What Does it Take to Run a Parish?

The answer: probably more than you think.

As we begin a new church year this Sunday, we want to thank the many parishioners who have shared their time and talent with our parish this past year. On Friday evening, November 22nd, over 130 people attended our annual Stewardship Appreciation Dinner, hosted by the parish staff. The dinner was a feast of Southern BBQ and of friendship. The evening was an opportunity for us as staff to express our gratitude to our volunteers for making Santa Maria a wonderful place to grow in faith and community.

Did you know that we have the following number of volunteer parishioners involved in the following ministries: 65 ministers of communion, 44 ministers of the word, 26 ushers, 29 greeters, 18 adult servers, 10 altar servers, 14 adult choir, 11 children’s choir, 10 Faith Formation teachers, 4 high schoolers leaders, 10 confirmation group hosts, 10 collection counters, 2 on the RCIA team, 15 Guild board members, 30 Knights of Columbus, 9 Social Justice board members, 7 Art & Environment members, 7 on the Buildings team, and 4 Finance Council? This doesn't even include the parishioners who host the weekly donuts, who help with the many social justice outreach programs, CYO coaches, and Pastoral Care Ministers!

This is what it takes to run a parish: YOU! How about joining us so we can do more for the parish, for our world, and for God?
Your responses help us plan our mission in action

As we begin a new church year, we are also looking ahead to the 2020 budget year. The pledges promised on your Commitment Cards help us budget for another year of ministry, service, education, faith formation, worship, and more for our parish community!

Thank you to the parishioners who have responded (as of this printing) with their Commitment Card for our His Heart, Our Hands program! We are humbled by your sacrifice and are grateful for your generosity.

This number includes those who have made a financial commitment to our parish as well as those who have pledged to pray for the program.

This is a great chance during the busy Christmas season to stop, focus, and pray. Our celebrant and presenter will be Fr. John Mark Ettensohn, OMI, and the morning concludes with liturgy and a light lunch.

Give yourself a respite from your busy life, and then go back to your holiday preparations with renewed energy!

Sign up on the poster in the narthex if you’d like to join us!

Immaculate Conception

This year the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary falls on Sunday, December 8th. Therefore, the solemnity will be celebrated on Monday, December 9th and will not be a holy day of obligation! Rather, it is a holy day of opportunity!

Advent Reconciliation Liturgy

Mark your calendars now for our Advent Reconciliation liturgy – a great way to prepare for Christmas. Celebrate this healing Sacrament and be transformed by God’s mercy.

The date is set for Wednesday, December 11th at 7:30pm.

A reception will follow the celebration of the sacrament in the Parish Hall.

Christmas Poinsettias

You are invited to help us decorate our church for the season of Christmas by making a donation for our Christmas Poinsettias. In the narthex you will find envelopes for your offering. Please place them in the Sunday collection or bring them by the Parish Office.

Christmas Caroling

On Monday, December 16th, members of our parish choir will be caroling at the Orinda Senior Village and the Orinda Care Center (formerly Orinda Convalescent Hospital). The morning of Christmas songs begins at 10am at the Orinda Senior Village. If you would like to sing with us, contact Tony at tmillette@smparish.org.

Come by for some Advent Spiritual Renewal

The Women’s Guild is hosting a Spiritual Morning on Wednesday, December 11 at 9:30am in the Convent chapel.

PARISH LIFE
Did you know the Mass is the “perfect prayer”?  
You can have a Mass said for anything you pray for! Has someone been in your heart recently? Did a family member or friend pass away? Is there an anniversary or celebration you’re joyful for? Is there something you’re grateful for?

Call the Parish Office and ask for a Mass to be said for any of those intentions! It doesn’t cost anything—but if you’re able to give, a $10 offering is appreciated.

**PASTORAL CARE**

Rewarding ministry at Orinda Senior Village

*A reflection by Bob Semar*

I am a member of the Pastoral Care Ministry which is coordinated by Sister Mary Magdalene. One of the activities of this Ministry is a Eucharist Service and praying of the Rosary at the Orinda Senior Village at 10:30 on the first Monday of every month.

This is very rewarding ministry as the participating seniors at the Village are so appreciative of what Sister Mary Magdalene does for them. I am especially grateful to all of the Sisters of the Holy Cross for helping me become a more active and fulfilled parishioner at Santa Maria.

**COMMUNITY & OUTREACH**

Interacting with the Homeless - Recognizing Jesus in Everyone

Early on a Saturday in November, members of the Social Justice team, along with one of the our youth group teens finished packing “Blessing Bags” before heading off to San Francisco on BART to bring some necessities to the homeless.

Thank you to **Gail Gabriel, Jessie Rosendez, Bill Caldwell, Ron Sharp, Betty Jazmin, and Walter Peyton.** This was the first time that all of them (save Gail) had participated in this kind of activity and they were all grateful for the opportunity to help!

*For the full story, visit the Social Justice Announcements page on our parish website.*

**Weekly Food Collection**

1st/2nd Weekends: St. Cornelius School
3rd/4th Weekends: St. Peter Martyr Church Pantry

Please put all donations in the bins in the Narthex.

**12 Days of Christmas**

*Friday, December 6*
6:30pm | Parish Hall

**Appetizers, dinner, dancing, and Christmas fun for $50**

**Tickets on the Parish Website**
We encourage you to register in the parish so that you can receive regular communication via both email and regular mail. Registration information is essential for responding to requests to be sponsors/godparents and other ministries.

Please register at www.santamariaorinda.com/registration
Middle School Youth Group sorted items and packed bags to prepare for the Saturday of Service.

Our team of Social Justice and Youth Ministry volunteers took to the streets of San Francisco to make connections and share the wealth.