



FRIENDS OF CARMEL 2024
THE SISTERS AND SEASONS OF RENO CARMEL

WHERE THE DESERT MEETS THE MOUNTAINS



SUSAN



Rosalind



Ann



Claire



Chris



.Rosemary



Cecilia



Carol



Sa Ra



Maria



Marie Louise

Dear Friends of Carmel

In August, we launched our new Website with the hope that our life and spirituality would speak to you in the language of today. As our community arrives at 70 years in Reno, we see this time as a way to look back to our treasured history and look forward with the insights of contemporary contemplative life.

This is how we tell our story today... the contemplative life lived within the Carmelite Order.... sometimes, we tell it in a different way, but it is the same story....



The story began 70 years ago when on August 16, 1954, four nuns holding one-way tickets for Reno, Nevada, left the Carmelite Monastery in Indianapolis. The next four nuns followed a few days later, and our Carmelite life took root in a small brick house on 829 North Virginia Street on the Feast of St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1954. The days grew into months, into years, into seventy years and on August 24, 2024, we prayed:

*In every age, O God, You have been our refuge
In Your eyes, O God, a thousand years are like yesterday
and a life like a watch of the night.*

As we reflect on the 70 years, we are also aware of the unique time in history in which our monastery was founded.

...the Second Vatican Council would take place within fifteen years of our founding.

... the Holy Father was urging the convents to seek remunerative work in the aftermath of World War II with its devastation of Europe and its effect on cloistered nuns,

...it was the era of Scriptural and Biblical renewal, and the findings of contemporary scholars began to be recognized and taught

throughout the Church.

...in our own country, forces were being discovered which would change the face of American Society: the civil rights movement, an emerging feminist spirituality, new dialogues with authority.

The societal changes took place outside the cloister but also shaped the vision of the new community. Years later, our collegial form of leadership, our printshop, the form of the divine office, our embrace of the principle of unity in diversity, our outreach to the community outside the monastery-all can be traced to the perspective of the founding Sisters and a unique moment in history.

As the founding Sisters experienced profound changes in reading the Scriptures and celebrating Liturgy, their own understanding of the contemplative life as lived in Carmel reflected these insights. Church documents urged the faithful to accept the insight of scholars that both Scripture and the Liturgy were phrased in the words and understanding of the era in which they were fashioned. This new understanding prepared us to challenge a barrier to renewal that maintained that embedded customs were immovable because: “it’s never been done that way.”



top:Marie+1955, Joan A.+1983, Anne+1997, Jean+ 2004, Mary 2024 Marie-Celeste+2005
bottom:: Pat +2007, Laureen+ 2010, Rose + 2012, Joan +2017, Michael+ 2020

“Sisters of our Community “ as we journeyed through the years....
This year we added Sister Mary

There is a need for heralds of the gospel who are experts in humanity, who have a profound knowledge of the heart of present-day humanity, participating in humanity's joys and hopes, anguish and sadness and who are at the same time contemplatives in love with God. (John Paul II)

More recently, we have found inspiration in Father General's quote of 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
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.*





We've launched our new website! Same address, new look: www.carmelofreno.com It's been a labor of love, over two years in the making. We'd like to thank our generous benefactors and website team, without whose tireless commitment and creativity, this would not have been possible.

The purpose of the new site is two-fold: To provide a digital experience of beauty, love and peace that's possible through prayer and community – especially for those who are unable to come to the monastery in person. And more importantly, to automate and re-engineer our Shop and Card business to free up the community to focus our efforts on creating, composing,





CAROL
“...*The role of Carmel is to be a bastion of love... the energy of love, in prayer, flowing out.*”
(from our website)



MARIA
... “*In prayer we become more dependent on God as the source of life.*”
(from our website)

painting and writing in order that we may continue being a source of spiritual nourishment to our world.

Browse the main pages of the website to be immersed in our spirituality. Visit the Experience page to view video interviews with the community and friends of the community. Listen to musical selections by Sr. Claire, read inspiring reflections, learn about our printshop from a PBS video and, of course – visit our SHOP for a wide variety of Christmas and All-Occasion cards.

We intentionally launched our new website to mark our 70th year in Reno this August 24th. We are planning a celebration of the last 70 years and the 70 years to come in the Fall of next year.

In the meantime, we hope that your experience of our new website will lead you to a place a quiet introspection that creates space to experience something more...a space where the depth and beauty of the Breath of Life can connect, touch and awaken your depth.



Cameraman Omar Gaieck prepares Rosey to share



In the Spring of 2024, a group of Carmelites representing sisters from around the world were invited to meet in Nemi, Italy (an hour south of Rome) to discuss the updating of our Constitutions. Sr. Claire was among this international gathering of 58 sisters; 3 of whom were from the United

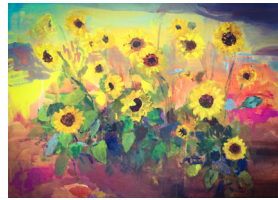
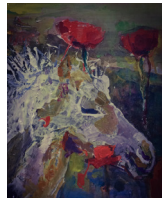
States. Each sister came with the dreams, hopes and challenges of their respective national Associations. Sharing about our charism, as it is lived in different cultural contexts, was made possible by simultaneous translation in French, Italian, Spanish and English. Claire's small group included English-speaking sisters from Belgium, Iceland, Vietnam, India, South Korea, and the UK.



Seeds sown in dialogue and friendship laid a solid foundation of trust for the work of renewing our Constitutions, which will continue in the years ahead. The sisters were grateful that our Generalate arranged for a private audience with Pope Francis during their time in Italy. In speaking to the nuns about the

renewal of our Constitutions, Pope Francis said, "You are challenged to discover new language, new ways and new means to give greater impetus to the contemplative life that the Lord has called you to embrace..." After his address each one had the privilege of greeting the Pope personally, to receive his blessing and to assure him of our prayers.

The Covid era introduced us to Zoom, which offered a “trusted collaboration tool for video meeting, team chats, etc.” As SaRa continues her time in Korea, caring for her Mother, Zoom has become our “go to” tool for keeping the lines of communication open and strengthening the bonds of Community. Ever the artist, Sa Ra spends her free time painting, and she put together an Art Show in the Spring. She did not



expect to sell many works and was surprised that every single painting sold. We miss her presence with us but support her commitment to her mother.

SISTER MARY

October 29, 1927 June 8, 2024

When you approach the Monastery from almost any road in Reno, the first thing you will notice are the trees which line the driveway and cover the property. They exist as a memorial to Sister Mary’s dedication and perseverance. Like a modern day “Johnny Appleseed”, Mary spent years planting, watering, caring for the trees - even carrying buckets of water by hand to insure their survival. After a lifetime of frenetic activity as gardener, cook, nurse, her final years of inactivity weighed deeply upon her.



After a very long journey on earth, Sister Mary transitioned to heaven on June 8th, the day we celebrate as consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. That day was very fitting as Sister Mary’s motto, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord”, echoed the Blessed Virgin’s.

In a certain way, the Printshop was folded into the reality of the Foundation. Bishop Dwyer, our founding Bishop, made clear that his desire for a “Carmel in Reno” did not come with funding.



Combined with prompting from the Holy See that Contemplative Monasteries should consider “remunerative work,” the early sisters enthusiastically embraced the challenge of financial independence, which in the long view has proved to be a blessing.

Because this was a new foundation struggling to remain in existence, almost anything was undertaken as remunerative work: altar breads, vestment sewing, printing, artwork, and calligraphy. The artwork and theological input were carefully crafted to offer people something more uplifting than the usual “church goods” style they had been getting. By today’s standards this would not seem much, but it was avant-garde for the mission Church of Nevada in those days.

As the printing work increased in the 1960’s, we gradually discerned that it would be better to concentrate our efforts on one avenue, printing. This was in the interest of simplifying our life, focusing our energies and time on what we thought could be the main source of income. As the decision was being reached, Sister Michael wrote:

“It was not easy to exchange the quiet, solitary, and creative work of sewing and altar breads for the risky and demanding one of printing. The price was willingly paid by everyone and a united thrust into the future began.”

In the 1970’s we went from a few cards, printed for friends, and

expanded to All Occasion, Valentine, Seminarian Ordination cards and brochures, calendars, books, prints...we began by charging 10 cents per card and caused dismay when we raised the price to 15 cents which occasioned one Sister to say; "you are gouging our customers"... we went door to door selling our work and had a booth at the County Fair.

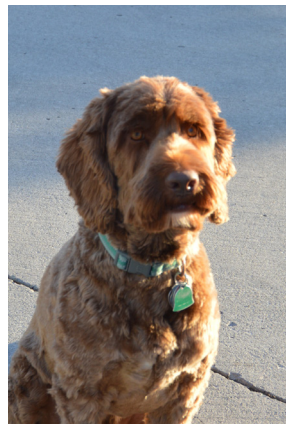
The Christmas and All Occasion card side of our business grew, and again we began to specialize, choosing to limit ourselves to cards always in the interest of our primary commitment to community life and contemplation. This focus was aided by the advent of the "Digital Age" as printing went from a subset of several complicated skills to pressing a button. With the aid of several grants from the E.L. Wiegand Foundation, our printshop went fully digital in 2009.



Rather than a static entity, the printshop was, from the beginning, an evolving work affected by the advances in the printing industry and the needs of our community ... This year we have begun another transition. In conjunction with our new Website and a partnership with RENO TYPE, a local organization, our cards will now be ordered through the Website and with this Christmas Season a new "thrust into our future" has begun.

THEO UPDATE

Week by week Theo is leaving puppyhood behind...well, almost, as the "quick napkin snatch" remains his specialty. Besides the exercise he gets in walks with us, he has



become an expert in running the length of the grounds- at full gallop- for phantom squirrels and birds. He doesn't seem to want to catch them...the run looks to establish his authority over the whole property, and he considers birds and squirrels intruders.



Our monastery is both a place set apart and a committed part of the contemporary world and its needs and its sufferings...your needs and your sufferings. The metaphor of contemplative space is concretized among us not as separateness but as a harmony between the central meaning of life and life lived in its daily apparel. We hope to be sign, sacrament and reality of our God who though transcendent is very near to us.

As the events of the past year show, we are a diverse community deeply connected with you, the Friends of Carmel. We thank you for the generosity of your support that sustains our contemplative life and the overflow of it to all around us. You are part of this Carmelite Family and, at this season of Thanksgiving, we give thanks for you and ask God to bless you abundantly.