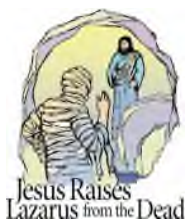
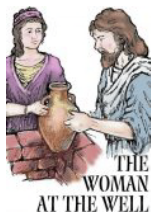


## The Scrutinies

On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Lent, parishes with an active OCIA are asked to witness and participate in a special rite called the Scrutinies. The Scrutinies are part of the initiation process and support the Elect (the unbaptized) as they move into the final period of preparation for the Easter sacraments. *"Their purpose is to deliver the Elect from the power of sin and Satan, to help them resist temptations, and to find strength in Christ."* (OCIA #141) The church calls this time immediately preceding initiation the "Period of Enlightenment and Purification." This really is what Lent is meant to be for all of us as we are called to reflect on our own lives and on our need for God's help.



The Scripture readings for the Scrutinies include the Gospel stories of the Samaritan woman at the well, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. These readings were chosen for their powerful images of sin, surrender, conversion, faith and healing, and remind not just the Elect but the whole parish community of the ways God delivers us from thirst, from darkness, from death. God does not scrutinize the Elect to focus on what's wrong with them, but rather to make known to them God's compassion and healing.

Let us pray for our Elect, Bonnie, Vinnie and Ashok, and for our candidates, Dan, Nicole, Alexandra, Alejandra and Gabby, as their journey to Easter continues. May these readings inspire us all to thirst for the Lord, to truly see as Jesus sees, and to die to whatever keeps us from following the way of Jesus.

On the 1st Sunday of Lent, the Catholic Church celebrates the **Rite of Election**, in which Catechumens (the unbaptized) are publicly acknowledged as being ready to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. Due to the snowstorm, the Rite was celebrated in parishes this year rather than at a diocesan event. At our 11:30 Mass, Bonnie, Vinnie and Ashok signed their names in the Book of the Elect, signifying their faithful commitment. We continue to journey through Lent with them, offering our prayers and support.

