



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

September 7, 2025

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wis 9:13-18b | Phlm 9-10, 12-17 | Lk 14:25-33

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

I am particularly struck by this line from Solomon's prayer in today's first reading from the Book of Wisdom: "Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?" Solomon doesn't seem to be seeking direct answers to the questions he presents today, but rather, uses them as a sort of poem of praise to honor God in all his glory. In modern language, we could rephrase his questions: *What do we know that God has not instilled into our minds? What wisdom do we have that was not infused by the Holy Spirit?* There are many things that we cannot understand without the wisdom God gives us. May we, like Solomon, praise and thank God for this gift. Let us trust that where our feeble, corruptible humanity falters, our heavenly Father is our refuge in every age.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Today's Gospel is certainly one that we need God's wisdom to understand. This reading always makes me do a double take or a read-over. "*What did Jesus just say?!*" His words today are stark and can feel disconcerting. "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." When I encounter a challenging Scripture such as this one, I try to immediately root myself in concrete truths about the Lord. First, I acknowledge that he is good and desires *my* good. He is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving. After centering on those realities, I can look at this Gospel again, but this time through a clearer lens. Ultimately, this Gospel is a piercing reminder of the radical renunciation desired by the Lord. It is a rubric for the narrow road and for sanctity. Jesus does not mince his words, nor does he seek to confuse or confound: to follow Jesus is to release our hearts from earthly attachments, to embrace our cross and to set our lives in proper order. Clear and direct? Certainly. Easy? Not at all. But doing this in union with Jesus? *Absolutely possible.*

REFLECT

Today, consider reflecting on your attachments – the places you cling to anything that is not Christ. As you go into these tender places, invite Jesus to gently reveal where he wants to grant you his freedom.

Don't Hold Back

Do we recognize the Jesus who says, "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, he cannot be my disciple"? The words seem harsh in comparison to the soothing invitation of the Good Shepherd. Not to worry—Jesus is not insisting we abandon family or become homeless in order to follow him. But Jesus is saying, without doubt, that nothing—no thing and no one—can become so central in life that it interferes with doing God's will to love God and love your neighbor as yourself by being just, showing mercy, and walking with God. Jesus' call is "do as I do. Love as I love, hold nothing back. Do this in remembrance of me." - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

Holy Father's Prayer Intention - September

Let us pray that, inspired by Saint Francis, we might experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.

Components of Kairos Ministry 5 of 15

The Kairos Prison Ministry offers a transformative five-component journey for incarcerated individuals.

1. The Kairos Three-Day Weekend Retreat: This initial retreat serves as the entry point, immersing participants in God's love and forgiveness.
2. The Instructional Reunion: One week later, graduates reconvene to learn "spiritual listening"—sharing and listening with an open heart. This session invites them to ongoing Prayer and Share meetings.
3. Prayer and Share Fellowship Meetings: These weekly, graduate-led gatherings are the core of Kairos, providing continuous spiritual connection and nourishment, showcasing their growth and leadership.
4. The Monthly Reunion: A larger monthly gathering of graduates and volunteers, also graduate-led. It includes scripture reading, personal reflections, and small group discussions for insights and prayer.
5. The One-Day Retreat: Held midway between the longer weekend retreats, led by the upcoming Kairos Weekend leader. Volunteers give short, inspiring talks, prompting discussions, blending the Monthly Reunion's spirit with the full Kairos Weekend essence.

WEEKLY OFFERING - Aug. 31

-Total: **\$5,888** (\$4,660+online: \$1,228). Goal: \$6,800.

-YTD Sunday: **\$53,717**. Budget: \$61,200.

-Humanitarian relief for Gaza: **\$3,244**. Thank you!

MASS INTENTIONS

Sept 06	Sat	05 pm	Maxine Stice +
Sept 07	Sun	07 am	Gary S. H. Chang +
		09 am	John Sokol, Senior +
		11 am	Cecilia Moreno +
		05 pm	Kay Lynch +
Sept 11	Thu	08 am	Vi Nguyen +
Sept 13	Sat	08 am	Fr. Rey Sarmiento +

Parish Picnic Sept. 7, 2025 @ Noon

With Catered BBQ & Games, Prizes

\$25 per person | Children 12 and under: Free.

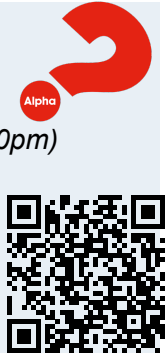
Tickets available after Mass, and at the Picnic.

Explore Christian Faith & Life Through the Alpha Course

On 6 Sundays, starting from Sept. 14
in Worner Hall classrooms (12:15pm - 2:00pm)

Each session includes a meal, a talk, and discussion for Connection, Content, and Conversation.

Registration: Scan QR code >>>
or call 408-725-3939.



What Is God Saying to the Church?

Fr **James Mallon**, Bishop **Robert Barron**, and Reverend **Nicky Gumbel** discuss "What is God saying to the Church" in these challenging times and explore how we can move forward together.

Fr. Mallon is the founder of the **Divine Renovation**, helping parishes escape *maintenance* mode and get back on track for *mission*.

Bishop Barron, founder of the **Word on Fire** ministry, is a gifted speaker explaining the beauty and truth of Catholic teachings in a way that speaks to contemporary culture.

Rev. Gumbel, developer of the **Alpha Course**, is a charismatic evangelist, who helps people ask big questions about faith and purpose, discover foundational Christian beliefs, build friendships, and potentially develop a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Scan the QR code for the **VIDEO** >>



40 Days for Life Campaign Kick-Off

You are invited to the 40 Days for Life Prayer Campaign kick-off Mass with Bishop Cantú, Sept. 27, 5:00 pm at St. Frances Cabrini Church, 15333 Woodard Rd. San Jose.

Collection for Catholic Education Sept. 13-14

Ninety percent of the funds collected will remain in our Diocese to support tuition assistance, lay ecclesial ministry formation. The rest will be for the Catholic University of America. Thank you for your generosity.

Men's Club

Meeting in-person: Worner Hall/Lounge Room
Friday, September 12 at 6:00pm.