



Church of Santa Maria

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

Slot machines and salvation

The boring reaction of society

Pictured: A lady playing a slot machine hopes for a bonus round or free spins



16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 18, 2021

This week, I'm in Las Vegas. Actually, I'm technically writing this in Henderson, which is where my in-laws live, but Anthony and I did spend a few hours on the strip just to see what it was like in a COVID sort of world.

No surprise - it's much the same, just with fewer people. Same smells, same noises, same fluorescent faux sky ceilings, same thousand-degree, oven-blast street crossings.

And the same zombies sitting at the slot machines.

I don't understand how when you walk through the casinos, you can hear people winning, sometimes see their tally of credits or coins or whatever increasing on a giant lit screen, and there is absolutely no outward reaction that I can discern! Now, maybe there's a secret gambling code that I don't know (as someone who prefers to spend her "fun money" on plants and fabric rather than slot machines), and maybe this secret code includes not gloating about a win in front of others... but I somehow doubt it. I think it's more a sense of the inevitability of winning - put in enough quarters and you'll hit a jackpot eventually, right? That attitude rather takes the joy out of winning. It's not a surprise, and it's not something that feels like a bonus, but is instead something the winner feels rather entitled to after putting in so many coins.

Now here comes The Bulletin Article Question - do you ever recognize that same sort of attitude in your view of salvation?

Really, we hit the salvation jackpot here with Jesus taking on the guilt and punishment for our sins, but I think many times we sit around and almost think we've rather earned it ourselves. After all, we go to Mass, we give to the food pantry - we've put in our spiritual quarters, done our holy time. It's about time we got something back, right?

Holy Moley, what a sad, graceless, and uninspiring view toward salvation.

The truth is, we would never be able to “earn” salvation - that’s part of the human condition. We do the good we do out of love for the Lord, and as an expression of our gratitude and freedom to be who He created us to be, not to earn a place at anyone’s right or left hand. Salvation came as a gift freely given because God was tired of His children dying and being disconnected from Him. The Jesus Solution as a way to make a new and eternal covenant that wouldn’t result in our doom was so simple, so straightforward, and so very, very precious that if we really understood it, we would probably be falling on our knees every moment in gratitude for its grace and example of God’s never ending ocean of love for us.

So whether you’re gaming on vacation or you’re considering the eventual fate of your eternal soul, take a moment and breathe some gratitude. It’s not only healthier for you, but it also makes life a little more joyful and fun.

*Megan Arteaga
Youth Ministry Coordinator*

Weekend Worship Opportunities

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, 4:00-4:30pm

Church Plaza

Reconciliation also available by appointment

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday, July 11, 2021

8:30am | Mass in the Church; also [Livestreamed](#) (available all day)

10:30am | Mass in the Parking Lot

[Click here to open or print the Worship Aid](#)

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

Join us this Sunday in the Church at 8:30am or in the Parking Lot at 10:30am for Mass! We are blessed to be able to celebrate with you.

If you join us for the 8:30am Indoor Mass, please note: No more social distancing is required, so all pews will be available to the congregation. Masks are only required for those who have not yet been fully vaccinated - with the exception of the priest and Ministers of Communion, who will continue to wear a mask during the distribution of Communion as required by the Diocese, regardless of their vaccination status.

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

Food for Thought

Pope Francis and the Life Issues

Pope Francis's tendency to use colorful expressions and abrasive adjectives in commenting on ideas, habits, and practices of which he disapproves have puzzled Catholics for over eight years now. Is this how popes talk? From my own study of papal history, I can easily believe that Pope Pius XI had a few choice (even brutal) words to say on occasion. But his verbal smackdowns were always delivered behind closed doors, while many of Pope Francis's most memorably deprecatory locutions have been quite... [Click here to read more!](#)



Service and Outreach

Time to get school supplies for formerly homeless students!

Kickstart the upcoming school year for formerly homeless and low-income students by donating a backpack and school supplies before July 24!



Hope Solutions is working with the Sydney Paige Foundation to deliver 400 backpacks to their students in Contra Costa County. They are at about 50% of their goal!

Over the years, Social Justice has supported Hope Solutions, and many of our parishioners have volunteered with them, including when they were formerly known as Contra Costa Interfaith Housing!

[Help these students get ready for the school by clicking here](#) - your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Do you have any calla lily bulbs?

If anyone might have some calla lily bulbs in their garden that they would like to donate to the parish, we would be very appreciative!

We're doing some planting in a semi-shaded area behind the Rectory, and calla lilies would be a nice addition - particularly since our resident deer don't particularly care for them!



You can drop them off at the Parish Office any weekday between 10am and noon, or bring them to the church on the weekend when you come to Mass. We would be most grateful!

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Parish Life

Program registration is open!

Attention, families with kids in grades K-12 - registration is open!



We have **Monday Faith Formation** classes for students in grades K-5, which also includes preparation for Reconciliation and Eucharist in 1st and 2nd grade!

There's the ever-popular **Youth Group** for 6th-8th grade Middle Schoolers on Wednesday nights, too!

High Schoolers have the **Confirmation Program** and **Faith In Action Team leadership**, and some of them have been asking for a High School Youth Group - is this the year? You all decide if you want to make it happen and how!

If you have questions on these programs before registration opens, please visit [the Faith Formation page of our website](#) for K-5th grade, or the [MSYG](#) or [Teen Confirmation](#) pages for 6th-12th grade.

June Collection Report

Month of June

Goal: \$42,000

Actual: \$41,361.00

Deficit: \$639.00

Past Six Months

Goal: \$252,000.00

Actual: \$248,167.88

Deficit: \$3,832.12



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!



Mass Intentions

Sunday, July 18

8:30am: Peter Locke (D)

10:30am: Parishioners of Santa Maria, Living and Deceased

Bulletin Sponsors

Thank you to the following bulletin sponsors:

Monday, July 19

8:30am: Brian Cummings (D)

Wednesday, July 21

8:30am: Father Jerrold Kennedy (D)

Friday, July 23

8:30am: Sue Godfrey (D)

Mass Intentions are a beautiful way of praying for your intentions or for the souls of our deceased loved ones. To request a Mass Intention, please contact Mirna in the Parish Office [by email](mailto:mirna@santamariaorinda.com) or at 925-254-2426



Pastoral Team

Reverend George Mockel

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Sister Mary Magdalene Nguyen, LHC

Pastoral Care of the Sick
mmnguyen@santamariaorinda.com x309

Prayer Intentions

For the Sick:

Sonny Acosta, Mary Beth Alban, Joan Artmann, Shoab Aryan, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Kathie Brady, Miguel Briseno, Maria Carmen, Fred Chavaria, Grace Parent DeBoot, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Nora Enriquez, Alfred Ferreira, Anthony Fisher, Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Noreen Gillham, Jennifer Gray, Judy Gust, Florentino Ibabao, Brian Kelly, Mason Kelly, Aileen Kelly, Michael Kelly, Jim Kennedy, Jerry Kirk, Lawrence Knapp, Carol Koupus, Patricia McGuire, Rose Mary McPhee, Robert Nick, Arsi Orihuella, Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Brian Riley, Mary Sheehy, Patrick Sheehy, Ustrula Simmons, Scott Treter, Steve Turner, 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.](mailto:marteaga@santamariaorinda.com)

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Maria**

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