



CARMEL MISSION FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

A Letter From Our Chairman

May 26, 2023

Dear Friends and Donors to the Carmel Mission Foundation,

The Pine Cone's recent article, "Lawsuit accuses Carmel Mission group of fraud, wrongdoing", is a lawsuit whose purpose is to force the Carmel Mission Foundation (CMF) to turn over its funds to the diocese/parish. If we were to do that, we will have abdicated our fiduciary responsibility to our donors and the public for the renovation and preservation of the Carmel Mission Basilica. As our attorney stated last week, "...the lawsuit was filed in bad faith and that the diocese, through its lawyer, 'recently told the CMF that it would stop its accusations and cease badgering the CMF for financial information if it would just hand all its remaining funds over to the diocese.'"

As current Chair of the Carmel Mission Foundation, I would like to provide some background information on the purpose of CMF and respond to this frivolous lawsuit which we are facing. The genesis for the CMF was Father John Griffin. In the May 16, 2010, and May 23, 2010, bulletin, Father John recognized the deteriorating nature of the Basilica. He wrote the following to the parishioners in the [May 16, 2010 bulletin](#):

"...It was this information that prompted me to say to our stewardship group that we needed a way to attract donations from people outside our parish family; people that have a love and concern for the historic site but do not want to give money into the custody of the Catholic Church. We further needed an additional vehicle for our own people who are concerned about giving large sums in light of the church's recent difficulties...The foundation stands as an independent funding source alongside the parish...The proper parish authority (me) directs the projects and requests the funding".

In the May 23, 2010 Bulletin, Father John Griffin wrote:

“...When the foundation received its final OK from the federal government, it ceased to have any tie to the parish and was then standing on its own.”

The Carmel Mission Foundation was established to restore and preserve the historic buildings, grounds, and artifacts throughout the Carmel Mission, founded in 1771. The Foundation is an internal revenue code section 501(c)3 Corporation, a public charity independent from any religious organizations. The Carmel Mission is a U.S. National Historic Landmark, a California State Landmark, and is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. Since 2008, the Foundation has provided over \$14 million to support the [restoration and preservation](#) needs throughout the Carmel Mission property.

Over the past decade, we have restored, seismic retrofitted the renowned Basilica, the rejuvenation of the Quadrangle Courtyard (Central Courtyard), the restoration of nine mission bells in the two bell towers, various artifact conservations and museum preservations, the [recent restoration](#) of the century old Downie Museum adobe and Basilica Forecourt Garden, and the creation of the Serra Memorial Circle to commemorate our donors' efforts.

As Father John recognized, it was most important for the Foundation to be completely independent and not connected to the church, other than to cooperate with them in the restoration efforts, as the Diocese were owners of the structures. CMF enjoyed an excellent relationship with Father John and together much was accomplished. Our problems began with the arrival of Fr. Paul and continue to this day.

Please refer to our website after June 1 for additional information regarding our reply to this misguided lawsuit.

Richard Denier
Chairman, Carmel Mission Foundation