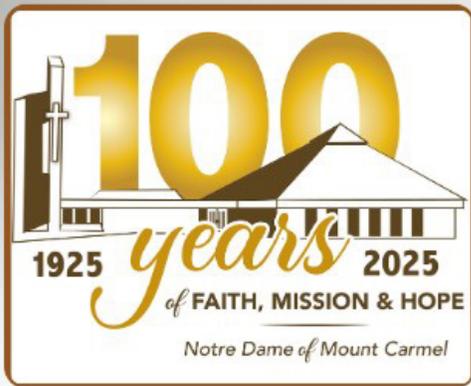


Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church

PARISH UPDATE

www.ndcarmel.com



**NOTRE DAME
OF MT. CARMEL CHURCH**

75 Ridgedale Avenue
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927
973-538-1358

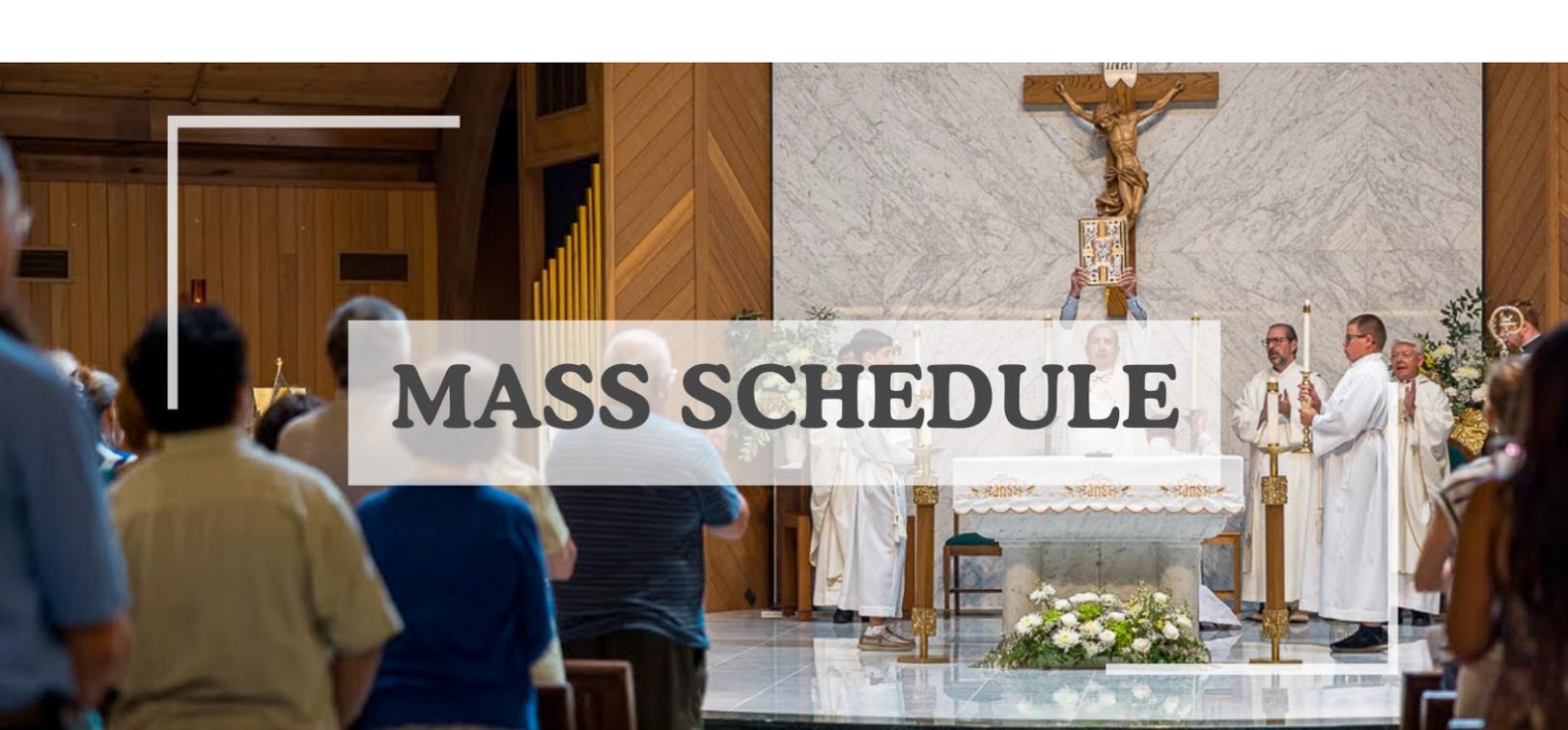
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Parish Update: January 21, 2025

A graphic with a dark silhouette of a cross on a hill against a background of a sunset or sunrise sky with orange and yellow clouds. The text 'The Lamb of God' is centered in white.

The Lamb of God

who takes away
the sin of the world



MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday Mass Schedule

Saturday: 5 pm Vigil (*livestreamed on YouTube*)
Sunday: 7:30 am
9:30 am (Family Mass)
11:30 am
6:00 pm (Mass with Contemporary Worship)

Daily Mass Schedule

Mon - Sat: 12:00 pm (*followed by praying of the Rosary*)
Mon-Fri: 7:30 am LENT ONLY and through Wednesday of Holy Week.

Upcoming Holidays (Parish Office Closed)

- Monday, Jan. 19, Martin Luther King's Birthday
- Monday, Feb. 16, President's Day

Confession

Saturday: 12:45 pm to 1:30 pm
(*Except Holy Saturday and when Christmas Eve or Christmas Day falls on a Saturday*)
By Appointment with the Pastor (*call the parish office at 973-538-1358*)

Adoration

Thursday: 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm in the Chapel
Friday: 8:00 am - 3:00 pm in the Chapel

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75 Ridgedale Ave
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927
973-538-1358
www.ndcarmel.com
Facebook: @ndcarmel
Instagram: @ndcedarknolls
YouTube: @NotreDameofMtCarmel

Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Staff



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Deacon Eric Kispert
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Louis Castano - Director of Contemporary Worship
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Volunteer Main Office Support *volunteer@ndcarmel.com / x100*



Patty Gant



Agnes Loughlin



Mary Malone



Sallyann Augello
Database Administrator
registration@ndcarmel.com

A Message from our Parish Pastoral Council

With grateful hearts, and at the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Hope and the midway point of our Parish Centennial year, the Parish Pastoral Council would like to provide you with an update on our activities.

One year ago, on January 18, 2025, nearly 50 ministry volunteers gathered for a fruitful session of goal-setting that helped build the foundation for our parish's Strategic Plan.



Participants considered the six strategic pillars of our parish as well as the priorities associated with each pillar, and in a series of facilitated sessions, crafted goals for those pillars. Our pillars are Evangelization, Stewardship, Discipleship, Ministry, Worship, Community and Fellowship.



In the weeks and months following the workshop, the Council met regularly and appointed designated sub-teams to meet more frequently to organize the input from the workshop. The Holy Spirit was at work among us as we identified commonalities among the goals, combined goals wherever possible, and prioritized them according to the expressed needs of the parish community. We prayed together before and after each meeting, asking the Lord to bless our efforts, and we observed a series of three Eucharistic Adoration hours offered for the work of the Council.

Within the coming weeks, the Parish Strategic Plan, approved by our Pastor, Fr. Vidal, will be published to the parish community. The timing of the plan's completion coincides beautifully with our recent Called and Gifted workshop and the upcoming February 28 **Leadership Summit**, where current and future ministry leaders will gather for fellowship and to "look ahead" toward a clear path of discipleship for our beloved parish.

Our activities over the past year, the development of the parish Strategic Plan, and the upcoming summit, are affirmations of our parish mission which we strive to keep front and center: *Formed by the Word, fed at the Table, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we invite, welcome and guide each other into a relationship with Christ, to go out and make missionary disciples.*

We give thanks to God for the many blessings that He has gifted to our beloved parish of Notre Dame of Mount Carmel: our pastor, our parish staff, our ministries, and our wonderful parishioners.

With prayers and gratitude, on behalf of the Parish Pastoral Council, Dan and Jen

**Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel
Parish Pastoral Council**

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
|  <i>Fr. Vidal Gonzales (Pastor)*</i> |  <i>Dan Balogh (Chair)</i> |  <i>Jen Qvotrup (Vice-Chair)</i> |  <i>Karen Mascolo Hagan (Secretary)</i> |
|  <i>Deacon Eric Kispert* erickispert@aol.com</i> |  <i>Diane Byrne*</i> |  <i>Maria Cascio*</i> |  <i>Christa Cottone</i> |
|  <i>Greg Ellmer</i> |  <i>Patrick (Pat) Madden</i> |  <i>Bob Flynn**</i> | |

Staff Members
Member to Finance Council



Leadership Summit: It's Time!

In the life of our parish, the Lord has continually called us to gather as leaders—listening, discerning, and supporting the present and future of our parish community. For many years, these gatherings, previously known as Ministry Chair Meetings, brought together ministry leaders to focus primarily on procedural communication and coordination. With the beginning of our parish renewal in 2016, that approach was prayerfully reimagined with leadership gatherings becoming more intentional and relational, shifting from procedural meetings to gatherings designed to **celebrate, inspire, and equip** leaders. The invitation was expanded to include

not only ministry leaders but also core team members and those in line for leadership succession.



While various circumstances have limited our ability to host these gatherings as regularly as we would hope, the call to come together has never diminished. With gratitude for the past and hope for what lies ahead, our parish leadership is excited to host our next **Leadership Summit**—a moment to gather once again, especially in this, our Centennial year, renew our hearts for mission, and look forward together as the Lord continues to guide our parish.

THE LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH

2026 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

A CLEAR PATH



WHEN:

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 28, 2026
8:30 – 11:45 AM
at the Parish Hall

WHO:

Ministry leaders,
core teams,
ministry members,
and anyone who,
even if not currently serving
in a ministry,
has a heart for
our parish, its mission,
and its future!

Join us for breakfast and fellowship, prayer and reflection,
compelling content, personal witness, and small group discussion.
We will **CELEBRATE** the gifts of leadership and service, and be **INSPIRED**
and **EQUIPPED** to impact others as disciples on mission!

REGISTER AT WWW.NDCARMEL.COM

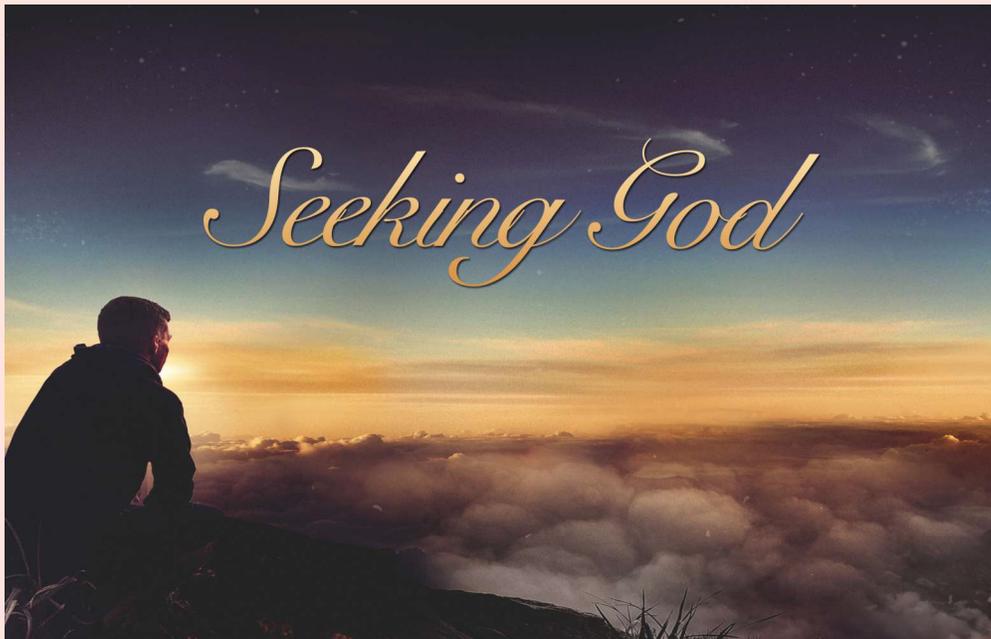
If you are a ministry leader, part of a ministry core team, ministry member, or a parishioner who, even if not currently involved in ministry, has a heart for our mission and the future of our parish, please join us! Click above to register today!

This Leadership Summit is hosted by representatives of our Parish Leadership Team and Parish Pastoral Council and aligns with the Strategic Plan for Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church.

Alpha: Let the Seeking Begin

"Many of you ask, quietly or out loud, 'How do I seek God?' Especially today, when life is noisy, fast, and full of pressure, God can seem distant or silent. But the truth is God is already seeking you, even before you begin to seek Him.

"To seek God does not mean escaping the world or becoming perfect. It means learning to pay attention. Let (yourself) seek God in your questions. Your doubts, struggles, and restlessness are not signs of weak faith. They are often the place where God begins His work. When you ask: 'Who am I?' 'Why am I suffering?' 'What is my purpose?' you are already standing on holy ground. Do not be afraid of these questions. Bring them honestly to God.



"God is there. You do not need to wait until you are 'ready.' God meets you as you are, not as you should be. Seeking God is not a straight road. It is a journey, sometimes joyful, sometimes painful, but always meaningful. Walk step by step. Trust that even when you feel lost, God is walking with you. Do not be afraid to seek. Do not be afraid to hope. Do not be afraid to love. God is closer than you imagine." Fr. Jackson Duong, OFM.

Our Small Group Alpha experience is a meaningful opportunity for you or anyone to seek the Lord in a safe and non-judgmental space. You will be invited to ask honest questions, such as, "Who is Jesus?" *Why does faith matter? How does God work in my life?*—in an atmosphere of respect and hospitality. For those new to faith, Alpha is an open door to Christianity without pressure or expectations. For those already practicing their faith, it's an opportunity to renew foundations, deepen understanding, and encounter the Holy Spirit in a fresh way.

Alpha is about relationships: sharing fellowship, building community, and discovering that faith is not meant to be lived alone.

**FOR THE CURIOUS
FOR THE DOUBTFUL
FOR THE WONDERING
FOR THE INTRIGUED**



Your seat



is *saved.*

Come, join us on this seeking journey. And if you know someone who is disconnected from the faith, has questions about life and faith, or is seeking "more to life than this," please extend an invitation. Don't let fear of a "No, thanks!" deter you from asking. Their "yes" or "no" is not up to you, but to the Holy Spirit and the Lord's perfect timing. Be an instrument of His Grace. Visit our website or click below for details and to register.



Explore life, faith, and meaning in a safe and non-judgmental space over snacks and refreshments!

**Begins Wednesday,
February 25th at 7:00 pm**

<https://www.ndcarmel.com> 🔍



Called & Gifted: The Journey Continues

By Debby Kispert

As you may recall, the parish hosted a *Called & Gifted Workshop* on Saturday, November 8, 2025. We had approximately 75 individuals participate from Notre Dame and several surrounding areas. The workshop was intended to help participants begin exploring their God-given charisms. A charism is a special way that God's provision and love reach our neighbor and the world through us, for purposes of His Kingdom.



Prior to this workshop, each participant took a ***Spiritual Gifts Inventory***, which provided general insight into each person's top Charisms. These gifts from the Holy Spirit, granted at Baptism, enable us as Christians to achieve extraordinary outcomes beyond our natural talents. Ultimately, they support the mission of our parish and the Church in building missionary disciples.

Those participants interested in continuing this journey of charism exploration had the opportunity to connect with a facilitator from The St. Catherine of Siena Institute for a ***Gifts Interview Session*** to further explore their top charisms and select one for further discernment.

The next step of this process is for participants to consider journeying in a ***Called & Gifted Small Group***, which involves creating a discernment plan and going out to experiment with their selected charism over a 6-8 week period. The group participants serve as a community of prayer and a source of support and accompaniment throughout the process.

Eighteen brave souls in three small groups are beginning their small-group journey this month, meeting on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays (respectively). They will gather for four sessions held every other week

What is discernment?

Discernment is a process and is an intentional way of discovering how God is leading you to be the person you were meant to be.

through the beginning of March. The time between sessions is meant for prayer, experimentation, and discernment.

While the groups are being facilitated by Debby Kispert, Cathy Piccoli, and Cristina Folan, they are also equal participants in the group, discerning their own charism.

During their initial session, each participant shares which charism they chose, what experiment they plan to do, and receives feedback from the group. Moving forward, they will remain attentive to the signs of their charism and, based on discernment and feedback, may make adjustments to their experiments.

Discernment of a charism relies on three indicators: ***inner experience*** – the feeling of an unusual sense of peace, energy, and joy when performing an activity associated with the charism; ***effectiveness*** – the actions produce unusually effective results that build up the Church and draw others to God, beyond their natural abilities; and ***affirmation*** – other people notice and affirm the gift, expressing gratitude or seeking the person out for that specific kind of support.

Why is Called & Gifted Discernment so important to our parish? The more of us who know what our key charisms are and seek ways to exercise them, the more our parish and the Church will become what is truly meant to be: a **living, Spirit-led community of missionary disciples**, not simply an organization maintained by volunteers.

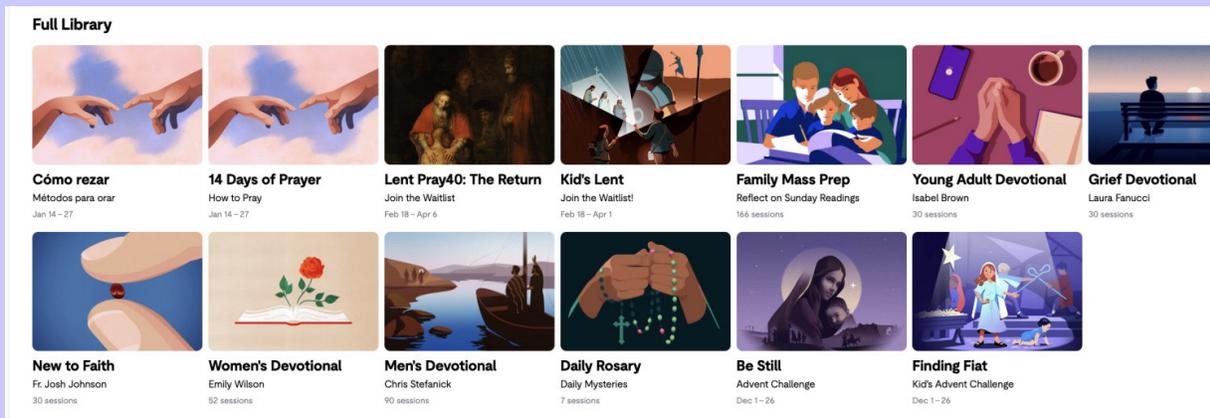
How can you support these individuals on their journey of charism discernment? Please keep them all in your prayers. We all know how powerful this can be for everyone, the group, and the success of their experiments as they continue to minister to others, bringing them closer to Christ.

If you wish to learn more about the Spiritual Gifts Inventory and the process, please reach out to Debby Kispert at dkispertmsrd@aol.com or Cristina Folan at commsupport@ndcarmel.c.

Hallow Partnership: Upcoming Special Event

Our partnership with **Hallow** has been a powerful gift to our parish community, opening new ways to grow in prayer and deepen our relationship with the Lord. Thus far, **162 parishioners have joined our parish page on Hallow**, participating either through a paid subscription or at no cost through this partnership.

Thus far, we have offered two challenges, the most recent being **"How to Pray: 14 Days of Prayer."** Additional content available at no cost to participants through the partnership includes **Men's, Women's, and Young Adult Devotionals, New to Faith, and Daily Rosary, among others.**



(A paid subscription at a discounted rate due to our partnership offers full access to Hallow content.)

In a special way, this partnership has fostered **connection and intercession**. Participants have shared reflections on their experiences in prayer, lifted up special intentions, and faithfully prayed for one another. Through Hallow, our parish continues to grow not only in prayer, but in communion—supporting one another as we seek to draw closer to Christ through prayer.

As we journey toward Lent, we will have the opportunity to host a "special event" in partnership with Hallow on **Sunday, February 8th**. Deacon John Davis will lead a half-hour session of "Why We Pray: Encounter, Transformation & Mission." We've timed the event in such a way that folks who attend the 9:30 am Mass or 11:30 am Mass can easily extend their stay or come earlier to participate. Of course, any member of the community is welcome to join, regardless of which Mass they are planning to attend.



WHY WE PRAY: Encounter, Transformation & Mission!

Grab a cup of coffee in the Gathering Space and join us in the Upper Room as we reflect on why we pray, what truly happens when we gather in prayer, and how prayer draws us into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and to a deeper transformation—of hearts, families, and entire parish communities.

UNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH

10:45 - 11:15 AM

OUR UPPER ROOM

TOGETHER WE WILL:

- Reflect on the presence of Jesus in our parish community
- Hear a personal testimony of how prayer shapes daily life and vocation
- Pray together using content on Hallow
- Discover what is possible through a parish partnership rooted in prayer
- Be invited into a shared commitment through the Pray40 Challenge



This ½ hour session will be facilitated by **Deacon John Davis** on behalf of Hallow. Deacon John will also speak briefly at our Sunday Masses and will be available after Mass for assistance with the app or just to chat!

We hope you will join us!

Brought to you by our partnership with Hallow App!



This gathering is a beautiful opportunity to prepare our hearts for Lent, deepen our understanding of prayer, and continue growing together as a parish rooted in encounter with Christ.

For more details and/or to join our Hallow partnership, visit our website [HERE](#).

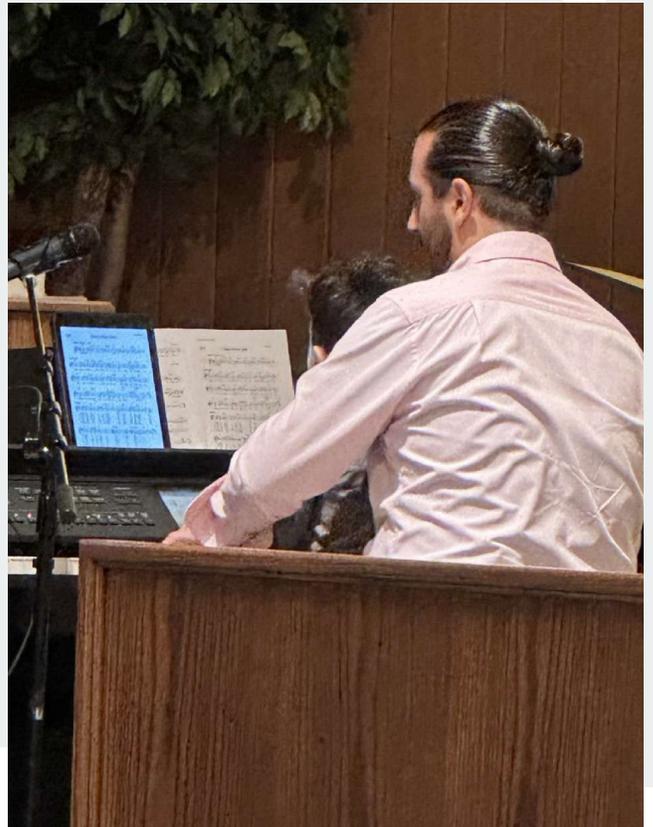
This Week's Lamp & Mass Intentions

Parishioner Announcements

Memories that share our story...

9:30 Family Mass







6 PM Contemporary Worship



A Final Thought...



Marcel LeJeune

Nov 8 · 

You can love the Church without loving Jesus.
You can love devotions and liturgy without loving Jesus.

You can love doctrine without loving Jesus.

You can love an apostolate, parish, program, or community without loving Jesus.

You can love an experience or event without loving Jesus

But loving Jesus is the only one that matters in the end.

