

9-18-18 Meeting with coordinators and councils of Mary, Queen of Carmel (MQC) and Carmelite Communities Associated (CCA) in Dallas, Texas

Notes taken by Sr. Rosalind Forrest of CCA and emailed on 9-26-18 to the following Participants:

Carmelite Communities Associated (CCA):

1. Sr. Rosalind Forrest – Reno Carmel
2. Sr. Cecilia Kang – Reno Carmel
3. Sr. Monika Bies – Baltimore Carmel
4. Sr. Bernadette Thérèse Huang - Boston Carmel

Mary Queen of Carmel (MQC):

1. Sr. Corinne Uher – San Antonio Carmel
2. Sr. Ruth Miriam – Piedmont Carmel
3. Sr. Mary Clare Trolley – Terra Haute Carmel
4. Sr. Teresita Maria – Alhambra Carmel
5. Sr. Teresa Magdalene – Zephyr Carmel (Ontario, Canada)
6. Sr. Susan Labyak – Shoreline, Washington Carmel

In preparation for our meeting with the Friars on 9-19-18, we decided to begin our discussion on the agenda, which were in the folders we each received. Numbers 1 & 2 will be covered on the 19th so we chose not to comment on those items today.

#3 “Formation for formators program/funds”—sisters expressed their concerns and suggestions on following related topics

- Need for more input on how to teach (beyond only input)—a new methodology that includes dialogue and perhaps role-playing
- Improve our ability to assess behavior, learn better communication with younger applicants—cultural differences, how to understand each other
- Often we are inclined, in Carmel, to judge with our hearts, not our heads
- Learn to be more “comfortable in our own skin,” with newer members and with each other in community—psychosocial development, gift of our own sexuality in our celibate vocation
- It is important for presenters to have the skills to make us more comfortable and confident in assisting applicants and those in formation to communicate well and be able to talk about all aspects of human development as part of God’s plan for us to mature and grow in wisdom, age and grace
- Scientific understanding can enhance contemplative spirituality—example: Leonard Boff, in speaking about quantum physics, talks about how energy connects everyone and everything...flows into the weakest parts to strengthen the whole. As contemplatives, we may be aware in our deepest self that “When we receive the Body of Christ, we not only receive for ourselves but we also receive the Body of Christ for the whole of

creation.” Isn’t it wonderful that science has not come to this same conclusion in the explanation of Quantum Physics and energy!

- It would be important to have someone as a resource person who actually works with young adults—resources such as National Vocational Conference or National Catholic Youth Conference or diocesan Youth Ministry programs or Conferences
- Other resources:
 - Elizabeth McCabe—methodology with both input and dialogue
 - Ray Carey—behavioral assessment
 - Kevin Mc Clone—Assessment/Human Development CTU & Independent consultation/lectures

#4 **“Explore together resources for initial and ongoing formation”** our discussion included the following

- Resurrect the joint website with the Friars which was established in 2015 for Celebration of St. Teresa of Avila—Fr. Bonaventure Sauer of OK province had previously been contact; list resources on line such as
 - Great Courses—ongoing education
 - Lending Library of DVDs
 - “Know You Know Media” ½ hour DVDs on many topics such as Interior Castle by Keith Egan
 - When those in initial formation are not yet allowed access to You-tube, consider converting lectures on Carmelite Spirituality or other good topics into MP3 format on iPod
 - Boston College School of Theology and Ministry offers many excellent talks by Carmelite authors on You-tube: “Carmelite Authors 101”
 - If friars and nuns agree to resurrect website, we could have a 5 year calendar of US OCD nuns and friars posted there to help with planning meetings, events to avoid overlapping dates
 - If any friars and nuns have technical skills which they would be willing to share, this would be wonderful resource
 - OCD History (Fr. Daniel Chowning and Fr. Steve Payne)
 - Previously Fr. Leopold O Carm had done excellent course on Carmelite history up to the time of OCD
- Use technology whenever possible to share talks, input, decrease cost and energy of travel, enable communities to view online from home—zoom meetings; Skype; webinars
- Pool resources among nuns and friars—Guest Lecturers invite top rate speakers (*face to face when possible helps us all to connect, bond, grow in trust and collaboration*); get permissions necessary to record these speakers as another resource for those unable to travel; plan a Formation for Formators conference together

- Sister Bernadette Thérèse (CCA) gave out 2 handouts and briefly described an pilot project for ongoing formation, which will be done by Zoom gatherings. After the initial 3 sessions are completed and evaluated in 2019, we hope to be able to invite other associations to participate.

#5 “How might we develop closer relationships between nuns and friars...”

We expressed our appreciation for our brothers and think that it is important for the friars to feel welcome in our communities...that we do not expect them to have to give presentations or conferences in order to visit us...that friars from any province are welcome to visit (and, if space available, to spend time in our guest areas). We also want to hear from our brothers when we get together. Frank and open conversation with each other builds respect and trust among us.

#6 “3-5 Year common calendar” All present thought that this is a very good idea, and would help all 4 associations and the 3 provinces to plan ahead so that our meetings/conferences do not overlap.

#7 “Religious Assistant—Cor Orans” Neither MQC nor CCA has ever had a Religious Assistant nor does a Religious Assistant seem to be within our Carmelite tradition. Each Coordinator (“President”) has sent a detailed report at the end of her term of office, so the Holy See (CICLSAL) is getting accurate information. We have studied Cor Orans, notes on Sr. Fernanda Barbiero’s talk to the Association of British Contemplatives on Cor Orans, Archbishop Carballo’s Conference on Cor Orans to the Theological institute on Religious Life (Madrid, Spain), **and especially** the letter from Fr. Saverio, and Fr. Jean-Joseph Bergara, OCD, Procurator General of the Order to Carmelite nuns in Spain, *translated into English by Carmelite nuns of Rochester, NY*. At this time our councils would prefer not to include a Religious Assistant in updating our individual Statutes. However, we will be asking our member communities for names of 3 Carmelite friars whom they would want should the congregation of the Holy See require this before approval of our updated statutes.

One of our Mexican sisters (forgive me, I did not legibly write down her name) wrote in a very diplomatic way about the topic of “Religious Assistant” and Carmelite women being able to make decisions and communicate information directly from Federation/Association President to the Holy See without needing to duplicate communications. Who knows the life of a Carmelite nun better than a Carmelite nun?

Important PS: In meeting with friars and nuns on the 19th, Fr. Elijah from Washington Province, suggested that if all 4 of US Associations would prefer not to include a Religious Assistant in updating our individual Statutes, that it might benefit all of us to write a letter signed by the “President” of each association giving our reasoning and requesting a dispensation from a Religious Assistant.

The friars also suggested the possibility, if a Religious Assistant does become a necessity in the future, that 1 friar (perhaps selected by the Provincials of the 3 provinces), could be trained to be the Religious Assistant for all 4 US

Associations. This would be a better use of personnel for the friars than having multiple friars involved.

Other topics we discussed

- Updating our statutes—in 2020, both MQC (fall) and CCA (June) plan to have a draft of updated statutes ready for vote at our next Assembly by our delegates.
- Regarding Cor Orans and a common house of formation, perhaps we can consider common formation courses in lieu of a common house of formation
- Other issues related to Cor Orans were discussed
 - Implementing Cor Orans in our statutes and life is going to be a work in progress for some time, involving initial and ongoing formation, finances, etc.
 - Differences between Canonical Visitation and the regular visit by Association President/Coordinator with Financial Administrator
- We agreed on how important it is for us to share information with St. Joseph and St. Teresa's Association and to continue to work together in anyway we are able. Collaboration in 2015 and for the 2017 St. Louis meeting has enriched us all and deepened our mutual respect and sisterly bonds. *It would be good to send a summary of this meeting to both Associations who were not present with us.*
- Sisters Mary Clare and Ruth Miriam (MQC) shared about their wonderful visit last fall to the Berkeley, CA monastery of Carmelite nuns who moved from Valparaiso, IN then to Canyon, CA, and now Berkeley.
- Discussion followed on Associations, affiliations, discernment process for accepting admission to an existing Association, what is our policy of admission to our associations, etc.
- We also discussed necessity of self evaluation of our own individual communities and our own association as part of an ongoing discernment process: look at who we are now, and in next 3-5 years, what do we need to do to be viable as individual communities and also as an Association? Can we really consider accepting a monastery as an affiliate to our monastery or to our Association?
- Care of aging and/or ill sisters—different choices communities are making
 - Piedmont has chosen to care for their sisters at home as they have sisters with nursing background—may need outside assistance for night duty in the future
 - Terre Haute has been able to build infirmary with 4 handicapped rooms, elevator large enough for medical equipment, and when more medical assistance is needed, their sisters are able to go for more nursing care at the infirmary of the Sisters of Providence, about ½ hour drive away
 - Reno to the present has usually been able to care for their sisters at home (exceptions being hospitalization and need for rehab; and December 2017 when Sr. Joan was in auto accident and died in

ER) There is no Catholic nursing home in Nevada should we need extra nursing care in the future. Resources for home care through Medicaid are very limited in NV.

- Possibility of a common Carmelite Infirmary Monastery has been brought up in the past. However, discussion revealed that in the USA we are too far apart to establish one where originating communities could continue visiting their sisters.

Additional Notes informally taken by Sr. Rosalind Forrest on 9-19-18 at joint meeting of friars and nuns

(Fr. Jorge Cabrera-Marrero—email = jorge.jn1721@gmail.com took official notes of meeting and emailed them to participants)

- Cost of this meeting will be divided among all participants and invoices sent from OK Province to each Association Coordinator and Provincial.
- Some thoughts of friars:
 - Regarding interpretation of necessity of Religious Assistant, the friars suggested that Fr. General has more leverage than Sr. Fernanda because of the special relationship between the friars and nuns as established by St. Teresa and reflected in our constitutions.
 - An association or several associations together may want to inquire if the Generalate has consulted with CICLSAL re Religious Assistant for Carmelite nuns
 - VDAQ is law; Cor Orans is how to implement it
 - Whenever there is doubt or question you may
 - leave it in God's hands and see what happens
 - write a formal " to CICLSAL: we have a question and this is our understanding in this matter
 - Make sure to document your whole process as individual associations so that you reflect due diligence; what advice did you seek; interpretation of Generalate; etc.
 - we (friars) are willing to help you as you need and request our help
- More Information from friars:
 - According to CICLSAL ***There is no more permanent excommunication.*** The only option is to apply for dispensation of vows.
 - All forms needed for any situation can be obtained from the Generalate website under procurator general—English for nuns and friars
- Regarding future Joint Meetings of Nuns and Friars, a further suggestion was made by certain friars beyond what was in the minutes of Fr. Jorge. The Provincials and their councils would meet every three years for 2 days prior to the joint meeting of nuns and friars. The coordinators and their councils would also be able to meet prior to the joint meeting for 1-2 days according to their needs.