutinies are rites of self-searching and repentance on a spiritual level. Through these Scrutinies, the elect are to learn a process that we are all challenged to undergo on a daily basis:

- First, the elect are challenged to find and uncover all that is weak, defective, and sinful within their souls.
- Secondly, they are tasked to discover and strengthen all that is upright, strong and good within themselves.

This process is not something that is done one time; rather, this is something that the elect, in fact all of us, should do on a daily basis

throughout our entire lives. We're all called to purge the bad and strengthen the good that is within us.

This week, we are beginning the process of the three Scrutinies, which will continue for the next two Sundays of Lent. We observe these Scrutinies so that the elect, and those of us who are already members of the Church, may realize the power that sin has on us and increase our desire for salvation.

Today, with the first Scrutiny, we heard the passage from Matthew's Gospel about the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. She came to the well looking for physical water, but found the spiritual water for which she was unknowingly thirsting. This woman, who was living in a sinful relationship, found the cure for her thirst through our Lord.

All of us have a thirst, a desire for something greater than us. We know that there is something more than what we can experience with our senses, and we yearn for it. While sin promises to fulfill that thirst, and oftentimes will initially quench it, in the long run we are all the more thirsty. Like a sugary drink that seems to fill our earthly thirst but actually dehydrates us, sin worsens our thirst instead of quenching it.

When speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus promises her that He is the living water that will quench her thirst. But this thirst is not the physical thirst that can be satisfied with water from Jacob's well; rather,

this thirst is the desire to be united with God. When we turn away from sin and place our trust in Jesus, we receive this living water which will quench our spiritual thirst more than we could possibly imagine.