



NOTRE DAME OF MT. CARMEL CHURCH

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Parish Update: February 25, 2025

Parish Pastoral Council Update

By PPC Representatives

Following our Strategic Planning Workshop on January 18th, the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) has been diligently consolidating and prioritizing the valuable feedback received. The Council has also been refining the 250 goals that workshop attendees shared. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the attendees' engagement and fellowship during the workshop!



Workshop Survey Fast Facts

- **Communication Channels:** Almost 55% of survey respondents indicated they heard about the workshop through Flocknote—a testament to the effectiveness of our Communications Team!
- **Personal Outreach:** Nearly 25% of participants shared they were invited by a friend or someone from church, highlighting the importance of personal connections and outreach.
- **Positive Feedback:** We were delighted to receive 21 five-star ratings for the workshop, which indicated a high satisfaction level among participants.
- **Readiness to Act:**
 - About 55% of respondents felt they had a role in implementing the parish's strategic plan.
 - Around 45% indicated a willingness to lead efforts to further identified goals.
 - Nearly 75% expressed a desire to participate in initiatives to achieve these goals.
- **Overall Impression:** Respondents described the workshop as “energizing,” “excellent,” “inspirational,” organized,” and “positive.”
- **Participant Sentiment:** Attendees left the workshop feeling “empowered” and “impressed.” They appreciated the “opportunity” to express themselves openly and honestly in a “safe space.”

- **PPC Facilitators:** Respondents recognized the PPC facilitators as “experts” and “stewards” of the process. They went on to say facilitators were “encouraging,” “receptive,” respectful,” “prepared,” and “supportive.”

NEXT STEPS

Building upon the feedback received, we look forward to the next phase of this project. The next stage will involve inviting ministry leads, ministry teams, and parishioners to join us in translating the refined goals into action.

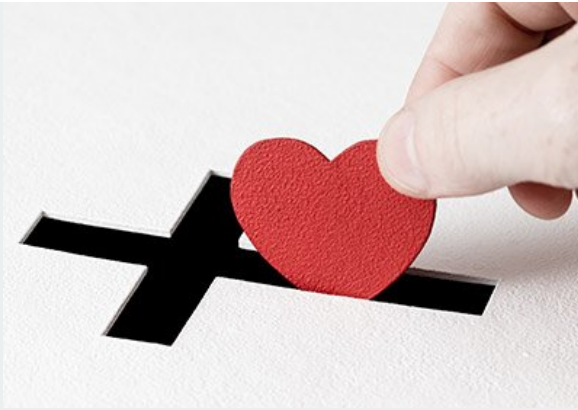
We ask that you pray for our parish community, our pastor, and the Pastoral Council as we work to carry out Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel’s mission.

We will update you on our progress and inform you of future developments. Thank you for your support and commitment to our shared mission!

Generosity: Not Asked but Called

Acts of kindness have the power to touch hearts and lift spirits. While visible and measurable actions are essential to our mission and our "bottom line," quiet, gentle, and behind-the-scenes acts can offer equally significant or even more inspiring impact.

Last week, our Finance Ministry shared our mid-year financial results. The report was not what we had hoped for, yet something inspiring happened the day following its publication. A parishioner—a faithful and gentle servant—stopped by our office to speak to Karen, our Bookkeeper. This person was seeking to increase their offertory giving and make a special donation for the weekends missed at the parish.



What made this gesture so worthy of note was that it came purely from a heart moved by the true spirit of community and stewardship—there was no formal appeal; it was just an individual responding to faith, an apparent need, and a firm commitment to our parish.

It is easy to be discouraged by financial challenges or to focus on what we lack, but this parishioner -- as many others have -- reminded us of the abundant goodness present in our parish family. A single act of kindness can spark hope, inspire others, and remind us that even in difficult times, there is always grace at work. May we all be inspired by this example and look for our opportunities to give, not because we are asked, but because we are called.

“Share Your Blessing”

The worst of nature and the best of Humanity.”

By Fr. Vidal

Typhoon Yolanda struck my province in the Philippines on Nov. 8, 2013. It was one of the strongest storms in history, leaving behind devastation, loss, and suffering. Seeing the situation of my province and other provinces and realizing the people's needs, I started the ***“Share Your Blessing Program.”***



Since then, every January, I have visited the Philippines, particularly my province, to bring help like clothing, toys, school supplies, a dental kit, and food for their daily needs. Many of my friends and parishioners extended their help, realizing that their contributions make a big difference, and recipients find renewed strength in knowing they are not forgotten.



Typhoons and other calamities have shown us the worst of nature but also the best of humanity. They remind us that while storms can destroy, they cannot take away our ability to love, serve, and hope.



This past Feb. 5, 2025, I went home, and together with my generous friends, we



conducted another “*Share Your Blessing Program.*” We gathered around 200 people, fed them, played with them, and gave them backpacks, toys, and bags of goods, like rice, noodles, canned goods, and coffee.





As a priest, my role is not just to preach but to lead by example. “Share Your Blessing” is an extension of my own commitment to serving Christ in the poor and marginalized. It is my way of responding to God’s call, ensuring that His love is not just spoken but through concrete action.

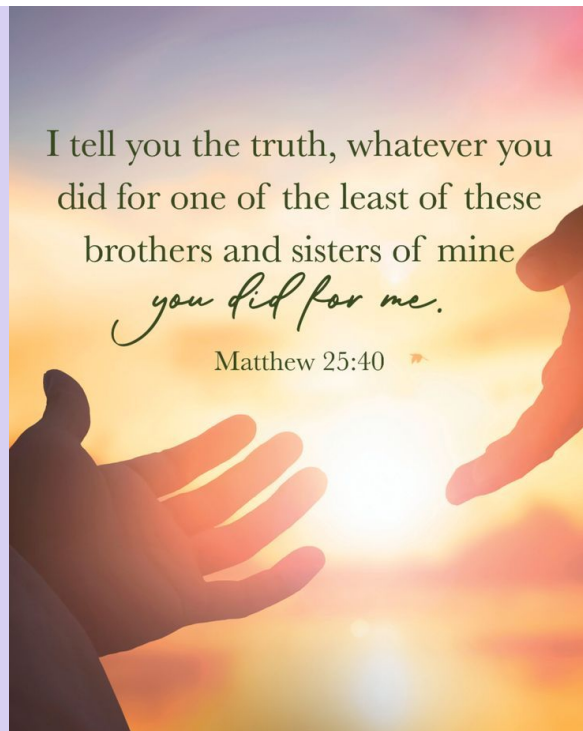
The work is not done. Every day, there are new challenges, new people in need, and new opportunities to be a blessing to others.



I am looking forward to next year’s Share Your Blessing program. May we continue to be blessings to others, knowing that in giving, we receive far more than we could imagine.

"This mission is not mine alone; it belongs to everyone who believes that we are all called to be instruments of God's love, mercy, and compassion. As long as there are people willing to share, there will always be hope. My hope is that "Share Your Blessing" continues to grow – not just a program, but as a movement of love and generosity."

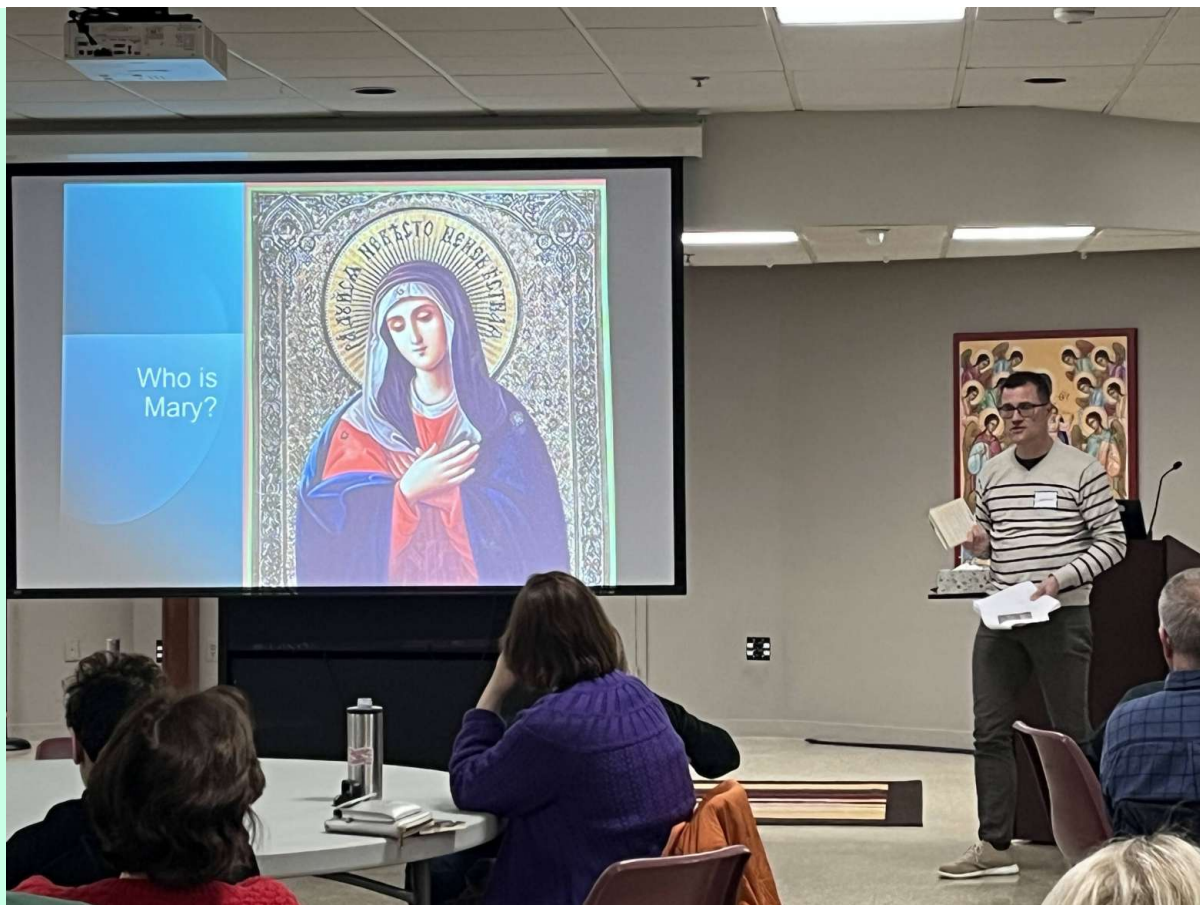
Fr. Vidal



One Step Closer Through Questions and Answers!

By Laura Balogh

On Tuesday, February 18, 2025, **Charles Malaniak** of St. Cecilia's in Rockaway gave a presentation entitled "***Jesus & the Jewish Roots of Mary***," based on the book by Brant Pitre. About thirty participants attended the session, and we were pleased to host some guests from St. Cecelia parish. What a great witness to parish collaboration!



Charles's talk explored important questions, such as, "Are Catholic teachings of Mary biblical or simply based on the traditions of men?" "Should she be called the "Mother of God" or just the "Mother of Jesus"?" "Did Mary really remain a virgin her whole life?" "And why does all this all matter, anyway?" Charles explored the evidence and Old Testament teachings to answer these questions, and the answers are compelling! The Bible teaches us that Mary is the new Eve, the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven and Earth, and the new Ark of the Covenant.

"I had a great time with the interactive ND and St. Cecilia brothers and sisters. Because so little is documented about Mary, this was an excellent opportunity to share Brant Pitre's research with friends who are as enthusiastic as me. As always, my favorite part was the discussion after my presentation. Great questions from very smart friends.—Charles Malaniak, Speaker

"I left with a greater appreciation of the Blessed Mother and her unique role in Salvation History. Charles' presentation was informative and thought-provoking, which was evident from the discussion that followed. His enthusiasm for the topic and the extensive analysis he provided captured the goal of this monthly series - to dig deeper into our rich Catholic faith."—Matt Cooney, past speaker, and attendee

Having a firm grounding in these and other teachings is important to all Catholics since we're often called upon to explain key tenets of our faith to others. **One Step Closer** is a monthly ongoing series that breaks open the richness of our Catholic faith, bringing disciples one step closer to Jesus. Our next session will be on Tuesday, March 18, with the topic **Wasn't Jesus Just a Really Cool Guy?**, which will explore the historical evidence for Jesus.

ONE STEP CLOSER

WASN'T JESUS JUST A REALLY COOL GUY?

Have you ever wondered just how reliable the Gospels are? Is it all just a hoax?

Has it ever bothered you that there is barely any mention of Jesus outside of Scripture?

Did Jesus actually claim to be God?

Come to this fascinating and informative presentation where we will dive into the historical evidence for this man from Nazareth, and answer for ourselves the question: "But who do you say that I am?"



WHEN
Tuesday, Mar 18, 7-8:30 PM

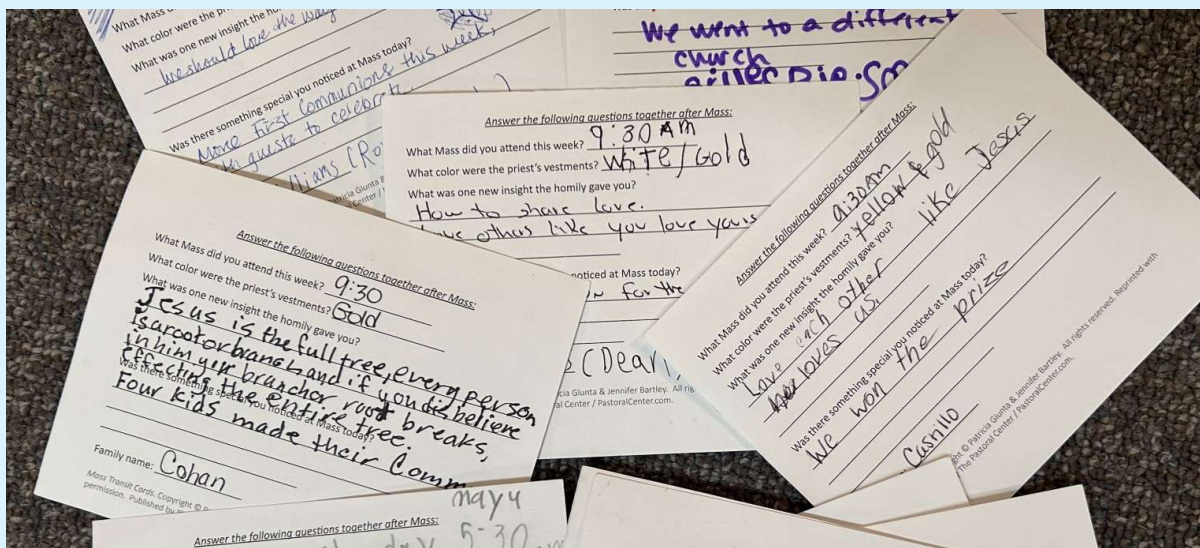
WHERE
Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel
75 Ridgedale Avenue, Cedar Knolls, NJ
The Parish Hall (downstairs)



ONE STEP CLOSER

is an ongoing series breaking open the richness of our beautiful Catholic faith, bringing disciples one step closer to Christ.

Mass Transit Cards



What was the one insight the homily gave you?

"Luke's version of the Beatitudes include the "blessed" and "woe" statements - and Father called them the Beatitudes for the poor."

"I was distracted."

"Be Jesus' hands, lips, heart."

"Fisher of men!"

Was there something you noticed at Mass today?

"The theme seemed very close to the conversations we've been having as a family - trying to avoid dependence on materialism and worldly things."

"The moment I was shot, I forgave you." - Pope John Paul II

"Fr. Jim said mass."

"Those who are last on earth will be first in heaven."

"Jesus chose his apostles even though they were sinners. He also wants to work through us."

"Jesus mostly did not answer questions directly. Instead, he answered questions with other questions, challenging people to think."

"You don't always have to get a thank you for doing something good."

"We should do nice things for people just because we want to, not for a "thank you" or to get something for it."

"Jesus wants us to love our enemies and those that are not nice to us."

"Jesus is with us at hard times."

"To love God, you need to love others."

"Learn how to forgive people for all of their wrongdoings. Do not expect them to always reciprocate. Forgive!"

"The Joyful Noise choir sang."

"Deacon Joe led the Communion Service. He did a great job! No priest!"

"My mom went to a retreat."

"Snow caused problems. Started mass without the priest. Deacon Joe did awesome."

"The words for the Nicene Creed were on the screen. I asked Mom why Father and Son both have capital letters. It's because they mean God and Jesus."

"Deacon Joe did the homily. I gave out the songbooks today with my friend Chloe."

"God talks to me in my head."

"The Lord is kind & merciful. We liked the song's message."

"The priest from Totowa came in. Father was away in his country."

"Full mass."

"There was a different funny priest. We like bringing the gifts up!"

**This Week's Mass
& Lamp Intentions**

**Parishioner
Announcements**

Memories that share our story...

7:30 am Mass



Family Mass





