



CARMEL MISSION FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

A Letter From Our Chairman

June 5, 2023

Dear Friends and Donors to the Carmel Mission Foundation,

This letter is in response to “Fr Paul’s Message” in the recent [June 4 Bulletin](#). While Fr. Paul is correct that the donations are to be used for the restoration and preservation of Carmel Mission and, in fact, I can assure you that all donor funds received by the Carmel Mission Foundation (CMF), less normal and reasonable nonprofit organization costs for administration and fundraising, have been used to restore and preserve the historic buildings, grounds, and artifacts throughout the Carmel Mission, there are significant inaccuracies in Fr Paul’s message which need to be addressed.

For example, in his third paragraph Fr Paul states that “It came to our attention that the Carmel Mission Foundation announced it would be winding up its affairs and wanted to give the funds to the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, an organization which has no connection with the Carmel Mission or the Diocese of Monterey.” The clear inference is that he was surprised to hear this news when, in fact, It should not have come as a surprise to Father Paul and the Diocese that we were planning to wind up CMF affairs given the following:

1. In an email from Father Paul dated 11-18-22, he stated, “I requested yesterday that CMF refrain from fundraising until such time that we can have an agreed realignment of CMB and CMF.” Fr. Paul never explained what he meant by this “realignment.” A CMF Board member and I, as Chairman, had met with Father Paul and Parish General Manager, Justin Burke, the previous day on 11-17-22.
 - a. With respect to the above email comment, Father Paul asked for two (2) years to sort out this realignment but then said maybe it could be done in one (1) year. For many months we had tried to get Fr. Paul to identify fundraising projects, but rather than identify a project, Fr Paul simply said there first has to be a “realignment”.
 - b. Obviously, we could not continue the Foundation if we could not raise funds.

2. The Diocese/Parish, through their outside attorney, informed us they wanted CMF to discontinue operations.

Given the above, I find it completely disingenuous on the part of Father Paul that “it came to our attention that the Carmel Mission Foundation announced it would be winding up its affairs.” The simple truth is the only reason the CMF was contemplating dissolution and turning funds over to the Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) was because Fr. Paul and the Diocese of Monterey (DOM), after being asked by the CMF on numerous occasions in recent months if they wanted the CMF to continue its operations, finally and specifically informed the CMF that they no longer wanted the CMF to do any fundraising activity on their behalf nor to exist.

Once it was obvious, that the DOM and parish leadership, Fr. Paul and Justin Burke, wanted us to disband, we had to decide what to do with the funds. Though we seriously considered giving the remaining funds to the DOM, which would have made everything much simpler for myself and our board members as we are all volunteers, we felt we had a much higher responsibility than making life simpler for us. We had a fiduciary responsibility to our donors to be sure their donations were used for the intended purpose of restoring and preserving the Carmel Mission property. As to why we selected the Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) to safeguard the funds and dispense them to the Diocese/Parish, rather than to the Diocese of Monterey/Parish (DOM), it was because many people and some significant donors did not trust the DOM to use the funds exclusively for the purpose for which they were raised. In short, once the funds went to the DOM/Parish, there would be no control as to how those funds would be used. The fund that would be set up at the Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) would have to be used exclusively for the intended purpose of restoring and preserving the Carmel Mission.

Be assured we will continue to safeguard all donor funds currently with the CMF and any future funds raised by the CMF and ensure those funds, net of normal and reasonable expenses, are used exclusively for the overall preservation and restoration of the Carmel Mission.

Finally, the CMF is reconsidering its decision to discontinue operations due to numerous donors requesting we continue.

Sincerely,

Rich Denier
Chairman, Carmel Mission Foundation