

The Sisters' 1929 Foundation of Love Becomes the Beacon for the Next Century of Compassionate Care

An Open Letter to the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm by Trish Gathers.

Our Beloved Carmelite Sisters,

On behalf of the entire executive leadership team, our dedicated staff, our clinical partners, and the thousands of families whose lives you have touched, I offer our deepest congratulations and heartfelt prayers as you enter your historic 98th year and gather for your General Chapter. As you enter this sacred time of reflection, renewal, and discernment, we stand in awe of the legacy you carry.

On September 3, 1929, just weeks before the stock market crash plunged our nation into economic uncertainty, Venerable Mother M. Angeline Teresa McCrory and six courageous companions established a new standard for caring for the elderly and infirm. This profound ministry was built by women, forged from their own poverty, at a time when women did not enjoy equal rights in our country. Yet from limited material wealth and social power, they created enduring places of hope for those who were aged, infirm, and dying. Mother Angeline looked upon those too often forgotten by society and saw the face of Christ. She built this ministry on radical trust and gave us a simple, revolutionary truth that continues to define us:

“The Difference Is Love.”

Today, nearly a century later, that foundation has become a remarkable legacy of compassion. As Chief Executive Officer of The Carmelite System, I wake each day with both the privilege and responsibility of stewarding a ministry that helped shape modern geriatric care. The Sisters did not simply build senior communities. They championed individualized care, resident dignity, self-determination, and a holistic, person-centered approach to healing long before those principles became widely embraced throughout healthcare. Over the decades, your footprint expanded across multiple states and across the Atlantic to Ireland. For any community fortunate enough to have one of these sacred havens in its midst, it is more than a healthcare resource. It is a community gift—to be cherished, strengthened, and sustained.

We witness that legacy throughout our ministries, including Cabrini of Westchester in New York; Ozanam Hall in Bayside; St. Patrick's Manor and Carmel Terrace in Framingham; D'Youville Life & Wellness Community in Lowell; Mount Carmel Care Center in Lenox; Lourdes-Noreen McKeen Residence in West Palm Beach; St. Patrick's Residence in Naperville; Mother Angeline McCrory Manor and The Villas of Saint Therese in



Columbus; Carmel Manor in Fort Thomas; and Kahl Home in Davenport. These are not static institutions. They are vibrant communities continually renewing and challenging themselves in the pursuit of excellence. Throughout your history, innovation has always accompanied compassion. You responded to the changing needs of healthcare by working alongside acute-care hospital systems and developing high-quality subacute and post-acute services that allow patients to transition safely to the next stage of recovery. In doing so, you strengthened the broader healthcare continuum while bringing the same standard of specialized, compassionate care to short-term patients that has always defined the care of long-term residents.

Our journey today is also one of intentional preservation. The Carmelite System is committed not only to strengthening our existing ministries, but also to extending this model of care into new communities and helping preserve the missions of predecessor religious congregations that have spent generations serving others. As religious communities confront changing demographics and vocations, we have an extraordinary responsibility to ensure that their sacred footprints of service are not simply dissolved, commercialized, or forgotten. Their buildings matter. Their ministries matter. Their charisms matter. Their legacies matter. And the people who will depend upon them tomorrow matter. At its heart, what happens within our walls is an accompaniment of the human soul during some of the most sacred and vulnerable years of life. When a Sister or nurse clasps the hand of a resident, when a dietary aide remembers exactly how someone likes their morning coffee, or when a chaplain sits quietly beside a grieving family—that is love in action. As you gather for this General Chapter to reflect upon the life of the Congregation, renew the foundation established by Mother Angeline, and

elect the leadership that will help guide your future, you are undertaking the sacred work necessary to sustain this ministry for generations yet to come. Your vision ensures that older adults will continue to have dignified choices rooted in spiritual peace, personal autonomy, compassionate care, and unconditional love. But preserving this extraordinary ministry and extending its foundation into the future is work none of us can accomplish alone.

Absorbing new ministries, transforming aging infrastructure, expanding services, and honoring the legacy of predecessor congregations require exceptional resources to match an exceptional mission.

To our philanthropic partners, I invite you to become part of this legacy.

An investment in The Carmelite System is an investment in the future of compassionate, faith-rooted healthcare. It helps strengthen ministries, preserve access to dignified care, modernize the environments in which that care is delivered, and ensure that future generations inherit something increasingly precious: places where the dignity of every human life remains sacred.

And to our extraordinary employees and to the new generation of leaders we are calling to join us. I offer a challenge: share fully in this vision.

To work or lead within a Carmelite ministry is a sacred stewardship. We seek clinical experts, gifted administrators, innovative thinkers, and operational pioneers who want more than a job. We seek people who understand vocation. We need leaders with the executive acumen to navigate an increasingly complex healthcare environment while carrying within them Mother Angeline's timeless mandate to be “kinder than kindness itself.”

Dearest Sisters, as you enter this historic General Chapter, know that the entire Carmelite System family stands beside



you in prayer, gratitude, and shared purpose. We will continue to innovate. We will continue to examine ourselves. We will continue to improve, preserve, strengthen, and grow. But beneath every change, we will always care. The ministry Mother Angeline began in 1929 stands strong today because its foundation was dug deep into the bedrock of divine love. As you discern the next chapter, we pray that the Holy Spirit guides your deliberations, strengthens your hearts, and blesses those called to leadership.

May Mary, Mother and Beauty of Carmel, wrap you in her mantle of peace as you chart a vibrant and visionary future—one in which every elder entrusted to our care knows, without a shadow of a doubt, that they are cherished, they are seen, and they are loved.

Nearly a century ago, Mother Angeline and six courageous companions laid a foundation of love. Today, that foundation is ours to preserve, strengthen, and carry forward into the next century of Carmelite care.

Because after nearly a century, the foundation remains unchanged:

The Difference Is Love.

With deepest gratitude and prayers,

Trish Gathers
Chief Executive Officer
The Carmelite System

To learn how you can support our mission through philanthropy or explore career opportunities to share in our vision, please visit The Carmelite System Support & Careers.
<https://www.carmelitesystem.org/>