

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 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ez 37:12-14 | Rom 8:8-11 | Jn 11:1-45

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

The raising of Lazarus marks an irreversible turning point in Jesus' ministry. It's impossible to publicly raise someone from the dead and continue to fly beneath the radar. It's no surprise that the next time we meet Jesus, he'll be greeted with Hosannas and palm branches as the promised Son of David. But we also know that by raising Lazarus, Jesus attracts the attention of his enemies and sets himself on a course that ultimately leads to the cross. In our own life of discipleship, there may be times when we will have to step up and make a decisive and public choice for our faith or our values. Standing up for what's right may bring praise and admiration, or lead to misunderstanding or even persecution. We can draw strength in these decisive moments from the knowledge that the One we follow is the resurrection and the life. Any risk we take in following him is worth it in the end.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Today's Gospel passage features the shortest and perhaps one of the most profound verses in all of Scripture: "And Jesus wept." This text reveals that before he restored his friend to life, we have a God who weeps with us over the losses and tragedies of our lives. Likewise, before we can announce the Good News of the Gospel, we must learn the "art of accompaniment," as Pope Francis reminded us in *Evangelii Gaudium*. (169) This requires that we offer "our closeness and our compassionate gaze" to all those we seek to evangelize. When our first action consists of compassion, empathy, and entering into the joys and sorrows of others, our efforts at evangelization will bear much fruit.

INVITATION

St. Paul tells us to "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Rom 12:15) As we enter the final week of Lent and prepare for Holy Week, spend some time thinking about who in your life is experiencing a particular moment of joy or sorrow at this time. Consider one concrete action you can take to be present to them: it could be dropping off a meal to someone who recently had surgery, sitting with someone who lost a loved one and listening as they share stories of their lives together, or bringing a special treat to celebrate a friend's recent accomplishment. Then - do it.

A Rock of Faith

Of the two sisters of Bethany, Mary is usually considered the “spiritual” one, and Martha is relegated to the category of “hostess with the mostest.” But after the death of their brother Lazarus, it is Martha who shows her spiritual mettle in her encounter with Jesus on the road. She gives her profession of faith with as much insight and certainty as does Peter when he was once asked by Jesus, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter’s response earns him the role of first leader of the church. Martha’s faith ensures that Lazarus is returned to her family and demonstrates that she, too, is a “rock.”

-Takefiveforfaith.com

Pope John XXIII’s Prayer for Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, who are called the Prince of Peace, who are yourself our peace and reconciliation, who so often said, “Peace to you,” grant us peace. Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice, and brotherly love. Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace. Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace. May all peoples of the earth become as brothers and sisters. May longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always over us all.

Interested in Stephen Ministries?

Stephen Ministers are lay members of the church trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. If you are interested, call Fr. Hao at 408-725-3939.

Consider a Special Easter Gift

A special Easter offering is a powerful way to support our church ministries and projects beyond regular giving. We also appreciate your contribution to the **Flowers Fund**.



WEEKLY OFFERING - Mar. 15

-Total: **\$4,980** (\$3,796 + \$1,184 online). Goal: \$6,800.
-YTD Sunday: **\$249,214**. Budget: \$251,600.
-Catholic Relief Services: **\$2,404**.
-Flowers Fund: **\$25**. Thank you for your generosity.

MASS INTENTIONS

Mar 21	Sat	05 pm	Ben Angeleri +
Mar 22	Sun	07 am	Ana Karen Sanchez (L)
		09 am	Khiem Maria Bui +
		11 am	Norine Cusick +
		05 pm	Mercedes & Ricardo Fuenzalida +
Mar 25	Wed	08 am	Louise Kayser +
Mar 26	Thu	08 am	Marietta Gloria R. Martinez +

Pray for **Norine Cusick**, who died on Dec. 27, 2025.



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

- Holy Thursday** (no 8:00am Mass)
7:30pm: Mass of the Lord’s Supper followed by Adoration in the hall until 10:00pm.
- Good Friday** (no 8:00am Mass)
12:00pm: Passion of the Lord (*Collection for Holy Land*)
1:30pm: Stations of the Cross
7:30pm: Passion of the Lord (*Collection for Holy Land*)
- Holy Saturday** (no 9:00am Mass)
8:30pm: Easter Vigil
- Easter Sunday**: Regular Sunday schedule.

Easter Egg Hunt

The FII-Am Association will be hosting the yearly Easter Egg Hunt and Coffee & Donuts on April 5, 2026.

Catholics at the Capitol

Join California’s Bishops and Catholics for a day of prayer, worship, and advocacy on Wednesday, March 25, 2026. On the Feast of the Annunciation, Catholics from across California will gather at the State Capitol to ignite a faith that serves—a faith rooted in prayer, alive in community, and expressed through action for the common good. Watch Bishop Cantú’s video invitation to participate (QR code).



Capital Campaign Report: 62%

The “Sowing Seeds of Faith” Capital Campaign this year includes the **ADA 2026**.

It supports the Pastoral Plan in our Diocese. It provides resources for ministries at Ascension and all parishes.

Ascension’s total goal: **\$569,000**

(\$495,000 for the Campaign; \$74,000 for the ADA).

50% of every dollar raised toward the campaign goal will return to Ascension, helping us achieve our priorities.

We are pleased to report on the campaign progress in our parish:

Week 1: Pledged to date: \$101,905 (**18%**)

Week 2: Pledged to date: \$178,405 (**31%**).

Week 3: Pledged to date: \$282,405 (**50%**)

Week 4: Pledged to date: \$354,105 (**62%**)

Thank you to our generous donors!

We have exceeded the ADA 2026 goal (\$74,000), and currently, **\$140,052** (or 50% of the Campaign goal) is expected to be returned to Ascension.

Our parish will contact families with more details and invite their participation.

You may get a call from Fr. Hao, or one of these **campaign ambassadors**: Jim Scherffius, Tony & June Stolz, Charlie Nguyen, Gene Plevyak, Nick & Kathy Fedeli. More names will be added.