

August 23, 2026

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 22:19-23 | Rom 11:33-36 | Mt 16:13-20

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

In today's second reading, St. Paul reflects in awe over the "depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God." God's judgments are inscrutable, his ways unsearchable, he goes on to say. While on our own, we cannot know the depth of who God is and the beauty of his plan for us, we have been given access to this knowledge by the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel, Peter is able to grasp that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God," not by "flesh and blood," but by a revelation from our heavenly Father. The Church that is still led by Peter's successor continues to be guided by the Spirit into the fullness of truth. (Jn 16:13) As individual believers, we, too, have received the Spirit in our hearts. By living in communion with our Holy Father and by seeking to listen to the Spirit who also speaks into the depths of our hearts, we can rest assured that we are in a "sure spot" where we can receive all that the Lord wishes to reveal to us about what it means to live in him.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Today's Gospel demonstrates that Christ desired to place Peter – and his successors – as the visible head of his Church. Yes, God willed from the beginning to leave his Church with a leader who could safeguard the quintessential confession of Christ as the "Son of the living God," but there's more to it than this. Peter is given *keys to the kingdom of heaven*. And what are keys for if not to open doors? In a very real way, the mission of our Holy Father is to open up access to God's kingdom, and there are many examples of this. On World Mission Sunday in 2011, Pope Benedict said, "The proclamation of the Gospel is intended for all peoples." And Pope Francis, speaking at World Youth Day in 2023, emphasized that the Gospel is for todos, todos, todos – everyone, everyone, everyone, without exception. As we pray for our Holy Father and the immense task with which he has been entrusted, let us work in our own way to ensure that the doors of our churches, the way to the kingdom of heaven, remain open for all.

PRAY

As we reflect on the gift that Jesus left us by making Peter and his successors the visible head of his Church on earth, take some time to pray for our Holy Father and his intentions. You can pray along with the Pope at the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (a site which contains a short video of the Pope's monthly prayer intention and other prayer resources) at www.popesprayer.va.



Small text on the right side of the image: Saint Peter depicted (by Peter Paul Rubens) holding the Keys of Heaven while vested in the pallium - Museo del Prado, Public domain

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

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION • SARATOGA

Parish Picnic

Come celebrate as one parish family!

Sunday, September 13, 2026

Noon • Following the 11 AM Mass
On the front lawn of the parish

ON THE MENU

Catered BBQ and Burgers
Kids' Activities
Ice Cream and Dessert

\$20 PER PERSON **Kids come free!**
Children 12 & under — no charge

Please buy tickets in advance
Available after all weekend Masses and for purchase in the parish office,
or contact Don Goers at (630) 329-9765
ASCENSION SARATOGA.ORG • (408) 725-3939



Use Zelle to Buy Tickets If You Have No Cash

- Open your bank's mobile app
- Select "Send with Zelle"
- Enter "Ascension95070" or scan our parish Zelle QR code at the ticket sale table.
- Enter the money amount that corresponds to the number of tickets (\$20 per ticket).
- Click "Send."

Mission Co-op - August 21-22

Fr. Anthony Kekai visits Ascension this Sunday to seek our support for the Diocese of Bomadi in his native Nigeria. Thank you for your generosity.

WEEKLY OFFERING - August 16

The numbers weren't available at the time the bulletin was printed. Thank you for your generosity.

MASS INTENTIONS

Aug 22	Sat	05 pm	Louise Harpham (L)
Aug 23	Sun	09 am	Khiem Maria Bui +
		11 am	Marie Firato & Family
		05 pm	Joseph Fiorentino (L)
Aug 26	Wed	08 am	Ted & Frank Siudut +
Aug 27	Thu	08 am	Richard Wong +

Family as First School

Our parish will offer a Disciple Pathway through Word, Worship, and Witness. Our youth and their families will be invited to the **11am Mass every Sunday** to be nourished by the Word and Sacrament. And as a community we will have **monthly gatherings** from October to learn about faith through St. Francis of Assisi's life. At these gatherings, we will share a meal, have a reflection and discussion on a theme.

**Pastoral
Plan at
Ascension
Part IV**

These efforts will need the support from families. Each Christian family is supposed to be the **first school for children**, where they learn to become a human being and a disciple of the Lord. Thus Christian parents play an important role as primary catechists for their children before they learn catechesis from the Church. Parents are also called to accompany their children in their journey of faith.

Addressing the International Catholic Legislators Network on Friday, August 21, Pope Leo stated that in the AI age, **the family is the first school of humanity**: "For it is within the family that we first learn trust before calculation, generosity before competition, dialogue before division, and love before power." He encouraged legislators to "promote policies that strengthen marriage and families, support parents in their educational mission and enable young people to look to the future with confidence."



For Pastoral Plan parts I, II, III, scan QR code.

Pray for Baby Liam and His Family

Fr. Hao baptized Liam V.-M. last Sunday. Liam, who turned one year old in late July, is under specialized, round-the-clock care at a pediatric care facility in Saratoga. Please pray for him and his family.

Marriage Renewal - Sept. 18-20

This workshop/retreat at Ascension helps couples strengthen communication, deepen their faith, renew their relationship. Registration: \$250 per couple (Meals included). Financial assistance is available. Couples of all faiths and cultures are welcome. Scan QR code for more details.



August: National Make-a-Will Month

Do you have a will, trust, or estate plan? Planning your estate keeps your family from guessing. It also offers the chance to help sustain the Church's mission. Our Diocese has partnered with FreeWill, a secure online tool that helps create a legal will at no cost to you. Visit partner.freewill.com/dsj.