



Church of Santa Maria

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Why look for more?

In participation in the National Eucharistic Revival, here are some stories of the real effects the Eucharist has had in peoples' lives

Pictured: The Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Christ, and as such is central to the life of the Church



The 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 15, 2023

This article first appeared in print in the December 2022 edition of The Catholic Voice:

There's a story told about St. Teresa of Avila. Apparently, someone once said to her, "If only I had lived at the time of Jesus... If only I had seen Jesus... If only I had talked with Jesus!" If only, indeed! - except that Teresa responded, "But do we not have in the Eucharist the living, true, and real Jesus present before us? Why look for more?"

I love this reminder of the simple yet astounding beauty and gift of the Holy Eucharist: that in the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lord Jesus Christ truly is present. As Jesus himself said in the final words of the Gospel of Matthew, "Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

In the Eucharist, God is among us. Heaven is on earth. Truth and Love incarnate appear under the guise of a tiny white host. The infinite and eternal has become so humble and approachable as to risk being overlooked and even dismissed.

The Eucharist changes hearts and lives

Two of my friends were simply unable to dismiss the power of the Eucharist. Each had powerful encounters with the Lord through the Blessed Sacrament that changed their lives.

"It was like the climax of my conversion story," she explained to me. Kellen Troxell, now a Theology teacher at Marin Catholic, was then 19 years old. In her own words, she had been "living away from the Church, and looking for happiness and meaning everywhere else." Right when she'd decided to come back to the Church and had started attending Sunday Masses, some friends of hers invited her on a youth retreat as a speaker.

As they were preparing for the retreat weekend, "everyone kept talking about Adoration, Adoration, Adoration, and I didn't understand what it was; I had no idea." But when Saturday evening's Holy Hour came around, she got the picture.

"It was just a very classic, very emotional Youth Ministry Adoration experience," she said, chuckling. "There was a worship band, and it was all dark, and they had lights, but when they started playing 'Lord, I Need You,' I felt..." She paused, searching for words. "I'd been searching for love and had been feeling very unloved, a mess, just unworthy, I guess, and I'd done a lot of things that gave me reasons to feel shame, but at that moment I just felt the most love that I've ever felt in my entire life - this immense wave just flooded my heart. It was such an overwhelming experience of being loved by Somebody, being seen and understood all at once. I'd never felt like that before."

That wasn't the end of Jesus tugging on Kellen's heart, though - when she came home from retreat, she had what she explains as "this huge conversion of my heart. All of my misgivings about Catholicism, things I was struggling with, God was just pulling on my heart to go deeper and deeper. It was really slow over time, but if I look back, like when did it start, Adoration was a huge pivotal moment - even though I didn't see it at the time." Kellen received the Sacrament of Confirmation later that year, choosing St. Augustine as her patron saint. She still makes time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. "I do love my hours in Adoration. It's always lovely. That's all you need, the peace of Christ in your life."

Another friend, St. Bonaventure parishioner Rod Chisholm, had his own life-changing encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist. Back in the day he wasn't Catholic, he said, but wanted to set a good example for his kids, so he attended Sunday Mass with his family each week. "I didn't want the kids to ask why I wasn't doing it," he explained. But when he wanted to receive Holy Communion with the rest of his family, "my son, Ben, he told me, 'Dad, you can't do that unless you believe it's the Body and Blood of Christ.' Well, I certainly wanted to believe that this is real. I thought, maybe if I just go up there, I'll have some sort of epiphany or something."

As Rod approached and revered the Body of Christ, "nothing really changed, but when I turned to the Chalice, I was just humbled right down to my knees. I just started crying, carrying on. My two daughters had to escort me back to our pew. It was a real epiphany for me." When they got home, he told his wife Kathy that if the Catholic Church was going to give him this, then he was going to become a Catholic. Rod entered RCIA and converted to Catholicism, and is now a proud evangelist to the

faithful on the importance of receiving Holy Communion.

Rekindling the fire of the Eucharist

There are many who long for the truth and peace of Christ or yearn for experiences like Kellen's and Rod's but haven't found it yet. The Bishops of the United States of America have an answer to this cry, and the Diocese of Oakland is joining in: we're talking about the National Eucharistic Revival!

As Bishop Barber wrote in his October letter to parishes, "It is time to revive and rekindle the fire of the Eucharist in our hearts." Of the most recent Pew Research Center's survey of American trends, only one-third (31%) of those who self-identified as Catholics say they believe that "during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus." This belief is called "transubstantiation," and is the heart of the Church's understanding of the Eucharist as the source and summit of our very faith.

The National Eucharistic Revival is in some sense a response to this situation. It gives Catholics a chance to reflect upon the centrality of the Eucharist in our lives, and to reaffirm our call to be a people nourished, fed, and renewed by the Eucharist itself.

The theme of our Diocesan Eucharistic Revival comes from the Gospel of Matthew: "I Am With You Always." Christ Himself promises us that He is here with us, and invites us to renew our personal encounters with Him in this Revival. A steering committee of about 40 leaders on fire for the Lord have been chosen from parishes across the Diocese to guide our own Revival, which will start with a Diocesan Eucharistic Revival Congress in September 2023.

Our Eucharistic Revival Congress will be held over two weekends in September 2023: a Spanish-language track on September 8-9, and an English-language track on September 15-16. We're looking forward to a time of prayer, talks, discussion, Mass, Adoration, a public procession of the Blessed Sacrament, and more! With events for both youth and adults, there will be many opportunities for our hearts and souls to be renewed at this Eucharistic Revival Congress.

As St. Teresa said, "we have in the Eucharist the living, true, and real Jesus present before us" - here with us always.

*Megan Arteaga
Youth Ministry Coordinator*

Weekend Worship Opportunities

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, January 15, 2023

4-4:30pm | Confessions in the Church

Please note: Confessions will be cancelled on Saturday, January 21 because of the Walk for Life West Coast.

The 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday, January 15, 2023

8:30am | Mass in the Church; also [Livestreamed](#)

10:30am | Feast of Santo Niño Mass in the Church

5:00pm | Mass in the Church

[Click here for the Sunday readings](#)

Masks covering the nose and mouth are required for those who are not fully vaccinated, and are optional for those who are fully vaccinated.

Parish Life

NEW: Walk for Life is Jan 21 - join us!

The annual Walk for Life West Coast will be at Civic Center Plaza on Saturday, January 21!

Join us to learn about, hear witnesses for, and walk in support of life - from conception to natural death.

Join us at 10:30am

SHARP at the Orinda BART station - and have your Clipper Card ready with at least \$10.10 in round-trip fare!

We'll participate in about half of the Rally, then do the Walk, ending at the Embarcadero Station before returning to Orinda.

Please note: Confessions will be cancelled on Saturday, January 21.



Thank you, choirs!

Before the Christmas season is officially over, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who sang in each of our Christmas choirs this year.

Thank you for your time and effort in making each of our Christmas celebrations so memorable!



Prayer and Worship



The Fil Am Group of Santa Maria will hold its Annual celebration for the Feast of Santo Niño on January 15, 2023 with the Holy Mass at 10:30AM. There will be a reception after the mass at the Church Hall.
All are invited!

In honor of our dear Santo Niño, join the virtual 9-Days Novena Prayers from January 6 to 14, 2022 @7:30PM

(join via Zoom link Meeting ID: 885 6950 8159 Passcode: 112 233).

O Santo Nino, who has said, "ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," Give we beseech you, to us who ask the gift of Your divine love, that we may love You with our whole heart, in word and work, and never cease from showing forth your praise. Make us, O Lord, to have a perpetual fear and love of Your Holy Name, for You never fail to govern them whom you do solidly establish in Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Service and Outreach

Warm coats and jackets final total

A big thank-you to Santa Maria

parishioners for reaching our goal of 200 coats/jackets by the end of 2022!

Sr. Anne of Oakland Catholic Worker cannot thank you enough for your commitment to this project that has brought so much joy and warmth (physical and metaphorical!) to its recipients.



We have decided to keep the box in the Narthex until the end of February while the cold weather continues. So - if you or your neighbors have outgrown coats and jackets that are gently used and clean, feel free to toss them in the box!

NEW: Shop early - shop the sales!

Our next Food Drive is on **Sunday, January 22** with the groceries going to St. Cornelius in Richmond. Hopefully, this will give you ample time to shop early and hopefully save on the cost of needed items:

- Canned tomatoes/sauce
- Canned protein (tuna, chicken, beef, SPAM, chili, beans)
- Canned veggies/fruit
- Canned soup
- Plastic bottle of cooking oil
- Flour/beans/rice/pasta
- Plastic jar of peanut butter/jelly
- Cereal



Two volunteers are needed on January 22 for each shift:

- 9:00-10:00am
- 10:00-11:00am

We also need a driver!

[Please RSVP if you can help!](#)

Food for Thought

Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes: Investigating medically unexplained cures

A 60 Minutes short on YouTube

Bill Whitaker reports on the unexplained healings that have occurred at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in the south of France, and the team of world-renowned doctors and researchers who investigate the claims of cures. [Click here to watch](#)



Good Stewardship

CHALLENGE TIME - Restore and Renew gifts matched up to \$30,000!

In early 2023, we will be launching the final stage of our Restore and Renew project in the church. So far, we have constructed a new Baptismal Font, built new Confessionals, added an ambry for the holy oils and a wood carving of the Baptism of Jesus, built a new tabernacle, removed asbestos from the church flooring, painted, and put in new carpet and LVT in the nave and sanctuary.



This new phase involves the much-needed renovation of the two sacristies behind the church - and nobody who has seen them would doubt their need of refurbishment! The ceiling is stained and falling apart from water damage due to a leaky roof (which has been fixed), the paint is peeling off the walls, the flooring is scuffed and cracked, and as the building has settled, cabinets have shifted - not to mention there's asbestos that needs to be removed here as well.

Thanks be to God, we have a generous donor who will match any contributions for this final phase of Restore and Renew up to \$30,000! The cost estimate for this phase of Restore and Renew is a little less than \$60,000, so if we reach this goal, we will have covered the total project cost!

If you would like to donate to Restore and Renew, please speak to Father George, or simply send a check to "Church of Santa Maria" with "Restore and Renew" on the memo line, so your gift is credited appropriately! Speak with Father George as well if you'd like to see the sacristies and the work that needs to be done.

How can I support Santa Maria?

Thank you so much for thinking about us and

supporting our parish! 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 here. Again, we thank you for your planning and your generosity!

Mass Intentions

Sunday, January 15

8:30am: Doug Fortune
10:30am: Tom, Steve, and Tom O'Brien
5:00pm: Parishioners of Santa Maria, Living and Deceased

Monday, January 16

8:30am: Yau Lin Liu

Tuesday, January 17

8:30am: Dimpna Short

Wednesday, January 18

8:30am: *Intention of the Presider*

Thursday, January 19

8:30am: Annette Turner

Friday, January 20

8:30am: James Anderson

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.

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Would you like to become a sponsor for our parish bulletin?

We'll share your advertisement (like Ana's, above) each week for a year, and feature your business three times a year in a larger column as well!

All advertising proceeds go directly to Santa Maria.

[Contact Megan Arteaga for details on how you can sponsor us.](#)

Pastoral Team

Reverend George Mockel

Pastor

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Deacon Rey Encarnacion

Prayer Intentions

For the Sick:

Mary Beth Alban, Avery Ann, Joan Artmann, Shoab Aryan, Patricia Bartholomeu, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Miguel Briseno, Jeff Calder, Maria Carmen, Fred Chavaria, Judy Eben,

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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.](#)

Likewise, thanks be to God for those for whom prayer has been answered! If you would like to be removed from the prayer list with gratitude for answered prayer, please let Megan know that as well.

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