

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



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Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

December 7, 2025

Second Sunday of Advent

Is 11:1-10 | Rom 15:4-9 | Mt 3:1-12

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

Today's Gospel is a challenging one, inviting us to consider how much spiritual fruit we are bearing in our lives. St. John the Baptist tells us, "Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance," reminding us that the depth of our conversion will be measured by our fruit. Speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees, John says it is not enough to say that "We have Abraham as our father." If he were speaking today, John might put it this way: it's not enough to say "I'm Catholic!" or "I belong to X Parish." Our lives must show outward evidence of the inward conversion we have undergone. The good news for us today is that we can pause and take stock of how well we are bearing spiritual fruit. Pay attention to what areas might need pruning or fertilizing to ensure that when we come to the Lord's threshing floor at the end of our lives, there is a bountiful harvest he can gather into his barn.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Our first reading gives us a glimpse of God's kingdom: The Son of David will rule with wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge, judging "the poor with justice" and striking "the ruthless with the rod of his mouth." In his kingdom "the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb" and yet "there shall be no harm or ruin." What a poetic way of describing the harmony and wholeness that God longs for in society! As disciples, this is our mission. We're called to work so that God's kingdom vision can become reality. As we work for peace and justice, we're doing our part in the Church's work of evangelization. As the U.S. bishops reminded us in their letter *Communities of Salt and Light*, "social justice is an integral part of evangelization, a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel, and an essential part of the Church's mission."

REFLECT

In the Gospel, John the Baptist says of Jesus, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Our ability to bear spiritual fruit comes from the power of the Holy Spirit within us. Take a moment to reflect on where you see the gifts (see the first reading from Isaiah!) and fruits of the Holy Spirit in your life. How might the Spirit of God be working to increase your spiritual fruitfulness this Advent?

Put Aside Your To-Do-List

Advent can seem like a wintery Lent—purple decor, sober worship, scripture about the end times. While it is about focusing on our inner life, it's not from the perspective of repentance but a passionate desire for God. Unfortunately, a quiet time like Advent is easily shouted down by the madness of a jump-started Christmas. Advent is not a to-do list; it's a gift tied in purple velvet ribbon. Unwrap it—it's "just what you always wanted!" Confront your use and abuse of time. Create and jealously guard little pockets of quiet. Go for a walk in the crisp air. Sit with your address book; picture, pray for, and bless each person you cherish. Turn off the TV, listen to the first part of Handel's Messiah and bask in its beauty. Be still. Know God.

-Takefiveforfaith.com

Advent Reconciliation

Saturday, **Dec. 13**, from **9:30am to 11am**.

In this season of preparation for Christ's coming, come celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Advent Call to Repentance

Advent's call to repentance is rooted in our preparation for the Savior's arrival. This season encourages us to realign our lives day to day to be ready for Christ. In doing so, we can find healing, joy, hope. "*Prepare the way for the Lord*" (Is 40:3)

Year-End Donations

Thank you for being a part of our Church of the Ascension and for your support. Let's finish the year strong and work together for a blessed new one. Consider giving a year-end gift to our parish. May the Lord bless you for your generosity.

WEEKLY OFFERING - Nov. 30

-Total: **\$6,171** (\$5,103 + online: \$1,068). Goal: \$6,800.

-YTD Sunday: **\$130,795**. Budget: \$149,600.

-Thanksgiving: **\$757**.

-Human Development: \$500 (YTD \$2,424).

Thank you for your generosity.

MASS INTENTIONS

Dec 06	Sat	05 pm	The Hornbrook Family
Dec 07	Sun	07 am	Gary S. H. Chang +
		9:30 am	Anne Sanquini +
		05 pm	Lowell Forte +
Dec 08	Mon	08 am	(Immaculate Conception)
		07 pm	(Immaculate Conception)
Dec 09	Tue	08 am	Carmela Honor +
Dec 10	Wed	08 am	Elizabeth Maldero +
Dec 11	Thu	08 am	Anne Sanquini +
Dec 12	Fri	08 am	(Our Lady of Guadalupe)
Dec 13	Sat	09 am	The Weeks Family

Dec. 7 Sunday Mass Schedule

7:00 am; 9:30 am (*no 9:00 am & 11:00 am*); **5:00 pm**

Dec. 8 Mass (Immaculate Conception)

8:00 am; 7:00 pm.

Immaculate Conception

The feast of the Conception of Mary was first celebrated in the Eastern Church in the seventh century, then in the West in the eighth century. Since the 11th century it was called the feast of the Immaculate Conception, then became a feast of the universal Church and a solemnity.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed: "The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin."

Pope's Prayer Intention for December

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.

Beacons of Hope

During his Nov. 27-30 trip to Istanbul, Turkey, Pope Leo XIV and Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew reaffirmed their commitment to the path toward full communion and strongly condemned using religion to justify violence. The trip marked his first foreign visit and commemorated the 1,700th anniversary of the ecumenical Council of Nicaea (present-day İznik, Turkey), which produced the Nicene Creed in 325.

In a joint declaration, the two religious leaders state, "The goal of Christian unity includes the objective of contributing in a fundamental and life-giving manner to peace among all peoples. Together we fervently raise our voices in invoking God's gift of peace upon our world."

Acknowledging that in many regions, conflict and violence continue ravaging the lives of countless individuals, the Pope and the Patriarch made a plea to those holding civil and political responsibilities to take all necessary actions to ensure that the calamity of war comes to an immediate halt.

Our Giving Tree

-**Catholic Charities** relies on your generosity to provide support for families and individuals on their journeys to self-sufficiency. Gift cards make the holidays brighter for Catholic Charities clients.

-The **Layette Program** welcomes infant clothing and other needed items and supplies. This program has been in existence for 70 years in our Diocese! (The Help One Child program is not seeking gifts this season). **Please stop by the Giving Tree** and consider giving a gift. Thank you.