

## CCA Factual Report - General Assembly

May 4 – May 9, 2025

Bon Secours Conference and Retreat Center  
Marriottsville, MD

### Sunday Evening - May 4

The meeting opened with prayer, a welcome to those attending in person as well as those online, and introduction by Sr. Colette.

Stephanie Hauge, our facilitator, shared a slide with *Meeting Agreements* and facilitated a brief discussion on the *Desired Outcomes* for the meeting:

- Having a new form of leadership and a method for CCA to move forward.
- Approval to hire an Executive Director.
- Present Leadership Team continues to serve as transition support until September 1.
- The time is now for all our CCA sisters to be seen as valuable and bringing forth their skills and talents, so that we are all sharing in the responsibility for CCA.
- We want white smoke!!!!

The proposed *Desired Outcomes* by the LT were accepted.

The General Assembly was conducted throughout as a hybrid meeting, with live streaming of general sessions. There was the opportunity for online participants to be put into breakout rooms for discussion when the in-person participants went into small groups. CCA contracted with Kevin Nelson for IT and live streaming services. Srs. Shirley Marie and Mary Fleig served to monitor the chat for any questions/comments from online participants.

### Monday Morning and Afternoon - May 5

Sr. Mary Fleig opened the meeting and welcomed Sr. Nancy Schreck OSF, of the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa. Nancy offered the prayer, followed by her presentation, which focused on Liminality. (Presentations are available on the CCA members-only section of the website.) Nancy offered questions for discussion in the small groups. Comments were shared in the large group.

Eucharist was celebrated at 5:00 p.m. by Father Michael Berry, OCD in the Oratory. Sr. Robin had prepared a booklet for use at the Eucharistic liturgy each day, and Sr. Bernadette Therese accompanied the hymns. Sisters signed up to serve as Eucharistic ministers and lectors.

In the evening an informal gathering brainstormed on ideas for Ongoing Formation.

- Fr. Craig Morrison, O. Carm. will take up the position of Chair of the Center for Carmelite Studies at the Catholic University of America, replacing Fr. Steven Payne, OCD. Sr. Colette offered to speak with Fr. Craig.
- This past year, CCA sponsored eight ongoing formation sessions including Nancy Schreck's retreat.
- Suggest six presentations a year, one every other month. CCA would need to provide financial stipends to presenters.
- Claire will continue to host "We Space" once a month except for the summer months. Sr. Liz Sweeney, SSJ has been leading the sessions every other month. CCA has given Liz a financial offering.
- Some sisters have participated in the same class as the friars for initial formation.
- Father Michael Berry, OCD had the experience of rotating with various monasteries in the Brighton area. Nuns were also teaching, which was much appreciated by the friars.
- Connie is willing to record some talks on the history of our roots, as she is able. It is a rich history, and Baltimore's archives contain much material.
- When Jo Robson comes to Baltimore Carmel, Connie intends to do some of the history with her and others. At least four sessions could be recorded. The friars would be interested if an invitation is extended to them.
- Given our changes and practicalities, would there be interest in a common retreat? It would be on ZOOM, five days in a row, with one or two conferences a day, as desired.
- If a community is having something that might be of interest to others, consider opening it up, and ask for assistance to ZOOM to others. It could be opened up to the friars.
- Assign each Carmel to take a month and provide a program via ZOOM.
- During Lent this year 2025, Boston nuns watched a tape of one of the Irish friars, and then spent time in community sharing on it. There may be a way to use a theme, with input followed by breakout rooms on ZOOM. Fr. Liam Finnerty.
- In the past, Sisters shared in the newsletter presenters they think are worthwhile. Encourage communities to share resource information.

## **Tuesday morning – May 6**

Sr. Shirley Marie Ahern opened the meeting and welcomed Sr. Nancy Schreck. Nancy offered the prayer in the context of her presentation focused on Divine Wisdom. There followed small and large group discussions/comments.

## **Tuesday afternoon – May 6**

The assembly gathered for a presentation by the communities of Baltimore, Boston, Carmelite Communion, Latrobe, and Reno reporting on their work and 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.” Several used PowerPoint slides, and others simply addressed the questions requested in the template that was provided.

Following a break, Sr. Shirley introduced Sr. Mary Elizabeth Goeckel, OCD, president of the St. Joseph Association and a member of Flemington Carmel. She is on the nine-member International Commission for the Revision of the Constitutions. The Commission has benefited greatly from the facilitation of Sr. Lidia Wrona, a Carmelite Missionary from Poland, who had been at the Nemi meeting (April 2024). Sr. Mary Elizabeth's presentation was recorded and is available on the CCA website members-only section. She noted that the work of the Commission to date has focused on the members getting to know each other, traveling to some of the sites established by St. Teresa of Avila, and developing a Table of Contents for the revised Constitutions. This Table of Contents will be sent out by July 1 with responses from the various federations/associations due back by September 14. Going forward they will meet in person every six months.

Eucharist was celebrated at 5:00 p.m. by Fr. Michael Berry, OCD, in the Oratory.

In the evening there was general Q & A session with Sr. Mary Elizabeth regarding the work of the Commission.

## **Wednesday Morning - May 7**

Sr. Jeanne Marie opened the session and presented the prayer. As the Conclave opened this day in Rome, our prayers were united with the Church for the Conclave.

Jeanne Marie then turned the session over to Stephanie Hauge. After recognizing the

delegates, Stephanie presented the proposal to remove the restricted designation on the interest from the Thomas Kilduff Fund: **We propose that the restricted status of interest from the Kilduff Fund be removed to allow the money to be used for operational and administrative purposes, as well as for programs, at the discretion of the Leadership Team.** Stephanie clarified that the restrictions had been placed on the Interest Fund by the CCA not by the donor; therefore, it can be changed by CCA. It was unanimously approved as requested and without modification.

Stephanie asked that the Leadership Team's proposed "model/option" for the functioning of CCA during the next term be presented: **We propose that the CCA:**

- 1. Hire or contract with a part-time Executive Director to direct the administrative/operational responsibilities of the association for the two-year term of the next LT;**
- 2. Continue to utilize the services of an Administrative Assistant;**
- 3. Elect up to four sisters to a leadership team that has oversight of the Ed, and that is supported by advisors/consultants consisting of at least two to three past CCA presidents;**
- 4. Continue to use the volunteer services of its current facilitator;**
- 5. Elect a treasurer who will continue to be supported by the services of Christian Brothers Services to manage its finances with oversight from the ED and LT.**

**In order to implement this proposal, the current LT will serve in a transition capacity until September 1.**

**This proposal assumes that sisters from the member communities will serve in various delegated roles to support the Association's needs (e.g., the CCA newsletter, the CCA website, the CCA fundraising committee, coordinating formation, designated volunteer "companion contacts" to dispersed sisters, moderator of prioresses' meetings, etc.).**

Stephanie asked Sr. Marjorie to present her community's alternate to #3 of the LT proposal:

**We propose an alternate to #3 of the Proposal:**

**We will not hold elections at this time but will choose an Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is made up of the prioresses and past presidents of CCA and will**

have oversight of the Executive Director. The proposed Advisory Group is already a functioning group within CCA which meets regularly, with Sr. Susan Weber as moderator.

The sisters of the Advisory Group would function as a unit, sharing among themselves necessary responsibilities, experience, expertise, and requirements for CCA leadership. They will decide and choose who within the Group will carry out various roles.

Participants, both in person and online, went into their small groups to discuss these proposals as well as any other ideas regarding the future functioning of CCA. Relevant suggestions were shared in the large group.

## DECISIONS

- CCA will hire an Executive Director.
- A Search Committee of the current Leadership Team and Sr. Marjorie, if her community agrees, was formed for the hiring of an Executive Director.
- A CCA Governance Board, consisting of prioresses of the autonomous communities, plus Sr. Barb Losh, local superior of Cleveland, and the three past presidents of CCA (Sr. Bernadette Therese, Sr. Colette, Sr. Marjorie).

**Governance Board members:** Sr. Judy Long (Baltimore), Sr. Bernadette Therese (Boston), Sr. Marjorie (Carmelite Communion), Sr. Mary Wild (Latrobe), Sr. Claire Sokol (Reno), Sr. Barb Losh (Cleveland), Sr. Colette (Baltimore).

**The CCA Governance Board** will assume their role effective September 1, 2025. The initial term of the Board will be two years from this date.

We have accomplished Goals 5 and 6.

The assembly reviewed in detail the [job description](#) for an Executive Director that was provided in conjunction with the Executive Director proposal.

## **Wednesday Afternoon – May 7**

In the afternoon there was discussion on simplification of the Goals. Small groups were asked to consider the six Goals and prioritize three Goals for 2025-2027.

Leaders/secretaries of the groups were asked to provide their results to Stephanie.

### **Goals for 2025+ and Priorities**

1. Continue to Embrace the diversity of the Carmelite family, collaborating with other associations and federations here at home and abroad as well as with other religious organizations, exploring life-giving relationships and partnerships.

Priority: Be open to specific practical ways that the groups could support each other.

Encourage local initiatives. Confederation.... In the US, international, worldwide.

Long term.

2. Continue to exercise our voice and presence in matters affecting our lives, our Teresian charism, the Order, our role in the Church, the world and all of creation.

Priority: Direct our efforts towards the review of the revised Constitution text and provide timely responses/feedback. Send all responses to Sr. Claire Sokol.

3. We continue to care for one another in a spirit of sisterly support and friendship, in light of our new and changing realities.

Priority: Encourage the non-incardinated sisters to incardinated.

Note: All sisters have an obligation to be a member of a community. They need to have the support of a community.

Jeanne Marie expressed our gratitude to Fr. Michael, for his brotherly presence at our meeting and for the gift of celebrating each day's Liturgy with us.

Roz closed with a Prayer.

The Eucharistic liturgy was celebrated at 5:00 p.m. with Fr. Michael Berry in the Oratory.

**Wednesday evening** the group enjoyed creative games of CCA Bingo hosted by Sr. Mary Fleig. Much laughter, fun, and precious memories were shared by all.

## **Thursday Morning - May 8**

The meeting was opened by Sr. Rosalind. She offered the prayer and then turned the session over to Stephanie.

Stephanie acknowledged the work of the previous day's sharing and feedback on the Goals, calling for a discussion on finalizing the Goals and priorities.

A question was raised on what was missing—**A VISION**. Sr. Connie offered to do a draft of a Vision Statement that would be shared with all at some point in the near future.

Regarding the priority for Goal 3, asking how we can companion the non-incardinated and other sisters? **Susan Weber volunteered to ask who is doing what and who is willing to do something, or have ideas as to how to do this.**

**The healthcare oversight/coordination of the non-incardinated sisters needs to be determined.**

At the end of the morning, Fr. Steven Payne, OCD and Br. John-Mary arrived with the welcome news that WHITE SMOKE was seen from the Vatican! Everyone hurried through lunch and returned to the meeting room. The large TV screen focused on the Vatican plaza, where hundreds of people were gathering, and on the balcony where the announcement of the new pope would be made. Excitement and anticipation filled the room!

## **Thursday afternoon – May 8 – Final Session**

- The meeting opened with rejoicing and gratitude on the election of our new Pope Leo XIV!
- Stephanie drew our attention to the decisions we have made and the responsibilities / delegations for the next few months:
- Goals for 2025-2027 were accepted.
- The CCA Governance Board and its members were affirmed. Their term will begin on September 1.
- The primary role of the Leadership Team during the transition period is that of Search Committee for an Executive Director. With her community's approval, Sr. Marjorie will join the Search Committee.
- Recommendations for possible candidates will be sent to Sr. Denise Lyon with all the

information and some vetting. Denise will send information to the Search Committee.

- Follow-up on ongoing formation.
- Review current delegations.
- The role of treasurer is open, with Sr. Barbara Losh agreeing to continue for the next two months.
- Governance Board to deal with assigning the CCA treasurer and formator.
- CCA Newsletter - Donna
- CCA Fundraising - Judy M, Michaelene, Stephanie
- CCA Website – Sr. Jeanne Marie and Sr. Shirley Marie (until September 1)
- CCA Archives - Colette
- CCA On-going formation, with proposed ways to consider this.
- Claire is open to be a focal point for the responses to the International Commission on Revision of the Constitutions. She can work with CCA's administrative assistant, Sr. Denise.
- Invite sisters not incardinated to incardinate with your community.
- Stephanie will send a revised Executive Director job description to all on the Governance Board. Stephanie spoke with Sr. Nancy Reynolds, SP, regarding the salary for half-time role of an Executive Director, preferably a woman religious.

### **CCA Goals for 2025 - 2027**

- 1)** Continue to Embrace the diversity of the Carmelite family, collaborating with other associations and federations here at home and abroad as well as with other religious organizations, exploring life-giving relationships and partnerships.
- 2)** Continue to exercise our voice and presence in matters affecting our lives, our Teresian charism, the Order, our role in the Church, the world and all of creation.
- 3)** We continue to care for one another in a spirit of sisterly support and friendship, in light of our new and changing realities.

The meeting closed with recognition of all who had contributed to the success of the meeting, as indicated on the “In Gratitude” sheet. Special thanks go to the members of the Leadership Team and Stephanie Hauge for their commitment, hard work, and the many hours of service they have given during this past term.

The Eucharistic Liturgy was celebrated at 5:00 p.m. by Fr. Steven Payne, OCD in the Oratory. The intention was for our new Pope Leo XIV, whose election as pope had taken place just hours earlier.

In **the evening**, a prayer service, “CCA’s Unfolding Future,” was prepared by Sr. Marita Biscotti and Sr. Marjorie. Following the readings, there was a Prayer of Gratitude for the Leadership Team and a Blessing for members of the new CCA Governance Board. Gifts were given to each member of the Leadership Team for their term of generous, caring service to CCA and for their generous acceptance to remain on as the Search Committee.

The singing of the “Salve Regina” concluded the evening.