



January 28, 2024

## Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dt 18:15-20 | 1 Cor 7:32-35 | Mk 1:21-28

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

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

Oh, to not be anxious! What would that be like – to not have to worry about how we'll pay the bills or whether our kids are safe or if our health will fail? While anxiety is a very human emotion, we can take comfort in knowing that our God is more powerful than anything that may worry us. It is also important to note that in today's reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, what he means by "anxious" is not a modern psychological concept with only a negative connotation. The connotation is more "to be concerned with," or "caring about" something, and can refer to things that are very good – including spouses and families! But when we care for many things, including our relationship with God, it is only natural for us to be anxious at times. But Jesus Christ gives us the assurance that the troubles of this world are temporary, and the peace of God eternal. Paul is encouraging the Corinthians, and us, to understand the importance of an undivided devotion to God, to care for him above all things – no matter if we are married or single – so that our whole life is devoted to holiness.

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I am always thankful when something good that has been anticipated, or predicted, comes to pass: The sunshine and mild weather holds true for that outdoor event I hosted; or the generous gift that a longtime friend mailed arrives unscathed. There is some anxiety in the waiting for, but relief in the fulfillment of, these beneficent promises. And while these are somewhat superficial examples, they do point us in the same direction of hope and gratitude that the divine gifts of God elicit in us. In today's first reading, Moses promises the people that the Lord will raise up for them, from among their own kin, a prophet who will speak God's own words and to whom the people will listen. And the Lord did provide numerous prophets, and kings, and judges, and eventually his only begotten Son, to call his people back to himself, and to save them from the wages of sin and death. The hope and anticipation God's chosen people had was fulfilled in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We share in that gift of hope and of gratitude for our salvation.

**PRAY** Today's psalm (Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9) is a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving and encouragement. It helps us steer our minds from those things which may make us anxious. Spend time in the morning or evening each day of the coming week, praying and reflecting on the words.

### Church of the Ascension

Saratoga, California

[www.ascensionsaratoga.org](http://www.ascensionsaratoga.org)

408-725-3939

Mass Schedule

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

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

## Overcoming Power of Darkness

In the gospel story today, Jesus' audience is astonished by his teaching authority and his miracle power. Jesus shows both his compassion to the demoniac and his power over the darkness forces.

During dark times, especially when you feel that "merciless powers" can overtake you, you may find comfort in Saint Patrick's Breastplate Prayer:

I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me. . . .  
God's shield to protect me,  
From all who shall wish me ill, afar and a-near,  
Alone and in a multitude.  
Against every cruel merciless power  
That may oppose my body and soul.

## National Catholic Schools Week

Jan 28 - Feb 3

Since 1974, National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the US. It is entering its 50th anniversary this year. The theme for this week is *Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community*.

## February Special Collections

Feb 11 (Sunday):

Ethnic Minorities & Church in Latin America

Feb 14 (Ash Wednesday):

Church in Central & Eastern Europe

## Mass with Anointing of the Sick

-Saturday, **February 3, at 11 am** at **St Joseph Cathedral**:  
Mass with Anointing of the Sick with Bishop Cantú.

-Saturday, **February 10, at 9 am** at **Ascension Church**.  
We will also pray for God's blessing on caregivers and ministers to the homebound.

## Ash Wednesday Mass Schedule

February 14: **8:00 am; 7:00 pm**

"Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love" - *Joel 2:13*

## Lenten Practices

Jan 28 - Feb 3

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting and abstinence from meat for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence.

## MASS INTENTIONS

Jan 27	Sat		No Mass intention
Jan 28	Sun		No Mass intention
Jan 29-31	M-W		No Mass intention
Feb 01	Thu	08 am	Corey Matthews +
Feb 02	Fri	08 am	Todd Kerkhof (L)
Feb 03	Sat	09 am	Jack Sutcliffe +

## WEEKLY OFFERING - JAN 21

-\$9,562 (baskets: \$8,243, including an annual \$4,400 gift; online: \$1,319). Weekly goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: **\$184,469**. Budget: \$195,000. Shortfall: \$10,531.

-Faith Formation collection: **\$1,520**.

Thank you for your generous support.

## Eucharist Small Group Study

The "Jesus and the Eucharist" small group study is held every Sunday (Jan. 14 - Feb. 25) right after the 9:00 am Mass in our church. In preparation, you can watch the series free of charge at FORMED. Just type "*Formed.org Jesus and the Eucharist*" into a search engine.

## Jesus & the Eucharist

### Session 3: Am I Saved?

What Jesus did for us through his Death and Resurrection was the greatest act of love in history. Through this act he saved us. And then, desiring that we encounter him and allowing his Paschal Mystery to reach each of us, he gave us himself in the Eucharist.

But it is easy to feel unworthy of this gift of love. We may feel we have too much baggage. But God came to enter into our messy condition, no matter how messy! He came to fix us from within—to transform us from the inside out. Some might be surprised by how generous and abundant the love of God really is. We don't deserve God's love, but that's the incredible reality of God's mercy.

#### STUDY OVERVIEW

1. What's Our Story?
2. Who Is Jesus?
3. Am I Saved?
4. Why a Church?
5. God Is with Us
6. Story of the Eucharist
7. Bread for the Journey

## Annual Diocesan Appeal 2024

Kickoff: Feb. 3-4

Your ADA gift supports our Diocese and Ascension mission. Your contribution will also benefit Ascension in another way. We plan to turn the area in front of the church, where there are different elevations, into a level terrace that is safe and good for parish gatherings. More details will be provided. ADA 2024 surplus will return to Ascension for this project. Thank you for your gift to this year's ADA.

### On February 11

#### Lion Dance right after the 11 am Mass

Celebrate Lunar New Year of the Dragon with the Lions and Kids Dancing outside Worner Hall, organized by the Chinese Catholics at Ascension.

#### Valentines for Seniors at 12 noon

Come join us for a few fun hours of socializing, music, dancing, lunch and bingo, in Worner Hall, hosted by Ascension Fil-Am & Youth Faith Formation.

RSVP by February 1. Contact Marie Maraschin at 408-218-2704 or Parish Office at 408-725-3939.

## Wedding Anniversary Celebration

Feb. 17 at 10:00 am

at St. Joseph Cathedral.

Couples celebrating their Anniversaries (1st – 5th, 25th, 40th, 50th, and greater) this year are invited to attend. The couples will renew their vow and receive a blessing at the celebration by the Bishop.

To register, scan the QR code >>>

