



Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center

The Passionists of Holy Cross Province 700 N. Sunnyside Avenue, Sierra Madre, CA 91024-1023
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September 14, 2015

Dear Neighbors:

We were pleased to host more than 20 of our nearest neighbors recently at the informational meeting we invited you to in our last letter. The meeting provided a wonderful opportunity to share our thoughts and hear comments and questions from those who live close to Mater Dolorosa.

This meeting was about preliminary planning – why we are considering the sale of the land, what our commitments are to the community, and what the new neighborhood might look like. There is no plan yet, but we know that whatever is planned for the site must:

- Protect the peacefulness of the Mater Dolorosa retreat experience, as retreats will continue here,
- Maintain the village character of Sierra Madre, bring benefits and minimize negative impacts, and
- Be designed so it complies with the building standards of Sierra Madre and the provisions of California's strict environmental laws.

In our presentation, we described what the new neighborhood might look like, based on our desire to fit in with existing neighborhoods nearby, conversations we've had with homebuilders and our understanding of what would be required by development and environmental regulations. In summary:

- Lot sizes would average 13,000 square feet, comparable to neighboring lots, yielding approximately 40 to 50 lots. City ordinances would limit the amount of the lot that could be covered with a home.
- The neighborhood design would maintain the look and feel of Sierra Madre neighborhoods like yours, with a mix of home sizes, styles and lot sizes. We expect that single-story homes will be built along the west and south edges of our property, where the new homes would abut existing homes.
- New homes adjacent to existing homes would be separated by a 50- to 80-foot-wide natural open space – totaling almost 3 acres of the 20-acre site. The natural open space would serve wildlife and aesthetic purposes and help meet regulations that require rainwater and runoff to be captured on site, allowing it to replenish our aquifer instead of race down gutters to storm drains.
- The neighborhood would be open to the public, with open access to its streets, a potential neighborhood park and paths that would connect to Bailey Canyon Park and its trails to the Angeles National Forest.

Many who attended signed statements in support, asking the City to give us fair consideration when plans ultimately come before the City. Of course, many others didn't. We understand their concerns and remain committed to doing all we can to earn their trust and support over time.

We will shortly publish a "Frequently Asked Questions" document on the Mater Dolorosa website that will include the questions we received at this meeting, plus others we've received at other meetings. If you would like to receive a notice when it's posted, would like to receive regular updates, or have a question or comment, please use the enclosed reply card.

Sincerely,

Fr. Michael Higgins, C.P.
Retreat Director