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# Carmelites Mark 200 Years

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the first Carmelites in America, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns will hold their first ever open house the weekend of Oct. 20 and 21 from 1 to 4 p.m. at their monastery, 9150 Clayton rd.

Visitors will be able to tour the cloistered monastery and learn more about the Carmelites' life of prayer. The event will conclude with a Mass of thanksgiving at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 21, with Archbishop John L. May principal celebrant.

Two centuries ago on July 2, 1790, four Carmelite nuns and two priests arrived from Belgium at New York harbor and established the first foundation in America at Port Tobacco, Md. From this foundation, the Carmelites spread throughout the country. The monastery established in St. Louis in 1863 was the second Carmelite monastery in the United States.

The Discalced Carmelites used Archbishop Peter R. Kenrick's summer residence at Calvary farm as their first residence for 15

years. In 1878 the sisters moved to a second monastery on 18th and Victor sts. As the noise of the growing city encroached on their solitude, the sisters moved again in 1928 to their present 14-acre property. Today, the order has 65 communities in the United States, with more than two-thirds of them tracing their origins to the Maryland foundation.

In the 127 years since its foundation, the monastery in St. Louis has established five foundations. Fourteen years after the sisters' arrival here, four sisters went to New Orleans. In 1913, a monastery was founded in Alhambra, Calif. Cleveland followed in 1923, Jackson, Miss., in 1951 and Springfield, Mo., in 1965.

The Teresian Carmelite life of prayer is modeled after the solitary, cave-dwelling hermits who clustered around Mount Carmel in the 12th century "to ponder the law of the Lord day and night."

In the 16th century, St. Teresa of Avila reformed the Carmelite order, establishing monasteries of strict observance, with the help of

St. John of the Cross, for both men and women. They were to pray unceasingly for the needs of the Church.

Today the Carmelites continue to follow the charism of St. Teresa and direct their ecclesial and apostolic vocation to the service of the Church. Teresa inculcated a joyous spirit, affability in community life and mutual respect among her followers.



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**Carmelite Life**

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A Discalced Carmelite nun prays in the order's private chapel Saturday during the first-ever open house of the monastery at 9150 Clayton rd. Visitors toured the cloister last weekend to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Carmelites in the United States. The St. Louis monastery, established in 1863, is the second oldest in the nation. — Photo by Richard C. Finke.