



Church of Santa Maria

40 Santa Maria Way | Orinda CA 94563 | 925-254-2426 | www.SantaMariaOrinda.com

Does "the easy way" really make it easier?

Lessons from a fluffy Podocarpus Gracilior

Pictured: The tree in question in a photo from a few months ago (also potentially entitled, "I can't believe my garden has grown so much in two months")



17th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 26, 2020

In my side yard lives a gentle and kindhearted Podocarpus. She watches over my compost pile, shades my lettuce, and lends her branches to Northern mockingbirds in the Spring for their nests. She also shields my garage from the late-afternoon sun blast, helps my pile of greenwood to not dry out too quickly for carving, and gently pats me on the head with her branches every time I walk by, endearing herself to me even further.

Being a deciduous tree, pruning can happen anytime, and it was definitely time: the head-pats had dipped down to shoulder-taps, and eventually I was ducking under branches to get to my compost and greenwood piles.

As I paused, looking up from trimming off laterals (to reduce weight before making The Big Cut), I realized that my presenting problem was actually solved - the remaining branches ended above my short stature, and I could walk by without playing limbo. I contemplated just stopping there, and forgetting about the healthy-tree-pruning details of undercuts, relief cuts, and callous tissue to remove the whole branch "the right way"... but then I saw that someone else had also stopped where I just paused and done this "the lazy way" - many times. Almost exactly where I'd pruned the laterals back to, there were big knobby knuckles, scars from my tree pushing out growth year after year, doomed to be repeatedly chopped back to the same point.

So I took a breather and decided not to succumb to the temptation to stop there, but to do the extra work and do it the right way, so the tree would be healthier in the long run (and I wouldn't be fighting this growth every year as the previous pruner had).

AND THEN there came the Megan's Metaphor Lightbulb Moment. How many times have I done something "the easy way," only to struggle with consequences down the line that would have been nonexistent had I simply started with "the right way"? Maybe you, too - how many little white lies have we told that need to be maintained, how often do we halfheartedly cover up problems that keep coming back to bite us, how frequently do we put off doing good with the assumption that there's always tomorrow to do it?

Pruning a tree is like pruning sins out of our lives - it's better to get to the bottom of it and cut it off the right way (with Confession and penance and a firm intention to do better in this metaphor, not shears and bow saws and wood chippers) than to halfheartedly pluck at its effects with promises to ourselves to "try harder next time" or pass it off as no big deal. Because if we do that we'll be like my branch: back where we started the next time we decide to get the pruning shears out and shape up our lives.

As much mind power and positive thinking and greater-picture perspective it takes to get us to make the effort and do the better thing, it's worth it. In the long run, we'll be better off ourselves, and better able to offer our own branches and shade to those who need it.

Megan Arteaga
Youth Minister

Weekend Worship Opportunities July 26, 2020

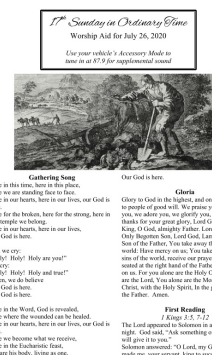
8:30am | Mass in the Parking Lot; also [Livestreamed](#) (available all day)
10:30am | Mass in the Parking Lot

[Download and print the Worship Aid here](#)

Turn on your car's Accessory Mode and tune in at 87.9 KGOD!

Join us this Sunday in the Parking Lot at 8:30am or 10:30am for Mass! We are blessed to be able to celebrate Masses publicly with you again. **If you are unable to physically join us, we will continue to livestream the 8:30am Mass** for you to participate from home.

Click on the image to open or print this Sunday's **new printer-friendly** worship aid for your convenience.



Parish Office Plans to Reopen Soon

Our Pastoral Team is planning to reopen the office from 10am-noon Monday through Friday beginning Monday, August 3!

We will be strictly following County protocol regarding health regulations. Mirna's husband Ken has installed a **plexiglass screen** between the staff

and guest area, **hand sanitizer** is available for your use, **masks are required** for both staff and parishioners, and a **limited number of people** will be allowed in the Parish Office at one time.

Please stop by (wearing your mask!) if you have questions, want to request a Mass Intention, or just to chat!

Note that this plan is subject to change, according to State and County requirements and regulations. We will keep everyone updated.

ONE DAY MORE!

The first Backpack Drive for St. Vincent de Paul was a huge success!

We collected a total of 19 full sets of school supplies, and 12 backpacks. Thank you to everyone who has already donated.

If you missed the first drop-off date, don't worry - we will have one last drop-off **right after the 10:30am Mass THIS SUNDAY, July 26.**

[Click here for the list of needed supplies.](#) A \$25 grocery gift card is acceptable as well.

Thanks, everyone!

*Ethan Berndt
Coordinator*



Tuesday Gardening

Thank you, thank you to our loyal team of gardeners who have been coming on Tuesdays to help with the Church cleanup. With 4 loaded "green" bins and 6 trash bags this week, we continue to make progress. Soon we will reach our overall cleanup goal and then be able to shift into a maintenance phase. Thanks to **Marita Platon and Walter Peyton with their grandchildren (Sasha and Sofia Obnial and classmate from**

Face Masks for Good

Thank you to all who purchased face masks back in May and June.

Some of the money recently went towards food which was delivered to the **Missionary of Charity Sisters in Richmond**. The food will be used to prepare meals for the homeless in Oakland and residents of Richmond who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19. Sister Shanti was very pleased to receive this donation of food, which included large quantities of rice, pasta, diced tomatoes and sugar.



Miramonte Kaylin Ishizu), Judy Shallat, Mari Kay Breazeale, Tina Locke, Colette White, Franco Alejo, John Cahill, Janet and Gail.

Other uses of the money are going toward the backpack collection and other food needs.

Come and join us on **Tuesday, July 28, between 8am and 11am.** Bring your gloves, mask, hat and water bottle. Tools to bring: clippers, broom, dust pan, hoe, rake, large outdoor garbage bags. We have a huge jug for water bottle refills.

Only two solid orange masks with ties (\$10 each) are left. If you are interested contact [Gail Gabriel](#).

To get involved, contact [Janet Riley](#) or [Gail Gabriel](#).

Drive-Thru Food Collection: July 29

Time to go grocery shopping! Please support this month's **food collection for St. Cornelius families in Richmond and those served by the Catholic Worker organization in Oakland.** We have all the volunteers we need for the event. All we need now is for everyone to bring bags of nonperishable groceries.



Goal: 300 bags

Suggested Groceries (NO glass containers, please):

Canned protein (tuna, chicken, beef, spam, chili, beans)
Canned vegetables and fruit
Canned tomato sauce/soups
Rice/pasta/beans
Plastic bottle of cooking oil (48 oz.)
Cereal
Flour
Peanut Butter
Snacks (e.g., protein bars, breakfast bars, nuts)

All volunteers will be wearing masks and gloves. Donors bringing bagged food donations will be instructed to stay in their cars while volunteers take bags from their trunks and deposit them in the delivery vehicles to comply with safe social distancing practices.

If you can't make it on July 29, you can make arrangements with [Janet Riley](#) or [Gail Gabriel](#) to deliver earlier to one of their homes. If you would like to have someone shop for you, please contact Janet or Gail; we have volunteer shoppers!

How can I keep supporting Santa

Maria?

Thank you so much for thinking about us and continuing to support our parish during these trying times! We are greatly appreciative of any help you can provide.

You may drop your collection in the offertory baskets at Parking Lot Masses, mail a check to the Parish Office (40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda CA 94563), or [make a one-time donation using Faith Direct](#), our eGiving service, to make your offering.

If you would like, you can also [sign up for recurring giving through Faith Direct](#) to continue to give to the Sunday plate even though you can't come to the church to drop it in the basket as usual. Again, we thank you for your planning and your generosity!



Pastoral Team

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Pastoral Care of the Sick

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Sister Magdalena Duong, LHC

Bookkeeper

sistermagdalena@smparish.org x305

Prayer Intentions

For the Sick:

Liduvina Acosta, Sonny Acosta, Mary Beth Alban, Joan Artmann, Shoaib Aryan, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Kathie Brady, Cara Bradbury, Miguel Briseno, Maria Carmen, Fred Chavaria, Jan Coe, Grace Parent DeBoot, Rich Delany, Mary Dodge, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Nora Enriquez, Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Noreen Gillham, Doris Hale, Florentino Ibabao, Brian Kelly, Mason Kelly, Aileen Kelly, Michael Kelly, Jim Kennedy, Jerry Kirk, Lawrence Knapp, Carol Koupus, Judy Lazarus, Rose Mary McPhee, Robert Nick, Arsi Orihuella, Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Brian Riley, Patrick Sheehy, Jean Wells, Faye Young

Would you like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list? Please contact Mirna in the Parish Office at 925-254-2426 or at mirnawong@smparish.org.

Mass Intentions

All Mass Intentions during Shelter in Place orders are either postponed or celebrated privately. Mirna is contacting all those who requested the currently scheduled intentions.

To request a Mass Intention, please

contact Mirna in the Parish Office.

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