

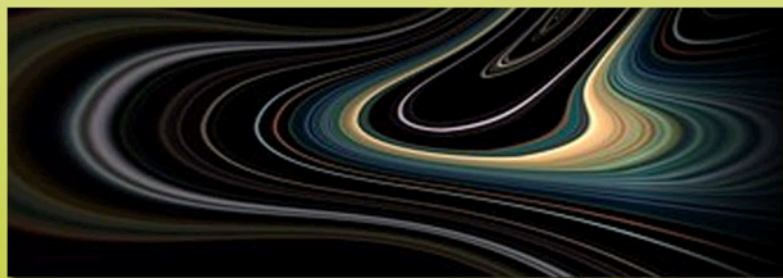


CCA Newsletter

Volume 39 Issue 2 February 2018

*E*ven though he disappeared from their sight,
once the disciples recognize
the presence of the Risen One in their midst
a new path opens for them,
indicating possibilities that before seemed nonexistent.

Saverio Cannistrà, OCD



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

MEMBER CARMELS



Sr. Michaelene Devine

Letter from the CCA Leadership Team

Dear Sisters,

During this post-Christmas season, we have a brief period of “Ordinary Time” before we plunge into Lent. As I write this we are slowly recovering from a season of hurricanes, fires, floods and bitterly cold temperatures in much of our country. At present, here in the East, we are experiencing a warm spell with the promise (or threat?) of more intense cold weather. It certainly helps to think of Spring and Easter Alleluias!

Late October saw the newer members of CCA gathering at Mt Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Falls in the mid-Hudson Valley region of New York. It was the fulfillment of a dream and a promise of continuity which was born at the first “Newer Members Gathering” at Darien, Illinois, in 2015. Heartfelt thanks to Sisters Celia Ashton, Maria Fideles Musiko and Cecelia Kang for their work in organizing every detail of this meeting. The desire was for this group of newer members to meet and share their specific journey at this point of their lives. And share they did! The meeting concluded with an even firmer commitment to continuity, stronger relationships, and greater collaboration. Each of those present was enriched by the other participants and by the excellent input given by Sisters Connie FitzGerald and Carolyn O’Hara and Fr. Daniel Chowning. You will find several interesting reports of the gathering in the following pages.

Just prior to the Newer Members Gathering, Sr. Claire attended the Mary, Queen of Carmel Association meeting in California. The coordinators (plus companion) of each of our four US associations were invited and Claire represented CCA. Our attendance at the Queen of Carmel meeting was a “first” and Claire was happy to be warmly welcomed by our sisters. In her own words....*“As usual, Fr Rafal’s input was excellent, and contributed to a very rich and personal sharing in my small group. I went away feeling inspired and enriched by my sisters.”*

The Leadership Team has been at work with preparations for our national meeting in April. It promises to be a full and rich assembly! By the time you read this newsletter, you will have already received some of our letters pertaining to the meeting which is at **Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center** in Marriottsville, MD, **15-21 of April**. We hope to see many of you there!

We in CCA have lost several special people in the last few months – Sr. Joan Williams of the Reno Carmel, Sr. Mercedes McCarthy of the Concord Carmel, Sr. Anna Kalinauskas of the Danville Carmel and Sr. Rita Donahue of the Beacon Carmel. While we rejoice in the completion of their earthly journeys and know they are in the embrace of God, every death is a loss. Each of these sisters has played a unique role in our lives – especially in the lives of those they lived with – and that role is cherished and irreplaceable. Our memories of them enrich our own journeys to the heart of God.

Many blessings to each of you as we begin our pilgrimage through Lent – to Easter!

Carmel of Our Lady and St Joseph

Boston, Massachusetts

Information, Inspiration and Prayer

On Sept. 27th we resumed our 'formal education' with Prof. Angela Kim-Harkins who returned for our ICF program. She spoke on Job. Tom Stegman, SJ came the following month to give a day on the Parables. Our next meeting was with Brian Dunkle, SJ who spoke on Augustine and Ambrose. And in



Sr. Mary Clare Doherty



**Fr. Tom Stegman, Raquelle, and
Sr. Mary from Concord**

December, Fr. Richard Lennan gave a lecture, with much discussion, on the Holy Spirit. O. Ernesto 'Neto' Valiente dealt with reconciliation in the social sphere. 'Forgiveness is necessary but not enough for reconciliation. For the latter we must face the truth, at least the part of it that we have, and act for justice. Forgiveness, enslaved as it is by our vengeance, can take time. God initiates it.' New to our roster, Professor Richard Gaillardetz, dean of the School of Theology at BC, lectured on Vatican II in a morning session and, in the afternoon, on



Netto and Sr. Mary Teresa

Christian friendship as the 'primal vocation.' The content was both thought-provoking and inspiring, and very clearly and enthusiastically delivered.

Srs. Agnes and Maria attended, and much appreciated, the CCA 'newer members' meeting in NY.

Bishop Robert Reed, who is in charge of the archdiocesan television network, and has a strong devotion to St. Therese, was the celebrant and homilist for our Mass in her honor. And Fr. Raymond Bueno, OCD, gave our public lecture on Elizabeth of the Trinity. Both experienced a very large and appreciative group in attendance.

In Oct. Randy Sachs, SJ, came up from Gloucester for our retreat. He'll return in Feb. as part of the ICFP to give a day in preparation for Lent, speaking on 'Holy Saturday in the writings of Hans Urs Von Balthasar.' For her personal retreat Mary Teresa went up north to our sisters in Lowell, Vermont and Eileen Mary went south for her retreat with our sisters in Barrington.

In November we had a prayer/reflection day with Sr. Joan Duffy, former superior general of the CSJ's.

We ask your prayers for our former pastor, Fr. Waldron, who had a fall and is very frail.

Vocation

On the Vocation front, another CSJ, Marian Batho, the archdiocesan vicar for religious, brought a group of young women, in the process of discerning a religious vocation, for an afternoon of prayer and input on our life.

Regarding vocations we've had some comings and goings. Regina from Korea and Raquelle from Rhode Island both did live-ins and we and they concluded the Lord had other plans for them. At present, however, Sr. Jean-Marie has three other young women scheduled to spend time with us in the coming months. One of these is from Sr. Marian Bathos' group.

Celebration



Sr. Catherine from Concord and Bernadette Therese at our refectory

Four of us were able to get up to Concord to attend the funeral of Sr. Mercedes who had left her very loving and caring community to go to the Lord. She will surely return the care now.

We celebrated Halloween at a dinner elegantly prepared for us by Sr. Marieleth. Some came in costume, actually most.



'Marieleth's meal

For the eleventh year in a row a group of families joined us on Thanksgiving to celebrate the Eucharist after which we had our traditional group photo. One member of the group is a professional photographer. And, as they have always done, they came laden down with an abundant Thanksgiving meal.

For the 33rd year in a row, the amalgamated parish of 'New Roads,' a name chosen after hearing Pope Francis use the phrase in a talk, brought us 20 cartons of food, their Thanksgiving offering.



Jisu at the piano

Music

At the end of December, another niece of Sr. Agnes' came to Boston to study at the Berkeley School of Music on a scholarship. Jisu stayed with us for a few days, treating us to the sound of her music at liturgy, during her practicing, and with a too brief concert. A lovely young lady of extraordinary talent, we're quite sure she will be famous someday.

Art

We recently acquired some very impressive tables. A good friend, after moving to a smaller apartment, gave us his exceedingly large, oval-shaped dining table that has settled handsomely into our recreation

room. It has six leafs!! And David, our carpenter, put the finishing touches on four lovely tables which he had made for our refectory.

Thanks Be To God

One morning, a Nigerian sister of the Congregation of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus (EHJ), who often attends Mass here, told us that three of their sisters and three aspirants had been kidnapped by pirates who had come into Nigeria. The kidnappers were demanding more money than the congregation could ever afford. It was weeks before her superior general called to say that one sister who was sick was released and the others had managed to escape unharmed.



Sr. Marie Elizabeth Krug

Carmel of the Assumption Latrobe, Pennsylvania

As I write this, we are in the midst of a cold and frozen space, rather unusual for us, as our last several winters have been mild. We share this climate with many in the country, along with those who are ill prepared for the colder weather. Our empathies are with them especially, as we pray that the warmer areas of our country that depend on fruit crops and other growing things for their livelihood will not be harmed.

We lost another of our daily Mass attendees, a dear woman and friend of many years. She was a woman of biblical fidelity and faith, admired by many. She was left a widow with three young children more than thirty years ago. Her son is mentally challenged and she had been his faithful caregiver. Right before Thanksgiving she brought us a tray of her nut and poppy seed rolls that she usually gives us for Christmas. Her son was due for surgery and she wasn't sure she would have time to do them in December. The Sunday after Thanksgiving *she* was taken to the hospital for emergency surgery. They found her full of cancer and she went home to the Lord that Wednesday. Please remember her son in your prayers. He is presently being cared for by his two elder sisters and a niece, but he doesn't want to leave his home and the sisters are both married with their own households. Our Chapel gets emptier with each passing and no one seems to come to replace those we lose.

Advent and Christmas were short and uneventful. This means that no one was ill and we were all able to enjoy the festivities and celebrate this great Mystery. Our OCDS group had their Christmas party on the second Sunday of December. This is the one occasion we try to join them, when they sing some Christmas carols. Because of the cold weather and snow, we had fewer visitors and so had time to leisurely enjoy each others' company, read the community Christmas cards and share the Christmas photos of our families, mostly grand-nieces and nephews.

2018 began, as each New Year does, by our silent Holy Hour in Chapel. At midnight we sing the Salve Regina to greet Our Lady on her feast, then wish each other a blessed New Year before we retire.

Our Epiphany cake was cut and distributed and yielded our patroness for the year, St. Mary of Jesus Crucified, for the third time in a row. She was our patroness the year she was canonized and we think she may have a special affinity for us, since we prayed she would be canonized. We are privileged to have a large piece of her habit, which is framed, along with her icon on one of the walls of our Monastery.

The first Friday in February is our Eucharistic Day, ending with a public Holy Hour with Evening Prayer and Benediction. We transferred the Holy Hour from 7 p.m. since it is easier for one of the Benedictine Fathers to get here to preside for the special service. This year we had Fr. John-Paul, one of the newer members of St. Vincent.

Please remember Sr. Mary's mother, Cecilia Wild, in your prayers. She is recovering from a mild heart attack. Our county is second worst in the State for flu cases and all those who are afflicted need prayers, especially the young. A blessed Lenten season to all.

Carmel of the Queen of Heaven

Eldridge, Iowa

In Eldridge, we experienced a quiet Christmas this year. On a happy note, the Kahl Home Sisters gave us a surprise gift for our Christmas Feast, which we very much enjoyed.

Our new Bishop Thomas Zinkula comes out to say Mass once a month. He has interesting insights into the gospel and we especially appreciate his sermons.



Bishop Zinkula

Recently he came for an evening Mass and stayed for supper with us. He listened to the stories of our vocations and told us about his own call to the priesthood.

This winter has been especially cold with wind chills of minus 25 – 30 degrees below zero some nights. We remember to thank God for the sisters that came before us (Sr. Mary Jo and Sr. Rozanne) who had the wisdom to plant trees for a wind break. Otherwise the house would be cold indeed. In fact, outside the refectory on the deck the raccoons have given up, but the possums are persistent along with a legion of birds.

Concerning some of the people in community, Sr. Lynne continues to recover. Sr. Jeannette Celebrated 50 Years in Carmel on the Feast of St. Teresa. Sr. Carol spent two months at Baltimore Carmel. Upon returning she said that she very much enjoyed the visit. Sr. JonFe is on a family visit with her mother in the Philippines. Her Amaryllis sure brighten up our otherwise overcast February days.

Wishing all of our Sisters in CCA a good winter and a Blessed Lent and Easter Season!



Sr. Miriam Hogan



Sr. Jeannette



Sr. Roseann Gillice

Carmel of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Therese Barrington, Rhode Island

The weather forecast for Rhode Island was a mild winter. So far, two snow storms and a dusting today fell upon us. The first storm knocked out the electric power for most people about six days and more. Fortunately, we had partial power after one or two days of none. The second storm was a little friendlier. The snow was soft and the winds were high leaving the wires more free to do their thing allowing everyone to have electricity. The water of the Bay near the shore line was frozen.

The Spanish Community came, as has been our custom, to celebrate Our Holy Mother's Office of Readings with us. Some time ago their own parish closed and they joined another. As a community, though, they now have a Spanish-speaking priest from Ecuador as a chaplain so that has been a joy for them. He had connections with Carmel and loves Teresa and was at home coming here knowing only a little English.

Some of us visited Mary Gehring for Teresa's feast. She still cannot articulate what she is thinking, but she can surely make connections. We showed her a paper with OHM's picture and the Bookmark. Mary said, "If we do that, then everything will be good."! She even read some of the Spanish words. Recently, it has become more difficult for Mary to swallow food or liquids; she's now on palliative care. Linda Polselli, her friend of many years, visits her faithfully. Once Linda arrived with a cup of coffee she had been drinking. She greeted Mary and asked if she knew her name. Mary looked up, paused and said, "Honey." Linda



Sr. Mary and nephew, Joe; Linda Polselli, Mary's friend, Joe and his wife, Patti

laughed and asked if she knew her last name. Mary said, "Dew". They joined together in laughter. Mary's nephew Joe and his wife Patti came to see her at St. Elizabeth's after their return from Florida to their home in Connecticut. As you can see from the pictures.

During the second half of October, Fr. Andre

Brouillette, S.J., was our guide and companion on our Pilgrimage, the theme of our retreat. It was truly a

time of prayer and desert silence filled with peace; entering into the Scriptures is an experience of being at home with the Trinity and all creation. Father Andre belongs to the Jesuit Canadian Province, but teaches at Boston College. We learned about him through our Secular Order members. The son of one of the members attended his classes on Teresa at BC and recommended him to his Mother for one of their meetings. Andre also gave some of the talks at Boston Carmel during the inter-formation lectures. He is listed in the “Now You Know” series.

Our sister Eileen will be leaving us soon to return to Bethlehem to her Carmel of origin (and her home town) for three months with the hope of a permanent transfer. At the end of last October, the prioress of Bethlehem Carmel (a French sister) spoke with Eileen ‘on Skype’ to tell her that if she would like to return to Bethlehem Carmel she is welcome. Many of you know, 18 years ago Eileen and all the sisters of her community in Bethlehem were told to leave their Monastery (no reason given, no explanation). They transferred to other Carmels; a group of Polish nuns were brought to form a new community. Today the Carmel is rather an international community, like the other Carmels in the Holy Land. We will miss Eileen very much and are so sad for us, but we are glad for her.

Please pray for Sr. Patricia’s brother, Jack Keilty, who died recently. He was Patricia’s younger brother, 94, and beloved by all.

May we find each other in the Heart of Christ and grow in the New Year in love and trust.

Carmel of the Sacred Heart Baltimore, Maryland

Your sisters in Baltimore send greetings to you all and hope you’ve had a blessed Christmas season. As always we have been busy with seasonal activities but several dates on the calendar which changed from 2017 to 2018 are standout times for us so we surely want to share news of these events with you.

October started wonderfully as we large crowds for our celebrations of St. Therese and OHM St. Teresa. The Sunday morning congregations had some lovely comments after the liturgies and seemed inspired to do their own reading and study of these two great saints. As the Fall 2017 semester began we had gotten the word around Goucher College, located right up the street, that we would be willing and happy to provide transportation to any students who wanted to come to our Sunday liturgy. Right away we’ve had four to six students attending. We are really beginning to know them, and they are quite devoted to our larger worship community. Also in October was Benedictine Sister Jo-El McLaughlin’s Final Profession of Vows. This is the third major Benedictine celebration we were delighted to host in our chapel as their Monastery chapel is not large enough for these public events.



Sr. Leah Hargis

Just after OHM's feast we were joined for Vespers one evening by a group of Presbyterian women. It was a joy to have such prayerful women join us for the evening prayer. Also, in mid-October Sr. Angela Reed, RSM, who is the Sisters of Mercy representative at the United Nations presented a program about her work with women in the Philippines who have been trafficked. This program helped us better understand what is happening and how these women are helped to healthier lives. In the midst of this very busy month we hosted an afternoon of Carmelite Prayer and Reflection for young women. We introduced our way of life and prayer and they experienced our community prayer through attendance at our Vespers. Finally, at the end of the month, six of our sisters attended the Newer/Younger sisters meeting near Beacon Carmel. When our sisters returned they were filled with enthusiasm and even deeper passion for our Carmelite life.



Community with Sisters from Kirkintilloch

As November rolled around we were thrilled to host 3 visiting sisters from Scotland who had attended the meeting in Beacon. Our guests shared their experiences of the meeting and of the vital connections between their British, Scottish and Irish Carmels. Our bonds with these sisters will last and we were sorry when our sisters left although we know the communication between us will continue.

Our Learning Festival was a slightly shorter-than-usual week for our own community planning and process as well as some wonderful guest lectures.

Sr. Kathy Duffy, SSJ, spoke to us about physics and

spirituality in the life and writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Dr. Claire Matthews-McGinnis, a professor of theology at Loyola University, Baltimore, spoke about Mary and the life and prayer of St. Ignatius. Our last presentation of the Festival was given by Diane Barr, JD, our Archdiocesan Chancellor, on ministry to transgender Catholics. We had an opportunity to view and discuss the very fine Frontline documentary on transgender children. Finally, on one morning of the Festival, many of our sisters traveled just around the corner from our road to the Mormon Church. A committee of the Mormon women had been in touch and suggested that we work together on one of their outreach programs—preparing sandwiches for a Catholic-sponsored soup kitchen. Our sisters were happy to have been able to participate and had invited the women to attend our John of the Cross Vigil in December. (Three women attended and expressed gratitude for the prayer experience.) The last 2 days of the Festival were community process days. Sr. Connie Gilder, SSJ, returned to help us with a community decision-making scheme via contemplative dialogue. Toward the end of November we hosted the sixth grade classes from St. Ignatius Loyola Academy and Loyola Blakefield for a service day. After a Mass the boys, somewhat guided by our own sisters, helped rake and dump the leaves in the front and back of our property. This day always shows us how youthful enthusiasm can help get the job done.

December was a colder than normal month and we all lamented the short Advent season. Our Candlelight Vigil service for St. John of the Cross was beautiful and well attended. Along with our choir pieces, we were pleased to have our accompanist, Jackie Stokes, along with Sara Nichols, flautist and Suzanne Chadwick,

mezzo-soprano provide some lovely music in addition to the exquisite readings from St. John's Romances. For the evening of St. John's feast several of our sisters attended the annual celebration of the feast at Whitefriar's Hall in D.C. The hospitality of our friars is always such a joy! Christmas and New Year's celebrations were joyful as well and we even had some snow along the way.

As 2018 burst upon the scene Connie went to the Carmelite Study Week at Whitefriar's Hall to share her work on prayer in the Carmelite tradition. Unfortunately we have not escaped the cold-cough-flu thing



2017 Xmas Connie and Luisa; Mary Eileen Birthday

and so we've taken extra precautions in the house and at our liturgies. As I write this we have just emerged from our winter community retreat. Sr. Sandra Schneiders was with us for daily conferences on the topic of the resurrection in the Gospel of John. It was a privilege to have this time of prayer and study with this extraordinary scholar in the midst of the quiet of winter.

Carmel of the Incarnation Beacon, New York

For our community retreat in October, we had three days of input by Fr. Joseph Chalmers, O.Carm. We had appreciated his homily on Our Holy Mother at the closing of her quincentenary, and were happy to have him back. He spoke on Carmelite living.



Fr. Joseph Chalmers

On October 18, one of our Redemptoristine sisters, Sr. Mary Anne Reed, died. Those of us who lived in the Bronx had known Mary Anne and treasured her friendship for over 40 years. She had been at Lourdes Health Care Center, where our Sr. Jeannie resides.

At the end of October, Sr. Michaelene and I left for the Newer Members Meeting in nearby Wappingers Falls, Michaelene as a leadership team member and I as facilitator and speaker. You will undoubtedly be receiving enthusiastic reports of this meeting; there was a wonderful energy



Sr. Carolyn O'Hara

operating. Here in Beacon, we welcomed Srs. Celia and Constance of Baltimore and Fr. Daniel Chowning two days early, so that Connie, Daniel and I could work together. Other members of the group came in on various days and at all hours to the Beacon hotel and airport service! A highlight of the meeting was the afternoon and evening visit to our Carmel.



The Beacon community with the Newer Members Group

December 10, we had a farewell party for our good friend, Fr. Bill Drobach, SA. A Graymoor Franciscan, Bill was moving from being director of St. Christopher's Inn, a facility for homeless and substance addicted men, to being novice master for the community. Bill and several other friars brought a wonderful supper so that all we had to do was enjoy it. The novitiate is in Assisi and we hear that Bill now says Mass in Italian with a Spanish accent!

A little later in December we had our usual concert of carols by the parish confirmation class – they visit the “shut-ins”! It is good to see so many children preparing for the sacrament.

You know already from Sr. Michaelene's message that Christmas morning began with Sr. Rita's falling and

breaking her arm. Her recovery went well until she developed shingles which went into sepsis and meningitis. We did not think she would survive, but to the astonishment of the medical people, she has begun to get better. We are most grateful for your prayer for her. Please keep remembering her.



Srs. Rita and Pat, Fr. Bill, Srs. Michaelene, Marjorie and Maria Paz

As is probably true of most of you, we were looking forward to our three quiet days before the New Year. The first opened at 5:15 a.m. with the fire alarm going off. The temperature outside was around zero, so we

huddled in two rooms with outer doors but without the alarm. In short order, about 18 nuns in bathrobes were joined by about a dozen large men in full fire gear traipsing through the building. Nothing wrong was found. Then the New Year itself was rung in at 2:50 a.m. with a repeat rendition of the fire alarm. Again, nothing wrong found. After a third alarm and lengthy inspection by the alarm company, the only conclusion was that the extreme cold must have done something to the system. (Florida is looking good.)

As our community continues to experience the consequences of our aging, we decided to consult Sr. Mary Hughes, OP. LCWR had been given a large grant to work with communities in transition, and Mary, a former president of LCWR, was chosen to do this work. It has become her full time ministry, and she now has broad experience of different communities, both contemplative and apostolic. She met first with the council, then on January 31 with the whole community. We began a dialogue on our strengths and vulnerabilities, and what might have to change. It was a good beginning, and she thanked us for our “stunning” honesty. Pray for us as we continue this process.

Carmel of the Resurrection Oldenburg, Indiana

“Our Chronicler, Jean Alice, is recovering from recent hand surgery. As we have no real news, we simply wish everyone a holy and happy New Year. We look forward to sharing about ourselves in the next newsletter.”



Sr. Jean McGoff



Sr. Maria Viatori

Carmel of the Holy Family Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Carmelite Saints

In baseball terms we had a triple header with Father Mike Woost celebrating the feasts of Saints Therese, Teresa of Jesus, and John of the Cross with our worshipping community. Whenever Mike preaches on Carmelite Saints, you sense his intimate friendship with them because he literally mines the treasures that are deep in the recesses of Carmelite Spirituality.

Newer Members Meeting

Michaelene and Deana from Beacon deserve medals of valor for their perseverance in battling the torrential rain storm and plane changes to pick up Donna at Newark Airport for the Newer Members Meetings at Mount Alvernia. Donna greatly enjoyed the input and camaraderie and looks forward to future sessions with the group.

Moving Forward

December 1, 2017, marked the day when our community received the keys to our new home. Barb has been inundated with details as we look forward to moving sometime in the late spring of 2018. Thank you for praying for us as the process and transition continues through the winter months. We are grateful to the members of our Advisory Committee who have generously given countless hours of service in house hunting, judging construction options, giving legal counsel, negotiating contract terms, giving financial

advice, and contacting appropriate tradespeople. We also are indebted to our Carmelite Guild for their many decades of steadfast support.



Srs. Donna, Barb., Mary K. & Maria at the new house



Srs. Pat O'Brien, Mary K., & Bernadette at Thanksgiving Celebration

Our Sisters at Regina Health Center

Our sisters received a wonderful surprise a week before Christmas. The sisters from Jackson Carmel sent them a festive rum cake. The activity director of Regina called one day to inform us of the delivery. Anne Joan, Vera Lea, and Pat Conway had a lovely Christmas Tea Celebration thanks to the thoughtfulness of our sisters in Jackson.

Our entire community was together for a special Christmas afternoon visit. Bernadette brought her famous potica for the sisters and we celebrated with our traditional reading of Christmas sayings. It was a rich blessing to celebrate and experience the great bond of our Teresian community.

Implementing Something New

With all the busyness and shifting schedules of these months Barb recognized the need to hire a part-time person that had experience in elder care to be a consistent presence to our sisters at Regina Health Center. Jean has been a friend to our community for years and jumped at the chance to assist us. We continue our weekly visits with our sisters, and Jean on her Friday sessions is engaged in practical aspects of daily living.

Welcoming Bishop Nelson Perez

On January 5, 2018, we welcomed Bishop Nelson Perez to the monastery. We were delighted to have him for morning coffee and Bernadette's potica. All the sisters commented that we felt so much at home with our new Bishop. Our conversation and dialogue was truly warm, friendly, open, and honest. The Bishop asked us what we felt the Diocese of Cleveland needed. Our resounding response was that his pastoral presence and care for the people already proved to be a positive step in the right direction as we walk together on our journey of faith.



Srs. Bernadette, Mary K. Donna, Pat O'Brien & Barb with Bishop Nelson Perez

Sending on our Prayers of Support

We continue to remember our sisters in Concord and Reno as they traverse through this sacred time and give praise and thanks for the lives of Sisters Mercedes and Joan Williams.

Carmel of Our Lady of the Mountains Reno, Nevada

Late fall and into the winter this year has been a whirlwind of activity and



Srs. from Scotland on our ground tour;
Johann, Jenny, Dorothy

developments for us in Reno. Just after our last newsletter went to press, and after attending the newer members meeting, we had the joy of having our sisters from Kirkintilloch, Scotland visit us. We had wonderful exchanges about how to live Carmel in meaningful and fruitful contemporary expressions. The dialogue has been continuing. What a gift! On their return home to Scotland, they had celebrated an "American Thanksgiving" at their Carmel. We of course, had to respond in kind with a real Scottish St. Andrew's day party: complete with plaids, ethnic food, native prayers and all. Great fun!



Sr. Marie-Louise

Sisters Cecelia and SaRa shared their experiences and impressions about the newer members meeting at the end of October with the whole community here. The energy was palpable even second hand. We were so encouraged by the wonderful spirit and enthusiasm for Carmel that was so obvious. There is much life and love for Carmel here and we pray it will continue to grow.



Sr. SaRa at the New Members Meeting

CCA has always been happy to welcome our Carmelite nuns from other Associations to our meetings over the years, so we were particularly happy that Sr. Claire was able to accept the Queen of Carmel Association's invitation to their association meeting this fall. It was a positive experience for all. Especially after our St. Louis meeting ties between and among us seem to keep growing.

November began with our Annual Open House event. We display and sell our Christmas and all occasion cards, original art by Sisters Sara and Carol, music and CD's are always popular. They enjoy hearing about the history of our community here in Reno and love the prayerful ambience of the chapel. We ended the day with a prayer service for our beloved dead, and left their names under the altar in our prayer basket remembering them particularly during the month of November. Several hundred people come each year and our volunteer helpers tell us they wouldn't miss it.

Sr. Claire attended a 1-day workshop in Milwaukee hosted by the Religious Formation Conference: **Re-Imaging Formation for Religious Life for the Future: A Sociological and Theological Analysis of Religious Life in the United States Today** by Mary Johnson, SNDdeN and Sandra Schneiders, IHM. Claire was interested in what CCA might be able to glean from their experience and insight. She came away encouraged by the prospect of partnering with apostolic religious communities in formation endeavors equally relevant to contemplatives.

It seems that from Thanksgiving to New Year's has almost been a blur for us here. So much has happened that has been major for our community. We have had a number of sisters with major family illnesses, and so our prayer intention list has been even more full than usual. Then on Dec. 8th our dear Sr. Joan Williams was returning from a medical appointment and was in an automobile accident. Due to her age and frail condition she did not survive and died early the next morning. The emergency room doctors and nurses were wonderful, as was the policeman who brought her in with the ambulance. They let all the sisters stay around her bed in the ER and we could all pray there and sing the "Salve". Even though she was not conscious, we all had the sense that she "knew" we were all there with her.



Sr. Joan Williams

We celebrated Joan's life with God with her funeral Mass on December 14th. Her only surviving relatives (cousins, nephew, etc.) are in the Midwest, and could not attend, but were definitely present in spirit. The chapel was packed and the celebration joyous. Bishop Calvo's homily was masterful in the way he wove Joan's "Growing Free" book into the scripture readings and it captured her spirit well. Memories and tributes about the contribution Joan made to people's spiritual life and growth abounded both at the vigil and at sharing after Bishop Calvo's homily. We shared a wonderful lunch and spirited conversation after Mass. Joan would have enjoyed it all.

We went directly from Joan's celebration into full gear for Christmas, while writing thank you letters and corresponding with all her many friends. It was wonderful to celebrate the joy of Christmas knowing that Joan was in heaven to enjoy it. Our chapel was full to overflowing with our "regulars" and all their families near and far. As usual the liturgy was beautiful and we had the added gift of Claire's sister Anne Sokol Philpott's violin for music along with our own musicians. Claire had her cello, Roz on keyboard and Rosey on recorder.

We closed 2017 with a lovely New Year's Eve Peace Vigil that Roz prepared, and we opened this up to any of our worshipping community who wanted to come. A combination of music, prayer, and silent prayer, it was very well received.

January 5-6 we had our annual Diocesan Religious Education Conference. Carmel of Reno has a booth there where we sell our cards and have a chance to visit with many of the lay ministers and volunteers throughout the diocese of Northern Nevada. We also attend a variety of workshops and lectures. It's a wonderful way to both support the diocese and keep in touch with the wider community.

Carmel of Our Lady and St. Joseph

Concord, New Hampshire

Greetings, Sisters! I write this letter on the last day of a cold and stormy January, which came in like a lion (in imitation of its younger sibling, March) with sub-zero temperatures and snow. Although we shivered and moved our Liturgy of the Hours out of an under-heated choir upstairs to the oratory, this season does bring much beauty. I am including two pictures from the ice storm last week for your shivery enjoyment. Fortunately, the storm did not knock the power out in Concord.



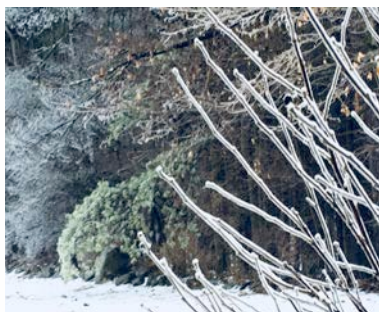
Sr. Hilary Case

Many of you have heard that just short of her 93rd birthday, Sister Mercedes of the Blessed Sacrament, formerly our organist and choir director, died at Mount Carmel Nursing Home on November 21st. We were not able to be with her as she died, but several of us had visited her in the days just preceding her death. Although Mercedes could no longer speak, she could smile with her eyes, and she knew us very well. Her caregiver at Mount Carmel told us that she died very peacefully, as she had lived during her last years. Many times the staff at Mount Carmel told us how cheerful and positive Sister Mercedes was. We miss her, but we are proud of her loving spirit and her courage. She is an example for all of us.

Sister Mercedes' Funeral Mass was held on November 29th in our chapel. Our chaplain, Fr. Maurice Abasilim, presided, and Fr. Jerome Day, OSB gave the homily. We were glad to see some of our friends and sisters from Boston Carmel, who always support us with their friendship and their good singing voices-- many thanks! Fr. David Centner, OCD represented the Brighton Friars, an act of real generosity since he had newly arrived to serve that community. Because Sister Mercedes comes from a large and equally supportive family and because she had many friends in the neighborhood, we held the reception and lunch at St. Peter's Parish Center rather than at the monastery. The whole day was solemn, yet warm and festive because Sister Mercedes was much loved. We were celebrating her life-journey, from East Boston to New York City to Rome and eventually to the Land of Carmel, where she flourished here on earth and continues to flourish in Jesus' presence now in new and mysterious ways.

We also want to share some Initial Formation news. Our transfer sisters, Mary and Katharine, are enjoying their trips to Boston Carmel for inter-formation classes. The lectures, often given by professors from Boston College, have been excellent. Thanks are due Sister Mary Teresa, who coordinates this program.

In November, Sisters Claudette and Hilary went to Milwaukee to attend the Religious Formation Congress. The presenters included Sr. Mary Pat Garvin, RSM, Mary Johnson, SND de N, and Sandra Schneiders, IHM. We found ourselves in a sea of sisters, more than two hundred, in a huge hotel: Claudette's room was in a far corner of the 17th floor, and Hilary's room was just across from the elevator on the 12th floor. We weren't exactly next-door neighbors! However, we felt welcomed by the hotel staff and energized by the other sisters. In fact, the sisters of the Congress, who came from many different federations and congregations, welcomed us *as contemplatives*. They showed a strong interest in sharing resources and collaborating with contemplative sisters in the future, and we plan to retain ties with the Congress in ways that are appropriate for us.



Our back cloister just after the ice storm of January 16th

In December, as part of their monthly meeting at the monastery, the OCDS treated us to a Christmas potluck lunch. It's always fun to chat with them and to eat special food that we would not ordinarily cook for ourselves. Also, during December and January, the time when our chaplain, Fr. Maurice, takes a home leave in Nigeria, several other priests of our Deanery substituted for him at our daily Masses. We were moved by their brotherly spirit; they seemed to enjoy being with us and they came in all the weather January dished out: snow, freezing rain, and extreme cold.

This brings us up to our internal and external preparations for the season of Lent. May God bless all of you abundantly and grant you good health. More news next time!

Carmel of the Sacred Heart and of the Holy Face Danville, Pennsylvania

It seems that the most talked about event now is the frigid weather, with the flu epidemic a close second. One wise elderly gentleman quipped to us. Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it! As for the flu, by God's goodness we have been spared thus far.



Sr. Angela Pikus



Asela Calvert, OCDS

Friends from our days in Elysburg continue to keep in touch and visit. In September, two sisters, one from Virginia and one from Maryland, drove up for their annual fall visit with a trunk load of food and supplies. We had an interesting conversation with them and they confided prayer intentions to us.

Fr. Jose Markalonis, TOR, retired from the Franciscan missions in Brazil, stopped by for an afternoon visit in September. He has been a friend for decades and his visits are both enjoyable and informational.

Our Secular Carmelites continue to grow. In December Lesley Murphy made her Temporary Promises; in January Asela Calvert made her Definitive Promises. In their ongoing formation class, the whole group completed a lengthy study of The Story of a Soul and then began The Dark Night. The group is closely knit and is in its 63rd year.

Our Community is concluding a 24 part DVD series on the New Testament by Prof. Bart Ehrman of the U. of North Carolina. Each segment brings some new and/or deeper insight into the topic - the emphases of the four evangelists in the writing of each Gospel, the Greco-Roman context, the great missionary Paul and his letters, the letters of Peter and the beginning of persecution, Revelation and the genre that it belongs to, etc. It's a wonderful course with accompanying text, in the comfort of our Community room!



Sr. Margaret admiring the Christmas tree

Christmas was, as usual, festive, colorful and joyful. A prelude to it, the feast of St. Nicholas, brought the keeping of a tradition among the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius. Each Sister was to put outside her door on the evening of December 5th a shoe/sandal. Next morning she found St. Nicholas had come, leaving a bag of goodies – nectarine, candies, cookies. No one found coal.

And the passing to God of our Sister Anna on January 5th. Sister had lived four years in Nazareth Memory Center and then transferred to Emmanuel Center for skilled care. Her death from a stroke after three days of unconsciousness was peaceful. Since she had been an extern Sister for 16 years in the Elysburg monastery, she was known to many people. The Chapel was practically full for her funeral. The three concelebrants for the Mass of Christian Burial had been personal friends of hers, one of them from teen age years, another as a spiritual directee in his high school years and the third as a newly ordained priest. Family members came from Texas and South Carolina.



Sr. Anna's title was "of the Holy Face" and the Scripture readings for the Mass were the readings for the Transfiguration, the day she chose as her feast day. The homilist phrased well the ending of the homily, a prayer of his and ours, "Rest in peace, dear Anna. Rest in peace and behold for all eternity the glory of God, shining on the face of Jesus."



Sr. Anna

Sr. Anna's funeral Mass; Fr. Chester Snyder, V., Rev. John Kemper, S.S., and Fr. Gerard Heintzelman, our chaplain

Carmel of the Mother of God San Rafael, California

Dearest Sisters of CCA,

Greetings to all our dear Sisters! At the beginning of Autumn, on the night of October 8th and the morning of October 9th, four huge fires broke out about 40 miles north of our Monastery, which eventually was called the



Sr. Anna Marie Vanni

Northern California firestorm. The Northern California fires killed almost 50 people and hospitalized at least 185. 250,000 acres were burnt and an estimated 8,900 structures were destroyed. We prayed for all the first responders, fire fighters, and people who lost their homes, families and businesses. Firefighters and Police came from many neighboring counties and states to help with all the fires, which went on for weeks. Finally, on October 31st, the last of the fires were contained. We can't thank all of you enough for your prayers of protection and concern during all these fires. We were so fortunate that the small fires that were started close by, in Marin County, were immediately put out. Then, in early December, the Southern California fires began and raged until January 12th. We prayed again for everyone fighting the fires and fleeing from the fires. We especially prayed for our family and



Mother Dolores' 95th Birthday Party

friends in Southern California and those of our Sisters in other Carmels of other States.

On October 15th, we had a wonderful celebration of Mother Dolores' 95th Birthday! Her nephew, Father Blaise

Berg, offered the Mass, the Solemnity of St. Teresa of Jesus and many of our friends and Mother's family members, came to share in this wonderful event. Our last count was 5 different Birthdays cakes, baked and brought especially for this special day!! Mother Dolores had a great time and is still reminiscing about the past 95 years!!!

We were very privileged to have Sr. Clare Marie from the Finland Carmel and Mother Anne and Sr. Victoria from the Armstrong, British Columbia Carmel with us on October 22-23. They were on their way to the San Damiano Retreat House in Danville, for the Mary, Queen of Carmel Association Assembly Meeting. Then, after the Meeting, Mother Marie Therese and Sr. Therese Marie from the Clinton Township, Michigan Carmel, came for a wonderful visit as well. It was such a blessing to catch up on all the news and reminisce about our past visits.

On October 27th, we had very special visit with Fr. Rafal Wilkowski, OCD, the Carmelite Secretary for the Nuns. He was attending the Mary, Queen of Carmel Assembly Meeting and tried to visit as many Carmels in the area as possible. We thanked him profoundly for his outstanding presentation given to us the previous April on the Apostolic Constitution Vultum Dei Quaerere, and for all his wonderful service to the Nuns.

We had a delightful visit with the Jesuit Scholastics from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley (JST). Deacon Oscar Momanyi, SJ, from Kenya; Father James Moro, SJ, from Uganda; Father Sirano Dimeni Emde, SJ, from Congo Brazzaville and Sr. Maureen, SMK, from Kenya were happy to share their different vocation stories with us. We promised our prayerful support for all their studies.

Right after their visit, Sr. Immaculate went into Retreat to prepare for her Solemn Profession of Vows on December 8th. She stayed in our "Redwoods Hermitage" and shared later that it was a very blessed and peace-filled time with the Lord.

Mother Dolores was thrilled to have her niece, Carol Ann Felldin come for a nice long visit with her and the community. We all enjoy her visits very much. She has studied very hard for her physical therapist degree and is now working in this field as a vocation in later life. Carol Ann and Mother thoroughly enjoy each other's company and sharing about their wonderful family.

December 1st brought Sr. Immaculate's Mother, Syprose, and Aunt Hellen from Kenya to stay for Sr. Immaculate's Solemn Profession. It was such a special blessing to have them for an entire month! They enjoyed their stay, even though it was very much colder here than they were used to in Kenya!



Sr. Immaculate's Solemn Profession with family and friends

Now, we knew we were getting close to this very grace-filled event: the Solemn Profession! All the Sisters worked very hard getting ready the Chapel, Choir and Refectory. Sr. Mary Anne, our interior decorator, seemed to be everywhere at once! She decorated Sister's candle and the Choir Altar, the Chapel Altar, and the entire Refectory!

At last, the great day dawned, December 8th, the Immaculate Conception of Mary. We had the joy of having Bishop Patrick Joseph McGrath, the Bishop of San Jose, as the main celebrant, with 11 other Priests concelebrating. Over 150 people came to share our joy! The Parish Choir and Organist came to help with the music and many of our friends helped out with the flowers, and setup for the reception afterwards. They generously brought delicious food and desserts to augment what we had prepared. It turned out to be a banquet.

The Bishop's homily was wonderful and inspiring. His love for the contemplative life was very evident: "In a special way, God has chosen Sister Immaculate to live a life of love while professing the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience to Christ, her spouse. Like Mary, it was God who first chose her, and like Mary, she has responded wholeheartedly to that call...Religious profession is a commitment to a person, to Christ, the only meaning in life, the one who died so that he would give life...It is getting to know how the Lord thinks and feels. It is sharing his values. It is caring about the things he cared about. It is cultivating an awareness of his presence. It is sharing your life with him and allowing him to share his life with you. God has chosen all of us. Like Mary, we are challenged to say "yes." He has a role for each of us. He waits for our "yes" that puts our freedom at his service. Let's think about it."

Our Christmas Eve Mass was offered by Father Pepin Dandou, a good friend from Congo Brazzaville, who is studying English and Spanish to do Parish work in our Archdiocese. Father also offered our Christmas Day Mass as well. He loves to sing and composed a very special hymn to baby Jesus. So, after singing the entire

Mass, he led us in his hymn to the newborn King. We all joined in, joyfully singing to the Lord on his Birthday.

The Christmas spirit continued with a visit from our dear friend, Father Ray Reyes, the Vicar for Priests in our Archdiocese, who loves to come at Christmas time to offer Mass and then have a Christmas Carol sing-a-long! Three other Priests came with him: our Pastor, Fr. Mark Reburiano, our Parochial Vicar, Father Samuel Musiimenta and Father Pepin Dandou, as mentioned above. We all had a great time singing our favorite Carols.

We had several wonderful visits from Sr. Christine, from Uganda. Sister runs a grammar school of 780 students in a very poor area of Uganda. She was here to visit the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, who have several schools in the area, as well as the University. She was able to visit all the schools and shared her view that here in the U.S., the students are able to do a lot of study on their own with their computers and that their teachers guide them. Whereas in Uganda, without computers, the teacher is the only one with the knowledge and the students are waiting to receive it. She also shared that the parents of the students are too poor to afford any school supplies, uniforms or lunches for their children. We, along with our dear friends, were able to help out by supplying her with several suitcases full of school supplies, for which she was very grateful. She promised pictures of the children with their new supplies and their prayers for all of us.



Christmas Carol sing-a-long!

We all send our greetings to everyone in our Association and pray that this coming Lenten Season be one of great grace! Much love and prayers, your Sisters in the San Rafael Carmel