



**Church of the Ascension**  
ascensionsaratoga.org | 408-725-3939

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

February 15, 2026

## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sir 15:15-20 | 1 Cor 2:6-10 | Mt 5:17-37

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

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

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that "unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." In Matthew 23:3-5, Jesus says, "Do and observe all things whatsoever [the scribes and Pharisees] tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice ... All their works are performed to be seen." What Jesus is inviting us to see is that to authentically live the commandments requires more than mere external compliance with the letter of the law. It's also not about putting on a show so that others think we're "holy." Rather, it's about the quiet, inner transformation of our hearts. The Gospel tells us it's not enough that we avoid murder; God wants to free us from anger and wrath. It's not enough to avoid unfaithfulness in marriage; God wants to give us hearts that are pure and free from lust. Our task is to open our hearts to the transforming power of his commandments which, if we live them, lead us to fullness of life.

### **GO EVANGELIZE**

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

In our second reading, St. Paul speaks about some challenges we face when sharing the faith with others. There are those who are unable to grasp God's wisdom, which is different from the wisdom of this age. God's wisdom is mysterious, hidden, and can only be understood and grasped through a revelation of the Spirit. This is an important concept for us as evangelizers. Sometimes no matter how hard we try, no matter how eloquent we are at explaining something, those who are not ready to receive what we have to share will not be able to receive it. In order for others to understand the Gospel, the Spirit must open their hearts to receive it. While we are responsible to share the Gospel as well as we're able, it is up to the person before us to respond to God's invitation.

### **PRAY**

Accepting the Lord's teaching in the commandments requires humility, and understanding their true meaning and depth is the result of the Spirit's work in our lives. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you true insight to live the commandments with your whole heart. Consider using these lines from today's psalm in your prayer: "Open my eyes, that I may consider the wonders of your law. Instruct me, O Lord, in the way of your statutes, that I may exactly observe them. Give me discernment, that I may observe your law and keep it with all my heart."



## Choose the Right Route

Breaking Bad, the highly acclaimed television series (2008-13) in which a desperate and dying chemistry teacher decides to become a producer of methamphetamine to make sure his family is cared for, is a modern morality tale that illustrates the destruction and death that are the consequences of making wrong choices, or “breaking bad,” as it were. With each ill-conceived decision it becomes easier to make the next until you become so turned around that you completely lose your moral compass. Take the time to map out your choices to see where they will lead—and then choose the path of righteousness.

-Takefiveforfaith.com

## Fast & Abstinence Guidelines

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting (18 to 59 years of age) and abstinence from meat (from age 14). Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence. Exemptions: the frail, the sick, pregnant women, those with physically demanding jobs, etc.

**Pope Leo XIV:** “I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor.”

## Upcoming Special Collections

**Feb 18 Ash Wednesday Collection:** provides aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe to meet the needs of rebuilding the Church.

**Feb 22 Black & Indian Mission Collection:** for the evangelization of the US Black and Indian peoples.

## WEEKLY OFFERING - Feb. 8

-Total: **\$15,180** (\$5,015 + **\$7,800 yearly donation** + online: \$2,365). Goal: \$6,800.

-YTD Sunday: **\$216,862**. Budget: \$217,600.

-Church in Latin America: **\$80** (YTD: \$1,720).

-Christmas 2025: **\$500**.

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 14	Sat	05 pm	Maxine Stice +
Feb 15	Sun	07 am	Edward & Josephine Gembala +
		09 am	Romulo Sison +
		11 am	Kathryn Holecek +
		05 pm	Joseph & Rosaria Fiorentino +
Feb 18	Wed	08 am	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>
		07 pm	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>

## Ash Wednesday Mass

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

## Stations of the Cross

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

## Spring Renewal for the Soul

It's the beginning of a new season of Lent for those who believe. Lent traditionally takes on a penitential tone with somber purple color and the practice of fasting, prayer, and charitable giving. But we shouldn't forget that Lent comes from the Old English word for “spring,” and in this sense it's a sort of spiritual new year, a season of rebirth and renewal. “Lent is a time of grace, a time for conversion, a time to come home to God,” says Saint Maximilian Kolbe. During Lent we cultivate better habits for a healthy heart. What will you refrain from (fasting), how will you seek God (prayer), and where will you share your love (almsgiving) these 40 days? -Takefiveforfaith.com

## Calling All High School Youth!

Join the Diocesan Youth Retreat (6/8-12), where we'll grow in faith, build friendships, and encounter Christ in a powerful way.

This year we celebrate its 30th anniversary.

For five days, in the beautiful setting of South Lake Tahoe, the teens from incoming 9th to 12th graders experience the love of God through catechesis, sacramental formation, social justice awareness, prayer experiences and significant opportunities to fellowship and create lasting friendships.

Registration will open on Saturday, March 7, 2026



## Sowing Seeds of Faith

Ascension, together with all parishes in the Diocese, is launching the “Sowing Seeds of Faith” campaign. This fundraiser seeks to address the current pastoral needs and to have a long-term impact on ministries. The campaign helps provide the resources we need to achieve the Parish's three core priorities: (1) worship, (2) families, and (3) youth and young adults.

A major undertaking will be the Terrace Project providing safe entrance to the church and a place to gather after Masses. More details will be provided.

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.

## Presidents Day

Our parish office will be closed this Monday in observance of Presidents' Day. Happy holiday.



**Happy Lunar New Year!**

February 17