

Closing remarks by Sr. Bernadette Therese, June 12, 2020

As a conclusion to our meeting, I want to sincerely thank each of you on behalf of the Leadership Team for your interest and your participation in this historic CCA virtual business meeting. Through zoom, many, many more CCA sisters have been able to be a part of this gathering to share our concerns and our dreams for CCA. By being here, you have helped to shape the future of CCA. Together, we accomplished a great deal: We made decisions for the next term on formation and on a shared services plan, affirmed the value of virtual gatherings, had open discussions on our Statutes, on elections, and our 50th anniversary celebration, and we refined the goals of CCA for the next term. But even more than all that we accomplished in terms of business matters, I hope that our being together, our praying together, our listening to each other, and all the happy moments of seeing and greeting each other before and after our formal meeting times were nourishing for your spirits. Through friendship and sisterly support, we have provided food for the journey for each other.

I would like to make special mention of the tremendous work that Sr. Celia Ashton has done for all of us in making these meetings possible with her technological wizardry. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude, Celia, for your very generous work in preparing everyone for these meetings. Thank you so much. We also want to acknowledge the untiring commitment of Stephanie Hauge to CCA. Stephanie has contributed her services in a huge variety of ways: as facilitator, grant writer, consultant, financial contributor, among many other things. Each of us in CCA has truly been blessed by your generous spirit, Stephanie. Thank you!

As we look to the future, I don't think anyone can deny that Carmel and CCA are at a crossroads. Our sharing has made clearer to each of us the realities that we now face. And yet we have experienced life and vitality in our coming together over the last 2 years for Women at the Well dialogues and in working together these days. This gives me great hope in knowing what is possible when we make collaboration a way of being. As we walk alongside each other toward the mystery of a unknown future, a challenge is on offer to us. It seems to me we are being called to a real shift in terms of how we think of living as Carmels and who we consider as our sisters in community. Communion cannot just be a nice word for us to use in reports and in our goals. It needs to be made real and gradually nurtured by decisions that we make with and for each other, in support of each other, outside of our individual communities.

Carmelites are the 'experts,' so to speak, of the reality of God's indwelling presence. I pray that we may rely completely on that active presence within each of us to guide us individually and communally and to give us confidence as we take each step forward through the uncertainties and changes that Carmel is undergoing. Guided by our goals, we can with characteristic Carmelite courage, determination and generosity, achieve the true communion we all desire for CCA.