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**FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN**

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What stands out for me after my first week of doing double pastoral duty, here at Mt. Carmel and at Our Lady of Refuge, is not what I would have expected. I was bracing myself for a lot of tension and division at Our Lady of Refuge during these hard days for them without their pastor of nearly forty years. What I found, instead, was a lot of holiness, a lot of prayer, a lot of love, and a lot of support for me and for our Catholic faith.

One moment was particularly moving. I was celebrating a daily mass at Our Lady of Refuge and looked out on a congregation of people I did not know. But they so reminded me of all of you here at Mt. Carmel. They were there worshiping God, seeking his grace in the Eucharist, and probably praying for special intentions for their families and themselves. Then I thought of the people gathered for mass in every other parish in our city, country and around the world. There is a lot of holiness out there! And I have no doubt that God looks down upon all of you and has mercy on the world because of your holiness! Thank you for never giving up on prayer.

A wise woman once told me, "Father, when people ask you to pray for them, when do you do it?". I told her that I remember everyone's special intentions in my morning prayer and in the first mass of the day. She responded, "that's good, but maybe also pray for them in the very moment they ask you, just in case." I have never forgotten that. She was reminding me that prayer is so important that we can't risk forgetting to pray for each other. Now, when someone asks me to pray for them, I try to stop in that moment for just a second and ask God to hear their cry.

The holiness and prayer that I have seen for four years here at Mt. Carmel, and now too at Our Lady of Refuge, makes every challenge bearable and every sacrifice worthwhile!

God bless, Father Jonathan