



CCA Notes to our Donors Spring 2026

Dear Friends:

As we approach the end of this most solemn season, we wanted to send you our greetings and updates once more.

You have been very generous to us over the years, and we are very grateful for your support, and so we thought it might be worth explaining to you in a little more detail how we use your gifts. The Vatican, specifically, the Dicastery for Religious, has been very concerned about care for the nuns as their monasteries approach completion [closing]. That is the point at which the leadership of their association often steps in to ensure that the nuns either transfer to another monastery or enter a care setting. This kind of shepherding often costs money, and sometimes their monasteries cannot take care of it. Our CCA leadership often travels to the nuns to help with this. Additionally, we have hired Sr Ellen Dauwer, SC, our executive director, to facilitate these transitions. So just know that your donations to CCA are used to care for your dear sister friends. We want them to have the best care possible in their elder years, and we are sure that you do too.

Your donations also help us with our biennial General Assembly, at which we make plans for our future. Members of the Carmelite Communities Associated (the association of all our monasteries) come together to strategize about the ways that we can help one another. It is also a time of on-going formation for us. Donations help us pay for speakers and IT. We broadcast the meeting for the nuns who are unable to travel. Lastly, your gifts help subsidize lodging and travel for the nuns who are able to travel. So, you see that you play a very important role in our continued well-being. Thank you!!

From the Executive Director



Sister Ellen

Sr. Ellen Dauwer, SC, was only appointed as CCA's executive director a few months ago and she has made an exciting start. Here are a few of the things that she has engaged in:

These months have provided a time for me to continue to be oriented to this new role and for the Governance Board to begin to take shape more formally.

Each of the past four months I have been able to spend time visiting one of the CCA communities. The tour kicked off at the end of the Thanksgiving weekend in Boston. In December, during the third week of Advent, I spent two days in Baltimore where freshly fallen snow stunningly covered their grounds. In mid-January, we gambled with the weather, and I flew to Reno where afternoon temperatures soared to the low 50's. And in early February a few of us from the Governance Board were able to visit the Cleveland Carmel for a tour and afternoon coffee and cookies.

On February 16 CCA met via Zoom to discuss the most recent revision of the Constitutions. Sister Claire Sokol, the CCA liaison for the International Commission on the updating of the Constitutions, provided an update on the revision process. All present engaged in lively discussion on the draft of the table of contents, facilitated by Stephanie Hauge.

On February 3 and 4 the Governance Board met at the Jesuit Retreat House in Cleveland for process, business, prayer, and socializing. The first day provided an opportunity for the group to form and to look back, look at the present, and look ahead. This sharing then enabled the board to spend the second day with a business agenda. We all agreed that it was worth the travel and the time away.

Meetings have been held with three of the four delegations to date: website (two meetings), newsletter, and fundraising. Since I have an academic background in technology, I began these meetings with the website group. If you have not checked out the CCA website recently, I encourage you to do so. You can find it at ccacarmels.org

Spotlight

In the spring of 2024, a worldwide group of 58 Carmelite nuns—each representing her national Association—gathered in Nemi, Italy, just an hour south of Rome, to begin discerning the updating of our Constitutions. I was blessed to be among them, one of three sisters from the United States. Each of us carried with us the dreams, hopes, and lived experience of our national Associations.



Pope Francis with Sister Claire

Simultaneous translation in French, Italian, Spanish, and English allowed us to listen deeply to one another and to appreciate how our shared Carmelite charism is expressed in diverse cultural contexts. My small group included English-speaking sisters from Belgium, Iceland, Vietnam, India, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. Our week of intense work—rooted in prayer, dialogue, and mutual respect—laid a strong foundation of trust and

friendship for the ongoing renewal of our Constitutions, a process that continues today.

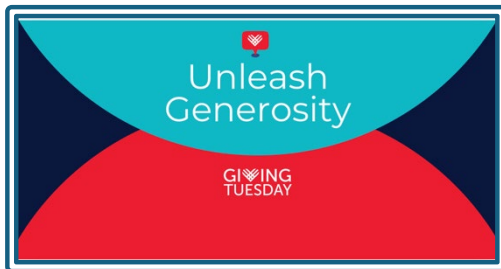
A private audience with Pope Francis had been arranged for us during our time in Italy. After addressing the entire group, he welcomed each sister individually. We had the privilege of greeting him personally, receiving his blessing, and assuring him of our prayers. Naturally, I felt nervous standing before such a beloved spiritual leader. Yet his soft-spoken gentleness and humility immediately put me at ease. His eyes sparkled when I told him I was from the United

States, where the Carmelites love him and pray for him. I thanked him especially for his courageous witness and his service.

That brief exchange remains a treasured grace for me—an encounter that continues to inspire me in my work with our Association as we reflect on the Teresian charism as it is lived today, drawing us more deeply into prayer, strengthening our worldwide communion, and renewing our gratitude for the gift of our vocation in Carmel.

Claire Sokol, OCD, Carmelite Sisters of Reno

Giving Tuesday can be any Tuesday:



We appreciate your past generosity and seek your continuing support. Thank you!

We ask you once again to consider making a donation to us either by sending it to:

Carmelite Communities Associated, Inc.
PO Box 124
Central Valley, NY 10917

Or by the PayPal feature on our web page at CCACarmels.org.

Or see our web at CCACarmels.org/donate 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

In Conclusion

During these last days of Lent, the joy of our coming Easter celebrations is clouded with violence in so many areas. In one of Pope Leo's earliest *Regina Coeli* talks in 2025, he said, "Let us not grow accustomed to the destruction of homes, the death of children, and the silence of the international community." He was speaking mainly of the war in Israel and the devastation in Gaza. It was a painful period for all, and the damage caused by that conflict will not be quickly healed or forgotten. Added now to the world trauma is our presence in Iran and the Middle East.

On the other hand, this is the 800th anniversary celebration of the death of St Francis, for which Pope Leo has written a beautiful document of celebration to the Franciscan Order. In it, Pope Leo writes, "*After his conversion Francis heard a call: The Lord revealed to me that we should say this greeting: May the Lord give you peace.*"

And for the rest of his life, Francis lived a life of peace with others and encouraged his followers to do the same. The Pope also points out that this is the same greeting Jesus addressed to his disciples on Easter evening, as they gathered in the upper Room.

And so, we pray in a special way that the Lord give you peace in the coming Easter Season. Thank you for all your goodness to us!



Happy Easter

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