

**Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church**

# **PARISH UPDATE**

[www.ndcarmel.com](http://www.ndcarmel.com)



## **NOTRE DAME OF MT. CARMEL CHURCH**

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

[www.ndcarmel.com](http://www.ndcarmel.com)

**Parish Update: January 6, 2025**





# 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)

- Tuesday, Jan. 20, 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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[www.ndcarmel.com](http://www.ndcarmel.com)

Facebook: @ndcarmel

Instagram: @ndcedarknolls

YouTube: @NotreDameofMtCarmel



# *Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Staff*



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**Frank Figur**  
Facilities Support

**Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Church**  
75 Ridgedale Avenue  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927  
973-538-1358  
feedback@ndcarmel.com



## **Volunteer Main Office Support** volunteer@ndcarmel.com / x100



**Patty Gant**



**Agnes Loughlin**



**Mary Malone**



**Sallyann Augello**  
Database Administrator  
registration@ndcarmel.com

## Epiphany: Encounter Changes Everything!



*"The Magi did not simply admire the child and remain where they were. Scripture tells us they **returned home by another way**. Encountering Christ always*

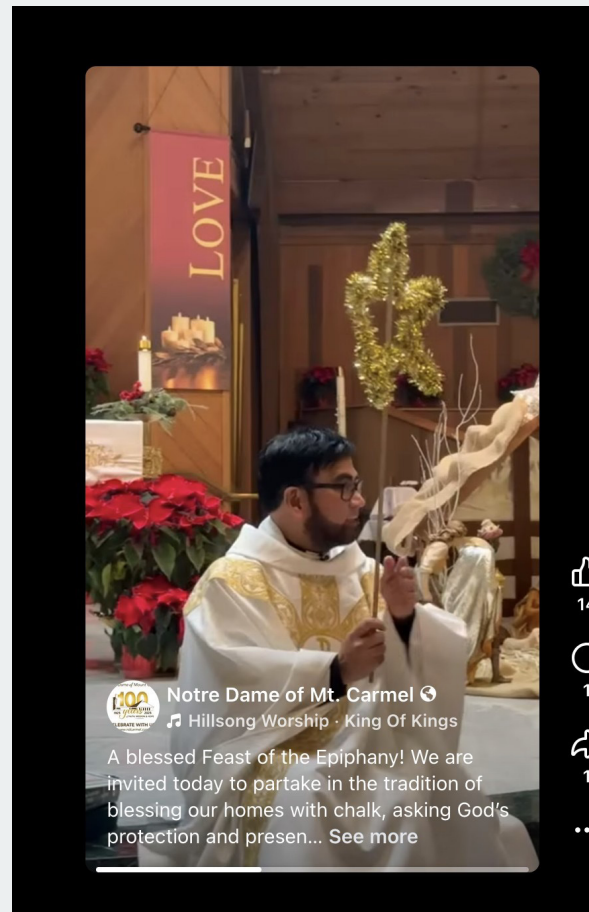
- *Go forth to welcome the stranger.*
- *Go forth to witness through love, not argument.*
- *Go forth to serve with humility, generosity, and courage.*

*In a world often divided by fear, noise, and uncertainty, the Church is called to be **a living epiphany**—a visible sign that God is still at work, still drawing people to Himself through compassion, mercy, and truth."*





*Click below to view our reel •\**



## Hallow App Partnership: Looking Ahead!

On December 1st, as part of our partnership with the Hallow App, we launched the first of five prayer challenges: **"Be Still."** This first challenge invited participants to find peace amid the busyness of the holiday season by prioritizing **presence over pressure**, helping establish prayer as a consistent and life-giving routine. The challenge engaged 150 members of our Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel parish presence on Hallow.

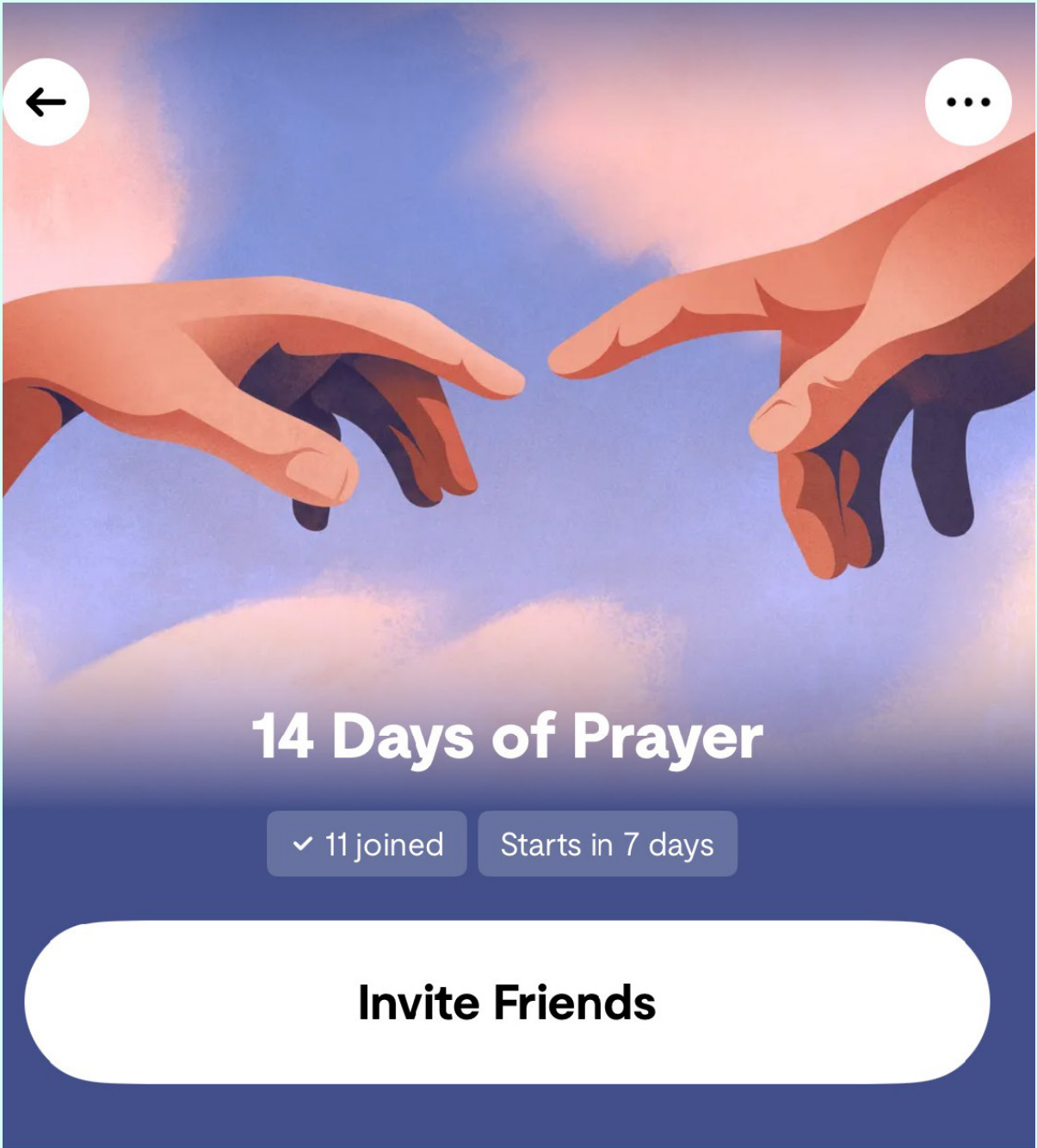
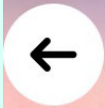
Besides participating in the Advent Prayer Challenge, several members sought prayer support for their special intentions and also explored other areas of content available on the app, either through our partnership or through their paid subscriptions. In all, close to 25,000 sessions of prayer were completed!

**So what's next??**

**Our next Prayer Challenge on Hallow will be  
14 Days of Prayer, beginning on Wednesday,  
January 14!**







# 14 Days of Prayer

✓ 11 joined

Starts in 7 days

**Invite Friends**

Hosted By



**Notre Dame of  
Mt. Carmel**

Featuring



**Jonathan  
Roumie**

Join Fr. Mike Schmitz, Bishop Barron, Sr. Miriam, Jonathan Roumie, Mark Wahlberg, and other world-class spiritual guides as together we experience the transformative power of prayer. Over the course of fourteen sessions our guests



Sample sessions on this challenge will include Imaginative Prayer, The Rosary, Lectio Divina, The Examen, Sacred Music, Surrender Novena and more! Join us on Hallow and explore these various forms of prayer as you strengthen your prayer life and your journey with our Lord. **Click HERE to find out more or email [commsupport@ndcarmel.c](mailto:commsupport@ndcarmel.c) to coordinate assistance!**

## Preparing Hearts for Reconciliation

By Diane Byrne, Family Faith Coordinator

This past Saturday, children preparing for their First Holy Communion and their parents attended a Reconciliation retreat. The goal of the retreat was for parents and children to spend time together, surrounded by other families, to experience God's love.





Since the parents have been doing most of the faith formation with their children at home, this retreat allowed them to come and be led in special experiences with their children along other parents and children on the journey.

Through skits, discussion, activities, and prayer, the children and parents learned that God loves us and wants us to be with him. Although sin weighs us down, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God's immense love takes it away from us.



As these families continue their journey toward First Communion, this retreat served as a gentle reminder that God's mercy is always near—inviting both children and parents to return to Him with open hearts and trust in His unfailing love.

# **A Pilgrimage to Greece and Turkey**

## **In the Footsteps of St. Paul: October 4 - 14, 2026**

**By Fr. Vidal**



*“Join me on an 11-day pilgrimage to Greece and Turkey with a two-day Greek island cruise as we follow in the footsteps of St. Paul. We’ll walk where he preached, prayed, and proclaimed the Gospel. This sacred journey will deepen your faith, bring Scripture to life, and offer a profound encounter with the early Church. Along the way, we’ll celebrate daily Mass, reflect together as a community, and take in the beauty of God’s creation. This pilgrimage is an invitation not only to explore the history of the early Church, but also to renew our own commitment to Christ. I hope you’ll come with me on this unforgettable spiritual adventure!” Fr. Vidal*



**Nativity Pilgrimage**  
Faith Meets Adventure

OCTOBER 4-14, 2026

DISCOVER THE BIBLICAL HISTORY OF  
**GREECE AND TURKEY**

11-Day Pilgrimage with  
2-Day Greek Island Cruise!

**SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**  
**FR. VIDAL GONZALES**  
NOTRE DAME OF MT. CARMEL

**TO SIGN UP, CONTACT:**  
Tanya D'Souza — 862-209-9037 / [tancat@gmail.com](mailto:tancat@gmail.com)  
Fr. Vidal Gonzales — [frjvgonzales@gmail.com](mailto:frjvgonzales@gmail.com)

[nativitypilgrimage.com/trip-5714](http://nativitypilgrimage.com/trip-5714)

Highlights include:

- Istanbul
- Ancient Ephesus and the House of the Virgin Mary (Acts 19)
- Athens
- Corinth
- A two-night, all-inclusive cruise to Patmos, Crete, and Santorini in an all-inclusive package.

**CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS!**

*If you have questions and/or are interested in making this spiritual pilgrimage, please contact Tanya D'Souza at [tancat@gmail.com](mailto:tancat@gmail.com) or 862-209-9037.*

## **Guatemala Outreach & Our Sponsored Student: Update and Words of Gratitude**

Back in 2017, as part of our Guatemala Outreach Ministry, our parish embarked on the sponsorship of Axel Danilo Vasquez at the From Houses to Homes Kemna'oj School. Eight years later, Axel has remained in school, and thanks to that wonderful and nurturing educational environment, Axel has continued to grow and overcome challenges. We recently received Axel's Year-End Report Card.

*As another school year comes to a close, we at Escuela Kenma'oj are deeply grateful for your continued support and the kindness you've shown our students throughout 2025. Enclosed, you'll find the year-end report for your sponsored student. You'll also receive a personal card from your student in the mail soon.*

## YEAR-END UPDATE 2025



**Axel Danilo Vasquez Chavez**



*Escuela Kemna'oj*

<b>Grade/Grado:</b>	7th. Grade	<b>GPA/Promedio:</b>	60
<b>Favorite Subjects/</b> Materias Favoritas (comentario del maestro):	Physical Education: He is highly engaged in physical exercise and excels at soccer and other sports. Visual Arts: He possesses great artistic talent, particularly enjoying drawing and painting, and performs excellently with teacher support.		
<b>Area of challenge/</b> Materias que le cuestan y debe mejorar (comentario del maestro):	Mathematics: He initially struggles with logical reasoning. However, with the consistent support of his teachers, he is demonstrating the ability to grasp and understand concepts. Communication and Language Arts: He faces difficulty with grammar rules and application.		
<b>Grade Next Year/</b> Proximo Grado:	8th Grade		



### Contact Us

From Houses to Homes, PO Box 85, Mt. Tabor, NJ 07878  
Calle del Hermano Pedro #9 Antigua, Guatemala  
Project Director, Oscar Mejia – oscarfhth@gmail.com  
Sponsorship Coordinator, Carmen Dardon – secretariafhth@gmail.com

*Thanks to your generosity, each student will also receive a special Christmas gift from their sponsor. We truly appreciate all you do and look forward to another year of learning and growth together in 2026.*

*With warm thanks,  
Carmen Dardon, Student Sponsorship Coordinator  
From Houses to Homes Guatemala*

**There are others!**



Several other parishioners who have participated in the Guatemala Outreach Ministry have also embraced sponsoring other students at the Kemna 'oj school. Below, we share Barbara Matthews' story of sponsoring her student and "goddaughter," Miriam.

*"While sitting in church, I heard what felt less like announcements and more like a calling — especially the invitation to serve on a mission trip to Guatemala. Longing to grow closer to Jesus, I listened to that call and took my first trip in 2016. Though nervous, I quickly discovered how deeply transformative the experience would be. Building a home in just five days alongside families who lived with so little yet radiated joy changed my perspective forever. Handing over the keys at the end of the week, surrounded by smiles and tears, revealed the true beauty of serving others.*

*I returned in 2017 and continued building homes, while also learning about a school supported by the From Houses to Homes organization. The idea of sponsoring a child stayed with me, and in 2018, I became a sponsor to Miriam (Aracely Oron).*



*Despite the language barrier, we formed a deep bond, and she lovingly adopted me as her “Godmother.” Visiting her again in 2019 affirmed how meaningful this connection had become and how clearly the Holy Spirit was guiding my path.*

*When COVID halted travel in 2020, Miriam and I stayed connected through social media, sharing life’s milestones from afar. This past August 2025, I returned to Guatemala once more. Although an earthquake closed the school and altered our plans for the annual visit to the school, God provided another way. Miriam traveled to meet me at the hotel in Antigua, along with her partner and two young daughters. Our reunion—filled with joy, gratitude, and tears—was a beautiful reminder that love knows no boundaries.*



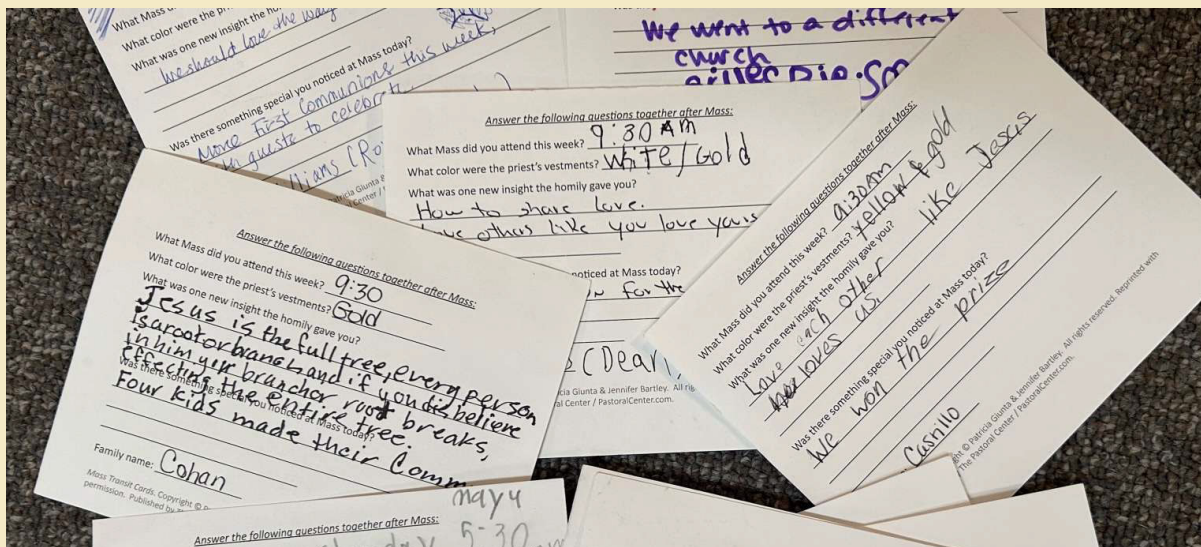


*Miriam has grown into a strong, joyful woman, and our relationship remains a blessing in my life. Through every step, I am grateful for God's call and the continued grace of being part of this ministry, trusting that He will continue to guide and bless this journey.*





## Mass Transit Conversations



**What was the one insight the homily gave you?**

"The 3 wise men followed the star to Bethlehem."

"BIBLE = Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth."

**Was there something special you noticed at Mass today?**

"Father Vidal used OnStar map."

"More singers than usual."

"The Gloria had a lot of OOOOOOOO's."

*"God is like a GPS recalculating if we miss a turn."*

*"To show your love for Jesus and honor him in your daily life and everytime we come to church by praying and the sign of the cross."*

*"Jesus came to save us."*

*"The three wise men did not have a map to get to Jesus. They followed a star."*

*"When Father Vidal said the joke - today is Christmas Eve; yesterday was Christmas Adam."*

*"Reading the Bible will tell us more about Jesus."*

*"Jesus is king. Be kind and thankful."*

*"The Bible is the word of God and it is our guide to life."*

*"He talked about the star leading the king to Bethlehem."*

*"The bible is like our star."*

*"We don't have gifts for the Lord Jesus, but we can still give him love."*

*"The Angels sang at God's creation. God is the magic ingredient in life."*

*"We talked about how Mary was feeling before she had Jesus."*

*"The animals in the nativity all have meanings ... Ox - carries burdens of the world, sheep - symbolizes the sacrifice Jesus made for us."*

*"New Year resolutions and Pope John."*

*"You get out of faith what you give. Believe in the Lord."*

*"Always show Jesus respect and love."*

*"Fire alarm."*

*"There are no longer any Advent candles."*

*"My sons were chosen to have the chalk blessed to give out to the church community for us all to bless our homes."*

*"There is still poinsettias."*

*"There were a lot of people. My cousins came to mass to see me sing."*

*"Our friends, Lucas and Logan, gave out the music pamphlets."*

*"We loved when they carried Baby Jesus in. We loved all the Christmas music."*

*"There was a big sparkly star."*

*"The red wreaths and flowers still in the church."*

*"There was the children's choir. Friends came with us. I also saw someone wear a Giants jersey."*

*"New nativity scene."*

*"I saw a friend at mass."*

*"My cousins are in the choir."*

*"The little boy in red did a good job reading from the Book of Isaiah. Ann did a nice reading."*

*"The Nativity has baby Jesus in it."*

*"New priest."*

*"They did a special prayer for the people that passed this year."*

*"There were a lot of kids excited for Christmas."*

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

**Parishioner  
Announcements**



The Jubilee Year of Hope concluded today, January 6, 2026, with Pope Leo closing the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica.

Aleteia.org

THE  
**HOLY DOORS ARE CLOSED**  
THE JUBILEE YEAR IS OVER



THE NEXT  
**JUBILEE:**  
**2033**

2000<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF JESUS'S DEATH  
AND RESURRECTION