

Frequently Asked Questions

April 21, 2022

1) What are the current challenges for Our Lady of Confidence Carmelite Monastery?

For over half a century the nuns have been living in less than satisfactory conditions: an old house with outbuildings that are not connected.

- Significant structural shortcomings of the current facility have become obvious.
- Safety concerns and privacy issues. The nuns must go outside to other buildings for Chapel, meals, laundry, mail room and sleeping cells. This lack of privacy is counterproductive to a life of silence and prayer.
- Significant energy efficiency issues to address.
- Appropriate office and meeting space is a priority. Mother Mary Elizabeth and Sister Carmela share a desk in a crowded office. When someone comes with a concern/need, they are meeting in a converted garage.
- Proper sleeping, dining, bathrooms, and general living facilities are needed.

The current building was never designed to be a monastery; thus, it lacks many features that are necessary for monastic living. The nuns need a structure that allows silence, apartness, and discipline. The inadequacy of the current structure creates disorder. Order is needed to allow the nuns to carry out their mission and live a more productive, prayerful life.

2) What has been done to address this challenge?

In 2012, conversation began in earnest on these matters. After much prayer and discernment, the only realistic solution was to build a simple but strong monastic building. Moving forward with their plans, the nuns established a new Advisory Board and engaged professional consultants to assist them. They initiated a capital campaign to raise the funds necessary to make this new monastery a reality. To the praise and honor of Almighty God, benefactors and supporters have already given over \$1 million towards the building!

3) Is the Order experiencing a decline in vocations?

No! Contrary to many people's thinking, six aspirants have expressed interest in joining this Carmelite community. Some are in the processing stage prior to arrival. However, since all sleeping quarters are currently occupied, there is no space for these nuns to even make an extended visit.

4) What is the financial goal?

Our Lady of Confidence Carmelite Monastery is seeking \$4 million in additional support from both current and new benefactors. This is the first time the Community has requested help of this magnitude from the outside world.

5) What is the timeline for this Campaign?

The initial quiet phase of the campaign began in the Spring of 2021. A public phase will be rolled out throughout the Diocese of Savannah in the Spring of 2022. The Campaign will conclude in the Fall of 2022.

6) Who will be asked to participate?

Current and future benefactors living in the Diocese of Savannah and throughout the United States will be asked to participate. Further, every parish and every household in the Diocese will have the opportunity to consider an informed, thoughtful, and prayerful commitment. Support from all current and many new donors throughout the Diocese is needed to make this new monastery a reality.

7) How long will donors have to fulfill their pledges?

Donors will be asked to consider a three-year pledge to the campaign. This may enable benefactors to consider a larger gift that can be funded over a period of time while giving the Carmelites the assurance of support for the project and allow them to begin construction. Your pledge can be funded in a variety of ways. Details are provided in the Ways of Giving document.

8) When will the building begin?

In preparation for the new building, initial site work has already begun using funds already received. However, the building of the Monastery itself cannot begin until the campaign financial objectives are met.

9) Who is responsible for the administration of the Campaign?

The Development Office of the Monastery and the Advisory Board to the Carmelites have formed a Campaign Cabinet to lead the Campaign. Together, these three entities are responsible for the administration and leadership of the campaign.

10) Why did the Carmelites and the Advisory Board hire an outside consulting firm?

The Carmelites and Advisory Board wanted a campaign of this scope and duration to be conducted with the guidance and expertise of professional counsel. The Carmelites do not have the internal staff resources necessary to manage and support this effort.

11) Is this the right time for a Campaign of this magnitude?

Considering the urgent need of the Carmelites and the results of the planning study research, the current benefactors and friends have a deep understanding of the needs and favor a campaign to provide a new monastery for the nuns. They are committed to supporting this effort with their time, their talent, and their treasure.

12) How can I make a gift to support the campaign for Our Lady of Confidence Carmelite Monastery?

First, prayerfully reflect about making a three-year pledge to this campaign. You will have the flexibility to fulfill your commitment on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis. Additional information will be available in our Ways to Give sheet.

13) Is my pledge legally binding?

A pledge is a moral rather than a legal obligation. In order to fund the priorities outlined and because the nuns will rely on the good-faith pledges of its benefactors in making its plans for this Monastery, it is hoped that you would continue payments on your pledge.

Frequently Asked Questions, pg. 2

14) Is my contribution tax-deductible?

Yes. All contributions are tax deductible in accordance with federal law. You will receive appropriate substantiation for your contribution. Please consult with your personal tax advisor if you have more detailed questions.

15) The Cost of the new Monastery seems a little high. Why is that?

This facility is not just a residence for the Carmelite Nuns. In addition to the residential area, this facility includes workspaces, public guest spaces, worship spaces, and other areas not normally found in a private residence. Thus, the city of Savannah has zoned the monastery as a multi-family residence. Further, the Carmelite Order does not have a retirement home, but follows an “age in place” tradition, which means that space and facilities must be provided to care for senior nuns as well as the infirm.

16) How can I learn more about the campaign?

All questions regarding the campaign should be directed to us at development@carmelofsavannah.org