



Church of Santa Maria

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If a tree falls in the forest...

On noise and the restorative properties of (sacred) silence

Pictured: Two pine trees lean precariously over a stream - if they fall, will they make a sound?



The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 20, 2022

We live in a world polluted by noise.

A sound engineer by the name of Gordon Hempton decided to travel the world in search of quiet places - those unaffected by "the anthropone," or the human-made soundscape. Think vehicle noises, airplanes, and lawnmowers. By his count, the entire Continental United States has fewer than a dozen sites where you can't hear human-made noise - for at least 15 minutes, at dawn. (A painfully low bar, in my opinion.)

Even now while I'm sitting at my kitchen table typing this article up, there's a lot of background noise - the air purifier, the fridge compressor, the neighbor's puppy across the street...

Now, I've classified all this as "noise," which technically means *unwanted* sound, because I both don't like it and find it distracting - and that's the point.

These sound waves all take a surprisingly direct path to our brains. The problem is that for the split second before our frontal cortex gets to work interpreting them, our bodies have already emitted a stress response just in case that loud rumble were a man-eating lion and not just a harmless airplane.

So amid all of this distracting noise, how is one supposed to decipher the whisper of the Holy Spirit or the gentle call of the Lord? Even Jesus

routinely escaped the ancient anthropophonic soundscape of large cities and retreated to the desert or the sea alone or with just a few friends to regroup.

So if you're feeling stressed, anxious, or trapped, take a cue from Our Lord and get out to a place with less grating noise and more restorative sound - sit by the Briones reservoir ([permits available here](#)), bathe in the birdsong of [Redwood Regional](#), or if you really want to be adventurous in a faithful interpretation of Jesus, take a [backpacking trip in the Mojave Desert!](#)

And to answer my original question: if a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, then no, there technically is no sound. Unless the vibrating molecules are processed into pitch by, say, bird, fish, or human brain, it's not a sound. Which means that, without a sound, our falling tree actually can't be noise, either.

Megan Arteaga
Youth Ministry Coordinator

P.S. - If you'd like to read more about restorative sounds, check out these articles on how [melodic birdsong decreases stress](#), [the sounds of water bring a calmness to urban landscapes](#), and [hearing the voice of someone you love has the same physiological effect as touching them](#).

Weekend Worship Opportunities

The Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday 4:00-4:30pm | Church Confessional

The Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday, February 20, 2022

8:30am | Mass in the Church; also [Livestreamed](#) (available all day)
10:30am | Mass in the Church
5:00pm | Mass in the Church
[Read this Sunday's Readings](#)

No more social distancing is required, so all pews will be available to the congregation. **Masks covering the nose and mouth are required for all while indoors, regardless of vaccination status.**

COVID-19 Updates

**NEW: Diocesan mask
mandate update changes
policy for Masses, office
visits effective 2/16**

The following applies to all who

worship, work, volunteer, or attend parish events in our parish and around the Diocese of Oakland:

Masses and Worship Services

- Individuals who are vaccinated are **not** required to wear a mask indoors.
- Anyone who is unvaccinated must **continue** to wear a mask indoors.
- Some may wish to continue wearing a mask indoors, and it should not be assumed that they are not vaccinated.



Parish Office and Indoor Meetings

- Vaccinated employees and volunteers will **not** be required to wear a mask indoors.
- Unvaccinated employees and volunteers who do not provide proof of vaccination will be **required** to always wear a mask while indoors.
- Visitors may remove their mask indoors if they show **proof of vaccination**.

Prayer and Worship

NEW: Get ready for Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, March 2, and as usual our Masses will be offered at **8:30am, 4:30pm, and 7:30pm in the Church.**



By receiving the ashes, we enter into the season appointed for spiritual purification. This custom, biblical in origin, expresses how the human condition is affected by sin. We outwardly profess our guilt before God and thereby, prompted by the hope and trust in the Lord's kindness and compassion, His patience and abounding mercy, express our desire for inward conversion.

Ash Wednesday is also an obligatory day of universal fast and abstinence for those who have completed their 18th year until the beginning of their 60th year. Fasting allows a person to eat one full meal in addition to two smaller meals, not to equal one full meal. Abstinence from meat is obligatory for all who have completed their 14th year of age.

Fridays in Lent are obligatory days of abstinence from meat as well. As always, anyone for whom fasting or abstinence would pose a health risk is excused.

NEW: Are you interested in a Lenten Retreat?

Last year, we offered a Virtual Lenten Retreat on Tuesday evenings on Zoom. What about this Lent?

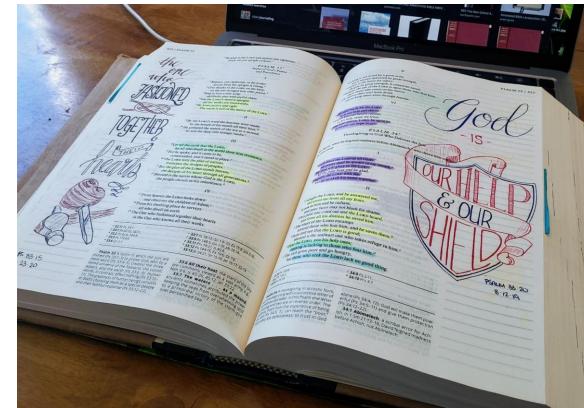
Answer our quick two-question survey here to help us plan!



Would you pass or fail a Scripture Scavenger Hunt?

Our Thursday Morning Bible Study group is growing strong - in knowledge and in members!

If you're interested in Biblical context, Scriptural fun facts, or even just want to get more comfortable looking up verses or passages, we'd love to have you join our group.



We meet at 11am at the Parish Office [and on Zoom](#), and we'd love to have you! Whether you want to just drop in or dive in, you'll be glad you came.

Parish Life

NEW: Thank you and farewell

Tony Millette, our Director of Liturgy and Music, has decided to leave his position here at Santa Maria after 30 years of service to our parish.

Tony plans to spend some time seeking a position in which he can use the varied skills and talents honed in his years in parish ministry, and I have no doubt that his abilities and gifts will be put to good use in his next endeavor.



I know all of you will join me in thanking Tony for his dedicated service, and wish him all the best in the future. Tony will remain with us for the next several weeks as we transition into Lent.

Youth and teens learn the value of human dignity in their annual Safe Environment training

Each year, the Diocese requires us to offer Safe Environment training to everyone enrolled in our K-12 programs. Youth Ministry completed their training this week in thoughtful sessions for Confirmation and Middle School Youth Group.



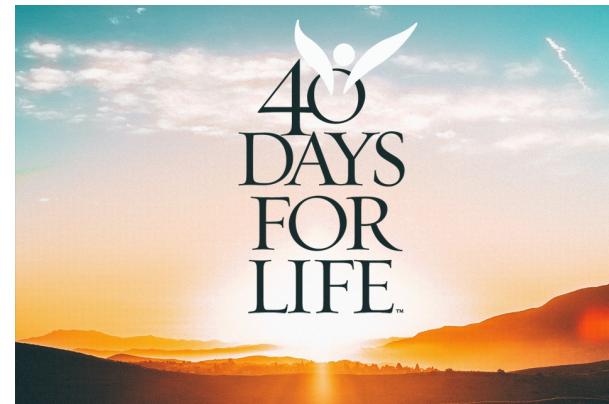
Training focused on the inalienable dignity of the human person as beloved people created in God's image and likeness, and how nothing that happens to us or to anyone else can change that. Youth and teens were taught to tell a trusted adult if anyone ever confided in them that their boundaries were crossed, and how to recognize good and healthy relationships with friends, teachers, coaches, and other community members - even their favorite Youth Ministers!

We're grateful to the resources provided by LifeTeen and Edge that give this training a distinctly Catholic focus and approach.

Service and Outreach

NEW: One hour may save a human life

Santa Maria parishioners are invited to join the peaceful and prayerful Lenten **40 Days for Life** vigil near abortion facilities in Walnut Creek and Concord to prayerfully affirm the dignity and sanctity of life, and help women realize that there are life-affirming choices other than abortion.



Small groups of vigil participants stand and pray in one-hour shifts in the public right-of-way outside of the two facilities between 7am and 7pm. Join for an hour a day, an hour a week, or even a single hour total! This is a life-affirming way to make a sacrifice of time and prayer during this Lenten season - our powerful presence may potentially save a human life and give support to a mother in need.

To sign up or to receive more information, contact [Friends for Life Trivalley](#) for Walnut Creek or Friends for Life Concord for Concord.

NEW: New month, new food drive!

Sunday, February 27

8:00am - 10:30am

Supporting Catholic Worker of the East Bay

Volunteers and a driver needed:

7:45am-9:30am

9:30am-10:30am

10:30am Driver

RSVP to [Gail Gabriel](#) if you can help.

Donation items include:

- Canned tomatoes/sauces/soups
- Canned tuna/chicken/protens
- Canned fruit and veg
- Plastic bottle of cooking oil
- Bag of flour/beans/rice/pasta
- Plastic jar of peanut butter/jam/jelly
- Box of cereal

Contact your friends and neighbors and ask them to bring bags of these non-perishable groceries as well!



Food for Thought

NEW: From Calcutta to California - how the Missionaries of Charity came to the US

A Pillar Catholic article by Matthew Wilson

Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity she founded are well-known for their work with the sick, impoverished, and abandoned in the poorest areas of India. Perhaps less well-known is the presence of the Missionaries of Charity in the United States.

How did the congregation - known for its work among the poorest of the poor - come to be in such a wealthy nation? And what does...[read more](#)



Four Chaplains Day honors self-sacrificial World War II chaplains, including Catholic Priest

Four Chaplains Day, Feb. 3, recognizes the heroism of four World War II military chaplains who sacrificed their lives to save those trapped on a sinking U.S. Army transport ship.



"Their voices were the only thing that kept me going," one survivor remembered of the fateful day in 1943. [read more](#)

Good Stewardship

NEW: We reached our Bishop's Appeal Goal! Good job, Santa Maria!

Thank you to the 68 parishioners who made both outright gifts and pledges in our parish's name to the 2021 Bishop's Appeal, "Rebuild My Church."



We have reached **100.39% of our goal of \$34,700** from our parish to help offset the costs of Diocesan programs like FACE, ethnic pastoral centers, clergy formation, and priest retirement, to name a few.

It is because of parishioners like you that we are able to support the work that furthers Christ's mission in the Diocese of Oakland!

January Collection Report

Our Finance Council has determined our monthly goal for the Sunday Plate. Here is our total for the month of November:

**Goal: \$42,000
Total: \$48,287.00
Surplus: \$6,287.00**



How can I support 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 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 if you aren't yet coming to the church to drop it in the basket as usual. Again, we thank you for your planning and your generosity!

Mass Intentions

Sunday, February 20

8:30am: Tom and Stephen O'Brien
(D)

10:30am: Parishioners of Santa
Maria, Living and Deceased

5:00pm: Bridget Donner Daws and
her Baby Boy (D)

Monday, February 21

8:30am: Al Ferreira (D)

Tuesday, February 22

8:30am: Dick Cummings (D)

Wednesday, February 23

8:30am: Ernestine Ottino (D)

Thursday, February 24

8:30am: Clarence Andrade (D)

Friday, February 25

8:30am: Monique Fung (D)

Editor's Note: Last week, Monique Fung's name was spelled incorrectly in the bulletin for the 2/15 Mass.

Mass Intentions are a beautiful way of praying for your intentions or for the souls of our deceased loved ones. To request a Mass Intention, please visit the office during Office Hours

Bulletin Sponsors

Thank you to the following bulletin sponsors:

An advertisement for KBM Hawaii. It features a scenic view of a resort complex with multiple buildings, swimming pools, and lush greenery overlooking the ocean. The text "Your Kaanapali & Kapalua Maui Vacation Rental Experts" is at the top, followed by "1, 2, and 3 Bedroom Condos, Villas & Homes". On the left, there is a logo for "KBM HAWAII" with the phone number "808.568.3270" and the website "kbmhawaii.com". In the bottom right corner, there is a promotional offer: "Parishioner Discount! Promo Code: SAINT for a 5% Booking Discount".

An advertisement for Monique McCool, a Compass real estate agent. It features a dark background with white text. At the top, there is a circular logo with the letters "MMcC" and a small icon. To the right of the logo, the text reads "Caring, Competent, Ethical Real Estate Representation.". Below that, it says "Monique McCool" and provides her email address "monique.mccool@compass.com", phone number "925.388.3140", and DRE number "01345886". The word "COMPASS" is written vertically on the right side of the ad.

Pastoral Team

Reverend George Mockel

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Liturgy and Music

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Faith Formation (Grades K-5)

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Megan Arteaga

Youth Ministry (Grades 6-12),
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Sister Mary Magdalene Nguyen, LHC

Pastoral Care of the Sick

mmnguyen@santamariaorinda.com x309

Prayer Intentions

For the Sick:

Sonny Acosta, Mary Beth Alban, Joan Artmann, Shoaib Aryan, Kylie Bissell, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Miguel Briseno, Maria Carmen, Fred Chavaria, Grace Parent DeBoot, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Nora Enriquez, Anthony Fisher, Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Jennifer Gray, Judy Gust, Brian Kelly, Mason Kelly, Aileen Kelly, Jim Kennedy, Jerry Kirk, Lawrence Knapp, Carol Koupus, Patricia McGuire, Rose Mary McPhee, Jim M., Maria Elsa Moya, Robert Nick, Chase O'Keefe, Arsi Orihuella, Deacon Jim Pearce, Melissa Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Carl Robinson, Ursula Simmons, Scott Treter, Steve Turner, Jean Wells, Faye Young

For the Deceased:

Patricia Cookson

Would you like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list? Please ensure you have their permission, then [contact Megan in the Parish Office](#).

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