



FRIENDS OF CARMEL 2020
THE SISTERS AND SEASONS OF RENO CARMEL



Sr. Mary Sr. Marie-Louise Sr. Carol Sr. Rosemary Sr. Cecilia Sr. Ann



Sr. Claire Sr. Susan Sr. Sa Ra

*It helps, now and then, to step back
And take a long view.*

*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.*

OSCAR ROMERO

These words of Archbishop Oscar Romero have a particular resonance this year, capturing the dislocation of our generation's experience of a world-wide pandemic.

*The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
It is even beyond our vision...*

But this is our heritage: to continue to water seeds planted in centuries gone by, and nurtured in our own day to sustain the dreams of future promises.



top: Marie+1955 Joan A.+1983 Anne+1997 Jean+ 2004 Marie-Celeste+2005
bottom: Pat +2007 Laureen+ 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...Cloister expanded to facilitate our transformational encounter with reality...Poverty expanded to embrace the concept of remunerative work in the Print Shop...Community governance expanded to move the focus from an individual to each sister with her gifts and insight and functioning committees to be responsible for vital components of our life. Through all these encounters with reality, the contemplative life, re-visioned and re-fashioned, undergirded every innovation and brought us to the community of today.



The era of our founding concluded with the death of Sister Michael, but what she achieved will forever shape our community: a poem, which we found at her passing, tells something of her journey:

*“Long, long have I walked
skin raw from the wind-
blown sand
leaning into the sand blinded
with the grit.
I could walk backward and
spare my eyes, but
I would no more know the
way backwards or forwards:
You are a lamp for my feet.”*

On Thursday afternoon, January 2nd Sr. Michael’s ‘long, long desert walk’ led to eternity.

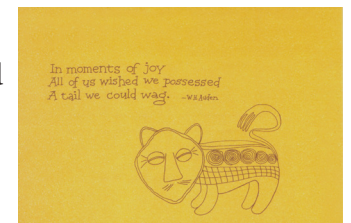
Our website begins: “On August 12, 1954, four nuns holding one-way tickets for Reno, Nevada, left the Carmelite Monastery in

Indianapolis...” Sister Michael came on a later train (1956) but was the pivotal figure in what evolved as the Carmel of Reno. Under her leadership, which was a model of wisdom, deep holiness and a refreshing sense of humor, we transitioned from a traditional cloistered community into the Carmel of Reno you know today. Her early years in the monastery coincided with the Second Vatican Council, and guided by its principles, she lifted its spirituality into the 20th century.

In the Carmel of the 1950’s and 60’s, it was a novel experiment to have a remunerative work that supported the monastery. Sister Michael created our early Printshop and led the effort to consolidate our other works of the time (stuffing envelopes, vestments, Communion Hosts) into this single work of printing. This led to the conversion of the monastery basement as a viable working space with Offset Presses, an industrial Cutter, and Darkroom. Concurrent with this project, she oversaw the 1970 renovation of the then Monastery Chapel into a more inclusive space where people outside the monastery might join us for worship. It was also novel at that time to emphasize education, but Michael created our library and over a 20 year period had the vision to bring endless scholars from all over the world and from the USF Summer School of Theology to the monastery for lectures.

The list of her achievements pales beside the spirit of kindness she breathed into the monastery which became a way of life for us all. She always wore her deep knowledge of the classics with a spirit of whimsy.

Sister Michael was essentially an artist and remained active throughout her life, designing cards, silk-screening originals and in later life crafting vases. Two of our best selling cards are her designs: MC-101-“In moments of joy...all of us wish we possessed a tail we could wag!” and MC-589 “If I should pass the Tomb of Jonah/I think I would stop there and sit for awhile/because I was swallowed once deep in the dark and came out...”





ALIVE AFTER ALL !

With the death of Sister Michael, the foundational era of our community passed securely into our hands – the Carmel of Reno 2020.

Prayer does not live in books, buildings, and places, or even in specific eras. To be authentic, prayer must be born anew in the hearts of those

who have sensed a personal invitation and responded with the consecration of their lives. The women who founded our community were formed by a profound vision of contemplative life and fashioned for us an inheritance that continues to influence our choices today. The founders' achievement is a monastery that has flourished and today is an integral part of the Church Community of Nevada as well as a part of Carmelite communities throughout the United States and the world. In our community meetings, in seminars, in silent prayer and communal theological reflection, we have sought a contemplative life that is a sign and existential sacrament of the continually renewed covenant between God and the people.

In our tradition, we possess not only an ancient dialect but also the capacity to receive the voice of the Spirit today. Evolution of thought does not spring from a void but builds on this foundational shared life of a community begun with visions and dreams, which have passed into a lived reality. Among ourselves today, we have many sources of renewed vision as we mine the lived experience of one another and hope to be a resource for those seeking the contemplative life today.

Every day in the community is a new day in which we continue building; we cannot give what we do not already possess, and we

daily face the task of shaping the outward life to reflect the inward reality. Genuine life evolves through the challenges of community, and everyday living creates a life that sometimes surprises us. Enter Covid-19 with its challenges and its possibilities.

With people of our neighborhood, nation, and throughout the world, we had a common experience of the “Stay at Home Order.” Life, as we knew it, came to an abrupt halt as many of the events of daily life were canceled. Together with the global community we entered uncharted territory, and there was no certain path that would lead to the resumption of our former lives. With our now distant experience of Papal Cloister we probably had an advantage over the average person as we dealt with the “Stay at Home Order,” but it was soon clear that our life of prayer really embraces a wider perspective than 1950 La Fond Drive. Through “Constant Contact,” Zoom, and Mailings we focused on reaching out to the wider community which looks to our Carmel as their spiritual home. As we reached out, the response was supportive, warm and loving. Our



friends wrote:

I am touched by the substance of this thoughtful message sent to, not only your devoted friends, but in a way to the whole of humanity in such great need of consolation during this time of such uncertainty and impassioned questions for our betterment in society.

Thank you for helping to comfort our souls, so very disillusioned and troubled.



Chalk sign created in our driveway during the Covid-19 lockdown

I am so very, very sad about this (the lock-down). You are a part of my family. It is the right thing to do. How difficult these days are, as we adjust to the absence of gatherings that are life-giving, and that strengthen both individuals and community. Every time I have been with you, I leave feeling deeply connected, inspired, and loved.

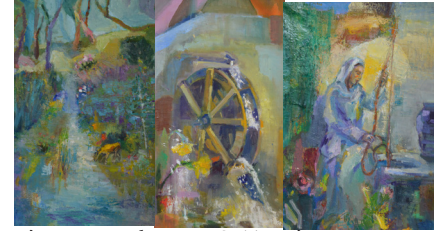
God Bless you sisters. I can't tell you how much we all miss you. We continue to pray all stay well. Missing Easter Vigil will be sad for us all. We will make next year's even more glorious.

How are all of you doing? We miss all of you so much. And it is so strange not to attend Mass. Let us hear how you are. We love you all!

Thank you so much for reaching out to me. It always means so much to me and even more now as we are going through this.



Claire, Rosemary and Bo reading the message



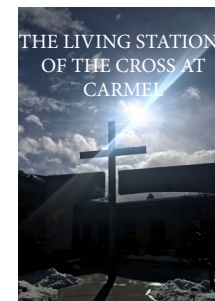
Sa Ra's Paintings, depicting St. Teresa's Four Waters of Prayer

In retrospect, the opening months of 2020 have the distinct feel of “before” and “after.” Before the pandemic, life was going on as usual; after the widespread virus ravaged the world, we entered an era of “never in our lifetime has anything like this happened!”

As the year began, life was on its usual course and we hosted two events.

On February 22, we presented a “MORNING OF RECOLLECTION” to share with the broader community, a time of centering and sharing the insights of Sister Carol, Sister Sa Ra, Sister Kathleen and Chris Donovan. As part of the presentation, Sa Ra shared her paintings which had been inspired by the works of St. Teresa.

The following Friday, the Students of the Newman Center of Our Lady of Wisdom Parish made the evening of the first Friday of Lent a few hours of profound meditation on the sorrowful journey of Christ to Calvary.



	<p>+ On the Brink of Everything Carol Sachse, OCD</p>
	<p>+ St. Teresa's Four Waters of PRAYER Sa Ra Lee, OCD</p>
	<p>+ Being vs. Doing Chris Donovan</p>
	<p>+ Christian Contemplation & Zen Meditation Kathleen Pruitt CSJP</p>



Under the heading, “never in our lifetime has anything like this happened!”, the Bi-Annual meeting of our National Association (CCA) in Baltimore was postponed.

We have been a part of CCA (Carmelite Communities Associated) since its found-

ing fifty years ago, and for the past two years Sister Rosalind and Sister Cecelia have been part of the Leadership Team. Their years of planning for the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary were upended by the Covid Pandemic. The celebration was postponed and important business took place online. By this move, all the members could participate. In this season of Civil dysfunction, our Zoom meeting the commemoration was a tribute to the power of collaboration and resourcefulness..

Goal one of the Association is stated as:

“We have fostered a broader acceptance of unity in diversity and the mutuality of the Carmelite family, especially by continuing collaboration, friendship and communion among associations/federations at home and abroad.”



Cecilia

WORDS OF HOPE

Reflecting via a Power Point prepared by Sister Cecelia, the Leadership Team wrote:

Despite the disappointment of not actually having the meeting, there were positive outcomes to all the planning. Certainly the closer bonds we have established with the planning committee members and their associations will con-

tinue to advance our goal of communion and further collaboration in the future.

The Leadership Team has collaborated on various topics with our sisters from the UK and Germany. We have been in touch via e-mails, Zooms, and phone conversations and look forward to future collaboration.

A portion of the presentation focused on the 2019 Newer Members Meeting.

The gathering strengthened friendship and communion with other associations ... and was specially blessed not only by the richness of the program but also by the presence of our sisters from abroad and across the country. Ever since the



first meeting in 2015, our newer members have been expanding their vision and forging friendships nationally and internationally, thus

enlivening their zeal for Carmel. This June meeting was a proof of our sisters’ strengths and leadership qualities.



Rosalind

Although the in-person General Assembly had been postponed, the online presentation generated hope for a future that needs to be discovered, nurtured, and Spirit-led over the coming years.

We are so grateful to Roz and Cecelia for all their work which has strengthened the bonds of our Association, and we look forward to the promise of the coming years as Roz has so generously agreed to continue in her leadership role in CCA.

This era of “never in our lifetime has anything like this happened!” became the norm and defined the year of 2020 but we continue:

*to plant seeds that one day will grow...
and water seeds already planted,
... for a future not our own*

... and try to gain a new wisdom.

Trying to discern the new “signs of the time,” we continue on. What have we learned? It is probably too soon to tell, but the Contemplative life has the power to make our understanding grow, and in the today of faith extract from yesterday what was passing and what has the staying power to guide through the unknowns of new ways of being.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI

“We are freed to practice new behaviors without interference from established cues and our habitual response to them. Discontinuity forces us to think. By making fresh decisions, we act in new ways, ones that may work better for us.”

(1967 Commentary on Dei Verbum)

As we look at one another in community, we have a profound sense of gratitude for each sister. We are uniquely blessed with gifted individuals who engage their dreams to a common endeavor. Through an endless navigation between the world we encounter and the world we envision, we can count on one another for clarity and insight. Shaped by collegiality, collaboration and participation, we daily strive for a level of consciousness which will bring the Carmel of Our Lady of the Mountains into fruitful dialogue with the realities of today.

Throughout the days and seasons and year, we count on one another and we also count on you, the Friends of Carmel, who have faithfully supported and sustained us.



Carmel of Our Lady of the Mountains
where the desert meets the mountains
and the road leads on and on...

In our community prayers and in our prayers in solitude, we gratefully remember each one of you and hold your intentions in our hearts.