



Church of the Ascension

ascensionsaratoga.org | 408-725-3939

Masses: (Sat) 5p; (Sun) 7a, 9a, 11a, 5p

(Mon-Fri) 8a; (Sat) 9a

Confessions: (Sat) 4p – 4:45p

March 30, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Jos 5:9a, 10-12 | 2 Cor 5:17-21 | Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

We await with anticipation holidays and holiday parties – but do we look forward to the day after? To the cleanup, the back-to-the-grind, the business-as-usual? Jesus' parable in today's Gospel recounts the lavish celebration of the father who rejoices at the homecoming of his wayward son. We rightly recognize in the father's mercy the abundant forgiveness of our heavenly Father. But have we ever considered what happened the next day? The son, accustomed to his independence and dissolute life, is once again in his father's house. He must live according to his father's rules and demonstrate the sincerity of his repentance by faithfully carrying out his duties. There is work to be done – crops to be harvested, perhaps. As the weeks and months pass without another fatted calf for feasting, the son might ask if his father's love has waned. And although we may sympathize with his unease, the certainty of his father's goodness must be, for the prodigal son and for us, the guarantee of his steadfast love.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

In our relationship with God, we will likely experience moments when our Father's love is keenly felt. Perhaps we will be overwhelmed with peace when we return to him in the sacrament of confession. Perhaps we will be struck by a verse of Scripture during a moment of prayer. But most of our days will look more like the prodigal son's "day after" than the festivities which marked his return. We know, however, that if the weeks that followed were comparatively boring, his father's love had lost none of its warmth or vitality. Similarly, in the days when God seems quiet, when our prayers seem to drift into space or our hearts are distracted with the concerns of everyday life, we must not despair of the Father's love. Nor can we suppose that our happiness can be found outside of his fold. We abide under the care of our Father who lovingly calls us to himself with every circumstance he places before us. To believe this, even when the festivities are over, is to live by faith.

PRAY

With so many opportunities for gratification at our fingertips, it is easy to become restless and to seek happiness in distractions. This week, find an image of Jesus or a Scripture verse about God's love and keep it with you as you work, study, or carry out monotonous tasks. When you're tempted to leave your duties aside out of boredom, take a moment instead to praise and thank God for his love.

Join the Party

Just as we've learned that the word "prodigal" applies more to the father in Jesus' famous parable than to the son (it is the father who loves and forgives without counting the cost), so also the key figure in the story may very well be the elder brother. It is easy to share his perspective: Work hard, do the right thing, and you'll come out on top. How quickly he becomes sullen when reminded that his father's love—like God's rain—falls even on his kid brother. One can feel sympathy for the elder son, self-exiled from the party. Thank goodness the parable ends with the Prodigal Father still waiting for his stubborn older son to join the celebration. Let the lesson of God's unrelenting love sink in. - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

Rite of Scrutiny & Sunday Readings

Scriptural readings at the 9am Mass these weeks (third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent), when we celebrate the Rite of Scrutiny, are different from those at other Masses. They include the stories of Jesus encountering the Samaritan woman at the well, the healing the man born blind, and raising Lazarus from the dead. These transformative encounters with Jesus help the elect (those prepare to join the Catholic faith) examine their hearts and their resolve to thirst for the Lord, to see with the eyes of Christ, and to hold fast to the promise of eternal life.

Parish Office Closed - March 31

Our parish office will be closed on Monday, March 31, in observance of Cesar Chavez Day.

Is It Normal Aging or Is It Dementia?

Come to explore the warning signs and hallmarks of dementia with Tami Anastasia, a dementia consultant with 30 years of experience.

Date & Time: Saturday, April 5 (10am - 11:30am)

Location: St. Mary's Parish - Office Conference Room, 219 Bean Ave, Los Gatos.

Free Admissions. RSVP 408-803-3999.

Special Collection - March 30

The second collection this Sunday is for Catholic Relief Services. Thank you for your support.

WEEKLY OFFERING - MARCH 23

-Total **\$5,711** (\$4,018 + online: \$1,693). Goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: \$243,300. Budget: \$247,000.

Thank you for your generosity.

MASS INTENTIONS

Mar 29	Sat	05 pm	Fr. Rey Sarmiento +
Mar 30	Sun	05 pm	Ron Stopnick +
Mar 31	Mon	08 am	The Lau Family
Apr 01	Tue	08 am	The Gerrard Family
Apr 02	Wed	08 am	Fr. Ben Manding +
Apr 03	Thu	08 am	Paul & Cecilia Phung +
Apr 04	Fri	08 am	Arturo R. Martinez, Jr. +
Apr 05	Sat	09 am	Rose LeSage +

Jubilee Yearbook Available

The Jubilee yearbook will be available for purchase at church this weekend. It will cost **\$10 for those who had their portraits taken** for the book and **\$20 for others**. Please place your payments in the **wooden boxes** located near the main entrance of the church. **If you had your photo taken, kindly mark your family name on the list** displayed in the church. You may choose to contribute more than **\$10 per copy** to help cover the actual costs. Any excess funds generated from the Jubilee book will be allocated to our Youth Faith Formation. Thank you for being a part of this Jubilee commemorative yearbook project.

Global Catholic Church Statistics

The global Catholic population increased by 1.15% between 2022 and 2023, rising from 1.39 billion to 1.406 billion over the biennium (two-year period). Africa is characterized by a highly dynamic spread with 3.31% increase. With a growth of 0.9%, the Americas include 47.8% of the world's Catholics.

- *2025 Pontifical Yearbook*

Risks & Opportunities of AI for Children

AI technology can enhance learning and render education more effective, yet it also exposes children to considerable risks: addiction to social media, interference with cognitive development, invasion of privacy, manipulation of behavior, and even sexual exploitation.

On March 21-22, the Vatican hosted a conference on "Risks and Opportunities of AI for Children." It brought together church leaders, scientists, educators, and child rights advocates to explore how AI can either help or harm children, and to call on policymakers to establish laws that safeguard young minds from AI's darker implications.

Lenten Practices

- **Gong:** During Lent, a gong may be used in some churches as a call to ongoing prayer, following the final blessing and dismissal.

- **Holy Water during Lent:** It's proper to empty the holy water fonts on the days of the Sacred Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday) in preparation of the blessing of water at the Easter Vigil. Lent, as a penitential season, is also a season rich in the symbolism of water and baptism, constantly evoked in liturgical texts.

ADA Report - Week 8

-Number of Pledges: 108

-Percentage: **98%**.

We almost reached our goal!



Have you made your pledge? Thank you for your support.

