



February 8, 2026

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 58:7-10 | 1 Cor 2:1-5 | Mt 5:13-16

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

My understanding of prayer changed when I read St. Teresa of Calcutta's statement that says, "I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things." Prayer is not an incantation that can change the will of God. It is the act of raising our hearts and minds to God, and of opening ourselves — our will, our understanding, our joys, and our sorrows — to be sanctified. The prophet Isaiah seems to be saying something similar in the first reading. He lists off the commands of the Lord to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and shelter the homeless, and then tells the faithful that if they do these things, "then your light shall break forth like the dawn." We certainly serve those who are vulnerable because each person has immeasurable dignity and deserves to be cared for as a child of God. But the act of caring for another also changes us. We are made more fully into who we were created to be — not an individual living in isolation, but one who is deeply connected in community to the rest of humankind.

### **GO EVANGELIZE**

#### **PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT**

An act of service, then, is much bigger than simply donating money or giving of our time. In caring for our neighbor, we proclaim God's goodness to a world in darkness, bearing witness to the love of God which is the source of all our actions. In the Gospel, Christ calls his followers to be "the light of the world," reminding us that he wants to shine his light through us. But we are not the source of the light. Even when we are the ones serving, we still remain only the vessel the true light shines through. When we love others, we are changed because we allow ourselves to be conformed more closely to Christ, allowing others to encounter his love in our actions.

### **SERVE**

The corporal works of mercy are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. This is not a list meant to overwhelm, but rather to provide opportunities to care for God's children. What act of service can you and your family engage in this week to allow the light of Christ to shine through you?

**Church of the Ascension**  
[ascensionsaratoga.org](http://ascensionsaratoga.org) | 408-725-3939

**Masses:** (Sat) 5p; (Sun) 7a, 9a, 11a, 5p  
(Mon-Fri) 8a; (Sat) 9a  
**Confessions:** (Sat) 4:00p-4:45pm



## Put It into Practice

Twentieth-century writer Aldous Huxley said of love: "There isn't any secret formula or method. You learn love by loving." At every crossroad, at every bump in the road in your relationships with others, this is a simple truth to put into practice: Learn to love by loving; learn to forgive by forgiving. It isn't any more complicated than that. The choice is yours.

-Takefiveforfaith.com

## You Are The Light of the World

St. Dominic Savio (1842–1857), a youth, is a model of joyful holiness, exemplifying that serving God and others should be done with a cheerful heart in everyday duties. He famously summarized his spiritual approach by stating, "I am not capable of doing big things, but I want to do everything, even the smallest things, for the greater glory of God".

## Ash Wednesday Mass

February 18: 8:00 am & 7:00 pm.

## Stations of the Cross

Every Friday during Lent after the 8:00am Mass.

## How to Lent

This is a new series from the Augustine Institute that aims to help us appreciate and practice the pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. This series will challenge our preconceived notions about Lent, laying out a roadmap for entering the season.



## More Lenten Resources

for ADULTS and CHILDREN on the FORMED **Lent Calendar** (QR code). **Sign up** by entering our church zip code, selecting Ascension, etc.

## WEEKLY OFFERING - Feb. 1

-Total: **\$10,700** (\$9,488 - including a **\$5,500** IRA contribution + online: \$1,212). Goal: \$6,800.

-YTD Sunday: **\$201,682**. Budget: \$210,800.

-Church in Latin America: **\$1,640**.

Thank you for your generosity.

**Consider an IRA to Charity Contribution:** individuals aged 70½ or older can transfer to a church up to \$108,000 annually without increasing taxable income or requiring itemized deductions.

## MASS INTENTIONS

Feb 07	Sat	05 pm	Theresa Tien Dao +
Feb 08	Sun	07 am	Gary S. H. Chang +
		11 am	Mark Anthony Baylon +
Feb 10	Tue	08 am	Natividad P. Rios +
Feb 12	Thu	08 am	Gaudencia Santiago +
Feb 13	Fri	08 am	Christopher Wong (L)
Feb 14	Sat	09 am	Felicitas Bunag +

## Bearing Witness to Suffering

On January 29, 26, Bishop Oscar Cantú joined federal and local leaders, and community advocates and interfaith leaders at a press conference in San José to speak against the violent immigration enforcement actions and the toll it has taken on families and communities, and to pray for those being affected.

In a statement a day earlier, the Catholic bishops of California expressed that they "are deeply saddened and alarmed by the recent loss of life connected to federal immigration enforcement activity... At a moment when people are exercising their First Amendment rights to protest and seek accountability, violence only deepens wounds and erodes the foundations of peace and public trust."

Visit [cacatholic.org](http://cacatholic.org) for the full text.

## Sowing Seeds of Faith

The Church of the Ascension is participating with all parishes in the Diocese in the 2026 **Sowing Seeds of Faith capital campaign** (ADA 2026 is included). This campaign seeks to provide the necessary resources for the **Pastoral Plan**, which is being implemented in every parish. The Pastoral Plan's goal is to foster spiritual renewal through deeper discipleship, vibrant community, and missionary outreach.

For Ascension, this campaign helps our parish to:

- Creating a Welcoming Place for Worship
- Supporting Families at Every Stage
- Engaging Youth and Young Adults.

Over the next five months, we will be asking you to support the important work in our Diocese and Ascension through your Time, Talent, and Treasure. Thank you for your support.

## Diocesan Youth Retreat

Calling all high school youth! Join our Diocesan Youth Retreat, where we'll grow in faith, build lasting friendships, and encounter Christ in a powerful way in a beautiful location!

This year we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Diocesan Youth Retreat (June 8-12).

For five days, in the beautiful setting of South Lake Tahoe, the teens from incoming 9th graders to graduated 12th graders will experience and encounter the love of God by means of Catholic catechesis, sacramental formation, social justice awareness, prayer experiences accompaniment and significant opportunities to fellowship and create lasting friendships. Through the power of the Holy Spirit during the retreat, we hope young people will take ownership of their faith and grow deeper in relationship with God.

Interested? Call Fr. Hao.

## Men's Club

Meeting in the Hall Lounge, Friday, Feb. 13, 6:00pm.

