



Carmelite News

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50 Years

On August 31, 1961, the nuns of Baltimore Carmel moved from Caroline and Biddle Streets in Baltimore City to the community's fourth monastery, located on Dulaney Valley Road. On the occasion of our 50th anniversary of contemplative presence at this site, we share with you a few remembrances. The article below was written by one of the nuns (probably Sr. Miriam) shortly after the move took place. In mentioning those whose presence continues to sustain our lives -- the Sisters of Mercy, Stella Maris, the Jesuits, the Secular Order, and a community of friends and family surrounding us -- the account touchingly links our past to our present.

In 1830, the Carmelites who were our cherished ancestors left their monastery at Port Tobacco Maryland, and moved the first American Carmel to the city of Baltimore. Covered with their large, forbidding black veils, they undoubtedly presented a far more striking spectacle than the 22 nuns who unobtrusively left the old Biddle Street Carmel on August 31, 1961, at the beginning of the summer's most prolonged heat wave.

Although we had been absolutely certain of our move, still we had been equally uncertain about the actual date of transfer. The difficulties of packing for the first time in 88 years were thus intensified and the last two weeks became alarmingly full and hectic. Several unexpected trips to Dulaney Valley in small groups to clean and arrange things took a heavy toll of daytime working hours. Our poor Reverend Mother (Mary Magdalen Bruckner, ocd), was constantly in demand. "Shall we take this?" – "May I throw these away?" – "Would St. Vincent's like this?" – "Will we need those?" greeted her everywhere.

As paper towels replaced our large unique table napkins, and monastic mugs and dishes gave place to paper cups and plates, our excitement grew. The day of days!! Although some packed into the early morning hours, everyone was up at sunrise. After Mass we prepared the last few items for the nine o'clock moving men: bed boards, trestles, straw sacks, cell crosses and tables. Engulfed in bustling busy-ness, most *seemed* unaffected by the momentous departure. But when the hard, resounding hammer heralded the altar's demolition and the two large bells, tolling mournfully at each bump, were dragged down the front stairs, the reality reached to our hearts. A humbling awareness of the many Carmelites who had dwelt with God within these walls and walked from these old corridors into the splendor of eternal life was suddenly present to us,

At our new monastery, the gracious, generous Tertiaries (Secular Order members) who greeted us made everyone feel welcome, with their smiling joy and delicious iced tea and cookies. The afternoon was one of leisurely visits around the grounds and delightful introductions until the very last weary but happy family bade goodbye to the tired, hungry nuns. The dear Sisters of Mercy Villa had sent our supper, which we ate outside. We awoke next morning to discover Dulaney Valley still a beautiful reality – not a dream. The previous evening we had arranged our recreation room as a temporary chapel and at 6:30 a.m. on the First Friday of September, the first Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered in our new Carmel of the Sacred Heart by one of the Jesuit Fathers from Blakefield. On that first bewildering day of settling, exploring and unpacking, we were very grateful for the lovely dinner the generous Sisters of Stella Maris graciously provided – the beginning of the unending kindness of so many to us here in the Valley.

Watching them Grow...Sr. Veronica Remembers

Far be it from me to wait until the last week to "put my house in order." My responsibility was packing pots, pans, all our special dishes and food supplies. But whenever I started it was too soon for our senior sisters in the kitchen. "Where is ___?" "Packed. Use this, it will do fine" (so I thought). Cartons marked #19 kept piling high.

Moving to Dulaney Valley Road was a totally happy occasion for me. I did not look back at the corner of Caroline and Biddle. While my more than 13 years there were marked by grace upon grace, I looked forward to a wide open space and the possibility of planting trees and watching them grow which, among many other things, I have done these past 50 years. Blessed be God..

Imagine the Beatitudes

The crowd follows Jesus to a gentle hillside. They are about to see another dimension of this son of Joseph, the carpenter. As they've journeyed with him they've been caught up by the extraordinary healings of this remarkably ordinary man. Indeed, today they hope to see more miracles, perhaps hear a few pithy remarks, something really to knock their socks off! It is a pleasant day and they all mill around – all of them by appearance the same raggle-taggle group who wait, who have been waiting eons for something new, something...

Then he leans toward them, and then, from the youngest to the oldest they lean toward him and he begins to speak in a clear but gentle voice...Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...that's just the beginning – it's as if the crowd holds its collective breath –suddenly the world is turning upside-down!

The crowd sees and hears both the teacher Jesus and prophet Jesus, who speaks not of woe and wailing to come but of blessings that, in this hearing, are being bestowed on the very crowd of raggle-taggle gathered before him. Jesus knows them, looks at them, leans toward them...Jesus knows us, looks at us, leans toward us right now and asks "can you imagine this?" All who mourn, all who are single-hearted, all who make peace...

We follow the crowd and especially the disciples or "learners" as they listen to old words and old promises newly told with a twist. Jesus speaks with them – are they the leaders, the lawyers, the priests? No! The crowd comprises the ones who most suffer with the oppression of a conquered land and the oppression of their own tradition. Their yearning for a new vantage point is probably quite palpable to Jesus who, after all, is a Jewish peasant.

Here comes the revolutionary message. In the midst of their poverty and powerlessness Jesus insists that they can make the choice of a lifetime. They can choose to let this dangerous law of love enter their hearts, to guide their lives. Each member of the crowd is challenged to choose life in a daily way, and each soul is empowered.

Jesus is saying that we must choose, and we must imagine. Choose life, choose love. Imagine a new future, borne from this upside-down perspective. We join the crowd and enter the fray of choice, each day, every day. Yes, we answer. Yes, we can imagine!

🌿 Calendar 🌿

Lenten Day of Recollection	Saturday April 2	1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.	Good Friday Tenebrae Liturgy	April 22 8:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m.
Palm Sunday	April 17	Eucharist 9:00 a.m. Vespers 5:00 p.m.	Holy Saturday Tenebrae Vespers Easter Vigil	April 23 8:00 a.m. 4:30 p.m. 9:00 p.m. Patrick McMahon, O.Carm.
Holy Thursday	April 21	Tenebrae 8:00 a.m. Eucharist 5:30 p.m. Brian McDermott, S.J.	Easter Sunday Eucharist Vespers	April 24 11:00 a.m. 4:30 p.m. John Donahue, S.J.

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Carmelite Monastery
1318 Dulaney Valley Road
Baltimore, MD 21286-1399

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