



CCA Notes to our Donors

Spring 2025

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Dear Friends,

In the holy month of March with its three major feasts for Patrick, Joseph, and Our Lady, we are thinking of you in a special way. These were all saints who gave themselves generously to our Lord and his Church, and you do that as well in all the ways you support the ministries of our Church. For that reason, we send this letter to you, our donors, to share with you all the good things you empower us to do. We hope, as always, that you find our Newsletter informative and that it reassures you of our due diligence in the use of your precious gifts.

What I am reading for Lent

In his writing John of the Cross looked at all of life through the lens of God's gracious love for us, and in *The Living Flame of Love*, he brings this to the fore in a profound way. This is the final work of a man who spent his entire life on the God-quest through contemplative prayer. He was so in love with God that he interpreted everything, including the crucifixion, through that lens, the lens of love. God has loved us so much that He sent His only Son. John tells us that when we have been transformed by God, one act of love inspired by the Holy Spirit is more valuable than all the previous good works we may have done. And so, I invite you to make little acts of love frequently throughout your day this Lent. It's as simple as that!

Spotlight

Sr. Shirley Marie is a member of the Latrobe Carmel. She writes:



I appreciate the opportunity I have been given to serve on the Leadership Team of CCA since April of 2020. This has definitely been a time of major change and transition for our Association and our member Carmels.

My first experience of CCA, as a novice at the 1999 General Assembly, was the surprise I felt at being allowed to attend, and the encouragement I was given to actively participate in the meeting. This openness to the concerns and ideas of all members of the association, not just prioresses and those in leadership, is one of the hallmarks of CCA. Fortunately, through the generosity of our donors, we continue to physically meet for our General Assembly every two years and have also been able to utilize Zoom technology to continue to gather real-time input from those members unable to attend in person. As the situations change, this becomes even more important for our future as an Association.

During my tenure on the Leadership Team the major thrusts of our efforts have been to continue providing ways for our membership to interact, grow spiritually and support each other in these rapidly changing times. Both Monasteries, some of which have had to close, and individual Carmelites, who have been displaced, have needed assistance in dealing with the issues brought about by changes in circumstances and directives coming out of Rome. Again, through the generosity of our donors, the Leadership of CCA has been able to visit and assist sisters in transition and engage people who are helping us to adjust to our new reality and look to the future.

Another thing your donations assisted with was the much needed updating of our CCA Webpage at <http://ccacarmels.org>. Though there is still work that needs to be done, we have launched the new site. A few of the highlights you might enjoy are:

- A video called “Our Story” that covers the first 50 years of our Association
- A link that allows you to find opportunities to pray with the sisters online or in person
- Access to the 200th Anniversary Edition of the book *Carmel in America 1790-1890: A Centennial History of Discalced Carmelite Nuns*

Please accept my gratitude for all you do for CCA.

CCA General Assembly Session – May 2025

CCA currently holds a General Assembly every two years at which we elect going forward leadership and make other decisions. This year's Assembly has been prefaced by a series of discernment retreat days held via ZOOM under the direction of Sr. Nancy Schreck, OSF, focused on discerning possible options for the future governance of CCA. Additionally, a virtual pre-session of the meeting will be held in April at which the Leadership Team will provide accountability of their service over the past two-year term. Other topics will include reporting on CCA's financial status, the overhaul of the CCA website and its functionality for membership, and a brief report from the On-going Formation team. At the GA itself, Sr. Nancy Schreck, OSF will guide the Assembly through its on-going discernment. The prioresses of the CCA communities will account for their completion of Goal 5:

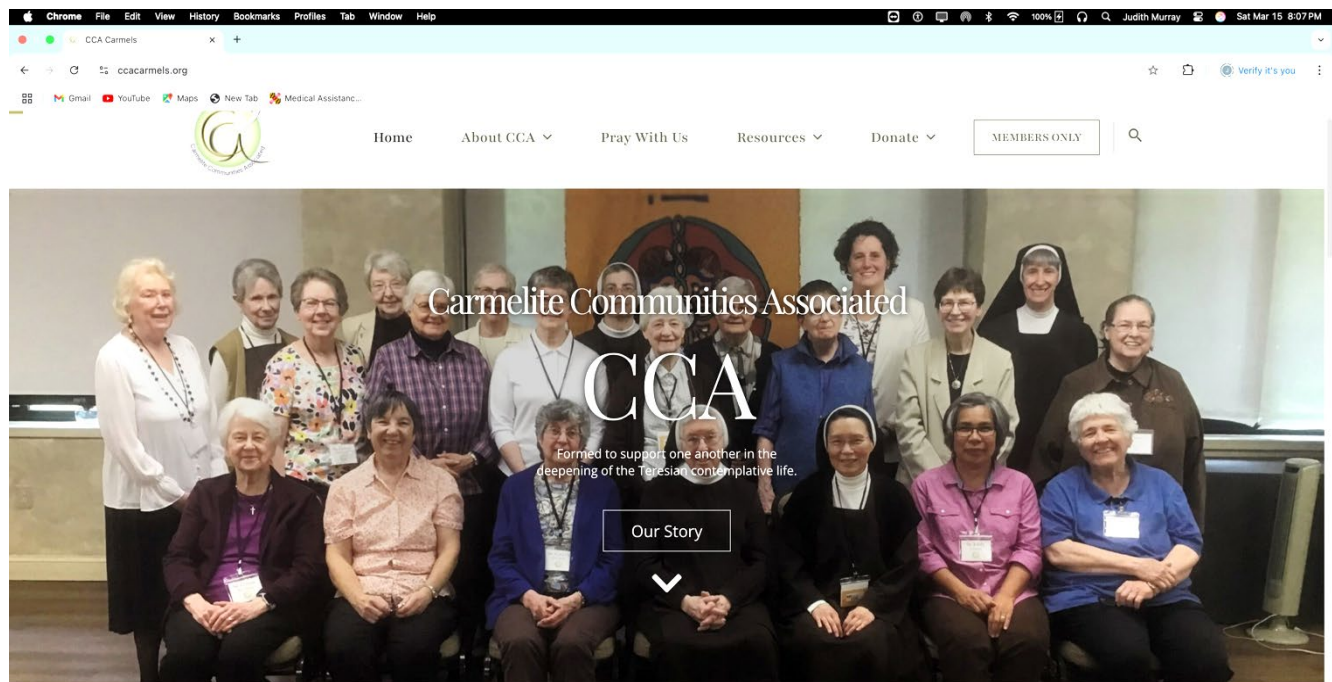
Each CCA community has adopted the protocol/practice of documentation in each of the areas as recommended by the task force and will have such in place within the next two years along with a process to keep current. Note: These areas include Legal, Financial, Medical, Archives, Sisters' Personal Documents, Building and Property, etc.

Additionally, Sister Mary Elizabeth of the St. Joseph Association is representing the US as a member of the international commission that is working on the updating of the Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelites Nuns. She will be presenting on the work of the commission and soliciting further input from the sisters.

The Assembly participants and delegates will then discuss proposals that have emerged regarding:
Goal 6: We have explored and proposed options for the future functioning of the CCA by the end of the upcoming tenure.

It is our hope and prayer that this Assembly will be graced with God's wisdom for making good decisions regarding CCA governance for the next two years.

We guaranteed it! Here's our new web page



Please visit CCACarmels.org

CCA Governance

CCA has come to the conclusion that the burden of leadership cannot be completely borne by sisters from its member communities and has started exploring possible alternative forms of governance. Options under consideration would entail possibly engaging the services of a part time Executive Director, and/or potentially other contractual arrangements. In order to do this, the CCA needs greater financial resources at this time. We ask for your support to make it possible for CCA to provide for its future operation and governance as it seeks to continue its important mission of supporting its members. Thank you!!!

Planned Giving

We have staked our lives on the belief that our prayers can be at all fronts, that our prayer is a prayer without borders. The coming General Assembly is a critical one for determining the future of our Association. It is also the vehicle for discerning how we can best assist our member communities in this moment of change. Additionally, it is the most expensive project that we undertake. Your generous donations of whatever size will really help us to sustain the ministry to which God has called us. You can support our mission by making a donation payable to Carmelite Communities Associated at:

Carmelite Communities Associated
c/o Sr. Barbara Losh, OCD
2541 Arlington Rd.
Cleveland Hts. OH 44118

Or by using the Donate/PayPal feature on our web page.

See our web page 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.

And finally, a Prayer

Even in this penitential season of Lent, we celebrate the lives of the Saints, those who have gone before us and continue to bless us with their example and affection. We remember those holy people who have inspired us and continue to nurture our faith. In March, we celebrate the life of St Patrick and a few days later, we celebrate that quiet man, St Joseph, who loved and cared for Jesus and Mary, and now watches over the Church and all its members. Some days after the feast of St Joseph, comes the feast of the Annunciation, when we reflect on Mary’s consent to be the mother of Jesus. Our Lady holds a prominent place in our hearts and liturgy, and we rejoice in her special care for us, the brothers and sisters of Jesus!

The feast of the of the Annunciation is just the beginning of Mary’s place in our lives. There is another feast which is especially dear to Catholics in the United States. In 1846 the United States Bishops declared Our Lady, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, to be the Patroness of the United States. It is always appropriate to call on her and beg her intercession for our country. Perhaps more so now as there is so much turmoil and confusion in our country at present.

We close with a prayer of Pope Francis, which he prayed on the feast of the Immaculate Conception:

Dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit inspire the leaders of nations to seek paths of peace... Queen of all peoples, reconcile your children, blinded by power and hate. You, who are close to all, shorten our distances. You, who have compassion on everyone, teach us to care for one another. Amen.

