



# Church of Santa Maria

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## "Our Lord uses whom He chooses"

*On one woman's surrender to God's improbable plan for her start of Lent*

*Pictured: One of Mary's yoga classes included both the young residents of the orphanage as well as their teachers*



The 3rd Sunday of Lent  
March 12, 2023

*I'm taking a break in my writing this week to share a story with you from one of our parishioners and member of Thursday Bible Study, Mary Carrillo, who had a recent experience of trusting in God's call and seeing evidence of His love halfway around the world. As you read, consider how her physical journey might parallel a Lenten journey. ~Megan*

If anyone had told me in January (or anytime, for that matter) that one month later I would be teaching orphan schoolgirls and leading their teachers in yoga class in a remote area of India that I couldn't pronounce, I would have laughed at the improbability of it all. But that's what happened.

There were so many improbable events that happened in those few weeks that **it's impossible for me not to see that our Lord uses whom He chooses - in this case, someone like me who is stubborn, occasionally foolish, and often stunned like a deer in the headlights - to carry His message.**

When I asked a friend if February 15 would be a good time to visit her, she said she'd be in India - and I jokingly asked if I could go with her, to which she said yes! Coincidentally, a running buddy had just gone to India and walked me step by step through the visa process, which I completed in two days - after which I booked my first Priceline trip from SFO to Vishakhapatnam (VTZ) Airport. I was shocked and somewhat fearful that I had actually booked the trip.

It was a rocky journey - including "an aft galley issue" that caused our first plane to return to SFO after only 45 minute in the air, a rushed gate-side re-booking that somehow still got me into VTZ on the correct day, two flights, an overnight stay in an airport "pod" hotel room, and the temporary panic-filled loss of my passport, visa, money, and phone at a Starbucks in the largest airport in India. Through every stumbling block, **I was left thinking that if God is all-powerful, and if he did not want me to continue this trip, it would soon be clear** - but apparently it was His will that I go.

By His grace, I finally made it to Vishakhapatnam, in Andhra Pradesh on the Southeast coast of India. It's a rural area with lots of cows, pigs, motorcycles, busses, and pedestrians sharing the mostly dirt roads frequented with roadside shrines of various Hindu gods. Hindu women walk the roads in saris, carrying stick bundles or sacks of items balanced on their heads. The air is thick with smoke from burning trash, which still seems to be everywhere - with mangy dogs, cows, and pigs rooting through it. There's no public sewage system or potable water, or much visible infrastructure at all. **The lack of opportunity to better one's living conditions seemed apparent.**

The "Children of Faith" home and school, where I served, is only accessible by dirt roads, and consists of two large dormitory-like structures (one for the 60 girls and the other for the 60 boys, all from ages first through tenth grade) and a covered area. These 120 children are lovingly housed, nutritionally fed, go to classes Monday through Friday and a half day on Saturday in both English and their native language, Telegu, and go to church on Sunday. They're healthy and happy kids, with most attending college and having a life-changing education.

The complex also employs about 20 adults from the surrounding areas who serve as teachers, cooks, repairmen, etc. It was founded by a Christian Indian couple who came from this area, went to the United States, and after working in Walnut Creek for about 10 years realized that they could do the most good in the world by returning to their childhood home and opening an orphanage. Approximately 25% of the children have no parents, 50% have one parent, and the remainder have both parents but whose families are so poverty-stricken that they can't be taken care of.

I started out helping grades five and six with their reading, but was soon thrown out of my comfort zone leading grades nine and ten in singing Christian songs, and teaching yoga to the 60 girls everyday. (No, I am not a yoga teacher, and I realize the irony of teaching yoga in India, but I had memorized my yoga instructor's class and could repeat it acceptably.) The teachers enjoyed it so much they asked for permission to not wear their saris so they could participate in the yoga poses. I also played games and danced with the kids, played Kabaddi with the women teachers (like an Indian version of rugby), and sang solo in two different local churches on Sundays - wayyyyy out of my comfort zone!

So what did I learn from all this? **God's message is a covenant of love**

**with me.** He promises to love and uphold me, and I have a responsibility to love Him and be faithful to His call. I am not always able to gracefully follow His next indicated action with faith that it will all work out according to His will, but **I am grateful that this time I was able to take the next action, and the next step, and see His work all along the way.**

Mary Carrillo  
Parishioner

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## Weekend Worship Opportunities

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

**Saturday, March 11, 2023**

**4-4:30pm** | Confessions in the Church

*Please note there will be no Confessions on Saturday, March 18.*

### The 3rd Sunday of Lent

**Sunday, March 12, 2023**

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

**10:30am** | 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.*

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## Parish Life

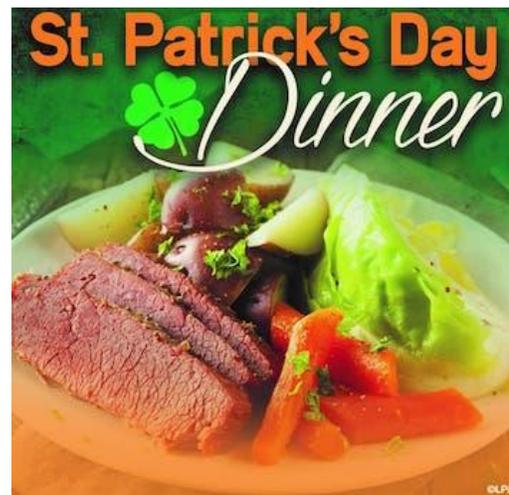
### Get tickets for the Knights of Columbus' St. Patrick's Day Dinner!

On Friday, March 17, the Knights of Columbus will be hosting a Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner in honor of St. Patrick's Day!

**St. Patrick's Day Dinner**  
**Santa Maria Parish Hall**  
**Friday, March 17**

Doors open at 5:30pm

Dinner served at 6:30pm



Bring your family (kids 12 and under eat free!) at \$30 a ticket for a fun night, including a corned beef and cabbage dinner, potatoes, salad, and a drink ticket good for beer, wine, or soft drinks!

Tickets available after the Sunday Masses; contact [Greg Smith](#) for more information.

*Bishop Barber has provided a dispensation from Friday's abstinence from meat; see below for more details.*

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## The Season of Lent

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### St. Patrick's Day dispensation from Friday abstinence

[Please click here](#) to see the decree granting dispensation from abstinence of meat on the upcoming Feast of Saint Patrick (Friday, March 17).



Bishop has encouraged everyone who makes use of this dispensation to engage in another sacrificial or charitable act that day.

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### Invitation to Thursday Morning Lenten Faith Sharing

On **Thursdays from 9:30am to 10:30am**, join us in the Parish Office or on Zoom for a deep dive into the season of Lent with the resource "Restore: a Journey of Healing and Restoration" with Sr. Miriam James Heidland, SOLT!



[Click here to watch the Second Week of Lent video](#)

Each week throughout Lent, Sr. Miriam will lead you to meet the tenderness of God's mercy, the power of his love, and the restoration of your heart and life as you practice prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and sacrifice.

Want to go the extra mile? Feel free to purchase **Restore: A Guided Lent Journal for Prayer and Meditation** from [Ave Maria Press](#) or [Amazon](#) to guide you through the Lenten journey! It is NOT required for

your participation on Thursdays - just an option.

*[Email Megan](#) for more details or to receive the Zoom link!*

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## Stations of the Cross: Friday Mornings through March 31



During Fridays in Lent, we will be praying the Stations of the Cross immediately following Friday morning Masses. On Good Friday, there will be no morning Stations; instead, the Stations of the Cross will be celebrated at 7:30pm as is our tradition at Santa Maria.

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## Service and Outreach

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### **NEW:** Lenten Family Service Opportunity

We need 10 volunteers to write a note in 6 cards that will be provided to the 60 teens located at the John A. Davis Juvenile Hall in Martinez and the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility in Byron.



If you're interested, [contact Gail!](#)

You'll get more instructions - like what to write, where to pick up your cards, and when to return them - when you sign up. Our goal is to complete and deliver them by the end of March.

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### **NEW:** Appreciation from the St. Mary's Center

Last week, our parish received the following message from Beverly Hop, Donations Coordinator at the St. Mary's Center:

"This is just a follow-up thank you to all your wonderful Church members who helped with the food drive, as well as to all the



wonderful people who donated! Your gifts came at the right time. Would you believe that all the groceries you brought in have been distributed, save for the stuff on the wire rack to the left in the attached picture? They went out yesterday in the rain to some of the preschool families. Needless to say, they were very much appreciated!"

Keep up the beautiful generosity, Santa Maria!

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## Records broken!

Bay Area temperatures have realize record-breaking lows. The Santa Maria parish community has donated 285 warm coats to the Oakland Catholic Worker, registering an all-time high!

It's as if we knew a cold front was headed our way!

A huge thank-you goes out to all those who responded to the cry for help. We hope your hearts are warmed by helping those in need.



## Bag lunches? It's in the bag!

Thanks to the 16 quick and speedy parishioner volunteers who have covered the need for bag lunches for the next two months!

Our commitment to Oakland Catholic Worker is only fulfilled because of the generosity of people like you in our congregation. Thank you!



## Food for Thought

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**NEW:**  
**EXCLUSIVE**  
**interview:**  
**Bishop Barron,**  
**the face of the**  
**modern**  
**Church?**

A Catholic Herald article by Melanie McDonagh

He has advice for Catholics who take to the internet to engage in religious argument; he says drily that all too often the first thing you see online is the Church bickering with itself. "It's evangelically

uncompelling." And his rule for those Catholics engaged in those arguments is: "Before you press the send button, ask yourself, is this motivated by love?" It's a simple question, but it's funny how... [read more](#)

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## **Harrison Butker opens up about his Super Bowl-winning kick - and his prayer routine**

A CNA article by Jonah McKeown

Even though Harrison Butker kicked the winning field goal in

what he described as "one of the best Super Bowls ever played," football doesn't define the Kansas City Chiefs player's life.

"I want to be a saint. And that's the most important thing, and that's why I'm here on this earth," Butker recently told EWTN News In Depth's Colm Flynn.

"I'm not just making kicks so that I can make money and I can puff myself up as this great person that people want to be like one day. I'm making kicks because God wants me to have a platform, at least for right now, to share this message of faith, of growing in virtue, of growing closer to the sacraments and of being a saint." ...[read more](#)

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**ANSWER:**  
**Who's that standing next**

## to the Pope?

A few weeks ago, we asked - **who's that standing next to the Pope in her First Communion dress?**

It's parishioner **Margaret Govednik!**

She tells the story: "I was just confirmed prior to our visit to Rome at the Italian Embassy in Ankara, Turkey - where my dad was stationed - and that's me in my First Communion dress, lengthened and altered! The story behind this photo is that I happened to be the youngest and shortest person in the group and was shoved to the back when the photographer arrived. Suddenly, the group opened up and the Pope walked through, took my hand, and placed me by his side in the photo. I thought he was God Almighty!"



## Good Stewardship

### **CORRECTED:** January Collection Report

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

Goal: \$42,000  
**Last Month's Total: \$42,331**  
**Surplus: \$331**



*Editor's Note: Last week, I'd typed a number from the wrong column of the spreadsheet I was looking at. I guess that's why I'm your editor and not your bookkeeper!*

### **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, March 12

8:30am: Tom O'Brien †  
10:30am: Aida Adia †  
5:00pm: Parishioners of Santa Maria, Living and Deceased

### Monday, March 13

8:30am: Maria Ly †

### Tuesday, March 14

8:30am: Maria Mai †

### Wednesday, March 15

8:30am: In Thanksgiving to Our Lady of Lourdes

### Thursday, March 16

8:30am: Joseph (Giuse) Thanh †

### Friday, March 17

8:30am: Joseph (Giuse) Bong †

*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  
[gmockel@santamariaorinda.com](mailto:gmockel@santamariaorinda.com)

### Deacon Rey Encarnacion

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x301

## Prayer Intentions

### For the Sick

Mary Beth Alban, Avery Ann, Joan Artmann, Shoaib Aryan, Patricia Bartholomeu, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Miguel Briseno, Jeff Calder, Maria Carmen, Fred Chavaria, Judy Eben, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Matthew

**Deacon James Pearce**

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**Sister Mary Margaret Phan, LHC**

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**Suzanne Wells**

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Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia  
Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Gregory Ibabao,  
Shirley Jones, Brian Kelly, Mason Kelly,  
Jim Kennedy, Jerry Kirk, Lawrence  
Knapp, Carol Koupus, Rose Mary  
McPhee, Jim M., Maria Elsa Moya, Robert  
Nick, Chase O'Keefe, Arsi Orihuella,  
Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann  
Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Carl  
Robinson, Ustrula Simmons, Steve  
Turner, Faye Young

**For the Dead**

Chuck Kovely †, Daniel Mein †, Jean  
Wells †, Carole Marie Zimmerman †,  
Manuela Iturrioz †

*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.*

**Support Santa  
Maria**

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