



Reflection from Ben Babaran

May I start my reflection with a joke? - **Reconciliation with a hook:** An elderly man on the beach found a magic lamp. As he picked it up and started cleaning it, a genie appeared and said: "Because you have freed me I will grant you a wish." The man responded. "I had a fight with my only brother thirty years ago. I want to be reconciled with him so that he may forgive me and start loving me." The genie said, "I am glad that you did not ask for money or riches. Your wish is granted. Are you sick and about to die?" the genie asked. "No way!" the man shouted. "But my unmarried, older brother is about to die and he's worth about \$60 million!!"

Traditionally, the Fourth Sunday of Lent is called *Laetare Sunday* (Rejoice Sunday). Anticipating Easter joy, today's readings invite us to rejoice by being reconciled with God through repentance and the confession of our sins and by celebrating our coming home to be with our loving and forgiving God. Sunday's Gospel celebrates the joy of the prodigal son on his "homecoming" where he discovers his bad choices and realizes his father's forgiving and overflowing love.

Let us look into the prodigal son's discovery of his bad choices. While he was enjoying the "high life," he thought he had no sins. When his own economy tanked he "came to his senses," realized the error of his ways, recognized how shallow his happiness had been and how foolish his choices. "Came to his senses" means the prodigal son made an introspective evaluation of his predicament. In a sense, he did a self-scrutiny.

The last three Sundays of Lent are the times when catechumens and candidates of R.C.I.A. (Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults) program go through a "Rite of Scrutiny." The **Scrutiny** is an opportunity for these catechumens and candidates to assess if they are ready to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. Likewise, for the remaining days of Lent, we are invited to examine our ways. Most of us have a difficult time seeing ourselves for who we really are because we are so very busy and involved with many different projects and activities. I know I am. There never seems to be time for self-analysis or personal reflection. We might do well to concentrate on that time when we thought we didn't really have any real sins.

~ *Peace,*

Ben