Finding the needle in the haystack (or the ridiculously thick grass)

On seeking, finding, and the extraordinarily obvious

Pictured: The triumphant moment of reuniting with my needle

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 19, 2020

You guys, I did it. I found my needle.

Of course, this also implies that I was doopy enough to drop my needle into the turf in the first place (who embroiders outside on the lawn? This girl!), but that's beside the point. For context, I was dog-sitting for the lead vocalist’s 16-year-old doggo Pixie during a live-streamed sunset Praise and Worship concert at my husband's parish, St. Bonaventure, and didn't realize the thread had fallen out of my needle when I grabbed my work after giving the needy Pixie a cookie.

Anyway, I spent most of "All the People Said Amen" with my nose inches from the grass, patting it and combing through its innumerable layers in absolute disbelief that grass in California could possibly be that thick and luscious in the middle of July. I was just muttering to myself that even if I walked over the area barefoot I STILL wouldn't find my needle when lo! a small silver sparkle caught my eye. I was in such disbelief I took a photo to commemorate the moment.

It was around the time where they were singing the line about the Kingdom of God and I started wondering why people think the KINGDOM is so hard to find. "Can't be that hard," I thought, "I just found a needle in the richest, deepest, thickest grass I've ever seen." It reminded me of a line in Father George's homily a few weeks ago about how Jesus speaks
to us so plainly that sometimes we wish he weren't so blunt about it. So many times he said we bring about the Kingdom with this, or worship God with that, and how it's compared to the other.

We don't need to crawl on our hands and knees with our nose an inch from the text to understand what we think God is whispering almost silently to us - we just need to sit with empty ears and hear what He's been saying (very) loud and (extremely) clear all along: love one another, and you'll find me. His Word is not a needle. It's as verdant and rich as the grass, and often just as obvious.

Megan Arteaga
Youth Minister

---

**Weekend Worship Opportunities**

**July 19, 2020**

**8:30am |** Mass in the Parking Lot; also Livestreamed (available all day)

**10:30am |** Mass in the Parking Lot

**Download and print the Worship Aid here**

*Turn on your car's Accessory Mode and tune in at 87.9 KGOD!*

Join us this Sunday in the Parking Lot at 8:30am or 10:30am for Mass! We are blessed to be able to celebrate Masses publicly with you again. **If you are unable to physically join us, we will continue to livestream the 8:30am Mass** for you to participate from home.

Click on the image to open or print this Sunday's new printer-friendly worship aid for your convenience.

---

**Thank you, Sister Magdalena!**

After 5 years of serving our parish as Bookkeeper, **Sister Magdalena Duong, LHC** is moving on as her community's needs change. While she admitted math was never her favorite, she always worked hard (often on her own time, after her office hours) to ensure our books were balanced, our benefits were taken care of, our budgets were reasonable, and our paychecks were sent on time. We hope she enjoys her new position as Administrative Assistant at Most Holy Trinity in San Jose! The Pastoral Team thanked her on her last day with us at a socially-distanced outdoor brunch on the St. Francis plaza outside the Parish Hall, pictured above.

Meanwhile, we're grateful to not lack for a bookkeeper - our
Administrative Assistant **Mirna Wong** has graciously agreed to step in with her QuickBooks savvy and add bookkeeping to her parish duties. **Megan Arteaga** will fill in as receptionist as needed, as well. Thank you for your patience during the transition!

---

**Need a jolt with your joe? Join us for Coffee Talks!**

If you need a little inspiration or a quick second to stop thinking about everyday life, join us for Coffee Talks!

Our Pastoral Team will be sharing brief, informal 2-3 minute videos each Tuesday and Friday for the month of July reflecting on and sharing whatever moves them. Check out **Megan on prayer**, **Tony and sowing**, and **Father George with St. Peter**!

*Have an idea for a future Coffee Talk? *Let us know!*

---

**Join us again and again and again!**

"It's for the church." That's why our gardening team is so dedicated every Tuesday to come out and clean up the church grounds. On July 14th, they hacked at dead wood, pulled up long-rooted weeds, dead-headed spent blossoms, and stuffed and stacked garbage bags. Thank you to **Franco Ajelo, John Cahill, Marita Platon, Walter Peyton, Mary Kay Breazeale, Colette White**, and **Susan Hamilton** for your good work!

Join us and help beautify Santa Maria: each Tuesday from now likely through August, you're welcome to join in beautifying our parish grounds between 8am and 11am. **Come for part or for all!**

Bring your own gloves, mask, and tools to pull weeds, trim shrubs, and do general garden work!

*To get involved, contact* **Janet Riley** or **Gail Gabriel**.

---

**Two more weeks to get those backpacks packed!**

Are you out buying school supplies already? Why not pick up a few more for St. Vincent de Paul's backpack drive, coordinated by Confirmation teen Ethan Berndt?

Please [click here for the backpack supplies](#) that are needed. Also, consider including a $25 grocery gift
Deliver your backpack donations to the church:
July 21 between 10am-noon
July 26 after the 10:30am Mass
Follow signage to the drop point!

Questions? Contact teen coordinator Ethan Berndt.

---

**How can I keep supporting Santa Maria?**

Thank you so much for thinking about us and continuing to support our parish during these trying times! We are greatly appreciative of any help you can provide.

You may drop your collection in the offertory baskets at Parking Lot Masses, mail a check to the Parish Office (40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda CA 94563), or make a one-time donation using Faith Direct, our eGiving service, to make your offering.

If you would like, you can also sign up for recurring giving through Faith Direct to continue to give to the Sunday plate even though you can't come to the church to drop it in the basket as usual. Again, we thank you for your planning and your generosity!

---

**Pastoral Team**

**Reverend George Mockel**
Pastor
gmockel@mparish.org

**Deacon Rey Encarnacion**
dcn.rey@mparish.org x310

**Deacon James Pearce**
dcnpearce@mparish.org x301

**Mirna Wong**
Administrative Assistant
mirnawong@mparish.org x301

**Tony Millette**
Liturgy and Music
tmillette@mparish.org

**Sister Mary Margaret Phan, LHC**
Faith Formation (Grades K-5)

---

**Prayer Intentions**

*For the Sick:*
Liduvina Acosta, Sonny Acosta, Mary Beth Alban, Joan Artmann, Shoaib Aryan, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Kathie Brady, Cara Bradbury, Miguel Briseno, Maria Carmen, Fred Chavarria, Jan Coe, Grace Parent DeBoot, Rich Delany, Mary Dodge, 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, Rose Mary McPhee, Robert Nick, Arsi Orihuela, Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Brian Riley, Patrick Sheehy, Jean Wells, Faye Young
Megan Arteaga
Youth Ministry (Grades 6-12), Communications, and CYO
megan@smparish.org x308

Sister Mary Magdalene Nguyen, LHC
Pastoral Care of the Sick
sistermn@smparish.org x309

Sister Magdalena Duong, LHC
Bookkeeper
sistermagdalena@smparish.org x305

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.

Mass Intentions
All Mass Intentions during Shelter in Place orders are either postponed or celebrated privately. Mirna is contacting all those who requested the currently scheduled intentions.

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