



Villa Maria del Mar



Renewing the Heart of Service: The Need for a New Electrical Panel at Villa Maria del Mar

BY JOANNA POLLOCK

For over 60 years, Villa Maria del Mar has offered refuge and renewal to countless individuals seeking rest and spiritual nourishment. Retreat guests experience God's presence in the stillness, in the beauty of nature, and through the generous hospitality of the Sisters, Staff and Volunteers.

In order to serve our guests safely and sustainably, we rely on the practical infrastructure working behind the scenes. At present, Villa Maria del Mar is powered through a combination of traditional electrical service, gas utilities, and an array of solar panels - which reflect our commitment to environmental stewardship. Each power source plays a vital role in ensuring the operation of our facility and the comfort and safety of our guests. In particular, the main electrical panel is essential to the Villa's operation; enabling us to prepare food, serve hot meals, provide comfortable warm rooms, wash linens, heat water and wash the dishes!

Our current electrical cabinet is literally corroding from the outside in. The individual breakers are outdated and failing, and impacting our ability to provide a consistent and safe source of energy for our operational needs. Hence, we have identified a critical need for the installation of a new mains electrical panel.

This new electrical panel will safely integrate our various energy sources and equip Villa Maria del Mar for future necessary upgrades. Furthermore, installing a modern, reliable electrical system upgrade will allow us to continue the Villa's mission to "serve the people of our society who seek God in a prayerful environment of peace and beauty."

The estimated cost for this project is over \$30,000 with an installation date prior to the next winter season. If you would like to donate to this project, please use the enclosed envelope or you can donate online www.villamariadelmar.org.

Your support for this project— through prayer or financial gifts—will help ensure that Villa Maria del Mar continues to be a sanctuary where lives are quietly yet profoundly changed.

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth*

Acts 1:8

IN THIS ISSUE

Need for New
Electrical Panel

Epicurean News

A Day in the Life of
the Villa

Note from the Sisters



Sponsored Retreats

2025

July 21-27

Sr. Teresa Maya, CCVI

July 31-Aug 3

Fr. Joe Nassal, CPPS

Dec 11-14

Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ

*(Virtual attendance only;
please call to register)*

2026

Jan 8-11

*Winter Stillness
Retreat*

For more information and
to register online:
villamariadelmar.org/events

A Day in the Life of the Villa

What does a typical day look like at the Villa? Well, anything but typical!

Each day we host anywhere from 5-85 guests. Over the past five months we have hosted various church denominations, women's groups, recovery groups, meditation retreats; priest groups, Catholic school staff, personal wholeness, creative writing and song-writing retreats, non-profit agencies, many religious orders and various SNJM retreats. In addition, the Villa sponsored two "Day of Reflection" retreats, and for the first time, we hosted a seven day retreat for 72 guests for the Everyday Zen Foundation. It has been a busy season!

Upon checkout, the housekeeping staff will often clean over 40 rooms in one day! In our laundry we will process up to 140 sheets, 180 pillowcases and 70 sets of towels, and all this with just three (very efficient) housekeepers. Our maintenance manager will respond to work orders, tend the garden, and ensure that all of guestrooms are in functioning order. Starting daily at 6:30am, the Epicurean kitchen team will serve three meals per day, preparing delicious and nutritious food for all of our retreat guests. Our bookkeeper works part-time and is assisted in the front office by regular volunteers who provide a warm welcome to those at the front door and to guests calling with inquiries. (They also assist with mailing the Villa Newsletter!) All of the generous donations received are acknowledged with personal notes of gratitude hand-written by the Sisters. Volunteer hostesses and Sisters greet arriving groups and individuals and support them throughout their stay. To help with overnight coverage, we recently added a new position to assist our hostesses in responding to facility needs from 9pm-7am.

In addition to our work at the Villa, Sisters, staff and volunteers prepare and plan for our weekly liturgy with the Villa Chapel Community.

There is no typical day at the Villa! However, what we do experience daily is the joy of serving others, a willingness to work hard, laughter, good food and a heart of service.

"Hospitality should have no other nature than love." - Henrietta Mears



A Note from the Sisters

BY SISTERS MICHELLE GARLINSKI AND MARY ONDREYCO

Charism is a word that is common in religious contexts. A Charism is a gift of the Spirit given to an individual or group to be shared with others. The charism of the Sisters of the Holy Names is the way our Sisters, Associates and Partners live the spirit of our foundress, Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher, in the world today. Traditionally, the charism attributed to her are prayer and hospitality, a passion for education, justice and concern for those most in need, and a commitment to the full development of the whole person. Rooted in her steadfast love for God and in the persons of Jesus & Mary, this charism inspired the community she and her companions founded.

Charism is best understood when experienced. At Villa Maria del Mar, a ministry of the Sister of the Holy Names, the charism is alive in the many ways the staff and volunteers welcome, interact and extend hospitality to our guests.

In November, we gathered staff and volunteers for a charism retreat day. This was an opportunity for us to strengthen our community, learn more about the SNJM story, and reflect on how our personal story weaves into the mission and ministry at the Villa. We learned about what people did before coming to the Villa; we shared the stories of the first sisters that arrived in California; and we committed to continuing to live the SNJM charism as we share our gifts at the Villa together.

In June, we gather again to continue our Charism retreat, with the focus of SNJM commitment to justice and our corporate stands regarding human trafficking, water, and migrants and refugees. This Charism retreat is an opportunity for all of us - staff, volunteers and Sisters, to continue to celebrate and live our mission today and into the future.



Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher

Epicurean News - What's Cooking?

Curious about the food at Villa Maria del Mar? Here's what our guests have to say...

"Wonderful - lots of fresh fruit - lots of choices for salad...& the scones!!"

"I love the "soul-food" served here - farm fresh! And the presentations and variety, plus nutritious value, makes one marvel at the love and care by which I am nourished!"

"Great flavors, healthy fresh food. Plenty of options for various tastes and health requirements."

"Delicious, plentiful, thoughtful and felt made with love and prayers."

"The food was excellent. So good I ate too much at all meals!"

"I loved the variety, quality & staff was phenomenal."

"Amazing! Probably the best food I've ever had at a group facility! Especially appreciated all the veggies and always having protein for vegetarians."

"Each meal was delicious, sustaining & comforting...a reflection of love & care."

"Food quality and quantity was above my expectations. Additionally, it was timely and well presented."

"The most delicious & nourishing place on the planet! Unmatched quality and preparation."

Thank you to Chef Jeff and our entire kitchen team; Marco, Olivia, Gladys, Luz and Mario. Great job!

