



FRIENDS OF CARMEL 2022
THE SISTERS AND SEASONS OF RENO CARMEL



Dear Friends of Carmel

“In many and various ways our holy ancestors have laid down how everyone ...shall live in allegiance to Jesus Christ and serve faithfully. (Rule of Carmel 1209 AD)

The Crusades extended from 1095 and lasted till 1291. The motivations and methods of these wars have been debated through the centuries, but the outcome which affected the founding of Carmel took place as former Crusaders remained in the Holy land and sought a life of contemplation near the fountain of Elijah on Mount Carmel.



In solitude and in common prayer, these early hermits crafted a life in “allegiance to Jesus Christ.” In 1209, the hermits 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.

One provision of the Rule states: “on Sundays, or, on other days, if necessary, you are to discuss the keeping of the observance and your spiritual welfare.” In the archives of our monastery, there is abundant evidence that our community kept this precept and faithfully gathered through the weeks and years to be in touch with one another, to discuss our spiritual welfare and the evolution of our community.

There is extant a little pink loose-leaf book (3 inches by four inches) holding the first conversations after the Vatican II Council which tasked us to reflect on our sources. Some quaint gems include:

January 31, 1969

“Those leaving the enclosure should mark their names on the board...this in view of the Superior’s responsibility for the enclosure...ordinary silence should be observed in the car when this is possible, as well as courteous discretion regarding the whys and wherefores of the trip.”

January 19, 1967



The habit can be altered and without discarding the traditional habit we could experiment with a work dress (which would not be adopted as the last word on the subject.)



There are many discussions on the fast of the Order, updating the schedule, the Divine Office in English, etc. but hovering over all is a comment by Sister Michael:



March 17, 1967

“We are building a community of love. Unless we are a community, we can’t contribute to the Church...and unless we love one another we can’t be community.”

In 1969 Sister Lauren expressed the emerging insights of the Founding Sisters in a pamphlet she entitled, “Riders on Earth Together.”

“The Carmelite essence is about life and prayer and about the

reality of a group of people who have cast their lives together in community because they share a conviction that their witness of prayer and worship meaningfully cooperates in the building of our earth and God’s reign on earth. Prayer is simply the gift of loving Presence which God offers to everyone and within which God is revealed in Jesus Christ. This loving Presence, nourished in stillness, is totally available in the speed and movement of our times, penetrating life with meaning and direction. It is the Presence of a loving God, alive with an ever-renewed invitation to friendship. The Carmelite “thing” is about life and about prayer and about how the two are really one, when life is a shared presence. It is meant to tell simply by the witness of its own existence.”



This vision has passed on to us as a way of life with the potential to be faithful to our roots and at the same time to be open to the Spirit. We have returned to our intra-community discussions again and again as we revisited the previous vision and re-fashioned it with the input of those of us who have followed in the footsteps of Reno Carmel’s Founders.



Our Community in 2010

In 2010, the Sisters discerned together:

“In viewing the reality of the community involvement which characterizes the Carmel of Reno, we are aware of the expanding boundaries of our contemplative life. The view from our chapel, which embraces the city of Reno and the distant mountains, is a constant reminder as we gather for prayer that the Spirit has beckoned us beyond our borders. The circle of our community has led to larger circles, which in turn become an essential part of who we are. The intersection of our lives with our extended community expands our capacity to hold all peoples in our hearts. ... “we are not our own, we are God’s community.”



2022

Recently in an article for “The Occasional Papers” of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Winter Edition 2022, Sister Claire wrote:

If we remain faithful to contemplative practice... and receptive to the quiet inflow of

Wisdom, I believe through our united, silent presence to the Divine, we can become even more vibrant communities of hope, harnessing the transformative energy of Love together to become a cultural force for change in our world. The risk inherent in the invitation to let go of everything in contemplative prayer is the same risk we face in this Spirit-blessed moment in history: “We cannot discover new oceans unless we have the courage to lose sight of the shore.”

Even as we re-articulate our visions, hopes, and dreams, we continue to meet together, keeping the precept; “on Sundays, or, on other days, if necessary, you are to discuss the keeping of the observance and your spiritual welfare.” And as we meet, we continue to surface perennial questions:

How does our community continue creating itself now and in the future?

Who are the prophets of today and what are they saying to us?

How do we invite others to share our life?

How do we bring the fruit of contemplative life into the lives of others?

As we are in the midst of a paradigm shift, how do we redefine traditional concepts and translate them into a new reality?

What bridges do we need to build to implement our vision?

How does our community continue creating itself now and in the future?

We hope we can continue to listen deeply to the Spirit and to one another... we hope we don’t run ahead of the Spirit or lag behind... that we continue to discern in Wisdom when and, if we’re called, to move in haste not moving before we are ready to do so, as we envision our future as a frontier. The geography, landscape and pathways are unexplored and promising. We have lived our life in a past that is gone but the spirit of the community has every possibility of evolving into the future.

In our fractured world of today, we see our efforts to craft a contemporary contemplative community more important than ever. We come in all shapes and sizes and needs, and the challenge is to fit the parts together and bind us together in a common vision. As the early hermits on Mt. Carmel first lived their vision and later formalized their way of life in the Rule, we are envisioning our future in terms of our lived experience. With the years the questions have evolved, but the continuity of vision has remained and matured. Early on we discovered that in our tradition, we possess not only an ancient vocabulary but also the capacity to receive the voice of the spirit today.

When we were drafting the plans for our Chapel, our architect, Brad Van Woert, wrote us with his proposal: “You are a great group,

but you have a crummy entrance.” (He went on to create what you experience today.)



“The arch, being the strength of architecture, is broken by the only thing that is more important, and that is the Spirit, which is symbolized by the Cross. This cross from the old building, was taken down, reshaped and repainted as a symbol of the legacy that continues from this day forward.”

Brad VanWoert, our architect at the Chapel Dedication 2001

We recently discerned that our website has not kept pace with our community evolution and that we need to create digital experiences that provide additional points of entry to our community and way of life.

So, we are now in the final phase of creating an upgrade which will both concretize our message of mission and facilitate communication in this digital age. Over the past months, Chris Donovan put us in touch with the Website Developers, “Inside Out.” Responding to our initial inquiries, the company wrote:

“This is an important moment in time for Carmel of Reno and we’d like nothing more than to help you articulate and deliver a compelling story to support the monastery and its mission through the artistic and contemplative work you do.

The challenge is how to frame this story in a way that conveys the history and traditions of the monastery and Carmelite order in a way that is fresh and engaging. We all believe there is an opportunity to connect the sisterhood, its mission and message, as an antidote to the cultural forces that define these tumultuous times. With so many people seeking spiritual insights and contemplative

practices, we have a solution to offer and a perspective to share. This small but mighty community is grounded in the ancient traditions of service, contemplation, and prayer, while also espousing a remarkably modern perspective regarding our collective consciousness and responsibility towards one another and the earth we call home. We’ve been challenged to bridge these realities – giving voice to the order’s mission of peace and prayer – and building a platform to engage more fully with the world beyond the monastery walls.”

When we read their response, we knew we had found the right company. Look for the finished product in late Winter-early Spring of 2023 at: www.carmelofreno.com.

Our news of Korea

In this coming year we are sharing Sa Ra and Cecelia with their country of Origin.

With the sudden death of her brother in 2021, Sa Ra became the only family member left to care for her aging Mother, whose health is declining. It was a difficult decision for Sa Ra but the caring culture of Korea for elders has prompted her to an extended stay in her native country as a filial duty.



We try to keep in touch through Zooms, phone calls and texts and hold SaRa and her mom in our prayers.

Last Summer, as we were contemplating our future, Sa Ra expressed her vision:

“Picture our community like a lake...



picture Lake Tahoe...our community has been filled with all the richness of the prayer life and the presence of the Sisters, past and present. To be a source for others, we need to be filled ourselves. Only from a full lake can water flow out to bring nourishment and refreshment to others.”

Sa Ra, for whom art is a way of life and breath, recently sent these photos to us.



The Trees outside SaRa's apartment



Sa Ra's painting of these trees



As Cecelia prepared to spend a year in Korea, she addressed the congregation who attend our Saturday Mass:
Hello, I am Sr. Cecelia, for those who don't know me.
As you see, I am a Korean American. Once the great Indian poet, Tagore, called Korea, 'the Land of Morning Calm,' 'the Light of the East.' But the real depths of the beauty and strength of Korea were hidden to me for so long. 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 just have to follow the call.

I am returning to Korea for a year of independent study and research into the origin of Korean philosophy, culture and religion. And this is only possible because of my sisters in Reno Community; as you well know, without their great spirit of creativity, openness, generosity and nurturing environment, I wouldn't be here the way I am now. So, with great gratitude, I thank each and all of you, my sisters, for your gracious and loving support. Also, I thank each of you here today and ask your prayers.



Cecilia's study guides

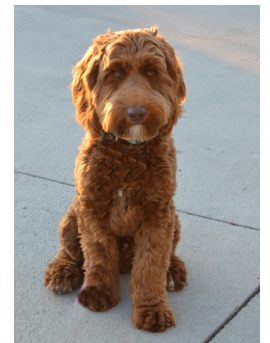
When I go, I am bringing Reno with me. I will share and spread the beauty of Reno whenever an occasion arises. When I'm back, the beauty of Korea will be added to Reno. Just so you know that wherever I am, whatever I do, you are with me as I am with you. Thank you! (Farewell announcement to the extended community at Sat Mass, July 16, 2022)

Our Local News



Theo visits the Memorial Garden

...Oh, and we wanted to tell you that a new puppy has taken up residence among us. Theo (short for "Theophilus" ...beloved of God) shows every evidence of finding a permanent place in our hearts.



We are Carmelites in a modern era, defining our presence in the broader community, and we are grateful on the local level to the people of Reno and our State who see us as just as much a part of life in Nevada as the Casinos.

RGJ.COM | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2021



ELKO MURAL EXPO

TRAVEL NEVADA PRO TIP

Don't miss hundreds of unique handmade gifts, offered up by nearly 80 regional artists and makers at Holland Project's annual High Desert Art+Craft Fair (Dec 4-5).

THE ART AFICIONADO

Warm a heart with made-right-here art

Nevadans are a creative and crafty bunch, which makes for some truly vibrant holiday gifting. Deck someone's halls with intriguing mosaics and wood burnings from Sparks' HDizzle Designs, or handcrafted greeting cards and prints from the local nuns of Carmel of Reno. For out-of-this-world, Black Rock Desert-inspired ceramics and paintings, put Planet X Pottery in your orbit. Box up beautiful region-revering stickers, apparel, and other goodies from Sunshine & Sagebrush, With Love From Reno, and Home Means Nevada Co. Or treat someone to a mural-filled getaway, a class at Reno's The Wedge Ceramics Studio, or a working staycation at historic Tuscarora Pottery School.

GIFTS TO WRAP

- Carmel of Reno Cards
- HDizzle Designs
- Home Means Nevada Co.
- Planet X Pottery (Gertach)
- Sunshine & Sagebrush
- With Love From Reno

GIFTS TO MAP

- Mural Tours:
 - Reno Mural Tours with Art Spot Reno
 - Elko Mural Expo
 - Ely Audio Tour
 - Tonopah Walking Tour
- Tuscarora Pottery School Weeklong Workshop
- The Wedge Ceramics Studio Classes



High+Desert ART+CRAFT FAIR

GREETING CARDS, CARMEL OF RENO

From the Reno-Gazette Journal Nov. 25, 2021

Thank you for joining us on this journey of a lifetime...we enjoy your company, and we thank you for your support and friendship. We see you as an essential part of our contemplative life today, received from generations past but lived with confidence in our present and hope for our future. You are ever in our thoughts and prayers.