



Carmelite News

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The Nuns' Tale: An Experience of Sisterhood

Over forty years ago in 1970, our community joined together with other Carmelite Sisters from around the country to found the first association of Carmelite Nuns in the United States. This endeavor was a response to the Letter "*Sponsa Christi*" (Pius XII, 1950) urging contemplative sisters to form associations or federations for mutual help and encouragement. It was also an attempt to develop plans for collaboration following the mandate of Vatican II and the call for renewal of religious life.

During the 1960's there were gatherings of Carmelites for study programs and the implementation of the Vatican II documents. Many of the sisters were in conversation about desires for the future and working together for the common good. Some goals for the sisters included initial and continuing formation, leadership training, spiritual growth and development, mutual assistance and friendship. The 1970 meeting, hosted by the Bon Secours Sisters at Marriottsville, MD, achieved some first steps. During this time it was agreed that several sisters, elected by the group, would plan a meeting to probe the charism of our Carmelite life and look towards working with resource persons to study how the association would be organized. Since these early inspirational and organizational meetings (1971-72) Carmelite Communities Associated (CCA) has been a flourishing part of our life.

Now, years later, we are facing new challenges and still discovering the heart of contemplative life and prayer—together. Our 26th national meeting (April 24-30), held again at the Retreat and Conference Center at Bon Secours, was a time to ponder the present and the future "*and launch out into the deep.*" Sr Ilia Delio, OSF, presented "*Love, Evolution and the Power of the Future,*" demonstrating how the science of the 20th century has ushered in a whole new world of consciousness. This affects life, prayer, our image of God, relationships, world-view and so much else.

Our own Sr Frances Horner, OCD, linked insights of the transformation of consciousness to the teaching of Teresa of Avila in her lecture: "*Core, Culture and Holy Daring: Carmel's Challenge for the 21st Century.*" Sr Janice Bader, CPPS, from the National

Religious Retirement Office, addressed the sisters on "*Growing in Wisdom, Grace and Age.*"

One very important part of CCA's goals and direction is collaboration with Carmelite Sisters internationally. At our 1976 meeting we had our first guests from Holland and the Philippines. The experience of meeting with sisters from other countries is wonderful and enriching. This year we had Carmelite Sisters from England, Scotland, France, Germany and Mexico. Most of them spent some time staying with our community; it was a blessed time of sisterhood. At the meeting the sisters shared with us their own "*world of Carmel.*"

To carry on all the hopes and dreams and practical suggestions discussed during our five days together, we elected a Team to facilitate the implementation of decisions over the next two years. Our Sr Judy Long is part of the Team and some of our Baltimore community are involved in task-force delegations or other arenas of service to the group. This carries on a long tradition as many of our sisters have been involved with CCA leadership since the beginning.

There is a wonderful "labyrinth" at Bon Secours and it provided a symbolic grounding for our meeting. A labyrinth can be a mystery as well as an opportunity. Our meeting gave us the possibility of journeying in

New Carmelite Resource

Looking to learn more about Carmelite spirituality? Check out www.carmelstream.com, a website sponsored by the Carmelite Institute. The Carmelite Institute is a collaboration of Carmelites from across the entire family of Carmel in the United States. Carmelstream.com is the Institute's "face." There you will find articles, essays and reflections on a wide variety of Carmelite topics. Also, don't miss www.carmelstream.com/eclasses, which offers free online classes. Just recently begun are classes on Teresa of Avila's *Way of Perfection* and *The History and Spirit of Carmel*. It's not too late to join!

mindfulness and intention to a center, and then outward to an opening, a place where action provides a voice to the experience within. The Carmelite vision has much to do with journey. Our individual and community prayer encircles the earth and reaches places we hardly imagine. Through our sharing of liturgy, music, laughter, tears, substantive business and visionary lectures, we journeyed to a new opening compelled by the spirit and wisdom of the entire group. We are blessed with sisters who have years of leadership and experience, who *“read the signs of the times”* and helped bring us to a renewed and deeper identity of contemplative and Carmelite life. We are likewise blessed with newer members in Carmel who have dreams, hopes and commitment to continue along the path.

These days together always deepen our connections and friendship with one another and are a great encouragement in the daily living-out of our Carmelite charism. To quote Sr. Ilia’s lecture: *“We are Christ in evolution, the Living One who continues to appear in new ways, the frontier of the future.”*

**Please join us to celebrate
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Sunday, July 15, 9 a.m.**

Our Order’s great titular Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16, falls on Monday this year. To allow more of our people to share in the feast and in our prayer, we will give particular attention to Mary of Mount Carmel on Sunday, July 15, at our 9 a.m. Mass.

We would be so glad if you could join us!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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