



November 19, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Prv 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31 | 1 Thes 5:1-6 | Mt 25:14-30

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

When we think of gifts, we may picture a child eagerly ripping into wrapping paper on a birthday or at Christmas. Oh, the anticipation and the joy seen through a child's eyes! In contemplating today's Scriptures, it occurs to me that the gifts God has given to us should fill us with the same joy and sense of gratitude as that child. Although there are many facets to the parable of the talents which Jesus tells his disciples in today's Gospel, what stands out to me comes at the very beginning: "A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them." No small thing to be entrusted with the master's possessions! In the same way, God *entrusts* us with his gifts – they are all we have and all we are. And, like the master in the parable, God expects us to use our gifts and talents to build his kingdom here on earth – to multiply his goodness in the world.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Does the parable seem a bit harsh at the end? After all, the last servant didn't squander the money he was given, he simply gave it back in the same form in which it was given to him. But let's think about our generous God and the gifts and talents he has given us. God expects us to *use* these gifts, not hide them under a bushel. If we are lazy with and inattentive to our God-given gifts, they will shrink and fade away. We will be squandering our invitation to full participation in the kingdom of God. Obviously, each of God's children has unique gifts, just as the servants in the parable received different numbers of talents *according to their ability*. With this in mind, let us consider how we can share our singular gifts and help others do the same. No gift or talent is too small, and God has given us everything we need to use each gift wisely. Empowered by God's love and grace, let us use our blessings for his glory.

WITNESS The imagery of the "wicked, lazy" servant being punished, coupled with St. Paul's words that the Lord will come "like a thief at night," impart urgency to the task before us. In order to be prepared to give God an accounting of how we are using his gifts, let us start growing them today. Offer forgiveness, love someone whom it is hard to love, show mercy; in other words, be a blessing to others and see how that goodness multiplies.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Church of the Ascension

Saratoga, California

www.ascensionsaratoga.org

408-725-3939

Mass Schedule

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

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

Big Shoes to Fill

I had a friend whose father worked a lot of evenings and also traveled a lot for his job. He once told me, "I was always relieved when I heard Dad's footstep on the stairs coming up to our apartment. Life never seemed quite right when he was away, and for a while I found myself becoming withdrawn and even depressed during his absences." Though God never leaves us, there are times we experience the absence of God. Today's gospel begins by saying that the landowner was leaving—going on a journey. The story revolves around what happens in the landowner's absence. Some people stay busy and involved in life, putting their "talents" to good use. Others withdraw from life and get disengaged.

Perhaps one of the best benefits of having faith, even in those times when we don't feel God's presence, is that it gives us the confidence to continue to function well in life—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—despite our uncertainties. This is one of the biggest gifts that parents can nurture in their children—the ability to have faith even in times of doubt. We will all go through times of confusion. But the worst thing we can do at such times is to withdraw our gifts and our talents from the world. For it is in putting them to good use that we're most likely to hear God's footsteps and know that all is well. - *Tom McGrath*

Thanksgiving - Mass & Bread Blessing

Come and celebrate Mass on Thanksgiving, November 23, at 9:00 am. You may bring bread that you will share at the Thanksgiving dinner for a blessing at the end of Mass.

Parish Office's Thanksgiving Week

Our Parish Office will be closed Nov. 23 & Nov. 24 (Thursday and Friday) in observance of Thanksgiving.

Concert at Ascension

Nova Vista Symphony & San Jose Symphonic Choir present Holiday Celebration at Church of the Ascension on Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 7:30 pm.

Masks are recommended.

General admission: \$25.

Seniors/Students: \$20.

Children 12 and under: Free.

Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at www.novavista.org/tickets

MASS INTENTIONS

Nov 18	Sat	05 pm	George Chrisman +
Nov 19	Sun	07 am	Jherico Duerr-Pak (L)
		09 am	Frank Rose + Brian Rose +
		11 am	Ruby Welch +
		05 pm	Gabrielle Mancuso (L)
Nov 20	Mon	08 am	Mark Anthony Baylon +
Nov 21	Tue	08 am	Anthony Lau +
Nov 25	Sat	09 am	Fiorino Lenarduzzi & Family

WEEKLY OFFERING - NOV 12

-\$5,942 (baskets: \$3,876; online: \$2,066).

Weekly goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: \$111,452. Budget: \$130,201. Shortfall: \$18,749.

Thank you for your generous support.

Monastery Goodies Fundraiser

Purchase your holiday candies through Ascension and raise funds for our Youth Faith Formation in the process.

The bakery and confectionery run by the Dominican Nuns Monastery in Hollywood offer Handmade, Sweet & Delicious Bread, Candies, et. Treat yourself, your family and friends to old fashioned Pumpkin Bread, copper kettle Peanut Brittle, and a heavenly assortment of candies.

The Monastery of the Angels is a community of Dominican Contemplative Nuns dedicated to prayer, work and study. Your purchases will benefit both our Youth catechetical formation and the Monastery of the Angels.

Place your order using **promotional code "Ascension" for 10% discount.**

- at **MonasteryGoodies.com** (Enter the code at the very end of the online purchase process).

- or **fill out the paper order form** (available in church) and mail it with a check to the Monastery.

Annual Layette Drive

Sunday, **December 3, 2023**

Drop off items from **11:00 am - 2:00 pm**

At Isolation Products, **157 San Lazaro Ave, Sunnyvale.**

Donate new baby items or hand-crafted layette items, for babies 0-6 months. This is a wonderful way to support women and new mothers who may be facing financial or emotional challenges.

Giving Tree

Our Giving Tree will be up next weekend, Nov. 18-19. This year Ascension will support the work of these local organizations:

-**Catholic Charities** of Santa Clara County is seeking gift cards for their clients from Target, Safeway, Lucky, Walmart, Grocery Outlet, or a Visa Gift Card. They ask that gift cards be clearly marked with their value.

-**Help One Child** is requesting about 80 gifts. Gift tags will be on the Giving Tree. Donors choose a tag depicting a child's first name, age, gender, and wished-for gift.

Please consider giving a gift to either organization by December 10. Thank you for your support.

FORMED - What Is It?

Have you tried listening to a 6-minute podcast about Marriage while driving to work? Or hear a story about the life of a saint -- while gardening or doing household chores? This is the gift we have been given with FORMED, an on-demand Catholic resource. One of our parishioners has been using FORMED for over a year. If you have any questions (downloading, installing, or ideas on what to watch) reach out to her via email or phone: loy.oppus@gmail.com or call the parish at (408) 725-3939.

Quotes

"We desire peace but not the things that make for peace."

- *Thomas À Kempis*

"It is not enough to win a war; it is more important to organize the peace." - *Aristotle*