



CCA Newsletter

Volume 37 Issue 2 February 2016

How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy,
so that we can go out to every man and woman,
bringing the goodness and tenderness of God!

Pope Francis, BULL OF THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

RENO

BEACON

BOSTON

LATROBE

CONCORD

ELDRIDGE

DANVILLE

CLEVELAND

BALTIMORE

SAN RAFAEL

OLDENBERG

BARRINGTON

MEMBER CARMELS

*Forever
I will sing your mercies. St. Teresa*

Letter from the CCA Leadership Team

Greetings from your CCA Leadership Team. As I write, January is drawing to a close, and Lent looms on the horizon. The Deadline for our Newsletter Contributions is February 10th, Ash Wednesday, and by the time you receive this Newsletter, we will have entered into the season of Lent. At this time, the second circular letter issued by CICLSAL to consecrated men and women in 2015, *Keep Watch*, would be a good source of reflection. This letter takes its departure from Ex 40: 36-38:



Sr. Hilary Case

*At every stage of their journey,
wherever the cloud rose from the tabernacle, the people of Israel would resume their march.
If the cloud did not rise, they waited and would not march until it did.
For the cloud of the LORD rested on the tabernacle by day,
and a fire shone within the cloud by night, for all the House of Israel to see.
And so it was for every stage of their journey.*

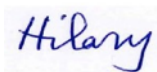
The authors reflect that the Exodus, the very passage we make symbolically during Lent, suggests our situation as religious: our highs and lows, our openness to new possibilities and our refusals, our dedication and our murmuring and backsliding, and above all, our need to move forward when the cloud of the Lord moves and to wait when the cloud of the Lord stops and our direction is not clear.

Sisters Claire and Bernadette Therese have just returned from Rome, where they listened to talks and met with contemplative sisters from all over the world. On February 3rd, they joined the other Discalced Carmelite Sisters in a meeting with Fr. Saverio and members of the Definitory. Fr. Daniel Chowning met them and showed them through St. Peter's Basilica on their first day. All of this marks much progress in relationships among different areas of the Church: CICLSAL's invitation to the nuns, the nuns' willingness to gather, the Generalate's warm welcome. Moreover, Pope Francis welcomed the Sisters on February 1st; this event is historic. The cloud of the Lord is surely moving.

Returning to our lives in the States, the Team will meet in person with Stephanie Hauge at Barrington Carmel, from February 23 to February 27, to fine-tune our plans for the National Meeting of CCA, taking place from April 17-23 at Bon Secours Spirituality Center, **Marriottsville**, MD. By now, you have all received the brochure and application forms, and we hope that many of you can join us for what is to be a uniquely contemplative experience of shaping the future of our communities and our Association. Coordinators and guests from other U.S. Associations and International Federations will contribute their wisdom and friendship. Some of our work at Barrington will be writing reflection questions for all to ponder in preparation for our meeting. We will send these at the end of February. It is also time to nominate sisters for the next Leadership Team. Our thanks go to Ann Weber for coordinating the nomination process. Finally, Proposals for the Delegate-Assembly of CCA are already coming in. If you have a proposal, please send it to me: Hilary, shcocc@gmail.com by March 1.

Our Team wishes you a blessed journey of faith during Lent. Know that the cloud of the Lord goes before you during your days and hovers over your tents by night. We are all looking forward to meeting in Jerusalem, aka Marriottsville!

Your Sister,





Sr. Angela Pikus

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

Warm greetings from the Danville Carmel blanketed in snow and serenaded by whistling wind! Despite the low temperatures and wind chill we have avoided the illness that often accompanies these, thank God.

In January we had an informative presentation by a member of Shalom, a Private Association formed in 1982 in Fortaleza, Brazil. Hilda Pires, 30 years of age and a member of Shalom for 12 years, shared with us the founding of the Association, the evangelizing work and prayer life of the members and her own apostolate in Cambridge, MA. The Association is not a religious congregation nor a secular institute. It is a Private Association [canon # 298ff] and its Statutes received approval by the Church in 2007. After 33 years, it now numbers 4,000 members in 27 countries. It is based on the spirituality of our Holy Mother St. Teresa and as part of their formation the members study, among other things, the Life and Interior Castle. Members spend two hours in personal prayer in the morning, while the afternoon and evening is given over to evangelizing locally. Hilda has been doing ministry among students from Cambridge and finds this challenging and rewarding, supported so much by her prayer life.



***Sr. Anne, Hilda Pires, Sr. Joan Bourne,
Sr. Angela, Sr. Pat***



Our Bishop Gainer has designated the Basilica of SS. Cyril and Methodius here on the property a place of pilgrimage for the Year of Mercy. The Doors leading to the Basilica were solemnly blessed and opened by Fr. Lease, pastor of the Catholic Church in Danville and over the doors was placed a wreath of olive leaves. Since the Basilica is within a few minutes' walk from Maria Hall, it is easy for the Sisters to make a "pilgrimage". Our Chaplain knowing of Sr. Margaret's faithful daily walks presented her with a staff, which is somewhat practical and a bit ceremonial!

In front of entrance to Basilica: Sr. Margaret

January was a month of birthdays: Srs. Anna, Joan Bourne and Angela.

Our good friends, the women's Cursillo group of St. Joseph parish in Danville, faithfully provide a cake of the Sister's choice for each Sister's birthday. Sr. Anna and we enjoyed her yellow cake with creamy chocolate icing. Six of us were able to join her at Nazareth Center for the afternoon celebration.



At birthday party: Sr. Joan Bourne, Sr. Angela, Sr. Anna

December brought the annual Christmas concerts from our friends in the Elysburg Community Choir and the Danville Choir. Both concerts were enjoyable and it was refreshing to see young and old members singing with great energy and joy.

The Danville Secular Carmelites continue to grow. On a Sunday in November Cynthia Drucis pronounced her First Promises in Maria Hall Chapel during Vespers. Cynthia has a long history with us: she was present as a young child at the opening of the monastery in Mount Carmel in 1953; as a young teen she was present at

the opening of the newly-built monastery in Elysburg in 1961. She is overjoyed to be a member of the Secular Order.

We wish you all a blessed, fruitful Lent and a joyous Easter!



Sr. Carolyn O'Hara

Carmel of the Incarnation Beacon, New York

We held our final celebrations of Our Holy Mother's 500th at the end of September and on October 15. September 27 we and our parish co-sponsored a concert by Kim and Reggie Harris. They are very engaging performers and those in attendance at the parish church loved it! Our pastor: "It was just what I needed and didn't know I needed!" A women's group in the parish provided food afterwards which included a large cake with "Happy 500th Birthday St. Teresa" on it. We were grateful for the

generosity of so many.



Community with Kim and Reggie

For the feast of Therese we once again had our usual and ever popular celebrant Fr. David Nolan. This year, David took inspiration from the upcoming canonization of Zelig and Louis Martin, and Pope Francis' words to families in Philadelphia.

October 15 our small chapel was packed at the closing Mass of the year. Fr. Joseph Chalmers, O.Carm. gave a wonderful homily on Teresa, and was charming afterwards at dinner with us and the Carmelite novices from Middletown.

Once again, in October, we joined our Redemptoristine sisters in celebrating together the birthdays of their Sr. Lydia and our Sr. Jeannie at Lourdes Health Care Center where they now live. At 85 and 83 respectively, Lydia and Jeannie are relative youngsters there.

One sister at the party was 102 and another 110. They do receive good care!



Fr. Joseph Chalmers and novices

On October 7, Srs. Marjorie, Michaelene, Marita and I attended the semiannual meeting of the Archdiocesan Council of Women Religious. The featured speaker was Sr. Mary Hughes, OP, who had been president of Leadership Conference of Women Religious during what she referred to as “the troubles”. LCWR has received a five year grant for service to congregations in transition, and asked her to administer it.

Sr. Mary shared with us a quick overview of the status of religious life in the developed world, a long list of questions pertinent to how we go forward in religious life, many of these reminiscent of those in LCWR’s original viability study, as well as a list of possible options for communities growing older and smaller. The second option she mentioned certainly opened up new possibilities for me: “Congregational leaders abscond with the resources”. I guess it has happened! (Join me in Bermuda?)

A wealth of resources is now available on the website of the Resource Center for Religious as “the toolbox”. As you may know, CCA holds membership in RCRI and those individual monasteries who wish to use RCRI pay a subscriber’s fee. However this toolbox is accessible even to those who are not in any way members of RCRI. Sr. Sharon Euart, RSM of RCRI generously gave us the usernames and password that can be used by non-members and Marjorie will share them when she sends her financial report.



Sr. Mercy

Our Sr. Mercy (Mercedes of the Immaculate Conception) began her personal retreat in late October, only to finish it, we trust, in the beatific vision. She suffered a stroke on November 3 and died peacefully in the hospital November 6. Many of her devoted friends celebrated with us at her wake here and funeral in our parish church. (We knew we could not fit all of them in our chapel!)

We had a lovely Christmas, presaged by the usual concert of Christmas.

As happened with super storm Sandy three years ago, and with a blizzard last year, we were just on the edge of the devastating snow storm that came through much of the East in January. We had only a dusting of snow which quickly evaporated as we watched in awe photos and videos of the massive amounts dumped on parts of the country south and east of us.

We have been praying for our sisters in Rome, and have thoroughly enjoyed following Sr. Claire’s blog. We look forward to more reporting on these historic meetings, and to the CCA meeting to come.

Our prayer for a grace filled Lent and Easter.

Carmel of the Assumption

Latrobe, Pennsylvania

A blessed new year! A graced year of mercy! How gracious is our God...

Our winter here in Latrobe has been mild - until "Jonas" arrived! It was almost 70 on Christmas day. Real snowfall first came on the scene January 12th and then only a couple inches. Jonas "only" dropped about 13 inches here, so we were spared any serious effects. We could enjoy the scenery without suffering for it like so many of our Carmels.



Sr. Mary Paul Cutri

Our celebration of the Epiphany had some added excitement this year. A water main break on a nearby street had us improvising as we prepared our dinner. We were grateful the cooking was already underway before it happened. When we cut the cake, Sr. Joann found the nut and our community patron for 2016 is Elizabeth of the Trinity.

These last months of 2015 have held many unexpected health challenges for our community. Four of our Sisters, Shirley, Marie Elizabeth, Tanya and Barbara, have needed surgery and their recuperation periods are not yet over. Sr. Shirley needed two surgeries on her foot this year. In addition to caring for our two eldest, this left us with quite a challenge to keep things running as best we could. We thank all of you for your prayerful support of them. The bond of union in love and prayer between our communities is important to us.

The most recent surgery in November was because of the fall Sister Barbara had, resulting in a broken hip and the need for a replacement. She injured her left foot also, but the break was not properly diagnosed until two months later. She is recovering, but slowly, due to the misdiagnosis.

Sr. Tanya was promised by her surgeon that she would be able to work in her garden by the Spring. She still has physical therapy to complete before then. She is halfway through her six months recovery. Sr. Shirley's first surgery did not heal properly so she was operated on again in November. This time it went well and we pray she is finally on the road to a full recovery.

Our community retreat with Fr. Bonaventure Sauer, OCD of the Oklahoma Province was from October 26th -November 9th. As usual, we have one week with conferences once a day and the second week is in solitude. Fr. Bonaventure spoke on St. Teresa and the Interior Castle. We had never met him before and we enjoyed having him.

Recent deaths of two very close friends of our community brought us sorrow and gratitude for all the good they have done for us over the years: in October, Fr. Jacques Daley OSB, and in December Sr. Jean Marie of the Cleveland Carmel.

Fr. Jacques, one of the monks from St. Vincent Archabbey, struggled with cancer for years. He had a great devotion to St. Therese and gave us and the Secular Carmelites many homilies and conferences on her over the years. He was one of those people in love with life and one couldn't

help but catch his joy. Jean Marie was a dear sister whom we first got to know when she invited our community to attend the course given by Sr. Agnes Mary many years ago. We last saw her when our Cleveland Sisters visited us a couple years ago. Even in her 80's she didn't want to miss the trip.

Led by the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis has called for, so meaningfully, a Jubilee year of Divine Mercy. What is more needed than hearts full of compassion, forgiveness, and mercy in our times of great turmoil, displacement, terror attacks and violence in many forms. It is a call for all of us, especially those dedicated to a prayer life, to bring to all our encounters that bountiful mercy of Christ which heals, transforms and mends human relationships and brings peace to our world.

Sister Mary Paul's sister, Gerry Falcone, has been seriously ill with cancer. She was near to death in early January, in need of blood transfusions, followed by pneumonia. Sr. Mary Paul went to be with her in Florida. She had planned to stay a couple of days, but that all changed when "Jonas" arrived. Her visit was extended due to all the airport closings. It was a unexpected blessing to all. God has His surprises! Your prayer for Gerry and the family are needed and appreciated.

We will be in prayerful union with our Sisters in Carmel who will be in Rome for the International meeting of "Consecrated Life In Unity" and for the Carmelite meeting with Fr. Saverio. What an exciting and historic occasion. Surely, it will bring many blessings and graces for those in religious life and in Carmel. God grant that these meetings will promote greater unity and collaboration for the good of the entire Church.



Community with the 90 year old father of our new Bishop Malesic.

Carmel of the Sacred Heart

Baltimore, Maryland

Closing Centenary Weekend

We were fortunate to have Sister Sandra Schneiders, IHM, give us a lecture on ***The Jesus Mysticism of Teresa of Avila and its Importance for Theology***. The chapel was very much filled and people were appreciative of Sandra's sound and insightful input. After the lecture we had invited friends of the community in for a dinner. Our Carmelite brothers from DC and the students in particular were grateful to have a chance to meet Sandra and have a conversation with her. This



Sr. Monica Bies



***Brian McDermott, SJ; John Donahue, SJ;
Sandra Schneiders, IHM; Constance FitzGerald, OCD
and a friend of the community.***

was the last lecture in our year-long program of events to celebrate the 5th Centenary of Saint Teresa's Birth. As you remember the first lecture in our program had been given by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in April 2014.

Sandra stayed with us for a few days after the lecture and gave talks on the vows for Sister Celia Ashton. The talks were open to all the sisters and many of us attended. As we have all studied the vows at different times in our Carmelite life it was a great opportunity to hear and discuss Sandra's material.

Our year of celebration came to a close with a special Eucharist for the feast of St. Teresa of Avila. We were grateful that Father John Welch, O.Carm, had agreed to be our presider and homilist.

As a prelude we treated our Sunday congregants to the beautiful virtual choir video *Nada Te Turbe*, music composed by Sister Claire Sokol, OCD. We had put up our big screen in front of our tapestry, so that the people would not only be able to listen to the beauty of the music, but also see the different Carmelite nuns who participated in the singing. During the mass we sung *Teresa's Way* and *Living Water*, two other poignant pieces written by Claire. A string quartet added to the very festive music.

Sharing Our Spirituality

Parish Visit October 26

As part of the Year of Consecrated Life, Sr. Carol Czyzewski, FSSJ, director of Adult Faith Formation at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Hydes, MD, brought a group of parishioners from three local parishes to visit our monastery. Sisters Celia Ashton and Monika Bies introduced the group to our Carmelite spirituality and the history of our community, and Mrs. Barbara Sardella, president of our Mary, Queen of Carmel Community, spoke to the group about the Secular Order. After a question and answer session the group had time for quiet prayer before Vespers after which our guests had the opportunity to spend time with the entire community. It turned out that one of the men had served as an altar boy in our monastery on Biddle Street and one of the women had corresponded with Sr. Mary Eileen McNamara for years!

Visit of Loyola Class November 16

Brother Tim O'Brien, SJ, Visiting Assistant Professor at Loyola University Maryland, brought his class to further their study of prayer and Carmelite spirituality, and to pray Vespers with the community. Sisters Constance FitzGerald and Celia Ashton met with the group to share with them briefly about our charism, the history of our community, and The Prayer of Recollection. It was evident that these young adults had been working hard to draw up buckets of water and that they were beginning to work with God to cultivate their interior gardens. We were very much encouraged by their sincerity and openness.

Loyola Blakefield Service Day November 20

We are grateful to the 6th graders from St. Ignatius Loyola Academy and Loyola Blakefield who came to our monastery for a Service Day. After celebrating Eucharist together and giving them some time to ask us questions about our life, they went outside to rake leaves. We could not have gotten all the work done as quickly without their generous help.

Jubilee Year of Mercy



Our Community formally began the Jubilee Year of Mercy on the Second Sunday of Advent. We invited the congregation to think of our chapel door as a Holy Door, the door of the great Mercy of God. With Pope Francis we pray that this Jubilee Year of Mercy may be an extraordinary time of grace and spiritual renewal for all. Those of you who have been to our monastery will recognize our chapel door in the program cover that Sister Mary Fleig had designed for our Sundays in Advent.

January Community Retreat

During our January Community Retreat we listened to the series *Living into Death, Dying into Life: A Christian Theology of Life Eternal* presented by renowned theologian Dr. Peter C. Phan. We were taken, as the CD cover promised, on “a fascinating journey through eschatology, the theology of the Last Things.” The lectures tackled fundamental questions about life, death, and the world to come, focusing on the issues of our knowledge and language about death. The material has a lot of depth to it and is very well presented. If you have not had a chance to listen to this series and would like to do so you can purchase it on Now You Know Media.

Newer Member Group

We will have started to discuss the Charter of Life following up on the suggestion of the Newer Member Group by the time this newsletter is going to press. We are doing this at Friday Compline instead of reading the Carmelite Rule and have also set time aside to discuss it further on Monday afternoons. More will be reported on the Charter of Life blog and at the CCA meeting!

A Special Contribution by Colette Ackerman, OCD

Pilgrimage to Spain---2015

It is a delight for me to share a little of our pilgrimage to Spain sponsored by the Carmelite Institute to honor the 500th anniversary of Teresa's birth. Four of us, Sisters Celia, Judy L, Judy M and Colette, traveled to Madrid on October 29, where we joined about fifty other pilgrims. Two buses took us on to Avila, site of Teresa's first monastery of nuns. We spent three days in Avila enjoying the medieval city and our visits to Carmelite sites. The walls are amazing and the surrounding terrain very rocky. The evening of our arrival and the next morning we had Mass at the Friars monastery of La Santa and at others times toured the exhibition and museum space below their church. We visited San Jose, which was especially poignant, and the Incarnation. We ate Avila bean soup and enjoyed looking in the pastry shops filled with delightful, clever cookies and cakes made to resemble our Saint. On All Saints Day we drove to Segovia for Mass at the Friars monastery where John of the Cross is buried, and saw the hermitages high up in the hills where John prayed. Our buses departed for Salamanca on November 2 and we had a morning stop and Mass in the small village of Fontiveros where John was born and baptized. Back in Salamanca we were on our own for lunch and had an afternoon to walk around the city.



***Srs. Judy Murray, Celia Ashton, Colette Ackerman
and Judy Long in front of the walls of Avila***

The next morning we travelled to Alba de Tormes for Mass at our Sisters' monastery and prayed at the tomb of Teresa. The sacristan, Sr. Victoria, knew our Sr Maria Luisa, so it was nice to make that connection. Back in Salamanca we had a long walking tour with a special guide: seeing the university, their incredible plaza and so much more...

Our journey continued to Medina del Campo early on November 4, with the first stop our celebration of Eucharist in the chapel where John celebrated his first Mass. We saw the grate and parlor at the Nuns' monastery where Teresa and John spoke with one another. We rang the bell at the monastery door and the Nuns welcomed us in and several came to greet

us. Very nice as it was our first real meeting with a community on the trip.

Our next stop was Valladolid where we had a bus tour in the afternoon. The morning of November 5, we left for Toledo and after lunch "on the way" spent the afternoon on a walking tour of the city. At the convent of our Nuns, we had a special guide give a lecture on Teresa. After dinner Fr. Steve Payne took us down to the place where John of the Cross escaped from his captivity. It is hard to believe the distances he maneuvered! We could hear the river flowing as John would have heard in his prison cell.

The next city was Madrid and a Friday of visiting museums: the Prado and Reine Sophia. Saw marvelous art!



The second week of the trip took us south from Madrid on the train through miles and miles of olive tree groves. We visited Seville, Cordoba and Granada. Sunday morning, November 8, we had Mass at the Nuns' monastery in Seville. Afterward we met the sisters in the parlor and were introduced to their newly professed Sr. Annunciata, an Italian from Rome. I believe our Celia will be keeping in touch with her. In this short account I can only say that Seville is magnificent: architecture, gardens, culture, food.

On November 10 we left Seville and travelled to Granada with an afternoon stop in Cordoba. The highlight in Cordoba was the cathedral, which had been a mosque during the Islamic period. Again, the architecture was breath-taking as was the Alhambra palace, which we visited the next morning in Granada.

We left the Alhambra at noon with Fr. Dan Chowning, who had arranged for travel with one of the friars and accompanied the four of us to Ubeda, where John of the Cross died. The OCD friars welcomed us to their retreat house for lunch and we explored the museum with artifacts and relics of John's life, including the room where he died. This was an especially lovely day. From Granada we returned to Madrid and arrived home on November 12, filled with gratitude and very tired!

We experienced so much inspiration being in the monasteries and places of our spiritual heritage, sites connected to Teresa and John and to Spanish history. Our Carmelite chaplains, Fr. Leopold Glueckert (with us for the whole pilgrimage), Fr. Steve Payne (first week) and Fr. Dan Chowning (second week), gave wonderful lectures on Teresa/John/ history on our long bus rides and at other times. And they gave very special homilies at Eucharist throughout our travels. Sr. Judy Long led the singing at Mass and some of the OCDS folks wanted to hear about the history of the U. S. Nuns, which we provided—at least a bit.

Teresa is truly everywhere in Spain. I began reading The Foundations quite soon after I arrived home and I remain so grateful for all the writings of our great Saint. Teresa and John's texts continue to grace our lives with wisdom. And it is a special blessing to have seen so much of their towns and cities.

Kate Sullivan, a retired registered nurse, who many of you will remember from the Carmelite Forum, was so kind to stay with us during our sisters' Spain Pilgrimage. She assisted Sister Pat Scanlan with infirmiry functions while Sisters Judy Long and Judy Murray were away. Her warm presence was greatly appreciated.



Our Sister Lupe Gallo from Mexico enjoying the snow!

Carmel of Our Lady and St. Joseph

Concord, New Hampshire

Joyful greetings to all! We hope that 2016 is a good time for your community. There is much to pray for at this time in both national and international news: election primaries, instances of violence, the plans of ISIS--one could go on and on. Believing, as St. Teresa did, that Jesus sends us many opportunities and challenges each year, indeed, each day, we want to share some of them with you.



Sr. Hilary Case

In late October, Sr. Katharine Toher and Mary Francis Mure set off for California, where they joined the Formation Seminar of the Association of Mary, Queen of Carmel. At El Carmelo Retreat Center in Redlands, CA, they met several members of the MQC Council as well as other sisters in initial formation. For their program, Fr. Stephen Sanchez, OCD presented a study of St. Teresa's *Life*: "Teresa de Jesus: Determined Authenticity in Christ." Among Fr. Stephen's reflections is this one, with a message that is always worth pondering: "Within the call to be Discalced there is also the essential call to be community-minded, to be of-community. . . It is through my gift of self to the community that I become a gift to the Universal Church, the Universal Community." At Concord we are considering ways in which we might better our gift of self to the other sisters in community, and we are most grateful to Queen of Carmel for inviting our sisters in formation to their seminar.

November held challenges and opportunities for Sr. Hilary, who participated in the Visioning Committee, composed of five sisters from CCA and four members of the Ministry Leadership Center in Sacramento, CA. As you have read in subsequent Letters to CCA Communities, both "teams" decided to collaborate in the project of setting up a formation program in Ministry Leadership designed particularly for Carmelites, at first, those of CCA. Larry O'Connell, CEO of Ministry Leadership Center, believes that such a program is both "doable and fundable." The process of reaching this conclusion was truly grace-filled for all. After the meeting, Sisters Claire, Bernadette Therese, Sue Lumb, and Hilary visited the Carmel of San Rafael. A big thank you is due to San Rafael Carmel for their hospitality as they prepared for their festive Mass and reception to close St. Teresa's Anniversary Year.

On November 21, 2015, the Chapel of Concord Carmel officially became a place of pilgrimage for the Jubilee Year of Mercy as the main Chapel Door became a Holy Door. In this first ceremony, the door was blessed and closed, barred with paper bars to remind everyone not to use it as usual. On the Third Sunday of Advent, December 13, our diocese held a special service to open the door, now a Door of Mercy. The paper bars were broken, and we processed in. The Advent Public Reconciliation service followed with individual confessions. Nine priests and over 200 people participated; we had never seen our chapel so full. Since this day, several groups of contemporary pilgrims have come to pray in our chapel, either with us at Mass or at other times.

On Thanksgiving and at Christmas, we were happy to welcome Sr. Mercedes, who resides at Mount Carmel Nursing Home in Manchester, for our festive dinners. Both times she came with her own joy and plenty of good energy. We ask your prayers for her and for the "ministry of joy" that she has at Mount Carmel, where she encourages others and helps them to share her own cheerful spirit. Jesus is with her every second of every day.

Sister Miryam Kathleen is working with her parents, who live in The Cottages, an assisted living facility, in Bradenton, FL at present. Their needs are becoming greater, so Sr. Miryam will be joining her brother Patrick in going to Bradenton to sort out the situation on February 12. Please keep all of them in your prayers.

Since December 16, our postulant, Mary Francis Mure, has been in Arizona helping her brothers. Her older brother Ed died two weeks ago of bladder cancer and other health issues. She and her younger brother, Tony, have been cleaning out Ed's home, which was also their family home as they grew up. She will be home on February 17; please keep her in your prayers as well.

In other news, on February 16, Sisters Claudette and Hilary will visit Northeast Catholic College in Warner, NH to tour the campus, participate in the college Mass, and have supper and a discussion of "vocation" with the Sodality of Mary, an intentional group of women on campus who meet at the president's home bi-weekly. Claudette and Hilary are working with Katherine Pajor, the Assistant Dean of Students at the college to offer Northeast's students the opportunity to become aware, or more aware, of the option of consecrated life.

And that's all the news for now. We wish you a grace-filled Lent.

Carmel of the Mother of God

San Rafael, California sends love and will contribute next issue.



Sr. Maria Viatori

Carmel of the Holy Family Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Accompanied by our Carmelite Saints

Bishop Roger Gries, OSB, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Cleveland was presider and homilist at our liturgy honoring Saint Therese on October 1. Bishop Roger has always enjoyed coming to celebrate this wonderful occasion with us. The chapel was

filled to capacity with people who have great devotion to the saint of our simple lives. We rejoiced with the entire Church community this year as Therese's parents, Zelig and Louis, were canonized.

On October 14, after the 7:30 am liturgy the community held an hour of prayer honoring the close of the 5th centenary of Saint Teresa. Many of our friends who come to daily Eucharist joined us for this time of prayer and gratitude.

Father Michael Woost celebrated Liturgy on the Solemnity of Holy Mother Teresa. He spoke of the virtue of purity of heart that encourages an awareness of God's profound action in our lives. Purity of heart born from gratitude gives birth to the vision of God. In her *Spiritual Testimonies* # 24 Teresa knew that everything she did was born out of the grace of God. She recognized how many times she struggled and failed and in that failure God acted in her life. In chapter 13 of *The Life*, she admits that she always had great desire to practice prayer, yet she held on to her own pleasures. Even in this state, God never gave up on her. Throughout her writings Teresa encourages us to believe that God can lead us beyond our limitations.



Mary K. with Bishop Gries

We were blessed to have Father Michael Woost come again to celebrate the Solemnity of Holy Father John of the Cross. In his homily, Father Mike said that John conveys that we need a deeper enlightenment. John teaches us to be attentive to the journey and the dynamic state of transformation in our lives. Everything God desires to do in our lives is channeled through love. God's purifying love radiates in the midst of the chaos in our lives. Because of who Christ is, we become the heirs of God's glory. God adapts God's self to us and becomes entirely vulnerable. John of the Cross asks us also to be vulnerable to God's love.

Helping Hands

Our lives are interwoven with so many people who reach out in generous service in support of our life of prayer. Students from John Carroll University came to prepare the yard for the major leaf rake on November 14. Last year we had to cancel the leaf rake because of snow. This year we were especially grateful to see our friends brave the cold weather and work side by side to tidy up the property for a long winter's nap.

Throughout the months of September and October the Carmelite Guild Women gather for crafting sessions in preparation for the "Roses In November" luncheon and boutique. The Guild has been a

steadfast and generous group of women who help sustain our life through their financial support and good works. We also had some busy bees crafting away for the “Carmelite Nuns” table. Donna knitted many lovely fashion scarves that would enhance anyone’s wardrobe, Bernadette baked her outstanding potica, nut rolls and cinnamon bread and bottled some of her salad dressing, and Vera Lea cheerfully labored to produce Sr. Agnes Edward’s Halleluiah Dressing. The Guild women and the nuns prayed for a positive outcome to their months of work. Barb, Donna, and Vera Lea attended the function. When the sisters came home, they all announced that it was a great success.

“I Have Arrived I Am Home” – Thich Nhat Hanh



Jean Marie

After many months of failing health and multiple hospital admissions, Jean Marie was admitted to University Hospital for the last time on October 6. A week later she agreed to transfer to Regina Health Center in Richfield to receive the care she needed, and which we could not provide at home. During the weeks that followed she received many visitors, family and friends, and marked her 71st anniversary of entrance into Carmel.

On Wednesday, Dec. 2, Barb received a call from the Hospice nurse stating that Jean Marie was unresponsive and seemed to be in the active stage of dying. Jean Marie’s family came and our community was there as Father Elmer Marquard, a resident of Regina Health Center celebrated the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. All of us had the opportunity to bless Jean Marie as Father Elmer celebrated the sacrament, and he invited anyone to come forward and receive the sacrament. It was a profound moment for all of us. Community members and family stayed with her through those last days. Jean Marie entered eternal life the morning of Friday, December 4, with Anne Joan at her bedside.

Jean Marie was a native Clevelander who used to boast that she was a girl from Soika Avenue. She had steadfast companions from her high school days and many friends who came to know her when she was turn sister. Jean Marie had a genuine interest in people and conveyed an earnest sense of concern and caring in her relationships.

She was devoted to her brother, Richard, sister-in-law Juanita, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild. A steady stream of people came to pay their respects at Jean Marie’s wake service. Father Neil O’Connor was the main celebrant, Father Kenneth Styles gave the homily, and nine other priests concelebrated the Liturgy. So many priests in our area had a relationship with Jean Marie because they were on the receiving line of her request to celebrate Liturgy for our worshipping community.

The old adage, “Jack of all trades and master of none,” did not apply to Jean Marie. She gave her all in whatever task she was asked to perform. Jean Marie was prioress, sub-prioress, mistress of novices, turn sister, infirmarian, sacristan, librarian, and priest scheduler to name a few! She was a talented calligrapher and an avid gardener devoting much time to the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Meditation Garden. Jean Marie also loved to take out her mother’s recipes and cook up a storm.

Christmas was her favorite season and Jean Marie would literally transform the library into her Christmas Room. She would invite her friends in to spread a bit of Christmas cheer. Jean Marie was active on many fronts. She was eager and instrumental in welcoming the reforms of Vatican II and was willing to do the hard work of promoting holistic education and development. She exhibited that spirit of *aggiornamento* that permeated her religious life. She often reminisced about the ground breaking

meeting at Saint Louis, the terrific gatherings at Woodstock, the excitement of writing the syllabus, the joy of being involved in the life of CCA and ACS, the happiness of visiting other Carmels, and so much more.

In her later years Jean Marie had experienced increasing heart failure and her physical health was noticeably changing. She joked with friends that she had survived nine trips to the emergency room in less than a year. She was convinced that she had much more to do in life, and her wish was to come back to the monastery to wrap things up. God had other plans and brought her home to her eternal reward.

One of our dear community friends sent us a beautiful poster with the words from Thich Nhat Hanh:

“I Have Arrived . . . I Am Home.” It was as if Jean Marie were sending us her last lesson of life and teaching us to look forward to the future.

Increments of Change

Many sisters in CCA have been to our monastery and have sat at our circular Amish-built table in our refectory. We had a long standing custom to celebrate Office of Readings around the table after celebrating our Tuesday evening liturgy and meal. We have extended that custom to include Friday evenings. This is a small change, but a welcome respite for the community.

In December, after a lengthy discussion we decided not to have night liturgy on Christmas Eve. It was one of the times we celebrated Liturgy only for community members and because of the extensive duties of our brother priests, we decided to just have our Office of Readings. At the end of the Office we had a spontaneous singing of Christmas Carols which added festivity and brightness to the holy night.

Formation News

On February 2, 2016, Sr. Donna Schultz entered her second year of novitiate. We ask you to pray for Donna as she continues to live the life of Carmel. We are blessed to have her in our midst since she shares so generously her spirit of community and prayer. Many of you have met her at the Newer Member Conference.

“Wind Blow Free, Move Tenderly”

On Thursday, February 4, 2016, Barb received a call from the head nurse at Regina informing her that our Sister Mary Lavin was in the active stage of dying. Our community went to accompany Mary in this sacred time of passage. We prayed the psalms and her favorite portions of Scripture, sang some of the music that she composed, and prayed the rosary. During our time with her we also talked of the mysteries of Mary’s life.



Donna

Mary was born into a loving family a few blocks away from the monastery. She attended Beaumont School across the street from the Monastery and daily came to Liturgy. Mary often joked that all the while she wanted to join an order dedicated to Mary, she never realized that Carmel was, in fact, dedicated to the Blessed Mother.

At her bedside Pat Conway remarked, "Mary was born running." She had that energy and spirit that enlivened any group. In fact, her favorite tee shirt proclaimed, "I'm not short; I'm fun-size." Mary was definitely a woman of the outdoors. She told many stories of her days as a camp counselor and cherished the fact that the young campers continued their friendship through the years. Because Mary loved exercise so much, she devised a one-hole golf course within the enclosure. She was a cross-country skier, swimmer, cyclist, and walker. She would camp outdoors and on occasion took her sleeping bag to the roof to sleep under the stars.

Sodality and Ignatian Spirituality were paramount in Mary's personal spiritual life. She often recalled her moment of conversion when she felt she had to give everything to the Lord and enter Carmel.

Mary was a voracious reader; a book was her fifth appendage. We often saw her walking through the halls reading a current article. Her interests were wide and varied.

Throughout her years in Carmel, Mary was prioress, bookkeeper, librarian, sacristan, teacher, and lecturer. She was a spiritual director and guide to many. Even in her later years she would be part of the Busy Persons Retreat at Case Western Reserve University. She was also an active member of CCA and ACS and held offices in both organizations

Music ran through her veins. She was an accomplished pianist, composer, and guitarist. The seasons and shape of her prayer life can be seen in the lyrics of her many compositions. Truly the Lord was Mary's song.



Mary Lavin

On February 5, 2016, at 8:28 a.m. Mary entered eternal life. Thank you for your continued prayers.

As the Liturgical calendar moves toward Lent, Easter, and Pentecost, we ask God's rich blessing upon all of you.

Carmel of the Queen of Heaven Eldridge, Iowa



Sr. Miriam Hogan

In Eldridge Carmel we had a peaceful but busy Christmas time celebration. The weather so far has been mild and rather warm for winter with moderate snow fall and rain for the future crops. We quietly celebrated the Epiphany and Sr. Maria's birthday on Jan 3rd.

On January 4th however, the day after her birthday, our Sr. Maria Sheer suffered a stroke as she started to dry the dishes. 911 was called and their response was immediate. The ambulance rushed her to the local hospital and Sr. Lynne and JonFe followed in the car. By the time they arrived at the hospital Sr. Maria had already been given some treatment. It was quickly determined that she should be further transported by helicopter up to Iowa City. A call was quickly made for a priest to administer the sacrament of the sick and Fr. Ed Omelia a dear friend of the community was driving two blocks from the hospital and was able to administer the sacrament before she was loaded into the helicopter.

In Iowa City she was given more tests and treatment. Thankfully, because of the rapid response and rehab treatment she is making good progress, and is now in the Kahl Home about 15 minutes from the Monastery. Unfortunately, she doesn't remember anything about the helicopter ride, or much of anything else about that day.



Now, we are very grateful to the Kahl Home Sisters not only for accepting Maria but also for making the application process so smooth. **We also wish to thank all of our sisters and friends on OCD North America for their prayers and emails.** May God reward you and keep you safe especially during the occupational hazard of dish drying!

Finally, we continue to be accompanied by various birds and beasts during our meals. They gather on the porch outside the refectory. Sr. Lynne likes to remind us of God's care for the sparrows. The chickadees, cardinals, blue jays, mourning doves and woodpeckers

also like to visit along with the squirrels during the day and the raccoons and possums during the night.

Upon further reflection, we know that the care of God's Creation and our earth includes birds and beasts as well as His Children among us.

Wishing you the special peace and Joy of the coming Springtime and Lenten/Easter Season.

Sr. Miriam (Eldridge)



***Front: Srs. Lynne, Carol, Miriam, JonFe
Back: Srs. Jeannette, Joan***



Lynn with Linda Olson



Sr. JonFe and Fr. Brian Miclot

Carmel of Our Lady and St Joseph Boston, Massachusetts

Celebration. OHM's feastday began with the celebration of Mass with Bishop John Doherty, one of our auxiliary bishops, and Fr. Carlos Suarez, a good and generous friend of the community. Later in the day we processed, with prayers and hymns, to all our shrines honoring St. Teresa. Supper was Spanish, ordered from a Cuban restaurant, following which Aileen and Alina presented a video, accompanied by Alina on classical guitar, of their life in Carmel, -to date.



Sr. Mary Clare Doherty

Our wonderful community retreat in Oct. was given by a Redemptorist priest, Fr. Phillip Dabney. Another Redemptorist, newly ordained, Fr. Pierre, comes from Haiti and is with us for Mass fairly often. He learned not long ago, just before his ordination actually, that his mother had gone missing. Nothing has since been learned of what happened to her.



Elizabeth of the Trinity

The Marist fathers have joined our pastor with plans to stay on in the parish. One of them celebrated Mass here on the feast of Elizabeth of the Trinity to whom, it happens, he has a strong devotion. He was quite happy to see our icon of Elizabeth enthroned. The icon was the gift of a friend who had had it written for us in the Ukraine.

Formation. This past semester, our ICFP went as follows; Timothy Gallagher OVM spoke on praying the liturgy of the hours, Paul Fohlin OCD, on community, Tom Stegman SJ, on biblical eschatology, Fr. Brian Hehir (a priest of the diocese and new to our roster, has been teaching at Harvard for 40 yrs) on Pope Francis and Laudato Si, Brian Dunkle SJ, on Patristics and Ambrose, and Randy Sachs SJ, on Ecumenism. One talk was postponed due to the insidious workings of a nameless bug that plagued most of the community.

Going and Coming. Srs. Marian and Annmarie came up from Barrington for Michael Berry OCD's lecture on OHM. The lecture and Michael were both very well received.

Sr. Eileen Mary went with Marian and Annmarie for her retreat when they returned to Barrington.

Sr. Claire, from Reno, spent a night and a happy visit with us on the 25th, meeting up with Sr. Bernadette Therese here before they left for Rome.



Srs. Mary Teresa, Alina, and Marieleth with Michael Berry OCD

Sr. Teresa Susan, from Concord Carmel, was with us for a few weeks on her retreat. She kindly offered to play the organ for us while Sr. Bernadette Therese was away.

All Is Gift. St. Luke's parish, just outside of Boston, joined with St. Joseph's and is now called 'New Roads' parish. They have been bringing us their Thanksgiving food collection for the past 31 years.



Young women who came to Mass and danced

At the beginning of December, nine middle school girls from St. Joseph's parish in a town outside of Boston, came to the monastery for Mass accompanied by their school principal, Gretchen Hawley. After Communion they prayerfully danced a meditation. Gretchen has been bringing groups of girls here, from the different schools that she has worked in, for about 15 yrs.

We purchased a Christmas tree from a vendor we'd not dealt with before. When the tree was delivered it came with at least thirty huge, 'as-big-as-bushes' poinsettias and miles of green garlands!!! We draped the garlands on our front gate and fence and around the crèche at the entrance to the monastery and made Mt Pleasant Ave. very, very pleasant.

Prayers. Please keep Sr. Agnes' mother in your prayers. She had another stroke, though she is doing better now. Agnes was able to be with her for a while. Her brother, who is almost completely blind, lives with their mom.

A good friend of the community died during our retreat in October. Sallyanne McColgan was an extraordinary person. She had a brilliant mind, and though she lived for years with pain, she had a great sense of humor and a selfless personality.

Another extraordinary woman, even closer to us, Sr. Mary Teresa's sister, Sr. Dolores CIJ, died in January after coping for over 20 years with cancer and its therapies. Sr. Dolores, a very talented woman who was the leader of her Congregation and deeply involved in the



Community with Bishop Doherty at Christmas

community's ministry up until a few days before she died, was deeply loved and will be very much missed. Mary Teresa and Dolores were the only children of their parents.

Our Environment. Temperatures were biting cold at the end of January, then hit 60 the beginning of February. Now it is snowing. Before the winter began we had roof cables installed in the gutters and drain pipes . We have great expectations that this will enhance our relationship with the snow and ice settling there.

Parking, even without the snow, has continued to challenge us, the problem being that our driveways frequently get obstructed. The latest solution has been to paint the abutting curbs bright yellow and put an impressive warning on the gate: "tow zone, crazed tigers, etc..."

We mentioned in the last letter our difficulty with raccoons. Well we hired traps baited with maraschino cherries, marshmallow, and beef jerky and caught 6 or 7 raccoons, one skunk, one cat, and one frog. The raccoons and skunk were relocated to the wilder part of the State, the cat was let out to bolt away in a frenzy, and the frog (from our pond) hopped to his home looking a bit embarrassed.

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

Praised be Jesus Christ during this historic international meeting of religious in Rome!

Sr. Marian is printing Claire's news to keep us informed of their participation in this grand assembly of 4,000 + religious. It must be a consolation to see many of our friends from past CCA meetings and a joy to meet new sisters. From the reports the days require a lot of energy. It might not be like "a night spent in a bad inn", but extra strength will probably help to cope with the walking and waiting of these days. Tomorrow, February 1st, we will have the Votive Mass for Spiritual or Pastoral Meetings so as to unite with them in prayer for all that they need at this time.



Sr. Roseann Gillice

Our third lecture on OHM in October was given by Sister Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM. She spoke of the influence of Teresa on the spiritual journeys of Dorothy Day and Edith Stein. Inspired by these three courageous women of the Church, we closed with the singing of the song for the year of consecrated life, "Wake Up the World". Afterward, the candles on a huge cake were lit and people sang "Happy Birthday" to Teresa. Our Secular Order members provided the cake.



We prayed our annual Office of Readings with the Hispanic community of St. Teresa which had to merge with Blessed Sacrament parish. They do not have a priest; a deacon is with them. They desired to live their faith fed by the Scriptures and divided into base communities. Each night of the week a different community meets to prepare and share the next Sunday's Liturgy of the Word so as to enter more deeply into God's revelation. Of course, they also share good food among them as well as their community spirit. I felt as if I were in the midst of the early Christian Church; their spirit is so vibrant.

Every year the family of a very good benefactor comes for his memorial Mass. Outside they line the entrance to the chapel with Mum plants and pumpkins, about 35 to 40 plants alternating with pumpkins. This becomes fiesta time for the squirrels. One of them must have an artistic bent and chomped the design of an autumn leaf into the pumpkin.

The diocese celebrated the Year of Consecrated Life in early November with the Liturgy at the Cathedral. At the Presentation of the Gifts the name of the Order or Congregation was mentioned and called forth according to their year of arrival in the diocese. Each representative received a framed picture of the symbol and motto of their institute. (Earlier, we had sent the symbol and motto to the Sisters on the committee who then prepared them to be presented.) The naming of the variety of religious communities expressed the maternal nature of the Church reaching out to care for the needs of the whole person in Christ's Body. The action of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church was very palpable. Afterward, a reception was held downstairs in the hall of the Cathedral.

Two Sisters of the Cross and Passion come to the Eucharist in our chapel when their schedule allows it. They offered to bring their Bell Choir from St. John the Evangelist school in nearby Attleboro, MA, if it would be possible, as a Christmas event. The choir ranges from the fifth grade to the eighth grade.

The day they arrived was a blessing; the young ones gave much hope for the future. They were so joyful, responsible and courteously natural helping one another to set up the tables and bells. They and their teacher were connected with good will, seriousness and humor. At one point the audience was invited to make music with them. The students were to stand by and to help those who volunteered. One of our friends attended with her 4 year old twin grand-sons. The twins were first responders! They were under the wings of two students who guided them like loving parents! Besides the music the students had filled Christmas stockings for each sister as a gift. Sr. Sue had prepared a surprise bag for each of them to show our appreciation. Please pray for the Sisters who give themselves so generously and for the students whom they teach. One of the eighth graders has a rare heart disease and already suffered a heart attack.

Sr. Marian says that we have many copies of "Carmel In America" which was re-printed in 1990. If anyone is interested, please, contact Sr. Marian by e-mail: mariansteffensocd@gmail.com There is no charge for the books, but the cost of postage is requested.

Bell Choir



In January Sue and Mary Davin, (Barrington), Marjorie and Michaeline (Beacon) and Claudette and Hilary (Concord) met in Concord Carmel to collate

responses from the Carmels who expressed interest in discussing and sharing how we are working/living to keep the charism alive and viable. Also, what would Teresa tell us today? Memo: This was with regard to the aging factor in our communities and increasing limitations.

Pope Francis' words about mercy are a light for our paths and a great help for an examination of conscience or consciousness "Communication and Mercy: A Fruitful Encounter – Return to the Wellsprings of Mercy: The Holy Year of Mercy invites all of us to reflect on the relationship between communication and mercy. The Church, in union with Christ, the living incarnation of the Father of Mercies, is called to practice mercy as the distinctive trait of all that she is and does. What we say and how we say it, our every word and gesture, ought to express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all. Love, by its nature, is communication; it leads to openness and sharing. If our hearts and actions are inspired by charity, by divine love, then our communication will be touched by God's own power." How well Our Holy Mother Teresa put this mercy into practice "...all must be friends, all must be loved, all must be held dear, all must be helped."

Please remember in prayer our loved ones who are sick:
Sr. Maria Francesca's Mother, Lucy; Sr. Anne Marie's sister Mary.

We pray for our sisters who have died recently: Jean Marie and Mary Lavin of Cleveland Carmel and Anne Marya of Latrobe Carmel. May they know the splendor of Carmel and Sharon and see the glory of our God.

Carmel of the Resurrection Oldenburg, Indiana

We had an interesting event in October, here in our little village. In front of our town hall on Pearl Street, there is a small monument to veterans of various wars with four words written across the bottom: God–Duty–Honor–Country. A certain gentleman, who lives on Main Street and claims to be an atheist, raised an objection to the word “God” on public property. The word spread about putting up yellow ribbons as a sign that Oldenburg citizens do not agree. We thought a very special wedding was about to be celebrated in the yellow-decorated parish church until we were clued in! Our local paper said that 200 people gathered in front of the town hall while our town council deliberated and came to the conclusion that the monument would remain unchanged and not moved. The best result of all this was that many more people were aware of this precious memorial.



Sr. Jean McGoff



*Helen and Jean Alice with Carmelites of
Rising Sun*

In late November we had a visit from Sr. Theresa Irene and Sr. Barbara from the Anglican Carmel in Rising Sun, Maryland. They drove up from the Transfiguration Sisters in Cincinnati, the former community of Theresa Irene before she left to found a Carmel. We revisited Theresa Irene’s story and admire her courage and determination.

The first Saturday in December, Oldenburg celebrates a “Holiday Under the Spires,” an annual event with everything from the sale of homemade soup and cookies, music ringing from the church bell tower, carriage rides, lunch in the parish church, and various restaurants, games, sale of Christmas

wreaths and decorations, choirs in the Franciscan Sisters’ chapel, and the evening celebration of Sunday liturgy. As we participate in the choirs, we were already practicing Christmas songs.

In mid-Advent we hosted a dinner for members of the ACS in our very vibrant regional cluster. They came mostly from Cincinnati. Almost every month a small group meets here for lunch and sharing of some topic.

We have followed the Synod on the Family through the various magazines and newspapers. We look forward to the way Pope Francis will foster “this special experience of what he calls the “Synodal Church,” a Church in which everyone speaks and everyone listens, affirming the presence of the Holy Spirit in the laity as well as the hierarchy, and bringing to the fore some of the insights of Vatican II that have fallen into the background.

December 29 we had an open house for our Franciscan Sisters. We gathered in our library around our beautiful tree and the crib that has been part of our Christmas for at least eighty years. They are celebrating 165 years of service to the Church this year. Their foundress, Sr. Theresa Hacklemeier, arrived in Oldenburg from Austria in 1851. They have a beautiful retreat house (Olivia Hall) next door to us. In spite of its many good programs, it still needs subsidizing by the community. New plans are underway to use part of the large motherhouse for this purpose and to use Olivia Hall for something that would be financially productive. When good weather comes, we expect the sounds of renovation to alter our usual silence!

Our beautiful dog, Abby, died in December. Our grief is great but we are recovering with the acquisition of a little, 16-pound Chihuahua-mix named Sammy. We found him in a rescue shelter in Cincinnati, after seeing his picture on the net. His personality is emerging daily. Like many small dogs, he thinks he's in charge, clears our yard of squirrels, and lets visitors know he is protecting the house.

We quietly celebrated my 65th profession anniversary at the end of January. I told the Sisters that during my morning prayer I vividly recalled the day of my first profession. Sr. Miriam Elder came to my cell with a lighted candle which I carried through the dark corridors of our beautiful monastery to the chapel where the community was waiting. I visited each one in my imagination. Only four of them are still living. Two left Carmel and Sr. Joan Williams and Sr. Michael Fox are in the Carmel of Reno. In my heart, we all had a holy reunion! As OHM put it, "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord."



Teresa with Sammy

We are so grateful to Sr. Claire Sokol for the professional blog she sent each day from the meeting, Consecrated Life in Unity, in Rome. It was almost like being there, minus the cobblestones and the long lines for security checks! Her closing remarks about discerning the value of the whole experience were so wise.



Marcie creating our Thanksgiving table

As I write this, we are celebrating the Chinese New Year. Our table is red with yellow flowers and napkins. Helen recited the Our Father in Chinese during our morning prayer and we prayed for all the needs of her native country.

Our first encounter with another Carmelite community occurred in 1967 when most of the Cleveland Sisters joined us for Sr. Agnes Mary Burkhart's initial workshop. Their young, vibrant, and prayerful energy was such a blessing, in addition to the spiritual energy of the workshop. We have felt a special closeness to them ever since. We deeply feel the loss of Sr. Jean Marie Konyesni and Sr. Mary Lavin and will always be grateful for the blessing of their gifts in all the years that followed that first meeting.

We will begin Ash Wednesday with a retreat, our custom for many years. Sr. Liz Sweeney wrote in the last LCWR Occasional Papers: " 'Through every form of effort to raise the powers of love upward to the next stage of consciousness' (Chardin), appears to be the way Spirit is alluring humanity forward at this moment of history. Happily, this is a direction in which our years of living in community, praying contemplatively, participating in communal assemblies, and even undergoing the purification of aging, give us a blessed advantage." May our faith and commitment to this process keep deepening.



Anna Mary celebrating her 97th birthday

Carmel of Our Lady of the Mountains

Reno, Nevada

What a wonderful 500th Teresian Jubilee Year! Like many of you we celebrated it with our extended community. It was a special gift that it's closing on Oct. 15th coincided with the celebration in our chapel of Sr.



Sr. Marie-Louise and family

Marie-Louise's 25th anniversary. It was a big surprise to have more of her family come than expected. As always the sisters here welcomed one and all with good liturgy, bountiful food, and celebrations galore.

The November terrorist attacks in Paris deeply moved us, as they did so many of you. In solidarity with our Carmelite sisters in France, and with the French nation, we had a special observance at our weekend Eucharist celebration for all those affected by the attacks. We used the colors of the French flag, candles, and the altar bread made by our sisters in Le Havre Carmel as well as

special prayers at Office.

Last fall we initiated a young adult prayer group that meets in our chapel once a month for an hour. Some are young professionals and others university students. They are inspirational young adults and eager for a life of prayer. It has been a mutually enriching experience.

Our Reno Diocese completed a long process for a Diocesan Synod in December. There was broad consultation and input from all parishes in the diocese. Sisters Maria and Susan were participants in the process of discussion and both of them were delegates voting in the decision-making. Sister Sa Ra was commissioned to paint the crucifix that was used at the closing ceremony and again at our annual Diocesan Religious Education Conference.



Sr. SaRa's Painting for our Diocesan Synod



Sr. Marie-Louise



Every year our Carmel presents two Christmas concerts with the free-will offerings donated for the support of the city's homeless shelter for families and children. Sisters Claire and Clorinda play cello and piano respectively, Dolora Zajick sings, and they are joined by other professional musicians from the Reno Symphony orchestra, as well as by the Bella Voce choir. It is considered a highlight of the season by hundreds of music lovers in Reno and our chapel is full to overflowing for two nights.



Christmas Concert

With the opening of the special Jubilee Year of Mercy we wanted to celebrate it in a special way with our extended community. We had a blessing of our chapel doors, particular petitions, and an offertory procession representing the diversity of our worshipping community: young and old, multiethnic, and physically challenged. It was very inclusive and moving and a wonderful way to experience the wideness of God's mercy!

Presently we are in the midst of a massive project for revising our website to make it more user-friendly and updated. A committee of four of our sisters is working with a professional designer. One of several new "perks": we hope to be able to make it possible to download Sr. Claire's music directly online.

The newer members mailing from the CCA has generated a lot of lively discussion here. After rereading the "Charter of Life" and sharing among ourselves at several meetings, we have put together some of our reflections and this is posted on the CCA members only section of the CCA website. We sincerely hope everyone gets involved in the conversation.

With the CCA "Visioning Committee" meeting not too far from us in Sacramento, California, several of the committee visited the San Rafael Carmel following the Sacramento meeting to mark the celebration of their 50th anniversary of foundation. Sr. Hilary returned to Reno with Claire for a wonderful visit with us. Of course Claire remains committed to CCA "business," preparing for the 2016 CCA meeting, the talks for the Rome meeting with CICLSAL, and then the dialogue with the OCD Nuns and the Generalate.

Life is full and ever blessed.