



Church of Santa Maria

40 Santa Maria Way | Orinda CA 94563 | 925-254-2426 | www.SantaMariaOrinda.com

"If God has a plan for us, what's the point of free will?"

Revelations by some shrubbery and spiders for the benefit of all humankind

Pictured: Some ducks being beautiful ducks by design, a river being a beautiful river without a choice, and some greenery being beautiful greenery solely according to God's will



29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 18, 2020

Yesterday I took a trail run to get some fresh air and enjoy the remarkably vibrant sky that seems to be the hallmark of October. I was simultaneously pondering ideas for a few videos for our new Ascent Confirmation program - specifically, my next assigned one on free will and how it relates to God's plan for us.

I remembered Father George mentioning in his homily the other week how free will is what distinguishes us from the rest of creation. I was watching the trees grow and realized how, no matter how many branches are torn off or hardships are faced in the dry season, they keep reaching for the sky. Same for the manzanitas and coyote bush - I'm sure they've been grazed upon, trampled on, and their earlier selves were certainly strewn upon rocky ground as seeds, but here they are, strong and beautiful.

That's when I had the lightbulb moment of the big difference between humans and the rest of creation. Those trees and shrubs and turkeys and critters keep doing what trees and shrubs and turkeys and critters do best not because they're striving to be the best selves they can be, but because that's what they were created for, and that's all they CAN do.

That spider isn't practicing patience waiting to catch a fly in its web - it was made to wait and can only wait. If there's a rock in those shrubs' path, they can't decide they're just not feeling it that day and stop growing. They grow around it, or over it, or through it, because they were made to grow and have no choice in the matter.

Humans, on the other hand, have a choice between being the best humans we were intended to be (i.e., living by God's plan for us), or settling for a mediocre version. When there is a rock in our path (literal or metaphorical), we can choose to bemoan the rock, talk trash to the rock, complain about the rock to our friends and families, blame the rock on others, become paralyzed by fear of more rocks in the future or by memories of old rocks in the past, or... we can grow around it, or over it, or through it, because we choose to.

And isn't the growth more remarkable, virtuous, and worthy of honor and reward because it was done by choice and not by compulsion? Unlike the spider, we choose to practice patience. Unlike the trees, we choose to grow. And in choosing to do those things, we freely step into God's plan for the best version of ourselves and build His kingdom here on earth.

*Megan Arteaga
Youth Ministry Coordinator*

Weekend Worship Opportunities

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time October 11, 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 with you.

If you are unable to physically join us, we will continue to livestream the 8:30am Mass for you to participate from home.

Remembering our deceased loved ones in November

The month of November begins with All Saints Day and All Souls Day - the Church makes it clear that we are invited, and should, celebrate and remember the holy souls who have gone before us!



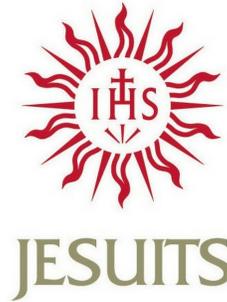
At Santa Maria you are invited to share in the celebration in many ways:

1. Attend the **All Saints Day Mass** (November 1 at 8:30am or 10:30am) and All Souls Day Mass (November 2 at 8:30am)
2. **Email us a picture of your deceased loved ones** for our Remembrance Video, which will be placed on our website in place of our normal parish Altarcito that we have in our church for the month of November
3. Consider how you could **display pictures of your deceased family and friends** at home in your entrance hall or family room
4. **Offer a Mass to remember and pray for the happy repose of**

their souls at anytime during the year by calling or stopping by the Parish Office during office hours (10-noon M-F) and asking for Mirna.

Welcome to our almost-Deacon Louie!

Louie Hotop, SJ, is joining us from the Jesuit School of Theology for parish ministry. He'll be ordained a Deacon next Saturday, October 24, coincidentally at Santa Maria during the Ordination Mass for the Jesuits.



Keep an eye out for a video interview of Louie coming out in next week's bulletin! Hear how he's interested in supporting Santa Maria, what brought him to our neck of the woods, and more.

Have any questions you think we should ask Louie? [Send them to Megan!](#) Your question may be featured in the interview!

Join us for our annual Outdoor Candlelight Rosary!

We're planning on offering our annual Outdoor Rosary by Candlelight for the Month of the Rosary on **Wednesday, October 28 at 7:30pm!**



Join us for this beautiful evening of prayer through our Blessed Mother outdoors, socially-distant, and with something new added this year: the Blessed Sacrament!

Bring your own Rosary; wear your own mask! Candles will be provided.

Welcome back to our students and youth!

This weekend are the first sessions of Confirmation, Monday brings the first Faith Formation classes, and Middle School Youth Group led the way with the outdoor kickoff two weeks ago (pictured) and their first Zoom meeting this past week!



If you haven't registered for K-12 formation programs, including First Eucharist preparation and High School Confirmation, [click here to register!](#)

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@smparish.org

Deacon Rey Encarnacion

dcn.rey@smparish.org x310

Deacon James Pearce

dcnpearce@smparish.org x301

Mirna Wong

Administrative Assistant and Bookkeeper

mirnawong@smparish.org x301

Tony Millette

Liturgy and Music

tmillette@smparish.org

Sister Mary Margaret Phan, LHC

Faith Formation (Grades K-5)

[srmphan@smparish.org](mailto:srmmphan@smparish.org) x306

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

Prayer Intentions

For the Sick:

Liduvina Acosta, Sonny Acosta, Mary Beth Alban, Joan Artmann, Shoab Aryan, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Kathie Brady, Cara Bradbury, Miguel Briseno, Maria Carmen, Fred Chavaria, Jan Coe, Grace Parent DeBoot, Rich Delany, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Nora Enriquez, Al Ferreira, Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Noreen Gillham, Jennifer Gray, 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 Orihuella, Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Brian Riley, Patrick Sheehy, Jean Wells, Faye Young

Would you like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list? Please ensure you have their permission, then contact Megan in the Parish Office at 925-254-2426 or at megan@smparish.org.

Mass Intentions

Most 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.

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