“Encountering” Christ in each other, the Eucharist, the world

Annual Life in Christ Retreat inspires teens

“Megan! On February 23, we’re going to 11:30 Mass at St. Charles and meet up with everyone and go to lunch afterward—do you want to come?”

This came from a group of my teens somewhere in the middle of our January Life in Christ, or LinC, Retreat with St. Charles Borromeo. It struck me for a few reasons: 1) it was the middle of the retreat (not the end) which meant there were some serious connections being made, if they already wanted to visit each other in the near future; 2) Mass was in the hang-out plans for my teens; and 3) they wanted to include me—me! A grown-up!—in the plans.

We always talk about relational ministry and how important it is as ministers to foster connections, to be truly present to each person we encounter, and to show our care for each teen as a whole person and not just their spiritual lives. This was probably the biggest fruit bud I’ve seen from this approach in my whole time here (excuse my mixing metaphors).

Journeying with these teens closer to Christ over the retreat weekend through witness talks, Adoration, Scripture-based games and studies, Mass, music, and prayer was pretty cool. Being invited to join in their own journey closer to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ was even cooler. The theme of our retreat, “Encounter,” really shone through over the weekend—and it had nothing to do with our plans, only with the Holy Spirit.
Got questions? Try Alpha—starting right after Ash Wednesday!

We’ll be making space for life’s biggest questions by meeting Wednesday evenings at the parish starting the week after Ash Wednesday. We’ll gather for dinner, a video presenting quality content on questions like “Why did Jesus have to die?” and “Why and how should I tell others?” We’ll end with honest discussion where nothing is off the table, and there’s no pressure to share.

Come for the food, stay for the conversation, leave with a purpose.

Sign-ups are coming soon! Keep an eye out here, in your email, and on the Parish Website.

Inviting the sick and suffering: Feb 15

Entering into the holy season of Lent with ashes

Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. The ashes symbolize the dust from which God made us. They also symbolize grief—in this case, our grief that we have sinned and caused division between us and God. Everyone is allowed to accept the ashes—so bring a friend to our Ash Wednesday Masses and introduce them to this age-old practice!

Our entrance into the Holy Season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 26th. Masses will be celebrated in the church at 8am, 4pm, and 7:30pm.

Calling all children and lovers of pancakes!

On Sunday February 23rd at 10:30am there will be a Children’s Liturgy, as we prepare ourselves to enter into the holy season of Lent the following Wednesday, Ash Wednesday.

Following the Children’s Liturgy will be a “Fat Sunday” Pancake Breakfast for the entire parish, hosted by the Faith Formation Parents. Mark your calendars now!
STEWARDSHIP

Lost your charitable tax deduction because of tax law changes?

Not to worry—there are other ways to receive tax benefits from your charitable contributions to Santa Maria. We’ll be inspiring you with a few creative ways of giving in the next couple weeks.

Are you 70½ or older and have a Traditional IRA (Individual Retirement Account)? You’re obligated to take a required minimum distribution, or RMD, annually—even if you don’t want or need the income.

Because RMDs increase your taxable income, there’s a potential that this additional income will push you into a higher income tax bracket.

You can redirect your RMDs (and avoid higher tax rates!) by making Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from your IRAs to Santa Maria! You can make a direct transfer of up to $100,000 to the Church of Santa Maria annually without this amount being included in your adjusted gross income. QCDs can be a tax-efficient way to accomplish your giving to the Church of Santa Maria!

We reached our 2019 Bishop's Appeal goal—get ready for 2020!

Thank you to the 78 donors who made it possible for us to reach and surpass our Bishop's Appeal goal once again for 2019. This year, we were assigned a goal of $34,700, and are currently at 100.16%!

While parishes rely on the financial support of their parishioners through the weekly offertory collections, the Bishop's Appeal helps offset expenses for parishes and schools in need, pastoral ministries and services, clergy formation and retirement, and religious education and formation.

OUTREACH

Toiletries and work clothes needed

A Friendly Manor is a drop-in center for homeless women in Oakland managed by St. Mary’s Center. Santa Maria has been supporting A Friendly Manor since 1987 by collecting supplies or providing lunch for the 30 residents.

On an ongoing basis, they need women’s toiletries (e.g., deodorant, razors, feminine hygiene products), women’s underwear, adult diapers, socks, washcloths, hand towels, rain gear, and work wardrobe items.

If you can donate any of these items, please drop them off in the closet in the narthex on the shelf marked “A Friendly Manor,” and they will be delivered on a regular basis by members of the Social Justice Committee.

Seeking businesses to partner with Cristo Rey

The Cristo Rey De La Salle Corporate Work Study Program is an innovated staffing solution for Bay Area organizations large and small. Our students work at Fortune 500s, small businesses, and local nonprofits one day a week to fund their Catholic Lasallian college prep education.

Cristo Rey alumni nationwide attend (and graduate from) top universities, and many go on to successful careers across a range of fields, due in part to their work experience while in school.

We’d love for you to learn more about our school and join our mission of providing quality education, work experience, and social capital to youth from low income families in the East Bay!

John Coughlan, director of the Corporate Work Study Program, will be speaking at all the Masses on February 23 with more information.
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.
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUTH MINISTRY!