

Totally Given to the Lord through a Life of Prayer Silence & Solitude...

Carmelite Nuns of the Ancient Observance

Wahpeton, North Dakota

Carmel of Mary, Mary's Carmel, was founded in the Marian Year of 1954, with a Shrine in honor of Our Lady of the Prairies. Candidates joyfully enter their community on a feast of Our Lady. No doubt about the role of Mary in their Carmel!

A treasured part of their community *horarium* is rising at midnight to pray the Office of Readings, which is rather unique in their O.Carm. tradition. Despite the sacrifice of an hour of sleep, the community is up to chant Morning Prayer at 5:30 A.M.

Their monastery is about six miles northwest of Wahpeton, with the grounds surrounded by a river on three sides. After living in Wahpeton, in an old hospital building transformed into a temporary monastery, the community moved to its present location in 1964 and enjoys the silence and beauty of the countryside and the regular sight of wildlife, vast skies and gorgeous



sunrises and sunsets. The beauties of nature raise their minds and hearts to the Creator of all beauty—Infinite Beauty Himself.

They chant the Liturgy of the Hours in Gregorian chant: in Latin on Solemnities and in English on lesser feasts. Their voices are united with the volume of praise rising to heaven from all who pray the Liturgy of the Hours from the rising to the setting of the sun.

A very special part of their apostolate of prayer is to pray for priests. There is no area or need which prayer cannot reach. Prayer requests by phone, letter and e-mails come to the monastery regularly and each is taken to heart by the community and to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament who blesses them with His loving mercy. Sometimes a suffering, needy person simply needs a listening ear and an encouraging word and assurance of prayer to have a brighter outlook on life and to face its challenges.

Their community can be characterized as having a “liturgical spirit.” Mother Mary Rose of the Sacred Heart and Mother Augustine Marie of the Blessed Sacrament, leaders of the community when their foundation was sent out from Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1954, had a deep love for the Liturgy. Very early on they implemented chanting the Liturgy of the Hours in Gregorian chant, learning one thing at a time: the psalm tones, then the hymns, then the responsories, until their repertoire included the entire Divine Office.

Their “liturgical spirit” reaches its high point in the celebration of Holy Mass each day. The proper antiphons are also chanted in Gregorian chant, in English on ordinary days and in a solemn Latin chant on some solemnities.

A “vocation story” is a marvelous working of God's grace. Their sisters came from east to west, north to south and in between: Maryland, California, North Dakota, Texas and Illinois. Theresa, their latest new arrival, a native of Viet Nam, entered the aspirancy on July 20, 2018.

What draws a young woman to Carmel? Basically, it is a CALL from God. Along with the CALL, He sends the grace to follow His gentle invitation. Love for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and a desire to give oneself totally to Him in a life





of prayer; a very special devotion to Our Blessed Mother with the grace to imitate her total *Fiat* are the most compelling reasons to follow her vocation. Love for the Church and the desire to pray for all God's people, an apostolic missionary spirit, the dire need for "stand-ins" before God in intercessory prayer for all the needs of His people become compelling reasons to answer the call. Most importantly, it is a love for Our Lord which can be satisfied only in Carmel in a life of prayer, silence and solitude. A joyful community life enables her to grow day by day in her gift of self to this great infinite Beloved.

Carmel of Mary has a web-page which contains a seven-minute DVD portraying the life of prayer and joyful community in Carmel and a FACEBOOK page. May vocations continue to flourish from coast to coast, sea to sea, and all around the world! 🌍



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In the Spirit of the Founders. . .

A Gift "Out of the Blue" for the Marian Year

The origins of the Carmel of Mary read like a story book. In the early 1950's, Mr. Patrick Flood, a professor at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, received an appeal for help for the Native American missions in North Dakota from the Bishop of Fargo. With a "spiritual nudge from on high," he wrote to Most Rev. Aloisius Muench and his auxiliary, Most Rev. Leo Dworschak, asking if they would be interested in a cloistered Carmelite monastery in their diocese.

Mr. Flood was acquainted with the Carmelite Nuns in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and knew that they were most anxious to send out a new foundation. Upon receiving his letter, the two prelates who had been wondering what they could do to make the upcoming Marian Year of 1954 a very special year of dedication to our Blessed Mother, realized that this was a gift "out of the blue"! Yes, they were very interested. They contacted the community in Allentown and expressed their great desire.

Next step: to find a suitable location for the foundation. There was a possibility of a place in the city of Devil's Lake, North Dakota. However, that didn't quite have a pleasing ring: "The Carmelites of Devil's Lake"! The old St. Mary's Hospital in Wahpeton was investigated and the Franciscan Sisters in Little Falls, Minnesota, were willing to sell it. With notable renovations, it could be transformed into a temporary monastery. Bishops Muench and Dworschak

were in Rome attending the canonization of Pope St. Pius X. While there, they obtained permission from the Sacred Congregation for the new foundation.



A flurry of activity followed in the Allentown community. Seven nuns were chosen, with Mother Mary Rose of the Sacred Heart (*above*) as the obvious choice to be the prioress. Everything needed was happily and hastily gathered together for the departure day—the Feast of Christ the King (at that time, the last Sunday of October). With mixed feelings the seven Nuns departed their beloved community and monastery.

None of the sisters had ever been on a plane before, so that was quite exciting. They arrived in Fargo on October 30, 1954, and were met by Bishop Dworschak and a large group of priests. After staying at St. John's Hospital in Fargo overnight, they were driven to their new location in Wahpeton.

At the opening Mass on the Feast of All Saints, Bishop Dworschak noted, "Today is a day of fulfillment and a day of promise. It was almost a year ago when Bishop Muench and myself were wondering, 'What can we do to mark in a special manner the Marian Year?'... Today we have the fulfillment of our cherished hope, and the story of the Carmel of Mary reads like a romance."