



FRIENDS OF CARMEL 2023
THE SISTERS AND SEASONS OF RENO CARMEL

OCTOBER 5, 2023

WHERE THE DESERT MEETS THE MOUNTAINS



Sr. SUSAN



Sr. Rosalind



Sr. Ann



Sr. Claire



Sr. Mary



Sr. Rosemary



Sr. Cecilia



Sr. Carol



Sr. Sa Ra



Sr. Maria



Sr. Marie Louise

Dear Friends of Carmel

AUGUST 28, 2023

On September 12, 1958, the Founding Sisters of Reno Carmel went in procession into the new building at 1950 La Fond Drive and formally established the Monastery of Our Lady of the Mountains. At that moment, they carried a spiritual legacy that reached back over eight centuries and the fervent intention to carry this legacy intact into their future. Part of this legacy embraced the concept of enclosure within their new home which began that day. Another part of their heritage included a way of life and customs which had seen little change over the almost 500 years since St. Teresa founded



the Monastery of St. Joseph in Avila, Spain in 1562.

The spirituality of the community which was enclosed that day dated back to the 13th century when former Crusaders sought a life of contemplation near the fountain of Elijah on Mount Carmel. In solitude and in common prayer, these early hermits had crafted a life in “allegiance to Jesus Christ.” In 1209, they asked Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, to fashion a rule of life for them, a rule that would constitute the beginning of the Carmelite Order. Albert acquiesced and the Rule of Life he authored mirrored the life the hermits were already living.

The spirituality of Carmel took root in 16th century Spain when Teresa of Avila founded the Monastery of St. Joseph, and Carmel arrived in the United States when the first American Carmelites established their monastery on a farm at Port Tobacco in Southern Maryland and dedicated it on October 15, 1790. Carmel arrived in Reno on August 24, 1954, when a group of young Sisters came to this land where the desert meets the mountains to begin a house of prayer in Nevada.



“You have not only a glorious history to remember and to re-count, but also a great history still to be accomplished!” (John Paul II, Vita Consecrata).

Prayer does not live in books, buildings, or places but in the hearts of those who have sensed a personal invitation and responded with the consecration of their lives. For most people the “past is a foreign country” only visited from time to time when nostalgia seeks a temporary visit to ease contemporary complexities. For the women who founded this community, it was their intention to bring the practices inherited from the hundreds of years since the foundation in Avila and to be the link to Nevada as they intended to create, *“a great history still to be accomplished!”*

The dust had hardly settled over this foundation before the directives for renewal filtered down from the Church as a result of Vatican II (1964), and our pioneering sisters were among the first Carmelites to hear the call and blaze a trail. Although their vision and courage were not without cost, the community’s commitment to renewal has endured, and history has proven that tradition is preserved not only through those people who presently live the story, but above all by those who can reinterpret it in their own lives and carry it forward in their own time and place.

A series of entries in the Chronicles of the monastery in the fall of 1962 set a tone and agenda for the years that would shape our community. They read:

September 26th ... said the “Iternarium” for our Bishop who went to Rome for the Council

October 11th the Council opens.

December 11th So now there will be change-that is definite. With the above entries of 1962, we embarked on a journey that continues today.



top:Marie+1955, Joan A.+1983, Anne+1997, Jean+ 2004, Marie-Ce-
bottom:: Pat +2007, Lauren+ 2010, Rose + 2012, Joan +2017, Michael+ 2020

The Carmel of Our Lady of the Mountains was born in 1954 and re-born under the vision of the Second Vatican Council.

History comes to us as dates and places and events. History also comes to us in the lives and stories of the people who lived the dates and places and events. We are grateful to the Carmelites of the past 450 years for the rich tradition that has brought us the structures of our lives and the marvelous rhythms that mark the seasons; fruit of the experience of countless generations. We are also grateful for the implicit gift which bids us live that tradition today and make it our own. For, as the stories are retold in our lives, the tradition lives on, develops, and understanding grows. As understanding grows, the life and prayer of those who have gone before us become a living,

dynamic, and essential aspect of our ongoing effort to grasp the tradition and live the fullness of our Carmelite life in our own day and place.

We cannot travel to the future without looking at our past. But we need to transcend the past, including the structures of the past. Religious life is transforming – not dying.

Fr. Miguel Márquez Calle, Superior General

In our meetings and continuing discernment this past year, we have re-visited our tradition and worked to bring it to a new reality. We have a good history of renewal and adaptation in which we neither lagged behind the inspiration of the Holy Spirit nor sprinted ahead of the Spirit's guidance. The result of our ongoing conversations have caused us to look for ways in which our life of prayer may be shared.

*This is what we are about.
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
Knowing that they hold future promise.*

*The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
It is even beyond our vision...
We are workers, not master builders.
Ministers, not Messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.*

For many years we have shared our contemplative lives with our local community: opening our hearts and chapel to one another as together we seek God's presence and direction in our lives. On our shared pilgrimage of faith, we have found a meeting place where our lives and pathways cross in mutual enrichment.

With so many other groups, the restrictions of the Covid epidemic

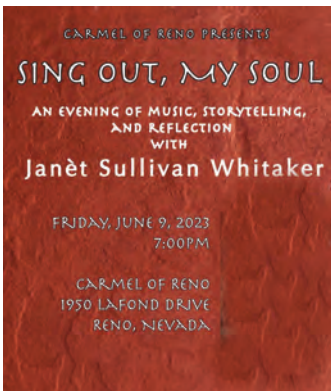
hampered this effort but, in time, broadened our vision of sharing... livestream came into our lives in a big way. In the first instance, livestream was our mode of communication. When the restrictions were lifted, livestream became an “add-on”. This past year, when we resumed outreach and shared several events with friends of the community, we have continued to offer all events by livestream for those who are unable to attend in person.



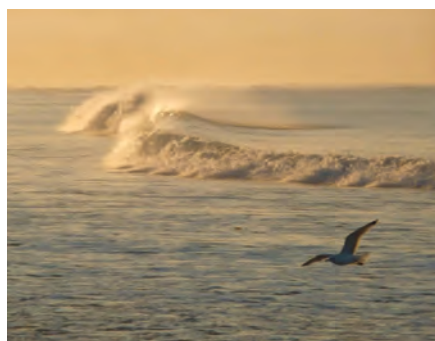
At the beginning of Lent, we joined with the broader community for Taizé Prayer ... “a service of song, silence and contemplation” and prayed:

O God of all,

You ask every one of us to spread love and reconciliation. Where people are divided so that the wounded body of Jesus Christ, your Church. May be the leaven of communion for the poor of the earth. And in the whole human family may your Spirit give us the grace and courage to be faithful to the Gospel in the ordinary, everyday moments of our lives



As summer began, we hosted an evening of: Song, Storytelling, and Reflection with Janèt Sullivan Whitaker. For two hours Janèt filled the chapel with her songs familiar to all who attend contemporary Liturgies: “Christ Before Us”, “Here at This Table”, “In Every Age”.



COME AWAY AND PRAY

On August 5th, Claire and Chris shared reflections on prayer, interspersed with silence and the video presentation of Teresa's Four Waters in Word, Image and Song.

This past year we were invited to attend the General Assembly at which the Father General shared some of his perspectives. He ended the meeting with a quote from Leonard Cohen's "Anthem":

*The birds they sang
At the break of day.*

*Start again
I heard them say.*

*Don't dwell on what
Has passed away
Or what is yet to be*



Claire and Susan with Father Miguel

*Ring the bells
that still can ring
Forget your perfect
offering*

*There is a crack,
a crack in
everything
That's how
the light gets in.*



In our community meetings, we are ever aware of the need to connect with the spiritual needs, and contemporary questions of the various groups of people who form a community around our Carmel, and in the process we have discerned a capacity to evolve into our future. As we re-articulate our visions, hopes and dreams, a basic question we ask ourselves is emerging: “How do we invite others into the fruits of our contemplative life?” Knowing there are multiple expressions and understandings of what it means to be Catholic and what it means to live a contemplative life in today’s world, we invited various groups of our friends to share thoughts and insights.

We may have intuited that their reflections would mirror our own spirituality and the responses verified that reflection. The friends who have sought companionship with our contemplative community bring a formed spirituality very similar to our own sources of inspiration which sustain us in our life of prayer:

“ I talk to God through the day”

“I have a sense of spiritual belonging
when the light of Christ shines through others
with their love and kindness in the oddest places, at the most unexpected
times...

when I am with friends, people who love me,

I feel a sense of spiritual belonging

With my wife

Immersing myself in nature

Music

Silence

In the earth’s last remaining groves of bristlecone pine trees...

in the bird’s song and

I believe dogs know God better than I

And we are humbled that every response contained some version of:

“I feel a sense of spiritual belonging at Carmel”

Our news of Korea



In August of last year, Cecelia spoke to our Saturday Congregation:
“Now, after 2 decades of my life in the States, the spirit of my homeland is calling me back to get in touch with her in the way I had never imagined before.

I returned to Korea for a year of independent study and research into the origin of Korean philosophy, culture and religion. When I go, I am bringing Reno with me. I will share and spread the beauty of Reno whenever an occasion arises. When I’m back, the beauty of Korea will be added to Reno.” And so it has come to pass and with so many of her friends we say:

“WELCOME HOME”

Sa Ra continues on in Korea caring for her mother. We miss her presence with us but support her presence to her



Mother.
We keep in touch through Zoom and Email and Text...not the same as having her with us in Community but a work of love as she cares for her Mother in this time of her need.

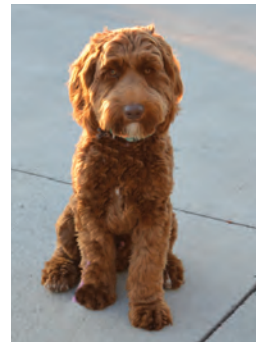


Our Local News

Thanks to the guidance of Sister Michael's niece Kathy Fitch and her husband Amery, we have joined the global network of the Little Free Libraries. Over 100,000 locations now sponsor their motto: "Take a Book. Share a Book." In memory of Sister Michael, Kathy and Amery built our "Little Library" in their home in Columbus, Ohio, dismantled it for the plane trip to Reno, re-assembled it, painted it with leftover paint from our Chapel and installed it at the entrance to the monastery. We initially stocked it with duplicate spiritual classics, a healthy number of mysteries, and the "Little Library" opened to serve passersby on La Fond Drive.



Last year Theo came to live with us and is still finding his unique place in our community As he finds his unique place, there have been some lively adventures as we sought to integrate his boundless energy and creativity with some semblance of monastic decorum.





“YUMMERS”



“ALL MINE”



DOWN?? WHO ME?!”



“OH BOY! MY OWN GARDEN TOOLS”

In our many years in Reno, we have developed deep relationships with you, our Friends of Carmel. You have enriched our lives with new visions and insights and supported us by your friendships and by your generous donations. As we continue on our journey into the future, we hold these years sacred and hold your hopes and dreams as our hopes and dreams.

*Look to the past with gratitude! Live the present with passion!
Embrace the future with hope!*

These words of Pope Francis opened the Year Celebrating Consecrated Life and aptly describe the community we strive to create as the Carmel of Reno. Our past informs our present, and we shall always remember the Sisters and Friends of Carmel who brought us into our contemporary reality.