

January 14, 2024

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

## Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19 | 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20 | Jn 1:35-42

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

When Samuel hears the Lord speak in today's first reading, he mistakes it as Eli calling out to him in the temple. The third time Samuel asks if he called, Eli is wise enough to realize what is going on and guides Samuel: "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel required guidance because he "was not familiar with the Lord, because the Lord had not revealed anything to him as yet." In a similar way does the Apostle Andrew come to the Lord. In today's Gospel, Andrew didn't know who Jesus was until John the Baptist told him: "Behold, the Lamb of God." Andrew then began to follow Jesus, and to bring others to him. There may be times when we, like both of these men, need someone else to help us hear the call of the Lord clearly, or see his presence among us. Those who serve the Lord in this way are a great gift to us, and enable us to be that gift for others. Pray for the grace to hear what we need to hear, to see what we need to see, and to say to others, "come, we have found the Messiah."

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

#### PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Despite our best efforts, the time and attention we give to our lives of faith can ebb and flow. Sometimes we can feel so connected with God that we sense his presence everywhere. But there may also be times when God feels distant and we struggle to hear his voice. Notice in today's readings how Samuel "was not familiar with the Lord" but was sleeping in the temple, close to the ark; notice how Andrew was hanging around John the Baptist and immediately followed Christ when told who he was. We can see that, already before "knowing," is a "desire to know." The Lord created us, formed us into being, and calls us to a relationship with him. We are drawn to him even before we can see or know what he has revealed to us. He is our source, and our ultimate end. We seek eternal life with Christ and a path of holiness to help us on our way. The stories of Samuel and the disciple Andrew impress upon us that God is always near and calling to us - we simply must give him the opportunity to speak, sometimes when we least expect it.

**INVITATION** We are all called to a life of holiness. But it's not always easy to grow in holiness and strengthen one's relationship with God on our own. Consider reaching out to your parish and asking about spiritual direction - a spiritual director will help you fine tune your ears to be more attentive to the Lord's voice.



Samuel Reaching to Eli the Judgments of God upon Eli's House, by John Singleton Copley, CCO

## 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

## It's Your Call

Most of us are leery about accepting calls from unknown sources. In the happy age of caller ID, it's as if a virtual butler brings each visitor's card on a silver tray into our drawing room. We can decline to be "home" to any undesirable contact. Still, people of faith do want to be present when it's God who comes calling. How do we learn to distinguish that special voice from all the internal chatter clamoring for our attention? Veterans in discernment are helpful mentors, including pastors, spiritual directors, and the blueprint stories of past saints. Seekers, take the call! - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

## Quotes

*"It is no use saying: 'Speak, Lord, your servant wants to hear,' if we never risk the silence to listen."*

- M. Basil Pennington, Trappist priest

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

In response to Christ's prayer "that they all may be one" (John 17:21), the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is observed annually from January 18-25. It started as the Church Unity Octave at Graymoor in Garrison, New York, in 1908. Since 1966, the week has been jointly sponsored by the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches.

The theme for this year is "You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbor as yourself" (cf. Luke 10:27). That's a statement by a lawyer who earlier asked Jesus, "What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" The commitment to love can help others know that we are Christians and lead us closer to the day when Christians are more united than divided.

## Faith Formation Collection

As mentioned in the October Parish Finance Report, due to the increasing needs in our parish and the high inflation, Fr. Hao and our Parish Finance Council asked for your financial support for two funds: Faith Formation, and Buildings & Grounds (two quarterly collections for each fund).

The Faith Formation Fund Collection is scheduled for next weekend, **January 20-21**. You can also give to this fund *anytime* through WeShare online giving platform. Thank you for your generous support.

## MASS INTENTIONS

|        |     |       |                            |
|--------|-----|-------|----------------------------|
| Jan 13 | Sat | 05 pm | Margaret & Elmer Fischer + |
| Jan 14 | Sun | 09 am | Felix Sichon +             |
|        |     | 11 am | Remedios Doria +           |
| Jan 15 | Mon | 08 am | Felix & Violet Paes +      |
| Jan 17 | Wed | 08 am | Terry Lynch +              |
| Jan 18 | Thu | 08 am | Jessica Fedeli +           |

## WEEKLY OFFERING - JAN 7

-\$7,424 (baskets: \$4,597; online: \$2,824). Weekly goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: **\$170,032**. Budget: \$182,000. Shortfall: \$11,968.

Thank you for your generous support.

## Eucharist Small Group Study

The "Jesus and the Eucharist" small group study will start on January 14, every Sunday, 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 and the Eucharist

SESSION 1: WHAT'S OUR STORY?

We all love a good story—from the characters and the twists and turns of a captivating plot to the dynamics of a conflict and the resolution at the end. The Bible is the story of God's love for us. It begins with him creating us out of love, redeeming us by that love, and finally

transforming us in his love. This divine author is *Love*—an exchange of love within the life of the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What a story!

### 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

## Parish Office Closed on January 15

Our parish office will be closed on Monday, January 15, in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

## Sabbath Prayer

While the Pharisees may have overemphasized strict observance of the Sabbath, perhaps we have swung too far in the opposite direction. Look around you on any Sunday afternoon—you'll see people shopping, working, rushing about. And most of us are right in the thick of things. While having options on how to spend our free time is a good thing, what seems to be getting lost is the notion of a qualitative difference in the pace of life, the "quiet Sunday afternoons" of times past. We all need a space in our crowded lives for time apart, time to reconnect with ourselves, our loved ones, and our God. Whatever your own Sunday choices might be, make sure you find a way to "keep holy the Sabbath." After all, as Jesus taught, the Sabbath was designed for our benefit. God doesn't need a day of rest—we do. - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

## MLK celebration

Celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King  
When? 6 pm, Monday, January 15  
Where? Steps of Saratoga City Hall,  
13777 Fruitvale Ave, Saratoga.

## Vocations Upcoming Events

-Jan 21: Revs vs Sems Basketball Challenge at St. Francis High School. Doors open 5pm.

-Jan 26-28: Men's Discernment Retreat at St. Patrick Seminary.