



Carmelite Communities Associated

May 9, 2018

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

Dear Archbishop Carballo,

I send greetings and an assurance of prayers from all the sisters of Carmelite Communities Associated.

The following is a summary of the activities of the CCA from April, 2016 - April, 2018:

CCA 'Sisterly Visits'

Responding to a request of the 2016 delegate assembly, our Association council (and delegates) visited 11 of our 12 monasteries during the last two years to offer sisterly assistance as identified by each community. We met with Sr. Mary Hughes, OP to prepare ourselves for this important work. Sister's rich and varied experience in dealing with situations similar to that of our own communities, made her input invaluable. The response of the communities to these visits was extremely positive. They have made the same request of the in-coming Leadership Team to carry out these visits again in the next term.

CCA Website

At the request of our member communities, we updated our CCA website (www.cca-carmels.org) to include a 'toolbox' to assist them in accessing resources to help with their current needs. Our toolbox includes resources for healthcare, finances, archives, legal questions, canon lawyers, facilitators, Insurances: property (alternative uses for buildings and property), health and cars, retreat directors and speakers. Contact information for national religious organizations in the USA with a list of their services includes: National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and the Resouce Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI). Our website is also used to post documents and talks given to contemplative nuns by members of CICALSAL and by our Superior General, Fr. Saverio Cannistrá, and his definitors.

National Meeting of 4 Carmelite Associations in the USA

For many years CCA has worked toward greater understanding and cooperation between our four US Associations. When *Vultum Dei quaerere* on women's contemplative life was released, we recognized this as an opportunity to work together. The other Coordinators readily agreed to do so. We appreciate your affirmation of this meeting (Letter to Sr. Mary Clare Trolley: Prot. n. FM 57c-1/1999).

Significant steps were initiated in our work together:

- The 4 Coordinators took turns facilitating our planning meetings
- We pooled our financial resources
- We planned the liturgies for the meeting together
- We composed joint letters to our communities together
- We developed a common letterhead

National Meeting the 4 Carmelite Associations of the USA cont.

In the end, 157 Carmelite nuns irrespective of Constitutional text (1990 or 1991), whether associated or not, were present for this meeting. This was, indeed, an historic occasion of communion among our Associations. Friars from our Generalate: Fr. Saverio Cannistrá (Superior General), Fr. Rafal Wilkowski (Secretary for the Nuns) and Fr. Daniel Chowning (Definitor for the Nuns) gave excellent presentations on the document, ***Vultum Dei quaerere***, offering reflections from biblical, canonical and formational perspectives. Following this meeting, *Cor Unum* in the UK published the talks given by the Generalate as well as the letter composed by the four US Coordinators giving a summary of the meeting. We trust that the fruits of the Spirit, so manifest during this time, will continue to bear fruit in the future.

CCA International Collaboration on Formation

In June 2016, our Superior General, Fr. Saverio Cannistrá, wrote a letter to the 18 Nuns who were represented at the General Chapter in Avila (2015) in which he responded to our request to form a working group of sisters to draw up a program of reflection on our charism. He asked for our suggestions and responses. The following month, CCA organized a ZOOM meeting of 11 Association/Federation presidents from 9 countries to discuss our response to Fr. General's letter. Following our meeting we sent a common letter signed by representatives of each of our Associations to Fr. General in addition to our individual Association responses. While we are disappointed that nothing has come from this endeavor, we appreciate the fact that this project served as an opportunity for dialogue with our sisters across the globe. We hope for the day when the same cooperation we experienced among the 4 US Associations will be possible among the nuns globally.

CCA Initial and Ongoing Formation

After receiving the approval of the nuns at the national assembly in 2016, we pursued the development of a leadership formation program for CCA which eventually came to be known as ***Women at the Well: Visioning Carmel for the 21st Century***. Supported by a generous grant from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, five highly-dedicated sisters from CCA and Stephanie Hauge (CCA facilitator) worked for 2 years to develop this program in cooperation with the Ministry Leadership Center (MLC) in Sacramento, California. The program was intended for all members of CCA, covering the essential aspects of our Carmelite charism over a 3-year period for the purpose of encouraging the interiorization of the Teresian charism. It is a great sadness that this work we started was not destined to come to completion. The two outstanding reasons being: at the same time CCA lost its non-profit status (a clerical mistake that has since been corrected), the Ministry Leadership Center unexpectedly closed. Despite the great efforts we put into restructuring the program we were not able to secure sufficient funding or personnel to keep it going. However, new efforts to address this critical need for initial and ongoing formation were introduced at our 2018 assembly, which the new Leadership Team is already in the process of implementing.

CCA Newer Member Meeting

From October 29 - November 3, 2017 the newer members of CCA met at the Mt. Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Fall, New York. Their theme was: ***A Reflection on the Beauty of Carmel: Embracing our Contemplative Identity and Articulating our Carmelite Charism for the World Today***. Presentations were given by Fr. Daniel Chowning OCD ((Definitor for the Nuns), Sr. Constance FitzGerald of the Baltimore Carmel and Sr. Carolyn O'Hara of the Beacon Carmel. The fire that was stirred up by this meeting is still evident among our newer members, who returned home glowing with the fruits of this meeting!

CCA Prioresses Meeting

Our CCA prioresses met in April of 2018 at Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center in the days immediately preceding our bi-annual CCA Association meeting. They found this opportunity for dialogue to be very supportive of their needs as sisters serving in leadership at this difficult juncture in our history.

Bi-Annual CCA Association Meeting

Our bi-annual CCA Association meeting took place from April 15-21, 2018 at the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center in Marriottsville, Maryland. We chose as our theme: ***Our Emmaus Journey, from Collaboration to Communion***. The meeting was attended by 32 sisters from CCA in addition to our guests who included the Coordinators and a council-member from Mary, Queen of Carmel Association and St. Teresa Association. Each member of the assembly was gifted with a copy of your publication: ***New Wine in New Wineskins, the Consecrated Life and its Ongoing Challenges Since Vatican II***. The sisters very much appreciate the insights offered for our reflection in this recent document. Our input by Fr. Michael Fish, OSB Cam. and Sr. Mary Johnson, SNDdN focussed on deepening our contemplative, Carmelite vocation in light of the Emmaus journey. Our discussions in large and small groups resulted in renewed insights and hope for the future of our communities. Our direction-setting for the next 2 years was led by facilitator, Stephanie Hauge.

At the end of our meeting we elected new leadership. Our new Coordinator (President) is a member of the Boston Carmel, who has served CCA in this capacity once before. We are very grateful to her for assuming this service to the Association which began immediately at the conclusion of our meeting. Her contact information follows:

Name: **Sr. Bernadette Therese Huang, OCD**

Email: sbtoccca@gmail.com

Address: **Carmelite Monastery
61 Mt Pleasant Ave
Roxbury MA 02119**

It has been my privilege to serve CCA as Coordinator during the past four years. I have every confidence that the Spirit will continue to bless and guide our new, capable Leadership Team in the coming years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your service to the Church and to wish you a very blessed summer. Please be assured of the prayers of all the sisters of Carmelite Communities Associated.

With every blessing in Christ,



Sr. Claire Sokol, OCD

Coordinator, CCA (April, 2014 - April, 2018)