



Women at the Well *Dialogues*

Visioning Carmel for the 21st Century

Session 1 Summary

Women at the Well Dialogues first session was comprised of 65 sister participants from 11 communities of CCA. The goal for this initial session was to strengthen relationship building within CCA, test and utilize Zoom technology for virtual conversation among participants.

Participants shared their hopes and concerns at the time of registration. Common responses were

1. Opportunity for relationship building among sisters and between communities; and
2. Concerns and fears about using technology.

As participants gathered on the Zoom conference call a joyful noise was made as sisters greeted one another, many reconnecting with sisters who are not able to attend large in-person meetings. Sr. Claire opened with a welcome and prayer, sharing Jan Richardson's poem *Stay*, from her collection of poems *Circle of Grace*.

The theme for Session 1 was '**Leading in Times of Change**'. Three articles explored the theme from various perspectives. Fr. Daniel Chowning's article *Adaptation in Carmel; Leading Through a Time of Change* by Ray Dlugos and Donna Fyffe *Unearthing the Potential of Uncertain Times*.

Following the [Input Talk](#), ten small groups met in Zoom break-out sessions, each with a facilitator. The ten facilitators are sisters serving as sister-visitors. Following small group discussions, each small group facilitator shared a report-out of topics and key insights discussed in small groups.

~~The Strength in Communion. We printed the consensus shared in Facilitator report-outs:~~ **Strengthening in Communion:** We printed the consensus shared in Facilitator report-outs: Importance of community and together developing a spirit of communion. We share so much in common. We need to strengthen bonds and accompany one another. There is a sense of hope and joy in being able to address issues together.

- **Contemplative, Intentional Change:** We have a desire to change in a meaningful, intentional way. Remaining rooted in God will help us make choices and go through challenges with flexibility. God's action is in everything and God is doing something new. Accept change as a Dark Night experience. Build on experiences of other communities. Places of resistance are sacred. Carmelite spirituality is our grounding.
- **Finding Voice:** Outside facilitators are helpful but our own voices are important. Important to find our own voice and to make a contribution to our discernment of change and adaptation. Take our future in our own hands, be present to the here and now. Allow ourselves to be disturbed with possibilities.
- **Change & Flexibility:** Change is transformation, change is opportunity. Flexibility is key. Collaboration and connection are vital. Elephant in the room is indecision - let's use a variety of choices, explore possibilities.
- **Technology is a Blessing.** There are so many uses for virtual connections in CCA.