

BALTIMORE CARMEL

News



Summer 2026

Prayer / Transformation / Love

Renovation Update
and Sr. Luisa's Jubilee Celebration

Renovation Update

As the summer solstice dawns, our renovation team has much to accomplish before winter approaches. Sr. Connie moved back into the Archive Office at the end of January just as we began moving out of the middle section of our monastery – the “original house,” which was constructed in 1927. This part of the monastery houses our Infirmary, Library, Living Room, Ancestor’s Hall, and Computer Room, as well as several offices and bathrooms. Construction has been moving along at a steady pace since Easter, and we look forward to moving back as the trees begin to don their brilliant autumn hues.



Removal of old radiators from Living Room

As with the renovation of the West Wing, we are replacing the heating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems throughout, updating the lighting, fire and life safety equipment, and renovating our Infirmary Rooms, Infirmary Kitchen, and bathrooms to make them better suited for our sisters who are aging. This section of the monastery has hardwood floors that will also be refinished. Since it is the oldest part of the monastery (the East and West wings were built in 1960), much of the electri-



Infirmary Bathroom

cal wiring needs to be updated as well. It has been amazing to watch the electricians and plumbers run all the new wiring and refrigerant lines.

Chapel Plans

As the echoes of the Independence Day celebrations drift into silence, our roofers will begin the much-needed repairs to our Chapel roof. Those of you who join us regularly for Mass know that when we get a heavy rain, the frequency with which the roof has been leaking has increased over the past few months; this has necessitated moving these repairs up on our “to-do” list. Unfortunately, our East Wing roof also has many active leaks so the roofers will be here through the fall replacing that roof in its entirety.

Soon, we will be repairing the 2 stone walls outside of the chapel entrance. As you might imagine, there is much exterior stonework to be repaired as part of the ongoing upkeep of the monastery. The masons will also be repairing one of our chimneys while they are here. We look forward to the warmth of the gas fireplace in our living room this winter.

Right as the warmth of summer gives way to the crisp air of autumn, we will be replacing the HVAC system in our chapel. Thankfully, all this equipment is located either outside or underneath the chapel, which means that this work will not interrupt our use of the chapel. When the Chapel and East Wing were renovated in 1991, it was easy to locate the big air handling unit in the chapel crawl space. It’s not so convenient when it needs to be replaced 35 years later. While our contractors will be able to disassemble and remove the current unit from the crawl space, the new unit will be located outside near the entrance of the monastery, which will make future upkeep easier. Please be patient while they are working. We anticipate that things may look untidy during construction but come spring we will have a landscape architect help us make everything beautiful once again.

The East Wing

Meanwhile, our renovation team continues to work hard planning for the East Wing renovation, which will hopefully begin in early 2027. We are eager to share that during this part of the renovation we will

be removing a staircase and adding a second full retreat room. Doing this will allow both retreat rooms to have their own private bathrooms and galley kitchenette. So, when you're thinking about where you might make your 2028 retreat, please consider coming to our monastery.

The Waterline

All of this brings us to an update about our pesky waterline. When we realized that the process to obtain all the necessary approvals from both Baltimore County and Baltimore City was going to take much longer than anyone had anticipated, we put in a temporary waterline that has been working very well. However, we are hoping that the new waterline and necessary stormwater work along our road can be completed before winter – hopefully this winter!

We Need Your Help

The costs of the work that is needed are extraordinary. As we mentioned in 2024 when we first became aware of the extent of the deterioration, we are so grateful for your generous financial contributions over many years which have enabled us to undertake a project of this magnitude. However, with the rising cost of materials and expanded scope of the work needed, at this time, it is necessary for us raise an additional \$2 million so that, like you, many more people will be able to continue to seek God and nurture deep lives of prayer in our monastery for years to come. The challenges we face are significant, time has taken a toll on our buildings. However, with your support we can ensure that the monastery remains a safe, welcoming, and vibrant center of monastic life within our Archdiocese. More than a building project, this is an investment in a living tradition of prayer, service, and hospitality. Through your support of this campaign, you will help secure the enduring mission of our monastery as a sanctuary of prayer and a beacon of hope for future generations.

We invite you to become a partner in this endeavor which holds our community's desires to inspire contemplative prayer and love in our world. Through your generosity – whether through a major gift, a pledge, or a contribution of any amount – you can help us reach our goal and preserve this sacred space.

Sr. Luisa's Jubilee

On May 15, Sr. Luisa of Jesus celebrated her Golden Jubilee - 50 years of Carmelite Life.

Here are her reflections for this occasion.



Fifty years??? Yes... I made my First Profession on May 15, 1976, in the Carmel of Villagarcía de Campos, in the province of Valladolid, in Spain. If I had known that day that -fifty years later- I would be celebrating my Golden Jubilee in the Carmel of Baltimore, in the state of Maryland, in the United States, I would probably have thought that I was out of my mind, or dreaming, or something like that.

But, I would have to admit that my journey has been anything except "lineal": My Solemn Profession took place, on July 16, 1979, in the Cathedral of Reyes, province of Ballivián, department of Beni, in Bolivia. And my Silver Jubilee was celebrated in my original Carmel, Villagarcía de Campos. And in relation to my Golden Jubilee, I don't need to tell you where we are.....

And now, a little confidence... During the ceremony of my temporary Profession, I went thru an experience I cannot name. The presider, the Provincial of the Carmelite friars of Castilla, gave the most enthusiastic and well-intentioned sermon, but the least appropriate

for my family, as it could be, and even for me. I was troubled and I pondered seriously if I could profess my vows. Thanks to God, the sermon was also long enough to give me time to think through my decision. I realized that I really wanted to profess my vows, only and fully, for God, because of my firm desire to give up my life to God in Christ, for the Church and for the whole world.... and nothing else mattered! So, I did it, and I can truthfully tell you: Thanks be to God!!!! I have never regretted that decision!

All through these long years, with so many changes, so many challenges, so many shortcomings and failures, so many of almost everything, the hope and trust that I placed in my Lord Jesus, in whose hands I put my life on that blessed day of my first Profession, has become a reality. With St Paul (but not comparing myself with him), I can say that "I also know whom I have believed". Indeed the ways of the Lord are not our ways.... But they are wonderful!

Anyway, although in some way I would like to tell you all this "long" story, be tranquil, I am not going to do it. I simply want to tell you that in my heart I have great gratitude for all that has contributed to shaping my life, little by little. Now I know that all has been GOOD, even what was not "so" good in the moment, or didn't appear to be. Everything has a meaning, a direction, all the pieces are taking their place in God's wonderful work, that is, in this my "crazy life."



Sr. Luisa Renewing Her Vows



*Sr. Luisa in 1989
while Visiting the U.S.*

I am really very grateful to God, to the Holy Virgin -always there in light and in darkness- and to my holy "parents" Teresa and Juan de la Cruz, and all the saints of Carmel, to whom I really love so much. All of them have nourished and enkindled my soul.

And I am also very grateful to my communities, in Spain, in Bolivia and, very particularly, in the US. They have given me the love and support I have always needed, have helped me to follow my path, have helped me to deepen more and more in my Carmelite vocation, and have filled my life with joy, purpose and love. And, indeed, I am also grateful to each and any person that has loved and trusted me all along my journey.

Blessed be God for ever and ever!

Archives Office Project

The Archival Collection of our monastery, dating from the early 17th century, is an invaluable historical asset. Reaching back to our Low Country history and to the colonial planter families of Southern Maryland, as well as to the beginnings of the Catholic Church in our country, our records of the oldest community of religious women in the original thirteen states are unique. They are valued by historians and they point to and carry the bedrock of our community's strength and its ability to survive and renew through more than two centuries.

Scope of Project

Replace Failing Liebert Unit (2008)

Duct Cleaning

Remove Radiator

Update Electric and IT Wiring

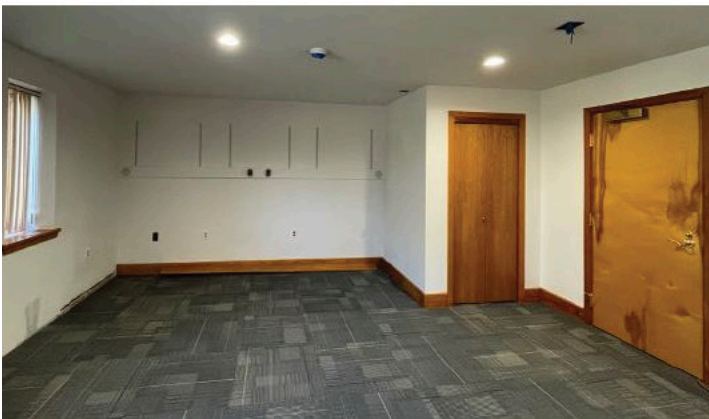
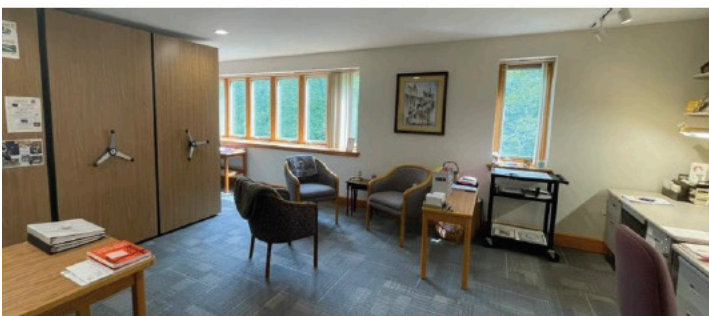
New Drop Ceiling Below Liebert Unit

New LED Light Fixtures or LED Tubes

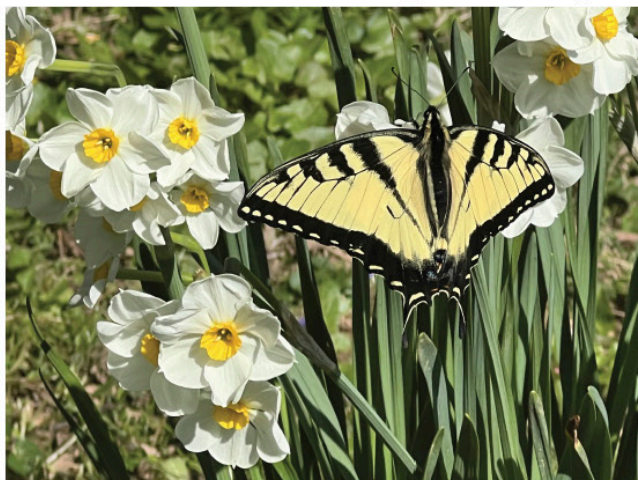
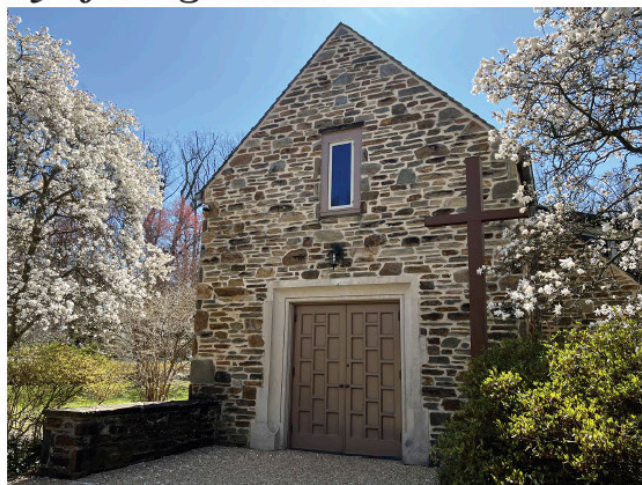
Replace Carpet

Wall Patching and Painting

Refinish Woodwork Where Needed



Some pictures of the beauty of our grounds



Palm Sunday at the Monastery

