A gift to be grateful for

*Sister Mary Margaret reflects on God as Love*

“What is one of the gifts you’re most grateful to God for?” I asked the second-grade children. Many children raised their hands to shout out answers, but one answer really captured my heart. I still remember an excitement in her voice and the radiant face of Finley as she proudly said, “The gift of Baptism!” “Why the gift of Baptism?” I asked her. She simply looked at me and said, “Because I get to become God’s child!”

I could not say anything more, just smiled and nodded.

Building up on the gift of Baptism, the second-grade children are getting ready to receive the second gift of grace—the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Indeed, there are mixed feelings of anxiety and excitement in the children as they try to understand God’s 10 Commandments of Love, practicing the Examination of Conscience and the steps of Confession.

I often softly remind them that God is love. God is waiting with open arms to embrace you when you come to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. God sends Fathers on His behalf to help you receive this Sacrament with joy. No worries about what to say—Fathers are there to help you. In this beautiful gift of grace, God simply wants to hear you say, “I am sorry,” and wants you to hear God say back, “You are forgiven and loved!”

Please hold these children in your prayers as they receive their First Reconciliation this Tuesday, January 14 at 7:00pm in the Church.
How do you say thank you enough? You can’t…

But we’ll try! Thank you to all those who ministered at our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day liturgies! Imagine not having servers, greeters, ushers, ministers of Communion, ministers of the Word, musicians, singers, deacons, or presiders—almost 200 people were involved in these ministries over our six Christmas Masses.

In addition to these ministers, we should thank those who gathered on Monday, December 23 to decorate the church—Bob Semar, Bobbie Richards, Lynda Paige, Linda Zunino, Ursula Gordon, Lynne Lloyd, and Nancy Moody. What an amazing team!

A big thank you also goes to Tili Tasker for an incredible job organizing the Children’s Mass in the Church on Christmas Eve. We also thank the Adult Choir who gathered for 9 hours of rehearsals during the busy month of December to prepare for the 10pm Christmas Eve Mass. We are so fortunate to have each of you share your love of song and of God—Thelma Fung, Melissa Pearce, Margaret Diaz, Mary Passeri, Gloria Kubitschek, Mary Carrillo, Charlie Schnellbacher, Dean Anderson, Steve Kubistschek, Chris Meyers, Ed Casey, Ed Beatson, Mike Kirby, Catherine Logan, Linda Zunino, Mary Lou Pollaczek, Suzanne Parsons, Donna Meyer, Beth Casey, Colette White, Holly Pabst, Ursula Gordon, and Megan Arteaga.

Liturgy is the work of the people—our work to allow each and everyone who worships at Santa Maria to rightfully give God thanks and praise.

Gather for prayer and celebration for the feast of Santo Niño

The Santa Maria Fil-Am Community invites one and all to our parish’s 2nd annual celebration of the Feast of Santo Niño, the Holy Infant Jesus.

The celebration will begin with a 9-day evening Novena Prayer in the chapel in honor of the feast from January 9 through January 17. Prayer will be at 7pm Monday through Friday, and at 4pm Saturday and Sunday. The celebration will culminate with the 5pm Mass on Saturday, January 18, and a reception will follow in the Parish Hall.

For more information on the Santo Niño celebrations, please contact Lenee Cadotte at lcadotte@comcast.net or 925-588-6558 or Mariel Melarpis at mariel.melarpis@gmail.com or 415-823-8308.

Infant Baptismal Preparation Classes

If you have a child that you would like to have Baptized over the next two months, the first of two required parent classes will begin soon. Dates of both classes are: January 15 and January 22; both classes begin at 7pm.

Contact the Parish Office at 925-254-2426 for more information about the Baptismal process or if you would like to register for these classes.

St. Perpetua Catholic School is now enrolling TK-8th grade for 2020!

Did you know that there is an amazing Catholic school less than 4 miles from Orinda? “St. Ps” inspires students through challenging academics (with outstanding STAR test results) and is dedicated to an
Warm jackets, infant clothes, diapers, and baby wipes are greatly needed. Donations can be placed in the containers that will be in the narthex. This collection coordinates with the Walk for Life West Coast that will take place January 25 in San Francisco!

**Walk for Life West Coast**

Join fellow Catholics and Pro-Lifers from all over California and beyond as we stand up for the littlest among us and their mothers at the 16th annual Walk for Life West Coast in San Francisco on January 25.

The rally begins at 12:30pm in the Civic Center Plaza, and the Walk down Market Street begins at 1:30pm. Last year’s Walk drew over 50,000 people!

Our parish group will meet to take the 12:05 BART train from the Orinda station so we catch part of the Rally and the Walk. For complete information about the Walk, visit www.walkforlifewc.com or call 415-658-1793.

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**We’re updating the Food Donations schedule!**

In the past, donations in the food bins in the narthex have been split up weekly between St. Peter Martyr and St. Cornelius. To simplify things for our donors and our volunteers Rose Wilson and Mary McCosker, each collection will now be for an entire month!

January donations will be taken to St. Cornelius, February will be St. Peter Martyr, and the two will continue to trade off throughout the rest of the year.

Thank you for continuing to support these collections!

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**Baby supplies needed!**

The Social Justice Team is organizing a collection of maternity and baby items for Birthright of Concord the weekends of January 18-19 and 25-26!

The center accepts new or “nearly new” maternity clothes, and baby clothes up to 18 mos.
**Pastoral Team**

Reverend George Mockel  
Pastor  
gmockel@smparish.org
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Reverend Jude Pooppana  
Priest in Residence
---

Reverend Michael Amabisco, OP  
Sacramental Assistance
---

Reverend Christopher Fadok, OP  
Sacramental Assistance
---

Deacon Rey Encarnacion  
dcn.rey@smparish.org x310
---

Deacon James Pearce  
dcnpearce@smparish.org x301
---

Mirna Wong  
Administrative Assistant  
mirnawong@smparish.org x301
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Tony Millette  
Liturgy and Music  
tmillette@smparish.org x303
---

Sister Mary Margaret Phan, LHC  
Faith Formation (Grades K-5)  
srmmphan@smparish.org; x306
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Megan Arteaga  
Youth Ministry (Grades 6-12), Communications, and CYO  
megan@smparish.org x308
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Sister Mary Magdalene Nguyen, LHC  
Pastoral Care of the Sick  
sistermn@smparish.org x309
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Sister Magdalena Duong, LHC  
Bookkeeper  
sistermagdalena@smparish.org x305
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**Prayer Intentions**

*For the Sick*

Liduvina Acosta, Sonny Acosta, Mary Beth Alban, Joan Artmann, Shoaib Aryan, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Kathie Brady, Cara Bradbury, Maria Carmen, Rosemary Catton, Fred Chavarria, Delores Codde, Grace Parent DeBoodt, Rich Delany, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Nora Enriquez, Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Noreen Gillham, Paul Guest, Doris Hale, Florentino Ibabao, Brian Kelly, Mason Kelly, Aileen Kelly, Jim Kennedy, Jerry Kirk, Lawrence Knapp, Carol Koupus, Judy Lazarus, Jim Marchetti, Rose Mary McPhee, Robert Nick, Arsi Orihuela, Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Patrick Sheehy, Faye Young

Would you like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list? Please contact Mirna in the Parish Office at 925-254-2426 or at mirnawong@smparish.org.

**Treasure**

1. **December 29, 2019**
   - **Plate:** $3,503.00
   - **Faith Direct:** $3,873.98
   - **Total:** $7,376.98
   - **Goal:** $10,350.00
   - **Negative:** $-2,973.02
   - **Maintenance:** $1,392.00

2. **January 5, 2020**
   - **Plate:** $9,461.50
   - **Faith Direct:** $2,299.60
   - **Total:** $11,761.00
   - **Goal:** $10,350.00
   - **Positive:** $1,411.00
   - **Faith Formation:** $904.00

**Mass Intentions**

- **Monday, January 13**
  - 8:00am: Richard Breuner (D)

- **Tuesday, January 14**
  - 8:00am: Eileen & John Walsh (D)

- **Wednesday, January 15**
  - 8:00am: Graciana & Felimon Barbante (D)

- **Thursday, January 16**
  - 8:00am: (I) Paras Family

- **Friday, January 17**
  - 8:00am: (I) Julie Abdo

- **Saturday, January 18**
  - 5:00pm: Lucian Alejo (D)

- **Sunday, January 19**
  - 8:30am: (I) Leona & Jule Villard
  - 10:30am: Nick Kemsley (D)
  - 5:00pm: Parishioners of Santa Maria

I=Intentions of [N.]; D=Deceased

To request a Mass Intention, please contact Mirna in the Parish Office.

*The offering of the Mass is “the perfect prayer.” Masses can be said for a living person’s intentions, or for the repose of the soul of someone who has died. We encourage you to have Masses said for all of your loved ones, or for your own intentions!*

Coffee and Donuts this weekend are hosted by St. Perpetua School as they spread the word about enrollment! Thank you for your hospitality!
16th Annual Walk for Life West Coast 2020

Because Women Deserve Better than Abortion.

Abortion Hurts Women

Saturday, January 25 • CIVIC CENTER PLAZA • San Francisco

Rally: 12:30PM
CIVIC CENTER PLAZA
Info Faire: 11:00AM
Saturday, January 25, 2020

Rally starts at Civic Center Plaza, walking down Market Street (2 miles). Ends at Embarcadero Plaza/Ferry Building.

BART stations at both locations. Ample parking.

Register and info: 415/658-1793 | email: info@WalkforLifeWC.com WalkforLifeWC.com