

# FALL NEWSLETTER 2024 DIDACHE



This weekend marks my second anniversary of Installation as Pastor, the same weekend we celebrated the feast of the Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels and asked them to watch over our parish community. Being your pastor has been a great blessing to me and I am looking forward to implementing the many through the parish survey suggested improvements of both myself and our parish in order to serve you better. I hope you all had a wonderful summer and are enjoying the first days of Fall.

As fall arrived and we returned to a more normal rhythm, we hosted a ministry fair. We had some new people sign up for a variety of tasks and welcomed many familiar faces back. I have added a summary that our Parish Council put together at the end of this letter of the comments that many of you took time to write and the actions we are taking to serve you better.

Two weeks ago, we commissioned our catechist **Michele Higa, Susan Franks, Jennifer Bodner, Alondra Klemek and Derwin Borling** who will be

leading our children, teens and adults into a deeper understanding of God's plan for us all. Last weekend, we began our religious education program with the first- and second-year Holy Communion Students. Next weekend we welcome our teens on October 6<sup>th</sup> to the first Confirmation Class. It was exciting to see the enthusiasm of both students and teachers. Let us remember to keep all of them in our prayers.

In the past several months, our parish has had multiple expensive maintenance and repair issues. Thanks to all of you for your generosity to our maintenance fund. Here are a few of the projects:

**Rectory Fencing:** The fence behind the rectory was just replaced, and the old decayed fence removed as it was unlikely to survive another winter. We also removed chain link fencing which was essentially useless. This work improves the security and aesthetics of the rectory and eliminates the need for emergency work this winter. This was about a \$9,413 project.

**Water Main Leak Repairs:** You may have noticed the excavator in the parking lot last weekend. Two large water leaks developed recently, and both were difficult to locate and very expensive to repair. In fact, we had to have the leak detection company and plumber come back twice to ultimately fix both. As part of this repair, we also installed a pressure regulator and shut-off valve at our water meter to reduce these kinds of leaks moving forward. This was costly at just over \$11,000.

**Hall Acoustic Improvements:** Parishioners enjoy their fellowship in the hall for our events like Lenten Dinners. But many have complained that the hall is an 'echo chamber' and with a large crowd it is near impossible to hear even the person next to you. We heard you (pun intended) and by September 30 will have installed a professionally designed acoustic improvement system with more than 30 sound absorption panels. This was an expensive project costing about \$18,000, partly offset by contributions of \$7,000 towards its completion. Finally, this is the summary that the members of our Pastoral Council have put together for all of you:

## Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (OLMC) Survey Summary: Compiled by the OLMC Pastoral Council September 2024

**Introduction:** A survey to all parishioners was distributed last April. The response was awesome! 100+ parishioners and/or their family members replied. We presented a first report giving answers to immediate matters like mass time changes, mural, etc. The Parish Council met three times over the summer to tally the results and process, especially the comments, that many of you took the time to write and we highly appreciated them.

**Actions:** Here are the actions to be taken as a result of your input:

**Availability and Office hours:** Many parishioners expressed their concern about the availability and accessibility of Fr. Jhonnatan; as well as the office being unstaffed during posted office hours. As a result, the office hours will be changed. The OLMC office will now be staffed by either Fr. Jhonnatan, Gail or a volunteer every Wednesday through Friday from 1-3 pm. In addition, Father Jhonnatan and/or Gail will be in the office between the 9 am and 11am masses on Sunday. **Communications:** Some parishioners are concerned about their inability to contact Fr. Jhonnatan by phone or email.

The OLMC phone (831-659-2224) will have a voicemail recording that facilitates the following:

- 1) Callers must leave a message with sufficient, clearly stated details, so someone can prioritize and return the call with appropriate information.
- 2) There will be an option to leave private detailed messages for Father Jhonnatan.
- 3) Mass times, and especially Church Holydays will be updated as needed.
- 4) If someone is gravely ill or in danger of death, there is an option to reach Fr. Jhonnatan for immediate assistance.

**Bulletin:** Multiple parishioners suggested changes to our bulletin, especially to include more local parish news such as: a) welcoming new parishioners, b) announcements such as family weddings, anniversaries, births and graduations, c) upcoming funerals, d) reports and photos of recent events, and e) periodic news from each ministry. Parishioners are welcome to submit items for consideration to the OLMC email address as we design a new bulletin format.

**Music Ministry:** The survey revealed that this ministry ranked the lowest in terms of satisfaction, but the highest in terms of wanting a high-quality music ministry. We thank Trudy Dowd for stepping in for over a year to recruit and schedule pianists and cantors and select music and Pat Ryan for his wonderful guitar accompaniment. We are actively looking for a part-time music director, we have a job description that we are actively circulating within the Monterey diocese as well as local music venues (MPC/CSUMB) and we welcome suggestions you might have to assist Fr. Jhonnatan in the search.

**Quality of Relationships:** Numerous comments strongly suggested we renew efforts to enhance relationships among our OLMC family. Parishioners want to become better acquainted with Fr. Jhonnatan and each other. Perhaps this can be accomplished by holding more parish events, with all of us making a commitment to attend as possible. Another solution may be for Fr. Jhonnatan and more parishioners to actively participate in our ministries as we strive to do God's work to Serve others. We have a small core group who do most of the work and receive too little acknowledgement of their many hours and talents. It only takes a few hours here and there to make a difference. Many of these ministries do not even take place every week. We recently held a Ministry Fair to increase our pool of volunteers, and a few stepped forward, but we need additional assistance. It is our hope that gathering at other times besides at Mass, we can deepen the quality of our relationships with Fr. Jhonnatan and each other. Also Fr. Jhonnatan is open for invites for a coffee or tea, lunch or dinners, or dog walks at the Community Park, etc.

These changes are going to effective on Wed. Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> 2024. We plan to revisit these topics in 6 months to review our progress. In addition, you shared an abundance of good ideas to improve parish life and connect with the larger Carmel Valley Community. We deeply appreciate your efforts to make OLMC a welcoming and thriving Catholic community. Thank you

