



February 18, 2024

First Sunday of Lent

Gn 9:8-15 | 1 Pt 3:18-22 | Mk 1:12-15

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

Today is the first day of Lent! It is the beginning of a new liturgical season in the Church, a season of prayer, service and self-sacrifice. It is a time of preparation, culminating in the holiest day of the year: Easter. As we embark on our Lenten journey, we hear a reading from Genesis in which God makes a covenant with Noah where he promises, “the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings.” The Lord has said that no matter our disobedience, sin and rebellion, he will never destroy us! Saint Peter explains how the story of Noah, “in which a few persons ... were saved through water,” prefigures baptism, and baptism, as we know, marks us as the Lord’s own forever. We are sealed with a sign that can never be relinquished. So, just as the great flood signaled a rebirth for the world, our baptism is a rebirth of our soul in Christ. We are washed clean of our original sin, and the door to salvation is opened for us. It is fitting that at the beginning of our Lenten journey we hear the story of the beginning of our eternal covenant with the Lord. Both the covenant, and Lent, will be fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

As a child, Lent meant lentils for dinner, Stations of the Cross on Fridays, and no TV ever. For a 10-year-old, it was a time to be endured. Now, as an adult, Lent can still be hard, but I recognize it as a time of opportunity as well. It is a chance to strip away all the excess in my life and focus on what matters most. While I am not exactly jumping for joy at the thought of fasting, I can’t deny that it is easier for me to spend time in prayer when I’m not mindlessly grazing on chips and chocolate all day long. I may grumble at times, but with God’s grace I have grown in understanding of the Church’s wisdom in encouraging us to fast, pray and give alms during Lent. All three practices invite us to reflect on the great sacrifice of the Lord and prepare our hearts to receive him each Sunday in the Eucharist, as well as on our final judgment day.

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

PRAY Lent is the perfect time to take stock of your current spiritual practices and add new ones to your daily routine. Remember the words we heard from Jesus today: “The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” Start off your Lenten season right by taking time to receive the sacrament of reconciliation and designating a time each day to pray. If you aren’t sure what to say to God during this time, choose a verse or two of Psalm 6 and let your heart take it from there.

Get Outside Your Comfort Zone

The desert is a great place to encounter the Holy, as a long tradition of desert fathers and mothers attests. But the desert's a traditional place to make intimate acquaintance with your demons as well—which is another reason Jesus, and generations of his followers, made friends with cacti. It's also why we symbolically enter the Lenten desert each year, fasting, praying, and giving alms. We allow the normal lifestyle padding to wear a little thinner and feel our vulnerable spots with more clarity. Make a commitment this Lent to explore your limits. Bring an extra supply of humility! - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

Weekly Lenten Reflection by Fr. Hao

Journeying with Jesus

During the **8:00 am Mass every Wednesday**

Starting from February 21.

Paschal Mystery: Dying and Rising

by Fr. Maurice & Fr. Hao

During the **5pm Saturday Mass on March 6, 13, 19.**

Diocesan Lenten Resources

Please visit and share with families and ministries the Diocesan Lenten Resources at www.dsj.org/lent.

ADA Week 2 Report

Number of pledges to date: 33

Total amount pledged: \$31,155

Percent of goal: 41.50%

We are making great strides! Thank you to early pledgers. How about you (who are reading this report)?

You can help us *reach* and *surpass* our goal in a few weeks! We plan to use the surplus this year for the *Terrace project* turning the area in front of the church into a level surface that is safe and good for parish gatherings. More details to follow. Thank you for your support.

Acknowledgments

-Last Sunday our community had a good time watching the Lion Dance marking the Lunar New Year of the Dragon. Many came and enjoyed the lively dance and upbeat drum performance. Thank you to the Lion Dance Troupe and the Chinese Catholic Community for a festive celebration.

-The Valentine's Day Luncheon for Seniors also on Sunday was a success. Our seniors enjoyed beautiful decorations, good music, good food, nice camaraderie, bingo game and door prizes. The Fil-Am group and Faith Formation families did a great job. Thank you all.

MASS INTENTIONS

Feb 18	Sun	07 am	Josephine Gembala +
Feb 21	Wed	08 am	Kerry Klinen +
Feb 24	Sat	09 am	Bianca Andrews (L)

WEEKLY OFFERING - FEB 11

-\$6,967 (baskets: \$3,533; online: \$3,434). Weekly goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: **\$203,146**. Budget: \$214,500. Shortfall: \$11,354.

-Collection for Ethnic Minorities & Latin Am. Church: **\$1,375**. Thank you for your generous support.

Jesus & the Eucharist

Session 6: Story of the Eucharist

God is the Master Storyteller. His great love story is authored with words and deeds. All of God's mighty deeds throughout history make up one beautiful narrative of salvation, which culminates in the Paschal

Mystery. Jesus's teachings and actions throughout his ministry prepare for the fulfillment of his promise that "My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." (John 6:55)

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

Help us Prepare for

Ascension 60th Jubilee Closing Reception

May 18, 2024

Our Parish 60th Jubilee will come to an official close on May 18, 2024, at the 5:00 pm Mass, presided by Bishop Oscar Cantú, followed by a Reception.

Help us plan the Closing Reception. Please sign up to (1) join the Reception Committee, or (2) be volunteers at the Reception. Sign-up sheets are near the main entrance to the church.

We are also planning to have a Parish Photo Directory. Thank you for your participation.

New Stations of the Cross

Through the generosity of a family, Ascension Church has a new set of Stations of the Cross. After Fr. Hao's prayer of blessing over the beautiful wooden carvings, our community prayed the Stations of the Cross with these new images for the first time on Friday, Feb 16.

Presidents Day - Office Closed

Our Parish Office will be closed on Monday, February 19, in observance of Presidents Day.

Retirement Visualization Seminar

More than 4.1 million Americans retiring each year through 2027. Are you and your family financially ready to live comfortably throughout your retirement years?

We invite you to a seminar to discuss about the overall retirement planning and general guidance. The conversation will cover:

- Retirement Age vs Life Expectancy Estimate
- General source of income and expenses in retirement
- Retirement Vision and Planning Framework.

Date & Time: March 9, 2024, from 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Place: Classrooms in the Worner Hall.

Presenter: David Fung (parishioner)

Investment Adviser Representative, NEXT Financial Group

Seasons of Hope - Grief Discussion

March 13 - April 17 on Wednesdays from 1pm - 2:30pm
Sacred Heart Parish Center, Saratoga

Grief and sorrow are meant to be shared. Seasons of Hope provides a place to share grief and sorrow for the loss of a loved one. To sign up, contact Carolyn Orasin, 408-867-3634 or c.orsin@sacredheartsaratoga.org. Or call Nancy Crowley at 408-209-6118. Please include your name, phone number, and email.