

# AVILA INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY HOSTS GROUNDBREAKING WORKSHOP ON VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP: “ROOTED IN MISSION”

With dedication to the ministry of elder care, the Avila Institute of Gerontology (AIG) convened industry leaders, administrators, and key decision-makers from across the country for a dynamic two-day workshop titled “Rooted in Mission: The Call to Value-Based Leadership” at the Motherhouse of the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm.

The workshop, held April 7–8, 2025, was introduced by Sister M. Peter Lillian Di Maria, O.Carm., Director of AIG and a Carmelite Sister for the Aged and Infirm. The Sisters have long championed mission-driven leadership and education for the future. This workshop exemplified a key aspect of their mission: to form and empower caregivers, religious communities, and healthcare professionals with the tools to lead with compassion, competence, and conviction.

## EMPOWERING LEADERS TO LEAD WITH PURPOSE

The program opened on Monday, April 7, with Session 1, led by Michael Rozier, SJ, PhD, titled “Discernment and Its Proper Role in Health Care Leadership.” This session offered participants an in-depth look at how spiritual and ethical discernment can guide personal and organizational decision-making in complex areas such as finance, staffing, and strategic planning.

In the afternoon, Dr. Laurence J. O’Connell, PhD, STD, took the stage with “The Vocational Attitude: Leading Business, Serving in a Ministry.” He explored the foundational concept of vocation as it applies to executive leadership in elder care, encouraging attendees to see their roles not just as jobs, but as sacred callings within a greater mission.



L- R Bonita Burke, Sr. Kevin, Sr. Margaret, Wayne Schubert, Ana Tagle, Sr. Philip, Kahoney Anderson, Sr. Diane, Kelly Carroll, Andrew Rossetti, Debbie Scionti, Jodi Ouimette, Naomi Prendergast, Karen Reich, Mike Ferrick, Christy Robbins, Sr. Ann Brown and Renee Allain.

## INTEGRATING VALUES WITH VISION

On Tuesday, April 8, Dr. O’Connell returned for Session 3, “Deploying a Vocational Attitude in Organizational Leadership.” Participants engaged in hands-on activities to internalize the connection between mission, leadership, and organizational culture.

Session 4 featured Sr. Patricia Margaret Rawdon, O.Carm., RN, BSHCA, LNHA, presenting “Understanding Your Organization’s Mission – Called to Stewardship.” Using the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm as a guiding example, Sr. Patricia outlined practical strategies for aligning stewardship with leadership amidst the challenges of modern healthcare.

The final session, led by Shane Cooney, BA, SHRM-CP, addressed “Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.” Emphasizing mission-based innovation, Cooney equipped leaders with the tools to foster a values-driven culture through real-world scenarios, team reflections, and case-based learning.

At the conclusion of the final presentation, Kathryn Fassbender, BS, CDCS, AIG faculty, interviewed a dynamic 90-year-old woman from New



Sister M. Peter Lillian Di Maria, O.Carm.

York who offered key insights into the perspective of older adults.

## A FUTURE ROOTED IN MISSION

More than a series of lectures, Rooted in Mission was a sacred convening, a gathering of hearts and minds committed to redefining leadership in long-term care. The two-day workshop offered a space for purposeful learning, spiritual grounding, and meaningful dialogue. Participants departed not only with practical strategies but with renewed inspiration to lead with conviction, compassion, and a clear sense of calling.

Leaders were reminded that effective leadership in Catholic healthcare goes beyond management—it is a ministry. As they return to their respec-

tive roles, the mission lives on through them. In every decision made, every policy formed, and every life touched, the spirit of the Carmelite legacy continues to shine—rooted in mission and inspired by CARE—Compassion, Accountability, Reverence, and Excellence.

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**The Educational Arm of the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm**

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