

## *PCM Mid Atlantic Region Newsletter*

### **FORMANDI RESUME STUDIES**

Whitefriars Hall (WFH) has a “full house” this semester, with 19 students and 10 brothers in residence. The students (or “Formandi”) represent the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary (PCM) and Province of St Elias (SEL) and hail from Mexico, Trinidad, Vietnam, and the United States. New student orientation at the Catholic University of America (CUA) took place on August 24 and classes began in earnest on August 28.



Formandi at Nationals Park

Formandi are immersed in the approximately eight-year process of studying to become a priest or brother in Carmel. After completion of the pre-novitiate at Whitefriars Hall (PCM) or in Harrison, NJ (SEL), the Formandi enter the novitiate in Mexico City, Mexico and receive the Carmelite habit. After one year of novitiate, the Formandi profess simple vows for three years and return to Whitefriars Hall for theological studies at CUA.

While in Washington DC, the Formandi familiarize themselves with pastoral work in local parishes. During their initial formation, the Formandi continue to discern their vocation and enter more deeply into living the Carmelite way of life before professing solemn vows. As part of their initial formation, they learn about the more practical side of Carmelite life in a one- to two-year internship in a Carmelite ministry. Those who discern the call to the priesthood, are ordained after completing their theological studies.

## MEET THE PRE-NOVICES

Two pre-novices joined the Carmelite community at Whitefriars Hall (WFH) in August, Rodrigo Alejandro Arroyo Aguilar and Omar Orlando Piloto Chan. The prior, Nepi Willemssen, stated, “We’re excited to accompany two brothers in the pre-noviate program as part of their journey in Carmel.” The pre-novices spend their year at WFH learning to live in community. Before pro-



ceeding to the next phase, they need to be bi-lingual – proficient in English and Spanish - and have a basic background in philosophy and theology before entering the novitiate at Casa del Carmen in Mexico City in July 2024. At that time they receive the Carmelite habit.

The pre-novices appreciate the internationality, open-mindedness, and inclusive nature of the Carmelite family. Language and cultural differences can be challenging. Less than 20% of the 30 residents at WFH are from the United States.

### **RODRIGO ARROYO AGUILAR**

Sometimes a life experience can change our view of where we are to go and what God has in store for us. Rodrigo is from the desert region of Chihuahua, Mexico. He felt drawn to religious life after witnessing people dying in the hospital without access to the sacraments. “I was a nurse and I saw many poor people who were very sick pass away without receiving the anointing of the sick. I want to bring the sacraments to others. I love that Carmel offers us many different ministries to serve. For example, I can serve as a hospital chaplain or as a missionary.”

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St Therese of Lisieux is Rodrigo's favorite Carmelite saint and *The Story of a Soul* his favorite book about Carmelite spirituality. After reading it, "I could see God in a different way. For example, I can glorify and adore God if I do simple tasks thinking of Him. Now I can feel closer to God every day."

One way he chooses to glorify God is through song. "Most people don't know that I sing well." Rodrigo has performed in concert and has recorded three worship CDs. "It's my favorite way to pray."

The requirement to learn English for community living can be stressful. Rodrigo has also found that the sense of solitude sometimes can be a challenge. "Whitefriars Hall is a big residence with many brothers, but sometimes it is so quiet. And it's hard being away from my family. I feel homesick sometimes and I miss the hugs of my family and friends. Sometimes when I hear about their troubles, I wish I could be there for them."

### **OMAR PILOTO CHAN**

At age 23, Omar is the youngest resident at WFH; he noted that having multiple generations living under one roof can be challenging.

"But brothers always support each other. It's a family."

Omar is from the Yucatan, the coastal region of Mexico. He studied theology, philosophy, and rational thinking in Mexico and is now studying English. His favorite class was the "History of Israel." He loves the liturgy of the Mass and learning how the Mass has evolved. *The Way of Perfection* inspired Omar to become a Carmelite. But *The Interior Castle* by St Teresa of Avila is his favorite. "The first time that I read this book I was young (well, I'm still young!), maybe I was not completely prepared for it. *The Interior castle* has helped me to have a prayer life.

Omar was drawn to the order's focus on prayer and has felt part of the Carmelites since the first day he met them in Mexico City. "I always have wanted life in community. The Carmelites have given me more than a community, they have given to me a family. "In Carmel, there is a place for everyone. Artists, academics, political activists, scientists... whatever you want to offer the world!"

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## EVENTS AROUND THE REGION



The St Therese LCC held a weekend retreat on St John of the Cross on October 28-29, 2023. Fr. Von Sandoval, O.Carm led the retreat.



“Transformation through Prayer, *A Fresh Perspective on the Interior Life,*” was the theme of the Flower of Carmel retreat



at Hallowood Retreat Center led by Fr. Nepi Willemsen, O.Carm on October 13-15, 2023.

Several St Rose parishioners and members of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Secretary, MD participated. Kathy Wessman made her temporary promises and the broader community renewed their promises.



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## COMING SOON

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Register at: [strose-parish.org/advent-retreat-registration](http://strose-parish.org/advent-retreat-registration)

St Therese Lay Carmelite Community invites you to an  
Advent Day of Recollection  
*St. Teresa of Avila—Doctor of the Church*

December 10, 2023  
Whitefriars Hall

Given by: Fr. Nicholas Blackwell, O.Carm, St. Elias Province  
Email [chipmunk1981@earthlink.net](mailto:chipmunk1981@earthlink.net) to register

**Newsletter Produced by  
Mid Atlantic Region  
of PCM Province**

St. Therese of Lisieux—DC  
Flower of Carmel—Gaithersburg MD  
St John Neuman—Berlin MD  
Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary—  
Southampton, PA  
St. Joseph—Pottstown PA



Please send us news about your  
community for the next edition!  
Photos, articles, upcoming events!  
Thanks!

Nancy and Doug

## PARTNERS IN PRAYER

In the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, Lay Carmelites have a unique opportunity to support the community at Whitefriars Hall (WFH) as they shape the next generation of Carmelite friars. The “Partners in Prayer” program links the Formandi at WFH to individual Lay Carmelites or communities.

This program seeks to create a bond between Lay Carmelites and individual Formandi by forming “partners in prayer.” The concept is simple – a Lay Carmelite will be connected to a Formandi. The Lay Carmelite will pray for the Formandi, and the Formandi will pray for the Lay Carmelite. If desired, the Lay Carmelite and Formandi can choose to become better acquainted by exchanging e-mails or meeting up at regional/ community gatherings.

The family of Carmel is extremely diverse. We hail from all corners of the world and from all walks of life. As members of the Carmelite family, it is our privilege to walk with others on this journey and help each other to grow closer to our God.

Contact your Community Director if you'd like to participate by becoming a Formandi's “partner in prayer.”



# The Carmelite Way



**Victor Andrade**  
Professed  
Veracruz, Mexico



**José Ayala**  
Professed  
Leon, Mexico



**Pedro Cruz**  
Newly Professed  
Mexico



**Barry Dineen**  
Professed  
Dumont, New Jersey



**Adrián Flores**  
Professed  
Puebla, Mexico



**Pedro Mira**  
Professed  
El Salvador, San Salvador



**Filiberto Oregel**  
Professed  
Guadalajara, Mexico



**Manuel Pérez**  
Professed  
Guerrero, Mexico



**Ryan Resurrección**  
Solemnly Professed  
Los Angeles, California



**Roberto Reyes**  
Solemnly Professed  
Mexico City, Mexico



**Salvatore Solis**  
Newly Professed  
Mexico



**Héctor Tavárez**  
Professed  
Chihuahua, Mexico



**Derrick Turrentine**  
Newly Professed  
Lynchburg, Virginia

## Carmelites in Formation

2023-2024



**Rodrigo Arroyo**  
Pre-Novice  
Mexico



**Omar Piloto**  
Pre-Novice  
Mexico



*Listen to God's voice in silence*

*Act on God's voice in the world*

[www.thecarmeliteway.net](http://www.thecarmeliteway.net)



**Order of Carmelites**  
Province of Most Pure Heart of Mary  
Office of Vocations  
Fr. Michael Joyce, O.Carm.  
[vocations@carmelites.net](mailto:vocations@carmelites.net)



## Recipients of 2023 St. Luke Award



The 2023 Saint Luke Award was presented to Rev. Quinn R. Conners, O.Carm., Ph.D. and Sr. Margaret Crowley, SHCJ, LCSW-C on October 16, 2023.

Fr. Quinn is from the Carmelite Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary (PCM) and is a licensed clinical psychologist. Fr. Quinn first joined the Saint Luke Institute clinical staff in 1997 and has held a variety of positions, including vice president and chief operating officer as well as associate director of clinical services.

Fr Quinn has served the PCM Province in many roles: as prior and director of formation at Whitefriars

Hall, Director of Novices, and Provincial. He is also an adjunct clinical associate professor in the School of Theology & Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America. Fr. Quinn continues to serve on the staff of Saint Luke Institute as a consultant for clinical services.

Sr. Margaret (Peggy) Crowley, SHCJ, LCSW-C is a sister of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and a licensed clinical social worker. Sr. Peggy joined the clinical staff at Saint Luke Institute in 1996 as a therapist for residential, continuing care, and outpatient services.

Currently the assistant director of formation at Whitefriars Hall, Sister Peggy excels in her role through her effective facilitation of group processes and extensive experience as a counselor. With a background in guiding religious and clergy through healing ministry, she also brings profound wisdom as a spiritual director and therapist for Carmelite Formandi. Her contribution aligns with the Carmelite Formation Manual, recognizing the complexity of formation ministry and emphasizing the necessity of a team approach, inclusive of non-Carmelites when possible. Sister Peggy's expertise and collaborative approach greatly benefit the formation team at Whitefriars Hall.