The First Easter

*Sister Mary Margaret reflects on Christ with us*

On the first Easter morning, Mary Magdalene was weeping at the tomb of Jesus, and the disciples were frightened and staying within closed doors. They were possibly wondering: “Where was Jesus?”

We can certainly identify with the sentiments of sorrow and confusion of Mary Magdalene and Jesus’ disciples, and connect them to our reality today. For the first time (and hopefully the last time), churches around the world are not celebrating Easter with the public inside their walls. It is a tragic reality of these sad and scary days. The minds of many people may conjure up the same question as the early disciples: “Where are you, Jesus?”

Perhaps this is the crucial time that we put our faith on the front lines, testing our belief in the Risen Christ. Do we see Jesus in those afflicted with COVID-19? Do we see Jesus in the doctors, nurses, and researchers tending the patients? In those who volunteer to give out COVID-19 tests? Do we see Jesus in the dying and in their distraught loved ones? In those who contribute financial support to the cause? Do we see Jesus in those offering numerous prayers for an end to this unprecedented pandemic? Could this opportunity provide us with a deeper faith that Jesus is not absent, but rather is truly alive and close to us more than ever during this pandemic crisis?

Jesus spoke these words to Mary Magdalene and his disciples, and so does he speak them to us today: “Do not be afraid,” “Peace be with you,” and continues on page 2
you,“ and “I will be with you until the end of the world.”

Let’s take these comforting words of the Risen Jesus, and give warmth to those who are in need of our love, care, and prayers. May this be our Easter blessing to the world this year.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Are you in “Constant Contact” with us?

Are you receiving our parish emails? At least once a week, usually more as we shelter in place, our Pastoral Team members send out email messages including information about upcoming Masses online, reflections from Father George, and other announcements.

If you’re not receiving these emails, please call or email Mirna in the Parish Office: 925-254-2426 or mirnawong@smparish.org. Thank you!

How “in heaven’s name” can I watch Santa Maria’s Masses on my computer??

Have you heard that we’ve been offering Masses online, but can’t figure out how to find them or get them to work?

Here are two options for you:

1. **Visit the Parish Website**
   Go to www.santamariaorinda.com, and on the homepage there will be a link to that week’s Mass. Click and watch away!

2. **Search on YouTube**
   Go to www.youtube.com and search “Santa Maria Orinda.” There you will find all of our videos, and Megan’s YouTube account, which will be hosting our Holy Week Livestreamed Masses as well!

If you still can’t get it to work, please contact Mirna in the Parish Office. She can walk you through it. 925-254-2426 or mirnawong@smparish.org

**PARISH LIFE**

“Should we plan on First Communion?”

Unfortunately, we aren’t able to provide a concrete answer for this question, either.

We want to ensure both the physical and spiritual health of our young Catholics and their families, while providing appropriate mental and catechetical preparation as well. We’ll continue to keep in touch and keep everyone updated as the situation changes.

**FAITH FORMATION**

“Will we still celebrate Confirmation in May?”

The short answer is: we don’t know.

We will continue to follow the appropriate civil authorities’ instructions regarding sheltering in place and avoiding gatherings, and hope that the restrictions will be lifted before Pentecost on May 31 so we are able to celebrate Confirmation as scheduled.

Of course we’ll keep you updated as to whatever our course of action is!

In the meantime, Confirmation classes will be held on Zoom, and candidates are asked to attend our parish Sunday Masses online.

We’re open for prayer!

Although we’re unable to celebrate public Masses or provide hospitality in person in the Parish Office, our church remains open 9am-5pm every day. Feel free to stop by for a few moments of private prayer and to sit with the Blessed Sacrament. All we ask is that you continue to maintain a generous social distance if someone else
happens to be present when you are.

Do we need updating?

Please take a look at the Prayer Intentions list on page 3. Is there anyone missing you would like to add? Is there someone on there who has been healed or who has passed away? Help us keep this list updated for those who faithfully pray for our intentions each week!

Reaching out to the sick and homebound

While we’re unable to visit the sick and homebound at this time, Sister Magdalene and our Pastoral Care Ministers will be reaching out by phone to those who regularly receive visits.

If you know of someone we should be regularly checking in on with phone call Scripture and prayer, please email Sister Magdalene at sistermn@smparish.org or call 925-254-2426.

March 2020

Faith Direct: $19,739.90
Weekly Plate: Unavailable at time of publishing due to shelter in place orders

Second Collections:
Faith Formation: $200.00
Catholic Relief Services: $10,628.50