



1 January 2019  
Octave of Christmas  
Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

Dear Sisters,

In beginning a New Year, we give thanks for the many blessings of this past year and look forward to what has been planned and what surprises God will provide in the days, weeks and months to come. We give thanks for so many of our CCA members and friends who have been donating time and energy on our behalf.

**August 2019 Newer Members Meeting** Within the next two weeks all our CCA communities will be receiving an invitation from our Newer Members Planning team. Sister Bernadette Therese will be sending invitations to our US Associations, multiple International Associations and to our sisters in Kirkintilloch.

**Women at the Well Dialogues** The 1<sup>st</sup> of three sessions for our pilot project begins later this month. The amazing registration response for this online course is a tribute not only to the desire among us for continuing learning and dialogue with our sisters, but also to the research and work of our project team members. Thank you, one and all.

### **Sisterly Mutual Support and Help**

- Another January beginning: our first Sisterly Visit of 2019 will be to San Rafael on the 31st. Attached you will find a list of each monastery and the Sister Visitors who will be visiting. Sister Visitors are still in the process of arranging times and dates with the communities to be visited, so we don't have other firm dates to report.
- In response to the request of Sr. Sue Lumb (Barrington Carmel) for dialogue around the impact of changes in our communities and how we might balance the needs both of sisters who actively care for aging members and aging members who need more care—and how both may continue to live their Carmelite vocation with vitality, your LT sent out an email to all our communities which included Sue's request. A Zoom has been planned this month for those interested in this discussion.

• In late November Bernadette Therese learned from Sr. Barb Losh (Cleveland) that help from 1 or 2 sisters, if possible, would be needed to assist them (perhaps with cleaning, packing, moving) the last week of December—or perhaps sooner, if they were able to get things done before then. Ordinarily your

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

LT would have written a letter to each CCA community when we learned of a need for assistance and had the permission of the community to do so. Reflecting on our own community situations and our Advent/Christmas schedules, and knowing the circumstances of other CCA communities, we decided not to send a CCA letter. However, we brainstormed several options at our LT Zoom meeting, and Bernadette Therese then presented options to Barb who was open to the suggestion that we ask other Carmelite associations for assistance. Within days after a phone call to Sr. Mary Clare of Mary, Queen of Carmel Association, Mother Anne (Terre Haute) called Barb and arrangements were made for her and three of their novices to drive to Cleveland in January. What a wonderful opportunity for Inter-Association collaboration and mutual support! Though not in these exact words, Mother Anne said that this would be a wonderful opportunity for their novices to learn that we are one Carmelite family and that we should be open to assisting each other. Our Cleveland sisters are delighted about the help they will be getting.

**Grants and Fundraising** Many thanks to Stephanie Hauge, Srs. Michaelene (Beacon) and Judy Murray (Baltimore) for their work in exploring opportunities for financial support and PR for CCA—their work may be behind the scenes yet oh, so important.

**CCA Website** For those of you who have been attempting to visit our website, we apologize and want to let you know that we have been hacked again. Sr. Jeanne Marie (Boston) has been working diligently and has engaged a new website maintenance company and better technical assistance. The website has been reconstructed and is now secure. More work is being done to update the Members Only section.

### **Collaboration with US Associations**

- Mary, Queen of Carmel, St. Teresa, and St. Joseph's Associations requested the assistance of CCA to begin the process of incorporating their Associations. Sr. Colette Ackerman (Baltimore) graciously assisted them on behalf of us all at a Zoom meeting.
- At the suggestion of Mother Therese of St. Joseph's Association, the 4 US association coordinators met at a Zoom meeting in November to discuss issues pertaining to Cor Orans and where each association is with regard to the "Religious Assistant" and the revision of statutes.

**Translation of Fr. Saverio's talk at Mexican Federation** In our LT letter of October 25, we had mentioned that we would be sharing the talks of Fr. Saverio and Fr. Rafal at the Mexican Federation Conference as soon as they were translated. Finding someone with the theological background and fluency in translating Spanish into American English has been challenging. Nothing is impossible with God—a close friend of the Reno community, Fr. Steve Judd, MM, has graciously and enthusiastically begun, and we have just received the complete translation of Fr. Saverio's talk in Mexico. We are waiting for the footnotes before sending the translation to you.

## International English speaking gathering at Gent

- This idea first surfaced at our 2018 Assembly during the report of the pre-meeting panel of representatives of Association councils from CCA, Mary, Queen of Carmel, St. Teresa, UK and Netherlands. It was enthusiastically received by those gathered and a decision was made to have a planning team, composed of similar Association councils to research possibilities.
- We (LT) had hoped that there would be room for anyone who wanted to attend to be able to do so, assuming their own community support. Due to limited rooms at the retreat center chosen by Fr. Benedikt Cobben, OCD on behalf of the planning committee, participation will be limited to the leadership teams/councils of English speaking Associations. Dates, including travel, will be May 12-19, 2020.
- We (LT) had hoped that the gathering, or at least the talks, would be live streamed as we did for our Assembly. However, despite CCA's proposal for live streaming, there was no enthusiasm around this idea amongst the other members of the planning committee. Instead, the three speakers will be videotaped and recordings will be made available. At this time, all three of the speakers have been confirmed: Sr. Constance Fitzgerald, OCD, Fr. Saverio Cannistrá, OCD and Reverend Rowan Williams.

Asking every grace and blessing upon you, we end now with the message of Pope Francis from January 1, 2018:

*"If our faith is not to be reduced merely to an idea or a doctrine,  
all of us need a mother's heart,  
one which knows how to keep the tender love of God  
and to feel the heartbeat of all around us.*

*May the Mother, God's finest human creation guard and keep this year,  
and bring the peace of her Son  
to our hearts and to our world."*

United in love and prayer,  
Your sisters,

*Benedicta Thieme Monika Roz Cecelia*