

Carmel Conversation



Our first Carmel Conversation for 2024 took place on Sunday 17 March and was facilitated by the Parish Advisory Council. Two focus questions guided our conversation:

- **What matters to us?**
- **What do we value about Our Lady of Mt Carmel parish community?**

We listened and we shared guided by our Carmelite way: **Prayer, Community and Service.**

The fruits of this conversation provide encouragement and inspiration for us as we seek to become ever more faithful to our Carmelite way in these times and in this place.

A preliminary report on this conversation was published a few weeks ago. This report provides a full overview.

The OLMC Parish Advisory Council, in ongoing dialogue with our community, the Carmelites and the wider Australian Church community, will keep this conversation front and centre as it collaboratively plans for 2024 and beyond in ways that allow our community to flourish. Our parish delegates to the Carmelite Assembly will be sharing this voice of our community at the upcoming Australia/Timor gathering.

Some threads from our conversation:

- Carmelite spirituality
- Ready identification with Prayer, Community, Service, and the many ways these are integral to each other.
- Quality/variety of liturgy/prayer experience
- Silence, stillness, contemplation
- Range of ministries and involvement in these
- Presence beyond our immediate context
- Sense of belonging
- Shared responsibility to build community
- Voice of women and laypeople – heard and valued
- Importance of encounter and dialogue/conversation

...and so much more. In addition, our conversation included consideration of a symbol to be shared in liturgy at the Assembly. Lots of suggestions were made. The cross pictured above

has been chosen at this time...it's earthy, it's Carmelite, it is relatable...and it recognises our oneness as a Parish community which includes our wonderful school.

Big thanks to everyone who participated in our March Carmel Conversation and to all in our community who together make us who we are. This is community in practice.

The OLMC Parish Advisory Council – Chris Clarke, Jane Connolly, Cara Fox, Michael Kearney, Paul Jensen, Warren Fields, Anne-Marie Maw, Matthew Tonini, Martinho Da Costa, Steph Unger.

Carmel Conversation, 17 March 2024

Carmelite Hall, Our Lady of Mt Carmel School, Coorparoo

Responses



Prayer



What matters to us?

What do we value
about OLMC?

Words from reflection related to
Prayer

- Carmelite Spirituality/charism valued
- Contemplative prayer
- Taizé Masses appreciated
- Prayer is really valued
- Part of the community – builds community
- Very inclusive
- Sense of belonging
- Mass of Forgiveness appreciated
- Peacefulness
- Silence and stillness
- Quality of liturgy
- Prayer and relationships inseparable
- Sometimes a little tension around private and public prayer (eg silent times in Mass when people are talking)
- Parish prayer groups exist but may need to be communicated more; more possibilities/prayerful opportunities?
- Union of spirit when we pray together
- Carmelite Third Order (Lectio Divina and other prayer styles)
- Range of ministries and opportunities for involvement (inclusive) that underpins parish prayer life.
- Presence of the Carmelites that invite us into prayer.
- Prayer is invitational
- Respectful of where people are at
- Quality homilies – confirm understanding and bring new understanding

- Voice of women and lay people welcomed, encouraged and heard

Community



What matters to us?

What do we value
about OLMC?

Words from reflection related to
Community 🍀

- Relationships are at the heart of community
- Variety of ministries and groups
- Strong community involvement in wide range of ministries
- People need to be invited in (personal invitation is powerful)
- Community is not just for ourselves (need to look outwards)
- Outward focus in a number of ministries eg. Carmel Care, Zumalai, aged care, SVDP
- Having the courage to invite others into the community
- Parish Advisory Council (energy and creativity)
- Community of communities (with ministry groups)
- Opportunity for small connections every now and again
- What is community? – needs ongoing conversation, prayer etc
- Liturgy focused maybe more so than conversation?
- Do people come for Mass or community?
- Intentionality required for building community
- Encounter and dialogue essential to community
- Can have different communities depending on who attends which Mass time – different feels at each Mass. –This is a positive thing.
- Community members hold the story of the parish.
- Hospitality after mass welcome
- Finding opportunities to share story
- Shared personal responsibility for building community.
- We need to be curious about the other
- Keep being real/authentic
- Lay Carmelites
- Unity is strength
- Diverse opportunities responsive to needs builds community
- Strong desire to return again and again
- Everyone is welcome at the table
- School and church = whole community

Service



What matters to us?

What do we value
about OLMC?

Words from reflection related to
Service



- Service for each phase of our lives.
- Strong spiritual care
- Prayer intentions for others should not be underestimated as service
- November Masses with funeral booklets, names on screen personalise care
- Service to the church and from the church
- How do we transform the neighbourhood?
- What's our role in the neighbourhood?
- Home visits
- Conversations within the broader community and what is possible?
- Hard for us to ask for help if we need help ourselves.
- Value the service of prayer intentions
- Readiness of Priests to serve the needs of parishioners is valued.
- Do we personally invite people enough?
- Need a discernment where we are called to serve and not "over serve" to keep a good balance with family etc.
- Do we know our gifts and what we can offer individually and as a parish?
- Being the hands and feet of Christ.
- Washing the feet.
- Nourished by parish community to go out and serve.
- Many and diverse ministries with widespread involvement
- Share stories of service/ministry
- Fertile ground allows ministries to arise from the ground
- Strong prayer and community gently let people know that they are worthy of being helped.