



## **CCA Notes to our Donors**

**Fall 2023**

### **Synodal from the Start!**

Baltimore, MD  
Barrington, RI  
Beacon, NY  
Boston, MA  
Cleveland, OH  
Concord, NH  
Danville, PA  
Eldridge, IA  
Latrobe, PA  
Oldenburg, IN  
Reno, NV

Dear Friends in Christ,

Every time we think of you, we think of you with gratitude. We appreciate so very much all that you do to support us.

As we hold you in our thoughts and prayers, we hope that this summer has been a relatively normal and Covid free one for you. We trust that you have been able to have vacations and visit with family and friends and get on with your lives.

It was because of Covid that our CCA monasteries were able to adapt and take advantage of Zoom technology to collaborate in a new way to answer the challenges of this time. This brings to mind the way that monasteries around the world had to adapt to face the challenges of World War II.

Before then monasteries did not cooperate with one another for mutual support, but during and after World War II, the monasteries in Europe struggled to survive. For that reason, Pope Pius XII urged them to band together for mutual assistance. In 1950 Pius said in a document called *Sponsa Christi*: “In view of changed circumstances there are now many considerations which make it advisable and sometimes even necessary to confederate Monasteries of Nuns.”

And then Vatican II happened, and in 1965 the church issued a document on the renewal of religious life called *Perfectae Caritatis* which said: “For the adaptation and renewal of convents of nuns suggestions and advice may be obtained also from the meetings of federations or from other assemblies lawfully convoked.” This concept was reiterated in 1969 in the document *Venite Seorsum* which said: “If, however, current circumstances seem to justify it, nuns might sometimes, ... be authorized to assist at those meetings which will truly benefit the cloistered life.” And thus, the impetus for CCA was laid so that in 1970 some Carmelite monasteries in the US formed an association for mutual support and to assist with renewal and adaptation.

At that time, and even to this day, the standard Federation meeting is comprised of the prioress and a delegate from each monastery, but CCA wanted a more grassroots structure. CCA decisions were made by any two fully professed nuns that the monasteries designated. While voting was limited to the two official delegates, any nun could attend the meeting and participate in the conversation. And many did! Coming together every two years for our national meetings has enabled us to deepen our friendships, understand the mutual challenges that we face, and strategize effectively to plan for our future.

CCA was a uniquely American approach to the federation of Carmelite monasteries that was synodal from the start. With your support we can continue to build a synodal church together. To that end could you suggest to us the names and addresses of other folks who should receive this newsletter? And also would you consider using ShopRaise as an easy way to support us? Thank you!!

## ***Opening to an Emerging Future: Called to Transformation.***

### ***CCA General Assembly – April 23-27, 2023***

The CCA General Assembly was held in April 2023 for four days at Bon Secours' Conference and Retreat Center in Marriottsville, MD. This was the first in-person Assembly since 2018. It was attended by delegates and participants from the member Carmels as well as invited guests and presenters. Additionally, IT support to live stream almost all of the meeting made it possible for sisters not able to be present, to participate.

The theme of the meeting was Opening to an Emerging Future: Called to Transformation. Presenters included Sr. Nancy Schrek, OSF, and Sr. Paula Cooney, IHM.

Prayerful rituals presented reflections on CCA's history from 1970 to 2020. These were followed by discussion of our present reality and pace of change from 2020 to 2023. The local leadership of the member communities each presented a realistic assessment of their current profile, challenges, and opportunities.

The CCA Goals were refreshed, new ones adopted, and a new Leadership Team was elected to serve for the next two years. (See further on a Spotlight on Leadership).

Some of the costs of the meeting were supported by a generous grant from The Koch Foundation of Gainesville, FL.

Evaluations of the meeting emphasized the growing sisterly support reaching beyond the confines of individual communities. Though faced with declining and aging members, the hope for determining a future path for Carmelite contemplative life is strong.

### ***CCA's New Leadership Team***

As part of every biennial national meeting, the CCA membership elects a new leadership team. Here they are:

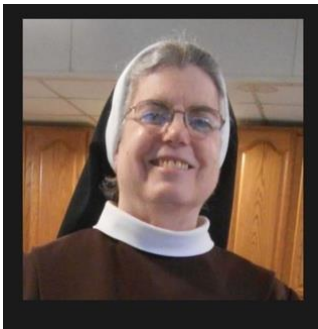


Colette Ackerman, President. She was born and raised in Baltimore and has been a member of the Baltimore Carmel for many years.



Mary Fleig, First Councilor, was born in Washington, DC, and entered the Baltimore Carmel in 2003.

Our other councilors:



Shirley Marie Ahern was born in Plymouth, NH and entered the Latrobe, PA carmel in 2005.



Rosalind Forrest was born in San Diego County, CA and became a Carmelite in 1986 and is now a member of the Reno Carmel.



Sr. Jeanne Marie Graham is a native Bostonian. She entered Boston Carmel in 1999.



## ***CCA's 2023-2025 Goals***

Every two years we also review and reformulate our institutional goals. Here are the ones for the next biennium:

Goal 1:

We have fostered a broader acceptance of unity in diversity and the mutuality of the Carmelite family, especially by continuing collaboration, friendship, and communion among associations/federations at home and abroad. We have reached out to, and collaborated with, other religious organizations to explore life-giving relationships in ways that are mutually beneficial.

Goal 2:

We have continued to work at achieving a representative voice in matters affecting our lives, the Teresian charism, and the Order.

Goal 3:

We have developed and empowered our members to be future leaders of and/or contributors to CCA.

Goal 4:

We have continued to provide active, mutual support to the identified needs of our communities. Coming from a way of life that emphasizes autonomy, we now affirm the desire to continue to create a culture of sisterhood.

Goal 5:

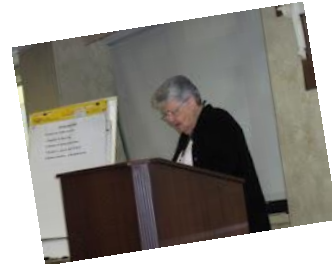
Each CCA community has adopted the protocol/practice of documentation in each of the areas as recommended by the task force and will have such in place within the next two years along with a process to keep current.

- Financial information
- Building and Property
- Legal
- Medical
- Sisters' Personal Documents
- Archives

Goal 6:

We have explored and proposed options for the future functioning of the CCA by the end of the upcoming tenure.

*Photos from the meeting*



## **Revision of our Constitutions**

The original constitutions for Discalced Carmelite Nuns were given to the nuns by St Teresa of Avila sometime after 1562. The most recent revision of these constitutions was in 1991 to adapt them to the Directives of the Second Vatican Council and the Canonical Norms in force and approved by the Apostolic See.

In 2016, Pope Francis' Apostolic Constitution – “*Vultum Dei Quaerere*” (“*Seek the Face of God*”) was addressed to Catholic women religious in contemplative communities. In March of 2018, an implementing instruction, “*Cor Orans*” (“*Praying Heart*”) was issued.

The current task is for the communities to provide their input regarding the updating of their constitutions to include the directives of “*Cor Orans*.” This is no small task! The CCA communities are currently engaged in doing this. The process will include having a representative from each Association/Federation gather in Rome in the Spring of 2024 to agree on proposed changes and updates.

## **Our Women at the Well Dialogue Series Continues**

**Breaking News from TODAY'S CATHOLIC, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023**  
**Pope Francis to publish apostolic letter on St. Thérèse of Lisieux Oct. 15**

“On board the plane taking him to Mongolia, Pope Francis announced that he is preparing an apostolic letter on St. Thérèse of Lisieux to be published Oct. 15.”



2023 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. Thérèse (Jan 2, 1873-2023). In special recognition of her anniversary, and at the request of the CCA membership, the Association Formators have planned two sessions of *Women at the Well Dialogues* devoted to exploring her spirituality more deeply with two outstanding presenters.

Sr. Mary Frohlich, RSCJ is a religious of the Sacred Heart who has been on the Catholic Theological University faculty since 1993. She is a noted scholar of Carmelite spirituality, with publications on St. Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux and John of the Cross as well as on broader issues in the tradition. In addition to teaching, Sr. Mary writes and leads workshops on Carmelite Spirituality, spirituality as an academic discipline and eco-spirituality. She will be speaking with the CCA membership on the theme of *Hope and Confidence in the writings of St. Therese*.

Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF is a Franciscan Sister of Washington, DC, and an American theologian specializing in the area of science and religion, with interests in evolution, physics and neuroscience and the import of these for theology. She relinquished a postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University in Alzheimer's research to enter a Carmelite monastery. She later left the monastery and joined a Franciscan community. While in formation with her Franciscan community, she was asked to study theology and was sent to Fordham University. She obtained a master's degree in Theology and a doctorate in historical theology, studying under Professor Ewert Cousins. Her theme in speaking with the CCA membership will be *The Divine Milieu of Therese of Lisieux*.

We are anticipating their input on Therese's spirituality with great joy!

## ***An Update on our Website***

Through the generosity of our donors, our website at [www.ccacarmels.org](http://www.ccacarmels.org) is about to undergo a major redesign. Our new website team, appointed following the April General Assembly, has been in contact with Christian Brothers Services (CBS) Website Development Team to discuss and begin the redesign process. We are hopeful that the new site will combine the best of what is on the current website with new information and capabilities that enhance its usefulness to both the public and our membership. Some of the new elements we hope to include for the public are:

- A calendar showing events at our member monasteries, which will provide opportunities for the public to participate in our prayer and spirituality, either online or in person.
- The 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of book, [Carmel in America 1790-1890: A Centennial History of Discalced Carmelites](#).
- Some information from CCA's 2023 General Assembly, our first in person assembly since 2018.
- Additional information about the history and purpose of our organization and a chance to learn more about our members.
- A "Carmelite Quote for the Day" feature and "Contemplative Focus Articles" by our sisters to provide a means for sharing our rich Carmelite heritage and nourishing the spirituality of those who visit our site.

## ***The GHR grant comes to an end.***

## ***The Shared Services Collaborative will continue.***

On December 31, 2023, the grant from the GHR Foundation which funded the Shared Services Collaborative (SSC) will conclude. These three years have been a time of great challenge and change as CCA communities evolved and Sisters strived to live out their Carmelite vocation in the midst of the COVID Pandemic.

Supported by the GHR Foundation, the Collaborative has helped to meet those challenges by engaging business and professional services to take on administrative tasks and meet changing community needs, freeing the sisters to devote more time and energy to Carmelite spiritual life.

Through the SSC, CCA communities have utilized specially discounted accounting, benefits management, insurance, IT, website, and other services on an "as-needed" basis. In a Survey conducted in 2022, the Sisters reported high levels of satisfaction with the quality and value of these services, which have continued to evolve with community needs.

IT services were especially important in maintaining communication and connection among the communities during the Pandemic. Professional technical assistance freed those sisters who had formerly served in that role to participate fully in CCA programs.

SSC initiatives for the remainder of 2023 include providing professional guidance to help community leadership develop proactive plans for the future, a critical undertaking. The SSC is also partnering with Boston College to establish a Carmelite Collection in the Repository for Catholic Religious Archives to preserve the history of CCA communities as a spiritual legacy.

Beginning January 1, 2024, the GHR Foundation grant will expire and CCA will assume full responsibility for funding this initiative. This CCA Program, will continue to provide professional support and services to sustain CCA communities as they meet the challenges and opportunities of the years ahead. Each CCA community pays for the services to which they subscribe. Additionally, CCA subscribes to services that benefit the whole association, e.g., accounting services, and is seeking financial support for them.

CCA remains deeply grateful to the GHR Foundation for its investment in the Shared Services Collaborative and Carmelite spiritual life.

<http://www.ghrfoundation.org>



## ***ShopRaise—Pennies From Heaven***

We continue to ask for your help with this.

Please help us raise funds for Carmelite Communities Associated. This year we're using the new ShopRaise app, which gives a portion back to us whenever you do your normal shopping online.

It's free and takes less than 30 seconds to get set up. Just follow their easy instructions. Simply get the app, then click on it to shop online and help us reach our fundraising goals.

Click on the link to get started. <https://shopraise.com/support/589235>

And please remember us on Giving Tuesday.



Thanks for your help. We really appreciate it!



## **In Conclusion**

And since we have staked our lives on the belief that our prayers can be at all fronts, that our prayer is a prayer without borders, we ask you once again to consider making a donation to us either by sending it to:

Sr. Barbara Losh, OCD  
Carmel of the Holy Family  
2541 Arlington Rd.  
Cleveland Hts. OH 44118

Or by using the Donate/PayPal feature on our web page at [CCACarmels.org](http://CCACarmels.org).  
Or see our web at [CCACarmels.org](http://CCACarmels.org) for planned giving opportunities.

If you would like to be dropped from this newsletter list or have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask them of Sr. Judy Murray, [judymurray@baltimorecarmel.org](mailto:judymurray@baltimorecarmel.org)

## ***A Prayer to St Therese***

Our dear St Therese, in seeking your place in the Body of Christ, you realized that LOVE comprised all vocations, that Love was everything. And you prayed with joy, “O Jesus, my Love...my vocation, at last I have found it...MY VOCATION IS LOVE!! In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be Love.”

From that special place in the heart of the Church, we beg your intercession for the Church you love, for Pope Francis and all the members of our Church, especially in this time of preparation for the Synod on Synodality. Remember all those throughout the world who have contributed to it and those who will participate in the Synod. Give them – and all of us – listening hearts and minds. May we all attend to the Spirit and to one another; give us a spirit of kindness and may love guide us as it did you.

Be with us and help us to pray for each other that the breath of the Spirit may flow through our lives!