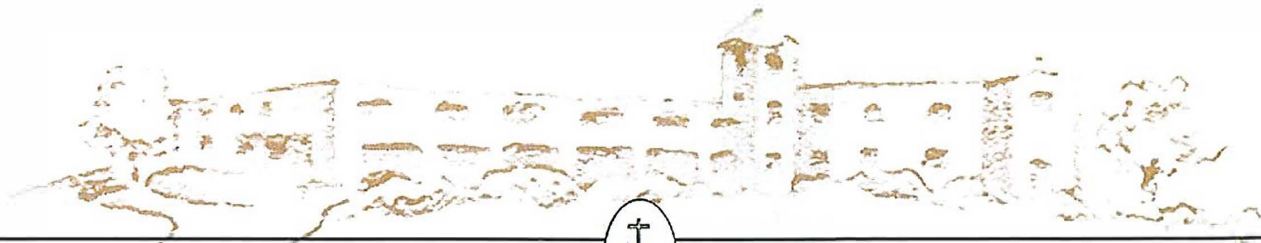


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*A Monastery & Retreat House of The Discalced Carmelite Fathers*

# Mount Carmel Center



Summer 2015

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## Celebrating St. Teresa of Avila: Reformer



We continue our focus on the many facets of St. Teresa of Avila, as we explore her role as reformer. To understand St. Teresa of Jesus as a reformer of a religious order we have to first place the ‘call to renewal’ within its historical context.

St. Teresa (1515-1582), lived in the “Golden Age of Spain”. Europe had been racked by wars, famines, droughts, and plagues in the Middle Ages. These tragedies decimated the population of Europe – some estimate that half of the population was lost to the Black Plague. Due to exposure in tending to the sick and burying the dead, especially large numbers of clergy had died. This left a severe shortage of priests who were replaced by hastily and poorly trained clergy. This impacted the quality of teaching, which in turn impacted the quality of understanding of the faith, leading to societal decay.

In light of these difficulties, religious orders adapted their way of life. The Rule of the Order governs all aspects of monastic life: the daily schedule and norms for prayer, community, work, and socialization. The Church slowly softened The Rule for most Orders,

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including that of the Carmelites. St. Teresa found herself in a busy convent, full of guests and lax in attitudes towards prayer.

St. Teresa decided to found a new order returning to the values of the Original Rule, allowing for fuller commitment to prayer and silence. Against many battles, disappointments and betrayals, St. Teresa founded the first of many monasteries of the Discalced Reform within Avila in 1562. In 1568 with St. John of the Cross, the reform of the Friars of the Carmelite Order began at the tiny hamlet of Duruelo.

Several attempts on the part of the Carmelite Order to reform did not come to fruition, until the Discalced Reform of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross. In 1575, it was deemed necessary to legally separate into two branches; the Discalced and the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance. Discalced is a term for Catholic religious orders whose members, both men and women, are barefooted or who wear sandals. In the Old Testament, bare feet symbolized reverence for the divine presence; humiliation; poverty and shame; penance and supplication. To identify themselves as reformed, this new branch of the Carmelites were 'discalced'.

Teresa's goal was that the Order recover its contemplative ideal and embrace solitude, silence, and prayer as did their spiritual forefathers, the 'venerable hermits' of Mt. Carmel. The 'new insight' that Teresa brought was that the contemplative life was to be understood as an apostolate at the service of the Church and her members.

The friars at Mount Carmel Center continue this tradition in striving to live and work, daily recommitting themselves to the reform that St. Teresa of Jesus brought about. We humbly ask for your prayers and support.

*An unabridged version of this article can be found on our website:*  
[www.mountcarmelcenter.org](http://www.mountcarmelcenter.org).



*Suffering is a great favor. Remember that everything soon comes to an end . . . and take courage. Think of how our gain is eternal.*

— St. Teresa of Avila

## Recent Developments

❖ We welcome back Fr. Bonaventure Sauer who's been in Spain the month of May for the 91st Carmelite General Chapter, the meeting of representatives of the wide world of Carmel. The meeting sets the direction of the Carmelite Order and elects the leadership. At the Chapter Fr. Saverio Cannistra was re-elected as General of the Carmelite Order. First elected in 2009, he will serve six more years. Please pray for his leadership, as the Order undertakes the important work of rewriting their constitutions, the guidelines which govern the order.

❖ Fr. Bonaventure noted that the meetings were long and the work was hard; but, Madrid was beautiful as always!

❖ Currently, our project is the restoration of the original pool, located on the southwestern side of the building. See the article in the newsletter for more information.

❖ Inside the building, we are giving the protector of the Carmelite order, St. Joseph, greater prominence. Our existing statue of St. Joseph is located at the end of the hallway, just beyond the door to the main chapel. We are building a lighted niche to highlight this beloved saint. Devotion to St. Joseph was a hallmark of St. Teresa of Avila, who credited her miraculous cure of paralysis to his intercession. Turn to the back cover for a special celebratory Mass to honor the 500th birthday of St. Teresa of Avila on her upcoming feast day, October 15th, 2015.

❖ We recently installed a brand new roof over the large chapel. As we are able, we will replace the roof over other parts of our building.



# Come on in! The water will soon be fine.

*Did you know that Mount Carmel Center has always had a swimming pool?*

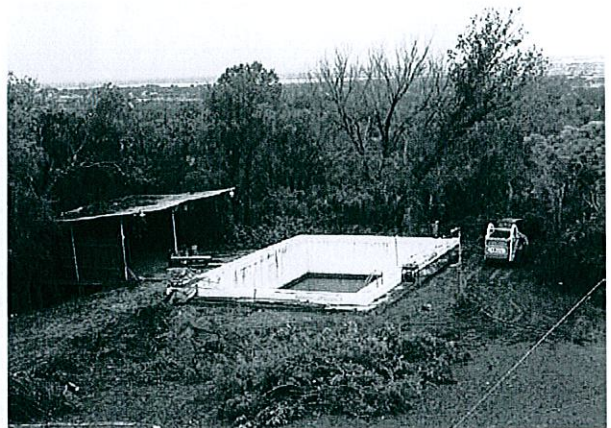


Built during the years that Mount Carmel Center served as a minor seminary, the pool is located at the back of the building, to the southwest. The pool served as recreation for the friars and seminarians for several years. As the number of people at Mount Carmel Center lessened, the pool was drained and fell into major disrepair. Besides being an eye-sore and a safety hazard, the empty pool has been the occasional trap for unsuspecting animals; the most recent being a large dog who was quickly rescued.

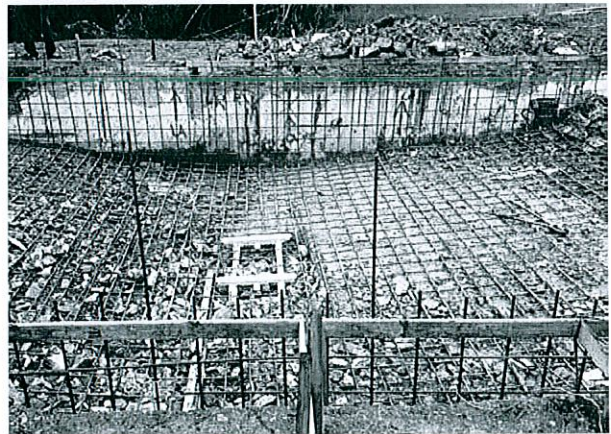
The friars have long wanted to restore the pool to its original use. Through the generosity of our donors we have been able to start turning this problematic hole in the ground into something useful and beautiful.

An affordable new pool is being built within the existing pool structure. It is a play pool, ranging from 3 to 5 feet in depth, featuring a salt water chlorination system. The new pool area will have proper fencing, new decking, a 911 phone, and a water fountain. It should be open for use by the friars and retreatants late this summer.

We hope you will be able to enjoy this newest feature at Mount Carmel Center soon!



This is where we started...



This is a work in progress...



We're almost there!

# Mount Carmel Center



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*"Let nothing disturb you - Nothing frighten you - All things are passing - God never changes - With patience you attain all things - Who possesses God wants nothing - God alone suffices."*

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**Save the Date!**  
October 15th, 2015 | 7:00P

A Mass in honor of  
St. Teresa of Avila



Our friends and benefactors are cordially invited to come celebrate with us at a Mass in honor of St. Teresa of Avila on her feast day, October 15, 2015 at 7pm. The Mass will be at the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe and will be followed by a reception in the Grand Salon. Bishop Kevin Farrell will be our main celebrant with the Carmelite Friars concelebrating. The 50 person choir from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio will provide the music. It is sure to be a wonderful celebration.

Throughout the world this year, the Carmelite Order has been celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of Saint Teresa of Avila. As we bring the year to a close, we hope that you can join us.

RSVP's are requested. Please e-mail your RSVP to [ocds.dallas@gmail.com](mailto:ocds.dallas@gmail.com).