

## Melissa Fasano

**From:** mail@flocknote.com on behalf of Notre Dame of Mount Carmel Church  
<mail@flocknote.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2023 11:57 AM  
**To:** Melissa Fasano  
**Subject:** Parish Update: December 19, 2023







In the darkness, we were waiting  
Without hope, without light  
'Til from Heaven, You came running  
There was mercy in Your eyes  
To fulfill the law and prophets  
To a virgin came the word  
From a throne of endless glory  
To a cradle in the dirt...

## **Beautiful Eucharist**





*"Jesus awaits you in the Eucharist. Come into the silence and let Him change your life." Matthew Kelly*

## **Investing in Our Faith, Investing in Our Future**

Our **Investing in Our Faith, Investing in Our Future** Renewal is wrapping up. We are so grateful for those who responded to the initiative with a commitment to:

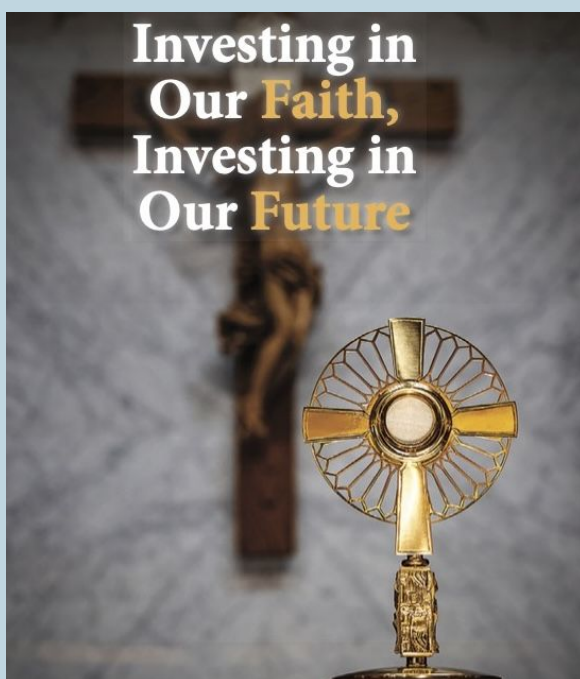
- Pray for our mission
- Sustain or increase their Regular Offertory Giving
- Become a Regular Offertory Giver

Your generosity reflects your gratitude for what the Lord is doing in your lives and the lives of those we impact through the works of our ministries here and beyond the walls of our parish.





*Pictured above is Deacon Joe Harris and our Bookkeeper Karen Fajardo during a recent weekend of promoting our **Investing in Our Faith, Investing in Our Future** Offertory renewal. As part of their commitment, Deacon Joe and his wife Karen also chose to move their giving from Envelopes to Online Giving!*



It is never too late to pray and discern your support of our parish and our mission through Regular Offertory Giving. Please click [HERE](#) or contact our Bookkeeper, Karen Fajardo, at [bookkeeper@ndcarmel.com](mailto:bookkeeper@ndcarmel.com)/973-538-1358, ext. 106, for details regarding Offertory Giving.



# Knights of Columbus: Annual Christmas Caroling

by Ann Bono

On Saturday, December 9, members of the Knights of Columbus Council 6904, along with their families, continued a tradition of bringing Christmas cheer to members of our community.



In the last 15 years, the Knights have brightened the day of some of our most isolated members at Notre Dame and Our Lady of Mercy, the homebound to which we bring Communion weekly. In the past, the Knights have also visited area nursing homes and convents to spread Christmas joy.





This year, the Knights caravan went to 9 homes of homebound Notre Dame and OLM parishioners and also visited a few Knights for whom it is not feasible to attend meetings very often.



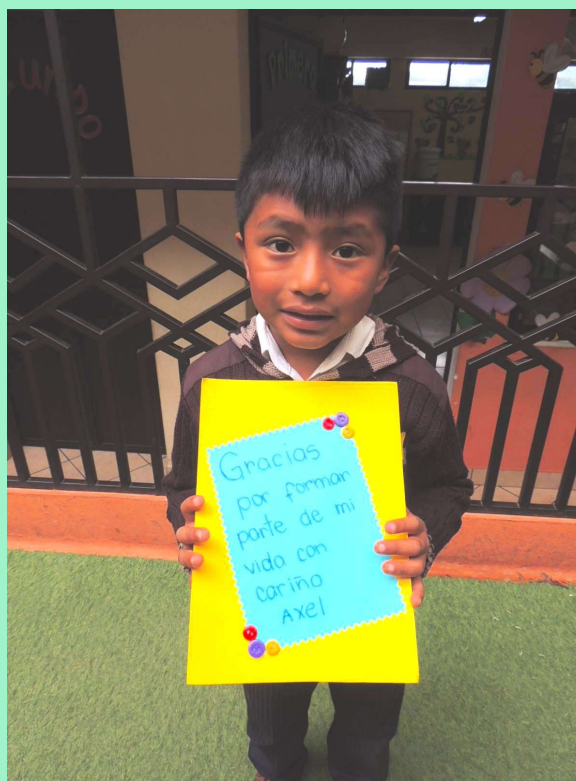
*"When I received a text from Jack Vales (Leader of the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist Outreach to the Homebound) asking if my mother would enjoy Christmas Caroling from our Knights of Columbus, I knew this would add a special gift to her Christmas season. What a wonderful outreach to our homebound parishioners to have volunteers from our community sing Christmas carols! I even noticed her singing along to several of the carols! Many thanks to this caring group that allows individuals such as my mom to remain connected to her loving parish. Many thanks from both of us." Mark Mitrenga*

## **Guatemala Outreach**

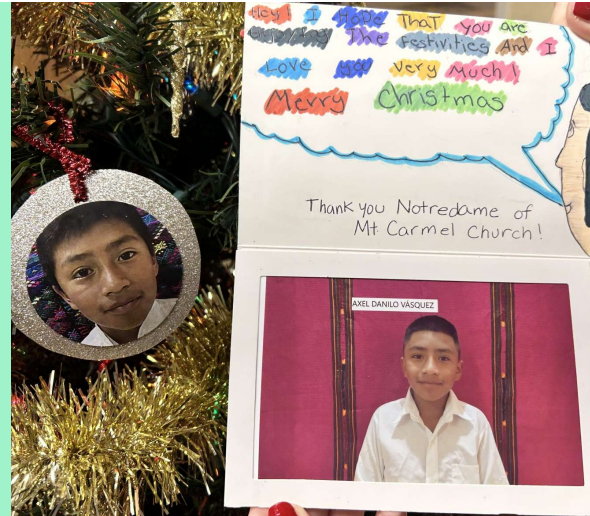
The Guatemala Outreach ministry at ND began in 2014; through it, 24 homes have been built for families in dire need of safe shelter. Although a mission trip has not



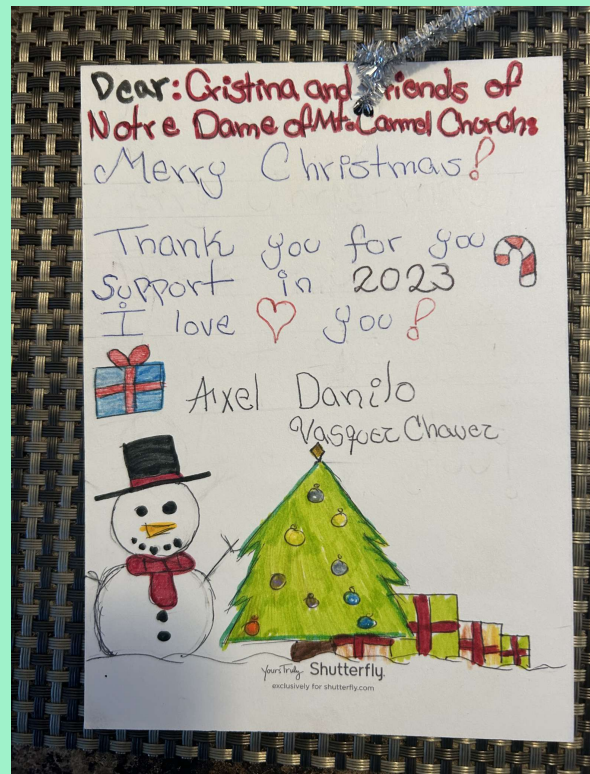
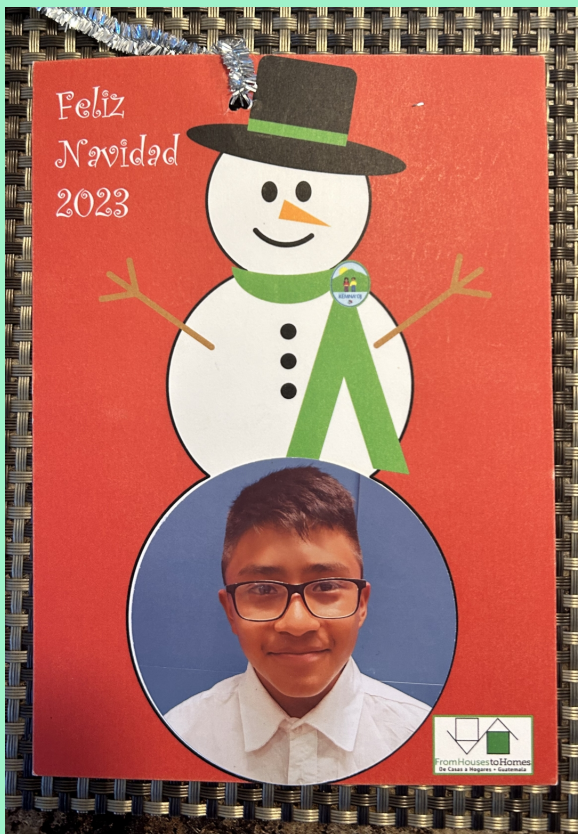
been feasible for the ministry since 2020, supporting those in need through From Houses to Homes - Guatemala has continued as much as possible, primarily through sponsoring children at their **Kemna Oj School**. Our parish has been sponsoring young **Axel Danilo Vasquez Chavez** since 2016, and several others who've gone on mission through the ministry have also made the generous decision to sponsor children at the school. It has been a blessing to support Axel Danilo and follow in his educational progress and accomplishments!







The latest message we have received!



Let us pray for Axel Danilo and his family, the From Houses to Homes Organization, and all our brothers and sisters in Guatemala. May our Lord also grant our Guatemala Outreach Ministry



**YEAR-END UPDATE 2023**



**From Houses to Homes**  
De Casas a Hogares • Guatemala

If you would like to send a message to your student, click [here](#) and we will translate your message to Spanish.

*Escuela Kemna'oj*

**Axel Danilo Vasquez Chavez**



<b>Grade/Grado:</b>	6th Grade	<b>GPA/Promedio:</b>	73
<b>Favorite Subjects/ Materias Favoritas/ (comentario del maestro):</b>	His favorite subjects are History, Art and Computing. He is a happy, responsible, polite and dynamic student. He shows interest in his classes and learns quickly.		
<b>Area of challenge/ Materias que le cuestan y debe mejorar (comentario del maestro):</b>	In Mathematics he requires more time to complete his work than in other subjects.		
<b>Grade Next Year/ Proximo Grado:</b>	7th 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 - oscarfth@gmail.com  
Sponsorship Coordinator, Carmen Dardon - secretariafth@gmail.com

the ability to resume their mission trips in 2024!

## The Flock: Knitting & Crocheting Ministry

In the Fall of 2022, parishioner Monica Orecchio approached us with a desire to start a knitting and crocheting ministry. Below, we hear from Monica and some of the members of "the Flock," the name they have chosen for the ministry.





*"As a parishioner, I wanted to contribute to our community in a unique way that fostered both friendship and stewardship. Knitting and crocheting do just that. As Missionary Disciples, the members of "The Flock" offer the fruits of their labors to other church ministries to be distributed to parishioners supported by their ministry. For example, the Baptism Ministry receives handmade baby hats and blankets to be offered to the families of newly baptized babies. The Homebound Ministry receives prayer shawls to be offered to those parishioners who cannot attend Mass in person."*



*"The personal blessings of this ministry are numerous. I have been blessed to witness the generosity of our own parishioners with their time and talent. I have been blessed by the collective sharing of knowledge and teaching that goes on in the group. But the most wonderful blessing of all is the friendships I have made with other knitters and crocheters that I may not have ever had the opportunity to meet...much less spend lots of wonderful time chatting with and getting to know about them and their journey with Christ." Monica Orecchio*





*"I love knitting in winter; in the Flock, I feel welcomed and motivated to do more projects and share and learn new stitches and patterns. Not only have I always enjoyed social outreach activities, but I have also formed meaningful friendships with the ladies from The Flock!" Mirtha Cardenas*



*"I joined the group because I like to do crochet mostly but also knitting. The idea of being in a group was a nice idea for me. Being an immigrant, it is very difficult to become part of social settings; participating in this group helps me to socialize and meet people from the church." Fernanda Reisinger*





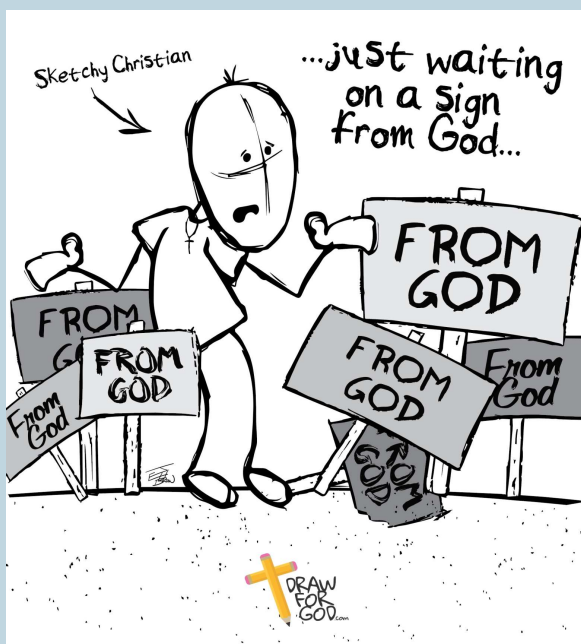
*"I wanted a way to serve the parish, so I thought I would try it, even though I am a beginning knitter. The ladies have been helping me learn to knit, and it's nice getting to know people in the parish who I usually don't see in church. It's fun making hats, blankets, and shawls for others." Ann Hoag*



## Every Story Matters to God

By Denise Panyik-Dale

*A sign. Literally. An actual sign on Hanover Avenue by the Shop-Rite. It was small, but the words jumped out at me: "Catholics Returning Home," and it listed a phone number. I'm sure it was there for a while, but I didn't see it until I headed home from work on a night in January 2015 that was as dark, dreary, and desolate as I felt.*



*It was slightly more than a year after my divorce was final and just shy of two years from when it was decided that a marriage of 34 years would come to an end. For the first time in my life, I was completely on my own. I lived at home during college and married during my senior year. I moved with jobs to multiple cities across the country before landing in New Jersey with my then-husband, daughter, and no other family within 900 miles. It was a particularly low point in my life, filled with many emotions, the primary being overwhelming hopelessness.*



*I typed the phone number on the sign into my phone before the light changed. The following day, I forced myself to actually call it, not knowing that at the other end was Notre Dame of Mount Carmel. But more importantly, this is what I heard on the other end as I poured my heart out: empathy, understanding, caring, no judgment, and most of all, hope.*

*Two evenings later, I walked past a banner that read "My Parish, My Home" and into Mount Carmel of Notre Dame.*



*I didn't know a single person at the parish, but it indeed felt like the beginning of a journey home. It's a journey I continue to travel with new opportunities to grow and evolve personally and spiritually: Journey for Divorced and Separated, Discipleship Groups, Women's Cornerstone, Alpha. The evolution and growth didn't happen overnight, but slowly, comfortably, and at my own pace — baby steps, so to speak.*

*The first step in my desire to serve was timidly volunteering to take photos on Holy Thursday. Although I am a professional photographer, I lacked confidence in doing so at the church and was not sure my images would be good enough to use; nonetheless, I felt drawn.*



*I returned the next day to photograph Good Friday, the next evening to capture the Easter Vigil, and the next for Easter morning.*

*Since then, I have captured many parish celebrations and events. I've served in the Women's Cornerstone ministry, helped build a house in*



*Guatemala, led Discipleship Groups,  
and proclaimed the Word of God as a  
lector.*



*I just recently embarked on a new  
and thrilling role in the choir! I've  
wanted to do this for a long time but  
never thought I could!!*







*As I write this, today is the 10th anniversary of the day an official stamped document was handed to me in the Morris County Courthouse. On that day, I had no idea where my life would go. Today, I still have no idea where I go from here, but I know it is a journey with God filled with friends, family, faith, fun, and, above all — hope!*



*(Photo above displayed on Denise's Facebook cover)*

## **Marriage Ministry Christmas Celebration**

**by Ann Bono**



Several couples gathered this past Saturday to celebrate Christmas and the gift of fellowship. Danielle and Mike Jones graciously agreed to host the gathering in their home, and all the couples were grateful and had a wonderful time. Deacon Joe Harris led us in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for the food we had to eat and the fellowship we shared. It was a fun night of food, drink, and conversations celebrating the Christmas season.



There were new faces to the ministry, as well as couples who have been attending events for more than a decade! Regardless, it is a blessing that the Marriage Ministry continues to thrive, offering welcoming spaces for old and new friends to share the gift of a small Christian community in the beautiful sacrament of Marriage.



*"We had a great time at the Marriage Ministry's delicious holiday dinner. Many thanks to Joe and Ann Bono for coordinating this warm and welcoming affair and to Mike and Danielle Jones for hosting it in their lovely home. The Marriage Ministry offers special opportunities to share fellowship with familiar and new faces who are on a similar life journey." Lee & Mike Connor*



## Women's Fellowship and Outreach

For the past few years, parishioner Carol Critchley has coordinated a Women's Christmas Dinner Outing in December to celebrate the season with old friends and welcome any new women into the community. This year's gathering took place this past Thursday at Village Restaurant.





Adding further purpose to the gatherings, Carol invites the participants to support a particular form of outreach.

*"The women's dinner last night brought in over 100 pairs of new socks that were donated to Nourish.NJ (formerly the soup kitchen in Morristown). Such generous and faithful 24 women had a fabulous time last night!" Carol Critchley*



## **The Best Present Ever!**

**By Diane Byrne, Family Faith Coordinator**

On Sunday, Deacon Eric and his wife Debby ended our series on Mary by reminding us that out of all the presents we can receive, Mary gave us the best one – Jesus! Then, they relayed the story of Jesus' birth.





After Mass, each child received a sheet of paper with a box pattern and directions for creating a 3-D gift box. The box is meant to remind the children that Jesus is the greatest gift of all!

## Family Faith: Mass Transit Conversations

*(Comments reflect previous Sundays' celebrations)*

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

*"Being spontaneous....doing what you are feeling in the moment, like dancing."*

*"That spending time with family is more important than gifts."*

*"Stay focused on God and have hope."*

*"We have to wait for dinner and not eat a lot of snacks, or our tummy will hurt. We have to wait for Jesus."*

*"Jesus always keeps his promises."*

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

*"There were beautiful nativity sets."*

*The altar is covered in a purple cloth, and there are joy and love banners."*

*"We talked about Guadalupe and how she is always in every Mexican's heart."*

*"We went to church with our friend Joanna."*

*"We sang Halle, Halle, Halle with Fr. Paddy."*

*"More people were picked to help with the host."*



*"When your parents lock you in your room, sing 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. You can find joy even when you are alone."*

*"It can be hard to wait, but we need to wait for Jesus."*

*"Take time to call upon the Holy Spirit."*

*"Fr. Alex loves talking about Christmas movies and the elf. He reminds us we are all still waiting for Christmas and the second coming of Jesus. We can trust Jesus to fulfill his promise and will be there for us."*

*"Be patient, be good as we wait for Jesus Christ to come. Be strong and trust."*

*Fr. Michael is asking for volunteers to make sheep for their manger." (family went to OLM)*

*"I saw a white service dog today at Mass."*

*"They were all wearing purple."*

*"My sister, Avery, altar served for the first time."*

*"Advent started, and the choir got to use handbells."*

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

**Parishioner  
Announcements**

## ***Memories that share our story...***

*Family Mass*











*11:30 am Mass*



*Blessing of the Quilts...*





... and a special blessing by Fr. Paddy upon parishioner Claire Palestri, who also received a beautiful prayer quilt as she continues to heal and recover from recent health challenges.



Sent by Cristina Folan - Communications



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