

BALTIMORE CARMEL News



Spring 2024

Big CHANGES ARE COMING....

AND WE NEED YOUR help!



[www. Baltimorecarmel.org](http://www.Baltimorecarmel.org)

Prayer * Transformation * Love

DEATH AND NEW LIFE

On February 23rd our Sr. Mary Eileen completed her long life and joined generations of Baltimore Carmelites who have passed on to deeper life in God. Even as we bring to a close and celebrate her 82 years among us, we prepare to welcome two new members, Sr. JonFe de Torres and Sr. Jo Robson who will join our community in late summer. While we are saddened by the closing of their Carmels in Eldridge, Iowa and Ware, England, we rejoice that they have found new life with our community here in Baltimore and will join our novice, Sr. Bridget, and Sr. Kelly who recently transferred to us from Carmel in Colombia. We welcome the freshness the Spirit is bringing to our Carmel through new members, as well as through all of you, our companions, near and far, who worship and pray with us in-person and online. It is this positive communal experience that informs our hope and confidence as we walk together into the future.



Our community has been in existence in Maryland for 233 years and has taken many risks during that time to survive and flourish. On the strength and experience of our long history, and with the knowledge of all the community has navigated in the wake of Vatican II to create a vibrant contemporary contemplative life, we are prepared, after careful discernment, and extensive research and professional advice, to take the next, necessary steps in our journey.

We moved to our present Dulaney Valley monastery from downtown Caroline and Biddle Streets 63 years ago and in 1990 we renovated our beautiful chapel so we could share our liturgies with you. Now as we set out to modernize the monastery for another 30-50 years, we want to share with you our plans, our dreams, and our very real needs.

THE SCOPE OF THE RENOVATION PROJECT

The renovation project will be carried out in two phases. The **FIRST PHASE** which we are concentrating on now will include three areas: 1) the monastery 2) the chapel 3) our private access road.

THE MONASTERY

In the monastery building, our HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) system has failed. This year, due to the significant deterioration of our pipes, we have not been able to turn on the heat in our West Wing which houses our cells (bedrooms), kitchen, dining room, and several offices. We intend to replace the HVAC system in the entire monastery, starting with our “West Wing.” We will update our current Fire Safety System throughout the monastery with addressable smoke detectors, fire doors, and other measures. Our plan is to move systematically through the monastery replacing the HVAC system in each area in turn.

In addition, our bathrooms are original to our move to the property in 1961. Many of our pipes are deteriorating, and we do not have the required safety measures for our older sisters, i.e. walk-in showers, raised toilets, sufficient space for assistive devices, etc. There is asbestos under worn flooring, leaking roofs, cracked masonry, and inadequate lighting, all of which needs to be remedied.

THE CHAPEL

Those of you who attend our services appreciate the beauty of our chapel, which was renovated in 1990. It is necessary to replace the old obsolete fluorescent fixtures with LED lighting. We plan to update the sound system and technology for improved sound quality in the chapel and more effective streaming of our services. Lastly, the chapel restrooms will be modernized.

OUR ROAD

Many of you have driven up the road from Dulaney Valley Road to the monastery. What you may not know is that we own the road and are responsible for its maintenance. Our waterline, which runs along the road and brings water from our meter on Dulaney Valley Road to the monastery, is deteriorating and has sprung numerous leaks. It needs to be replaced. In addition, we have taken down or pruned many dead or dying trees along the road, and we hope to re-pave the road when the renovation and work to the waterline are complete.

FINANCIAL AND FACILITIES COMMITTEES

We are grateful to our advisors, those who serve on our Financial and Facilities Committees, as well as the professionals we have hired to help us assess the current condition of the monastery and make prudent decisions about how to move forward. Over the next few months, we will be providing additional information regarding these renovations. In the meantime, we are grateful for your financial support, your prayers, and your friendship.

OUR NEEDS: FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Our fundraising goal to complete the work described is 1.5 million. We recognize these renovations will be costly but given the comprehensive scope of the project and the energy for contemplative life in our community which underlies it, we believe this is the time for us to undertake this work.

We are deeply grateful to each and all of you who continue to believe in and support our Carmelite life of prayer in so many ways. Please know how important your regular financial contributions are in helping us meet our ongoing operational expenses. We could not survive without you. Because of your faithful, generous financial support, and the responsible stewardship of the community over many years, we have the capital to begin the needed renovations which are underway as we send this newsletter.

We do need your financial support to complete the first phase of the project. We hope you will see this as an investment in the future of contemplative life!

PHASE TWO

1322 - A FIELD OF DREAMS

In February 2023 we entered into discernment about whether to purchase a property along our road which adjoins the monastery property. Because this property comes very close to the front of the monastery, we decided it was in our best interest to take ownership of the 1322 property so that we can be in control of what happens to it. It consists of 2.8 acres with a house in need of much repair and a large two-story garage with intriguing possibilities. A sewer connection is in our plans.



Purchasing 1322 began a process of dreaming for us. With our great investment in spiritual outreach, we began to imagine how we might be able to use the property to expand our contemplative ministry – to welcome more people to the monastery as retreatants and guests, and to make more green space available outside of the enclosure. We have not yet made any final decisions about the ultimate use of this property, but continue to dream and plan, and we look forward to dreaming with you, our friends, who are so near and dear to us.

Sharing prayer, liturgy and our contemplative life is extremely important to us and the new property may provide another means of doing so.





This view from the monastery courtyard shows the beauty of our sacred space, which provides a spiritual home for so many. The middle section, the original house, was built in 1928.

While the renovation promises to be disruptive for us, we remain committed to sharing with you our contemplative life in liturgy and prayer.

Please continue to join us for Lectio Divina on Zoom, which includes a commentary by a theologian or scripture scholar followed by small group discussions on the gospel text.

Lectio Schedule (2 p.m. ET)

April 20 Commentary by Dianne Bergant, CSA

May 11 Commentary by Dr. Jaime Waters

June 22 Commentary to be determined

Mass Online or In-person

Sundays at 9 a.m. ET

Easter Sunday at 11 a.m.

REGISTER FOR ONLINE EVENTS ON OUR WEBSITE: [EVENTS.BALTIMORECARMEL.ORG](https://events.baltimorecarmel.org)