



CCA Notes to our Donors

Fall 2024

Thanksgiving

Baltimore, MD

Dear Friends,

Barrington, RI

As we approach Thanksgiving, we think of the two parts of the word: thanks and giving.

Beacon, NY

Boston, MA

Thanks: we remember you with joy, gratitude, and appreciation. Truly you are collaborators in our mission of prayer. We wouldn't exist without the support of friends like you. There is the old saw which says that you can either give a hungry person a fish or give them the wherewithal to fish for themselves. Your sustaining donations give us the wherewithal to take care of ourselves and sustain our lives into the future. Thank you!

Cleveland, OH

Concord, NH

Danville, PA

Eldridge, IA

Giving: It is also the time of year when we celebrate Giving Tuesday. Giving Tuesday is a global movement that unleashes the power of radical generosity of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world. And when you donate to CCA, *you* are a part of that movement!

Latrobe, PA

Oldenburg, IN

Reno, NV

And so, we take this opportunity to share with you what your donations have helped us to accomplish. We all can be proud of ourselves for what we have done! Please take a moment to glance through this newsletter and pat yourselves on the back.

After that, if you are so inclined, please do remember us in your end of the year and Giving Tuesday donations. As always, we will send you a tax acknowledgement and a great big bouquet of prayers.

May your Thanksgiving celebration be wonderful and may you know the gentle quiet of the coming Advent season.

The LCWR Assembly in Florida by Stephanie Hange

Goal 4: ...We now affirm the desire to continue to create a culture of sisterhood

For the first time ever the CCA Leadership Team was invited to the national LCWR Assembly in Orlando this August. LCWR stands for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and it is an association of the active apostolic sisters. In times past it was thought inappropriate for contemplative nuns to participate in this association. That has changed!



The Conference was entitled: ***Our Time is Holy: Who Then Shall We Be?*** It was attended by 505 LCWR members and 248 collaborators. From CCA, president, Sr. Colette Ackerman, OCD; first councilor, Sr. Mary Fleig, OCD, both from Baltimore; Sr. Susan Weber, OCD of Reno Carmel, Nevada; Sr. JonFe de Torres, OCD, of Clinton Carmel, Iowa, and Stephanie Hauge, lay facilitator, participated in the session. The presenters and responders examined the current reality facing religious life today to articulate more clearly-the call that is now coming into view.

The Conference was an amazing testament to the variety of religious charisms that had gathered there. They had come together expressing a unity of purpose to forge an understanding of what it is to live into an emerging future: And they left knowing and embracing the realization that it will be an ongoing journey of discovery and hope.

The themes and discussions resonated deeply with the CCA attendees, as they experienced themselves as witnesses to the radical living of the Gospel in the context of the Carmelite charism, but at the same time also searching for how best to move forward as an association into the future. They are very grateful for this partnering opportunity with their sisters called to the active apostolic religious life.

In addition to networking with other sisters to share concerns and strategies, the conference afforded an opportunity to meet with professionals who provide assistance in healthcare, financial management, administration, and other services.



Sr. Mary Fleig, Sr. JonFe, Sr. Susan, Stephanie Hauge, and Sr. Colette

Goal 6: We have explored and proposed options for the future functioning of the CCA by the end of this tenure. by Sr. Maria Viatori, Cleveland Carmel

Tending to the future of our association is an important focus for the entire membership of CCA. We are blessed to have Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF, facilitate all our virtual retreat days for this important

process. Sr. Nancy was a past president of LCWR and has held leadership positions in her own congregation. Additionally, she has assisted many communities through governance restructuring.

Our Leadership and the On-Going Formation Teams met with Sr. Nancy and Stephanie Hauge, throughout the spring, summer, and fall to plan these days of retreat.

Our June 4 and September 24-26 sessions were interspersed with poignant video music-prayers, scriptures, input, and small group sessions. We focused on scriptural, personal, and communal tales of grace, witnessing to the hope and expectation that God would bring liberation, justice, and peace even in uncertainty. We were asked such questions as: Can we move forward toward an unknown future? Do we want to be a new consolation for God's people? We examined the many ways that the Holy Spirit enlivens, energizes, and works beyond conventional wisdom.

Sr. Nancy encouraged us to broaden our horizons and call into the circle of Carmel people and resources that need to be in concert with us to walk toward a dynamic future.

As we move forward and look at organizational reconfiguration, we know that our mission is paramount. The key is building relationships and living out the vision of our Carmelite life.

Sr. Nancy also urged us to be patient with the "not knowing" and allow the process to move one step at a time. Her mantra was "transformed people transform organizations." She also advised us to see ourselves as those who give life and generativity to those who will follow us. We need to see ourselves as having the same qualities as founders in this new context.

We ended each of our September retreat days with an extended time of prayer led by Sr. Liz Sweeney, SSJ, a retreat director and spiritual guide who has companioned us for several years now. As we move with Spirit of God to guide us, these times set aside for prayer strengthen our commitment to our call as Carmelites. We look forward to continuing this process of graced conversation and collaboration as we meet in November 2024 and January 2025.

Goal 6: Our Formation Program by Sr. Maria Viatori

For many years our On-Going Formation Program entitled "Women at the Well Dialogues" has provided current, holistic programs to further educate and provide enrichment for the members of our association. Topics for the various sessions were chosen from those recommended by the nuns and all the sessions were designed to promote "dialogue" among the sisters because building relationships among our various communities and individuals has always been a primary focus for our association. We are very fortunate to have used Zoom Meeting technology to enhance this work. It truly has made life easier for our member monasteries to connect with one another.

At the present time the On-Going Formation Team has provided behind-the-scenes technology and organizational strategies to aid the working of our Leadership Team as they spearhead our Discernment Retreats with Sr. Nancy Schreck.

Spotlight on Sr. Mary Fleig, a member of our Leadership Team

Mary is a member of the Baltimore Carmel. She writes:

"It has been a privilege to serve on the Leadership Team of CCA for the last 4 years. I think the biggest challenge has been to provide care for the needs of the sisters while meeting the requirements of Cor Orans, a new rule out of Rome providing guidance for Contemplative Communities/Associations. It has been particularly difficult when a community is required to close without adequate foreplanning thus requiring the sisters to find a new place relatively abruptly. In contrast, communities that have undertaken this step on their own have fared well and experience a new focus on continuing their life of prayer in their new living situation.

I found inspiration while attending the LCWR annual conference in August, and so I realize that Religious Life is changing and may take on a different form in the future. Our association is in the process of dreaming about what the future might look like for us through a series of directed Retreat Days. We know that we desire to stay together as an association of sisters and will perhaps invite sisters from other places to participate as well. Whatever the future holds, the charism of contemplation and prayer for the world will not go away, and we will continue to play a role in it together."



Sr. Mary Fleig

A Cluster of Carmelites

You may think that after our October celebrations of St Teresa and St Therese, we have exhausted the year's celebrations of Carmelite Saints. Not so! It's true that St Teresa, reformer of the Order and foundress of the Discalced Carmelites, and St Therese, one of the most beloved and famous of her daughters, are well known and studied, but there are many other less well-known Carmelites whose feasts we celebrate in the next few months.

First among them is St Elizabeth of the Trinity, beatified by Pope St John Paul II in November 1984 and canonized by Pope Francis in October 2016. A fine pianist before she entered Carmel, there are traces of her musical background in her writings. An enthusiastic reader of the Scriptures, she shared her love for the letters of St Paul through the many letters she wrote to her friends and family. Well-known also is the prayer she wrote to the Blessed Trinity in which she imparted her love for the Indwelling Trinity and encouraged others to delve into this treasure. Here is one phrase from this lyrical prayer:

O Consuming Fire, Spirit of Love, come upon me, and create in my soul a kind of incarnation of the Word: that I may be another humanity for Him in which He can renew His whole Mystery.

St Elizabeth's feast is celebrated on 8 November.

Following closely on St Elizabeth's feast, comes All Saints of Carmel on 14 November when we remember and celebrate all those members of the Carmelite Family known and unknown, and on 15 November we celebrate All Souls of Carmel.

And finally, in December, we celebrate the life and teachings of the friar St Teresa chose to help her reform the men of the Order – St John of the Cross! At first her protégé, he became one of the guiding lights of the Order. Thought by some to be stern, he was much beloved as a friend and confessor, who gently led his sisters to greater love of God. A poet as well as a mystic, in his *Prayer of the Soul Enkindled with Love*, he exults: "Mine are the heavens and mine is the earth; mine are the sinners; the angels are mine and the Mother of God, and all things are mine; and God Himself is mine and for me." St John of the Cross' feast is celebrated on 14 December.

In Conclusion Please Remember



Since we have staked our lives on the belief that our prayers can be at all fronts, that our prayer is a prayer without borders, we ask you once again to consider making a donation to us either by sending it to:

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

Or by using the Donate/PayPal feature on our web page at CCACarmels.org.
Or see our web at CCACarmels.org for planned giving opportunities.

If you would like to be dropped from this newsletter list or have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask them of Sr. Judy Murray, judymurray@baltimorecarmel.org If you get a printed version of our newsletter, you could really help us by switching to receiving an electronic version. Just tell us your email address. You can think of it as a "mini-donation" to our cause.

This time we can guarantee it.

CCA's new web page will go live on November 14th at CCAcarmels.org. Please check it out!

And finally, a Prayer

In these turbulent times, we close with an excerpt from a prayer of Pope Francis:

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division," "hatred," and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman.