



# Carmelite Communities Associated

## CCA Notes to our Donors

**Fall 2022**

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

Dear Friends,

We are writing to you once more on the eve of the feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. She is the 'little' Carmelite saint who became a doctor of the church, the co-patron of France and the co-patron of the missions.

In her youthful fervor in 1897 she wrote:

Ah! In spite of my littleness, I would like to enlighten souls as did the Prophets and Doctors. I have the vocation of the Apostle. I would like to travel over the whole earth to preach Your Name and to plant Your glorious Cross. But, O my Beloved, one mission alone would not be sufficient for me. I would want to preach the Gospel on all the five continents simultaneously and even to the most remote isles. I would be a missionary, not for a few years only but from the beginning of creation until the consummation of the ages.

Thérèse saw it so long ago, and we are only now catching on and catching up! One hundred and twenty years later Pope Francis reminded us in *Evangelii Gaudium* that we are all missionary disciples called to promote missionary fruitfulness with missionary joy! He has challenged us "to go out from our own comfort zone" and to "devote the necessary effort to advance along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are."

We are so mindful that we cannot leave things as they presently are in the rest of the world either: fire, famine, flood, war, pandemics. They are all at least indirectly caused by humankind. And it is only through conversion of heart that any of that can change. The only tool we Carmelites have at hand is the transformation of human consciousness through prayer. And together we are powerful. Francis tells us that we cannot doubt the missionary power of intercessory prayer; so, let us pledge to join hands in solidarity for the sake of this mission.

In this issue of our Donor Newsletter, you will see that CCA is not leaving things as they are at present but continues to work diligently to change and adapt to our current situation. You will not only read about our ongoing projects, but also about our April national assembly and other new things that we will be doing in the coming months.

Pope Francis told us, "Mystical notions without a solid ... missionary outreach are of no help to evangelization." CCA is trying to set the world on fire with Love. Yes, we are missionary disciples!

And we are inviting you to continue to share in our ministry through your loving support. For you are missionary disciples too!

## **Spotlight on the President**

### **An interview Sr. Marjorie Robinson of the Beacon Carmel**



*Sr. Marjorie*

*What has been your experience as CCA's president?*

I'm grateful for the experience of serving on CCA's Leadership Team. I follow in the footsteps of sisters who generously served CCA throughout its remarkable 50-year history. I recall the women who have mentored me, inspired me, challenged me and encouraged me to utilize the gifts and skills God has given me in service to the association. Many of those sisters have passed on, but in my prayer I draw on their wisdom, guidance and example.

*In what ways do you find the role of leadership different today?*

The face of CCA today is very different than in was in 1970. Times have changed, religious life has changed, Carmel has changed. Recent documents from Rome have redefined the role and responsibilities of the president and councils of associations of contemplative women religious throughout the world. This has added a level of governance that enables the president to assist sisters and communities who are in the process of transition and possible closure. It calls for a pastoral presence as well as a governance role.

*How have you responded to these changes?*

The challenge for me has been a lack of time to devote to the needs of sisters and communities in the association while at the same time being fully involved in the life of my own community. Carmels in CCA are spread across the country, making distance and travel a major challenge to being present to sisters.

CCA has always valued self-determination. A new time calls for a creative and courageous response and for life-giving decisions. Reflecting on today's reality and changes, we face the future with the same spirit that motivated our holy Mother, St. Teresa: "God's glory and the good of the Church are my only wishes."

*Are there specific areas in which CCA has grown beyond its member communities?*

Collaboration remains a key goal of CCA. Our efforts towards collaboration with other Carmels, both in the U.S. and internationally, has borne fruit in the friendships and ongoing communication we cherish with our sisters throughout the world. Our shared bonds of communion and commitment to the Carmelite vocation witness to the Church and to the world the value of a life of prayer.

I have come to appreciate the charism of religious life that Carmelites share with all women religious. The leadership team encourages our members to be open to opportunities to collaborate, deepen sisterhood, and share Carmel's spirit. Our members gladly extend a welcoming heart to all those who want to walk together with us.

*Grateful for our donors.*

I speak in the name of each sister in CCA when I thank you -- our families, friends and donors -- for your generous support that has enabled CCA's formation team to plan wonderful programs with excellent presenters. Over the last two years, programs have included presentations on theology, Carmelite spirituality and history, as well as other areas of interest requested by sisters. We called upon our sisters gifted with technological expertise to prepare Zoom meetings. These Zoom meetings were one positive result of Covid-19 because they allowed all the sisters in the association to participate from home. The meetings engaged all participants through discussion periods and opportunities for Q & A with the presenters.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and grants from foundations, those meetings over Zoom will continue into next year.

In addition, we are pleased to report that our April 2023 national meeting will be held in-person for the first time since 2018.

May God reward you for your generosity. We keep you and your dear ones in prayer each day. Thank you very much.



### **Fall 2022 Shared Services Update**

***By Kate Asselin, GHR Grant Project Manager***

The Shared Services Collaborative has conducted a survey to assess the sisters' experience with the business services offered and to gather feedback to help shape SSC plans for the future. Among the services surveyed were Accounting/Finance, Benefits Eligibility Management, and Insurance Services. SSC members were asked to rate their experience in terms of overall satisfaction, quality, value, and the extent to which each service met their community's needs.

Survey results indicated high overall satisfaction with these services, with top marks for *quality* and *value*. The sisters also reported that they expected to continue using these services and that they were likely to recommend them to others. These results document the success of the SSC's efforts to outsource community business operations, freeing the sisters to devote more time and energy to Carmelite spiritual life.

In addition to business services, SSC offers various other resources to meet CCA community needs, including Website Design and Archival Management Services. This fall, CCA and the Cleveland Carmel, in collaboration with Christian Brothers IT Services, are engaged in an exciting project to develop new websites. Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) is providing professional mentors to help CCA and the Beacon Carmel to organize archives and transcribe oral history tapes to preserve the Carmelite legacy. The SSC sponsored a Health Care Pilot Project, which seeks to learn how best to help communities needing health care support services. It is underway with the hiring of a Health Care Coordinator who is now working with CCA and the Barrington community.

CCA remains grateful to the GHR Foundation for its generous support of the Shared Services Collaborative and the services it provides to meet the changing needs of Carmelite communities.

<http://www.ghrfoundation.org>

### **Gathering with Joy: An Update from Our Association Formators**



Thanks to your generous support we have been able to continue to gather virtually to share our passion for our Carmelite charism, to deepen relationships among the nuns (both nationally and internationally), and to discern the promptings of the Spirit. Last Fall we held a book discussion with Sr. Maria Cimperman, RSCJ on her latest book, *Religious Life for Our World: Creating Communities of Hope*. This discussion led to our desire to participate in the Synod on Synodality inaugurated by Pope Francis in October of 2021. Our listening sessions were a powerful witness to our shared commitment and desire to continue to deepen our Carmelite, contemplative mission in the Church as a witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family. We submitted our feedback to Rome with a renewed sense of hope and a desire to continue to heed the call of Pope Francis to become a Synodal Church.

*Women at the Well Dialogues* continues to enrich our lives in significant ways. We've held 10 sessions to date, and we look forward to our upcoming sessions, which we have been busy planning over the summer:

Session 11 – On September 27<sup>th</sup> Fr. Daniel Chowning, OCD will be presenting *Laudato si' from a Carmelite Perspective* – a wonderful way for us to celebrate the *Season of Creation* (September 1 – October 4<sup>th</sup>).

Session 12 – On November 3<sup>rd</sup> the nuns will gather to discuss the questions we will explore with our newly elected Superior General, Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD. in Session 13: *What Gives Me Hope? What Makes Me Fall in Love?*

Session 13 – *Dreaming Carmel's Future Together: What Gives Me Hope? What Makes Me Fall in Love?* with Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD. Session 13 will be held on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

In addition, many of our sisters continue to participate in *WE Space Dialogues* with Sr. Liz Sweeney, SSJ. This important contemplative prayer practice fosters deep connection and opens us to ever widening circles of communion.

With deep gratitude and much joy, we thank you for financially supporting our ongoing formation initiatives!

### ***Follow up on Desire, Darkness, and Hope***

In our spring newsletter, we featured information about the book, *Desire, Darkness and Hope, Theology in a Time of Impasse*, which engages Sr. Constance FitzGerald, OCD's thought. In August the LCWR 2022 General Assembly presented a dialogue between Sr. Constance and Professor M. Shawn Copeland on Mystical Wisdom. This dialogue can be accessed here: <https://lcwr.org/calendar/lcwr-assembly-2022-mystical-wisdom-following-spirits-beckoning>. There are two recordings, Part 1 and Part 2. This dialogue encompasses serious reflection on the issues affecting our world. They examine loss of place and displacement, letting go and relinquishment. And they posit that this loss can be an invitation to a deeper place that allows us to appropriate and identify with the Crucified Christ, who became one with suffering humanity and identified with the poor. When this vulnerability is embraced, it leads to a transformation of human consciousness and a communal relational way of being, sharing the witness of our lives and ultimately into communion and union with the Trinity. This communal re-visioning can shape the emergence of new forms of religious life and empower its members to live with a "readiness to move on."

### ***RCRJ***

#### **The Ongoing Gift from the Resource Center for Religious Institutes**

In 2018 the Vatican issued a document, *Cor Orans*, which brought major changes to associations of contemplative women religious. The function of the president and leadership team changed from being one of overseer of the association to now also being responsible for guiding the closure of some Carmels and the affiliation of others.

In March of 2022 the Leadership Team reached out to Sr. Sharon Euart, RSM, Executive Director of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI), for help and guidance in ways to assume our new responsibilities. Sr. Sharon's experience and insights were very helpful. What followed from the meeting was an invitation to Srs. Marjorie and Susan to attend a workshop, *Fidelity to the Journey: Opportunities and Resources*, to be held in Chicago in June. The GHR Foundation had generously provided a grant for the meeting.

The workshop was excellent, giving us useful information. Equally helpful was the connection and interaction with other women religious who are facing similar situations in the areas of transition, care for members, use of resources, and canonical governance.

The gift of the meeting is an ongoing gift, as RCRI continues to be an invaluable resource. Also, we hope to invite some of the presenters from the meeting to share their knowledge and experience with CCA at our General Assembly in April 2023.

I share this experience with our donors as a way of illustrating that your gift to CCA is ongoing. Your generous support helps us move into the future with hope, openness, creativity, and trust in the Spirit.

Sr. Susan Weber, OCD  
Member, CCA Leadership Team  
Reno Carmel

### ***Please Donate***



In conclusion, there are many ways to help us. Certainly, we ask that if you participate in Giving Tuesday, please include us in your generosity.

And if you participate in the Amazon Smile program, please designate Carmelite Communities Associated Inc. as your preferred charity.

Or you can send a direct donation to:

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

And lastly, you can use the Donate/PayPal feature on our web page at [CCACarmels.org](http://CCACarmels.org).

**THANK YOU!!**

And as we approach the Feast of St. Therese, we pray:

*St. Therese, Flower of fervor and love, please intercede for our benefactors.*

*Fill our hearts with your pure love of God.  
As we approach and celebrate your feast day,  
make us more aware of the goodness of  
God and how well God tends His garden.  
Instill in us your little way of doing  
ordinary things with extra-ordinary love.*

