

2025 Pastoral Services Appeal Letter

To the St. Edward the Confessor / San Felipe de Jesus Family,

This year marks our 75th Anniversary as a Catholic parish in Dana Point. On the wall of my office, I have a large black-and-white photo of six priests standing in “Capistrano Beach” in 1950 at the groundbreaking for what is today San Felipe de Jesus Chapel. This photo reminds us that many good things start small and grow with the proper care, focus, hard work, and dedication.



Over the past 75 years, our parishioners and staff have certainly shown our commitment to serving our God, our Church, and our community. Throughout this time, our primary mission has been to build relationships with God and with each other. Today, we are a thriving parish community of over 4,000 families with a school that forms and teaches nearly 800 students.

Shortly after I arrived here in July, I learned that our beautiful new narthex, parish center, offices and Knight Hall were constructed and completed exclusively through the generosity of our parishioners, without borrowing any funds. While this may seem normal and natural for those of you who have been here a long while, I urge you to share my amazement at accomplishing such a daunting task. I am deeply impressed by your generous giving and by the vision of those who have led and served this parish since it was founded.

Our new parish center and narthex are stunning. Every detail was selected so that the resulting structures would give glory to God and serve our parish well. However, as we have used the Knight Hall, offices, kitchen, meeting rooms, and the narthex, we have learned that our use differs slightly from what was originally planned. We have already made some improvements, but we have additional work to do. The focus of our 2025 PSA is on items that, each in their own way, are intended to make our facilities either safer or more “user friendly.” I would like to highlight two projects for your consideration.

Lighting – \$80,000

The existing exterior lighting is quite deficient at the entrance to the church and the plaza. It is too dark to clearly see folks walking across the street from the parking lot. As a result, our church entrance is not particularly welcoming at night. In addition, our beautiful stained-glass wall in the narthex needs to be better lit so that it is a beacon to those who approach our church at night. This is just one component of an overall plan to improve our church and campus lighting. After some research on lighting alternatives, it appears that it will cost approximately \$15,000 to properly light the stained-glass window. The estimate to improve the plaza and entrance lights is approximately \$25,000. The estimate to replace the parking lot light fixtures is approximately \$40,000.

New Phone/PA/Bell System - \$50,000

Another area of concern is our Phone/PA/Bell System. We chose to put our old, sometimes unreliable, campus phone system into our new building. The school bell and PA systems are also old and do not function properly. With new technology, the three systems will be integrated. Our phone system is

currently functioning, but it is quite old and the components are obsolete. Our school PA and bell systems function sporadically or not at all. Lack of proper, reliable communication could be a safety risk for our students. To avoid that potential risk, we are hoping to replace these systems. We will work with experts at the Diocese who have assisted several parishes and schools which have replaced their aging phone systems over the past five years.

Other Possible Projects - \$75,000

In the event that you are even more generous this year than you have been in the past, we will also consider enhancing our campus by installing:

Upgraded Wiring/Hardware for the church video system to ensure that our video capabilities will continue for the next 10-15 years.

Additional Signage on Calle La Primavera (it is too easy to drive past the entrance when approaching the church from the downhill side).

Enhanced Adoration Chapel to enable adoration hours to be increased and provide a more intimate space for adoration.

Redesign and Refurbishment of outdoor worship area behind the church on the bluff to create a more intentional layout so that people can enjoy the peace of the fountain, the statues, and the view.

A Fountain for the Our Lady of Guadalupe Statue in the plaza area.

Our Diocesan PSA assessment is \$241,000. Every dollar that is raised over this amount will be returned to us. The new lighting and the new phone system total approximately \$130,000. That means, to fully fund our PSA assessment as well as those two items, we must collect a total of \$371,000 in PSA contributions this year. If we hope to tackle any of the other listed projects, we must collect even more in PSA donations. That is indeed a lofty goal but our parish has always risen to the challenges before us! Once we have a reasonable indication of the amount of funding that we will have available, we will be able to prioritize projects and begin work. Therefore, even if you plan to pay your pledge over 12 months, we can count on the entirety of your pledge as soon as you submit it. We hope to begin (or in some cases complete) the most critical of these projects prior to our 75th Anniversary celebration in June.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of St. Edward the Confessor and San Felipe de Jesus! We exist solely to serve each of you, and we could not exist without your generosity. May God richly bless you and your families!

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Mike