



Copper Dome

New Parish Center Completed in San Diego, California

by Kathleen Carpenter, vice president, Scribe Communications



The copper dome-capped, 24,000-square-foot Parish Center for St. Thérèse of Carmel Catholic Parish has been completed, according to Domus Studio Architecture, the San Diego-based firm who designed the multi-purpose building for the San Diego, Calif., Carmel Valley Community area church and school. The new building includes a 7,200-square-foot multi-purpose Parish Hall, a daily Mass chapel, and administrative offices for the Parish.

"The daily life of the church occurs in the Parish Center. This is where people will gather and interact every day for Mass, classes, and numerous activities," said

David Pfeifer, AIA, principal at Domus Studio Architecture. "The building we designed for St. Thérèse of Carmel will accommodate day-to-day needs, as well as all special event needs of the church and school."

Built by Erickson-Hall Construction Co., Escondido, Calif., the Parish Center is the third and final phase of the Catholic Church's 2003 master plan. A celebration of the completed project took place on Sunday, November 28, 2010. "With the opening of our new school, Notre Dame Academy, in 2005, and our church, St. Thérèse of Carmel, in 2006, the Parish Leadership Committee and I committed to move forward with our vision of completing our spiritual home here

in Carmel Valley," said Father Nick Dempsey, Pastor of St. Thérèse of Carmel. "It was my desire to design and build a social center that would serve the spiritual and social needs of our parishioners, their families and neighbors within the Carmel Valley area for generations to come. This beautiful building completes our campus facilities and realizes the hopes and dreams we had when we placed our parish under the patronage of our own, St. Thérèse."

"Our Building Committee selected Domus Studio teaming with Erickson-Hall using a design-assist model to design the Parish Center," said John Carney, director of operations at St. Thérèse of Carmel. "This was followed by the selection of Erickson-



Hall as general contractor. Our team is very appreciative of the performance by both Domus Studio and Erickson-Hall for designing and constructing a wonderful building on time and within our budget."

"I have been the project representative for the Parish for each of its three building campaigns," Carney continued. "Of all of

the delivery methods, Design-Assist for the Parish Center has been by far the most successful. It has provided cost and schedule predictability as well as a proactive team approach with qualified personnel to deliver a quality project, appropriate for the needs of our Parish community for years to come."

"When the owner, architect, and contractor work together as partners, the client's best interest is always the main focus," said Jim Fisher, construction manager for Erickson-Hall Construction Co. "Due to the team's relationship, this has not only been a rewarding project (on time and on budget),

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but also fun. It has been a great experience for all concerned." The 14.4-acre St. Thérèse of Carmel campus is located in San Diego's Carmel Valley community. The property already includes an 18,717-square-foot sanctuary and a K-8 parochial school.

"Construction of a new facility on a very active school and church campus presents some very unique challenges," Fisher said. "Safety for all is paramount. As a result, several traffic plans and delivery schedules were developed in collaboration with the owner to address daily construction opera-

tions. The outcome was a well-coordinated campus and construction project with minimal disruption of daily school and Parish life."

According to architect Pfeifer, the new single-story Parish Hall features an enormous main hall area that will hold as many as 800 people for church and school functions, like luncheons, dinners, and receptions. Four breakout rooms are also included and can be closed off and used individually or opened for maximum-capacity events. The new Parish Hall also dou-

bles as a gymnasium, where indoor sports like basketball and volleyball will be played. Care was taken in the selection of the interior finishes to balance durability, ease of maintenance, and acoustic performance, all while creating a warm environment for fellowship and gathering. School plays and assemblies will be staged on the raised platform at one end of the Parish Hall. Seating in the space can be arranged for a sit-down formal dinner or for the school's Christmas pageant.

"Our biggest goal with the design of the

Parish Hall was to create an assembly space with as much flexibility as possible," Pfeifer said. "One of the details of the design that works for both sports and entertaining is the flooring, which is a patterned carpet that accommodates both basketball-bouncing and high heels." The design of the carpet was a collaborative effort among Domus Studio Architecture, Erickson-Hall Construction and the carpet manufacturer, Burtco Enterprises, whereby design, installation, and fabrication ideas were all melded in a custom floor for the hall that was installed within .2% of required dimensional tolerances.

The Parish Center design also includes a lobby area with cafe for serving coffee and doughnuts after church. There is also a reception area for the 11 administrative offices, a conference room, a youth room, youth director's office, and full-service kitchen. The building's 24,245 square feet also includes a storage and utility basement, accessible via stairs and an elevator with doors on opposing sides to allow



access from the main hall area or from the parking lot.

Architecturally designed in the style of the adjacent sanctuary, the Parish Center has a daily Mass chapel with copper-topped dome and arched arcade entry arena that mimics the church's entry. The Parish Center, the sanctuary, and the school all face the church campus' courtyard area, a pedestrian-friendly environment that brings people

together for interaction throughout their visit to St. Thérèse of Carmel. The back of the new Parish Center has a trellised area for outdoor events and uses.

Domus Studio Architecture is a 24-year-old architectural design firm specializing in religious facilities, fire stations, educational buildings, senior housing, and custom residential projects through architecture, interiors, planning, and service.

