



## Women at the Well: Visioning Carmel for the 21st Century

February 25, 2017

Dear Sisters,

At the 2016 CCA meeting the delegate assembly overwhelmingly approved of the CCA Leadership Team continuing to develop an ongoing formation/leadership program for our CCA communities in partnership with the Ministry Leadership Center (MLC). Since that time the CCA Visioning Committee: Sisters Claire Sokol (Reno), Hilary Case (Concord), Bernadette Therese Huang (Boston), Sue Lumb (Barrington), Judy Murray (Baltimore) and Stephanie Hauge have been working devotedly to carry forward the assembly's mandate assisted by Elizabeth McCabe of the MLC and Sr. Judy Carey, RSM, our facilitator. While still a work in progress, the program is taking shape in significant ways. We hope this update will address many of your questions and awaken your desire to participate in this exciting program.

### **Program Title and Goals**

The Visioning Committee recently arrived at a title for the program that captures both the spirit of St. Teresa and that of the program itself: *Women at the Well: Visioning Carmel for the 21st Century*. As Jesus revealed himself to the Samaritan woman at the well, our hope is that this program will open a doorway for Jesus to reveal himself to us, the Carmelites of the 21st century. Thus the program will inspire the participants to take his transformative message back to their own communities and beyond.

### **What is the purpose of this program?**

- To renew our CCA communities with hope and vitality for the future.
- To strengthen the prospects for leadership on all levels in our CCA communities.
- With the goal of re-articulating our Teresian charism today, participants will grapple with questions such as: What is the relevance of our contemplative charism today? What difference does it make in our personal lives, our communities and our world? Is our charism truly prophetic? Is Carmel today capable of attracting women to become part of a transformative journey?

### **Who is this program for?**

- *Women at the Well* is an ongoing formation program open to every sister interested in exploring the Teresian charism and its relevance for our time in the light of the current circumstances of our communities and the culture in which we live.
- It is open to all professed sisters as well as those in the process of initial formation or transfer. While we don't recommend postulants, each community is free to make their own discernment.
- We strongly recommend that *at least 2 sisters from each community* attend the program for mutual support and to help integrate the learnings back into their own communities.

**What are the benefits of the program for the whole community?**

- Our hope is that this program will assist the participants to become more confident, knowledgeable, responsible and prayerful members of community.
- When one sister experiences a renewal and deepening in the charism, the whole community benefits.
- All members of CCA will have access to resource material recommended by the presenters through the CCA website.
- A summary of each session with reflection questions will be made available on the CCA website for any community who chooses to use them for dialogue and reflection.
- Evaluations will be built into the program for the participants as well as for the community to assess the benefits to both.

**What is the length of this program?**

- This is a three-year program which meets 3 times a year for 2 ½ days per session. Note: *the dates below include travel dates.*

**What are the dates and topics?**

- The topics were discussed and approved at the CCA 2016 national assembly. They include 9 ‘Foundational Concerns’ which are diagrammed in the form of a mandala. *See attached Foundational Concerns*
- During each of the 3 years we will be covering 3 Foundational Concerns as outlined below:

2018		
Session 1	March 12 - 15	Teresian Values in the Light of the Scriptures
Session 2	July 24 - 27	Renewed Ecclesiology
Session 3	November 6 - 9	Contemplative Life/Prayer
2019		
Session 4	March 5 - 8	Human Development
Session 5	July 23 - 26	Discernment
Session 6	November 5 - 8	Community & Eremitical (hermit) Life
2020		
Session 7	March 10 - 13	Theology of the Vows
Session 8	July 21 - 24	Prophetic and Apostolic Mission
Session 9	November 3 - 6	Unity in Diversity

**How will the sessions be run?**

- Sessions will unfold at a contemplative pace that honors our tradition. Each session will include input, dialogue in large and small-group forums, prayer in common and time for personal reflection.

**Will the sessions be live-streamed?**

- No. After thoughtfully exploring this option we decided it wouldn’t work for this program. Since the MLC pedagogy is a dynamic process balancing input with dialogue we felt that it needed to unfold among participants in the same physical space.

**Who are the Presenters?**

- We have not yet determined who the presenters will be. This is in process. They will be selected according to their competency to speak to our 9 Foundational Concerns.

**Will there be follow-up between the sessions?**

- Yes. It is important to recognize that the fullness of the formative experience is not solely the sessions. It is an ongoing process of what happens before, during and after a session. Fundamentally the pre-session and post-session work flow from the session content.
- Pre-session work will be determined by the individual presenters. It could involve reading, watching a presentation, answering one or more reflection questions and/or preparing a response.
- Post-sessions could also involve further reading, journaling, and/or meeting with your small-group forum via ZOOM should you wish to discuss the material further.

**Where does this program take place?**

- All 9 sessions will take place at Bon Secours Spirituality Center in Marriottsville, MD.

**Do I commit to all three years or can I come into the program later?**

- Because this program is cumulative and developmental, participants must commit to all 9 sessions for 3 years.
- We invite you to think of the commitment to participate in this program as twofold.
  - o For participants: a commitment to all 9 sessions of the program (3 per year) is expected as well as a willingness to convey elements of the program back to their communities.
  - o For communities: a commitment to prayerfully support those taking part in the program and to create a space for integrating their input into the life of the community.

**What will this program cost?**

- We are still working with some uncertainty in this area until grants are secured. We have very positive leads with Hilton and the Knights of Columbus. Our hope is to give generous financial assistance to every participant.

**When and how do we register to attend?**

- Registration will be in the Fall of 2017. We will share further information about the registration process before then.

**Has the program been approved by our Superior General?**

- Yes. *See attached letter from Fr. Saverio.*

Be assured that we will keep you abreast of program developments as plans continue to unfold. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions before that time.

**Gratitude**

We want to end this letter with a profound word of thanks to the sisters who continue to devote their time and talent so generously to serving on the CCA Visioning committee. The communities represented by this group are also to be thanked for allowing their sisters to serve CCA in this way. It is a significant gift to all of us! Thanks also to Sr. Cecelia Kang (Reno) for designing an absolutely beautiful logo for our program!

In hope and love,

Hilary Michaela Monika Claire