



Carmelite Communities Associated

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

CCA Notes to our Donors

Fall 2021

Dear Friends,

We are happy to present the Fall 2021 edition of our CCA Donor Newsletter. In it there are two important events we wish to share with you. First is September 14, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which is important to all Carmelites. Tradition holds that St. Helen, mother of Emperor Constantine, had the Church of the Holy Sepulcher built in the 4th century on the spot where Jesus was crucified; it also holds that during the excavation for that basilica, the true cross was found. September 14 is the date of the dedication of that basilica. It is also the day when we renew our vows and rededicate ourselves more deeply to our vocation to pray for the people of God. We encourage you to deepen your own life commitments as well.



Another important event of the fall is Giving Tuesday which occurs on November 30 this year. And so, we come to you asking that you unleash your own generosity to support our CCA communities. We rely on your support to make our lives of prayer possible. Donations can be made via the Donate button on our web site ccacarmels.org. Or checks can be made out to CCA, Inc. or credit card information can be sent to

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

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask them of Sr. Judy Murray, judymurray@baltimorecamel.org

Read, Reflect... Renew

As part of our ongoing formation, CCA has embarked on a virtual discussion of the book *Religious Life for our World, Creating Communities of Hope* by Maria Cimperman, RSCJ. Sr. Kathleen Pruitt CSJP is the facilitator, and Sr. Maria, the author, will join us for at least two of the discussions. We have invited 73 English-speaking Carmelite sisters from around the world to participate in this program. Here is what Sr. Jenifer of the Varroville Monastery in New South Wales writes:

Long before it was fashionable to reach out across international borders (at least in the case of Carmelite communities) the CCA was issuing invitations to representatives of other Associations and Federations around the world to attend their Assemblies as observers. I remember the first invitation we received caused something of a stir. Our Association of Our Lady of the Southern Cross has member-Monasteries in Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Wallis-Futuna, and Hong Kong. ‘How could we possibly attend’ we thought! It was like asking us to go the moon; it seemed so impossible. But thankfully the CCA persisted, and eventually we were able to attend an Assembly, and it changed everything for us.



Varroville is a suburb of Sydney

Our latest venture is a book-sharing, with participants joining on ZOOM from USA, France, Netherlands, Scotland and Australia. We are reading Maria Cimperman’s book, *Religious Life for Our World: Creating Communities of Hope*. One of the underlying premises of her book is the fact that together we can do more than we can alone. On that basis, even if all the English-speaking Carmelite communities connected with each other, we would create a very powerful network of Sisters across the world and a venue for sharing friendship, ideas, and possibilities.

Importantly, in our small way, it also witnesses to the fact that there can be friendship and cooperation across international borders. In her book Cimperman quotes St Pope John Paul II who speaks of the Church as a communion of the faithful and that “her members can and must unite their efforts, with a view to cooperation and exchange of gifts, in order to participate more effectively in the Church’s mission.”

Thank you for supporting the CCA. It is a very worthwhile organization and one that continues to inspire and provide opportunities for our Carmelite way of life to deepen and grow.

CCA Elections

The CCA is pleased to announce the results of its recent election. Sr. Marjorie Robinson, OCD, of the Beacon, NY, community, previously serving as treasurer, has accepted the role of President of CCA.

The First Councilor is Sister Susan Weber, OCD, of the Reno, NV, community. The other Councilors are Sr. Mary Fleig, OCD, of the Baltimore, MD, community and Sr. Shirley Marie Ahern, OCD, of the Latrobe, PA, community. These sisters have assumed office immediately upon their election.

The outgoing Leadership Team of Sr. Bernadette Huang of the Boston, MA, community, (president) Sr. Rosalind Forrest of the Reno, NV, community, Sr. Monika Bies of the Baltimore community, and Sr. Cecelia Kang of the Reno, NV, community have been acknowledged with much gratitude for their generous and competent service to the CCA.

The Changing Role of CCA

In mid-2018 *Cor Orans* – the Implementing Instruction of the Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei quaerere* on Women’s Contemplative Life, of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life – was issued.

The Carmelite Communities Associated's member communities are either affiliated or autonomous. An affiliated community is one that no longer meets the canonical criteria to be fully and really autonomous (*sui juris*). An affiliated community can affiliate with the association/federation of which it is a member, or it may, with mutual consent, affiliate with an autonomous community. Autonomous communities vote for a prioress (who canonically is the equivalent of a major superior), whereas affiliated communities have an appointed (by the president of the Association or prioress of the autonomous community with which they are affiliated) local superior. The affiliation is meant to be supportive and assist in determining whether the situation is temporary, whereby over time the monastery can become autonomous again, or whether the community will come to completion (suppressed) after all remaining sisters are transferred to care situations, if warranted, or to membership in a welcoming autonomous community.

CCA and its member communities have been engaged in understanding and implementing its directives. As a result, the CCA leadership can be selected by those member communities that no longer qualify to be completely autonomous to provide for their governance and thereby proactively assist in determining its path forward. This may entail various levels of support for such communities to transition to a smaller monastic home or independent living, and in some instances, sisters within these communities have been accepted into other communities, to assisted living, or continuing nursing care as the circumstances necessitate. This has been a very significant and difficult time of transition. In some instances, it means ultimately that a community must come to a final closure. CCA is a community of communities and, with compassion and hope, accompanies those of its members who are on this journey of discernment and decision.

As we seek to follow God’s will for us, we have sought direction and sound advice to guide our decisions. In the spirit of St. Teresa, we respond with courage and openness, with a deep love for God, one another, the Church, and our Carmelite vocation. As Carmelites, the motivation for all our decisions is God’s glory and the good of the Church.

The life of Carmel – seeking God in prayer and solitude – transcends the boundaries of walls and buildings. Although there is a sadness in endings, as Christians we believe that every ending promises a new beginning in ways we cannot imagine at present. We are a Paschal people. Christ’s death and resurrection are the foundation of our faith and the assurance of our hope in God’s care for us.

Shared Services Update - by Kate Asselin, GHR Grant Project Manager

Thanks to the continuing generosity of the GHR Foundation, implementation of the Shared Services Plan is proceeding with key service contracts recently negotiated in partnership with Christian Brothers Services (CBS) for: Financial Services; Benefits Eligibility Management Services (BEM); and IT Support and Website Services. These services are available to members of the Shared Services Collaborative (SSC) on a flexible, on-demand basis, individualized for each community, at specially discounted rates. Several communities have already engaged CBS for help with accounting functions, benefits eligibility questions, and IT systems problems and have been pleased with the services received. Other communities are working with CBS to redesign their websites or attending online educational programs like *Learning to ZOOM!* Most importantly, all these services allow the sisters to minimize time and energy devoted to administrative tasks and to engage more fully in their vocation to the Carmelite spiritual life. Expansion plans for the Collaborative are developing with other Carmelite communities and associations having inquired about SSC membership and available services. A growing list of SSC services is being compiled, and a video presentation on the Shared Services Collaborative is expected to be completed this fall.

<http://www.ghrfoundation.org>

Virtual Performance of Teresa's 4 Waters in Word, Image & Song

CCA was a founding member of the Carmelite Institute which began in 1993. The Institute is a place to find and contribute to the contemporary interpretation of Carmelite spirituality as well as to find inspiration for the journey toward intimacy with God in prayer. It is intended as a collaborative medium for engaging Carmelites and the wider public in the interpretation and application of our Carmelite charism to contemporary times and daily life.

The Carmelite Institute is a collaborative effort of the Carmelites of the United States and Canada. Its mission is to promote the following of Jesus Christ through studies in the Carmelite tradition and by making the tradition available to our Carmelite brothers and sisters, as well as to all those interested in a spiritual life.

On July 7, 2020 The Carmelite Institute of North America broadcast a virtual presentation of *The Four Waters in Word, Image, and Song*.



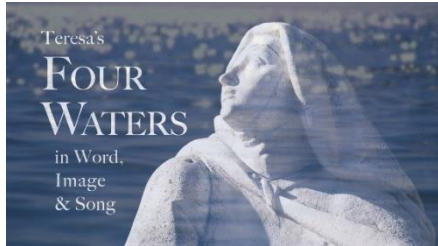
Sr. Claire Sokol

Teresa's Four Waters in Word, Image and Song is a meditation on St. Teresa of Ávila's (1515-1582) teaching and experience of prayer, which she likens to four ways of watering a garden. This beautiful tapestry of music, art, and nature is a presentation of the Carmel of Reno featuring music by Sr. Claire Sokol and artwork by Sr. Sa Ra Lee.



Sr. Sa Ra Lee

It is intended to invite you into a deeper awareness of God's presence of beauty, peace and love within you and within all creation and to inspire you to share that Love with our world.



Further information regarding the purchase of *Teresa's Four Waters in Word, Image & Song* in DVD and digital formats as well as an Audio download will be available by October 1st at: carmelofreno.com A YouTube preview of the composition is available here: https://youtu.be/HxXU_86sIq4

The Women at the Well Dialogues Continue

Our association, Carmelite Communities Associated (CCA), now 50 years old, continues to connect, console, and invigorate our members thanks to our generous benefactors and our technologically gifted sisters.

The Women at the Well Dialogues presents a welcome opportunity to share what is most important in our lives as a religious order in the Church and in the world. Together, we drink of the life-giving water of God the Holy Spirit, active and alive in our day in each of our sisters as well as in others who inspire us.

Recently, we have been working with Sr. Liz Sweeney, SSJ, a Sister of St Joseph from Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia, as leader in our current program.

As we share our experience of a particular topic, we participate in an exercise of shifting from I-space to We-space. One of the fruits of our encounter is a deeper sense of consciousness. It's a consciousness of being in communication at a deeper level, "of something being born, of something new and sacred. A sense of being separate drops and something undivided opens up between us to a new way of being human in the world."

Over time, it can physically change the structures of consciousness. The I-Space becoming the We-Space creates a grounded, rooted felt sense of trust despite the chaos in our nation and world right now.

– Sr. Roseann Gillice, OCD, Beacon Carmel

Other Carmelite Feasts in this Season

As we move into autumn and then winter, we note that we will celebrate three more Carmelite Feasts: the well-loved Therese of the Child Jesus (Lisieux) on October 1, Teresa of Jesus (Avila) on October 15, and John of the Cross on December 14. While many of our communities will not be celebrating publicly due to the ongoing Covid precautions, we assure you of our continuing prayers for your intentions and for your dear ones.

As we continue our mutual journey of faith, encouraged by hope in the promises you have made and filled with your unending love, we experience the joy of the companionship of all of you wonderful men and women whose generous hearts inspire us and support us. We are grateful! We are humbled! We thank you for caring for us all.

CCA Prayer for our Donors

Good and gracious God, we ask you to bless our benefactors. Protect them from all harm and send your healing presence into our suffering world. May their gifts come back to them a hundredfold! This we ask through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.