



ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT

Easter

April 9, 2023

May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know the hope that belongs to God's call, riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead. Ephesians 1:18-20

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Saint Raymond Community:

Easter is a time of calling to mission. The Old Testament readings at Sunday Mass are replaced by reading from the book of Acts of Apostles. This is not simply a history of the early Church. It is a model of missionary action for those who are sent on mission at all times and places. The Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost together are the three actions that send the Church on mission. The Father raises Jesus from death, manifesting the power of God that can overcome all human suffering. Jesus, the Son, ascends into heaven, making clear that it is the People of God who will carry forward the covenant mission, as the Body of Christ in the world. The Holy Spirit comes down upon the disciples to empower them for mission.

This Easter is a time of anticipation as we await the unveiling of our new tabernacle on Pentecost Sunday. The visible tabernacle in the Catholic tradition is a sign of the missionary identity of the People of God. Our new tabernacle has the Day of Pentecost engraved on its doors. It reminds us that Jesus shares himself with us in the Eucharist to make us into his body in the world, called to mission. The Eucharist, consecrated by the prayers of the People of God, is kept in the tabernacle to be taken out to all who are in need of the healing power of the risen Christ.

We celebrate the signs of new life that we have seen in our community over the past year: the growth of small faith-sharing groups, Family faith events, the presentation of The Chosen series as a new opportunity to come into a relationship with Jesus, Men's Renewal retreat, and the return of the Lenten fish fry Fridays.

We pray that God will continue to enlighten our hearts so that each member of



our community may know the hope of God's call in our lives. We pray that the Lord will make clear to us how we need to grow by helping us to see beyond the ways we have always done things in the past to enable us to minister more effectively and creatively to the changing community around us.

The apostle Paul describes our life as the body of Christ: As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body...If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?... The eye cannot say to the hand – "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet – "I do not need you." ...If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. (1 Corinthians 12-26)

God's power works through the Church as the body of Christ only if every person discerns his or her part in the mission and actively shares those gifts. The whole body suffers if anyone is weak or absent in their contribution. So we pray that the Lord will inspire us to activate the whole variety of spiritual gifts in our midst.

In this season of Easter, may the power of the risen Jesus touch your life and the lives of your families.

Peace Be With You,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fr. Scott Hebden".

Fr. Scott Hebden