

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISH
The Catholic Community in Rancho Peñasquitos
13541 Stoney Creek Road, San Diego, California 92129-2050



January 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Having once again just celebrated the Christmas season and the wonder of the Incarnation, the wonder of the gift of "God is with Us," it is hard for us to recognize and appreciate how difficult it was for the Jewish people to accept that Yahweh had finally been faithful to His promise, that the Messiah had come. Most had given up hope. But the appearance of the three wise men helped reinforce that God's plan was unfolding, although slower than everyone had hoped and in a manner unlike anyone anticipated. But it was happening....according to God's will and plan!

Since I have arrived at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, my focus and goal has been to build the new sanctuary (church) for the parish because that was the first question everyone asked me when I first arrived here: "Are you going to build the Church?" So everything I have done since then has been done with that end goal in mind. We developed a strategic plan for the parish that has been unfolding, slowly and unglamorous. Since that is how God's plan works for most of our lives, so it is for God's plan for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. But the plan is becoming clearer and I would like to share where we are in the plan.

The first part of the plan was **PHASE I** where with the approval of the Finance Council, for safety, health, and future use needs, we used Building Fund monies to develop present facilities (Buildings A, B, C, and the Hall). As I stated in a previous letter, much more of these same monies would have been used to buy new trailers in Phase I if we had relocated to the new site. The refurbishing cost is a lot less money! With these facilities refurbished, they no longer present health and safety concerns for us or our children, and they also prepare us for the 12- 17 % increase in parish population that will occur after the completion of our new sanctuary. That also means a greater demand on all of our facilities. **There will be no money after the construction of the new church for any major undertakings or maintenance related issues.** So our facilities have to be refurbished to meet this increased demand that must last us for at least 7-10 years after the new church is built. This is necessary because the parish will have to borrow to complete the building of the church. The parish has to plan ahead! With the completion of building A, Phase I will come to an end with the issuance of our Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Once the permit is issued, we can finally turn our attention to Phase II: the detailed design of our new church.

Last week you heard an announcement about a Rancho Peñasquitos planning board meeting to review our application for our CUP to the City of San Diego. Our application has been working its way through the city for a year so there has been little to report to the parish, except the CUP process is ongoing. We are finally approaching the end of this process, which is painfully slow and invisible, as opposed to **PHASE II**, which will be more visible and easier to get excited about. Phase II will focus on detailed design architecture, site improvement, and the necessary steps required to obtain a building permit for our new church. As the CUP gets approved, we will move towards estimating the cost of the church. With the general cost of the church determined, we will commence the process of selecting the general contractor and finalizing the contract with the architectural firm. This will all happen within the next eight months.

While waiting for Phase II to begin and the CUP permitting process to run its painfully slow course, I addressed another piece of the church building puzzle. Most people in the parish forget that there are two sources of money available to me (the parish). One source is the Building Fund that can only be used for the major purposes I laid

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out above. But I cannot use those monies for general parish operating expenses (payroll, office expenses, electric bill, etc.). The second source is the General Operating fund. Those monies come primarily from the Sunday collection. It is the Sunday collection that is the financial lifeblood of the parish. Without the financial commitment and the dedication of the faithful on Sundays, the parish could not function. So when I started talking about sacrificial giving, the parish was truly having trouble in meeting its **operating expenses**, because I could never access the building fund to pay parish bills even if we were bankrupt. But I can and I have, with the approval of the Finance Council, authorized construction to make old worn out buildings safer, more solid and healthier, from a source where we do have funds with an eye towards the future.

The response from the parish regarding Sacrificial Giving was significant. The response finally got us closer to a position where weekly collections come closer to meeting expenses, but we still fall short covering all expenses. In addition, we still need to save money to put in the bank to hold us over for the very difficult summer months when giving goes down significantly! Apart from increasing our weekly giving to a level where we are in a much better position....not to where we want to be but at least to a level with which we can live, we achieved a milestone important for the construction of the church. As part of the puzzle, I knew we needed a certain level of steady weekly income to qualify our Parish for the bridge loan from the diocese. By the parishioners' responding to the Holy Spirit's call to Sacrificial Giving, we as a parish have hit a threshold that allows us to borrow enough from the diocese, if needed, to construct the new church.

Eventually, when I know the final cost of the building of the new church, the parish will need to have another Capital Campaign to meet the final cost of the project. Hopefully I should have some hard numbers in eight to twelve weeks or thereabouts. The good news is that labor costs are down in this economy. Other parishes that have begun their building projects in our deanery have realized significant savings by going forward with their building plans and their parishioners have responded, even in this difficult economic environment. Not to proceed would put our plans on hold for who knows how many years and see the possibility of our building fund slowly eaten away by inflation. I do not see this as a realistic or viable option when the parish has faced so many disappointments already.

So this is our plan as it relates to building of the new church. Dn. Bob has been constantly working with the architect over the last year in the frustrating process of getting our CUP permit approved. With all the downsizing that has happened in that department, I guess we should be grateful it is happening at all. But essential parts of the plan are moving forward, even if they are seemingly invisible and unexciting. I will speak more of all this to the parish once the CUP is approved and where we go from here.

Thank you for your financial commitment to Our Lady of Mt Carmel. May the Lord continue to shower His love and grace upon you and your family now and throughout the coming New Year!

Your Servant in Christ,

Rev. Patrick J. Murphy
Pastor