



ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT

Lent

March 16, 2025

Reflections

Confirmation Team

Dear St. Raymond Community,

Today, 81 candidates will receive the Rite of Confirmation, and we joyfully welcome them into our faith community as fully initiated Catholics. These candidates have spent 2 years studying our Catholic faith through St. Raymond School, Religious Education, or Home Study. We are incredibly grateful to their parents, our school teachers, Tom Carrico and Linda Bryom, and our Sunday Confirmation facilitators, Art Malara and Joe Wurzbarger, as they guided the youth through their formation.

The candidates came together as a community of believers to participate in monthly Sunday formation discussions and reflections. Each candidate chose a saint to accompany and inspire them on their Christian journey. They completed service projects to learn what being a servant in Christ's name means and explored the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, connecting the sacraments of initiation to their calling as disciples of Christ.

On this Second Sunday of Lent, the Gospel of Luke shares the Transfiguration, a powerful moment of revelation, transformation, and empowerment. Similarly, the Sacrament of Confirmation provides the grace, strength, and deepening of faith necessary for Christians to live out their call as disciples of Christ in the world.

The Transfiguration is a key moment in the lives of Christ and his disciples. During it, Jesus reveals who He truly is—not merely a teacher or prophet but the divine Son of God. Jesus' intense prayer, dazzling appearance, and the presence of Moses and Elijah represent the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament, showing that He is fulfilling the New Covenant. The voice from the cloud with the command to “listen to Him” gives the disciples a glimpse of Christ's divine glory, deepening their faith, affirming Jesus' unique authority, and encouraging them to trust His teachings. As Jesus and His disciples descended the mountaintop, they knew the road ahead would lead to suffering and hardship. Their shared experience prepared the disciples to endure the trials that would come, including Jesus' Passion. Peter, James, and John were shown the ultimate purpose of His mission and entrusted with sharing their knowledge with others.

In the same way, the Sacrament of Confirmation serves as a moment of spiritual empowerment and preparation for life's challenges. The grace of the Holy Spirit helps illuminate the truth of the Gospel so we can grow our relationship with God. The Holy Spirit guides us to hear and respond to God's voice in our lives, helping us to discern God's will and actively live according to His call. The Transfiguration and Confirmation are moments of divine strengthening that prepare us for the challenges ahead, giving us courage in the face of trials and the strength to live out our faith. Just as Jesus equipped His disciples to go forth and spread the Gospel, the Holy Spirit equips the confirmed for the same mission.

We invite the entire St. Raymond Community to pray for these newly confirmed youth of our community. May **“the spirit of the LORD...rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD.”** (Isaiah 11:2). May the Holy Spirit inspire them to live their faith - Rejoicing in God's love for us, sharing God's love with all. Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Peace be with you,

Fr. Jerry Jacob

Fr. Jerry Jacob
Pastor

Sharon Moeykens

Sharon Moeykens
Director of Lifelong
Faith Formation

Mary Eileen Ward

Mary Eileen Ward
School Principal

Patrick McGarry

Patrick McGarry
Confirmation
Coordinator

Elizabeth Theiss

Elizabeth Theiss
Faith Formation
Coordinator



ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT

Lent

March 9, 2025

Reflections

Fr. Rodlin

Associate Pastor

Forty Days Lenten Journey Led by The Holy Spirit

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the 40-Day Lenten Journey in the desert of this world led by the Spirit. In a few days, we will embark on this journey together as a community of faith. Lent is a season of **repentance, reflection, and renewal** that culminates in the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. The ashes imposed on our foreheads remind us of our mortality: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. They also signify our need for repentance and our dependence on God's grace. This day ushers us into a spiritual pilgrimage, inviting us to journey with Jesus through the wilderness, drawing strength from the Holy Spirit, and preparing our hearts to fully embrace the victory of the cross and the empty tomb.

A spiritual writer once said,

"The same way we need blood to flow through our veins to keep us alive, we need the Holy Spirit to not only dwell within us, but He must also be our best friend if we want to spiritually live because He is the blood line that keeps us alive spiritually."

The Holy Spirit played a pivotal role in Jesus's journey through the wilderness. **He was not left to face the trials alone.** The Spirit who filled Him at His baptism also empowered Him to resist temptation, cling to God's Word, and emerge victorious. Jesus' reliance on the Spirit is a model for all of us as we embark on our own Lenten Journey.

Lent is not merely a season of abstaining from certain foods or habits; it is an opportunity to be led by the Spirit into deeper communion with God. Just as Jesus fasted and prayed in the wilderness, Lent invites us to detach from worldly distractions so we can hear God's voice more clearly and be transformed by His presence. The Spirit strengthens us to confront the "wilderness" within our own lives—the places of sin, doubt, or brokenness—and leads us toward **renewal and restoration.**

In the wilderness, Jesus was tempted to prioritize personal comfort, power, and self-reliance over His mission. Yet each time, He resisted by grounding Himself in the truth of God's Word: "It is written..." Lent calls us to examine the temptations we face—whether it's the lure of materialism, pride, or complacency—and to combat them with Scripture, prayer, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus emerged from the wilderness ready to fulfill His calling, we, too, can experience spiritual renewal that equips us for the mission God has for our lives.

The 40 days of Lent mirror Jesus's journey, reminding us that transformation often requires discomfort and sacrifice. The ashes of Ash Wednesday symbolize our need to repent, but they also point us to **hope.** They remind us that God can take the "dust" of our lives—our failures, sins, and shortcomings and create something beautiful.

So, as we move through Lent, the Holy Spirit walks with us, just as He did with Jesus. He convicts us of sin, empowers us to resist temptation, and reminds us of our identity as beloved children of God. This season is not about achieving perfection but about drawing nearer to the One who is perfect. It is a time to let go of anything that hinders our relationship with God and to open ourselves to the transforming work and power of the Spirit.

Let us embrace this journey together, empowered by the Holy Spirit, so that come Easter morning, we may celebrate not just the resurrection of Christ but the renewal and transformation of our own hearts and lives.

Pax et Bonum,

Rev. Rodlin