



DISCUSSION GUIDE

part 5 of 7



The Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Normally coinciding with Lent, the Period of Purification and Enlightenment invites the elect to join with the entire Christian community in reflecting on the paschal mystery and our sharing in Christ's saving work through baptism. The period has a markedly distinctive character, shifting away from catechesis to interior reflection. To prepare their hearts for the reception of the sacraments, the Church guides the elect through three Scrutinies and the Rites of Handing On, which aim to purify their hearts and minds and to enlighten them with a deeper knowledge of Christ the Savior (RCIA/OCIA, 139). Participating also in the traditional practices of Lent, the elect examine their consciences and do penance as they prepare for the celebration of the Easter sacraments at the Easter Vigil.



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FOR YOUR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

PREPARING SPIRIT AND HEART FOR THE EASTER SACRAMENTS

In this period, the focus dramatically shifts from catechesis to an intense spiritual recollection in preparation for the sacraments of initiation. While catechesis aimed to teach the Christian way of life, this period leads the elect to recognize their need for Christ the Savior. The Scrutinies draw the elect, enlightened by their growing faith, to search the depths of mind and heart and to grasp their own spiritual thirst, blindness, and death due to sin, from which only Christ can free them. The community of the faithful supports them in this spiritual recollection through fervent intercession.

- How would you describe the difference between catechesis and recollection?
- How can initiation teams make this period more about helping the elect to search their hearts than about forming their heads?

THE MUSIC OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The liturgies of Lent dispose the elect and the faithful to recall the paschal mystery at work in their lives. The hymns and psalms we sing on the Sundays during the Period of Purification and Enlightenment lead us out of the desert of temptation and into a life of transfigured glory. When we choose music about the baptismal symbols of water, light, and life during the Scrutinies, we should consider reprising the same songs or refrains at the Easter Vigil. The themes of Lent prepare us to celebrate Christ the life-giving water, the light of the world, the resurrection and the life.

- How does the music we sing at Mass or reflect upon during this period deepen our understanding of the paschal mystery at work in our lives?
- In which ways does our liturgical music help us understand our baptismal calling to service and discipleship? What songs come to mind?

FROM OUR HANDS TO YOURS

What our current rite has called "presentations" when referring to entrusting the Creed and Lord's Prayer to the elect, the new translation will call "handing on." The change echoes St. Paul's words to the Corinthians: "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you" (1 Cor 11:23). The expression "handing on" evokes an intimate and human gesture by which the Church reaches back to her earliest days and through the communion of centuries of believers lovingly entrusts the summary of her faith and model of prayer to those about to be baptized.

- Recall a time someone handed something on to you. What did it mean to you? How did you receive the responsibility?
- How do you "handle" the Creed and the Lord's Prayer?