Going solar: caring for the environment and saving funds

On the parish’s move toward solar energy

Stewardship means practicing the responsible and fruitful use of all the resources God has shared with us—financial, natural, and otherwise. We’ve been researching how renewable energy could be a wise alternative source of energy at the parish not only for the benefit of lowered utility bills, but also to decrease our reliance on fossil fuels and move toward clean energy.

The plan is to enter into a 25-year “Power Purchase Agreement,” a great option for nonprofit organizations (since nonprofits are not directly eligible for tax-based commercial incentives), with SolarCraft. They have been developing, financing, installing, and maintaining quality solar projects since 1984, with clients including Sterling Vineyards, the Dominican Sisters of San Jose, and several parishes in the Diocese of Oakland.

To put it simply, SolarCraft will put up the money to install 171 solar panels on the southern roof slope of our school building, after which our annual energy usage will be approximately 97% solar and 3% utility. In months where our solar panels generate more energy than we can use, SolarCraft makes back a portion of their investment by selling that energy. Over the time of the contract, as the investors obtain the return on their investment, our utility bill will gradually decrease.

As more updates are available on this project, we’ll share them with you!
**Lenten Regulations**

Lent is a time of prayer and penance. Our Church has a few ways of practicing these things during Lent:

**Fasting**

Catholics aged 18-59 are bound to fast on both Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This means consuming at most one full meal that day, while taking other smaller quantities of food at the other customary mealtimes is permitted. Food and drink between meals (excepting water and medicine) is not permitted on fast days.

**Abstinence from Meat**

Catholics aged 14 and up are to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, all Fridays of Lent, and Good Friday. This means refraining from eating meat products, although eggs, milk, and fish and shellfish are permitted.

**Lenten Practices**

All the faithful are encouraged to receive Holy Communion, participate in penance services, take part in public and private exercises of piety, give generously to works of religion and charity, perform acts of kindness toward the sick, aged, and poor, and to pray more fervently. All of these practices will help you have a more fruitful and holy Lent!

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**Stations of the Cross**

Come and join us as we celebrate the Stations of the Cross on Wednesday evening March 25th. The evening begins at 6:30pm in the Parish Hall for dinner and then Stations will follow at 7pm in the Church.

This is a beautiful way to commemorate and walk with Jesus’ last steps before death as we journey toward Holy Week.

**Lenten Communal Reconciliation Liturgy**

On Thursday evening March 26th our parish will gather as family and celebrate God’s love for each of us with the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This liturgy will be held in the church with several priests assisting. The liturgy begins at 7:30pm!

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**Collection reporting updates**

We are changing the frequency and manner of reporting our Sunday collection income, because the weekly income reports are no longer giving a meaningful picture.

This is due to several factors: more people are using Faith Direct and making their contributions on a monthly basis, and others contribute monthly, bi-annually, or even annually to the Sunday plate. Our weekly reports are showing extreme swings in income because of these factors, such that they no longer give a useful picture of the state of the plate.

Going forward, we will try a monthly report that will hopefully help smooth out some of those swings to give everyone a more useful picture of our income.

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**LENT**

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**PARISH LIFE**

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**What can you do to stay healthy?**

As we face the annual cold and flu season, complicated by concerns over the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), let’s remember to understand and promote healthy practices while at church.

On our end, we have suspended the distribution of the Precious Blood at Mass. We also continue to provide hand sanitizer for all of our ministers and maintain...
clean, fresh holy water in our font.

For your part, please feel free to refrain from holding hands at the Our Father or shaking hands during the Sign of Peace if you fear infection. While it is still an option to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, we strongly encourage reception on the hand during this time. It is also a sign of consideration for others that if you are suffering from flu-like symptoms, you may remain at home, reading the appointed Sunday Scripture and offering your illness for a spiritual intention.

There are also the common-sense methods to help you stay healthy—if you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue (or, lacking a tissue, into your elbow); wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and warm water; avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; get vaccinated; and stay home if you are ill.

If the issue becomes more serious and we are advised by the authorities to take further actions, we will reassess the matter and keep you informed of any changes. Meanwhile, we pray for the health and recovery of those who are ill and not with us today.

Guide Dogs for the Blind

Come hear parishioner Maureen Balogh, who is the Puppy Raising Leader of San Ramon Guide Dogs for the Blind. We will meet in the Conference Room at 10:00am on Wednesday, March 18. Sign up on the poster in the narthex!

RCIA First Scrutiny

This weekend our parish will celebrate the First Scrutiny for those in our RCIA process who have been preparing for Initiation at the Great Easter Vigil liturgy on Saturday, April 11th. The Second Scrutiny will be celebrated on the following Sunday, and the Third Scrutiny the week after.

The Scrutinies are a very ancient form of prayer in our Catholic tradition. The Christian people would gather with those preparing for Baptism and join with them in prayer by the laying on of hands, and by asking God to protect and deliver them from evil.

While these “Scrutinies” are directed toward those preparing for initiation, they are also meant for us, the gathered community. We, too, need protection and deliverance from evil. We have journeyed with these seekers over many months, and now together, we journey prayerfully through Lent to die to an old way of life and to be resurrected anew this Easter.

Please continue to pray for our Elect, Adrienne Wong and Tim Reynolds, and candidate Tom Balogh. Please also take this week to reflect on the struggles and evils you face or perpetuate in your life and bring them to Mass next weekend and offer them as prayer.

Help Needed to Clean Church

Could you spare 15 minutes of your time to help polish and clean up the brass in the church? Contact Ana at 925-640-6008.
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 request to be sponsors/godparents and other ministries. Please register at www.santamariaorinda.com/registration.

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 Chavaria, Delores Codde, Grace Parent DeBoodt, Rich Delany, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Nora Enriquez, Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Noreen Gillham, Doris Hale, Florentino Ibabao, Brian Kelly, Mason Kelly, Aileen Kelly, Michael Kelly, Jim Kennedy, Jerry Kirk, Lawrence Knapp, Carol Koupus, Judy Lazarus, Jim Marchetti, Rose Mary McPhee, Robert Nick, Arsi Orihuella, Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Patrick Sheehy, Jean Wells, 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.

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!

As noted, we are transitioning to a monthly reporting of our plate amounts. Please see the article on p.2 of this Sunday’s bulletin for more details.

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 request to be sponsors/godparents and other ministries. Please register at www.santamariaorinda.com/registration.
Alpha lets me engage with others to explore my faith and beliefs in a thoughtful, non-judgmental format. It’s not about a right answer, it’s about taking the time to think in a supportive group.

~Pat Lashinsky

Sign me up

If you would like to take part in Alpha, please visit our website and let us know you’re coming:

www.santamariaorinda.com/try-alpha

We look forward to seeing you