



Church of Santa Maria

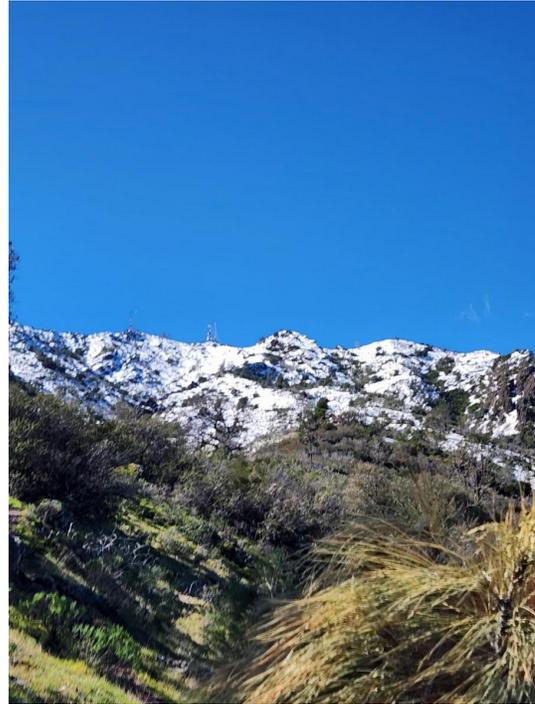
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Failing the difficult things

The hard-earned lesson on how everything comes from the Lord

Pictured: The snow on Mount Diablo's North Peak looked close. It wasn't.



The 4th Sunday of Lent
March 19, 2023

Last week at Youth Group, the Middle Schoolers were exploring the Lenten discipline of giving, and **Sam De Paschalis** had asked if a certain form of giving was acceptable for his Lenten practice - or, since it came easily to him, if he should choose something more challenging instead.

My response came straight out of that El Paso taco shell commercial: "Porqué no los dos?" Then in order to not sound like a flippant Youth Minister, I explained more deeply: "Doing the things that come easy to you means you're using the gifts God gave you, and that's a form of thanksgiving and praise - so yeah, definitely do that easy thing. **But when you do the challenging things, you're going to fail sometimes and that's the point.** It shows you your limits and reminds you that God is the source of all strength, so it's a tangible lesson that you can't do it without the Lord." (Then there followed a weight-lifting metaphor specific to Sam's life - insert your own pushing-your-limits-in-order-to-grow metaphor here.)

In fact, I'd had my own living experience of that pretty recently. Over that crazy weekend where people were snowboarding and sledding on Mount Diablo, I was away on retreat and couldn't get up the mountain -

and the following weekend, the snow line had crept higher as temperatures warmed and precipitation dropped. I decided that my best opportunity to see the snow by the power of my own two feet (driving was cheating) was a trek straight up the north face of the mountain to the 1084m high North Peak - an ascent that almost literally does go directly up. It would be a tough ascent, but if I could keep my pace up, it would be the fastest way up there - I'd see the snow, throw a snowball off the mountain for good measure, and could turn around and head home.

Now, to set the stage, I'm not used to failure. I generally complete what I start, pick things up quickly, and figure problems out. But this trek was tough. I wish I could blame it on a lack of gear, a shortage of time, or any other outside factor - but the truth was, it just wasn't an ascent I could complete solo. There was some four-limbed scrambling, a lot of scree, and at the higher elevations, ice on the trail and a biting wind that sucked all dexterity out of my hands and face. It was like I'd climbed from spring back into winter and all my layers were in denial that the climate had changed so rapidly - and to add insult to injury, I still hadn't reached the snow.

After about a half an hour of pushing through the challenges, I stopped and snapped the photo at the top of this bulletin. I'd paused, trying to figure out how the snow looked so close but was still out of reach, and in the pause, the voice spoke very kindly in my heart, "I don't think so, today."

I sat with that thought for a second, weighed the pros and cons, debated a bit about how the snow was probably just around the next corner, or on the other side of the next sight line, but still **the wisdom of that quiet heart voice outweighed the brain's protests**. I muttered, "Well, I'm sure I'll get a bulletin article out of it, anyway," and lengthened my trekking poles, turning around for the scramble back down.

It was on the way back down that I started thinking - of course we rely on the Lord for all things that are beyond our power (and here the unreachable North Peak became a metaphor for me). That's why prayer brings us so much comfort and why we celebrate the extent of His grace and mercy. We can hand it off to the Lord and say "**Okay Lord, I can't, but you can!**"

But really, if He has gifted me all of my abilities in the first place - the ones that got me this far up the mountain, both literally and metaphorically - wasn't I, then, actually completely dependent upon Him in the first place? It was never my own power anyway - it all came from the Lord.

So this Lent, do the challenging, humbling things, and let yourself be reminded that the Lord fills in the gaps between where we are and where we need to be. Just don't forget that everything we started with in the first place came from Him as well.

Weekend Worship Opportunities

Sacrament of Reconciliation

~~Saturday, March 18, 2023~~

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

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

The 4th Sunday of Lent

Sunday, March 19, 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.

Parish Life

NEW: Give to Catholic Relief Services this Sunday!

This weekend, our Second Collection goes to **Catholic Relief Services**.

When you give, you help fill the bellies of young children so they can study hard in school. You help prevent trafficking and provide welcome kits for survivors. You help mothers and babies around the world receive nutritional care and health exams.



When you give, refugees find safety and receive emergency assistance and trauma counseling. Farmers learn innovative ways to plant and grow crops despite drought or disease. And women find dignity in opportunities for savings and training.

You can make an immediate lifesaving difference and give hope to children, mothers and fathers around the world—ensuring that the most vulnerable people are taken care of.

Envelopes will be available in the pews at all the Masses this Sunday!

NEW: No confessions

Saturday, March 18

Please note there will be no confessions at Santa Maria on Saturday, March 18, as Father George will be on retreat with our Confirmation teens.

Here are a few local alternate options for Saturday:

St. Monica Church

1001 Camino Pablo, Moraga
3:30-4:30pm on Saturday in the church

St. Perpetua Church

3454 Hamlin Road, Lafayette
4:00-4:45pm on Saturday in the church



TONIGHT: Knights of Columbus' St. Patrick's Day Dinner

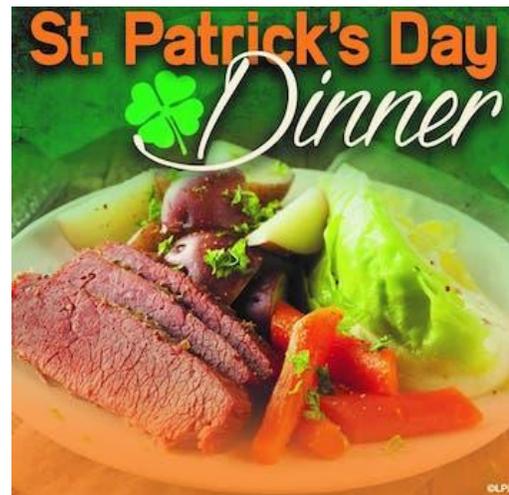
On Friday, March 17, the Knights of Columbus will be hosting a Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner in honor of St. Patrick's Day!

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!

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



The Season of Lent

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.



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 Third 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!

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.

Service and Outreach

NEW: Winter Nights another success

Santa Maria had another successful experience volunteering with the Winter Nights program this year.



Winter Nights provides shelter for homeless families during the cold, wet months of winter. This year, we partnered with the Orinda Community Church to provide a safe shelter, food, tutoring, and babysitting to the guests of the program.

Thank you to the many families who helped making this another successful year - the **Hawkins, Kemners, Brewsters, Nestals, Sitzmanns, Hogans, Lundstroms, and Eversoles**, along with **Mary Murphy, Alan Metheny, John McManus, and Gail Gabriel!**

NEW: Let's FLOOD them with kindness

It's official - we have plenty of water to share... to the point of flooding! Most would agree that we have much more to share from our plenty.



Our next Food Drive is for the Dorothy Day House community I'm Berkeley:
Sunday, March 26.

In addition to the regular items of food, they also request donations of new **wash cloths and towels** for the temporary housing of the homeless.

2 volunteers are needed Sunday, March 26 for each shift:

- 9am-10am
- 10am-11am
- One driver at 11am

Donations needed:

- Canned protein (tuna, chicken, beef, spam, chili, beans, etc.)
- Canned tomato sauce, pasta sauce, soup, vegetables, fruit
- Rice, beans, pasta, cereal, flour

- Peanut butter, jelly
- Plastic bottle of cooking oil (48 oz preferred)
- Shelf-stable snacks (protein bars, breakfast bars, pretzels, etc.)
- Crackers/cookies

[Email Gail if you can help!](#)

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!

Food for Thought

NEW: Pope Francis: Gender ideology is 'one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations' today

A Catholic News Agency article by Courtney Mares



While he is not writing something on gender ideology, the pope said that he talks about the subject "because some people are a bit naive and believe that it is the way to progress."

He said that they "do not distinguish what is respect for sexual diversity or diverse sexual preferences from what is already an anthropology of gender, which is extremely dangerous because it eliminates differences, and that erases humanity, the richness of humanity, both personal, cultural, and social, the diversities and the tensions between..." [read more](#)

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 un compelling." 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](#)

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

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 19*

8:30am: Al Ferreira †
10:30am: Hospicia Partido †
5:00pm: Jean Wells †

Monday, March 20

8:30am: In Thanksgiving for St. Anthony

Tuesday, March 21

8:30am: Jean Wells †

Wednesday, March 22

8:30am: Eddie So †

Thursday, March 23

8:30am: Holy Souls in Purgatory

Friday, March 24

8:30am: *Intention of the Presider*

*This Sunday's Mass for the Parishioners of Santa Maria Living and Deceased will be celebrated on the teens' retreat

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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Prayer Intentions

For the Sick

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Deacon Rey Encarnacion

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Carmen, Fred Chavaria, Judy Eben,
Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Matthew
Ennis, Nora Enriquez, Anthony Fisher,
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.*

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Maria**

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