



**ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT**

**Easter**

**March 31, 2024**

**Reflections**

Dear Parishioners,

A warm welcome to all who have chosen to celebrate the great feast of Easter at Saint Raymond. **Alleluia He is Risen!!** This joyous message is proclaimed throughout the world, professing Christ's ultimate victory over darkness, grace over sin, and life over death. During the Sacred 50-day Easter season, we have many opportunities to offer God thanks for the countless blessings bestowed upon us as individuals, as a family, and as members of a community of faith.

Oftentimes, we can focus on life's many hardships, but if we recognize how truly blessed we are, then we can become a people of joy, an Easter people. And if we are living our lives with this joy, then every moment can be a moment of Evangelization. This impacts how we greet people we meet on the street or in our parish, how we do chores around the house, and how we respond to our spouses. We are blessed with the knowledge of our faith, but that requires something of you and me. What does it mean to share in word and deed our faith in Jesus.

How is the truth of Easter -- the presence of the Risen Christ -- made real and effective in the world today? The answer lies in our hands, in our hearts, and in our own choices. As the great 16th-century Christian mystic Teresa of Avila expressed it: Christ has no hands but ours, no feet but ours.

*We bear him to humanity,  
we bring him forth to his world like Mary his mother.*

*Without us, he can do nothing:  
That is how he chooses it shall be.*

That is our calling and privilege as well. We are the Body of Christ. His Spirit is indeed with us. We are little Christs, christianoi.

- How can we be Easter people, the hands and eyes and heart of Jesus in our world?
- How can we be people of faith as we face the darkness of fear and evil?
- How can we be a community of peace, and learn to set aside differences and seek the common good of all?

Easter is the day on which we celebrate the fact of faith that Jesus was willing to die for us but was not willing to stay dead. By rising, he shattered the hold that death has over all of us. Death could not keep him down. And if we are joined to him, neither can it keep us down. We are "Easter people" when we put on new lives, not merely our new Easter clothes.

While I remain grateful to celebrate my first Easter as the pastor of Saint Raymond, I am aware of many challenges that we will face together. What is required of us is to Rejoice in God's love for us. Sharing in God's love with all? I pray that we will continue to listen and discern God's call for each of our lives.

A word of thanks to all of the ministries who have enabled us to celebrate these holy days!

Let us pray for one another,

*Fr Jerry Jacob*

Fr Jerry Jacob, Pastor



from

**Jacob's Well**



ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT

*Palm*  
*Sunday* **Reflections**

March 24, 2024

*Kathy Nuelle*  
Outreach Coordinator

We have reached the final week of Lent and soon will be immersed in the Holy Days of the Triduum – Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday. The Gospel reading this Sunday, Mark 14:1-15:47, is one we have heard many times. It describes the few days leading up to Jesus's betrayal and arrest and ends with his burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

When I was younger, the readings on Palm Sunday always confused me. The reading at the beginning of Mass during the procession of the priest, Mark 11: 1-10, speaks of Jesus riding in on a donkey to the shouts of praise and joy from the crowds – **"Hosanna in the highest."** Then, the Gospel tells us how the same crowd turns against Jesus and demands his crucifixion. I could not understand how people could move from praising Jesus, waving palm branches, and proclaiming him to be the King of the Jews to condemning him to death and despising him – all in a few short days.

I thought that Mark must have missed something – got the timing wrong or forgot to mention something Jesus did to make people so mad. The change in the crowd's hearts was so dramatic and divided; as a younger person, still naïve to the world and my faith, I could not make sense of that.

But as I grew in my faith and life experiences, I started to understand. How many times have we lost our Christian perspective? After hearing what the masses are saying, we too start to change our minds and hearts and believe people we don't even know instead of believing what our hearts and our God is telling us. We get caught up in the fury and anger of the crowd. We lose our courage and wisdom, and instead of thinking with a Christian focus, we take on the thoughts of those around us. We let fear, judgment, and self-righteousness rule our minds instead of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we were all given in confirmation; understanding, wisdom, counsel, knowledge, strength, piety, and fear of the Lord. We start to look at others through the eyes of the world and not through the merciful eyes of Jesus.

Jesus wants us to see all people as God's unique creations – created in His image and for His purpose. We are called to treat all people with the same compassion and mercy that Jesus showed everyone he met. There are countless stories in the bible of Jesus' desire for us to have merciful hearts – John 8:1-11 (the parable of the good Samaritan), Luke 10:25-27 (the parable of the prodigal son), and Luke 15:11-32 (the story of the stoning of the adulterous women) – to name a few.

Jesus does not condemn others; he listens to them, tells them to sin no more, forgives them, and encourages them. This is how Jesus wants us to treat others – this is His deepest desire. He died for us on the cross to give us new life and show us the depths of his mercy.

Jesus forgave those who betrayed him, tormented him, scourged and beat him, mocked and humiliated him, wrongly accused him, and finally crucified him. **"When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.'"** (Luke 23: 33-34). How can we not try and forgive those in our lives who have wronged or hurt us?

As followers of Christ, we are called to take His example of unyielding mercy and try to emulate it. This is a great mantra – a great philosophy, but **how do we put this into practice in our daily lives?** When a co-worker and you don't see eye to eye, instead of talking behind their back, try and find the good they bring to the office. When your classmates are annoying, remember that they, too, might think you are annoying, so try to find common ground. When the stranger in front of you at the grocery store unpacks their cart at an exceedingly slow pace, instead of sighing with exasperation, offer to help or say a prayer for them. When your neighbor shares his political viewpoints with you that differ from yours, don't write them off; listen, learn, and grow with each. There are countless times in our lives when we can choose mercy and forgiveness over anger and judgment. We are called to try! We will often fail, for it is impossible for us to have the same compassion as God, but God desires us to try and try and try again. And with each try, we come closer to becoming the person God created us to be – people of love and mercy.

*Kathy Nuelle*



**ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT**

# Lent Reflections

March 17, 2024

*Fr Rodlin*  
Associate Pastor

## Our Life's Clock Ticking Tick-Tock



Time can be our biggest friend and our biggest enemy. But what is time? According to Mr. Google, time is **“the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole.”** In the Gospel of John, 12:20-33 John recounts the story about some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast and came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee and asked him, Sir, we would like to see Jesus.”

Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, **“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”** Jesus was referring to His imminent death, crucifixion, and resurrection.

This Gospel for this weekend is from the beginning of Chapter 3, which is the continuity of the end of Chapter 2. At the end of Chapter 2, John recounts the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. He went to the temple angrily, driving the people out and turning the tables of the money changers because they were making His Father’s house a marketplace which was a dangerous provocation to the temple authorities. Even from a human perspective, Jesus could have foreseen his fate. On many occasions, he predicts that he will have to suffer and die and then rise again. He even knew who would betray him. He certainly knew what kind of pain and suffering he would endure for our redemption and salvation and when that hour would come. My question to you is;

### **What’s your hour? When will your hour come? What will that be?**

Those are unanswered questions because nobody knows except God, our creator.

Sometimes we assume we have time while we are running out of time. Time can be our biggest enemy because time controls us; we don’t control time. Time comes and goes. Yesterday has gone forever, today has 24 hours not a second is guaranteed, the future is no guarantee either. Thus, our existence is being controlled by time. Time can also be our biggest friend if we use it wisely and productively for the greater glory of God. As finite and mortal beings, we must be aware of the unknown and uncertainties of life.

Jesus was always aware of the timing of the unfolding nature of his life and ministry. He timed His ministry wisely and thoughtfully, even though people often seemed to challenge His timing. For example, at the wedding feast at Cana, when He was requested to turn water into wine, He said to Mary, **“My hour has not yet come.”** It wasn’t the time for Him to perform any miracle. Each time they attempted to stone him to death, He escaped because He was on a divine and heavenly schedule.

Let’s assume that you knew when your hour would come and all the in-between events of your life. **Would you remain the same person you are today, or would you need to experience some conversion and transformation?** Our life is like a clock operated by a single high-powered battery which is designed to last for several decades if you are blessed with longevity. The undeniable truth is that life can stop at any time. So, what time is it for you? What’s your hour? Nobody knows the answer, but everybody knows with certainty that our clock is ticking one tick at a time until the final tick.

Lent reminds us that we are on a journey, and every journey has a beginning and an end. Let us learn from Jesus how to reach our destination safely. As you have some time left, now is the time to wisely use your time so that when your clock ticks for the last time, it will not be the end of your time but the beginning of a lifetime and timeless time with God. I hope you learn to value time while your battery still has some juice. Like every single breath and heartbeat, that’s how precious time is. You may not know when your time will be up, but you know how to use the time that you have so that when your clock stops, your time here on earth will not be a waste of time. I leave you with this African proverb, **“Beware of time because it has all the answers.”**

*Rev. Rodlin*



**ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT**

*Lent*

**March 3, 2024**

**Reflections**

*Don Dave*

How is your Lent going? Here we are at almost the halfway point in Lent. Do you need a jolt, a wake-up call, or a reset? That is exactly what we are given in our gospel this week from John. We hear a story that appears in all four of our gospel accounts. The story gives us a surprising image of Jesus, that being an ANGRY JESUS when he saw what was going on in and around the temple area. Then he leaves us with a head-scratching statement.

The temple was the center of worship and commerce, and during Passover time, people traveled great distances and were not able to bring their animals for sacrifice; therefore, the temple leaders exploited them by charging exorbitant prices for their animals to line the temple coffers. Jesus felt this was a distraction to prayer and worship. He was so consumed with anger at this sight that he drove them out, overturned their tables, and told them not to make his father's house a marketplace. When asked for a sign or on who's authority he was acting, he makes the statement.

**“Destroy this temple, and in three days,  
I will raise it up.”**

Jesus said a lot of wild things during his public ministry. He told parables that sometimes were more confusing than clear. He made statements that described a kingdom that seemed to work the opposite of the way most people thought the world worked. He challenged people to do things, believe things, and embrace things that seemed to be impossible. Over time, those who knew him the best probably got somewhat used to it. But this may have been one of the most outrageous statements Jesus ever said. After all, the people had been working on the building of the temple for decades. They had assumed that he was talking about the building they were all looking at. But he wasn't.

**He was talking about the temple of his body.**

No one present would ever have done such a thing, nor would have even believed such a thing could be true. The temple was a holy place --- the holiest. Was Jesus saying HE was as HOLY as the temple, the “place” where God dwelled?

**You bet he was.**

It's a beautiful image when you really think about it. And what's even more beautiful is that it is not a term that only rightfully applies to Jesus. It's also a term the Church uses to describe our bodies - yours and mine - the ones we see in the mirror every day.

We may not like our bodies. Sometimes we are not sure that we are capable of doing the things God is asking of us --- certain that our faults, limitations, and weaknesses would make true faithfulness impossible. Am I a temple? Really? But it's true.

Of course, not exactly in the same way as it is true for Jesus. After all, he is God, and we are not. He is perfection, and we are not. He is the Savior of the world, and we are not. Yet, the term applies nonetheless.

It applies because:

- God created us, and that means we are good (no matter what we do or don't do).
- God made us in his image, and that means we have a dignity that we can never forfeit.
- God loves us beyond all measure, and so even the seemingly impossible from us is possible.
- And Jesus promised to send his Spirit, which means that God does indeed dwell within each of us if we allow it.

In other words, we were created a certain way for a certain purpose, that is, to be people who possess and share with the world every good thing, kindness, mercy, generosity, compassion, love, you name it.

Do we let prestige, material things, and pursuits get in the way of our relationship with God? We are given this season of Lent to make room in our lives, to work on setting our priorities, and to rid ourselves of those distractions, those "tables" that need to be overturned in our lives so we can become the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. The presence of God is not in a building. We are the temples; just as Jesus became a servant, we are the body of Christ in the world. Lent gives us that time to clean our house. We still have time this Lent to get angry and overturn those distractions, those "tables" that prevent us from being the Body of Christ to those we encounter.

Peace,

*Deacon Dave*  
Deacon Dave



**ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT**

Lent

February 25, 2024

Reflections

Brandi Sulak  
Media Editor

### *My Path with the Church*

In 1996, I started attending Mass at St. Edna in Arlington Heights with Todd, now my husband. He was born into the Catholic faith and went to church every week without fail. At the time, I was searching when I moved to Illinois, and there was a pull in me that led me to join him on Sundays. Soon after, I joined RCIA and completed my sacraments. We joined St. Raymond in 2002. I was involved and starting to feel like I was a part of the parish. I met many great people, and many are still friends today. **Vacation Bible School** filled me the most. Last year, I decided to “retire” from that ministry and allow others to bring new life into it. Maybe VBS is calling you? I hope you will also consider VBS a way to give back. See the bulletin for more on this one.

*“In Mark 9 (Gospel today), among other things, Jesus teaches the disciples about leadership in His kingdom. Leadership starts with knowing whom you follow. Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:14) due to all the honor and glory of God.” (bibleref.com)*

### *What Do You Get Out of Church?*

I have become very aware of all the parish has to offer just after my employment in November of 2019, just a few months before COVID when the world changed. This kicked my job description to a brand new level. I was attending more “church” than I had in all my life in a matter of months. Attending Mass on Sunday or a few events was the bare minimum.

There are things like; Holy Days, Taizé prayer services, and funerals to name a few. I knew there were Holy Days, but I’d never attended a Mass or service to learn more about Holy Thursday or Good Friday, for example. What I learned was that there was so much more to know **and be a part of and why we do that**. I had no idea how impactful Stations of the Cross could be. Did you know that every week is different? They are themed, not just a different host. We have a speaker series this Lent. Try one of those?

If there is anything to take away from this reflection, I hope you’ll **try something new** this Lent. St. Raymond offers so much for us to connect with personally and within the church. Please reach out to the office if there’s anything you want to know more about.

In addition, many of these things are **live-streamed**, so you can “give it a try” at home first and see how you feel about it. Maybe you haven’t been to Mass in a while and just read the bulletins. If that is the case, all homilies are recorded for each Mass, and you can listen at your own pace and find which one you connect with.

Did you know not everyone reads the bulletin? Did you know not everyone gets a weekly Parish email? Did you know not everyone is on social media? I am open to ideas to reach more people. **Would you mind** passing along a bulletin, forwarding our email, or sharing our social media?

*“What is the meaning of Romans 8:31-34 (2nd reading)? These verses show us how God*



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*has brought us in and is now for us, not because of what we did, but because of what He has done in Christ. God has shown how He is for us. This is not going to change! We need to learn to use this in our hearts when we're afraid." (thefellowship.site)*

## Patience

We started these reflection pages a few years ago. They have been written to incorporate the Gospel for that week and perhaps a reading or two. I have never been very good at reading and reflecting on scripture. I find myself relating to Matthew, as portrayed in [The Chosen](#). I need things spelled out a bit more. I was so grateful for [The Chosen](#) series to give me that storytelling version that speaks to me. We all learn differently, and I really appreciate that about everyone. I've known this about myself and sought the best ways for me. What I didn't realize was how these differences in learning affect everyone until I became a mom. **We all have the way that works best for us.** I hope St. Raymond is doing that for you.

*"I want to encourage you not to withhold anything from God. In Genesis 22:15-18 (1st reading), the whole point is that God is faithful to provide for those who trust in him. And I want to encourage you, as I have, to trust in him with everything we have." (radical.net)*

*Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.*

-Simone Weil

## Friends

Brandi 022524

At a funeral recently, Fr. Ron Kalas spoke of this parishioner who had a phone tree, and he was on it. She would go through her list of people to check in with and see how they were doing. She may not see them often, but staying connected was important. As I mentioned, I've become a real fan of [The Chosen](#). Season 2 has had several "ah ha" moments. In episode 2, Simon talks to Jesus about how "he sees" things. Everyone has their perspective. Slow down and remember that everyone has their gifts. We need to acknowledge them all and encourage one another. And **"If we don't make time for friends, we won't have any."**

## What is Lent to You?

I've never really understood the idea of giving up food for Lent to return to it after Easter. Is it the challenge to go without for 40 days? I personally like the idea of changing behavior, removing behavior, or doing an act of service for others. We have a few "in the words of Pope Francis" similar thought processes on our Lent 2024 page, in addition to the powerful litany by Marc Cadaronella that Fr. Jerry spoke about last week.

I believe churches are meant to praise God. But so are 2 am car rides, self-care, conversations with friends, strangers, and even VBS. Don't let a building confine your faith because we will never change the world by just going to church; we need to be the church. I talked about these things I've done at church as I was seeking belonging. I now know there are more things for me to be involved in and use my gifts to glorify God. **I challenge you to do the same.** Try a new ministry. Look over the Lent schedule and find something you've not participated in yet!

Thank you for reading,

*Brandi Sulak*

Brandi Sulak



**ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT**

# Lent Reflections

February 18, 2024

Fr. Jerry Jacob  
Pastor

Dear Parishioners,

Ready or not, the holy season of Lent is upon us. A unique season that asks us to take more seriously our relationship with the Lord and the tangible implications for how we choose to live each day. The traditional remedies or disciplines of Lent of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving have the potential to help us reprioritize how we spend our time, our financial resources, and how we share our gifts and talents with others. Lent invites us to ponder the wisdom and teachings of Christ and how we reflect them each day. Lent is the perfect time to examine our attitudes, how we judge others, our behaviors, what we do, and what we say. Our very way of life. A Challenging question for each of us to consider: Is the way I am living my life today pleasing in the sight of God? And if not, what needs to change?

In the Gospel of Mark, we are told that it was the Holy Spirit that drove Jesus into the desert to be tempted by Satan, and he remained there for 40 days and 40 nights. In Mark's account of Jesus being tempted by Satan, we are not told the precise ways that he was tested. While I don't think any one of us likes to be tested, testing reveals what we know and believe to be right and true. What change in our lives might the Spirit be leading us to this year? Jesus is not asking for the temporary in our journey of faith. That is why giving up chocolate for Lent will probably not have a lasting impact on our faith. In some ways, Lent is about turning away from those things that distract us or tempt us to do or say that weaken or impede our relationship with the Lord and others. Lent also invites us to turn toward those things that strengthen our relationship with the Lord and others.

Several years ago, there was a powerful litany, "Fasting and Feasting – a prayer service for Lent," written by Marc Cadaronella (<https://www.catechist.com/fasting-feasting-prayer-service-lent/>) and published in "Catechists magazine." Marc shared some concrete ideas to help students reflect on things they could fast and feast from during Lent. I think many are relevant for all of us. They include in part the following suggestions:



To fast from negative thoughts and feast on positive ones.

To fast from nastiness and feast on friendliness.

To fast from conflict and feast on understanding.

To fast from selfishness and feast on helping others

To fast from doubt and feast on faith.

To fast from holding grudges and feast on forgiveness.

To fast from discouragement and feast on hope.

May this holy season of Lent help us draw closer to the Lord and open up to what the Spirit wants to reveal to us over these 40 days.

Let us pray for one another,

Fr. Jerry Jacob

Fr. Jerry



from

Jacob's Well