

March 6, 2006

Dear Carmelites,

In October, 2002, shortly after assuming my responsibilities as Provincial Delegate, I called together a representative group of presidents of local OCDS communities for the purpose of identifying the needs of the Secular Carmelites for the coming years. The following January, we held a meeting of the directors of formation, in order to understand what was happening with regard to formation throughout the province at that time, and to learn from them the ways in which I might assist the local communities with their formation needs. That meeting gave rise to the establishment of the provincial task force on formation, which was charged with the task of writing uniform formation guidelines for the communities and groups within the province.

The task force is composed of myself and ten definitively professed members of the Order, selected from nominations made by the presidents and group leaders. We sought to establish good geographical representation of the province on the task force as well as a balance of range of experience. The other members of the task force are: Mary Lou Cereghino from West Covina, California; Doreen Glynn-Pawski from San Francisco; Toni Hagey, from Las Vegas; Rebecca Lambert, then with the Eugene, Oregon community and now with the Sacramento, California community; Thomas Moore from the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho community, and secretary for extended members; Cindy Sliger, from Seattle, Washington; Theresa Thomas from Berkeley, California; Mary Tucker from San Jose, California; Sharon Young from Denver, Colorado; and Pat Thibodeaux, who was then serving as my secretary. Theresa agreed to serve as coordinator.

The task force held its first meeting in August, 2003 at our House of Prayer in Oakville, California, and has met quarterly since then, despite the great distances various members needed to travel and other obstacles that had to be overcome.

After our Constitutions were adopted, Fr. Aloysius Deeney, General Delegate, asked all the provinces to write formation programs to be adopted by the OCDS Provincial Councils as part of the local statutes under the Constitutions. We were already well on our way with this important work. It was clear at that point, however, that the task force should answer to our OCDS Provincial Council from then on. Accordingly, last Spring the task force presented a draft of its work to the Provincial Council for suggestions.

In this volume we are pleased to present to you on behalf of the task force the fruit of our labor. Your experience in implementing these *Guidelines* will probably bring to light many ways in which they can be improved, but now we have a foundation on which to build. Please join us in praising and thanking God for this new expression of his loving care for our Carmelite vocations.

Sincerely, in Christ,

Father Patrick Sugrue, OCD
Provincial Delegate

Chris Hart, OCDS
President, Provincial Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The members of the task force on formation gratefully acknowledge the assistance we have received in the course of our work on these *Guidelines*. This includes all the authors whose articles appear here and in the Formation Readings, and our brothers and sisters in Canada who gave us permission to quote extensively from the *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation*. This also includes the Carmelite Institute, a joint effort of the entire Carmelite family in the United States and Canada, whose mission is to promote the following of Jesus Christ through studies in the Carmelite tradition, who gave us permission to reprint the Bibliography included in the *Formation Readings CD*.

We are also compelled to acknowledge those who went before us, whose work – for example, in the *Five Year Formation Readings* – formed us in Christ, and enabled us to conceive and bring to fulfillment the present work. In this regard, we would like especially to acknowledge the efforts of the provincial delegates who have shepherded the OCDS in the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph so well: Father Bonaventure Galvin, OCD, Father Michael Buckley, OCD, and Father Patrick Sugrue, OCD. We would be very remiss not to mention the prayerful assistance of our current Provincial, Very Reverend Father Gerald Werner, OCD, and our General Delegate, Very Reverend Father Aloysius Deeney, OCD.

We need to thank our OCDS Provincial Council, especially its president, Chris Hart, who quietly contributed as much as any task force member, and our local communities for their spiritual and material support. We also wish to acknowledge the sacrifices made by our families to enable us to complete this work. In these sacrifices, our families may have contributed even more than we ourselves to the fulfillment of this task.

Nor do we want to omit mention of the spiritual assistance received through Our Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus, Our Holy Father, St. John of the Cross, and all the Carmelite saints who have gone ahead of us. Lastly, and most importantly, we ask you to join us in praising and thanking God, whose Holy Spirit guided us at every step, and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, without whose maternal care and protection we would not have had the courage to begin.

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the intent of these guidelines to assist in the development of an orderly formation program by identifying the core objectives for each phase of formation, specifying essential resources, and giving practical suggestions for a curriculum. The guidelines are not intended to impose burdensome requirements, but to aid groups and communities in developing a formation program that will achieve the end of introducing candidates to our way of life in a manner that will enable them to meet the challenges of an intimate relationship with God.

Those communities who already have programs in place that work well for them will need to review them to ensure they are in compliance with all aspects of the uniform guidelines. Those groups and communities who are developing their programs will find that the guidelines minimize the burdens associated with developing a strong program of formation.

CLIMBING THE MOUNT IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL TO CARMEL

The Order of Discalced Carmelites, the seculars together with the friars and nuns, forms the nucleus of the great Teresian Carmelite family. The vocation to Carmel is a gift from God, a lived experience in which we all look to the Rule of St. Albert as our fundamental inspiration. Each branch of the Order has its own *Constitutions*, which interpret the Rule for its members. (*OCDS Constitutions*, Preface, par. 3 and 4)

St. John of the Cross uses the image of a mountain, and its ascent, as a metaphor for the spiritual life of intimate friendship with God. This image is echoed by the Church in the words "... may the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and Queen of Carmel, protect us and bring us to your holy Mountain, Christ our Lord." (Mass of the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Opening Prayer) Our life in Carmel is intended to help us in our ascent to this holy Mountain. It is the function of a community's structured formation program to shape our response to God's call to reach the summit. We are formed into community for aid and support on our ascent. The Blessed Trinity itself is a community of persons; no one can climb this Mountain alone.

In the experience of community life we find the movement and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a most effective way to grow in virtue. The call to "...be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48) helps us to live three key principles of Carmel: to give ourselves entirely to God, to strive for purity of conscience, and to foster an intimate union with God. Through community life, we learn love, gentleness and respect for others, which enables us to bring souls to Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the formation that begins in our Secular Order community comes to fruition in the experience of our whole lives. It is our responsibility to set aside specific times for personal prayer and study each day, and to be of service to one another.

These guidelines present a structure to shape the formation program of our members and aspirants in accordance with the call of our *OCDS Constitutions* "... to prepare the person to live the charism and spirituality of Carmel in its following of Christ, and in service to its mission." (*OCDS Constitutions 32*) Let us proceed in prayer, with love, detachment and humility (Cf. *Way of Perfection*, 4:4).

SPECIFICS FOR ALL STAGES OF FORMATION

In any formation program, it is important to draw deeply from the springs of Carmel, so that our actions may bear the fruit that comes from the treasures of our Order and of things divine. The word “Carmel” means “garden.” Our hearts and souls are meant to be as inner quiet gardens where the Holy Trinity dwells continually.

Formation teams must take to heart St. John of the Cross’s teaching that “...the principal guide is the Holy Spirit, who is never neglectful of souls ... the whole concern of directors should not be to accommodate souls to their own method and condition, but they should observe the road along which God is leading one ... [I]n harmony with the path and the spirit along which God leads a soul, the spiritual director should strive to conduct it into greater solitude, tranquility, and freedom of spirit” (*Living Flame*, 3:46).

The formation program, founded on personal interaction, is intended to bridge the written words of our legislation and the living vocation that is life in Carmel. A good formation program provides detailed instruction which is tailored to the needs of each community, and helps us integrate the Rule, the *OCDS Constitutions*, and our promise into our daily lives. The council of each community has the responsibility to present these formation guidelines with humility and patience. The spiritual assistant, and everyone in the community, needs to have a copy of them so that, with adequate preparation, they can contribute to a formation program that is consistent with the objectives of our *OCDS Constitutions*. Sharing the plan in this way provides for the possibility of mutual empowerment and accountability in its implementation.

The guidelines presented here state our objectives, list the essential materials, and indicate the time frames and basic curriculum for each stage of formation. The curriculum does not provide the specific plan and supplementary materials for each formation session. This allows freedom and creativity in meeting the various needs of the individuals in formation.

Accountability and written assignments

Since holding ourselves accountable is so crucial to the success of a community's formation program, we have devoted an entire section of the guidelines to it. Used with charity, accountability enables us to reach the goals we set, while limiting the risk of going astray.

We highly recommend written assignments for every stage of initial formation (that is, before the Definitive Promise). When well designed, they deepen our interaction with the themes in the curriculum and provide an opportunity to articulate personal reflections. They also serve as an excellent aid in discerning the call to Carmel. Completing a brief essay or short questionnaire each month gives an indication of our attraction to the deeper study of Carmelite spirituality. It also demonstrates our ability to follow through on commitments. Individual circumstances may require additional flexibility. See pages 97 through 122 for general principles and models for leading discussions and developing written assignments.

Because our rich Carmelite heritage provides for a lifetime of ever deepening study, the definitively professed can also benefit from written assignments, although their circumstances may permit greater flexibility in this regard. The definitively professed do well to maintain the attitude of beginners and return frequently to reread the foundational works of our Carmelite saints.

An extensive curriculum

Those who are beginners in Carmel have an extensive curriculum to cover in six to eight years as they prepare for the Definitive Promise. With clear communication among the Director of Formation, the other members of the Council and the Spiritual Assistant, topics can be addressed during the monthly meeting that supplement the hour-long formation study session. For example, a meeting themed on the meaning of the Mass could include a relevant reading from one of our Carmelite saints, a conference by the Spiritual Assistant based on a selected Church document, a meditation on Scripture, and reading brief selections from our Rule and *OCDS Constitutions*. If our meetings usually

include some reference to each of the above, we are continually reminded of the many sources of encouragement in our Carmelite pursuit of holiness.

Carmel is our focus

In order to make steady progress, our monthly meetings must be focused especially on Carmelite spirituality, while providing an adequate opportunity to take care of the business of the community. Out of respect for our shared commitment to Carmel, we refrain from bringing personal devotional materials into the meetings. Our mature devotion to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and our love for our holy founders will move us to keep our sharing at meetings focused on Carmelite topics.

One of the special times set apart for prayer noted in our *OCDS Constitutions*, paragraph 20, is the annual community retreat. It constitutes an integral part of the formation program. Similarly, we take particular advantage of periodic days of recollection as a privileged time for prayerful discernment of God's will.

Discernment

Careful discernment of God's will, especially as each candidate approaches another stage of formation, is vital for the good of the community and the Order itself. Carmel is for the Church and the world, but not everyone is called to Carmel. As we pray with and for inquirers and candidates, we help discern the way of life God intends for their growth in holiness. God instills a Carmelite vocation as an integral part of our identity, a part that must be developed through formation. No amount of effort can create it if He has not instilled it.

The entire period of initial formation, from Aspirancy to the Definitive Promise, is a time of discernment about the validity of a person's vocation to Carmel. The process of discernment requires trust in God's love so that we can be patient and open to His lead. As we grow in humility and detachment from our opinions and desires and surrender to the ongoing process of discernment, we pray, listen, seek, learn, and evaluate. It cannot be a solitary activity because a person can easily be captivated by a false self-image that

needs to be tested. Formators, and indeed the entire community, must be prayerful, welcoming, and careful to avoid rushing to judgment. We must also recognize that some people who greatly admire Carmelite spirituality and are deeply devoted to the Virgin Mary, will flourish better on a path other than ours. *¹ It is charity to let them find the place where God will most bless them.

With these principles in mind, let us examine the core objectives, curriculum, and resources for each stage of formation.

* See *Discernment of OCDS Vocation*, by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, reproduced in this volume, p. 43



STAGES OF FORMATION

DEFINITIONS

A. Human formation: Human formation develops the ability to become a supportive participant in community through service. It requires our willingness to learn and to unlearn, i.e., to be teachable.

OCDS Constitutions 34: “Human formation develops the ability for interpersonal dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance, the possibility of being corrected and correcting with serenity, and the capacity to persevere [in] commitments.”

B. Christian formation: Christian formation is the internalization of the Gospel message, which includes both intellectual understanding and a practical response in life.

OCDS Constitutions 33: “... Carmelite Seculars seek to be men and women who are mature in the practice of faith, hope and love, and in their devotion to the Virgin Mary. They commit themselves to deepening their Christian, ecclesial and Carmelite life. Christian formation is the solid basis of Carmelite and spiritual formation. Through the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Church documents, Secular Carmelites receive the necessary theological foundation.”

C. Carmelite formation: Carmelite formation is the process of coming to understand and live the Carmelite Rule of St. Albert as interpreted by our *OCDS Constitutions*.

OCDS Constitutions 35: “Carmelite identity is confirmed by formation in the Scriptures and lectio divina, in the importance of the liturgy of Church, especially the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, and in the spirituality of Carmel, its history, the works of the Order’s saints, and formation in prayer and meditation.”

D. Formation for the apostolate: Apostolic activity is the fruit of prayer (*OCDS Constitutions 26*). It is a life of listening to the Word and acting on it, with Mary as

model; a life lived as praise of God. It is the mission of Secular Carmelites, called to a life both contemplative and apostolic in response to the Holy Spirit, to carry into the world the distinctive witness of Carmel: “The Lord of Hosts lives, before whom I stand” (1 Kings 17:1). This definition is best understood in the light of *OCDS Constitutions 27, 28, 35 paragraph 2, and the Epilogue.*

Formation for the apostolate, or mission, begins with discerning the call of the Holy Spirit. Each person has a call to an apostolate and so does the community as a whole.

OCDS Constitutions 35: “Formation for the apostolate is based on the theology of the Church concerning the responsibility of the laity and on understanding the role of Seculars in the apostolate of the Order. These help to know the place of the Secular Order in the Church and in Carmel and give a practical way to share the graces received through the vocation to Carmel.”

The responsibility of the laity is set forth in Church documents, particularly these:

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

Christifideles Laici: The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People (CL)

Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (AA)

Novo Millennio Ineunte: At the Beginning of the New Millennium - (NMI)

Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (LG)

Marialis Cultus: Devotion to the Blessed Virgin (MC)

Redemptoris Custos: Guardian of the Redeemer (RC)

Because we are striving to be constantly attentive to the Holy Spirit, our Carmelite vocation can shine forth at all times and in all circumstances; for example, in our involvement in Carmelite activities, participation in parish work, or creative acts of Christian service, especially at home.

ASPIRANCY is for those who are beginning to discern a call to a vocation in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

“The purpose of this stage is that the applicant might become more familiar with the community, the style of life and service to the Church proper to the Secular Order of the Teresian Carmel. This period also give[s] the community the opportunity to make an adequate discernment.” (OCDS Constitutions 36a)

At the end of the Aspirancy, the applicant may be invited by the Council to receive the scapular and enter the formal period of formation in preparation for the Temporary Promise.

A. Human formation

- The entire Community welcomes and accompanies the Aspirants on their journey of discernment.
- The Community mentors Aspirants in all aspects of OCDS life.

B. Christian formation

- Understanding how to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- Understanding what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches about the celebration of the Christian Mystery in the liturgy and sacraments.
- General introduction to documents of the Church describing the role of the laity and their relationship to the Carmelite secular vocation. (*Lumen Gentium*, especially 30-42; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*; *Christifideles Laici*; *Novo Millennio Ineunte*; *Marialis Cultus*).

C. Carmelite formation

- Instruction in living the Rule through the *OCDS Constitutions*

- Basic understanding and practice of Carmelite prayer:
 - Quiet prayer
 - Liturgy of the Hours
- Right understanding of devotion to Mary and of the scapular;
- Initial discernment of a prospective vocation;
- Rudimentary understanding of history and structure of the Order;

D. Formation for the Apostolate

- Movement to commit to Christ in Carmel;
- Introduction to sharing concretely in community life by doing as well as talking; being participators, and not just spectators.
- Preparation to recognize and respond to a call to participate in the apostolates of the Order.

CURRICULUM

With the community at large:

- *OCDS Constitutions and Provincial Statutes*
- Scripture study and *lectio divina*
- Saints of the Order

- Teach how to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by using Part Two, “The Celebration of the Christian Mystery”, #1066 - 1209.
- Introduction to quiet prayer
Rule of St. Albert; OCDS Constitutions 17-24
- History and structure of the Order; mention names of office holders, drawing attention to participation in community life and apostolate, with emphasis on fidelity to commitments.
Rule of St. Albert; OCDS Constitutions 37-60
- Recitation of the *Liturgy of the Hours*
Liturgy of the Hours, General Instruction, located in Volume 1 of 4
- Teaching on the Scapular
The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual

- *Rule of St. Albert and OCDS Constitutions, Provincial Statutes, and overview of Ritual for Ceremonies (found in Legislative Documents for the OCDS)*
- Blessings of community life: personal support, participation in community life and apostolate, with emphasis on lifetime commitment to attendance at monthly meetings, giving service, holding office, etc.
OCDS Constitutions 9, 13-15, 26, 34, 40, Epilogue; Provincial Statutes
- Marian dimension of Carmel
OCDS Constitutions 4, 29-31; Provincial Statutes
- Introduction to the Carmelite dimension of detachment, penance, mortification and suffering in the spirit of the evangelical counsels and the beatitudes.
OCDS Constitutions 10-16, 22; Provincial Statutes
- Carmelite charism and discernment
Discernment of OCDS Vocation by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD on pages 43-50 of these *Guidelines*
- What might be an impediment
Catechism of the Catholic Church; OCDS Constitutions and Provincial Statutes (See also *Impediments to Joining the Secular Order*, by Doreen Glynn Pawski, OCDS, at pages 79-80 of these *Guidelines*.)
- Carmelite mission and apostolate
OCDS Constitutions 25-28 and the Epilogue

Essential Resources

- Holy Bible
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- *Rule of St. Albert*
- *OCDS Constitutions*
- Provincial Statutes
- *Discernment of OCDS Vocation* by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD
- *Liturgy of the Hours*
- *The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual*

Recommended Supplemental Resources for Formators: See page 34.

FORMATION I is for those who have received the Scapular and are candidates in formation preparing to make the Temporary Promise.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this stage of formation is to prepare to make the temporary promise (to follow the Evangelical Counsels and to live in the spirit of the Beatitudes) through the serious study of prayer, the scriptures, the documents of the Church, the saints of the Order, and formation in the apostolate of the Order. (cf. *OCDS Constitutions* 36 b, c, d) At the end of these two years, the applicant may be invited by the Council to make the temporary promise to live the evangelical counsels and the spirit of the beatitudes for three years.

A. Human formation

- Learning how to put into practice the virtues of humility, detachment and charity.
- Learning to persevere in commitments.

B. Christian formation

- To follow Jesus as both precept and example, with Mary as our model.. (The Gospels; *Marialis Cultus*)
- Beginning of internalization of the evangelical counsels and the beatitudes, through study and practice. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Three, “Life in Christ” # 1701 – 1729.)

C. Carmelite formation

- Understanding the *Rule of St. Albert* and *OCDS Constitutions* well enough to make an informed decision about undertaking the Promise and becoming a

member of the order, especially the fundamental elements of the Teresian Carmelite Secular vocation as expressed in *OCDS Constitutions* 6 and 9.

- Understanding and practice of prayer in the Teresian tradition.
(*Way of Perfection*; *Lectio Divina*; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Four, “Christian Prayer.”)

D. Formation for the Apostolate

- Continued growth in service to the OCDS community through willingness to share time and talents.
- Discerning priorities and motivations in service.

CURRICULUM

With the community at large:

- *OCDS Constitutions* and *Provincial Statutes*
- Scripture study and *lectio divina*
- Saints of the Order

Year 1

- *Rule of St. Albert*
- *OCDS Constitutions* and *Provincial Statutes* (monthly), perhaps with judicious use of *Be Holy* and *Commentary on the Rule of Life*
- Review of recitation of the *Liturgy of the Hours*, as necessary
- *Way of Perfection* together with review of *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Four
- *Marialis Cultus: Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Assigned reading)
- *Redemptoris Custos: Guardian of the Redeemer* (Assigned reading)

- Prayer:
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part IV, Christian Prayer #2558-2865
 - Types of prayer:
 - Blessing and Adoration;
 - Prayer of Petition;
 - Prayer of Intercession;
 - Prayer of Thanksgiving;
 - Prayer of Praise
 - Expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, contemplative
 - *Lectio Divina*, by Fr. Anthony Morello, OCD. See also *Practical Application of Lectio Divina for Carmelites* on pages 94A-1 – 94A-3.
- Structure of the Carmelite Order. See charts, pages 149-152. Tell them names of Father General, General Delegate to the Secular Order, Father Provincial, Provincial Delegate to the Secular Order. Discuss the decree on the front page of the *OCDS Constitutions*.
- *Discernment of OCDS Vocation*, by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, reproduced here on pages 43-50.

Year 2

- Prior to the study of his writing, the biography of St. John of the Cross in *Introduction to Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, ICS edition.
- *The Living Flame of Love*
- *OCDS Constitutions* (monthly)
- *Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* (Assigned reading)
- Preparation and discernment for the temporary promise
 - Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Three, “Life in Christ” #1701 – 1729.)

The Beatitudes as Integral Part of the Promise by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, found at pages 51-68 of these *Guidelines*

Discernment of OCDS Vocation by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, on pages 43-50 of these *Guidelines*

Discernment by Fr. Francis Lindekugel, S.J., pages 83-93 of these *Guidelines*

- Study of the ceremony rite and the *Instruction of the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites*, Most Reverend Fr. Philip Sainz de Baranda, OCD, which can be found in the *Legislative Documents for the OCDS of the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph*, pp. 78-80.
- Meditate on the words of the Promise daily for the entire year.
- Scriptural meditation

Essential Resources

- *Holy Bible*
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- *Legislative Documents for the OCDS of the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph*
- *Way of Perfection (Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila, vol.2)*
- *Marialis Cultus*
- *Redemptoris Custos*
- *Introduction to The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*
- *The Living Flame of Love (Collected Works of St. John of the Cross)*
- *Apostolicam Actuositatem*
- *Lectio Divina* by Sam Anthony Morello, OCD

Recommended Supplemental Resources for Formators: See pages 34-35.

FORMATION II is for those candidates who have made the Temporary Promise and are preparing to make the Definitive Promise.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this period of formation is to prepare the candidate to embrace fully the demands and rewards of living the way of life inspired by the Rule of St. Albert and outlined in our *OCDS Constitutions*. “In the last three years of initial formation there is a deeper study of prayer, the scriptures, the documents of the Church, the saints of the Order, and formation in the apostolate of the Order. At the end of these three years, the applicant may be invited by the Council to make the definitive promise to live the evangelical counsels and the spirit of the beatitudes for life” (*OCDS Constitutions* 36 d).

A. Human formation

- Personal growth in humility, detachment and charity
- Perseverance in commitments

B. Christian formation

- Deeper understanding of scripture and the documents of the Church acquired through study and prayer (*OCDS Constitutions* 36d)
- Growth in ability to discern the will of God and follow it (*OCDS Constitutions* 10)

C. Carmelite formation

- Deeper prayer through study and practice
- Deeper knowledge and understanding of saints of the Order
- Continuing study and integration of the *OCDS Constitutions* into daily life
- Internal preparation for the definitive promise

D. Formation for the Apostolate

- Responsible participation in the community apostolate and the lay Christian apostolate (*OCDS Constitutions* 36d)
- Willingness to serve and support the community

CURRICULUM

With the community at large:

- *OCDS Constitutions* and *Provincial Statutes*
- Scripture study and *lectio divina*
- Saints of the Order

Year 1

- *Story of a Soul* by St. Therese of Lisieux – in depth
- *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*
- Theme for preparation and discernment for the definitive promise: Charity

For resources on discernment, see Formation I year 2, p. 16.

Year 2

- *Interior Castle* by St. Teresa of Avila
- *Christifideles Laici: The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People*
- Theme for preparation and discernment for the definitive promise: the evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty, and chastity

For resources on discernment, see Formation I year 2, p. 16.

Year 3

- *Ascent of Mt. Carmel* by St. John of the Cross
- *Novo Millennio Ineunte: At the Beginning of the New Millennium*
- Theme for preparation and discernment for the definitive promise: the Beatitudes
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Three, "Life in Christ", section one, chapters one and two
 - "*The Beatitudes as Integral Part of the Promise* " by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, pages 51-68 of these *Guidelines*
- Meditate daily on the words of the definitive promise for the entire year

For resources on discernment, see Formation I year 2, p. 16.

Essential Resources

- *Legislative Documents for the OCDS of the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph*
- *Story of a Soul*, by St. Therese of Lisieux
- *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*
- *Interior Castle*, by St. Teresa of Avila
- *Christifideles Laici: The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People*
- *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, by St. John of the Cross
- *Novo Millennio Ineunte: At the Beginning of the New Millennium*
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- "The Beatitudes as Integral Part of the Promise", by Fr. Aloysius Deeney,
OCD

Recommended Supplemental Resources for Formators: See p. 35.

ONGOING FORMATION is for all those who have made the Definitive Promise. It is fundamental to the vocation.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of ongoing formation is to achieve the integration of experience of God with the experience of life: to be contemplatives in prayer and to fulfill their own mission (*OCDS Constitutions 17*).

Ongoing formation is primarily the responsibility of the definitively professed member together with the entire community. At this stage, much of our formation comes from assisting with the formation of newer members. The Council, however, retains its responsibility for the formation of all its members, including those who have made Vows (*OCDS Constitutions 46 & OCDS Constitutions 39*).

A. Human formation

- Continue to grow in community life through regular participation in the monthly meeting and giving service (*OCDS Constitutions 34 & 56*).

B. Christian formation

- Through the living of the Promise, carry the cross of accepting God's will revealed in the mission that He has confided to each person (*OCDS Constitutions 10*).
- Continued self-initiated pursuit of resources to support and enrich the life of prayer; internalization of the Gospel, manifested by fruits of the Holy Spirit. (*OCDS Constitutions 33 & 34*).

C. Carmelite formation

- Living the Promise to follow Jesus, by pursuing personal holiness in order to serve the Church in faithfulness to the Teresian Carmelite charism. This

requires the integration of all previous formation with the fundamental elements of the vocation. (*OCDS Constitutions* 6, 9, & 13-16)

- Witnessing to the experience of God (*OCDS Constitutions* 17-24)
- The freedom of the children of God with respect to the possibility of making Vows, which is governed by *OCDS Constitutions* 39, 47a, 58f, & *Provincial Statutes*.

D. Formation for the Apostolate

- Deepening the understanding and appreciation of the Teresian Carmelite charism (*OCDS Constitutions* 1, 7, 9, & 11);
- Giving service to the local OCDS community, to the apostolate of the Order, and to the Church (*OCDS Constitutions* 25-28).

CURRICULUM

With the community at large:

- *OCDS Constitutions* and *Provincial Statutes*
- Scripture study
- Saints of the Order

Ongoing formation is so fundamental to the vocation that our *OCDS Constitutions* presume it (*OCDS Constitutions* 34). There is no established curriculum. Instead, these suggestions identify areas of concern to those whose vocations have matured. Through communal ongoing formation, the Holy Spirit will continue to expand our hearts and grant new graces.

- Live the promise (*OCDS Constitutions* 11)

Motivated by charity for the community, we cultivate a deeper level of genuine caring for one another, doing this naturally and consciously, with sensitivity for the other's boundaries. This is really loving one another as Jesus loves.

Ongoing formation sessions become a time for sharing and encouraging one another for a strong and healthy community, without neglecting education. The fruits of our practice of prayer lead us to ever more balanced lives, individually and in our Carmelite and other communities.

- Nourish prayer through the practice of individual and community prayer and spiritual reading recommended in *OCDS Constitutions* 19.

Without other constraints, we are freer to delve more deeply into Carmelite subjects, both familiar and new, as the Holy Spirit moves us – to sample, to study and to meditate – continually turning to fundamental texts in freely chosen studies. Moving among works by and about Carmelites, scripture themes and Church documents, and taking full advantage of online resources, provides both balance for group study and more opportunities to develop leadership within the community.

- Continue to grow in community life through regular participation in the monthly meeting and giving service (*OCDS Constitutions* 34 & 56)

There is strong focus on building community. Recognizing that our responsibility is not just to ourselves and the other professed members, but to the entire community, and especially to those who are new to the vocation, we develop latent potential for leadership by creating opportunities for service and by encouraging one another to take advantage of them in facilitating a group activity or study. When approached by other members, we carefully and prayerfully consider whether our promise of obedience might require us to accept nomination to an office on the Council, trusting that God will provide the necessary grace to fulfill its responsibilities.

- Take part in the apostolate, which is inseparable from true prayer and renews the desire for prayer, contemplation, and the liturgical and sacramental life (*OCDS Constitutions* 25-28)

Communities should take care not to engage in activities during the formation time that are not directed toward nurturing the secular Carmelite vocation. For example, it would be inappropriate to devote formation time to fundraising

activities for our friars or nuns. Developing formation tools and offering a day of recollection for a parish are two examples of activities that could comprise both ongoing formation and apostolate.

- The *OCDS Constitutions* and *Provincial Statutes* govern the making of the Vows of chastity and obedience for life. (*OCDS Constitutions* 39 and 58f.) Formal preparation for Vows begins at the free initiation of the individual.

The candidate for Vows must be fully informed of both the serious obligations and the rich graces associated with the vows:

- Initial discernment and formation for this call will include the assistance of one’s own confessor or spiritual director, the council of the community, and the Spiritual Assistant to the community.
- The Vows are strictly voluntary. The Promise makes one a full member of Carmel and the Vows do not change that status.
- “While the Promise was made before God to the Superiors and members of the Order, the Vows are made directly to God, for vows are acts of religious worship. Thus, the Vows add the merit of the virtue of religion to the observance of chastity and obedience. They constitute a more complete self-offering and therefore entail a greater moral responsibility. The binding force of these Vows, freely made, renders more visible the bond of love and commitment that exists between Christ and His Bride the Church.” (*Instruction of the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites*, par. 7, *OCDS Legislative Documents for the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph*, p. 79.)
- Criteria to aid discernment
 - The candidate must be faithful in living the promise.

- The candidate's life must be suitably ordered, with any major irregularities resolved so that there are no blockages to grace.
 - The candidate must have a healthy, balanced integration of the experience of God with the experience of daily life. There should be evidence of greater charity, detachment, and humility.
- An individually guided preparatory retreat and a general confession are highly recommended.
- Resources for preparation for Vows

Essential:

- *Instruction of the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites*, October 15, 1990, par. 7 –12, found in *Legislative Documents for the OCDS of the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph*
- *Vows in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites*, by Fr. Michael Buckley, OCD, found on page 93A-1 of these *Guidelines*

Recommended:

- *Where the Spirit Breathes*, by Fr. Marie-Eugene, OCD
- *The Sanctifier*, by Most Rev. Luis M. Martinez
- *The Theological Virtues in the Spiritual Life*, by Fr. Anastasio Ballestreros, OCD

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability serves two major purposes: to empower us to reach our goals and to bring order into the process of formation. Other purposes served by holding ourselves accountable are:

1. To aid discernment (for example, of growth in ability to persevere in commitments)
2. To demonstrate care and respect in relationships
3. To bring growth
4. To inform
5. To focus energy to learn and to give service
6. To bring truth to situations in place of the fantasy of how we imagine ourselves
7. To keep ourselves focused on task
8. To bring order
9. To assist in giving ourselves to the community in a meaningful way

The Order – from the general superior through the provincial superior to the local OCDS community, acting through the Director of Formation and the other members of the Council, individual community members, and the candidates themselves – has responsibility for different aspects of this multi-dimensional process. In this section of the guidelines, we will set forth methods for holding ourselves accountable in specific areas of responsibilities with an explanation of the purposes served.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND METHODS

The Community at large sets an example for accountability by regular attendance and willingness to assist where needed with a spirit of joy. Cooperation among the president, formation director, and councilors is most necessary for any successful formation

program. This community mentoring will assist the candidate to embrace the Carmelite way of life.

With respect to their discernment, the aspirants and candidates in formation are accountable to the community through its council. The months and years of genuine prayerful discernment have their foundation in careful observance and patient, understanding interaction. Candidates and Aspirants may use a self-evaluation form¹.

The Council, as the governing body of the Community, has the duty of fully implementing these formation guidelines in the community's formation program.

“All Council members must be aware of their obligation to prayerfully observe all candidates, so as to be able to discern whether or not each individual has demonstrated the ability to live the norms and obligations of the vocation on a daily basis. Initiate friendly conversation at [the meetings]. Look at the person's record of attendance at the monthly meeting. Is he/she familiar with the Saints of the Order through reading? Is the person able to live in fraternal charity in the community? Is enthusiasm for the vocation and love of the Order demonstrated by helping when asked to help in the community? Has the person participated in the events of the Order? Does the person volunteer to help in small jobs in the community? Is obedience to the legitimate authority of the Order a problem?”²

Tools such as “Points that Councillors May Want to Consider about the Candidate prior to Conducting an Interview”³ assist with mutual accountability in formation. This could be very useful to Council members in order to conduct a proper interview.

Council members must make a sincere effort to know the aspirants and candidates in formation. Recognizing that God has made each of us unique, our discernment must also be imbued with common sense and sensitivity to recognize sincere devotion, charity and

¹ Examples of self-evaluation forms taken from the *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation: Information and Guidelines* (Copyright number 1016582) can be found on pages 125 - 127. We are deeply indebted to our brothers and sister in the Canadian Province for their generous permission to quote extensively from their Manual of Formation.

² *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation*, p. 49, par. 84.

³ *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation*, p. 121 - 122, included in these *Guidelines* on page 128.

love. A true vocation may be overlooked by strictly adhering to any single criterion, such as academic performance.

The Director of Formation must be willing to give much time, patience and energy to the position. A formation program, with accountability, is only effective when the Director of Formation is well informed, prepared, disciplined and gives correction with charity and humility.

The Director of Formation and all other members of the Council must be available to hear and to bring to the Council any formation concerns that may arise, especially those that come from the candidates. The highest confidentiality within the Council is required so that personal matters can be discussed with confidence. Council members must take advantage of the services of the Spiritual Assistant with respect to concerns about raising sensitive matters in Council.

The members of the formation team have a unique opportunity to communicate with the candidate and with the Council. Assignments are also an element of the dialogue, providing much information about the candidate's interest and commitment.

The Spiritual Assistant has a part to play in this dialogue.

RECORD KEEPING

Good record keeping is essential at all levels of formation. The advantages of complete records become apparent at the time of ceremonies and elections.

Communities must keep the following records:

- Attendance
 - General monthly meeting
 - Formation classes

- Attendance records include a notation of whether or not notice of absence was given.
- Necrology
- Dates of ceremonies for each person
- Copies of completed OCDS Central Office forms (application and permanent record form a, ceremonies form b, change of address form c, death form d, form for inter- and intra- province transfers)

Many communities find it helpful to keep the following records:

- Attendance
 - Retreat
 - Other OCDS events (but care must be taken to avoid the impression that these are mandatory)
- Reasons for absences
- Meetings with councilors
- Service to community
- Eligibility for moving from one stage in formation to another

When there is a change in officers (and formators) at election time or if a replacement is necessary, a notebook containing forms of attendance sheets, any evaluation and questionnaire material, etc. should be passed on to the new officers and formators.

So far we have addressed various methods of accountability in certain specific areas. We have not specified all the areas or methods for accountability. This has been a deliberate choice, in order to leave communities as free as possible to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. Some additional areas for accountability may include the following:

- Responsible stewardship of community finances
- Private prayer time
- Participation in community life, congresses, ordinations, jubilees, events of the Order

- Participation in the community apostolate
- Relationship with the OCDS Central Office
- Confidentiality (especially council meetings, minutes, and personal information)
- Fulfillment of obligations of office

We have mutual accountability to one another for the fulfillment of our Christian responsibility. When someone notices a failure in fulfilling a responsibility, that person has an obligation to address it in charity through appropriate means, usually the council. OCDS Communities should resolve through their councils any problems that arise, in consultation with the Spiritual Assistant.

RESOURCES

Essential Resources

This chart summarizes the resources that are essential to formation, and the stage in formation by which each candidate should acquire a copy of the resource. This list is not intended to restrict a community's use of other resources, but to identify those resources that are essential for every Discalced Carmelite Secular to own. For example, a community might choose to use the study edition of the *Way of Perfection*, and require its candidates to purchase it, but it is not essential that every secular Carmelite own the study edition, only the ICS edition.

When	Name of Resource
Pre-Aspirancy	<i>Holy Bible</i>
Pre-Aspirancy	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
Beginning of Aspirancy	<i>Rule of St. Albert</i>
Aspirancy	<i>OCDS Constitutions</i>
Aspirancy	<i>Provincial Statutes</i>
Aspirancy	<i>The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual</i>
Aspirancy and thereafter	<i>Discernment of OCDS Vocation</i> , by Aloysius Deeney, OCD
End of Aspirancy	<i>Liturgy of the Hours</i>
Formation I	<i>Legislative Documents of the OCDS</i>
Formation I	<i>Lectio Divina</i> by Sam Anthony Morello, OCD
Formation I, year 1	<i>Marialis Cultus: Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>
Formation I, year 1	<i>Redemptoris Custus: Guardian of the Redeemer</i>
Formation I, year 1	<i>The Way of Perfection</i> , in <i>The Collected Works of St. Teresa (ICS)</i> , vol. 2*
Formation I, year 2	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem: Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (AA)</i>
Formation I, year 2	<i>The Living Flame of Love</i> , in <i>The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross (ICS)</i>
End of Formation I	<i>Carmelite Proper of the Liturgy of the Hours</i>
Formation II, year 1	<i>Story of a Soul</i> , by St. Therese of Lisieux
Formation II, year 1	<i>Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (LG)</i>
Formation II, year 2	<i>Interior Castle</i> , in <i>The Collected Works of St. Teresa (ICS)</i> , vol. 2
Formation II, year 2	<i>Christifideles Laici: The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (CL)</i>
Formation II, year 3	<i>Ascent of Mt. Carmel</i> , in <i>The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross (ICS)</i>
Formation II, year 3	<i>Novo Millennio Ineunte: At the Beginning of the New Millennium (NMI)</i>

* All of the *Collected Works* are to be acquired by the time of the definitive promise.

Recommended Resources for Formators

Aspirancy

- *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, by Pope Benedict XVI
- *What Are You Seeking?* by Chris Hart, OCDS
- *Nourished by the Word: Reading the Bible Contemplatively*, by Wilfred Stinissen, OCD
- *Little Catechism of the Life of Prayer*, by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD
- *Divine Intimacy*, by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD
- *Prayer Primer: Igniting the Fire Within*, by Thomas Dubay, S.M.
- *Captive Flames: A Biblical reading of the Carmelite Saints*, by James McCaffrey, OCD

Formation I, Year 1

- Prayer
 - “Scriptural Meditation”, by Fr. Michael Buckley, OCD
 - Prayer Primer, Igniting a Fire Within*, by Fr. Thomas Dubay, SM
 - Awakening to Prayer*, by Fr. Augustine Ichiro Okumura, OCD
 - The Practice of the Presence of God*, (ICS edition), by Bro. Lawrence of the Resurrection, OCD
 - Conversation with Christ*, by Peter Thomas Rohrbach, OCD
 - Be Holy*, by Fr. Hilary Doran, OCD
- The Liturgy of the Hours
 - Making Holy the Day*, by Charles E. Miller, C.M.
 - The School of Prayer*, by John Brook
- Church Documents
 - Rosarium Virginis Mariae* and its companion, *At the School of Mary*, by Barry Michaels

- St. Teresa of Jesus
The Way of Perfection, A Study Edition, by Fr. Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD
The Teresian Gospel, by Fr. Otilio Rodriguez, OCD
I Want to See God, by Fr. P. Marie-Eugene, OCD
I Am a Daughter of the Church, by Fr. P. Marie-Eugene, OCD
Fire Within, by Fr. Thomas Dubay, SM

Formation I, Year 2

- Church Documents
Catechism of the Lay Apostolate (Apostolicam Actuositatem), by Fr. John A. Hardon, SJ
- St. John of the Cross
The Contemporary Challenge of John of the Cross: An Introduction to His Life and Teaching, by Leonard Doohan
John of the Cross: The Ascent to Joy, edited by Marc Foley, OCD
John of the Cross: Man and Mystic, by Richard P. Hardy
John of the Cross: Doctor of Light and Love, by Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD
The Impact of God: Soundings in St. John of the Cross, by Iain Matthew, OCD
St. John of the Cross: The Nightingale of God, by Fr. Otilio Rodriguez, OCD
God Speaks in the Night, by Fr. Frederico Ruiz, OCD et al.

Formation II, Year 1

- St. Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face
Formation Readings, provided on CD, may be used in conjunction with *Story of a Soul* as follows:
 - Ch. 3-4: “The Message of St. Therese in Relation to the Laity” by Fr. Gabriel Barry, OCD
 - Ch. 5-6: “His Face Was as Though Hidden” by Fr. Vincent O’Hara, OCD
 - Ch. 7-8: “The Life and Spirituality of St. Therese” by Fr. John Malley, O. Carm.
 - Ch. 9-10: “A Doctor for the Third Millennium” by OCD & O. Carm. Superiors
 - Ch 11 and Epilogue: “St. Therese of Lisieux on Suffering” by K.C. Russell, D.Th.
- St. Therese of Lisieux: Her Last Conversations*, translated by Fr. John Clarke, OCD
- The Poetry of Saint Therese of Lisieux*, translated by Fr. Donald Kinney, OCD
- With Empty Hands: The Message of Therese of Lisieux*, by Fr. Conrad de Meester, OCD
- Two Sisters in the Spirit*, by Hans Urs von Balthasar

Therese, the Little Child of God's Mercy: Her Spiritual Itinerary in the Light of her Autobiographical Manuscripts, by Angel de les Gavarres
Saint Therese of Lisieux: Doctor of the Universal Church, by Steven Payne, OCD
John and Therese: Flames of Love, by Guy Gaucher, OCD
I Believe in Love, by Fr. Jean C. J. d'Elbee

Formation II, Year 2

- *The Interior Castle*
Formation Readings, provided on CD, may be used in conjunction with *The Interior Castle* as follows:
 - Introduction and the first five dwelling places: “The First Mansion”, “The Second Mansion”, “The Third Mansion”, “The Fourth Mansion”, and “The Fifth Mansion”, by Fr. Gabriel Barry, OCD
 - The sixth dwelling place: “At the Center of the Soul”, by Fr. Herman Ancilli, OCD
 - The seventh dwelling place and Epilogue: “Christ in the Mysticism of St. Teresa”, by Fr. Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD
- Within You He Dwells: Rediscovering St. Teresa's Interior Castle*, edited by Fr. Philip Boyce, OCD
From Ash to Fire: A Contemporary Journey Through the Interior Castle of Teresa of Avila, by Carolyn Humphreys, OCDS

Formation II, Year 3

- *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, by St. John of the Cross. See the suggestions listed above for Formation I, Year 2, under St. John of the Cross.
- *The Theological Virtues in the Spiritual Life*, by Fr. Anastasius of the Holy Rosary, OCD
- *The Sanctifier*, by Most Rev. Luis M. Martinez

Ongoing Formation

- Return frequently to the major writings of our Carmelite saints
For example, *The Way of Perfection*
- Sample the minor writings of our Carmelite saints
For example, “The Prayer of the Church”, by Edith Stein, found in *The Hidden Life: Hagiographic Essays, Meditations, Spiritual Texts*, translated by Waltraut Stein

- Explore recent scholarship on Carmelite topics
For example, *Captive Flames: A Biblical Reading of the Carmelite Saints*, by Fr. James McCaffrey, OCD
- Use the Formation Readings CD that was distributed with these guidelines
While some of the commentaries are quite old, they are excellent and fairly easy to update. http://ocds.info/formation_readings.htm
- Study the documents of the Church
For example, the encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est: On Christian Love*, by Pope Benedict XVI
- Make use of good Scripture commentaries
For example, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Edited by Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., & Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm.
- Reflect on the spiritual classics used by Carmelite saints that nourish the soul
For example, *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis
- Make use of Carmelite web sites
For example, <http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/en/>
- Read Carmelite publications

January 15, 2017

Our OCDS Provincial Council is happy to announce that in light of the recent Canonization of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity and the Beatification of Bl. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus, **we have added the following texts to the reading list of our *Formation Guidelines*:**

To be inserted in the *Formation Guidelines*, after p. 37, under “Ongoing Formation”:

St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, ICS Publications: *The Complete Works*, vol. I, “Let Yourself Be Loved”; “O My God, Trinity Whom I Adore”.

St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, ICS Publications: *The Complete Works*, vol. II, *Letters from Carmel* (a selection).

Bl. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus, *Under the Torrent of His Love: Thérèse of Lisieux, a Spiritual Genius*.

Bl. Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus, *Where the Spirit Breathes: Prayer and Action* (a selection).

Bl. Marie-Eugene’s *I Want to See God / I Am a Daughter of the Church* are already listed in the *Formation Guidelines* (p. 35).

Websites of Interest

- Discalced Carmelite Order: <http://www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/en/>
- Fr. Aloysius Deeney's blogsite: www.OCD4OCDS.blogspot.com/
- OCDS of the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph: www.ocds.info
- OCDS National Council:
- St. Joseph's OCDS Community, Seattle: www.stjosephsocds.com
- St. Joseph's OCDS Community, San Francisco:
- OCDS Newsgroup:
- Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS): www.icspublications.org
- Carmelite Institute: <https://carmeliteinstitute.net>
- Carmelite Digest:
- Carmelite Book Service: www.carmelite.org.uk
- Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians:
<http://www.holyhill.com/>
- The Holy See: www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm
- U.S. Bishops: www.usccb.org
- Vatican Information Service:
- Zenit: www.zenit.org

Carmelite Periodicals

Other publications

- *Spiritual Life*
spiritual life/Online
2131 Lincoln Road NE
Washington, DC 20002
www.spiritual-life.co
edodonnell@aol.com

- *The Carmel Clarion Communications*
2131 Lincoln Rd., NE
Washington, DC 20002-1101
Telephone: 202-640-2201
(toll free): 1-877-845-4560
E-mail: carmelitecds@live.com

- *Flos Carmeli*
<http://www.thereocds.org/flos-carmeli-newsletter.html>

- *Apostolate of the Little Flower*
<http://www.littleflowerbasilica.org/111>
Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower
824 Kentucky Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78201
Telephone: 210-735-9126

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DISCERNMENT OF OCDS VOCATION

Very Reverend Father Aloysius Deeney, OCD, General Delegate

WHO/WHAT IS A SECULAR CARMELITE?

I would describe a member of the Secular Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Teresa of Jesus as a practicing member of the Catholic Church who, under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and inspired by Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross, who makes the commitment to seek the face of God for the sake of the Church and the world.

I would note in that description six distinct elements that, coming together, are those elements that move people to approach the Order and seek identification with the Order in a more formal way.

This is the whole point of this presentation. What are the principles that you use to discern the vocation to the Secular Order? Who is called to be a Secular Carmelite and how do you distinguish between those called and those not called. Among the friars and the nuns, people do not leave because they are bad people. People are not sent home from the monastery or the convent because they are morally unacceptable. It is a vocation to be a member of the Order and one that needs, for everyone's sake, to be clearly identified. Otherwise, the Order, either the friars, or the nuns, or the seculars, loses its way and confuses its identity

“Practicing member of the Catholic Church...” By this I mean Roman Catholic which refers to the unity under the leadership of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. The majority of Roman Catholics belong to the Latin Rite. There are, however, other rites within the Roman Catholic Church, Maronite, Malabar, Melkite, Ukrainian, etc. There are Secular Order communities in each of these rites.

The word “practicing” specifies something about the person who can be a member of the Secular Order. As a basic litmus test of “practicing” the Catholic faith I suggest the capacity to participate fully in the Eucharist without any hindrance. The Council called the Eucharist “the summit”. It is the high point of Catholic life and identity. It is the meeting point of heaven and earth. So, if one is free to participate in the summit, then the lesser points of participation are certainly permitted.

For most cases in the past this was rather simple to determine. People who came to the Secular Order came from parishes where the friars were present or through contact with friars or nuns who recommended them to the Secular Order. Divorce was not a major factor in Catholic life. So most situations were cut and dry, as we say in English.

It is not the way it is today. Things are not always clear. It is precisely here where the spiritual assistant can be of most help to the Council of a fraternity of the secular Order in

the screening of candidates. A woman approaches a fraternity of the Secular Order. The woman is known by some of the council. They know that this is her second marriage. They also know that she regularly goes to Mass and participates in the sacraments. The council of the fraternity would like clarity before admitting this person to formation.

There are a few possibilities with this case. The first marriage was annulled. Or, by arrangement with her confessor, she and her husband are living in such a way as to participate in the sacraments of the Church. An interview with the spiritual assistant would clarify the answers. Without necessity of too much explanation to respect the right to privacy and a good name that every member of the Church enjoys, he could give the word to the council that would allow this person to enter the Secular Order.

The Secular Order is a juridical part of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. It is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church and subject to the laws of the Church. Its own legislation must be approved by the Sacred Congregation. Therefore, someone who does not belong to one of the rites of the Roman Catholic Church may not be a member of the Secular Order. Non-catholic people with interest in the spirituality of Carmel are certainly welcome to participate in whatever way a fraternity might invite them, but they cannot be members of the Secular Order.

So here we have the first element of the identity of a Secular Order member – a person who participates in the life of the Catholic Church. There is, of course more, because there are millions of people who participate in the life of the Catholic Church who have not the slightest interest in Carmel.

We come to the second element – “under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel...”

It is not just any devotion to Our Lady that identifies a person called to the Secular Order. There are many Christians who are very devoted to Our Lady and have a very highly developed Marian character to their Christian life. There are many Orthodox Christians as well as High Church Anglicans who are very Marian. There are many Catholics who wear the scapular for all of the right reasons and with sincere dedication to Mary who are not called to be Secular Carmelites. Not only that, but there are some people who come to the Secular Order precisely because of devotion to Mary, the scapular, and the rosary who do not have a vocation to be Secular Order members.

The particular aspect of the Blessed Virgin Mary that must be present in any person called to Carmel is that of an inclination to “meditate in the heart”, the phrase that Saint Luke’s gospel uses twice to describe Mary’s attitude vis-à-vis her Son’s activity. Yes, all the other aspects of Marian life and devotion can be present, devotion to the scapular, the rosary, and other things. They are, however, secondary to this aspect of Marian devotion.

A very frequent experience of many groups is to have a person, sometimes a diocesan priest, who is very devoted to Mary, a person who has been on many pilgrimages to Marian shrines throughout the world, a person who is very familiar with many of the

apparitions and messages attributed to Mary, a real authority on current Marian movements approach the Secular Order and want to become a member. Many times they do not have the slightest inclination to “meditate in the heart”. They desire quickly to become the ‘teachers’ of the fraternity about the Blessed Mother and introduce an entirely un-Carmelite strain of Marian interest into the fraternity. If this person is a priest, it is very difficult for the community to protect itself from this detour in its Marian life. There are other Marian groups and movements that might be the home for this person, but it is not the Secular Order.

In addition, within the Teresian Carmelite family there is a place for people whose primary motivation is devotion to the scapular and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It is the Confraternity of the Brown Scapular, or the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Before the Council, in nearly all the countries where the Order is present, there were many requests for the establishment of confraternities (Brown Scapular, Infant of Prague, and Saint Therese) in different parishes and places. The registers for these confraternities are kept in the Secretariat of the Secular Order. After the Council, the requests for these confraternities nearly disappeared except for Poland, Mexico and the United States.

My own theory is that instead of establishing confraternities, every new group in many places became requests immediately for establishment as Secular Order groups. As I see it, in many places, especially in some missionary territories, it might have been better to begin with Confraternities allowing them later to develop into Secular Order groups. And even in some other places, the Secular Order fraternities are, in reality, little more than confraternities. I say that meaning no insult to the confraternities. I only mean that the motivation for the Secular Order is different than the motivation for the confraternity. If the Secular Order has lost its resolve and attraction, it may be because it has become something less than what it is meant to be.

Mary, for a Secular Order member, is the model of a meditative attitude and disposition. She attracts and inspires a Carmelite to a contemplative way of understanding the life of the mystical body of her Son, the Church. It is she who draws the person to Carmel. And in the formation program which the person finds when they enter Carmel, it is this aspect which must be developed in the person. So, I say that this is the second element – “under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.”

A member of the Secular Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Teresa of Jesus is a practicing member of any of the rites of the Roman Catholic Church who, under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and inspired by Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross...

Here we have the third element. I mention both Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross, and I might say right at the beginning of this section, that I also include Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, or Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity or Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, (Edith Stein) can also be included, but Saints Teresa and John of the Cross are central to this point.

Having mentioned all of those great people of the Carmelite tradition, I underline the importance of Saint Teresa of Jesus, whom, in our tradition we refer to as Our Holy Mother. The reason is because she is the one to whom the charism was given. In many parts of the world we are called Teresian Carmelites. Saint John of the Cross was the original collaborator with Our Holy Mother in both the spiritual and juridical re-founding of Carmel in this new charismatic way. So he is called Our Holy Father. It is hard for me to imagine any Discalced Carmelite of any brand who is not attracted by one, if not both of these persons – their histories, personalities, and, most importantly, their writings.

The writings of Saint Teresa of Jesus are the expression of the charism of the Discalced Carmelites. The spirituality of the Discalced Carmelites has a very well based intellectual foundation. There is a doctrine involved here. Doctrine, comes from docere, Latin for to teach. Any person who wants to be a Discalced Carmelite must be a person with an interest in learning from the teachers of Carmel. There are three doctors of the universal Church, Teresa, John and Therese.

A person comes to the community, a person with a great love of the Blessed Mother, wants to wear the scapular in honor of Mary as a sign of dedication to her service. This person is very prayerful but has no interest in reading or studying the spirituality of the Teresian Carmel. This person tries to read one of the Carmelite Doctors but just cannot find the interest to keep reading. To me, this is a good person who may belong in the Confraternity of the Brown Scapular, but definitely does not have a vocation to the Secular Order of Carmel.

There is an academic aspect to the formation of a Teresian Carmelite. There is an intellectual basis to the spirituality and identity of one who is called to the Order. And, as with each friar and each nun, each Secular represents the Order. A Carmelite that does not have the interest in studying or deepening the roots of his/her identity through prayer and study loses identity and can no longer represent the Order. Nor does that person speak for the Order. Many times when listening to a Carmelite speak it becomes obvious when hearing what is said that they have not gone beyond what they heard in formation years before.

This intellectual basis is the beginning of an attitude that is open to study. It leads to a deeper interest in Scripture, theology and the documents of the Church. The tradition of spiritual reading, lectio divina and time for study is the intellectual backbone of the spiritual life. Good formation depends on good information. When the information is bad, or absent, or incorrect, the formation stops or is stunted resulting in confusion in the Secular. If that Secular through some twist of fate becomes somehow an officer of the OCDS community, the community suffers. It happens with friars and nuns, and it happens with Seculars.

For some incredible reason which I have never fully comprehended, some Carmelites consider themselves and the Order dispensed from listening to the Church or following the indications given in Church documents. This is very present among Seculars. What the Holy Father said in *Christifideles Laici* is fine for everybody else, but “we are

Carmelites and are different. We do not have to do what everybody else has to do because we pray.” Bad formation based on bad information.

This academic or intellectual basis is very important and has been sadly missing in many groups of the Secular Order. It is not a question of “being an intellectual” in order to be a Secular. It is a question of being intelligent in the pursuit of the truth about God, about oneself, about prayer, about the Order and about the Church. Obedience has long been associated with the intellect and the virtue of faith. Obedience means openness to hearing (ob + audire in Latin). Is a radical attitude of the person to move beyond what that person knows. Education also comes from Latin (Ex + ducere to lead out of). Saint Teresa describes the person of the third mansions as almost stuck and unable to move. One of the characteristics of this person permanently in the third mansions is that they want to teach everybody else. They know it all. In reality they are disobedient and uneducable. That is, they are closed and unable to learn.

I have spent a lot of time on this aspect because it is the most important element for the advancement of the Secular Order.

The fourth element of the description is “who makes a commitment”. There are so many committed Catholics who are devoted to Mary and even experts in Saint Teresa, Saint John of the Cross or one of our saints who do not have the vocation to the Secular Order. These people may be contemplatives or even hermits, who spend hours in prayer and study each day, but do not have the vocation to be a Carmelite. What is the element that differentiates these people from those called to follow Christ more closely as Secular Carmelites?

It is not the spirituality, nor the study, nor the devotion to Mary. Simply put, the Secular Carmelite is moved to commit himself or herself to the Order and to the Church. This commitment, in the form of the promises, is an ecclesial event and an event of the Order in addition to being an event in the person’s life who makes the promises. In a certain sense, remembering always the person’s context of family, work and responsibilities that are involved in his/her life, the person who commits him/herself, becomes characterized as a Carmelite.

As I said, it is an ecclesial event and an event of the Order. It is for this reason that the Church and the Order have the essential say in union with the candidate in accepting and approving the commitment of the person. It is also for this reason that the Church and the Order give the conditions and set the terms for the content of the promises. A person may want to commit him/herself to certain things, daily meditation or the divine office for example. But the Church, through the Order establishes the basic and broad lines of understanding with regards to this commitment.

The Secular belongs to Carmel. Carmel does not belong to the Secular. What I mean by that is that there is a new identity, one developed from the baptismal identity, which becomes a necessary point of reference. As the Church is the point of reference for the baptized person (the baptized person belongs to the Church), so Carmel becomes the

point of reference for the Secular. The more “Catholic” one becomes, the more that person recognizes the catholicity of the church. The more one becomes Carmelite, the more one recognizes the catholicity of Carmel as well. In fact, the person who commits him/herself to Carmel in the Secular Order discovers that Carmel becomes essential to his/her identity as a Catholic.

It is because the Promises are the means by which one becomes a Secular Order member that formation for the Promises is so important – formation and on-going formation. In most formation programs that I have seen or that we have in the Generalate, the Promises seem to me rather summarily presented, almost as a minor point. And I have seen no program at all focusing on on-going formation in the Promises. The only possible point of on-going formation is the formation for the vows, but that is limited to those who make vows.

This commitment to the Church through Carmel has both content and purpose. These are expressed in the final two elements of my description of who is a Secular Carmelite.

The fifth element of the description is “to seek the face of God”. This element expresses the content of the Promises. I could rephrase this element in various ways, “to pray”, “to meditate”, “to live the spiritual life”. I have chosen this one because it is Scriptural and expresses the nature of contemplation – a wondering observation of God’s word and work in order to know, love and serve Him. The contemplative aspect of Carmelite life focuses on God, recognizing always that contemplation is a gift of God, not an acquisition as a result of putting in sufficient time.

The personal life of the Secular Carmelite becomes contemplative. The style of life changes with the growth in the virtues that accompany the growth in the spirit. It is impossible to live a life of prayer, meditation, and study without changing. This new style of life enhances all the rest of life. The majority of Secular Order members who are married and those with families experience that the commitment to the OCDS life enriches their marital and familial commitment. Men and women OCD Seculars who work experience a new moral commitment to justice in the work place. These are the direct results of seeking the face of God.

Is the essence of Carmel prayer? Many times I hear or read that affirmation. I am never sure just how to answer that. Not because I do not know what prayer is and its importance for any Carmelite. But because I never know what the speaker or writer wishes to justify by the statement. If the person means by prayer personal holiness and the pursuit of a genuine spirituality that recognizes the supremacy of God and of God’s will for the human family, than yes I agree. If the person means that I as a Carmelite fulfill my entire obligation as a Carmelite by being faithful to my prayer and that there is nothing else that I need do, than no, we do not agree. Personal holiness is not the same as personal pursuit of holiness. For a baptized member of the Church holiness is always ecclesial, never centered on self. And I am never the judge of my own holiness. (*Nemo iudex in causa suo.*)

I am sanctified by the practice of the virtues which is the direct result of a life of prayerful searching for God's will in my life. This is the Carmelite secret – prayer does not make us holy. Prayer is the essential element in Christian (Carmelite) holiness because it is the frequent contact necessary to remain faithful to God. This contact allows God to do His will in my life which then announces to the whole world God's presence and goodness. Without the contact of prayer I cannot know God and God cannot be known to others.

To seek the face of God requires an unbelievable amount of discipline in the classic and original sense of the word – disciple, one who learns. I must recognize that I am forever a student. Never do I become a master. I am always surprised by what God does in the world. God is forever a mystery. The clues to God's existence always interest me. I find them in the events of life, single, widowed, married, family, work, retirement. But they only become recognizable and clear through prayer, observing from the heart. The call to holiness is a burning desire in the heart and mind of the one called to the Secular Order. It is a commitment that the Secular must make. It is, in a phrase from Schillibecx, “an existential inability to do otherwise.” The Secular is drawn to prayer, finding in prayer a home and an identity.

This prayer, this pursuit of holiness, this encounter with the Lord makes the Secular more part of the Church. And as a more committed member of the Church the Secular's life is more ecclesial. As the life of prayer grows it produces more fruit in the persons life (the growth of virtue) and in the persons ecclesial life (apostolate.)

This leads me to the sixth element of the description “for the sake of the Church and the world.” This is the newest development in the understanding of the place of the Secular in the Order and the Church. This is the result of the development in the theology of the Church on the role of laypersons in the Church, and applying that theology to the Order. Beginning with the Second Vatican Council's document On the Apostolate of the Laity, and its fruition with the Synods on the Laity in 1986 and the Consecrated Life in 1996 (Christifideles Laici and Vita Consacrata) the Church has constantly underlined the need for a further commitment of the laity to her needs and the needs of the world. Saint Teresa had the conviction that the only proof of prayer was growth in virtue and that the necessary fruit of the life of prayer was the birth of good works.

At times I hear a Secular say “the only apostolate of the Secular is prayer.” The word that makes that statement false is “only.” A prayerful and obedient attitude toward the documents of the Church makes it clear that the role of the layperson within the Church has changed. The Rule of Life talked about the need of each Secular to have an individual apostolate. What Christifideles Laici highlights is the importance of all associations in the Church, and the OCDS is an association in the Church, to develop group apostolates. Many Seculars when they hear the mention of group apostolates think that I am talking about the entire community being involved in something that takes up hours each day. That is not at all what “group apostolate” means. Paragraph 30 of Christifideles Laici gives the basic principles of “ecclesiality” for associations and lists the fruits of these principles. The first fruit listed is a renewed desire for prayer, meditation, contemplation,

and the sacramental life. These are things “right down Carmel’s alley.” How many people there are who need to know what our Carmelite Doctors of the Church have to say! If every Carmelite were dedicated to spreading Carmel’s message, how many people would not be confused in the spiritual life! Walk into any major bookstore and see what nonsense is listed in the section entitled “mysticism”.

We, all Carmelites, can help to clean up the mess by making what we have known. It is not an option, it is a responsibility. As I said in Mexico, being a Carmelite is not a privilege, it is a responsibility, both personal and ecclesial.

As I said at the beginning, it is not anyone element that discerns the person who has the vocation to Carmel as a Secular. It is the combination that makes the difference. In this description is also an outline of a formation program. That, however, is the subject of another article.

THE BEATITUDES AS INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROMISE

Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD, General Delegate

I think that the promise is the most neglected part of formation programs that I have seen. There are many different religious orders. Right? There are Franciscans, Dominicans, Oblates, Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, and there Jesuits; there are all sorts of different religious traditions and religious families, but what makes the friars, or the priests, or the brothers, and the nuns and sisters and what makes us religious is that we make vows. I am a priest because I was ordained, not because I am a Carmelite. I was professed and the Church recognized in my profession my dedication of myself as a religious and as a Carmelite.

What makes you a member of the Secular Order is that you have made the promise

It is the promise that you make, that makes you members of the Secular Order. That distinguishes you from many, many, many other people who live and love Carmelite spirituality, but have not made any sort of commitment to the order and whose commitment has not been recognized by the Church. What makes you a member of Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites is not that you live Carmelite spirituality, because there are a lot of other people who may even live it better than all of us put together, who are not members of the order.

What makes you a member of the Secular Order is that you have made the promise. Your promise has been recognized by the Church. There are a lot of other people who are part of the Carmelite family who are not part of the order. There are a lot of people who know a lot of things about Carmelite spirituality and really are experts but are not members of the order.

How does this come up in a practical way?

Let me give an example, I bet in some of your communities you have the experience of people who got through the entire formation program, make definitive promises, may even make vows and then you never see them again. If you do see them...."well I say my office every day, I make mental prayer every day, I read St. Teresa, I read St. John of the Cross, I study them", but they have no idea of what it means to be a part of the order. I am asked that question. I know that is the truth because, no matter where I go in the world, somebody asks me about people who made the promises – the promise (it is singular, one promise) and then never come to meetings again. I have asked to look at many formation programs and most formation programs have zero in it about making or what the promise is, the content of the promise.

Why is there a promise?

What is the effect of making the promise?

It is almost like I want to say that there is too much formation in spirituality in the initial stages and not enough formation in what it means to become part of a community; because it is the promise that incorporates you into the order. So, I have a chance because I have been asked to talk about the Beatitudes, the Beatitudes in not just a Bible study program. It is incorporation, it is part of your commitment to incorporate yourself to become part of this family. The friars, the nuns, we live in community, it is our structure. Your structure is to make community. You don't live in community, you live in community of your families, you live in the community of your parishes; but you make a community of the people who share something very basic, about your Catholic Christian identity, namely, Carmel.

In order to put the Beatitudes in the context of the promise I want to read in the new Constitutions what it says about the following of Jesus in the Teresian Carmel, because that is where it talks about the promise. It does not talk about prayer. The third chapter talks about prayer. The second chapter talks about incorporation. It does not talk about spirituality and the formation for spirituality or rather the information for spirituality. That is the fourth chapter. The first chapter is identity, values, commitment, which leads to the second chapter which is following Jesus in the Teresian Secular Carmel and that has to do with the promise. It is how you follow Jesus. Let me read a few of the numbers in the constitution.

Constitution number 10 : Christ is the center of our lives and of Christian experience. Members of the Secular Order are called to live the demands of following Christ in union with Him, by accepting His teachings and devoting themselves to Him. To follow Jesus is to take part in His saving mission of proclaiming the Good News and the establishment of God's Kingdom. There are various ways of following Jesus: all Christians must follow Him, must make Him the law for their lives and be disposed to fulfill three fundamental demands: to place family ties beneath the interests of the Kingdom and Jesus himself; to live in detachment from wealth in order to show that the arrival of the Kingdom does not depend on human means but rather on God's strength and the willingness of the human person before Him; to carry the cross of accepting God's will revealed in the mission that He has confided to each person.

Constitution number 11 : Following Jesus as members of the Secular Order is expressed by the promise to strive for evangelical perfection in the spirit of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience and through the beatitudes. By means of this promise the member's baptismal commitment is strengthened for the service of God's plan in the world. This promise is a pledge to pursue personal holiness, which necessarily carries with it a commitment to serving the Church in faithfulness to the Teresian Carmelite charism. The promise is taken before the members of the community, representing the whole Church and in the presence of the Delegate of the Superior of the Order. By the promise made to the community in the presence of the Superior of the Order or his Delegate, the person becomes a full member of the Secular Order.

So the promises, the promise, I keep saying promises, but the parts of the promise, that is the fact of the act of committing yourself. It is not just personal, as it says in other parts of the constitution, it is ecclesial. Your promise is an ecclesial act. You are more part of

the Church, because you are a member of the order. Those of you who may have read in the Clarion, or seen or heard the tape of a conference I gave in New Orleans a couple of years ago, about the Profile of a Discalced Carmelite Secular Order member, essential element, the element that distinguishes, as I have already said every other person who follows Carmelite spirituality is that you make a commitment to the order and the order makes a commitment to you.

That commitment is recognized by the Church. For that reason it is not just a club. See many people have a club mentality about the Secular Order, that's why they stop coming, or they come when it is convenient or they come when it is almost time for elections. I can always tell that there are some things that are universal truths. People generally admit that they know somebody that does that. Club membership can hardly be the correct mentality for forming a community with people. That mentality that says I come when I come when it convenient for me, that mentality that says I come so that I can learn all this and do it for myself. That I say the office, I read it myself; I say my prayers, I mediate every day, I might even meditate an hour and a half or two every hours every day. I might read and know all about St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

One of the things that is in the Constitutions when it talks about Provincial Councils and Provincial Statutes, the first thing that Provincial statutes are to do is to develop an adequate program of formation. Not just a program of information, most of the time when people say we need a program of formation they are talking about a program of information. We want to know what to teach in this period, in this period, this period, this period and this period. What books to use in this stage and this stage, and this stage. That is not formation, that is a program of information. Formation is much more than information. Good formation depends on good information, that's true. You get bad information you have bad formation. Formation is much more, than just information. Information is what Formation is how.

So a program of formation is: how do we train people, how do we educate people?

How do we inform people so that they make progress in the stages of formation they can commit themselves to us?

The promise is made to the community into which the person is incorporated. So the formation of the person is to be able to commit himself or herself to us, with the right information. I have seen so many programs of information for formation programs, a lot of spirituality but not a lot of corporality, you might say incorporation. Remember what St. Teresa says? That is useless or it is silly to think of ourselves as angels as long as we have these bodies. The Secular Order is an extension of the Church. It is a realization of the Church, which is, by nature, incarnate. It has a body and soul. The soul is the spirituality but it gives life to a body which is the incorporation of people with each other. Many times this is the reason why people have been satisfied with learning a lot about spirituality but not being able to incorporate it, and cease to participate, because they do not see the necessity.

The promise is as the Constitution is saying: to strive for evangelical perfection in the spirit of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience and through the Beatitudes. The evangelical counsels are traditional, are, of course, what the friars, the sisters, the nuns, what religious make, as their vows as they incorporate themselves into the community in which they are members. The evangelical counsels are time honored, long standing. It defines a way of living Christ's life. Poverty, chastity, obedience or whatever order you want to put them in, chastity, obedience, poverty, those vows, those counsels, they are evangelical counsel.

As you know there are many people, especially after the Second Vatican Council, there was in the Church and in the order also a movement to really make the Secular Order independent of the friars and nuns in the sense of having their own forms. Forms that are different from our forms.

There was a movement, after the Second Vatican Council, that wants to de-religiousize the religious, de-religiousize the Secular Order. They wanted take away even poverty, chastity, and obedience and say there has to be something else. In every group, in order for a group to function, to survive, to have history, and to continue in history, it is necessary to have three things: discernment of who is part of the group, formation of the people who are discerned to belong as part of the group, and the commitment for the purposes of the groups. Commitment is necessary.

Poverty, Chastity, And Obedience

As time went along and different people were trying to come up with different things, we realized that poverty, chastity, and obedience are evangelical counsels. They are not counsels to religious. They are evangelical counsels. They are ways of evaluating yourself in the light of Jesus. Because the vows we make as religious and the promise you make as seculars are not to live our poverty, our chastity, our obedience, but to live the poverty, and the chastity, and the obedience of Jesus. My chastity is not going to save anybody, but it is the poverty, and the chastity, and the obedience of Jesus that saves. So we live, Jesus that person, second person of the blessed Trinity, God and man, who lived his life on Earth and in that life saved all of humanity, whose life is found in the pages of the Gospel and in the experience of the tradition of the Church, and the sacraments and prayer and meditation. That person becomes the standard by which we evaluate ourselves, under those three rather radical categories of human life. Loving, possessing, and being in obedience, how we are. In a certain sense it is that poverty, that chastity, and that obedience of Jesus that in our promise, in my vows, in your promise that we make that become the standard for us to evaluate our lives. How we are living, how we are moving, how we are being, how we possess things. We possess things, but how do we possess them? We love, and we love deeply and humanly but with what clarity do we love. We are and we are incorporated with each other, we are parts of community, parts of family, parts of society, parts of the Church, but how?

At the time of The Rule of Life in 1974, when The Rule of Life was written, the commission that was set up to evaluate the Rule of Life wanted to add something,

inspired by basically the Vatican Council's document on the laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* and added as an integral part of the promise to the personal evaluation of Jesus as standard of personal life, they wanted to add the Beatitudes. They wanted to add the Beatitudes for a very specific reason because the Beatitudes are not just a personal evaluation of one's own person, of one's own approach, attitude, living of life; but they are a measure of relationship to the world.

The Beatitudes

What does the catechism of the Catholic Church say about the Beatitudes? There are two numbers in the catechism, number 1716 and 1717.

1716 : The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. The Beatitudes fulfill the promises by ordering them no longer merely to the possession of a territory but to the kingdom of Heaven.

1717: The Beatitudes depict of the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray His charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of His passion and resurrection. They shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life. They are paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations. They proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured however dimly for Christ's disciples. They have begun in the lives of Virgin Mary and all the saints.

The Beatitudes depict of the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray His charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of His passion.

Remember this is a result of the Second Vatican Council document *Apostolicam Actuositatem* which then becomes even more highlighted and underlined, and enhanced in the document *Christifideles Laici* on the role of the apostolate of lay persons. It is essential, your role. It is not just because there are less vocations that your role is more important than before. It is because it is the time where the Holy Spirit wants this role. The Church doesn't need friars, the Church doesn't need nuns, and the Church doesn't need seculars.

The Church needs what we have to offer. The Church needs the witness of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. The Church needs that spirituality. The world needs that spirituality. The world needs what we have to offer, to the extent that we do not offer it, we are useless to God. We are useless to God to the extent that we do not offer what He has given us in our vocation. This commitment that we have made, you through the promise, I through the vows, is to be present in the Church, to minister to the Church, and this is the role specifically underlined, revealed most in the Second Vatican Council and after the Second Vatican Council through the different Synods about the role of lay persons in the Church. *Vita Apostolica* and *Vita Consecrata* are documents centered on the religious life. Paragraph 55 says that because of the new circumstances in the history of the world it has become apparent that lay people are called to share not only the

spirituality but the mission....not just spirituality but the mission of the religious family.

The Church needs to know what St. Teresa and St John of the Cross says and it's our job to tell them, to let them know. There are 40,000 of you. There are 4,000 of us. You are ten times more present than we are. We have to read the Beatitudes as a way to remind us of how our relationship to the world as communities is.

Beatitudes As A Way To Remind Us Of How Our Relationship To The World As Communities

We Americans have a big problem in that we are always tempted to be individualists. Right? (This also applies to Malaysian too, I believe. – S.Tai)

We are tempted to always think of what does this mean I have to do. Begin to think now as communities.

What does this mean for our community as a Secular Order community?

Not what does this mean for me. Nobody has to quit their job, leave their families to become a Carmelite Secular if we do things in thinking in terms of our community.

Let's read the Beatitudes. There are two sets of beatitudes. Not just Matthew, but also Luke. There are two sets of beatitudes. We are used to thinking of eight beatitudes, there is sort of a ninth one that some texts include in the eighth one in St. Matthew's Gospel. There are six or seven in St. Luke's Gospel.

(Matthew 5:1-12)

(1) Seeing the crowds he went on the mountain and when he was seated, his disciples came to him.

(2) Then he began to speak and this is what he taught them.

(3) How blessed

(There is always a problem is it blessed, or blessed. This is a point not just the word because it has to do also with the meaning. Other translations, I think the New American Bible first said, the one that we read at Mass or used to read at Mass in English, how happy. So it is happy or blessed or blessed. They have different shades of meaning.)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven, is theirs.

(4) Blessed are the gentle they shall have the earth as inheritance.

(5) Blessed are those who mourn they shall be comforted.

(6) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness.

That's the New Jerusalem Bible translation. Most of us are familiar with Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, they shall have their fill.

(7) Blessed are the merciful, they shall have mercy shown them.

(8) Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God.

(9) Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be recognized as children of God.

(10) Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness (justice) for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

(11) Blessed are you when people abuse you, persecute you, and speak all kinds calumny against you falsely on my account.

(12) Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven for this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.

St. Luke's version. (Luke 6:20-26)

(20) Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said: "how blessed are you who are poor, the kingdom of God is yours.

(21) Blessed are you who are hungry now, you shall have your fill. Blessed are you who are weeping now, you shall laugh.

(22) Blessed are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal on account of the Son of Man.

(23) Rejoice when that day comes, and dance for joy, look your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets.

(24) But alas for you,

I like the other translation WOE, woe to you who are rich for you have your consolation now.

(25) Alas for you, woe to you who have plenty to eat now, for you shall go hungry. Alas for you, woe to those who are laughing now, you shall mourn and weep.

(26) Woe for you when everyone speaks well of you, this is the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.

Again as poverty, chastity, and obedience were the measuring, were the life of Jesus: Jesus as poor, chaste, and obedient in the Gospel, in his life, in the tradition of the Church, that person becomes then the measuring stick of our own relationship to the Father, especially. The Beatitudes become the measuring stick for where do we identify ourselves, as our communities. Because when we do this in communities, this is again part of that incorporation. When we do this in community, we support each other doing it.

We are not left to wondering how or all on our own; but where do we identify ourselves? With whom do we identify ourselves?

Because the Beatitudes, as everybody, you can read many things and commentaries of the Beatitudes to understand that they are the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus and the Sermon on Plain in Luke. The Sermon on the Mount is very much about the relationship of one to another. Including of course to pray the Our Father.

How do we identify ourselves as persons who live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ? This Carmelite life? The Rule of St. Albert?

A life of allegiance to Jesus Christ and that allegiance to Jesus Christ brings us to identify ourselves with certain people and to see in certain aspects, and certain virtues and certain approaches to living how we have to live in order to be in allegiance to Jesus Christ, in order to be loyal to Jesus. The structure of the eight Beatitudes that are more famous, form the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel and you see sometimes hanging on walls, you can see it when you go to religious gift shops and see a plaque that has the eight beatitudes. People look at them like they belong on a Hallmark card, you know, but they are really very demanding and they are not so cute. They are cute on the card, but they are not so cute in living them out because they are demanding an attitude of us. That doesn't come naturally to us in certain ways. I do not think that it comes naturally to us as Americans - to live the Beatitudes the way the Gospels teach the Beatitudes. And they certainly don't come naturally to us as an approach to us to living life.

The eight Beatitudes, you can almost divide them into two sections of four. How I am going to read the traditional ones that I remember from grade school.

1. blessed are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted
3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are you who hunger and thirst for justice, you shall have your fill.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

There are two sets. The fourth one and eighth one go together, almost as a refrain, the way we do sometimes in the Psalms Response. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst

for justice, for they shall have their fill. Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice, for they shall have their fill. The justice that exists in the Bible, is not the justice that you and I understood, when we say justice is going to be done. We mean justice as punishment. We mean justice as revenge. That is not at all evangelical. That is not at all scriptural. It is not at all the justice of God. I often wonder especially when I am read the Gospels, it sort of shocks me sometimes, as the day of the Lord is when we let everybody out of prison. We find so many reasons to keep people in prison, because justice has to be done.

We are very conditioned in our attitudes; we get a lot more information about how to live from the television, from the newspaper, the means of communication than we do from the Gospels. So, we have a tendency to skip over what these things say to us because they are conditioned by how we understand. Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for justice. It is almost like we might exaggeratingly say we understand these as vigilante groups who go out to punish people. They are doing justice. They are not seeking forgiveness.

- Justice is to look out for the poor.
- Justice is to make sure people eat.
- Justice is to make sure people are clothed.
- Justice is to make sure people have what they need to be human and to live humanly.
- Justice is to forgive. Sister said, “actions speak louder than words.” Sister said “God’s justice was God’s mercy.”

Through all of tradition so many things, all Christian tradition, in theology, in philosophy, so many other things have interrupted almost, or infused themselves, or inched their way into spirituality, into scripture, into following Christ that we almost get political in the way we interpret or understand our approach to life, to living. It comes from whom we identify with One of the things about in the American system of justice is that we have the death penalty. Yet the Holy Father so strongly speaks against the death penalty. And, at least according to surveys, a majority of Catholics are in favor of the death penalty.

So our American idea of justice is more important than Jesus’ idea of justice. Again, I’m trying to be practical in pointing out that this is not easy, to live an evangelical life. Yet it is what you promised to do, and that is so solemn that promise, that the Church says that’s how you become a member. You can quote St. Teresa up and down, St John of Cross left to right, St. Therese, everything, but if you do not follow Jesus, you are not a Carmelite.

Importance of Community Meetings.

This also point to the importance of meetings. The reason why meetings are so important is you can’t do this alone. You need to be in touch with, and be supported by and support others who are trying to do it too. It is for that reason a little bit why we have inched away from, some people have said maybe we have moved miles away from the idea of

isolate members. Long distance, members from a distance, maybe in others ways, but they have to be associated with other people. It's too difficult to do this, it is too inhuman. It is not practical to set up a spiritual life and a solemn life, all alone. If it is not practical, it's not Carmelite. Carmelite spirituality is supremely practical. It can be done and it can be practiced under certain conditions and in certain way and for this reason community life, whether it is for us who live in communities, or for you who make community, it is indispensable.

Does that make sense?

So you have the mistake that people make when they say :

“Oh, I don't need to go to meetings anymore.”

I am not talking about the sick. I am not talking about those who are reasonably, rationally excused or those that miss because their daughter is getting married, or their husband is sick. I am talking about people who don't come. They don't come and they say :

“Oh I say my Office everyday and I meditate everyday.”

There is more to it than that. It is not a training ground for individualists. Matter of fact, the one thing we loose is our individualism, not our individuality of course, but our individualism. What grows in a person who makes this promise, who tries to live these beatitudes as an apostolate, is the need to have others, to understand what is the right thing to do. And the people who need to know this don't come any more. So this is why we have to really re-look at the way we do things. We cannot continue to make the mistake of forming individualist.

I have a whole program of formation, in parenthesis, because it is actually a whole program of information, all written out, that I have sort of gleaned from looking at formation programs from around the world. What can be done at different stages, but it's too early to give it out, because we still are not clear about the formation. If we just continue giving information to people as they go through formation classes, almost as if, you've seen the mistakes, and the mistakes come at voting time, and the council “Well, she's so intelligent. She really loves St. Therese, she knows everything about her, or she really loves the Blessed Mother. She loves the scapular. Goodness sake she wears it night and day, all the time, but you know she is a little disagreeable in community, just a little disagreeable. You notice that every time she comes into the meeting. (Or he, the he(s) can be a lot worse than the shes.) Every time this person comes into the meeting everybody shuts up. They don't want to set her off. When it comes time to vote, she really does know what she is talking about.” It is not a matter of knowing what. It is a matter of knowing how. The how depends on a good what. It is knowing how to live this life.

Why do we make people parts of our community that we would never want to live with?

What does it do to the community?
How does it affect the community?

You've seen in the talk that I gave in New Orleans and you have seen it in other places where I have written where I talk about people who talk about Our Lady of Medjugorje hours and hours. It is obvious how that throws the community off. So everybody can really see how if you really have wrong things, things that aren't Carmelite things, you can see why that person doesn't belong.

This is a far more fundamental question about people who can live these evangelical counsels, the spirit of evangelical counsels and the Beatitudes. They have to have a certain human capacity for conversion. Human capacity not spiritual conversion. Not aversion from sin. Not practicing virtues heroically, but a human capacity. There has to be an ability to be part of other people. That is your responsibility as Council members when it comes to vote. You can give a written test on Carmelite spirituality, on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, on all the documents that have ever been written, and a person can get A, A, A, B+ and still invite someone to become part of your community who does not belong.

Number 36 in the Constitution talks about formation, and again the formation touches upon the promise. The gradual introduction. It's gradual. It's step by step, nobody starts out at the finish point. Everybody starts out at the beginning point. The gradual introduction to the life of the Secular Order is structured in the following manner: A sufficient period of contact with the community for no less than 6 months. The purpose of this stage is that the applicant might become more familiar with the community. More familiar with the community, with the people. The style of life and service to the Church proper to the Secular Order of the Teresian Carmel. This period also, you might want to say, the main reason, is to give the community the opportunity to make an adequate discernment of the candidate.

What are you looking at?

Not their intelligence, not their wisdom, not their knowledge, but their ability to relate to the people in the community. This is not a private school of spirituality. This is an organization of Christ's faithful people, part of the Discalced Carmelite Order. It is a community of people. You are looking at the capacity of this person to be part of the community.

After the initial period of contact, the council of the community may admit the applicant to a more serious period. Very important... the council of the community may, may, may - this is not a factory that produces Secular Order members. It's the council of the community may and may not. The council of the community may admit the applicant to a more serious period of formation that usually lasts for two years leading up to the first promises. There is a purpose for the formation. It's to get the person in a position; mentally, emotionally, psychologically, intellectually, spiritually to commit himself or herself to the community.

Is that what guides the period formation that is given in the first two years?

That this person is going to incorporate herself or himself with these people?

It's the promise that does that. So what is the formation for the promise?

At the end of this stage, with the approval of the Council of the Community, the applicant may, may be invited to make the first promises to follow the evangelical counsels and to live in the spirit of the beatitudes for a period of three years.

In the last three years of initial formation there is a deeper study of prayer, the Scriptures, the Documents of the Church, the Saints of the Order and formation in the apostolate of the Order. At the end of these three years the applicant may be invited by the Council to make the Definitive Promises. The period of formation has for its purpose of making the promise.

So you are looking at, who are these people who can form community with us?

How does this person help me live my commitment to evaluate myself through Jesus, poor, chaste, obedient, in relationship to the world that suffers?

How is this person going to help me do this? How can I help this person do this?

The rest, the soul, that's the body of being a member of the order. It is that body that receives its energy, its power, its light, its guide from the spirituality of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, St. Therese, St. Edith Stein, St. Teresa of the Andes, Elizabeth of the Trinity. That's the energy, that's the light, that's how we know what we are doing, and that's how we do it as members of our order. We have all of our lives to study that. One of the things I want to say is that in some programs of formation there is too much in the initial stages and not enough body, not enough that weighs us down. Because if we put too much spirit in the formation, this is too much to handle. It becomes too heavy. Am I making sense? Do you follow what I am saying?

This is what the Church needs of us. If this is what the Church needs of us, then guess what, it is what God wants of us. You might have heard me, I don't know if I said it on the tape and in the talk in New Orleans, but all of us come to Carmel for our reasons. That all of us stay for God's reasons. Our reasons grow and change. As you know I was a diocesan priest before I became a Carmelite, in Philadelphia. I knew the nuns in Philadelphia, basically. This was before all sorts of divisions that exist now among the nuns, it was before then. When I went to Carmel, I really thought I was going to be contemplative. I know, I really thought I was going to live in a monastery someplace and have a lot of time for reading. Now, here I am after twenty some years, I've put a hundred thousand miles in the air a year and it's your fault. We don't stay in Carmel for our reasons. If we do stay in Carmel for our reasons, we never grow up, we never mature. We stay in Carmel for God's reasons.

Some of us did not know that God was going to ask of us the commitment that he asks of us. As we read the documents of the Church, for that reason we are fortunate in the United States, we have all the footnotes, read the footnotes to the Constitution, they explain why in the words of the Holy Father, the Pope, in the words of our Holy Father, St. John of the Cross and the words of St. Teresa, in the words of laws of the Church, the canon law and explain why. The Beatitudes in the context of the promise, the promise in the context of your vocation is the pledge to do what God wants done.

In a nutshell, people, basically what is Carmelite spirituality?

Carmelite spirituality is to know God, so that God may be known. Not to just know God. God has his reasons for wanting us to know Him. For wanting us to have this relationship with Him. The Beatitudes, in a most concrete way, drive us, to show us, where it is that we must show God, the poor, the meek, the mourning, those who suffer. That's where God wants us to be.

Accompaniment

There is a word that is part of formation that wasn't always part of formation and the word is accompaniment. You accompany people in the process. Good formation depends on good information. It is not wrong to have the information, but it's wrong to settle for the information as the formation. It's not only necessary only that we help people understand what they are suppose to do. It is necessary to understand how they do it. So there is an accompaniment, this is why you cannot have all the formation on one person. Other people have to be involved in helping the formation program. If I am going to have classes where I'm giving information, fine then give it all to me. I'll do it all, formation for the people in the first six months, formation for the people in the first two years, the people in the second period of three years, and the formation, I can give classes. Yeah, you can see how much I can talk. I can give classes all you want, but if you want me to actually accompany these people on the way, not being their spiritual director, not an invasion of their privacy, but there is a spiritual accompaniment that goes along. Those of you who do formation, you develop a relationship with the people in formation. They begin to talk with you about difficulties as they get to different points. So this is very true in some places.

It is very true in the Philippines, they have thirty-five to forty people in formation in their communities, in initial formation. They divide them up and have four people for the first stage and four people for the second stage, they divide them up. It is a new approach of how to do the formation.

Before, maybe forty, fifty, or sixty years ago, the formation was on how to do mortification or penances. I think this was true of the order, if you asked me when I first wanted to become a Discalced Carmelite, which was 1965, and somebody asked me why I wanted to become a Carmelite. Well, Carmelites don't eat meat, they sleep on boards, they do penances and mortification for the Church. They were ideals for me. That was how people defined who we were. They didn't define us as people who lived the spirituality of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. They defined us by the external things that we did. In many ways the formation, even of the tertiary, in those days in the Secular Order was the formation of how to do penances and what days you fasted on, and what days you had feasts on.

Information has changed now. All the friars who can remember, what were the three books? The Constitutions, The Ceremonial and The Manual or something like that..... Instruction. It was all about doing the external things right because you wanted to please God. There was nothing wrong in the sense of they were not making a mistake. They were doing what their times taught them to do and they did it for the glory of God, and so that they could know God and become saints and die and go to heaven. We have different materials and different responsibilities now. So, part of the mistake we made in learning all this was we changed the information, but didn't change the formation. We are still learning how to do this. Now, we are learning. We have learned. We have to accompany people to do these things. It is not just sufficient to give a good class.

It is necessary to accompany these people in understanding this, gently. That is why all these periods of formation say no less than six months, two years, and three years. Rule of thumb, practical experience of the Church, the Church allows in law, if there is a set period of formation, you may add up to one half of that set period as an extension. If you say six months, and at the end of six months they are not sure, you are not sure and it is

more important for you to be sure, by the way, if you are not sure, you can add three more months. If they are for two years in that period of formation before First Promises, they're not sure, you're not sure, you can add up to one more year. At the end of three years, they're not sure, you're not sure, you can add up to a year and a half, in segments, three month segments, six month segments; because you want to make the right decision and you want them to make the right decision.

I was Provincial in my Province three times. I sent eleven people home in those three times. Sometimes I sent people home I liked and sometimes I accepted the profession of people I did not like; because liking people has nothing to do with it. It is not whether you like them or not.

Are they whole?

Do they have these requisites?

If they are nice people, especially if it's your brother's, sister's, husband's, mother-in-law's daughter, that doesn't mean she has an in to make profession. Right?

This becomes, I think it becomes clearer with practice than it can be in theory. No, these lawyers, I'm telling you, Oh. The question was; is there a criterion or set of criterion that can be used in order to say no, if it is necessary to say no? My response to that is that I think that it is something that becomes clearer as the practice goes of accompaniment, because you begin to see things. Pay attention to doubts. You are the formatter, you pay attention to doubts. You don't make them a cause for a persecution and you don't white wash them away. You pay attention until they go away. If they stay there is something there. If they stay and it's not the first time, you wait, you have six months in getting people familiar, maybe nine months if it is necessary.

If you are a formatter, we have so many means of communication available to us, through e-mail, through telephone. You keep in touch with people along the way.

If you are formatter, you want to keep in touch because you want to accompany them. At times, you have nine months. They haven't made a promise yet but they are beginning to have two maybe three years before they make the First Promise.

We are not assembling Carmelites. We are forming Carmelites. I think it becomes apparent when a Formation Director says to the Council, "this person I think, really has it." The Council has the opportunity to make observations objectively, that might help make the Formation Director have an answer or might open the Formation Director's eyes to something that they are not seeing because they are too close. It works out with practice. The criterion is not set, because it's not objective, in the terms that it is not a test that you can pass or fail on. It is more under the influence of the Holy Spirit today.

I do want to make one little correction in the way you use order. The order is not you and us. It's us. How does the order make a commitment to you, when you make a commitment to the order? Because they receive your commitment. They provide a place for you to meet. Mainly, your other people in your community who are part of the order, you're meeting with them. They're there every month for you. Not just you there every month for them. The order makes a commitment.

No Carmelite, it would be impossible even for the friars, to take every course available to every Carmelite friar. There are certain people who go from certain provinces, I'm one with maybe two or three others, four others from my province in different years, we went to Avila for one year to study. The Philippines send a layman, the Secular Order members, not the Friars, the Secular Order members from the Manila community paid for

one of their people to go in Washington for two years. He is returning now that he's finished. He has returned now to be part of the formation team - a secular, a man, OCDS. Not everybody in every community needs to go, but a community can decide to support one of its members that might have the free time to go. So that person comes back and then shares with the community through the formation program that they help design. The commitment of the order is to be there. This is your commitment to be there. The order is not the friars, the order is not the nuns, the order is not the seculars. The order is the friars, the nuns and the seculars. Part of our mutual support is your mutual support to each other. If you lived over in one of those houses over there and you wanted to become a Carmelite, you couldn't do it alone. You would have to find other Carmelites, and you found them. The order made a commitment to you, it is there. At the end of six years it is definitive. That is why it is called definitive, you are a member of the order. Now it is your job to be there for others. The friars make a mistake all the time about the word order, they think it is us, meaning friars. A little way of correcting that word, and understanding the word, how is the order there, in the same way you are there for the people coming who are coming to your meeting now. The order sets up a structure for us, for the nuns, and for you. We all become a part of that structure to be present. And in the second part is that not everybody can come. When you are paying for courses that you're inviting people to come to teach, and they're coming from other places, you have to pay their airfare along the way. I don't know why things cost the way they cost, but they do. [Response to question from audience] No, you need be an accompanier. I am against being satisfied with information. In my province we made a mistake by confusing intelligence for capacity, or intellectual with intelligent.

[Response to question from audience] No, we are incarnate. It's not just the Holy Spirit. We learn from each other, this is part of being community.

[Comments from audience] Again, I am not defending anything of any course of action. I am defending the principle. The principle is that formation is not information. Formation is being accompanied in the process. You get someone joining Carmel, who has been formed personally in Our Lady of Medjugorje, who can take the information and twist it. If you don't have people who know what the information means, then it is not going to be the same information. You can take somebody who takes St. John of the Cross and the Ascent of Mt. Carmel and so distorts the words of St. John of the Cross, that you have people actually insulting the spirituality of St. John of the Cross by living a kind of rigidity and mortification that is offensive to God. Using the words, because they don't understand what is put to death in mortification. It is not you, it is not the self. There really has to be someone trained to give that information. To know what does it mean. This is the whole tradition of accompaniment in formation.

[Response to question from audience] It does. Now, we have to thank you. You opened up a theme that is also very important. Why is that some people come to some communities and turn away. Because they do not see in the community, the example of people who are living Carmelite spirituality. Especially if they come in and find groups, cliques, divisions. They can find that in the office. Why do they need to go on Sunday? It depends on how the community is functioning as a community.

Is the community functioning as a community?

This leads us to how the Council functions as a Council. Many times the divisions that exist in communities come from Councils that are divided. Especially if the Council has

on it a perpetual member. One of the advantages I have is that I don't know anybody or anybody's community, so I can come in and say things that nobody else can say. But the structure that is given in the Constitution on Councils, in order for someone to be a third time President, you have to get the Provincial permission. Two times is enough because the Council has to be able to function. It has to function, rationally speaking it has to function with respect for each other. I am trying to say what sometimes are the roots of divisions that exist in communities and why the community does not reflect or have the ability to live that experience is because as a community there's divisions that exists because this person was not elected. They were not elected as President and they're on the Council and they are upset, because they really wanted to be president, why? whoever knows. They set up sort unconsciously many times, a co-presidency. Or an anti presidency. There is a division in the community. Or it comes times for the Council to vote on people and somebody says something against somebody or a negative opinion about something and one of the people on the Council goes out and tells the person. It happens, I think, where people say things, that are said in the Council. Then the Council stops functioning as a Council because the person who is spoken about, her feelings get hurt, then her friends side with her and it leads to silly division, because the Council did not function as a Council. The Council has to function as a Council as long as there is respect for what is said in the Council.

What do they call that?

Confidentially, the persons, or members of the Council have to be able to speak their mind clearly. If they can do that, and the people understand that the way the Holy Spirit works, because it is according to the Constitution which is also the same in the Rule of Life (article 24 in the Rule of Life): the superior of the community is the Council, not the president. The president is not superior of the community. The president is not even superior of the Council. The president is the spokesperson of the Council, the mouthpiece. Some mouthpieces are very mouthy. The President speaks for the Council. It is the Council that decides. If you have three councilors who say "yes, mame" to the president, you don't have a council. The Council discusses, the president, the three councilors, the formation director. Those five people make up the Council, who discuss for the good of the community. Remember in the Rule of Life, it said the Council was supposed to meet once a year. Right? Now, in the Constitutions, when it talks about the Council, it says in number 47, it says the Council meets frequently and always when necessary in reference to taking care of formation programs and the growth of their own community.

Constitution Number 46 says: The Council composed of the president, three councilors, and the director of formation constitutes the immediate authority of the community. The primary responsibility of the council is the formation and Christian and Carmelite maturing of the members of the community. The Council has to function as a Council. Confidentiality, respect for what is said in the Council, understanding that's the way God arrives at decisions in our community is through the Council functioning. Also, it says the President, when it describes the president, is not to favor one person over another in the community, but is to be president actually of everybody in community. So, if we can avoid, and it is normal and natural, it happens among us, it happens with the nuns, and it happens with you, is that we like some people more than we like other people. It's natural. That's not what makes us brothers and sisters in Carmel. What makes us brothers

and sisters in Carmel is that we are committed to something beyond ourselves. When that works, then communities can and do. The communities form more by example, than they do by classes. This is the purpose of accompaniment in the formation process. You can talk about Christian charity in your formation class, but if they go into the community and hear back biting or gossip...if you're a gossip, go home now. Send them home now, because it ruins the ability for the community to function as a community. And as the community functions as a community, that shows. It guides the example of what is given in classes. You're right, but there is a condition on that.

[Response to question from audience] I think that basically it is true, because the more you look inward without abandoning the outward, the more integrated you would become with the outward. There are some people who look so inward that they disconnect from reality. The reality of life, the reality of family, the reality of work everyday, the reality of food to be eaten and prepared, the reality of schedules, they just disconnect. I think if you're connected to the outside, the more you become an inward person, the more you, I am not saying this very professionally, but the more integrated you become as a whole person in connection with the world.

[Response to question from audience] Well let's clarify one thing. Many of us when we use the word contemplative, especially as Carmelites, we have in mind probably a lot of times the example of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and St. Teresa. There are almost too many Carmelite nuns as saints, because we confuse contemplation with cloister and a cloistered style of life. Contemplative style of life is not a cloistered style of life. There are many people who have lived in cloisters, for many years who are still waiting to become contemplative, because contemplation, in Carmelite spirituality, is a gift of God. It is a quality of life as lived, gifted by God to be in relationship with Him in that certain way that enhances that life. Whether it is a nun in a cloister, a friar in a monastery, or a secular in a family, in work, in a parish of a secular priest. First thing is to clear up what do we mean by contemplation. We do not mean cloister, cloistered style of life. One of the readings I love is on the feast of St. Francis de sales, which is in office of readings, one of the examples he is using, if you're a mother of a family, you can't live like that of a Poor Clare Nun. I talked about this when I talked about Mary on Sunday. How much time it takes out of your day to do what you are supposed to do as lay people. You can still be contemplative because it depends on God, number one. We don't practice contemplative prayer unless God gives us contemplation. There is no sense in feeling guilty about not being contemplative because it is up to God, not up to you. It is the quality of life that improves with this knowledge of God that comes through prayer, through meditation, through dedicating ourselves to sometime for that contemplation.

[Response to question from audience] I sometimes say that Carmelites have the temptation to feel themselves dispensed from what the Church teaches because we are Carmelite. I got this a lot when I sent out original drafts about things and the importance of Christifideles Laici and all that Christifideles Laici says about the commitment necessary on the part of lay people in the Church. It is like St. John of the Cross says that if you are contemplative you don't have to do anything else. Well that depends on if God gave you contemplation, not whether you are making mental prayer, number one. Number two, it is a misunderstanding of what St John said and they know nothing about St. John of the Cross' life. So there is a temptation to think that because we are Carmelites we do not have to do anything else that the Church says. In the formation

programs that we hope are being developed in provinces now, after the new Constitution. (I have seen them, because some have been submitted already to Rome), it is not necessary to cover everything about St. Teresa or everything about St. John of the Cross in the first six years. It is necessary to see if the person has the stamina and the commitment to make themselves available to this life style in those six years, then we have the whole rest of life. Ongoing formation is so important, because it gives us the opportunity for all of this to deepen.

posted by Aloysius, ocd @ **05:34**

SCRIPTURAL MEDITATION

Father Michael Buckley, OCD

I. INTRODUCTION Perhaps I should say a few words by way of *apologia* for this paper. It is not at all Carmelite in character; it does not deal with any specifically Carmelite aspect of spirituality or method of prayer. Yet I feel that it is perfectly in order, and even very useful, to present it here in this Carmelite conference. Let me say why:

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council emphasized that each Order and Congregation should be renewed and inspired by a return to its original spirit - its founding charism. Subsequently many admirable efforts have been made to fulfill the mandate of the Council; and many religious communities have in this way rediscovered the riches of their heritage. Sometimes the search has been painful and arduous; but invariably it has been worthwhile and beneficial. Communities and individuals have reaped a rich harvest from the resulting research and study.

II. FOUNDERS' CHARISM One aspect not so much noticed in all this: the benefits accruing to the universal church. Individual religious groups have been enriched by contact and communion with the special charism of their founders. But many orders too have been inspired by tapping the resources of orders and congregations distinct from their own. We have all become more aware for example of the Jesuit (am I correct?) insight into spiritual discernment in the context of directed retreats. We are all very familiar now with the Franciscan spirit of detachment and poverty, the Cistercian spirituality of silence and quiet; and the dignified and profound Benedictine spirit of liturgical prayer. I should hope too that the church in general is now more keenly aware of our Teresian way and methods of prayer. In a wider contest, we are all somewhat familiar with Orthodox spirituality - even the words *poustinia* and *poustiniks* do not puzzle us any more.

It is in the interest of this larger context - universal church spirituality, so to speak, that I leave aside our own Carmelite spirituality for the moment to speak of a form of prayer which in ancient times was known as *lectio divina*. I will later try to justify the title: Spiritual Meditation, my very own translation of those almost untranslatable Latin words.

On a certain Monday evening some time ago I was walking in the Church grounds in Alhambra, reciting Vespers. It happened to be the fourth week of the month, a ferial day. I had just recited the Magnificat, and the intercessory prayers which follow it, and I came to the final prayer. This is what I read: "Stay with us, Lord Jesus, for evening draws near; and be our companion on our way, to set our hearts on fire with new hope. Help us to recognize your presence among us in the Scriptures we read, and in the breaking of bread."

That evening I was scheduled to give a talk on the scriptures - one of a series - to a group of people. I had been casting about in my mind for an inspiring thought to serve as a kind of preamble to my talk. I immediately realized that I had found the thought I was looking for in this prayer.

III. DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS I recall that episode just now because I want you to appreciate that beautiful prayer. You will recognize immediately its scriptural inspiration. "Stay with us...for evening draws near...be our companion on our way...set our hearts on fire..." The two disciples on the road to Emmaus: dispirited, dejected, without hope; the Stranger who joined them as their companion: their eyes "held" so that they did not recognize him; he explaining to them all the scripture passages which had reference to him; they pressing him to stay with them, for it was towards evening. When he blessed bread and distributed it to them their "eyes were opened" and they "recognized" him. Later they recalled how their hearts were on fire as he spoke with them and explained the scriptures to them. And they recounted to the apostles in Jerusalem all that had happened, and how they recognized him "in the breaking of bread."

That is the scriptural background and inspiration: the last chapter of St. Luke's gospel. It is also the last of the special passages which St. Luke, alone of all the evangelists, gives us. The story of the disciples at Emmaus bids fair to be the most loved passage in Luke's gospel. And, typical of Luke's insight and theology, it brings us face to face with a profound spiritual reality: that of presence: Christ's presence, how we recognize it and become conscious of it. And how we become aware of him present to us and speaking to us in the words of Scripture.

IV. PRAYING THE SCRIPTURES Our forefathers in the faith - Christians down the centuries - were fully convinced of this spiritual reality. They revered the Scriptures, prayed the Scriptures, looked to the Scriptures for inspiration and comfort especially at decisive moments of their lives. We have so many instances of this that it is difficult to select one as an example. I feel that the one I am choosing is the most dramatic of all, and the most elegantly described. I will not tell you until the end who is speaking; but I am sure the majority of you, if not all, will recognize who it is.

“Such things I said ‘How long, O Lord, how long...’ weeping in the most bitter sorrow of my heart. And suddenly, I heard a voice from some nearby house, a boy’s voice or a girl’s voice, I do not know; but it was a sort of sing-song, repeated again and again: ‘Take and read, take and read’...Damping back the flood of my tears, I arose, interpreting the incident as quite certainly a divine command to open the book of Scripture and read the passage at which I should open it. So I was moved to return to the place where Alypius was sitting, for I had put down the Apostle’s book there when I arose. I snatched it up, opened it, and in silence read the passage upon which my eyes first fell: ‘Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh and its concupiscence’¹...I had no wish to read further and no need. For in that instant, with the very ending of the sentence, it was as though a light of utter confidence shone in all my heart, and all the darkness of uncertainty vanished away.”

V. POWER OF THE WORD You will immediately recognize that celebrated passage, the conversion of St. Augustine, so graphically and dramatically described by himself in his Confessions.² The climax of his religious experience came as a result of reading and reflecting a text of Sacred Scripture. Such is the power of the Word, verified so often in people’s lives, most palpably in the lives of the saints. But we should not think that the power of the Word of God is verified only in the lives of the saints or in the distant past; it is an ever-present reality with all of us, in one degree or another. Which of us, for example, has not experienced, as we listen reflectively to a liturgical reading, a very real sense of God’s presence, of God speaking to us. Can we recall, for instance, an occasion when we felt overwhelmed with care, overburdened with sorrow, bereft of any sense of God’s providence. Maybe it is just at such a moment that we hear the words: “Therefore be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life a greater thing than the food, and the body than the clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they? But which of you by being anxious about it can add to his stature a single cubit? And as for clothing, why are you anxious? Consider how the lilies of the field grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these.”³

Or we may feel humiliated about our faults and failings, caught in the grip of a diffidence born of pride and self-reliance; oblivious of God’s merciful love - perhaps it is just at such a moment we find ourselves in church as the reading is proclaimed from the gospel of Luke, Ch. 15...the three stories of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost or Prodigal Son.

Or again, our faith is being tested, God seems far away, we are in a cloud and suddenly as if by inspiration we open Luke, Ch. 24; read that consoling story of the disciples meeting Jesus unexpectedly on the road to Emmaus; confessing later that their hearts were burning as he talked to them on the way, and how they recognized him in that, and in the breaking of the bread. I merely speculate; each of you, I believe, can verify this for yourselves. Indeed it may be a much more acute and constant experience, some Scripture text tugging at our heart strings for a long time: indicating that God wishes us to face up to some big decision: “Sell all you have and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.”⁴

VI. MONASTIC PRACTICE It is difficult to overestimate the place that the Sacred Scripture had in the life of the early church: it was absorbing, all-embracing. The use of Sacred Scripture for prayer was the monastic practice. It was for the ancient monks what the Exercises are for the Jesuit, what methodical mental prayer is for the Carmelite.

¹Romans 13:13

²Book 8, par. 12

³Mt. 6:25-29

⁴Mt. 19:21

Many spiritual writers have remarked that Benedict in his rule never speaks of mental prayer. The reason is that Scriptural prayer covers all that we refer to when we mention the name meditation, and more besides.

The word which the early monastic tradition gave to this type of prayer was *lectio divina*. It is a Latin title, because they thought and spoke in Latin. And it is one of those Latin phrases which is well-nigh untranslatable. A strictly literal translation into English would give you the words: “divine reading,” which at first sight conveys no precise meaning. The adjective “divine” refers to the book that is used in this prayerful exercise: the Bible. It is called “divine” because, as the early monks were well aware, it is not a book like other books. The Bible is the word of God, which means the Word who created the world, and now desires to re-create it anew.

VII. THE BIBLE AS HISTORY The Bible is merely the expression, in history, of the re-creating Word, re-echoing within the confines of creation, taking it up and fashioning it once more. To succeed in understanding the Bible it is essential to envisage it as a history. It is the history of an assembly of people, an assembly convened by the Word of God, and gradually assuming a certain form both human and divine under the breath of the living word.

Once we comprehend the overall design of God’s plan, it is easy to understand how the Scripture can become the whole of our meditation. And we experience in ourselves how the Scripture unfolds itself on three levels or planes. The first is the plane of the history of the people of Israel. The second is the plane of the history of Christ. The third is the plane of the history of the church being built up by our own history. Consequently everything in the Bible relates to us; it is threaded through with great themes, the final application of which refers wholly to us in Christ.

So much for the word “divine,” indicating the sacred source of the lectio. What about the reading itself. It is here especially that we must take a profound effort to understand. *Lectio* means literally “reading,” but it has not at all the same meaning that we give to the word. If this is to be prayer, and it is, one does not read just in order to have read; here we do not read to retain an idea or a formula, something which will be useful on a future occasion. It is better to liken the exercise to a conversation with a friend; enjoyed for its own sake, and not merely for what we can learn from it. Or we might compare it in a way to intellectual culture; it is of value not for what we learn from it, but through what it makes us become.

VIII. NOT MERELY INTELLECTUAL Entry into this wisdom is clearly not a purely intellectual matter. It might in fact be termed sacramental: it renews in us that of which it speaks to us. We feel that we must lend ourselves, dedicate ourselves as the material of its creative work. It becomes eminently personal, the true mark of prayer. Origen of old distinguished several categories among the readers of the Word. First, those who listen to it with pleasure, but merely as if it were music which delights for the moment, without making any permanent impression. Then there are those who drink it in like rich wine and who are intoxicated with a holy fervor. But the only genuine “hearers of the Word” are those who become, through the Word, “doers of the Word.” They are those whom the word of the Cross bruises in their turn. They are those who go down to the wine press with the vine dresser and concur in this crushing of themselves as the necessary condition of their rebirth. They will become hearers of the Word only if they themselves have first of all been touched and marked with its imprint of fire.

The ancient monks distinguished four aspects of this sacred “reading”: (the) reading (itself), meditation, prayer and contemplation. These were not four degrees of prayer, as they sometimes seem to mean for us. They were four aspects of a single organic activity. We might attempt to describe the activity or process this way. A person might sit down, Bible in hand, in reverence, in silence. A few moments should be spent in making oneself aware of the presence of God, the presence of Christ among us as we read the Scriptures. Then one should begin to read. The selection can be quite capricious: it may be some passage at random; it may be the continuation of a sequence; it may be a favorite passage depending on our mood. It is interesting to note that the ancients always did the reading aloud: it was always articulated. St. Benedict presupposes this when he prescribes that during siesta anyone who wants to read rather than rest should do so in such a way as not to disturb anyone else (48, 5).

IX. PRAYER OR CENTERING This method of prayer which begins with the reading of Scripture and is closely aligned with the Word of God, draws attention to a long-standing Christian tradition. This recognizes the value of repetitive vocal prayer as a route to contemplation. That ancient tradition is corroborated in our own day by the theory and practice of what is termed the “prayer of centering” (a term we owe to Thomas Merton) corroborated also by the present vogue of eastern mystical practices: mantras, etc. The mantra is a secret word, a word unique to the individual, a word which has power to evoke the personal identity as Christians; a Word which, when we know and love it, can inspire us, can liberate us from all that holds us back from God, and bring us to the apex of Christian fulfillment.

That Word is Jesus, and that Word is deep within us all. Reading the Scriptures aloud is the beginning of prayer because it sets up a rhythm of prayer, a cadence of peace and concentration which is a necessary preamble to prayer. The word of the text is meant to evoke the Living Word within me. The Holy Spirit who inspired the authors of scripture is the same Holy Spirit who has been given to me in Baptism and Confirmation, the Spirit who is the soul of the Church. Perhaps the words of St. Paul have relevance here: “The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For we do not know how to pray as we ought: but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with the sighs too deep for words. He who searches hearts knows what the Spirit means, for the Spirit intercedes for the saints, as God himself wills.”⁵

A careful, slow, reverent, vocal reading of the text which will form the basis of my prayer is essential; it is important to use the voice and even the breathing as aids to establishing the atmosphere of prayer. All this is an implied act of faith; in God who wills that I should know him and sense his presence by giving myself over to His word in Scripture.

The four “stages” of prayer might proceed like this:

LECTIO After I have composed myself and read the Scripture passage carefully and reverently, I may pause to collect, or center my thoughts and feelings. Then I may go over again what I have read - silently, this time. The point of this exercise is that, after a faithful and reverent reading, some particular words or phrases of the text may strike me as being particularly meaningful or moving. If the passage has been about sin and forgiveness, for example, some words about the ingratitude of sin, or the kind mercy of God may have impressed me in a special way. In the first phase, I use my voice to open my heart to God; in this second phase I am trying to open my emotions and feelings to Him. I think of the way in which the great mystics allowed themselves to be profoundly moved by memories for example of the Passion of Our Lord.

MEDITATIO The next step is to find meaning within a given reading. If I am concerned with sin for forgiveness, I can go on to consider its implications; I can draw lessons about sin and the merciful forgiveness of God. I can explore the feeling which it arouses in me. I seem to recall that St. Thomas Aquinas said that the formal object of Theology was not knowledge, but love. Francis Thompson, in his famous poem “The Hound of Heaven,” pictured God as relentlessly pursuing his creatures, seeking their love. Perhaps man too is a pursuer. With a mind and heart insatiably hungering for knowledge and love, he does pursue God, seeking to understand His life and gifts. And it is in prayer that we really share the life and gifts of God.

CONTEMPLATIO/ORATIO This step is surely the most difficult to describe; it is the very heart of this method of prayer. There are two things involved here: a) a person’s attempt to contemplate God, and b) a person’s realization that God is contemplating them. In the Catholic tradition we have always maintained the distinction between “active” and “passive” contemplation: active contemplation being one’s own efforts to penetrate into the mystery of the life of the Trinity: passive contemplation being a person’s surrender of one’s self to the Trinity which penetrates sacramentally and mystically into our life. It may be that such interpretation of God and the praying soul cannot be programmed into any method of prayer. The best we can do is to encourage ourselves to be “active” - to seek out a deeper sense of the mystery of God’s presence. But we should also cultivate a certain awareness of waiting for the Lord and a conviction that He does come. Continuing with the subject of sin and forgiveness, the perfection of prayer would be to have this experience: that while I am using my voice, searching my emotions, analyzing my mental powers to derive deeper meaning from all I have read - while all this is going on, I am taken hold of by the awareness that at this very moment while I am struggling to find God, He has found me in the very center of my being. While I recite, mull over and reflect deeply on the theme of forgiveness, He is loving and forgiving me. While I search for Him, he has found me. This is real prayer: to be caught up by the Lord while we were trying to find Him.

X. SPIRITUAL GROWTH In such a form of prayer, there is little self-reflection in the way of attempts to define the type of prayer or state of spiritual growth. This is for God to know, not for us. The deep mysterious touch of the Holy Spirit incarnates God’s word in us in silent mystery, in deep consolation, or in the mysterious knowledge that arises from union with the sufferings of Christ. St. Paul speaks of the scriptures in this way: “All the scriptures were

⁵Rom. 8:26-27

written for our instruction, in order that through the encouragement they give us we may derive hope with confidence.”⁶

At first sight a person might think that here we have only a slightly different version of “spiritual reading”: an ascetical exercise which became widespread in post-Tridentine spirituality. Monastic tradition however will show that *Lectio* differs considerably from “spiritual reading,” or any similar practice of setting aside each day a time for reading of Scripture or religious books. The traditional understanding of *lectio* has qualities and dimensions which go far beyond what we generally understand by spiritual reading.

We all have experienced the joy of curling up in a soft chair with an interesting book. We have taken care of our surroundings; the lights have been adjusted properly; it is our favorite chair; the room is quiet, noises eliminated: we may even have a little drink close at hand, to take care of our immediate needs. We have forestalled any possible interruptions, and concentrated our attention on the act of reading.

XI. CONCENTRATION In a similar way, we begin our Scriptural meditation with a special discipline of concentration; a concentration which reaches far deeper into the personality and calls for much greater attention. The first step is to strive to bring our entire life into a focused awareness; and this can be most clearly concretized in a complex act of reading. This concentration begins with an attention to our bodily posture. All too often it may be overlooked that prayer depends upon a physical substratum. Authors insist on this, even to the extent of telling us that we should sit up straight, be in an alert yet relaxed pose, and feel perfectly composed and comfortable. Even the reading which is part of this prayer is “physical.” We are to pronounce the words with our lips, at least in a low tone. Consequently we hear the sentence seen by the eyes, just as today, in order to learn a language, we are advised to pronounce the words. The result is more than a visual memory of the words: the sacred text is inscribed, so to speak, in the body and the soul.

XII. THE WHOLE PERSON Even more important is the step of concentrating and centering all of one’s mental abilities. Intellect, memory, will, affections and emotions are still engaged in the process. It is a work which engages the whole person, all the faculties and emotional powers. It is not possible simply to plop into a chair and immediately begin meditation; exterior and interior disciplines are demanded. Our mental and affective powers are brought into a state of readiness by exercises that increase our self-awareness. An element in this self-awareness is the sensitivity which comes to us from the presence of beauty; natural beauty, artistic beauty, or liturgical beauty. Invariably, in the ancient monastic tradition great care was taken to ensure that the religious lived in the presence of beauty. I am always impressed when I visit great monastic establishments (sometimes ruined) at the attention given to this. Often it is the beauty of the natural surroundings - think of how Benedict, Bernard, Francis, St. John of the Cross appreciated this. It can also be the beauty of artistic achievement; or liturgical celebration. Prayer in the ancient tradition was intimately bound up with these forms.

A collection of ancient patristic texts dealing with meditation, which has had an enormous influence since its appearance in a Venetian edition in 1782, goes under the lovely name *Philokalia* - “love of the beautiful.” Perhaps, after all, an appreciation of the good and beautiful has a great deal to do with meditation and prayer.

And this reference to beauty is the note on which to end. I have said something: the rest you can fill in yourself. In the end, prayer is not a matter of theory, but very much of practice.

XIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY 1. Please refer to Article 4 of the OCDS Rule.

⁶Rom. 15:4.

OUR FIRST DUTIES AS CARMELITES

Fr. David Centner, OCD

What is the *pars potior* (the most important part) of the Carmelite vocation? The answer usually given was prayer; by that meaning quiet or contemplative prayer. Is this a sufficient answer?

The Rule itself makes it clear that our first duty is to serve Christ with pure hearts and upright consciences. In scriptural terms, that means that we believe in him and put his word into practice.

To serve Christ rightly, we must turn to the gospels and learn what it is that he commands us to do. In the pages of John's Gospel we learn that his commandment is: "Love one another as I have loved you." It would follow that the *pars potior* of our vocation is to love and cherish one another.

That statement surprises many Carmelites who think that their chief responsibility is prayer and sacrifice. Yet, as St Paul tells us, if we do not have charity, everything else; including our prayer and sacrifices is of no avail. He even tells us, "Bear one another's burdens and you will fulfill the Law of Christ."

When Mother Isabel of the Angels, the only one of the Spanish Mothers to remain in France when Carmel was established there, was asked by the Carmel of Amiens to write some words of encouragement, she wrote (in deliciously mixed French and Spanish) about charity, not about observance. Her words were something like this: "As we have so little opportunity to converse with one another, we must anticipate one another's needs. This is what our Mother Teresa wanted, for this is the principal part of our religious observance."

Secular Carmelites have even less opportunity to converse with each other than do friars or nuns who live in communities. Yet the obligation of cherishing one another is as important for seculars as for religious. When we see communities that fail to love one another unconditionally as Christ does, we can doubt if all their knowledge of our spirituality and their practice of prayer has any value at all.

But how do we learn to cherish one another, especially when we know that all of us (myself included) have moments when we are disagreeable and all of us have natural antipathies? I think these things are extremely important:

"Do not judge and you will not be judged...for the measure you measure will be measured back to you." Holy Mother Teresa put this into practice by refusing to say anything negative about anyone, especially in their absence. As a consequence, she drew many to herself.

Always consider others better than yourself. By this we do not mean false humility. We mean the recognition that God gives different talents to everyone. There is no one alive who is not naturally better than I am in some respect. And as for supernaturally better, only God knows. But we do know this, the moment we exalt ourselves for some virtue, we lose it, for then charity has gone out of it.

As a consequence we listen readily to one another, and we reach out to help one another. We grow in patience and compassion, for we know that God has been very compassionate with us. In this way, we open the door to letting Christ bring to perfection His charity within us.

Conclusion: If we are to be true friends of Christ, as Holy Mother so ardently desires, because Jesus himself desires that, we must determine to be true friends of one another.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST STEPS IN THE SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES (THE ASPIRANCY PERIOD)

Doreen Glynn Pawski, OCDS

The period of aspirancy in the Secular Order is the most critical time, both for the candidate and for the community. This is the time when both parties have the opportunity, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discern a vocation to the Carmelite Order. It could not be a more important period and the new Constitutions have underpinned that point by extending it to one year.

For the OCDS community considering the candidate, this is a crucial time because the Council of that community has an awesome responsibility to the person being considered and to the Order itself. Fr. Aloysius Deeney, OCD has emphasized the seriousness of our position in this regard many times and has laid down guidelines for us to follow when deciding if an aspirant or candidate is to be accepted into the Secular Order. It is vital that we no longer slip into the pattern, in a mistaken idea of being charitable, that anyone who takes the trouble to come to meetings should be accepted into the Order. It is essential, from the very first day, that aspirants be educated carefully in the charism, the Rule of St. Albert, the Constitutions, and the expectations of the Order. The responsibility is definitely twofold -- for the aspirant and for the community -- but, unlike the practices of the past, it is wise to realize that the real burden lies with the community. This is because candidates often feel that they should be Carmelites, for various reasons, notwithstanding what is obviously clear to the contrary to the Council and/or the community. If we are truthful with ourselves as OCDS communities, we will admit that people without vocations have been accepted simply because we have been reluctant to say no. Because of the reluctance to deny persons, the Council then has to live with that decision and the problems that may arise for the community in the future. Since it is true that it takes six years before a person makes Definitive Profession, there is a theory that the community and candidate have plenty of time to discern the vocation, but with each step forward in the formation process, a candidate can and often does feel entitled to acceptance. If there are problems in the beginning, that is the time for the community to take the courageous step of denial. This is fairer to both the aspirant and to the community.

A twelve month period of aspirancy is not actually that long, especially considering the fact that it only consists of twelve meetings. For that reason, it behooves communities to keep the aspirancy class size fairly small (no more than twelve), so that the teacher can get to know each person. Because the Council of the community must decide whether or not an aspirant will be accepted into the community, it makes sense that the teacher should be one of the members of the existing Council.

The period of aspirancy could be called the honeymoon period for the aspirant and the community. This is the time when there is a great rush of enthusiasm and an awareness of new beginnings. It is important to put aspirants at ease, to welcome them warmly, and to introduce them to the spirituality of the Carmelite Order. However, aspirants need to know from the outset that they will be expected to live the life of Carmelite Secular

members from day one. That is why requiring weekly reading of the Constitutions is so vital. That is why the Aspirant class should not be a matter of the teacher simply giving aspirants information, but one of constant checking that they actually understand and that they are doing their best to live the life. The teacher cannot possibly help a candidate to discern his/her vocation without constant interaction. Questions have to be asked, expectations have to be fulfilled, and checking for understanding has to take place constantly.

Aspirants cannot go into the formal period of formation without being firmly grounded in the Constitutions and without actually having lived the life of Carmelite Seculars for a full year (or more, if deemed necessary). For this reason, it is incumbent upon communities to make the year of aspirancy one of in-depth study of the Constitutions and the charism of the Order.

Teachers of aspirants can only know what aspirants are doing, believing, and understanding if they ask. This is the time to ascertain if aspirants are rooted in prayer, are willing to be obedient to the requirements of the Constitutions, and are actively studying on their own. The teacher and the community cannot assume anything; they must find out directly from the aspirant. In the past, how many members have gone forward into formation and beyond who do not know the Constitutions thoroughly, who live the life half-heartedly because they do not really understand the implications of a lifetime commitment, who think of the Order as a social-religious group, and who are caught up in borderline superstitious ideas and activities? If we are honest with ourselves as communities, the answer is more than we like to admit.

That is why there is nothing wrong with asking, with actively testing for comprehension (in writing), and with inviting each aspirant to talk about how he or she is living the life of a Carmelite. All of these things can be done in a warm, congenial atmosphere that makes aspirants aware of what they are undertaking and of how seriously the community takes their vocation and the responsibilities that come with that vocation.

It should be made eminently clear to newcomers that membership in the Secular Order is a calling from God to a specific way of life and that God may not necessarily be calling every person who comes as a beginner to our meetings. There is no "shame" attached to not being called to Carmel. Persons who do not remain with us should be helped, through prayer and guidance, to realize that God has other things in mind for them if they choose not to continue or if they are not accepted. If the Council finds it necessary to deny acceptance, this is the time for the teacher and the Council to explain charitably and carefully that the person should pray to be open to whatever God has in mind for him/her as an individual, and that God has provided a wonderful variety of ways to serve Him through the gifts He has given each of us.

IMPEDIMENTS TO JOINING THE SECULAR ORDER

Doreen Glynn-Pawski, OCDS

Those who come to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites can be presumed to be seeking a more structured prayer life that will lead to intimacy with God for the good of the Church and the world. As a part of the Catholic Church, the Order of Carmel must require, however, certain criteria for membership, so that all can authentically live out the life in obedience to the commandments of God and the laws of the Church. This does not mean that there is a type of exclusivity in Secular Carmel; rather, it simply means that every member must be able to participate fully in the life of the Church and Carmel in the freedom of conscience that is afforded by adherence to God's law. Persons who feel they have a vocation to Carmel, but have certain impediment(s) to membership may confer with Church authorities to seek remedy or release from such impediments. It is not to exclude that Carmel must refuse membership, but to help the candidate acknowledge and understand that an impediment exists, and to assist him or her to seek God's grace in taking any possible steps to remedy the situation. Until remedied, impediments act as a bar to membership in the Order.

There are impediments to becoming a Secular Carmelite that may be self-evident, but which need to be mentioned explicitly by the formator early in the process to avoid errors, misunderstandings, miscommunication, and hurt feelings. With the assurance that it will be kept confidential, the candidate must reveal anything that may present an obstacle to entering the Secular Order to the President or Director of Formation at the beginning of aspirancy. This information will be kept within the confidentiality of the council. It is the responsibility of the council, with the help of the aspirant, to discern whether this person has or has not a potential vocation to the Secular Carmelites.

Impediments to entrance include, but may not be confined to the following:

- Under 18 years of age;
- Not able, for any reason, to participate in the sacraments;
- Not confirmed in the Church;
- If married, not married in the Church;
- Re-married outside the Church;
- Holding beliefs that are expressly in opposition to Church teaching; and
- Living a style of life that is considered scandalous and in opposition to Church law.

Membership in any other Order would prevent a person from faithfully fulfilling the requirements of either Order. Prudence, as well as a vocation to the charism of a particular Order, should inform a lay person's decision to make a special commitment to God in just one Order. It is necessary for a candidate to inform the President or Director of Formation of any stage of membership in another Order. It is the duty of the OCDS

Council to ask if any new candidate is a member of another Order. Dialogue can then be initiated as to which Order the person is truly called. Membership in other Church associations can also raise similar concerns.

SAYING NO WHEN THE CALL TO CARMEL IS LACKING

Rebecca Lambert, OCDS

Not everyone is called to Carmel. While we have the obligation to give a warm welcome to guests and to nurture vocations to our Order, we must also recognize when someone is not equipped to be received into our OCDS community. While the Holy Spirit may lead people to our community and give many blessings during our meetings, the next step for some individuals may not be to further progress in our formation program, but toward a different way of life. It is a disservice to delay those who are on a path to discovering their true calling.

Perhaps the most obvious sign that a person is not called to our community is continued absence from meetings without contact with at least the president. Some people maintain excellent attendance, however, and insist that they belong in Carmel even after it is clearly discerned by the council of the community that they do not share our vocation. It is in these cases that it becomes necessary to say no.

It is easier to say no when we are also saying yes, and we can discover reasons to say yes. As we get to know our guests, we learn what attracts them to Carmel. It may be their love of St. Therese, their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, or their desire for a more structured prayer life. They may be searching for a sense of belonging, or they may be looking for an audience that will listen to what they want to teach. Insight into each person's motivations is invaluable in the process of discerning God's call, and it helps us to be of greater service on those occasions when we must refuse admittance to the next stage of formation. One of the kindest things we can do is to help people find what they are really seeking.

The person with an overarching love of St. Therese may find spiritual nourishment in the Pious Association of St. Therese. Someone who is devoted to the scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel but is not suited to living by our Rule and Constitutions may do best in the Confraternity of the Scapular. Another person who is active in many organizations may simply need to make more time for personal prayer rather than find yet another community of people. We do well to learn about the opportunities and associations in our diocese in order to make appropriate referrals. The internet, of course, is very useful for this purpose.

One reason it is hard to say no is that we dread hurting another person's feelings. We have reason to expect the other person to become closed to us and unwilling to hear what more we have to say. This is a time when we especially want to show caring, but we have no control over how the other person will react to our message. What we can do is pray and make every effort to be both tactful and honest. By God's grace acting through our knowledge and love of the person, we may find ourselves saying that the Carmelite saints are for all the Church or that our Lady protects all her children.

Regardless of how our words are taken at the time, we may find later that they gave the loving encouragement that the person needed while also protecting the community from the problems caused by people who are fitted to a different vocation.

DISCERNMENT

Francis J. Lindekugel, S.J.

I. INTRODUCTION

“Beloved, do not quench or suppress the Holy Spirit, but test and prove everything to see whether they are from God; test and prove everything until you recognize what is good; to that hold fast.”¹

Since the essential means of growth into the full stature of Christ, through union with Him, is our identification with **Him** in His (and our) passage to the Father, the Spirit of Christ is ever drawing us to a greater conformity to Christ in the Enduring Redemptive Act of Love which is our dying (to the false self) and rising (to our true self) in and with our Head and Bridegroom.

When communicating Himself in grace to humanity, God brings about in them the acceptance of this communication and the response to it. This is above all the movement of Faith, Hope and Charity. In them God is present to the consciousness, as the object of these virtues.

Since the “Grace of Discernment” is nothing less than the experience of God in the concrete particulars of daily life, the Experience of Him Who transcends the voice of all creatures is heard only in the inner silence of our transcendent self, the inner sanctuary of the heart. The most fundamental requirement for docility to the Voice of the Spirit is the grace of interior silence and recollection.

This interior Silence and Recollection is born and grows through the constant purification of the three divine, transcendent and unifying energies of our spirit: Faith, Hope and Love. Our daily growth in humility of heart and the spirit of prayer opens our entire being to receive a continuous increase of the gifts of Faith, Hope and Love, enabling us to live our daily life and make our choices by Faith, with Hope and in Love.

Let us touch on these interior dispositions that are so necessary for hearing, understanding and responding to the Silent Voice of the Spirit of the Father and Son, as He speaks to us in the silence of our heart.

Since the entire process of Discernment is “by-in-with-through” the Holy Spirit Himself, our growth in these interior dispositions of mind and heart (Docility, the theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Love, Humility and Prayer) is itself the work of the Holy Spirit in us, with our cooperation. And since these dispositions are from the Spirit, they too, become for us, norms for discerning His Presence and Activity in the deepest recess of our heart.

II. DOCILITY TO THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT

¹I John 4:1

A. The Docility Required of Beginners.

In the first stages of the spiritual life, the Spirit guides and directs us in the daily exercise of the virtues, both moral and theological - Faith, Hope and Love. Consequently, our fidelity to the inspirations of grace consists primarily in daily growth in the virtues, the exercises of which integrates and unifies all our forces and energies of soul and body. This opens us to the movement of the Holy Spirit through the operations of the Seven Gifts of the Spirit; and what the Spirit brings is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Trustfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.

B. The Docility of the More Advanced.

As we become more delicately attuned to the silent, interior spiritual movements of God's Spirit testifying to our spirit; as "He speaks to us deep in our hearts" (to use the words of St. Paul in Romans 8:16) we enter into the fully "spiritual" life through the operation of the Seven Gifts of the Spirit, which are found revealed to us by God in Isaiah 2:1-3 and with which we were endowed at Baptism.

These Seven Gifts are the divine, passive energies of our spirit that place us at the constant disposal of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to surrender at any moment to the inflow into our spirit that of God's own Divine Light and Love, perceived by us through the interior senses of our spirit's intuition.

"To love this Spirit is to let ourselves be taken along by Him as a feather is carried by the wind; to let ourselves be possessed by Him as the dry branch is possessed by the fire that burns it; to allow ourselves to be animated by Him as the sensitive strings of a lyre take life from the artist's touch."²

C. All is the Work of Love.

From first conversion to Transforming Union with the Indwelling Trinity, the grace of docility is the grace of Christian Agape;³ God's Love flooding our hearts.⁴ Our response to the Spirit's continuous love is always a love that is called, a love stirred up, a love that responds to God's love. This activity does not have its origin in us. We are acted upon by the Spirit of Christ, Who gives us the capacity to respond to His love.

This continuous address of God's Spirit to our spirit is always addressed to our full liberty: God who knocks will enter only if we open to Him; God Who chooses would Himself be chosen; God Who offers Himself would have us give ourselves to Him in love, so that He might fill our being with the fullness of His love.

III. THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR DOCILITY

²Martinez, *The Sanctifier* p. 68

³a-gape2 (ä-gä'pä) (ä'g • -pä) —n. 1. Christian love. 2. Love that is spiritual, not sexual, in its nature. 3. In the early Christian Church, the love feast accompanied by Eucharistic celebration. [Gk. agapē, love.]

⁴Rom. 5:5

The voice of the Spirit is gentle; His movements are very delicate. To perceive them, we need a profound interior silence and peace of both mind and heart. To attain docility to the interior motions of God's Spirit interior silence and recollection are imperative.

“In order to attain this holy docility to the motions of the Spirit, the soul must be so silent and recollected that it can hear **His** voice; so pure and so filled with light that it can clearly perceive the meaning of the divine inspiration; so surrendered to the will of God that it embraces that will without hesitation; and so selfless that it performs that will without stopping at any sacrifice. Love accomplishes all this alone, or through the virtues and gifts which it coordinates and directs; for love as St. Paul teaches, ‘believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things’.”⁵

“Love brings recollection and silence to the soul. Whosoever loves, distinguishes among thousands of voices the voice of the beloved. Does not a mother know the voice of her child among all of the sounds, does she not hear it even when she is asleep? Love causes silence because it brings solitude and recollection; because it concentrates all its activity and desire on the beloved. The Holy Spirit frequently speaks to souls, breathes upon them, and inspires them. But they do not hear Him except in the measure of their love for Him, in the proportion in which love has anointed them with silence. Closely united with the Holy Spirit through love, souls feel the secret palpitation of the heart of God.”⁶

IV. FAITH AND THE GRACE OF DISCERNMENT

“Only by the Light of Faith (the impressive word is ‘only’) and by meditation on the Word of God (the essential means of growing in Faith), can one always and everywhere recognize God, in Whom we live and move and have our entire being and activity.”⁷ “Seek His will in every event, see Christ in all men whether they are close to us or strangers, make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in their relationship to man’s final goal.”⁸

Discernment, then is not a question of being intellectually clever; it is a question of being graced with the Pure Light of Faith, a question of being graced with an intimate, personal knowledge of Christ, Who is both the Light by which we see and the Reality seen, Who is, therefore, the entire reality of the grace of discernment, given to us by the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Discernment.

V. HOPE AND THE GRACE OF DISCERNMENT

“He Who calls you is faithful, and He will sanctify you through and through: spirit, soul and body. He will do this for you, just as He promised you.”⁹

⁵Archbishop Martinez, *The Sanctifier*

⁶Ibid.

⁷Acts 17:28

⁸Vatican II, *Decree on the Lay Apostolate*

⁹I Thess. 5:23, ff.

Hope is an ardent longing for Transforming Union with the Indwelling Trinity through conformity to the Father's Will, through identification with Jesus, with His Filial Love of Obedience to the will of the Father in the Sacrament of the present moment.

Since the entire meaning, purpose and fruit of discernment is to seek, to discern and to embrace the Father's will in all the situations and events of daily life, it is not difficult to see how the grace of discernment grows in the measure our complete and total hope and trust in God grows, in His Power to embrace the Father's Will, which is made known to us through the Light of faith. How great is our need of this strength, God's strength which hope and trust in God's Power.

“Those seeking to know the Father's Will can succeed only if they seek it with the intense desire to do it as well as know it. Anyone who seeks to find God's will with the intention of deciding after he finds it whether he will do it or not, already has a barrier to finding it. He is not yet free from the blinding effect of self-will, of selfish interest. He will very likely end thinking his own will is God's will.”¹⁰

At times, after receiving some good inspiration from God, we immediately find ourselves assailed by repugnances, doubts, perplexities, and difficulties, which proceed from our weak fallen nature, our addictions which are directly opposed to divine inspiration. **How great is our need of hope and trust in God.** How great is our need of Divine Strength for discernment which hope and trust in God gives us. We must trust then in His Fidelity to His Word of Promise to be our strength, in His infinitely loving Mercy and Power.

Moreover, the more faithfully a person responds to the inspirations he receives the more grace he receives. God responds to our fidelity by giving more and higher graces in our journey to Transforming Union. Therefore, it often happens that a person experiences temptations to fear and timidity. He asks: Where does this way lead? How shall I be able to bear up under these increasing demands? How can I fulfill them? If at this point we begin to rely on ourselves and not on God alone, or if false discretion urges us to remain mediocre, then we lose courage and cannot go forward on the road of fidelity. This seems to be one of the chief reasons why so few reap the full fruits of “docility”.¹¹

VI. CHRISTIAN AGAPE AND DISCERNMENT

The grace of discernment, “the grace to test the spirits to see if they are all from God,”¹² has its deepest origin and fruit in love, as does everything that is truly Christian.

¹⁰Jules Toner, S.J., *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, Sept. 1971

¹¹Joseph de Guibert, *The Theology Of The Spiritual Life* p.116

¹²John 4:1

The process of discernment is entirely rooted and grounded in love, and this for many reasons, not the least of which is that love unites us immediately and directly to the Supreme Norm of Discernment which is God.

For fruitful discernment of the varied impulses, attractions and aversions that we may be experiencing, it is imperative that we be able to transcend them; distance ourselves from them, in order that we might view them from a higher level of consciousness; see them in the Light of God Himself. Love is this power of transcending what must be discerned; it is the power of resting in God, in God's own Divine Light, which enables us to view all that we experience in the outer man from the level of our spirit.

If we are to discern the Voice of God, it is imperative that before and during the process, we hold our wills indifferent to any particular choices until we know what the Will of God is for us. Otherwise we will be inclined to hear and respond to the subtle voice of self rather than the Voice of God. Love is this power of complete detachment from anything and everything that is not God Himself, His Will for us. As St. John of the Cross says so well:

“Of its very nature love subjects the lover to the Person loved. Love of God, then makes us love all that He loves, transforms our wills into His Will, so that there are no longer two wills but only One; that of the Beloved, to which we conform ourselves perfectly. To love God is to lose our will (false self) in God, so that we no longer love anything but what God Himself loves.”¹³

As we saw, the key to the entire mystery of “Discernment” is an ever more perfect and habitual state of love, “Docility to the Holy Spirit,” for which the essential condition is Interior Silence and Recollection. Since it is Love that begets this interior recollection and silence, love is essential in the entire process of discernment.

Whoever loves distinguishes among a thousand voices the Voice of the Beloved. Love brings silence because it concentrates all its energies on the Beloved, awakening in our spirit a deep longing to hear His Voice and to surrender ourselves in love to Him Who so loves us.

VII. SOME CONCLUSIONS

Faith, Hope and Love are the work of the Holy Spirit in us, sharing with us the Divine Consciousness of Himself, which is the supreme norm of all genuine discernment. Our collaboration with the Holy Spirit, is our openness to hear and respond by faith, with trust and in love to the Divine Word He implants in our hearts; the Father's own Divine Word of Divine Truth, Promise and Love.

Since the measure of the inflow of the Spirit's Gifts of Divine Faith, Hope and Love, which are the Divine Powers of discernment, is in proportion to the depth of our humility, true and genuine humility is certainly one, if not the most basic disposition for discernment.

¹³St. John, *Ascent To Mount Carmel*, Bk. I, Chap 2, No 2-5

VIII. THE DISPOSITION FOR HUMILITY

God is close to the humble of heart, indeed He lives in them with all the graces of discernment. This is so because God is where Truth is and Humility is Truth; it is the lived Truth of my essential, ontological, and personal relationship to God as creature to Creator, the needy one to the Source of all of which I need, the beneficiary to the Benefactor, the servant to the Lord, the sinner to his Savior, the son to His Father, the bride to her Spouse, the temple of God to the Indwelling Spirit as Friend, Guest and Director.

Since Humility is Truth, the humble of heart will fully acknowledge and accept themselves as they are. They come into God's Presence, as they are and God sees them fully aware of their sinful condition, their radical poverty of spirit, their experiences of frailty and weakness, their failures in loving God, neighbor and the world with His own Divine Love.

The process of discernment will always be fruitful, always lead to greater identification with Jesus in the mystery of His dying and rising, to the extent it is carried out in truth: the truth of my complete and total dependence on God for His Divine Light, Strength and Love, the truth of acknowledging that in the process of discernment, I am deeply wounded in spirit, soul and body and am, therefore, in great need of Christ's healing love in the here present situation of discerning the Voice of the Spirit. We begin, continue and conclude our discernment not only in the consciousness of our great need of the Father's merciful love but with an ardent longing for the healing of all our spiritual, mental and physical wounds, especially those of which we are unaware and which are influencing the whole process of our discernment.

If humility is the most basic and fundamental disposition for discernment, it is also the clearest sign and norm of the presence of the Spirit in the interior movements of our spirit. The reason is clear: any genuine experience of God awakens within our deepest heart a profound reverence, respect, littleness and humility. The greater our experience of God the greater our experience of the littleness of the creature and the Transcendence of God, the sinful condition of man in the presence of the infinite holiness of God.

IX. REFLECTION

“The Holy Spirit saves us from the impulses that would throw us into wild competition with others. He delivers us from ambition. He is most easily recognized where He inspires obedience and humility. No one really knows Him who has not tasted the tranquillity that comes from the renunciation of our own will, our own pleasure, our own interests (without glory, without notice, without approval) for the interests of some other person.”¹⁴

“The inspirations of the Holy Spirit are not grandiose. They are most simple. They move us to seek God in works that are difficult without being spectacular. They lead us to paths that are

¹⁴Thomas Merton, *Ascent To Truth*, p. 185

happy because they are obscure. That is why they always bring with them a sense of peace and liberation; ‘for He is the Spirit of Truth, and the Truth shall set you free’¹⁵.”¹⁶

X. PRAYER

“Prayer is absolutely essential for authentic discernment that we might arrive at true liberty of spirit and not be led astray by subtle self-seeking, prejudice, nor fixations caused by insecurity. Prayer is absolutely essential that each person may be truly open to the Spirit, seeking and desiring only the Father’s greater honor and glory, one’s own perfection and that of neighbor.”¹⁷

The Truth of Humility opens our spirit to all the graces of Faith, Hope and Love, the exercise of which is Prayer, union with God that gives us the Divine Light, Strength and Love necessary for all genuine discernment.

The Light of Faith experienced in prayer, faith that is strengthened by hope and inspired with love, is Light upon the existential Word of God here and now. It is the Light given by the Spirit which illumines one’s self, persons, events, situations in the Light of Christ.

Prayer is union with Christ that gives us the Mind of Christ, the divine Consciousness of Christ, which is the supreme norm for discernment.

With the Mind of Christ, His own Divine Light enlightening our spirit, we see all creatures as they really are, as God sees them; we see them as entirely from God, in God, to and for God.

Above all, this pure light of faith, experienced enables us to discern the deep motivation coloring a person’s reading of the evidence of God’s actual call to him, so that he will be truly free and open to the Spirit illuminating the evidence. Thus we are able to discern the orientation of our thoughts and feelings as we prayerfully reflect on the decision to be made.

“This discerning prayer is a reflection upon the existential Word of God indicated in the concrete evidence of the actual situation and contemplation of the word of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, in the living tradition of the Church and experienced in each person’s own spiritual history.”¹⁸

XI. THE ANAWIM

“My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, my soul magnifies the Lord, for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaid. He who is Mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His Name.”¹⁹

¹⁵Jn.14:17

¹⁶Thomas Merton, *Ascent To Truth*, p. 185

¹⁷Futrell,S.J. *Studies*, p.60

¹⁸Futrell, op.cit.,p.61

¹⁹Luke 1:47

One word expresses the entire spirituality, the entire mystery of discernment in both the Old and New Testaments: *Anawim*, the little ones, the meek and humble of heart, the poor in spirit those who in loving docility to the Holy Spirit, place themselves by faith, with trust and in love at the complete disposal of the Holy Spirit. In fulfilling His Divine Mission in our lives the Holy Spirit is thus able to transform us from glory to glory into the Image of the Son, into the Son's own communion with the Father, with men and with the whole world - through love.

The joy, peace and fruitfulness of true and genuine discernment is ineffable contentment and happiness of the *Anawim*, the lowly and humble of heart, the true servants and handmaids of the Lord.

Through the grace of discernment the Holy Spirit is able to reproduce in us His greatest Masterpiece: our risen, glorified head, Christ, in the measure He finds in us, as He found in Mary, the interior dispositions of the *Anawim*: the meek and humble of heart, the unique example of which is Jesus and His Mother:

“Learn Of Me Because I Am Meek And Humble Of Heart.”²⁰

XII. CONCLUSION

Apex of Discernment:

“When we yield ourselves to the experience of the Spirit, when everything that can be grasped, named or tasted fades away, when we transcend all created reality, then we can be sure that not only the spirit, but the Holy Spirit, is at work in us. Then is the hour of grace. Then the uncanny fathomlessness of our existence, which we experience, is really the unfathomableness of God, Who is communicating Himself to us. It is the first approach to His infinity, in which there are no paths to be found, and which tastes like nothing, because it is Infinity.”²¹

“When we have yielded ourselves and no longer hear our own voices, when we have denied ourselves and no longer control our own lives, when all things including our own being are torn from us and flung into the distance, then we begin to live in the world of God, the God of grace and eternal Life. At first this may seem strange and unfamiliar. Ever and again we shall be tempted to flee back into the accustomed and the near; indeed we shall be compelled and permitted to do so. **But we must seek to acquire a taste for the pure wine of the Spirit**, that which is charged with the Holy Spirit. Or at least we must come to the point of not pushing the chalice away when His providence extends it to us.”²²

“The chalice of the Holy Spirit in this life is identical with the chalice of Christ. He alone will drink it who accustoms himself by degrees to find fullness in emptiness, success in failure, life in death, riches in renunciation. He who has learned this is

²⁰Mt.2:29

²¹Karl Rahner, cited by Dulles in *The Ignatian Experience In The Theology Of Karl Rahner*, p. 484

²²Ibid.

capable of experiencing the Spirit, the pure Spirit, and in so doing experiences the Holy Spirit of grace. For such a liberation is not normally given, at least in the long run, unless one accepts in faith the grace of Christ. And when a person is liberated in this way, they are set free by supernatural grace to plunge into the very Life Of God, which is the Life of our spirit, the ‘spiritual’ Life.”²³

“O’ Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from the wise, clever and learned, and revealing them to the little ones, to the meek and humble of heart. Yes, Father, I praise You that such was Your gracious Will and good pleasure.”²⁴

XIII. APPENDIX

St. Ignatius’ Rules For Making a Good Choice:

“In every good choice, as far as it depends on me, our intention must be simple. I must consider only the end for which I am created, that is, for the Praise of God our Lord and for the salvation of my soul. Hence, whatever I choose must help me to this end for which I am created.”²⁵

In making important decisions, in matters that are either good or indifferent in themselves, it is important to have a good, simple, practical method for discerning the Voice of the Spirit, for knowing what God’s Will is for me in the matter to be decided. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius gives us the following helps for making wise decisions.

The following are three circumstances in which a good decision might be made:

The first is, when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will, that without doubting, or being able to doubt, a devout soul follows what is shown it, as did St. Paul and St. Matthew in following Christ the Lord.

The second is when enough light and knowledge is received by experience of consolations and desolations, and by the experience of the discernment of various spirits.

The third is when one considers first why they were born, namely to praise God and save his soul, and desiring this they choose a life or state within the limits of the Church, in order to serve his Lord and save his soul. This is a time of quiet, when the soul is not acted on by various spirits, and uses its natural powers freely and tranquilly.

In addition there are two ways that will help in all circumstances:

A. The first way has six points:

²³Ibid.

²⁴Mt. 2:25-26

²⁵The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, No. 169

1. Put the choice before you, such as an office or benefice (or anything that falls in this category) whether to take it or leave it.

2. It is necessary to keep in mind the end for which I am created, which is to praise God our Lord and save my soul. I should not be more inclined or disposed to take the thing proposed and try to keep myself indifferent, without any inordinate propensity. I should think of myself in the middle of a balance, with an option to follow what I feel to be more for the glory of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul.

3. Ask God our Lord to move my will and put into my soul what I ought to do regarding the thing proposed, so as to promote more His praise and glory; discussing well and faithfully with my intellect, and choosing agreeably to His most holy pleasure and will.

4. Consider how many advantages follow from holding the proposed office or benefice for only the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul. Then consider the disadvantages and danger that follow having or not having the same.

5. After I have discussed and considered all sides of the question to look where reason more inclines: and so, according to the greater inclination of reason, and not according to any inclination of sense, I should deliberate on the thing proposed.

6. When the choice is made the person should go with much diligence to prayer before God our Lord and offer Him his choice, that His Divine Majesty may be pleased to receive and confirm it, if it is to His greater service and praise.

B. The Second Way contains four Rules:

First Rule is that that love which moves me and makes me choose such a thing should descend from above, from the love of God, so that he who chooses feels first in himself that that love, which he has for the thing which he chooses, is only for his Creator and Lord.

Second Rule is to set before you a person you have never seen before and ask him what he would choose for the greater glory of God our Lord, and the greater perfection of his soul.

Third Rule is to consider if you were at the point of death what choice you think you should have made in retrospect.

Fourth Rule is to look and consider how I shall find myself on the Day of Judgment, to think how I would then want to have deliberated about the present matter.

“Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve You as You deserve; to give and not count the cost; to fight and not heed the wounds; to toil and not seek for rest; to labor and not ask for reward, save that of knowing that I am doing Your Will.”

- St. Ignatius

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2. The *Holy Bible*.
3. *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, Book I.
4. *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, by Joseph de Guibert.
5. *The Ignatian Experience in the Theology of Karl Rahner*, by Dulles.
6. *Studies*, by Futrell, S.J..
7. *Ascent to Truth*, by Thomas Merton.

VOWS IN THE SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES

Fr. Michael Buckley, OCD

The moment we hear the word “Vows” we think automatically of religious. The “vows of religion” is a phrase that comes immediately to our minds: vows and religion are always associated in our thinking. Indeed, for religious men and women, vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are of the very essence of their vocation. Regularly vows are made after novitiate, and again a few years later; the only difference is between simple (temporary) and solemn (perpetual) vows.

So it is a new concept when we encounter vows in the context of a Secular Order as we do in Carmel. Yet, the exclusive association of vows with religious people is not warranted. A glance at the Canon Law of the Church will illustrate this. The Canon Law speaks about vows in numbers 1191-98, just before a chapter on oaths. Our Secular legislation makes no reference to the Canon Law when it speaks about vows. That is not necessarily a defect or lacuna in our Constitutions. Our legislation is in accord with sacred canons, but it is essential to be familiar with these. Let me summarize the chapter. It begins with a precise definition: “A vow is a deliberate and free promise made to God concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion.” Then it goes on to distinguish vows which are a) public, i.e., accepted in the name of the church, b) solemn or simple, c) personal or real, d) how vows cease or are dispensed, etc. These canons should be read by all who are inspired to make vows.

Regarding the taking of vows in the Secular Order, there has been quite an attitudinal shift in the course of the years. And I feel we should be familiar with that if we would fully appreciate our present legislation. Have patience with me as I take you back over the years and our Secular Order history. Just about a century, no more. Don't panic; this is a useful exercise. And we will not need a century to do it.

We can begin with a look at a little book which goes back to 1921, approved by the Definitory on April 13. It is entitled *A Manual of the Third (Secular) Order of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa*, and was approved by Pope Benedict XV on March 6 of that year. This book, which contained the Rule of Life, plus a section on the government of the Third Order and a section on Ritual (Ceremonial), had served as the handbook of the Third Order for many years. The reason for the 1921 edition was the appearance of the Code of Canon Law in 1917. All subsequent legal documents in the Church had to be conformed to that. This little volume in 1921 incorporated the changes consequent on the revision of Canon Law in 1917.

In this legislation, at the end of the year of the novitiate, the tertiary made profession. And this profession involved vows of obedience and chastity only. Paragraph 30 stated,

after giving the profession formula, that the vows were to be renewed twice a year; and then in Number 31: “The vows of Obedience and Chastity have not the same binding force as Religious vows; they expire on leaving the Order.” (There was no need to dispense from the vows as there was for religious who left the Order.)

Chapter 8 and 9, in typical fashion and very precisely, indicate the conditions for sinning gravely against these vows. Briefly, one would have to disobey a *written precept* given by a superior in the presence of two witnesses.

We notice therefore about this early legislation that only vows of obedience and chastity were made at profession time. And that took place one year after clothing. Clothing took place after a postulancy of two months’ duration. We are accustomed to a much longer period of time – up to a year before reception, a formation period of two years leading up to the temporary promise; a further three years before the final promise. Then in the case of vows, a year of deliberation and prayer before application is made. With the adoption of the present draft Provincial Statutes, at least one more year will be added before vows can be taken. That can be summed up: In former times, vows could be made after one year and two months; nowadays the minimum time before making vows is 7 ½ years. By means of these statistics we can see the extent of the change that has occurred between 1921 and the present; strictly between 1921 and 1979, since the 1921 legislation remained in force only until 1979.

The transitional change from this old style to the present was not achieved in one phase. It began with the approval and publication of the *Rule of Life* in 1979. This publication came following the Second Vatican Council. We recall that all religious Orders were invited, after the conclusion of the Council, to initiate a process of revision of their Constitutions. For us Carmelite religious that was accomplished through a series of General Chapters with the collaboration of the entire Order. Proposed *ad experimentum* in 1976, our new laws under the title of *Constitutions and Norms* were finalized by the General Chapter of 1979. By mandate of the Chapter they were approved by the Extraordinary Definitory in 1980, and ratified by the Sacred Congregation – Pentecost 1981. Further modifications in Canon Law at this time delayed the publication of the final text until 1986, and the English translation until 1988.

I mention these details and dates because the process of updating the Secular Order legislation went on during the same time. The work began after the Council. The revision followed wide consultation concentrating on “basic principles and highlighting the way of life of our Secular Order members.” The text was approved *ad experimentum*, October 1970. A commission of experts from diverse regions later set to work on a definitive text. It was approved by the Sacred Congregation on May 10, 1979, and published under the title: *Rule of Life*. The decree of approval notes: “The faculty is granted to discontinue the old name: Third Order, and take on the new name: The

Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites which is more in keeping with the earliest traditions.” I should like to observe here that the Manual revised in 1921 had as its title: *Manual of the Third (Secular) Order* I like to note that, as it is sometimes thought that the 1979 *Rule of Life* was the first to use the word “Secular”.

It is in this legislation for the first time that we are introduced to “promises”. “After sufficient contact with the community, the candidate is admitted for a period of formation, which normally extends for two years before the temporary promise, and for another three years before the definitive promise.” (1979 *Rule of Life* Art. 10) Vows are only mentioned as an option for members who request them a year after final promises.

Hence, in our Secular Order, the 1979 *Rule of Life* introduced us to the new reality of “promises”. If Vows are taken after a year has passed since final promise, this legislation notes, in Article 15: “These Vows are understood and interpreted in the same way as the promises in articles 12 and 14.” These two articles refer to the promises of chastity and obedience. Article 15 also notes: “The Vows add to the observance of chastity and obedience the merit of the virtue of religion. They constitute a more complete offering of oneself and therefore entail a greater moral responsibility.” We note in the profession formulas used for Vows and Promises this difference: Vows are made “to God in the hands of the superior...”, whereas Promises are made “to the Superior of the Order ...”. This difference is vital for the understanding of the Vows: their special merit consists in the fact that they are made directly to God; hence they link us up with the virtue of religion. It is here that we need to be precise: they oblige in accordance with the virtue of religion, but they do not make us religious; and this is made abundantly clear in our present legislation.

Exaltation of Vows

Let us consider for a moment an Instruction of Fr. Philip Sainz de Baranda, OCD – former Superior General (updated in 2003). It is appended to the Ritual of 1990 (October), and approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in February, 1991. It was written as an aid to priest assistants, homilists, and council members. It speaks first about the Promise. Then it deals with the Vows.

“7. Anytime after a year from the definitive promise, a member may ask, as a personal option, to be admitted by the council to the profession of the vows of chastity and obedience for life. While the Promise was made before God to the Superiors and members of the Order, the vows are made directly to God, for vows are acts of religious worship. Thus, the vows add the merit of the virtue of religion to the observance of chastity and obedience. They constitute a more complete self-offering and therefore entail a greater moral responsibility. The binding force of these vows, freely made, renders more

visible the bond of love and commitment that exists between Christ and His Bride the Church.

He adds this note:

⁵⁷From the Juridical point of view, these are authentic vows with effects in the “external forum”; more than merely “private vows”, they are “recognized” by the Church. (Their juridical standing runs parallel to the nature of the vows taken by members of Secular Institutes, explicated by the Vatican II Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis* n. 11). The nature of Secular Order vows is given in OCDS Constitution #39, officially approved by the Holy See in 2003 (Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life: Prot. n. C.228-1/2003). By means of the vows, members are more fully bonded with the Secular Order which is a “Public Association” according to Canons 301 and 312 of the Code of Canon Law. Admission to and dispensation from these vows require the confirmation of the Provincial Superior, who represents the authority of the Order (cf. *OCDS Constitutions*, #39, #47a & #58f).”

He goes on to link vows with worship, and Baptism and Eucharist. He has this explanation for the fact that our Secular Order members do not take a vow of poverty:

“11. The fact that Secular Carmelites may add vows of obedience and chastity to their promise does not devalue poverty which is not formalized by vow. Christian baptism itself entails the cultivation of the spirit of poverty, great attention to the needs of the poor, and the living in this world as though possessing nothing. For pastoral reasons poverty is not vowed, for its concrete object and material limits are not easily determined by general principle. Rather, living the beatitude of poverty is a matter of on-going personal discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, it is clear that, by making one’s definitive commitment in the Secular Order, a member explicitly promises to tend, for the whole of one’s life, towards evangelical perfection in the spirit of the evangelical counsel of poverty as well as of chastity and obedience. This holds true with or without a vow.

After this outline of our legislation since 1921 concerning vows, are we in a position to formulate some ideas that might lead to a theology of the vows at the present time? I shall try to contribute something to that, dealing with the matter under various heads.

A remarkable change

We have seen since 1921 a remarkable change in the deliberation period before vows are taken. As I mentioned, the change in the time frame for taking vows from a year and two months in the earlier legislation to 7 ½ years in our present *Constitutions* is truly remarkable. This, as we saw, came about in a series of intermediary Rules of Life, and with the introduction at a certain stage of promises leading up to optional vows (in our legislation since 1979). Any comment on that shift in perspective must surely see in it an acute realization of the gravity and sacred nature of vows. It invites us to be keenly aware of the exalted nature of this offering directly to God, which derives its merit from the virtue of religion. This is something which needs special deliberation and mature discernment. I was very pleased to see in the new draft Provincial Statutes that the taking of Vows is given further precision and clarification.

The 1979 legislation states, in Article 15: “One year after having made the definitive promise, the secular Carmelite who so requests it, may be permitted to take the vows of chastity and obedience”. Our new *Constitutions* (n. 39) do not specify the time. Instead in Number 58f, they leave it to the Provincial statutes to determine the circumstances and conditions for taking vows. In accordance with that, compare our draft Provincial statutes (Sec. XV Vows). Let me quote a few of the provisions:

- “1. Any member who feels called ... may petition the council not less than one year after the definitive promise.”
- “2. ... the member will commence a year of prayerful discernment.”
- “3. The member must be fully informed of both the serious obligations and the rich graces associated with the vows.”
- “5. The member will provide the council with the name of the priest who will be directing him/her during the one year discernment.”
- “6. The vows are strictly voluntary. The promise makes one a full member of Carmel and the vows do not change that status.”
- “8. After the year’s discernment, the member will send a formal letter ... requesting consent to make vows. A letter of recommendation from the directing priest should be sent....”
- “9. When making its decision the council should consider the following criteria: the member must be faithful in living the promise; the member’s life must be suitably ordered, with any major irregularities resolved so that there are no blockages to grace; the member must have a healthy, balanced integration of the experience of God with the experience of

daily life. There should be evidence of greater charity, detachment and humility.”

“10. An individual guided preparatory retreat and a general confession are highly recommended.”

11. The council, together with the spiritual assistant, will prayerfully deliberate... council will inform the Provincial in writing of the request”

Among other things, if I read it correctly, this extends the one year required after definitive promise in the 1979 *Rule of Life* to at least two years. And it gives a number of important directions on this time of preparation. Another notable difference in our present legislation is that now the Provincial has the ultimate word of approval after the Council has ended its deliberations.

A different slant

These recent requirements (in the draft Provincial Statutes) and the explanatory note by Fr. Philip which we have seen, have the effect of exalting the importance of vows and their special obligation. On the other hand, one cannot fail to notice in our Constitutions a rather different slant. Constitution 39, the basic legislation for the vows, begins with a very casual, almost dismissive phrase: “All of Christ’s faithful have the right to make vows ...” – a partial restatement of Canon 1191 §2, which is concerned only with vows in the most general sense. Then it goes on: “With the consent of the community and the permission of the Provincial, a member of the Secular Order may make vows of obedience and chastity in the presence of the community. These vows are strictly personal and do not create a separate category of membership. They suppose a greater commitment of fidelity to the evangelical life but do not transform those who make them into juridically recognized consecrated people as in Institutes of consecrated life. Those who make vows in the Secular Order continue to be laypersons in all juridical effects.” Further, in Number 12 the *Constitutions* state: “By the *promise* made to the community in the presence of the Superior of the Order or his delegate, the person becomes *a full member* of the Secular Order.” (Emphasis added.)

In light of these contrasts, we should, I think, have recourse to what is called creative tension. This is an attitude of mind which helps us to respect and understand two aspects of reality which are both valid, but seem on the surface to be in contrast. Our tendency at times when we encounter this actuality is to emphasize one over the other. A good example occurs in our thought processes regarding God. God, we are taught, is Transcendent. That means he is totally other, beyond our ken, he is spirit, infinitely distant from us, eternal, omnipotent, etc. At the same time, we are taught that God is immanent. That means he is as close to us as we are to ourselves. He lives in us. He

communicates with us. We bear Him within us. These two realities are contrasting. And to hold to these truths simultaneously we need to receive them in our minds as different aspects of a complex reality. In the matter of vows, our legislation is aware of the seeming anomaly of a community of lay persons assuming the profession of vows. This is not the case that is envisaged in Canon Law – a private individual making a vow. As Fr. Philip, our former General, makes very clear in his note in the Ritual, these vows are more than private; they are authentic, with effects in the external forum, recognized by the Church. In our present *Constitutions*, Article 39, these vows are made with the consent of the Council and the permission of the Provincial.

Observations for the future

By way of conclusion, may I be allowed to make a few observations in relation to the future. I assure you I am not taking on the mantle of a prophet; just a few words about the ongoing matter of legislation. I like to remind myself here of the canonical status of our present *Constitutions*. You remember that they were definitively approved by the Sacred Congregation on June 16, 2003, having received them from our General Definitory on June 10. Our Father General, in his letter, indicates “surprise” with this definitive approval, since he was expecting only approval *ad experimentum* for five years. Hence he writes, “We, the Order, will still make use of the five year period for making concrete observations on this text, eventually asking the Holy See to approve certain changes as practical application indicates.”

We have seen quite a sea change in our legislation just since the year 1921. For those of us who may remember the years between 1921 and 1979, the differences would be impressive, and not only in the matter of the vows. They would manifest themselves especially in the way in which the Third Order of old replicated the style of the Friars. Office holders were called Priors, discreets, subprior, master of novices, etc. The normal clothing was “a scapular of brown serge, composed of two parts, about ten inches in length and seven inches in width.” However, this was “without prejudice to the laudable custom of wearing a more elaborate habit on solemn feasts.” My lasting memory of a group which met in St. Teresa church on Clarendon Street, Dublin, is associated with the wearing of the full habit. I do not recall these details in any belittling way, but to show how things have changed because of a new consciousness in the Church regarding the theology of the laity.

Let me quote here an observation made following on the Council document on the laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (November 1965). In Father Walter Abbott’s edition of the Council documents, he includes a comment on each document. In this case the comment is by Martin Work, Executive Director of the National Council for the Lay Apostolate in Washington. He writes:

“Although a ‘lay apostolate’ has existed in the Church since the days of our Lord in Jerusalem, it was not until the Second Vatican Council that the Church’s official thinking on the matter was stated in a conciliar decree. As one layman put it pungently, ‘The lay apostolate has been simmering on the ‘back burner’ of the Church’s apostolic life for nearly two thousand years, and finally the Fathers of this Council moved it up to the ‘front burner’ and turned the heat up all the way.’ Everyone hopes it will ‘come to a boil’ soon because so much of the Church’s mission depends on an apostolic laity. Indeed, the renewal of the Church, called for by the documents of the Council, depends in great part on a laity that fully understands not only these documents but also their own co-responsibility for the mission of Christ in the Church and in the world.”

I know that further documents on the apostolate of the laity have come since: notably *Christifideles Laici* in 1988, quoted at great length in our *Constitutions*. But that paragraph by Martin Work expresses well the developing consciousness of the Church concerning the laity, a vast development indeed.

Are we to say that such development in doctrine and praxis has reached its peak and come to an end? One would not like to answer yes to that question. We are always in mind of the phrase in St. John’s gospel: “When he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will lead you into all truth.” (John 16, 12) But we leave all that to the Spirit and to our receptivity to the Spirit. Meanwhile we possess *Constitutions*, which reflect for us the ideals of Carmelite Seculars in the Church. They take into account the most up-to-date theology of the laity, while retaining many venerable traditions. They inspire us, pointing out a way to God based on a renowned spiritual tradition. Let us in our day strive to be worthy of this, our Carmelite charism.

WRITING A SYLLABUS

Doreen Glynn Pawski, OCDS

Before we begin to talk about writing a syllabus, we should demystify the words curriculum, syllabus, and to a lesser extent lesson plan.

As directors of formation, you have received the curriculum for the six year program of formation in the Secular Order.

- A *curriculum* is simply a plan for a course of study in a particular subject or subjects. It lays out what will be included in a course, the objectives and outcomes, and the materials that will be used. Our OCDS curriculum outlines the required materials to be covered in the formation program, while providing each community with the freedom to determine the manner in which they will be implemented.
- Using the curriculum as the guide, a *syllabus* is the schedule of how and when the course will be presented by the instructor.
- Based on the syllabus, a *lesson plan* is the instructor's personal plan for presenting the course material and activities to students. The *lesson plan* is the creative part of this whole process and you will be hearing more about this in a presentation to follow. It takes the requirements of the syllabus, blends the primary and secondary materials, and creates activities that make the subject matter come alive through planned activities, discussion, student presentations, and very short lectures. The more students are involved during the class period with varied activities, the more interested they will remain.
- A *syllabus* usually lays out the schedule for a complete course of particular study, while the *lesson plan* fleshes out each part of the syllabus so that the teacher can provide instruction and learning activities within the outlined schedule of events in the syllabus. Most instructors have a lesson plan for each class meeting.

You have been provided with a curriculum from which each director of formation, in collaboration with the Council, can create a syllabus or syllabi to best suit a community's particular needs. The biggest advantage of a

syllabus is that, once written, it can be kept indefinitely as the basis for a teacher's lesson plans.

The curriculum you now hold was created with the idea of providing each community with the flexibility to present its requirements in the way best suited to the community's circumstances and needs. This is where the syllabus comes into play.

- Some communities may choose to have a syllabus for each period of formation. For example, a certain community may have a syllabus for the year of Aspirancy, another syllabus for the two years of initial formation, and yet another for the three year program of study before definitive profession.
- There is even more flexibility in the presentation of on-going formation for the fully professed, so a plan for that course of on-going study can be created via a syllabus in accordance with the community's wishes.
- Other communities may choose to lay out their plans for each period of formation with syllabi for every book that is being studied. This type of approach could possibly be used by large communities that have a director of formation and two or three instructors. Conversely, this type may fit a small community's needs just as well.

In any case, a *syllabus* takes the particular course of studies and presents a schedule for its presentation within a set period of time. Because we meet once a month, the schedule can be based on an eleven or twelve month schedule. Certain materials may require a three to six month period, while others could require an entire year.

- For example, if the syllabus is being created for St. John's The Living Flame of Love, based on the amount of time allowed for each class meeting, a schedule for how long it will take to cover the book must be decided. After that has been decided, the schedule of how much will be covered during each class can be determined.
- Because a syllabus, and a lesson plan for that matter, should be student centered and not teacher centered, a syllabus must be created with the candidates in mind; that is, how much the candidates can be reasonably expected to do before class meets (homework) and how

- much they can be reasonably expected to learn within a class period. For that reason, ancillary material, which may increase a candidate's understanding of the material being studied, can be presented in class, rather than as homework assignments. If secondary sources are truly useful and are listed in the curriculum, they can make for very interesting subject matter for a deeper understanding and for discussion within the class period. When they are introduced in this way, secondary materials can help to confirm the candidate's own interpretation of the primary material or bring depth into the understanding. It is always wise to concentrate on the primary material when building a syllabus and when teaching a course. It does not make sense to teach our candidates about our holy father, St. John of the Cross, for example, by using secondary books, while ignoring his own writings.

Because a syllabus should be more than just a schedule, however, the other elements can be added after the determination of the length of study. Taking The Living Flame as our example again, if the first twelve pages are to be studied in one class meeting, expectations of students must be indicated. Will the members in formation -

- be expected to write any notes or express their reactions to the reading,
- will they be expected to have done any kind of homework,
- and what will be the assigned reading or writing for the next meeting?

The format of a syllabus should be -

- easy to read,
- uncomplicated,
- and logical.

Taking the curriculum as the guide, a syllabus should include, after the title of the work –

- the year of formation in which it takes place,
- full information on the work being studied and any other materials which may accompany it,
- and the schedule, with required activities and homework assignments.

- The objective of the study and the expected outcomes for students may also be included. Please note that objectives and outcomes, if stated, should be simple, reasonable, and based on the curriculum.

Initially, creating a syllabus or syllabi takes time, thought, and effort, but it provides a community with an invaluable tool for organizing the entire six year period of formation for its members. Once built, it can be permanent, as long as it meets the needs of those in formation. Of course, there is no need to create all syllabi at once. That is the advantage of our six year program. There is plenty of time to confer on and create one syllabus at a time.

WRITING A LESSON PLAN

Patricia Thibodeaux, OCDS

I have been asked to write a few thoughts about creating lesson plans. This is both an honor, and a humbling experience. What I would like to do is to suggest some ways to approach lesson planning using the new Uniform Formation Guidelines, and to point out helpful related resources included in the Formation binders. In drawing up these guidelines, the Formation Task Force was careful to avoid words such as “teacher,” “student,” “class,” and “homework” because these words have negative connotations for some people and because Formation is so much more than simply reading a book and answering some questions. Although I will be using some of these terms, as well as results of educational research, I ask that you remember we are not setting up ordinary classrooms, but Teresian schools of Christ.

The best way to begin the planning stage, as we begin any endeavor, is with prayer. Those of you who attended the first Formation Directors meeting (held at El Carmelo in January 2003) will remember Fr. Kanjiramukil’s conference on the Holy Spirit as the true Formation Director of souls. We are only the Spirit’s instruments, and as such we need to remain open and responsive to where He may lead us. We can pray before preparing each lesson that God will use us to do His work, that the candidates will be open to what He wants them to hear, and that the Spirit will grant all of us the gift of understanding.

As Doreen Glynn Pawski states in her article on Writing a Syllabus, a lesson plan follows from the syllabus. The syllabus tells me what information I am going to present; the lesson plan tells me how I am going to present it. There are many ways to communicate the knowledge we wish to impart. One of the most common is the traditional lecture. Another might be by eliciting information through a question and answer format, or through small group discussions based on questions which have been previously assigned. It is often best to use a variety of approaches in each lesson.

At the first Formation Directors’ meeting, Toni Hagi, then Formation Director for the Las Vegas Community, gave a presentation on Learning Styles. You may remember the individual assessments she distributed so we could determine our own learning styles. If a lesson plan is to be student centered, which it should be, then we must be aware of the different ways our candidates best learn new information. The 3 main styles of learning have been categorized as: visual (for those who learn best by seeing information), auditory (for those who process new information best when it is heard), and tactile/kinesthetic for learners who learn most efficiently by “doing.” For a visual learner to try to learn a foreign language using the “listen and repeat drills” in a language lab can be torture (as I can personally attest!) or for kinesthetic learners to try to master material only by attending lectures can be a very frustrating experience. Certainly, the candidates

should be responsible for their own learning, but as teachers, it is a sign of respect for us to be aware of the diverse needs of the individuals we are forming. This means thinking creatively about how we present the material to our Formation classes and using a variety of formats to get the message across. At the end of this article, you will find two charts that give more information about Learning Styles on one page, and a brief explanation of four Teaching Styles on the last page.

Since most people tend to teach as they were taught, we also need to be aware of what different teaching methods are available for us to use. If a student's learning style is compatible with the teaching style of the teacher, then students tend to retain more information and can more effectively apply it and have a better attitude toward the subject. After all, isn't that one of our goals? Pages 99 and 100 in your Guidelines, entitled "Teaching Methods and Principles for Developing Assignments," contain a list of suggestions for different methods of both teaching and developing assignments in order to bring variety into your Formation classes. In addition, "Principles for Leading Discussions" on page 97 contains excellent suggestions for beginning and encouraging participation in group discussions. All of these ideas can be incorporated into your Formation presentations and activities.

I would like to give an example. I begin to write each lesson plan by checking my notes from the last meeting. Did we have time to cover all the intended material? Were there any difficulties that need to be reviewed, or perhaps presented in a different way? Which areas of the class were most successful and which need more work? When writing a lesson plan, it is good to keep in mind all the materials that will be presented and look for ways they can be integrated into a single theme. Let's use as an example a class on "The Living Flame of Love" by St. John of the Cross. This poem and its Commentary are presented in Year 2 of Formation I. These candidates are in the year preparing for the Temporary Promise. If I am preparing a lesson for Stanza I numbers 19 and following, I notice this section is a digression on "purification, or the purgative way," so I can choose this as my theme. I consider if I have any audio or video materials, handouts, or speakers I may wish to use for that lesson. We always begin the class with a reading of the entire poem we are studying. Then I could give a short lecture on the role of purification in St. John of the Cross's writings, and how it relates to the theme of Divine Union in The Living Flame of Love. Since we would have recently studied the biographical introduction to The Collected Works, I could ask for examples from St. John of the Cross's life which show how he dealt with opportunities for purification. If written work has been assigned based on the reading, then some time must be allowed for questions and answers.

Also, this year of Formation is designated as a time for deeper study of the Constitutions and words of the Promise, so this would be a very good time to ask the candidates what practical application our theme of purification has for Carmelites today. They could look for examples in the Carmelite Rule, the Constitutions, especially in the Promise, and in

the Statutes. If this is assigned ahead of time, it can make for a very interesting discussion with each person given an opportunity to contribute what they have discovered. If not, candidates could be divided into small groups of two or three, and then each pair or group could be asked to look through one of the documents, find examples, and then report back to the entire group. In a one-hour Formation class, 3 or 4 short, but related, segments seem to work well. Finally, written work should be collected, and new assignments for the next meeting should be explained. Your Formation Binders have a rather lengthy section with many examples of Models of Assignments, which begins on page 101. As soon as possible after the meeting, I make notes to myself on the lesson plan evaluating the session and noting down any ideas I may have for the next meeting.

The actual lesson plan can be as simple or as detailed as you wish to make it, but be sure to include the materials you will need, the page numbers you will be using and the order in which material or activities will be done. A plan for the lesson described in the previous paragraph could look something like this:

1. Ask volunteer to read poem (p. 639)
2. Finish Lesson 3 questions from last meeting (questions 6-10) through p. 653 in text - 15 minutes
3. Introduce theme of Purification (Purgative Way) in St. John of the Cross (my notes) 10 minutes
Ask for examples from St. John of the Cross's life
4. Look to Rule, Constitutions, & Statutes for examples of purification that can actively prepare Carmelites today for union with God. Brainstorm list & look for
Constitutions: p. 12 #9e, p. 13 # 14 & 15
Statutes: p. 60 Sec. X
Rule: #6&8, 10, 12,16, 17, 21 (all)
Discuss as time allows
5. 5 minutes before the end of class, collect answers from Lesson 3 and answers for "legislation search" question (previously assigned.) Distribute Lesson 4 questions with answers due at next meeting.

While the curriculum, as the outline or skeleton, can be kept indefinitely, I see the lesson plans as ever developing depending on the candidates in each class, possible new presenters and the inclusion of new material as it becomes available. So, while I always keep lesson plans in a folder or computer file, I don't think I've ever taught the same class twice; I use last year's lesson plan as the basis that can be adjusted for this year's new class.

There are a few more sections in the Formation Binder that I would like to bring to your attention. One is the Supplementary Recommended Resources found on pages 34-37.

We must always keep in mind the importance of our work. Being appointed to help with the Formation of Candidates to Carmel is truly an awesome responsibility. In order to do it well, we need to be mindful of our own formation. By familiarizing ourselves with these additional resources, as well as some of the material found in the bibliography (pages 175-178) we can better prepare ourselves to teach the subjects we have been given, and we can model our own commitment to life-long formation.

The article by Fr. Deeney entitled “Discernment of an OCDS Vocation” (found on page 43) contains a section which addresses the creative tension that may be found between the spiritual and the academic/intellectual aspects of our vocation, and directly impacts formation:

The writings of Saint Teresa of Jesus are the expression of the charism of the Discalced Carmelites. The spirituality of the Discalced Carmelites has a very well based intellectual foundation. There is a doctrine involved here. Doctrine, comes from docere, Latin for to teach. Any person who wants to be a Discalced Carmelite must be a person with an interest in learning from the teachers of Carmel. There are three doctors of the universal Church, Teresa, John and Therese.

A person comes to the community, a person with a great love of the Blessed Mother, wants to wear the scapular in honor of Mary as a sign of dedication to her service. This person is very prayerful but has no interest in reading or studying the spirituality of the Teresian Carmel. This person tries to read one of the Carmelite Doctors but just cannot find the interest to keep reading. To me, this is a good person who may belong in the Confraternity of the Brown Scapular, but definitely does not have a vocation to the Secular Order of Carmel.

There is an academic aspect to the formation of a Teresian Carmelite. There is an intellectual basis to the spirituality and identity of one who is called to the Order. And, as with each friar and each nun, each Secular represents the Order. A Carmelite that does not have the interest in studying or deepening the roots of his/her identity through prayer and study loses identity and can no longer represent the Order. Nor does that person speak for the Order. Many times when listening to a Carmelite speak it becomes obvious when hearing what is said that they have not gone beyond what they heard in formation years before.

This intellectual basis is the beginning of an attitude that is open to study. It leads to a deeper interest in Scripture, theology and the documents of the Church. The tradition of spiritual reading, lectio divina and time for study is the intellectual backbone of the spiritual life. Good formation depends on good information. When the information is bad, or absent, or incorrect, the formation stops or is stunted resulting in confusion in the Secular. If that Secular through some twist of fate becomes somehow an officer of the OCDS community, the community suffers. It happens with friars and nuns, and it happens with Seculars. (page 46)

“Study and the OCDS” is another excellent article by Fr. Deeney, which can be found on his blogsite, www.OCD4OCDS. In it, he points out the differences between the “academic study” we all did in school, and “study” as it applies to initial and on-going formation of the members of the Secular Order. Especially for anyone involved in Formation, our General Delegate’s advice found in both of these articles is worth reading and re-reading often, and keeping in mind as we make our lesson plans.

Learning Styles

This chart helps you determine your learning style; read the word in the left column and then answer the questions in the successive three columns to see how you respond to each situation. Your answers may fall into all three columns, but one column will likely contain the most answers. The dominant column indicates your primary learning style.

<i>When you..</i>	Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic & Tactile
Spell	Do you try to see the word?	Do you sound out the word or use a phonetic approach?	Do you write the word down to find if it feels right?
Talk	Do you sparingly but dislike listening for too long? Do you favor words such as <i>see</i> , <i>picture</i> , and <i>imagine</i> ?	Do you enjoy listening but are impatient to talk? Do you use words such as <i>hear</i> , <i>tune</i> , and <i>think</i> ?	Do you gesture and use expressive movements? Do you use words such as <i>feel</i> , <i>touch</i> , and <i>hold</i> ?
Concentrate	Do you become distracted by untidiness or movement?	Do you become distracted by sounds or noises?	Do you become distracted by activity around you?
Meet someone again	Do you forget names but remember faces or remember where you met?	Do you forget faces but remember names or remember what you talked about?	Do you remember best what you did together?
Contact people on business	Do you prefer direct, face-to-face, personal meetings?	Do you prefer the telephone?	Do you talk with them while walking or participating in an activity?
Read	Do you like descriptive scenes or pause to imagine the actions?	Do you enjoy dialog and conversation or hear the characters talk?	Do you prefer action stories or are not a keen reader?
Do something new at work	Do you like to see demonstrations, diagrams, slides, or posters?	Do you prefer verbal instructions or talking about it with someone else?	Do you prefer to jump right in and try it?
Put something together	Do you look at the directions and the picture?		Do you ignore the directions and figure it out as you go along?
Need help with a computer application	Do you seek out pictures or diagrams?	Do you call the help desk, ask a neighbor, or growl at the computer?	Do you keep trying to do it or try it on another computer?

Below are **FOUR TEACHING STYLES** that represent typical orientations and strategies used by college faculty. These styles, like colors on an artist's palette, make up the characteristic ways professors design instructional settings. A brief description of each is detailed below.

Teacher Centered

The expert/formal authority style tends toward teacher-centered classrooms in which information is presented and students receive knowledge.

Model/Expert

The personal model/expert/formal authority style is a teacher-centered approach that emphasizes modeling and demonstration. This approach encourages students to observe processes as well as content.

Facilitator

The facilitator/personal model/expert style is a student-centered model for the classroom. Teachers design activities, social interactions, or problem-solving situations that allow students to practice the processes for applying course content.

Delegator

The delegator/facilitator/expert style places much of the learning burden on the students. Teachers provide complex tasks that require student initiative, and often group work, to complete.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF LECTIO DIVINA FOR CARMELITES

Chris Hart, OCDS and Theresa Thomas, OCDS

Lectio divina is Latin for “Divine reading”. It is a way of steeping ourselves in the experiential knowledge of God by engaging in conversation with the One who we know loves us. Using God’s own words in the Bible, we gradually learn to meditate day and night on the law of the Lord in order to center our life in allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Lectio has roots in ancient monastic tradition, which was highly regulated and very structured. As practiced in the Middle Ages, *lectio divina* included at least four steps: *lectio*, or reading; *meditatio*, or meditation; *oratio*, or prayer; and *contemplatio*, contemplation. It was often compared to eating: In reading, we put food into our mouths; in meditation, we chew on it; in prayer we swallow it; and in contemplation we taste its fullness. Thus the Eucharist remains alive throughout the day through *lectio*.

As Carmelites we seek a free, intimate relationship with God in contemplation. Yet the *Rule of St. Albert*, our *OCDS Constitutions* and Provincial Statutes call us to immersion in the Word of God through *lectio divina*. It is a paradox that such a highly structured, sometimes apparently rigid approach can lead us to the freedom that we seek in contemplation. So how does the Rule of St. Albert lead us to *lectio divina*? What exactly is *lectio divina* anyway, and how do we practice it?

The Rule of St. Albert is noteworthy for the way in which it relies on Sacred Scripture. St. Albert had internalized scripture so completely that the words of the Bible became the words he automatically used to express his own thoughts. The *Rule* is rife with allusions to Biblical passages, without any explicit reference to them. It reflects the familiarity and freedom that can only come from many years of faithful encounter with the Word in Sacred Scripture.

With such a background, it should come as no surprise that Albert would make use of immersion in Sacred Scripture to form a life pure in heart, steadfast in conscience, and

unswerving in the service of Christ. Immersion in the Word is particularly suited to the formation of contemplatives. He enjoins us to listen to a reading from Holy Scripture during meals; to ponder the law of the Lord day and night; to keep watch at prayer; and to pray the psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours. He instructs us to gather each morning to hear the Word in Mass and urges us to be fortified by holy meditations. The Word must abound in our mouths and in our hearts, thus letting the Lord's word accompany all we do. As example for this he gives us St. Paul, "into whose mouth Christ put his own words." (Rule of St. Albert [20]) All of these injunctions are ways of bringing *lectio's* encounter with the Word into our daily lives.

The purpose of *lectio divina*, as previously stated, is to bring about this profound familiarity with the Word of God so that His thoughts become our thoughts and His ways become our ways. Through *lectio*, we train ourselves to listen to what God has to say to us in the concrete circumstances of our lives. This is hard for us, because we are more accustomed to reading for information or discussion than to listening for and accepting what God wants to give in our reading. As with the Divine Office, when we engage in *lectio divina*, we are not alone, but in communion with the other members of Christ's body who have chosen to ponder the Lord's law day and night, keeping watch in prayer.

A preparatory step for *lectio* is to put ourselves in God's presence. We ask for the assistance of the Holy Spirit to create the silent space within that is necessary to hear God's Word for us expressed in the chosen scripture passage.

The first step then is to read the passage slowly and attentively, sitting with it in silence for a moment or two before asking, what does the text say *as text*? Here it is important to pay close attention to the words so that we do not interpret the text to say what we want it to say instead of what it actually says. Interior silence will enable us to retell the story accurately in our own words. This is the step that corresponds to putting the food into our mouths. We hold it in silence for a moment or two before reading the text a second time, again slowly and attentively.

In the second step, after stilling ourselves, we ask what does the text say *to me and to our world* today? Thus begins the meditation, the chewing, of the text. In this step it is important to search each part of the text until all the questions have surfaced that might help us understand what God is saying through the selected passage. In this way, we imitate Our Lady who pondered God's words to her in her heart. In our questions, we assume Mary's trusting attitude of faith, not challenging, but seeking God's truth.

This will lead naturally to the third step, *oratio*, the swallowing of the Word in prayer. In swallowing, we ingest something so that it can become an integral part of us. We might again read the text slowly and attentively, focused now on our deeper understanding of what God has said to us. Now we ask, how do I respond to what God has said? After answering that question, we make our response. This is St. Teresa's intimate conversation with the One who we know loves us. Our response may take the form of more reflection or further searching, which can lead to a commitment. It is easy to understand why it is swallowing the Word.

Having swallowed, we may enter the fourth step of *lectio*, tasting the fullness of God's word in contemplation. Even if God does not choose to grant the fullness of infused contemplation, after having absorbed God's word in prayer, we cannot fail to experience the joy, peace and tranquility of living in accord with his will. With faithful practice, like St. Albert, we will internalize God's words so completely that His word will abound in our mouths and in our hearts, and we will taste His fullness in contemplation.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the Carmelite Institute's program of January, 2006, "Handing on Our Tradition: Formation of Formators", and the contribution in it of Carlos Mesters, O. Carm., from whose article "Meditating Day and Night: Keeping Vigil in Prayer (reproduced at <http://www.carmelite.org/mesters/mesters5.htm>) we drew heavily.

STUDY AND THE OCDS
Very Reverend Father Aloysius Deeney, OCD, General Delegate

Recently I have been asked about the role of study in the Secular Order of Carmel. Some think that too much emphasis on studying may have the effect of scaring people away from the OCDS. Others think that an emphasis on studying makes the formation director's job much more complicated and/or difficult. And others say that there is difficulty in finding adequate formation personnel because they are not academically trained to be teachers.

As far as I can, I would like to clarify some issues in regard to study and the OCDS.

The first thing to say is that most of us have an image associated with the word "study" which comes from our own personal experience. When we were in primary school, we had "to study" in order to advance from grade to grade each year. "Study" meant memorizing, practicing, testing, afternoons or evenings in front of books (with our minds sometimes wanting us to be elsewhere). "Study" was competitive. Scores were given and prizes awarded to the ones whose "study" produced the best scores. As we progressed in school and advanced from grade to grade, the "studying" got more and more complicated and, above all, harder. Some people seemed to breeze through. Others succeeded, but at what headaches! But the good thing was, IT HAD AN END!

When or if we got to the advanced stages of "study" at university levels or post-graduate levels, we ran into an even finer "study". People in higher degree programs entered into fields of "study" in order to dedicate their lives and energies to "study" one certain thing. They produced the fruit of their academic work in a thesis that sometimes had the title of "The Study of....."

So "study" has for many of us, an image of "get it over with so you can get out of school" or "dedicate all your energy and time to this one thing".

Neither one of those ideas has anything to do with what the word "study" means in the initial or on-going formation of the members of the Secular Order. So, to try to understand what "study" is in the life of the secular, please take those ideas and images that you have and put them aside.

First, study in formation of the OCDS is not reduced to some sort of academic pursuit of knowledge that is externally discernable by testing like a mathematical times table.

Second, study in formation of the OCDS is not the sole pursuit of one person to conquer a body of knowledge.

Third, study in formation of the OCDS does not have a point at which one says THE END.

A basic definition of what “study in formation of the OCDS” could be, the process whereby, with the help of others, we attempt to deepen our understanding of the relationship with God in the light of Catholic and Carmelite doctrine.

Is there a place of academic and intellectual pursuit? Certainly, for those who have the time and the ability and the talent, yes, there is a place. But that is not what all of us need to do in order to “study” our spirituality.

A primary point is that we are all, at all times, in formation. No matter when we made our definitive commitment to the Lord in Carmel, we are still all in formation.

A second point, all of us are helped and accompanied by others in this process of deepening our understanding, be it by a designated person in certain stages, or by the community which serves as support in the relationship with God. Academic study has a product. Formation study is a process.

Because someone can quote chapter and verse of Saint Teresa, Saint John of the Cross, Saint Therese, does not necessarily mean they have been formed. I have heard the lament: “Our poor Holy Parents (Teresa and John), so often quoted, so little followed!”

There are challenges in this type of study. Not the academic ones... there are no tests, gold stars, blue ribbons.

The challenges are first, the desire to deepen the understanding of the relationship with God. That can be very demanding... in fact, it is a lot easier to memorize Saint Teresa!

A second challenge is that you need others do help you and you need to help others. Also, not so easy.

The third challenge is that it is based on Catholic and Carmelite teaching, not just on the way I think about it all.

So, I hope this helps to see the difference between the “study” that got you through school and the “study” that gets you through life.



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PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING DISCUSSIONS

Several different kinds of discussions may take place in OCDS meetings and formation classes. There may be simple discussions of upcoming events; consideration of a course of action preliminary to a vote; factual discussion of a text under study; or faith sharing. Although ultimately all our discussions are directed toward developing our union with God in faith and internalizing various aspects of the Carmelite charism, a discussion leader needs to have a clear understanding of the immediate goal of a discussion in order to gently guide the participants to maintain a proper focus.

A basic principle is that each of us is led by the Holy Spirit on the spiritual journey in Carmel; the Director of Formation and team play a subsidiary role, always careful to respect God's way of working with others.

1. Prepare beforehand. Understand the material to be discussed and the points you want to make, and anticipate questions that are likely to arise. Develop open-ended questions without yes or no answers. Open-ended questions are very useful, both in discernment and in assessing knowledge and understanding. Be sure that the questions are not intimidating in any way. No more than a third of the available time should be devoted to presentation, with two thirds reserved for discussion.
2. Listen carefully to the participants and ask questions only when necessary to keep the discussion moving or focused. Being truly heard and accepted (even if not always agreed with) will stimulate everyone to join in the exchange of ideas.
3. Maintain a focus without being bound to a prepared set of questions or outline; adapt to what is needed as the discussion moves along.
4. Encourage participation by gently including hesitant members, gradually developing a warm, accepting, open climate. A sense of humor, expressed in a sensitive, caring way, will add to everyone's enjoyment of the discussion.

5. Maintain an inviting facial expression, tone of voice and body posture. It will make an enormous difference in how your efforts are received.
6. We should be paying constant attention to our own honesty, respectfulness and openness during discussions and encourage others to do likewise, in order to assist the community's growth.
7. Allow for lots of levels of disclosure; encourage each person to contribute at a personally comfortable level.
8. Accept silence as an important part of natural human communication that can be very useful. As it is an important aspect of our charism, encourage comfortable silences, but know when to break the silence in order to maintain momentum.
9. Encourage participants to wait before speaking a second time, to give others an equal opportunity. This is a time when silence can be personally beneficial for the person who wants to speak, and for the group, giving us an opportunity to absorb what has already been said, and encouraging the more reticent members to contribute. There is a shared responsibility for how a discussion develops.
10. Since trust is essential to allow each person to open up, our sharings do not become topics of conversation or gossip in other settings.
11. Some faith-sharing groups focus simply on faith sharing, without catechesis. Ours is not one of those. While we ask each other to listen carefully in order to understand one another properly, and to accept one another as we are, in love, occasionally there is a need to correct someone. Usually this is best left to those in authority. When it is necessary, it should be done calmly, with great kindness and respect for the person being corrected, and for any others present.

TEACHING METHODS AND PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING ASSIGNMENTS

In our zeal to communicate the essentials in a formation program, the development of written and oral assignments that interest and engage the student is all too often neglected. Our goal is to help candidates to discern whether they are called to permanently embrace the Carmelite way of life. In this context, factual learning takes a back seat to faith development; and assignments need to be designed to engage the person in reflection and application of the material studied to daily life.

Various methods and tools of teaching are available to us. Some of these are:

- Lecture
- Guest speakers
- Tapes (to help focus, pose questions)
- Discussion
- Small groups
- Making up questions
- The Socratic method, in which the teacher asks questions that lead a student to understanding
- Brainstorming within the community.

Some possibilities for designing assignments are:

- Fill in the blank comprehension exercises
- Short essay
- Preparation and presentation of oral reports

In written assignments, as in oral discussions, open-ended questions have a greater tendency to generate valuable responses. Three important questions can almost always be used:

1. In your own words, what did you read?
2. How do you relate to it?
3. How does it apply to you as you try to live the ideals of Carmel?

In the pages that follow, we have provided some examples of the use of open-ended questions in written assignments. Variations on some traditional reading comprehension exercises can also be used to advantage. Examples of this can be seen in some of the models that follow, in which fill-in-the-blank questions provide the source document for the answers, but the candidates have to find them in the source document. Short-answer questions could be used in the same manner.

MODELS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

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SAMPLE FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. May the new text of the Constitutions of the Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites be a really effective means, so that its members can reinvigorate more and more their _____ consecration in the concrete situations of family, social, civilian and ecclesial life.

The Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the
Societies of Apostolic Life
Vatican, June 16, 2003

2. Each one of you is to stay in _____ or _____, pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers unless attending to some other duty.

Rule of St. Albert

3. Your loins are to be girt with _____, your breast fortified by _____, for, as Scripture has it, _____ will save you. Put on _____ as your breastplate, and it will enable you to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. _____ must be your shield on all occasions, and with it you will be able to quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked one: there can be no pleasing God without faith; [and the victory lies in this – your faith]. On your head set the helmet of _____, and so be sure of deliverance by our only Savior, who sets his own free from their sins. The sword of _____, the word of God, must abound in your mouths and hearts. Let all you do have the Lord's _____ for accompaniment.

Rule of St. Albert

4. You must give yourselves to _____ of some kind, so that the devil may always find you busy; no idleness on your part must give him a chance to pierce the defenses of your souls.

Rule of St. Albert

5. You other brothers too, hold your Prior in humble reverence, your minds not on him but on _____ who has placed him over you, and who, to those who rule the Churches, addressed the words: Whoever pays you heed pays heed to me, and

whoever treats you with dishonour dishonours me; if you remain so minded you will not be found guilty of contempt, but will merit life eternal as fit reward for your obedience.

Rule of St. Albert

6. Through _____ we take part in the triple mission of Jesus: kingly, priestly and prophetic. The first is a commitment to transforming the world according to God's design. By the _____ mission, the baptized person offers self and the whole of creation to the father with Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit. And as _____, the baptized person announces God's plan for human kind and denounces all that is contrary to it.

OCDS Constitutions

7. The members of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites are faithful members of the Church, called to live "in allegiance to _____" through "friendship with the One we know loves us" and in service to _____. Under the protection of _____, in the biblical tradition of the prophet _____ and inspired by the teachings of St. _____ and St. _____, they seek to deepen their Christian commitment received in _____.

OCDS Constitutions

8. _____ represents the prophetic tradition of Carmel and is an inspiration to live in the presence of God, seeking Him in _____ and _____ with zeal for God's glory.

OCDS Constitutions

9. The following principles of that Rule guide Carmelite life:
- a. Living in allegiance to _____;
 - b. Being diligent in _____ on the law of the Lord;
 - c. Giving time to _____;
 - d. Participating in the Church's Liturgy, both the _____ and the _____;
 - e. Being concerned for the needs and the good of _____ in the community;
 - f. Arming ourselves with the practice of the virtues, as we live an intense life of _____, _____.

g. Seeking _____ and solitude in our life of prayer;

h. Using prudent _____ in all that we do.

10. Taking into account the origins of Carmel and the Teresian charism, the fundamental elements of the vocation of Teresian Secular Carmelites can be summarized as follows:

a. To live in allegiance to _____, supported by the imitation and patronage of _____, whose way of life is, for Carmel, a model of being conformed to Christ.

b. To seek “mysterious union with God” by way of _____ and _____ activity, indissolubly joined together, for service to the Church;

c. To give particular importance to _____, which, nourished by listening to the Word of God and by the liturgy, is conducive to relating with God as a friend, not just in prayer but in daily living. To be committed to this life of prayer demands being nourished by _____, _____ and, above all, _____, in order to live in the presence and the mystery of the living God;

d. To infuse _____ and _____ with apostolic zeal in a climate of human and Christian community;

e. To live _____ evangelical self-denial from a theological perspective;

f. To give importance to the commitment to _____; in the ministry of _____ as the particular collaboration of the Secular Order, faithful to its Teresian Carmelite identity.

OCDS Constitutions

11. By means of this promise the member’s _____ commitment is strengthened for the service of God’s plan in the world. This promise is a pledge to pursue personal holiness, which necessarily carries with it a commitment to serving the Church in faithfulness to the _____ Carmelite charism.

12. By this commitment members strive to acquire the necessary training to know the _____, the _____ and _____ of the evangelical lifestyle they are undertaking.

13. The promise of poverty seeks an evangelical use of the goods of this world and of personal _____, as well as the exercise of personal _____ in society, in family, and work, confidently placing all in the hands of God.

14. The promise of _____ is a commitment to Christian love in its personal and social dimensions in order to create authentic _____ in the world.

15. The promise of obedience is an exercise of faith leading to the search for _____ in the events and challenges in society and our own personal life.

16. By promising to live the _____ in daily life, Secular Carmelites seek to give evangelical witness as members of the Church and the Order, and by this witness invite the world to follow Christ: “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn. 14:6).

17. The vocation to the Teresian Carmel is a commitment to “live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ”, “pondering the Lord’s law day and night and keeping watch in prayer”. Faithful to this principle of the Rule, St. Teresa placed _____ as the foundation and basic exercise of her religious family.

18. Besides personal contemplation, _____ to the Word ought to encourage a contemplation that leads to sharing the experience of God in the Secular Order community. By this means, the _____ together seeks to discern God’s ways, maintain a permanent energy of conversion, and live with a renewed hope.

19. Occupying a privileged place in nourishing the prayer life of Carmelite Seculars will be the _____ and _____ of

Scripture and the writings of our Saints, particularly those who are Doctors of the Church: St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and St. Therese of the Child Jesus. The Church's documents are also food and inspiration for a commitment to follow Jesus.

20. The vocation to the Secular Order is truly ecclesial. Prayer and apostolate, when they are true, are inseparable. The observation of St. Teresa that the purpose of prayer is “ _____ ”

reminds the Secular Order that graces received ought to have an effect on those who receive them. Individually or as a community and, above all as members of the Church, apostolic activity is the fruit of _____.

21. While giving life to Teresian Carmelite spirituality, Mary's presence also shapes its _____.

SAMPLE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

An open-ended question is one that cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. It requires a thoughtful answer. The following questions vary in their level of difficulty, and some probe quite deeply. Some may be more appropriate as topics for meditation than for a written assignment where another's judgment is involved. When developing questions for group discussions, or written assignments, keep in mind your purpose. Is it to help people think more deeply about what they've read or to help them apply it to their lives, or to aid them in discerning their vocation?

What Are You Seeking?

1. How do the requirements of this way of life fit with your daily life?
2. Have you prayed the Divine Office before?
3. What are your feelings about this Carmelite community?
4. Are you familiar with any of the Carmelite Saints? If so, which ones?
5. How would you describe your relationship with Mary?
6. In coming to Carmel, what are you seeking?
7. What kinds of services are you giving to others, at this time?

Welcome to Carmel

1. What advantages do you experience in praying, daily, morning and evening prayer? Are you having any difficulties?
2. How often do you pray?
3. Has quiet and solitude found a place within your day?
4. What have you been led to read for your spiritual reading?
5. What do you find attractive in the Carmelite Spirituality as it is described in *Welcome to Carmel*?
6. How frequently do you participate in the Sacraments of the Church?

7. Do you foresee difficulties living this Carmelite way of life?

Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition
The Sources, Characteristics of Carmel, the Rule and Its Spirit

1. How do you see, feel, know or experience God in your life?
2. What does the call to detachment mean to you?
3. What is your understanding of Elijah's constant cry, "The Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand"? How does it apply to your life?
4. What does the word desert, as is described in the Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition, mean to you? How have you found life there?
5. As a Carmelite living in the world how are you able to find solitude?
6. In 'pondering the laws of the Lord day and night and watching at your prayers,' what do you watch for?
7. How is our Carmelite way of life like that of the Blessed Virgin Mary's daily life?

Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition
Teresa of Avila

1. What is your understanding of what it means to be a hermit?
2. What value do you place in silence?
3. What value do you place in solitude?
4. What value do you place in community?
5. What role does prayer play in your life?
6. What aspects of this Carmelite way of life most fills you, gives you life?
7. Describe your relationship with Teresa of Avila and her writings.

Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition
St. John of the Cross

1. How much time do you spend each day studying Scripture?

2. What portions of the Bible carry the most meaning for you at this time in your life?
3. “Those who wish to come after me, must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” What meaning does this have for you?
4. Where in your daily life do you see God?
5. Aside from the Eucharist, in what ways are you spiritually fed?
6. How do you hear God in your life?
7. Describe your relationship with St. John of the Cross and his writings.

Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition
St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face

1. What roles do the three persons of the Trinity play in your life?
2. Describe your trust in God’s providence.
3. What does humility in relationship to Therese’s “little way” mean to you?
4. In what ways do you see your soul bringing glory to God?
5. Therese tells us, “Merit does not consist in doing or in giving much, but rather in receiving, in loving much... .” How do you apply this to your life?
6. We are told to “Be still and know that I am God.” Through Therese’s little way, how do you understand this stillness?
7. Describe your relationship with St. Therese of the Child Jesus.

Carmelite Spirituality in the Teresian Tradition
Carmelite prayer and contemplation

1. Describe how comfortable you are at being alone.
2. We are told by Christ to “... be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” How do you understand this perfection?
3. What does the term “meditation” mean to you?

4. What does the term “contemplation” mean to you?
5. What do you see as the goal or purpose of this prayerful way of life?
6. How do you understand the apostolic work of the Carmelite within the Church?
7. In Carmel, our Lady is seen as the “soul” in the presence of God. Describe your relationship to her as this model for life.

Way of Perfection
Chapters 1- 10

1. What do you see as the vocation of a Secular Carmelite?
2. St. Teresa of Avila calls poverty our insignia. In what ways do you practice poverty?
3. What do you see as the most important aspect of this way of life?
4. What aspects of this way of life keeps you coming to Carmel?
5. What things might keep you from living this way of life or attending monthly meetings?

Way of Perfection
Chapters 11-20

1. What does interior mortification mean to you?
2. Teresa says a true person of prayer who aims to enjoy the delights of God must not turn his back upon the desire to die for God and suffer martyrdom. What does this martyrdom mean to you?
3. Teresa asks us to “draw some benefit from your temptations.” She also tells us to study how to double our willingness to do things that go contrary to our nature. What acts have you found helpful in your life that allow you to gain freedom from temptations and a greater willingness to love and serve God in all that he asks of you in your daily life?
4. Teresa talks about having a holy daring. How do you view the idea of holiness?
5. What do you see as the purpose of prayer?

Way of Perfection
Chapters 21 - 30

1. What form of prayer do you find most beneficial to you at this time?
2. In Chapter 28 Teresa talks about where heaven is found. What is your view?
3. Teresa speaks of recollection and describes a recollected way of life. What has been your experience with recollected prayer?
4. How well do the humiliations and trials of daily life serve you?
5. In light of Teresa's statements in Chapter 29, Paragraph 7, how much of your day do you spend in God's presence speaking? How much of your day do you spend listening?

Way of Perfection
Chapters 31-42

1. In what ways do you seek to follow God's will in your life?
2. How do you understand Teresa's comments on suffering? (Chapter 32)
3. How do you understand justice?
4. In light of St. Teresa's comments in chapter 40 #7-10, how do you view penance?
5. The book is entitled Way of Perfection. How do you view perfection?

Introduction to the *Rule of St. Albert*

1. How do you understand "staying in your cell pondering the Lord's law?"
2. How does this way of life strengthen your family life? Your secular life?
3. What does mortification mean to you?
4. What benefits do you experience in a daily examination of conscience?
5. What pieces of the armor of God do you find difficult? What pieces do you find easy?
6. How do you understand the silence this life offers?

7. At what point in the six-year formation process do you feel a person should try to begin to live this way of life?

Introduction to the OCDS Constitutions

1. According to the Constitutions, to whom do we make our Promises?
2. What does the promise of poverty mean to you?
3. What does the promise of obedience mean to you?
4. What does the promise of chastity mean to you?
5. What does living a life of beatitude mean to you?
6. How comfortable are you at being alone for periods of time?
7. What is your understanding of simplicity, detachment and humility?

***Spiritual Canticle* Stanzas 1-10**

1. How do you view God's love for you?
2. Through this Carmelite way of life, what are you seeking?
3. Where do you find it most?
4. "Faith and love are like the blind person's guides." How do you understand faith and love guiding you?
5. How do you understand poverty in spirit, poor in spirit?
6. For what reasons do you think this Beloved of souls, whose great desire it is to love and fill all souls with himself, should have for withdrawing?
7. What has been your response to all that you experience of God's love for you?

***Spiritual Canticle* Stanzas 11-19**

1. In what ways does God reveal himself to you within your daily life?

2. At this point in your life, how do you view death?
3. How do you understand transformation of the soul in love?
4. How do you view suffering?
5. What is your relationship with the Holy Spirit?
6. In what ways does God speak to you?
7. How do you understand peace as a guide?

Spiritual Canticle
Stanzas 20- 30

1. How do you understand grace? To what extent do you use it?
2. How do you see spiritual poverty being related to the use of grace?
3. In matters pertaining to God, what is your greatest desire at this time?
4. How do you understand your partnership with Jesus?
5. How do you understand the will of God in your daily life?
6. How do you understand God's love for you?
7. In what ways does God reveal this love to you in your daily life

Spiritual Canticle
Stanzas 31-40

1. What is your relationship with our Heavenly Father?
2. When or in what situations do you most often give thanks to God?
3. Do you view your faults and weaknesses as helps or hindrances in your spiritual growth? Please explain.
4. What do you see as your gifts? How do you currently put them to use?
5. What is your understanding of faith?
6. How do you understand God's union with the soul?

7. If grace could be considered a commodity, something to be spent, how much grace do you need daily? How much do you spend daily?

Interior Castle
Dwellings 1-2

1. What do you see as the benefits or fruits of humility?
2. "Do not be afraid." Describe your understanding about fear and its effect in the soul.
3. How do you understand perfection?
4. What is your feeling about the unity and love shared for every member of this community?
5. How do you understand or recognize the will of God in your daily life?

Interior Castle
Dwellings 3-5

1. How do you understand the term self-abnegation?
2. What importance do you place on the virtue of obedience?
3. How do you understand the promise of obedience we make as Secular Carmelites? Does it aid in spiritual growth?
4. As Secular Carmelites, we make a promise of chastity according to our state in life. How do you see this promise as an aid in spiritual growth?
5. What aspects of the Rule of St. Albert or the Constitutions aid you most in spiritual growth?

Interior Castle
Dwelling 6

1. Describe the confidence you have in God and his love for you.
2. At this time in your life, what do you desire most in your relationship with God?
3. How much of your day is spent in communication with God?

4. Describe the ways in which God teaches you about who he is and about who you are within your daily life.
5. What do you look at during your daily examine? What benefits do you find in this practice?

Interior Castle
Dwelling 7

1. How do you view God?
2. In what ways does this Carmelite way of life strengthen what you are called to do daily?
3. For what sorts of things is it easy to thank God? For what things is it difficult to thank him?
4. In what ways do you see yourself capable of serving God in this community? In what ways do you not see yourself capable at this time?
5. How do you understand “being” verses “doing”?

Dark Night
Chapters 1-7 Book 1

1. As Secular Carmelites our promise includes living a life according to the Beatitudes. How do the Beatitudes “guide” and strengthen you in this way of life?
2. What is your understanding of justice?
3. What is your understanding of meekness?
4. What is your understanding of mercy?
5. What is your understanding of the reason for sorrowing?

Dark Night
Chapters 8-14 Book 1

1. What is your understanding of purity of heart?
2. How do the Beatitudes lead you closer to God’s reign in your heart?

3. How do you understand the dark night of the senses verses the dark night of the spirit?
4. Why do you suppose humility is considered the key to all the virtues?
5. What are the effects that fear has within you pertaining to spiritual growth?

Dark Night
Chapters 1-12 Book 2

1. How do you experience the effects of the divine flame? In your opinion what does it burn away?
2. Taking a deeper look at the beatitudes, how do you recognize love's action within the soul?
3. "Lord let your face shine on your servant." How does this phrase reveal the soul hidden within God?
4. Describe your understanding of the phrase, "My house being now all stilled."
5. What are the benefits of God testing the soul?

Dark Night
Chapters 13-24 Book 2

1. When God tests a soul what do you think he is looking for?
2. Describe what you think God desires most from his people.
3. Describe your understanding of the imagery of the "ladder." What do you think of this imagery?
4. Describe your understanding of the imagery of the "livery of three colors – white, green and red." What do you think of this imagery?
5. Christ is the light of the world. As we grow closer to God we become "brighter" with his light shining through us. Why do you think this writing is given the title the Dark Night?

Elizabeth of the Trinity
Heaven in Faith
(page 94-113 *Complete Works Vol. 1*)

1. How do you understand the statement, “The kingdom of God is within you”?
2. How do you understand God’s desire to have a partnership, his friendship, within the soul?
3. In your opinion, what is meant by the phrase, “I die daily”?
4. Describe the ‘eternal now.’ How does this hold meaning for you?
5. In your opinion, how are we “made holy and immaculate in God’s presence” in our daily life?
6. Describe “to be holy for I am holy.” Why is this meant for everyone?
7. In the phrase, “Christ is my life,” what does this mean for you?

Elizabeth of the Trinity
The Greatness of our Vocation
(page 124-129 *Complete Works Vol. 1*)

1. If God gives abundant grace to those who call upon him in their weakness or need, describe what you think about the phrase, “nothing can disturb the humble.”
2. How does Blessed Elizabeth’s insight on the relationship between humility, “dying daily,” and “taking up your cross and denying yourself” change your understanding of the unitive way of life?
3. In your opinion, how have “we been made sharers in His divine nature”?
4. Blessed Elizabeth tells us what she sees as the “freest soul” and the “secret of happiness.” Describe your understanding of what she is trying to tell us.
5. What is your opinion on Blessed Elizabeth’s advice on how to handle the movements of pride?
6. Describe your understanding of the phrase, “In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the passion of Christ for the sake of His body, which is the Church.”
7. What do you see as the greatness of our vocation?

Elizabeth of the Trinity
Last Retreat
(page 141- 162 Complete Works Vol. 1)

1. How do you understand the thought, "... He may teach her to fulfill the work which will be hers for eternity and which she must already perform in time, which is eternity begun and still in progress"?
2. Blessed Elizabeth claims to be, "a Praise of Glory." God has predestined you to fulfill for all eternity some aspect within the body of Christ. It is for you to respond to this call through your gifts and his grace. It may be at this time you can't answer this question, but it is one about which you should think and pray. Who are you in the body of Christ? Does your call to the Secular Carmelite way of life aid you in this?
3. The Rule of St. Albert does say, "In silence will your strength be." How do you understand this as a Secular Carmelite?
4. The soul who makes an occupation out of blessing and praising God, humbly clings to him with simple gaze. "Truly this soul is the praise of glory of all His gifts; through everything, even the most commonplace acts" Based upon these lines, what is your understanding about how this soul would be a praise of glory?
5. How important do you think it is to be able to give thanks to God in everything?
6. If all things that we encounter in our daily life come to us by the hand of God and we thank him for all that we receive, how do you think God looks on such a soul?
7. What is your opinion about Blessed Elizabeth's insight into how we are to become empty so that God might fill us with himself?

Elizabeth of the Trinity
Let yourself be Loved
(page 179-181 Complete Works Vol. 1)

1. In what ways do you recognize God's love for you?
2. "Do you love me more than these?" How would this phrase aid you in times of temptation?
3. How have the years you have spent living this Secular Carmelite way of life confirmed your vocation to Carmel? If not, what areas are still in question?
4. Describe the ease or difficulty you find in accepting God's love for you.

5. Describe your understanding of the phrase, “He alone who wants to work in you, even though you will have done nothing to attract this grace except that which a creature can do: works of sin and misery...He loves you like that.”
6. How would you define “remaining in communion with Love”?
7. From the information provided in this letter, what would you say is God’s greatest desire for his creatures? How is he loved by this action?

Biblical Study of Elijah
(1 Kings 17:1, 1 Kings 17:2-6, 1 Kings 17:7-24)

1. Why do you suppose that St. Elijah is venerated as the founder of the Carmelite Order when in truth he didn’t found any Order during his life time, he only lived a way of life?
2. How do you understand the idea of always remaining in God’s presence or “The Lord lives before whom I stand”?
3. What things, actions or events in your daily life are you willing to trust God to take care of? What things, actions or events are you not willing to allow God to take care of?
4. Describe how you are nourished by daily Scripture reading.
5. In your opinion, does fleeing the world and hiding in God require a complete separation between you and the world? How do you see this type of life fitting into a Secular Carmelites daily life?
6. In your opinion, what is the relationship between doing the will of God and faith?
7. In what way do you see a contemplative as an instrument of God’s use? A Secular Carmelite?

Biblical Study of Elijah
(1 Kings 18, 1 Kings 19:1-18)

1. How much of your day is spent listening?
2. “You have not yet remained sinless even to the point of shedding blood.” Describe Elijah’s faith in God as he must face King Ahab’s wrath. (How faithful are we to the One who desires to fill us completely with His love?)

3. Where do you find the altar of sacrifice in your daily life? How often are sacrifices being made?
4. How much importance do you place upon unity within the Church, within your parish, within the Secular Order, within each community of the Secular Order?
5. How much or to what extent do you feel that your choices affect the people around you, in your community or in the world?

Biblical Study of Elijah
(1 Kings 19: 19-21, 1 Kings 21)

1. What sort of an effect do you think the Secular Order of Carmelites has upon the Church, or upon the world?
2. What benefit do you find in living a hermitical way of life that shares in community?
3. What is your need for community life?
4. Describe how this community helps fulfill those needs.
5. Describe your call to the Carmelite way of life.
6. What sorts of things, signs, events have caused you to consider responding to this call in a permanent way?

Biblical Study of Elijah
(1 Kings 22:52-54, 2 Kings 1:1-17, 2 Kings 2:1-15)

1. Describe your understanding of the phrase, “We have come to Carmel for no other reason than to learn how to die.”
2. In your opinion, where does salvation lie?
3. How do you understand the statement, “Do you know that the Lord will take your master from over you today?” Why is the response “keep still”?
4. When you look at the Secular Order of Carmelite way of life, describe your experience as to whether you can live without this way of life?
5. By way of this Carmelite way of life, prayer, silent listening, etc., how do we proclaim the kingdom of God in our daily lives?

Excerpts from *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation*

We are deeply indebted to our brothers and sisters in Canada for their generous permission to quote these portions of the Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation.

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ASPIRANT'S SELF-HELP EVALUATION SHEET
For Personal Use Only

Have I a better understanding of what authentic devotion to Mary means?

Do I feel that being in Carmel has deepened my Christian and personal prayer life?

Have I enjoyed my journey in Carmel? Do I feel that I belong?

Do I like Carmel?

Do I like the Saints of Carmel?

Is the monthly community meeting a good experience for learning about the vocation and other aspects of Carmelite life?

Have I been faithful to attending the monthly meeting?

Has what I have experienced in learning to live the vocation fulfilled an inner spiritual need in my life?

Does transportation present a problem for attendance at the monthly meeting? If not what contributes to any absences?

Do family demands permit me to continue?

Do my Carmelite obligations interfere with my home life and make it a troubled one?

Is my family accepting of what I am doing in Carmel?

Do work demands permit me to continue?

Does health permit me to make such a commitment?

Do I understand the obligations of the vocation? Have I been able to live them on a daily basis? If not why?

Do I want to continue?

Am I able to continue?

Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation, p. 83

SELF-EVALUATION

For personal use before moving from one formation level to the next

"Both initial and on going formation in the teachings of Teresa and John of the Cross, help to develop in the Carmelite Secular a human, Christian and spiritual maturity for service to the Church. Human formation develops the ability for interpersonal dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance, the possibility of being corrected and correcting with serenity, and the capacity to persevere in commitments." *Constitutions #34*

1. Do I feel closer to God and am I learning to live in His Presence?
2. Do I find that living the Carmelite life is becoming my way of life?
3. Do I look forward to making my First Promise/Definitive Promise with zeal in my heart and the desire to belong to Jesus in a more submissive way?
4. In what area do I feel that I need strengthening?
5. Do I feel that my prayer life is improving or, do I need help?
6. Do I strive to imitate Mary my Mother and model, and ask for her help in my spiritual life?
7. Do I come prepared for the meeting by reading the monthly assignment?
8. Do I participate in the monthly group discussions?
9. Is my first choice Carmel, or do other groups take precedence? Would I be willing to give up other groups that interfere with my vocation in Carmel?
10. Do I wish to continue my journey in Carmel? Do I understand what I will be promising?
11. Have I been faithful to the practices of daily mental prayer and the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours?
12. I am attending daily Mass when possible?
13. Am I able to live in fraternal charity in community?
14. What are my goals in the coming year in relation to my vocation in Carmel?
15. Am I more aware of and have a better understanding of the inherent responsibilities of my baptism and the vocation?

16. Am I becoming more kind and understanding towards others, especially to difficult people?

Am I quick to forgive and forget injuries? Real or perceived?

17. Am I becoming aware of my true self, from both positive and negative experiences?

18. Is my sense of gratitude to God growing? Is my desire to praise Him growing?

19. Do I prefer to act in obedience rather than according to my own private judgments:

20. Is my desire to serve God increasing?

21. Do I have a great love and respect for the Church, for her ministers and for Holy Scripture?

22. Do I feel a great and urgent desire to help save souls through prayer, sacrifices, suffering and the apostolate in my home, parish and Order?

POINTS THAT COUNCILLORS MAY WANT TO CONSIDER ABOUT THE CANDIDATE PRIOR TO CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

“He who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning and like the sun rising on a cloudless morning.” *2 Sam 23:3-4*.

“... let all things be done for building up.” *1 Cor 14:26*.

Points to Take into Consideration:

- Punctuality at meetings
- Record of attendance at monthly meeting
- Reasons for any absences
- Was there an absent-with-regret call prior to the meeting?
- How was participation in community life?
- Is fraternal charity practiced in community?
- Attendance at special community events
- Volunteering to do small jobs in community?
- Faithfulness daily practice of mental prayer, recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours
- Attendance at daily Mass if possible
- Participation in group discussions
- Attendance at other larger OCD/S events and functions

This ... interview does not have to be lengthy, but to the point and should give encouragement while assisting the candidate's discernment.

Helpful reminders:

Give candidate the self-evaluation sheet provided in this book to assist personal discernment at the end of every level.

Suggest some spiritual preparation before entering another year of candidacy.

Use the self-evaluation questions as a guide to your own questions. The Candidate will have used these questions reflectively and will provide you with much information in your decision and discernment process.

Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation, pp. 121-122.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL INTERVIEWS

"Be an example for all believers in speech and conduct, in love, faith and purity." *1 Tim 4:12*

Before the interview, the Council must know about the individual through attendance records, observation of the candidate in community, and have feedback from the candidates' discussion group leader.

- Faithfulness to the norms and obligations of the vocation?
- Faithfulness to the assigned readings?
- How was attendance at the OCDS events?
- How responsive is the candidate in Community life?
- Draw as much as possible from the Candidate's letter.
- Note what is positive or anything that may cause concern.
- Reinforce the positive, to build up ..
- Should there be an area of concern, discuss this prior to the interview to decide the most charitable and honest way for this to be handled.
- After observing the individual over a period of years, the Council should have a good understanding of whether or not the candidate is called to Carmel.
- Is the Carmelite vocation given first priority? Or,
- Do other groups take priority?
- Does the candidate have a good understanding of the vocation?
- Is candidate familiar with the Constitutions?
- Is the candidate able to live in fraternal charity in community?
- Does the candidate understand the need for the combined practice of prayer with the evangelical counsels?
- Is a love of the vocation, the Order and its Saints demonstrated?
- Does the vocation fulfill an interior need?
- Does the candidate participate in community life and group discussions?
- Are job responsibilities accepted, volunteered for and carried out in community?

- Is there an understanding of the responsibilities inherent in the profession of promises?
- Does the candidate collaborate in community apostolate initiatives? Or,
- Participate in apostolate activities the Order invites us to?
- Does the candidate have a grasp of the relationship between Christian and Carmelite vocation and mission in the Church and world?

Tips for Interviews

Use the self-evaluation sheet that the candidate has been given as a question guide.

While the candidate has been asked to make some spiritual preparation during the discernment period prior to the interview, it is also very important that Councillors do the same spiritual preparation for the task ahead.

Our task must be conducted in faith by prayerful preparation. In hope and confidence in God's help, we must keep in mind that we are the visible face of God by our charity to all God's creatures.

Be sure that the area where the interview is conducted provides privacy to instill confidence in the individual to speak freely. Respect confidentiality.

Inform the person that what is being discussed here is confidential.

- Be gracious in your welcome to the person. Take great care to make the person feel at ease and relaxed.
- Remember the individual may be feeling nervous or apprehensive. Be kind. This is no time for a power trip.
- Make sure not to allow personal likes or dislikes influence your judgment one way or another.
- Be impartial, just and fair. We are accountable to God.
- Peace, charity and understanding must be the overtone of the interview.
- Begin the interview with a prayer.

- The President explains that we are gathered together to
- help the candidate discern if they are ready to make the commitment of First Promise/Definitive Promise.
- Thank the candidate for their letter. Acknowledge the fact that the individual wishes to continue their journey in Carmel.
- Point out the positive aspects of the candidate's letter and encourage and affirm them.
- Draw to the fullest from the letter submitted by the candidate.
- Ask questions in a non-threatening manner, so that the individual will not feel anxious, and understands that we are there to help them.
- Invite the candidate to comment on any concerns that they may have expressed in their letter, or otherwise, for example, is there any area in Carmelite studies or in living the norms and obligations of our Constitutions that need extra help or work on?
- If the Council has further concerns, ask the questions in a non-judgmental manner.
- Questions asked should be open-ended, so that they elicit more than just a yes or no answer. In this way concerns can be addressed to everyone's satisfaction.
- Find out if they have been faithful to all daily norms and obligations of the vocation?
- Do they understand the vocation? Do they love the vocation?
- Is the vocation fulfilling an inner spiritual need?
- Have they grown spiritually since joining the Order?
- Does their family know about this commitment that they wish to make?
- Is the family supportive of the vocation in Carmel?
- Is the vocation causing conflict at home?
- Are they prepared to do the necessary spiritual reading to learn more about their Christian and Carmelite vocation?
- How is participation in community life?
- Have they volunteered or given any help in small community tasks?
- Do they feel that they fit in with the community?

- Do they get along with members?
- Do they come to the meeting with the assigned reading prepared?
- Do you participate in the reading-group discussion?
- Is there any area in your Carmelite studies or in living our norms and obligations that you need extra help with?
- Do you understand what is being promised?

When the interview is concluded, if the candidate is accepted, joyfully and warmly congratulate them and welcome them to the family of Carmel. Each vocation to the Order is a gift from God. Treasure it, appreciate it, and nurture it in compassion and charity.

Encourage the candidate/s to make special spiritual preparation for their day of grace.

If a candidate requires more time before being admitted to the Promises, be sure to explain with kindness and understanding, that our path to God is not measured by a yardstick. This extra time does not mean that anyone is a failure, we all move at different paces. Explain that the Order understands this and allows the extra time.

...

Briefly explain the format of the ceremony, where it will take place, at what time it will start. Let them know at what time they should be at the meeting prior to the start of the ceremony, to allow time for preparation, especially when there is more than one person making profession.

Let them know that family and friends are most welcome to witness the ceremony of profession.

The Director of Formation will give them the Rite book to go over at home, so that they come to the ceremony prepared. This preparation will contribute to a smooth functioning and reverent ceremony.

...

After the interviews inform the community of the up coming ceremony and ask them to pray for the candidates.

Post Ceremony

Extend a warm welcome. Offer thanks to God for these new members, a sign of growth and new life for the community. Let gratitude prevail! Carmel is joy.

In the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph, the president takes the signed forms, has them photocopied, and mails the original to the OCDS Central Office. The photocopy is retained by the group or community in its files.

CREATIVE ADAPTATIONS

Our mission statement says that *“the guidelines are not intended to impose burdensome requirements... .”* We would like to consider the following three possible obstacles to implementing the suggested curriculum: (1) A community has one formation director, with people in the aspirancy, in initial formation, and in temporary promises. The difficulties here involve people, space, and schedule. (2) An established community with a system in place that has served them for years may be resistant to the guidelines because they do not want to change. (3) A formation director who is overwhelmed by the task of implementing the guidelines.

There is a simple solution to all three of these possibilities: *Carefully adapt the guidelines to your own circumstances, while maintaining their fundamental elements.* How? The formation director, led by the Holy Spirit and in response to the grace of the office, should take the lead in proposing priorities to the Council of the community. This may present an opportunity to engage the community by brainstorming together, and proposing different models to develop. (Come prepared with easel pad and markers!) Note the advantages and disadvantages inherent in each model, but realize that no single model will be perfect. And don't be afraid to introduce changes on an experimental basis. No program, no matter how good, is likely to serve the community permanently.

We have listed some creative adaptations for your consideration:

- Meet every month during the year, even if certain portions of the meeting must be omitted occasionally
- Have ceremonies only once a year
- Teach in blocks of material that can be covered in any order (rotation)
- Use teams of formators, not just the formation director
- Schedule entry into the community to coincide with the beginning of a block of material
- Meet for an entire day
- Assign more work to be done outside the meeting
- Give “summer assignments” for any month in which there is no meeting
- Eliminate the practice of skipping a meeting during the month of the community retreat
- Plan an additional retreat day for particular focus
- Have a “family meeting” to celebrate Carmelite feasts, timed to coincide with community ceremonies
- Have an optional second meeting for specialized purposes
- Evaluate location; look into another or additional space
- Stagger meeting times, but make sure aspirants attend the full community meeting
- Offer evening classes
- Groom upcoming formation directors through team teaching

One community that lacked the resources to break into separate formation classes spends all of their meeting time together, and the specific formation for each level is done

at the candidate's own speed through outside reading, with open-ended question assignments and regular meetings with the Director of Formation. This model for a formation program presents a creative solution to the problem, while simultaneously developing the candidate's capacity for silence, solitude, and personal responsibility.

Remember these two principles: (1) Necessity is the mother of invention; and (2) Working out a creative solution is an important part of community building and drives us to prayer.



A PORTRAIT OF SUCCESSFUL FORMATION

Chris Hart, OCDS

The following checklists are based upon the formation guidelines of the California-Arizona Province. Their purpose is to aid Formation Directors and Community Councils in establishing effective formation programs by providing a tool for regularly evaluating the outcome of the programs. Without being all-inclusive, the checklists also paint a picture of how those in different levels of formation might appear. They seek to answer the following frequently asked questions:

1. What might a Secular Order Carmelite look like according to Human, Christian, Carmelite and Apostolate formation in each of the three periods of formation?
2. How might the community aid in the formation process as part of ongoing formation?
3. How might a community measure the effectiveness of the formation program and what should its development include in addition to the information list provided by the provincial guidelines?

Formation Checklist

Aspirancy

Aspirant's Role

Human Formation:

- An attentive spirit who has made himself present to a new experience.
- All senses, especially those of vision and hearing, alert and ready to absorb tangible experiences and relate them to intangible realities.
- In a seeking frame of mind. Seeking to find out more as to our call, creation, purpose and meaning of daily life events.

Christian Formation:

- To recognize the need for prayer in life.
- To have a relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- To have a desire to grow closer to God and a desire to better understand their role in relationship to the Blessed Trinity.
- An appreciation for frequenting the celebration of the Sacraments, scriptural reading, and the Liturgy of the Hours as the prayer of the Church.

Carmelite Formation:

- A desire for the support of a community of like-minded people.
- A willingness to explore Carmelite history, its origins and the written works of those saints who have lived this way of life.
- A desire to learn more about prayer, why we need prayer and the role it plays within the Church.

Community's Role

Human Formation

- As the light of Christ for all whom God sends to us, all community members have the opportunity to practice a response of love to God by giving warm welcome, active support and help to all who are new to the community and aspire to recognize the fullness of their call within the body of Christ.

Christian Formation:

- As each member of the community has offered to the community unique, God-given gifts, by way of the promise, each member should be willing to assist the aspirants in their Christian formation by being eager to listen to questions, problems and daily struggles, provide reassurance of God's love, and keep aspirants in daily prayer.

Carmelite Formation:

- Provide assistance in praying Liturgy of the Hours in community during meetings.
- Members should make themselves available to assist with praying the Liturgy of the Hours between meeting dates.
- Community members need to lend assistance to Director of Formation in the area of instruction by a willingness

Aspirant's Role

Formation for the Apostolate:

- A recognition that we are loved by God.
- A recognition that we are called to make some response to God as a return of love.
- A growth in understanding that each one of us has a unique response of love to give to God.
- A realization that the community meetings offer a safe environment to practice this loving response to God by way of prayer and active participation.

Community's Role

- to share experience in living out daily life.

Formation for the Apostolate:

- As listening pray-ers for the needs of the Church and the immediate needs of the secular members in the world, the community's members should first of all practice these skills within the membership of the community.
- Each member should continue to seek a fuller understanding of "who they are" within the body of Christ. In doing so, they can lend loving example and share helpful suggestions to encourage aspiring members in this growth process.
- All members should encourage one another with the idea that what we as Carmelites bring to the needy world, whether physically active or not, is our focus of actively building the kingdom of God through a spirit of "being" rather than "doing".

Evaluation of educational materials and structure of community formation pertaining to effectiveness in obtaining above goals.

- Do those aspiring to discover if this way of life is for them have adequate opportunity to share in fraternal charity with senior members of the community?
- Does the informational material that the community has chosen to offer give necessary information without extra burden to aspirants?
- Is adequate reflection time given to aspirants to allow God to reveal what He has begun?
- Is adequate time given to aspirants for their questions to be answered by a community representative and/or its individual members?
- Is there a system of communication in place to adequately track the starting point, growth and areas of weakness in the four areas of formation program?
- Has community provided for the best example of our daily life to be given during each meeting?
- In the active apostolate that the community has chosen, does it flow naturally as a fruit of prayer or is it forced activity that takes time out of our day?

Formation Checklist

Formation I

Candidate's Role

Human Formation:

- Begin to recognize a spiritual reality behind tangible experiences.
- Begin to recognize and use the five spiritual senses that correspond to our bodily senses.
- Begin to recognize the constant presence of God and that God dwells within all creation.
- Begin to trust the movements of this God even when difficulties arise.
- Begin to understand the unique connection among all human beings.

Christian Formation:

- Begin to reflect and take a new look at common Biblical passages that carry new meaning.
- Begin to notice a new path of life that seems refreshing, revitalizing and life giving.
- Begin to recognize an internal need to attend Mass daily.
- Begin to recognize the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- Begin to understand benefits in following Christ's precepts as they are put into practice.
- Begin to discover the value of the Blessed Virgin Mary's life as a model of prayer and faithfulness.

Carmelite Formation:

- Begin to discover a new order and structure of daily life.
- Begin to acquire an appreciation for the saints of the Carmelite Order.

Community's Role

Human Formation:

- In the sharing of fraternal friendship the presence of Christ is revealed and shared, building up and encouraging the reality of the kingdom of God in time leading toward eternity.

Christian Formation:

- Encourage candidates in formation to continue to seek benefits in the practice of theological virtues and the Beatitudes.
- Encourage candidates in formation to recognize graces revealed through failings as well as successes.
- Members should show eagerness in lending prayerful assistance to the daily concerns of candidates' lives.

Carmelite Formation:

- Members should be willing to share experiences of God's movement within personal life experiences in group or class setting.

Candidate's Role

- Begin to appreciate the Carmelite identity found in scripture.
- Begin to discover the benefits in praying the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Begin to recognize that silence, solitude and stillness provide a path of renewed grace and communion with God.
- Begin to find a security in living out the rule of St. Albert as interpreted by the Secular Order's Constitutions.
- Begin to discover support and friendship among the members of the community.

Formation for the Apostolate:

- Show a willingness to practice a loving response to God by way of leading the community in opening or closing prayers.
- Show growth in fraternal charity by having a willingness to share God-given talents with community.
- Desire to make a commitment to the community to live this way of life.
- Begin to recognize that a vocation to Carmel is for the benefit of the world.
- Begin to understand what it means to die to self-desires, and the graces received by the death of self-desires.

Community's Role

- In listening to God, members should also be willing to listen to the needs, struggles and daily trials this Carmelite way of life offers.

Formation for the Apostolate:

- Be open to receive the skills and talents offered as gifts to the community by candidates.

Evaluation of educational materials and structure of community formation pertaining to effectiveness in obtaining above goals

- Do candidates in formation have adequate opportunity to spend time with senior members in order to build strong friendships?
- Does the informational material that the community has chosen give a well-rounded base of information about this Carmelite way of life and its saint?
- Is the information presented in a way that senior members can offer examples of successful daily, lived experience?

- Is the formation program organized in a flexible manner to provide room for life's struggles, trials, and unexpected mishaps that led to missed classes, missing instructors to teach the classes, or unforeseen weather condition that cause cancellation of scheduled meeting date?
- Is there a system of communication in place to adequately track spiritual growth of candidates or areas of weakness in any of the four areas within the formation program?
- Is the community open to the acceptance of new talents, skills, and gifts being offered to it by candidates?
- Has the community provided for the best example of our daily life to be experienced during each meeting date?
- Do informational materials or community members encourage candidates to seek a fuller understanding of "who they are" in the body of Christ and the response of love that they have to offer God and one another?

Formation Checklist

Formation II

Candidate's Role

Human Formation:

- Recognizes the spiritual reality behind tangible experiences.
- Seeks consistent use of spiritual senses. Relies mostly upon movements of the Spirit, therefore waiting and listening are practiced most often.
- Begins to recognize constant presence of God whether or not He is "felt" tangibly or intangibly.
- Understands human need to be united to other human beings and the unity shared between them regardless of whether they are physically present or not.
- Is comfortable in being alone. Does not feel isolated.

Christian Formation:

- Finds spiritual nourishment in reading the Bible, especially the New Testament.
- Has internal need to attend Mass daily, but remains flexible to God's movement in daily life.
- Seeks to practice remaining at peace during unexpected daily events.
- Seeks to put into practice and model the Blessed Virgin Mary's way of life.
- May recognize an inadequacy of self and seeks God's aid in every possible way.
- Finds continued practice of this way of life renews the internal spirit, bringing new life and purpose to daily life experiences.
- Has an understanding that dying to self is needed for Christ to live.

Community's Role

Human Formation:

- Summing up what has been listed before this; ALL members are called to share in one another's unique response of love to God. This requires that we encourage, strengthen and build up one another through prayerful listening and loving encouragement, remembering always, and in everything, to refer all things to God and His loving care.

Christian Formation:

- Summing up what has been listed before this; ALL members are called to share in one another's unique response of love to God. This requires that we encourage, strengthen and build up one another through prayerful listening and loving encouragement, remembering always, and in everything, to refer all things to God and His loving care.

Candidate's Role

Carmelite Formation:

- Enjoys the new-found freedom that this way of life offers.
- Rejoices in spiritual friendships found within the lives and works of the saints of the Carmelite Order.
- Finds strength to endure daily struggles, trials and unexpected events of daily life, through the writings and examples of Carmelites throughout history.
- Finds that internal identity can be best expressed by way of this Carmelite identity.
- The words silence, solitude and stillness take on more meaning than what is found by living in physical quietude, physically alone or physically motionless.
- Finds comfort and security to trust the movements of God by living out the Rule of St. Albert as interpreted by the Secular Order Constitutions.
- Attendance at meetings means a great deal. It has become a suffering not to attend.
- Community meetings have become a safe place to practice virtue, share gifts of God's grace and encourage one another, in order to develop the strength to share the gifts of their Carmelite vocation with the world.
- Have discovered that this way of life gives needed grace to those who die to self desire and gives grace to those in need no matter where they may be.

Community's Role

Carmelite Formation:

- Summing up what has been listed before this; ALL members are called to share in one another's unique response of love to God. This requires that we encourage, strengthen and build up one another through prayerful listening and loving encouragement, remembering always, and in everything, to refer all things to God and His loving care.

Candidate's Role

Formation for the Apostolate:

- Puts God-given skills and talents at the service of the community.
- Shows a willingness to share in leadership positions, such as leading the Liturgy of the Hours in community, leading group discussions, sharing personal experience within the formation group, assisting the community's Council in lightening the burden of needed tasks.
- Has a desire to practice a loving response to God in daily life by making a permanent commitment to the community.
- Recognizes the world's need of God's grace and seeks some prayerful or possible physical solution to share in God's giving spirit.

Community's Role

Formation for the Apostolate:

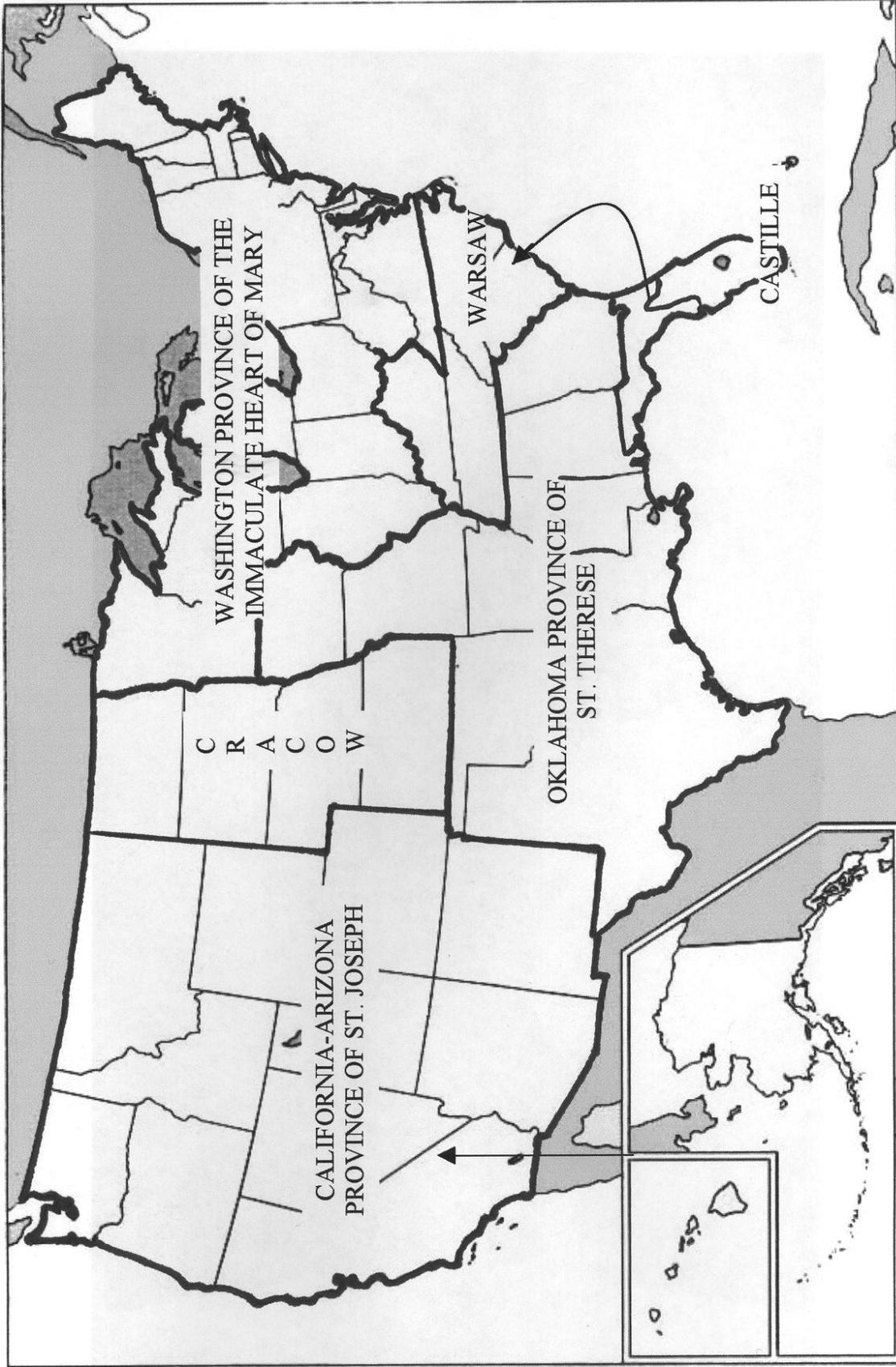
- Summing up what has been listed before this; ALL members are called to share in one another's unique response of love to God. This requires that we encourage, strengthen and build up one another through prayerful listening and loving encouragement, remembering always, and in everything, to refer all things to God and His loving care.

Evaluation of educational materials and structure of community formation pertaining to effectiveness in obtaining above goals

- Since these candidates may spend a great deal of time with senior members, do they also get an opportunity to spend needed time with aspirants and candidates?
- Does the informational material that the community has chosen give a well-rounded deeper study of prayer – especially supporting a life of internal silence, solitude and stillness – the saints of the order, the OCDS Constitutions as pertains to daily life, and the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model for a way of life?
- Is the information presented in a way that lends room for shared experiences in daily life, as well as time for necessary questions to be explored and answered?
- Is the formation program organized in a flexible manner to provide for life's struggles, trials and unexpected mishaps that lead to missed classes, missing instructors to teach the classes, or unforeseen weather conditions that cause cancellation of scheduled meeting date?
- Is there a system of communication in place to adequately track spiritual growth of candidates or areas of weakness in the four areas within the formation program?
- Is the community open to the acceptance of new talents, skills and gifts being offered to it by these candidates, especially within the areas of leadership?
- Has the community provided for the best example of our daily life to be experienced during each meeting?

- Do the informational materials or the community members encourage those in temporary promises to seek a fuller understanding of “who they are” in the body of Christ, and the response of love that they have to offer God and one another?
- Does the community offer or provide a connection to the friars, nuns and other secular Carmelite communities to aid in building fraternal bonds within the greater Carmelite family?

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ASSIGNMENT OF STATES TO THE OCD PROVINCES**



*Until such time as the Cracow Province has a sufficient presence in their U.S. territory, the Secular Order in those states is served by the Oklahoma Province. Similarly, until the Warsaw and Castille Provinces have sufficient presence, the Secular Order in those states is served by the Washington Province.

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENT OF STATES TO THE OCD PROVINCES

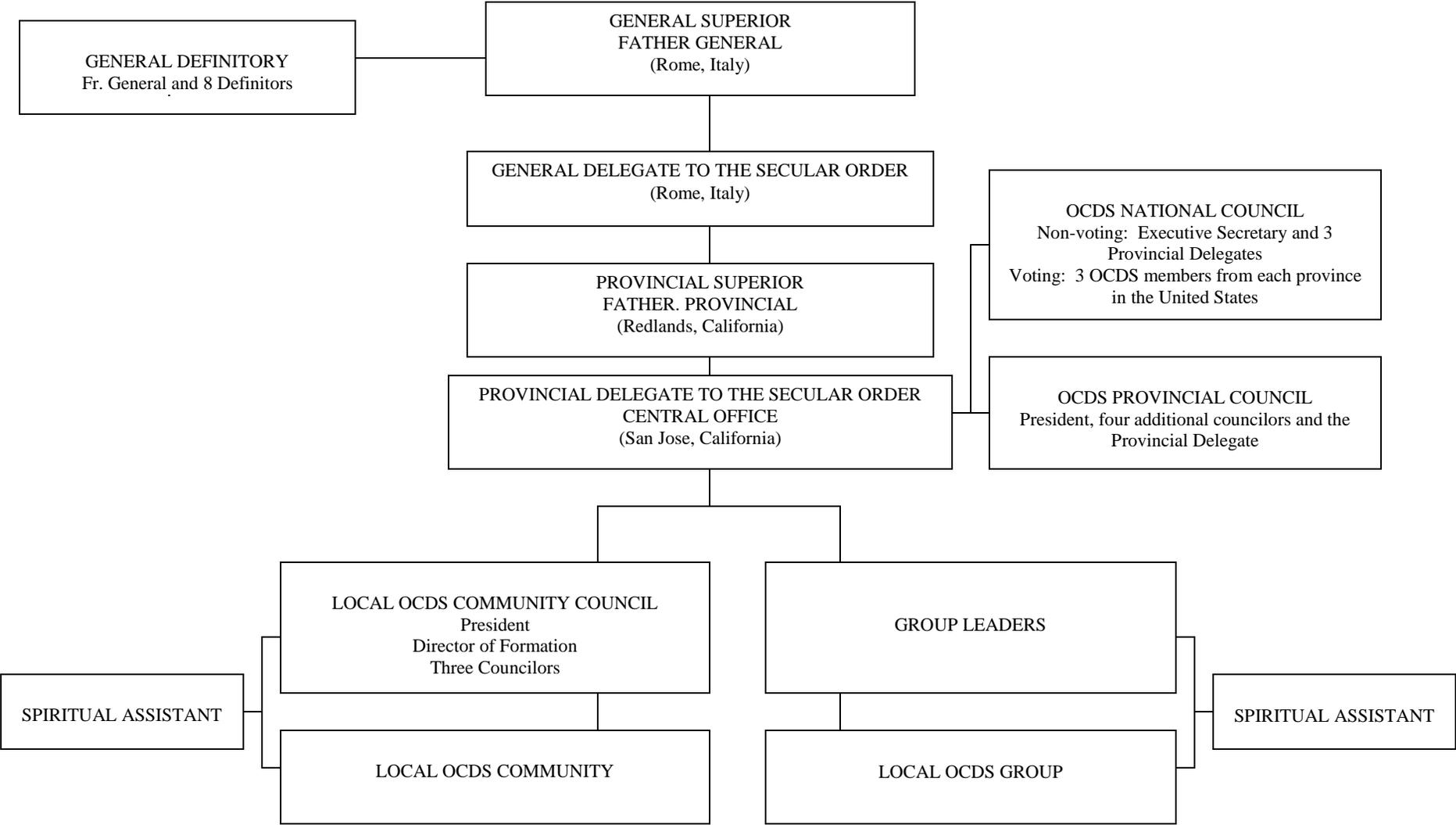
Secular Order members are juridically connected to the Order through the friars. For this reason, the OCDS provinces in the United States are geographically identical to the OCD provinces. At this point in time, the Cracow, Warsaw, and Castille provinces do not have sufficient resources in the United States to serve Secular Order members within their territories. Consequently, the Oklahoma Province of St. Therese serves the OCDS members within Cracow's territory and the Washington Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary serves the OCDS members within the Warsaw and Castille territories. The Korean province has established a house in Orange County, California, which serves their OCDS membership.

OCDS NATIONAL COUNCIL

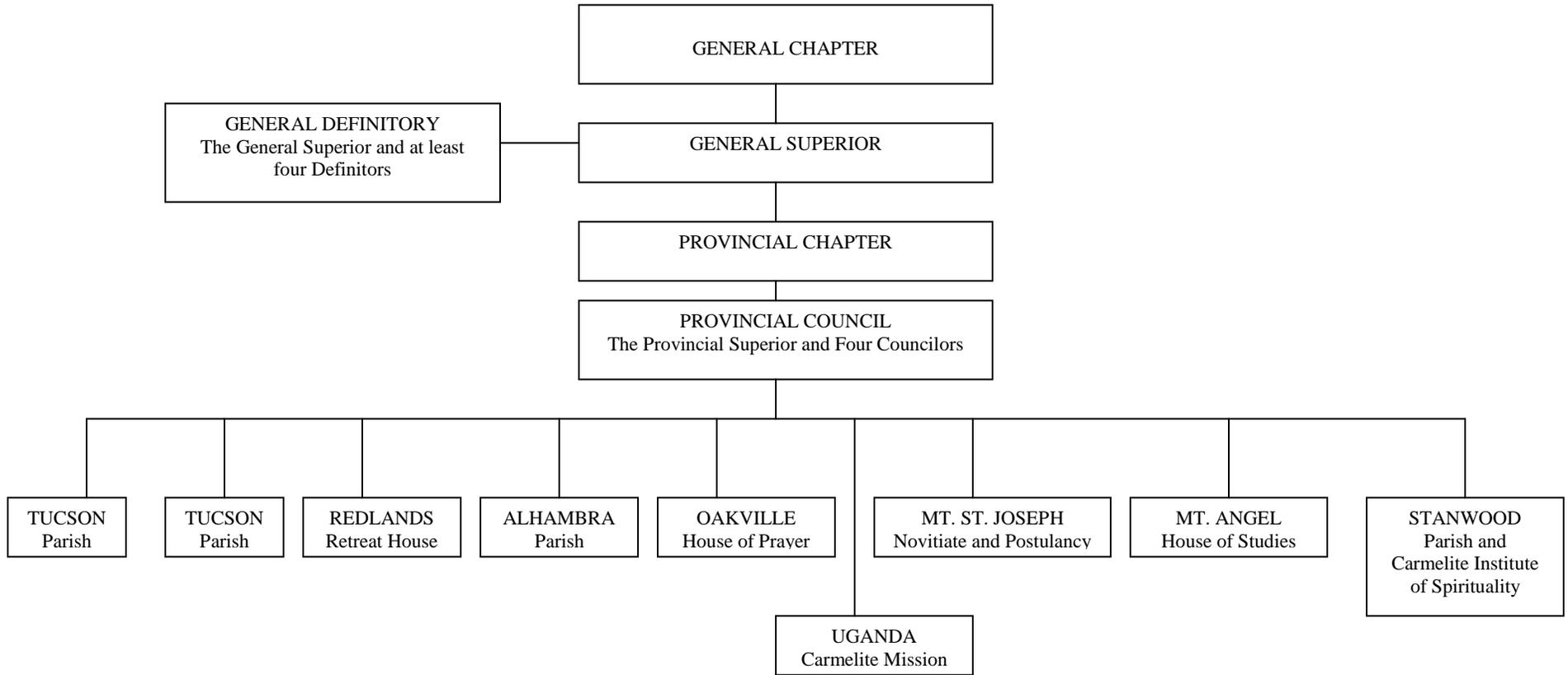
- is known as the Inter-Provincial Council, as of June 2010, which consists of members from the 3 OCDS Provincial Councils in the United States.

~~The only "permanent" member of the National Council is the Executive Secretary/Treasurer. He or she is the one who communicates with the provinces to ascertain who will be attending, to arrange for the meeting place and times, to write the minutes, etc. One Provincial Delegate from each province attends. One member of each OCDS provincial council attends the annual meeting. Two additional members from each province also attend and are chosen by the respective OCDS provincial councils, with input from the general membership. In our province, the three OCDS delegates must be definitively professed. Only the nine OCDS delegates vote. One OCDS member from a particular province chairs the meeting, with this duty rotating each year. (OCDS Constitutions 60)~~

**SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES (OCDS)
CALIFORNIA-ARIZONA PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH**



OCD FRIARS





LITURGY OF THE HOURS
(Carmelite Friars' Tradition in the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph)
Morning and Evening Prayer

Presider (P) *If a priest is present, he should be the presider.*

CANTOR SIDE 1 (C1)

CANTOR SIDE 2 (C2)

At morning prayer, while making the sign of the cross on the lips (only):

P **Lord, open my lips,**

All And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

Invitatory

C1 RECITES ANTIPHON IN ITS ENTIRETY.

All Repeat antiphon.

C1 RECITES EACH STROPHE IN ITS ENTIRETY.

All Repeat antiphon after each strophe.

C1 RECITES THE GLORY TO THE FATHER IN ITS ENTIRETY.

All Repeat antiphon after the Glory to the Father.

At evening prayer:

P **God, come to my assistance.**

All Lord, make haste to help me. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Alleluia.

At morning and evening prayer:

Hymn

If sung:

Stand

C1 INTONES FIRST LINE ALONE. (OR ANYONE SELECTED BY THE LEADERSHIP)

All Sing the rest together.

If recited:

C1 RECITES FIRST LINE ALONE.

Side 1 Completes the first strophe as if it were a psalm, and then sides 1 and 2 alternate.

Psalmody

Sit

- C1 INTONES FIRST PHRASE OF ANTIPHON 1
All Recite the remainder of the antiphon
C1 INTONES FIRST LINE OF PSALM 1

Side 1 Completes the first strophe of psalm 1

Sides 1 and 2 alternate the strophes of the psalm and Glory to the Father.

P Recites the psalm-prayer, if any

- C1 RECITES FIRST PHRASE OF ANTIPHON 1
All Recite the remainder of the antiphon.

C2 INTONES FIRST PHRASE OF ANTIPHON 2.

All Recite the remainder of the antiphon.

C2 INTONES THE FIRST LINE OF PSALM 2 IN ITS ENTIRETY ALONE.

Side 2 Completes the first strophe of the psalm.

Sides 1 and 2 alternate the strophes of the psalm and Glory to the Father.

P Recites the psalm-prayer, if any.

C2 RECITES THE FIRST PHRASE OF ANTIPHON 2

C1 INTONES THE FIRST PHRASE OF ANTIPHON 3

All Complete the remainder of the antiphon.

C1 INTONES THE FIRST LINE OF PSALM 3 IN ITS ENTIRETY ALONE.

Side 1 Completes the first strophe of Psalm 3.

Sides 1 and 2 alternate the strophes of the psalm and Glory to the Father.

P Recites the psalm-prayer, if any.

C1 INTONES THE FIRST PHRASE OF ANTIPHON 3

All Complete the remainder of the antiphon.

Reading

P Reading (*Presider stands; all others remain seated. After the reading, pause briefly for reflection.*)

Responsory

- C1 INTONES EACH FIRST LINE
All Complete the following line.

Gospel Canticle

Stand

P Intones first phrase of Canticle Antiphon

All Complete the antiphon

C1 INTONES FIRST LINE OF GOSPEL CANTICLE

Side 1 Completes the first strophe of the Gospel Canticle

Sides 1 and 2 alternate the strophes of the Canticle and Glory to the Father.

C1 INTONES EXACTLY AS THE PRESIDER AT BEGINNING OF THE CANTICLE ANTIPHON

All Complete the antiphon

Intercessions

P Intones opening line of each intercession

All Complete the second line of each intercession

P Our Father...

All Complete the Our Father

P (Without "Let us pray") Recites the prayer

Dismissal

If the presider is a priest:

P The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

P May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

P Go in peace.

All Thanks be to God.

In the absence of a priest:

P May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All Amen.

<u>Presider</u>	<u>First Cantor</u>
*God, come to my assistance	
	*Begin Hymn
	*Begin 1 st & 3 rd antiphon
	*Recite 1 st line of 1 st & 3 rd Psalms
*Psalm Prayer	
*Reading	
	*Responsory
*Begin Antiphon for Gospel Canticle	
	*Recite 1 st line of Gospel Canticle
	*Begin Antiphon
*Intercessions	
*Lord's Prayer	
*Closing prayer & dismissal by Priest or Deacon if present; otherwise by Presider	

<u>Presider</u>	<u>First Cantor</u>
*God, come to my assistance	
	*Begin Hymn
	*Begin 1 st & 3 rd antiphon
	*Recite 1 st line of 1 st & 3 rd Psalms
*Psalm Prayer	
*Reading	
	*Responsory
*Begin Antiphon for Gospel Canticle	
	*Recite 1 st line of Gospel Canticle
	*Begin Antiphon
*Intercessions	
*Lord's Prayer	
*Closing prayer & dismissal by Priest or Deacon if present; otherwise by Presider	

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF LECTIO DIVINA FOR GROUPS

Our Carmelite Secular Order communities and groups rarely have enough time together to engage in all four steps of *lectio divina* together. Since, under the Provincial Statutes, our meetings are to encapsulate our daily life, each meeting should include some *lectio*. As a practical matter, the best way to accomplish this may be to schedule the *lectio* immediately before the time for quiet prayer, and to engage in the first two steps of *lectio* aloud together, leaving the *oratio* and *contemplatio* steps to the individual in their personal quiet prayer. The practice of *lectio* can lead seamlessly into the practice of quiet prayer.

- Begin with a prayer to the Holy Spirit.

LECTIO (Reading)

Take the food into the mouth; acquaintanceship

- Read a very short passage of Scripture aloud, slowly and attentively
- Sit quietly for a moment.
- Retell the passage accurately, each person repeating a word or phrase from the passage until it has been retold.
- Listen in silence for a minute or two.

MEDITATIO (Meditation)

Chew the food; friendliness

- Read the selected passage aloud again.
- In silence, let Jesus speak to each person about the meaning of the passage for him or her, or its meaning in today's world for three or four minutes.
- Share aloud the insights received.
- Reflect on the insights in silence for another three or four minutes.

ORATIO (Prayer)

Swallow the food; friendship

- Read the passage of Sacred Scripture aloud a third time, slowly and attentively.
- In silence, ask, "What response does this passage of Scripture call forth from me to God?"
- Make the response from your heart.
- Spontaneous prayers may be spoken.
- Pray in silence for about five minutes.

CONTEMPLATIO (Contemplation)

Taste the fullness of the Word; union of life

- Read the short passage a final time.
- Rest in the presence of the Word, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to your deepest self in and through the silence, for another five minutes.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the Carmelite Institute's program of January, 2006, "Handing on Our Tradition: Formation of Formators", and the contribution there of Contemplative Outreach, from which we drew heavily.

LECTIO DIVINA
Individual Application

1. *Lectio.* Read the selected passage of Scripture slowly and attentively. Let it sink in. Make sure you understand what it says, in itself. Consider the meaning of each phrase. “Listen” in silence.
2. *Meditatio.* Relate the passage to other Biblical texts. Ponder what Jesus is saying to you personally in the passage. Reflect on these insights.
3. *Oratio.* Read the passage again, slowly and attentively. Ask what response Jesus wants from you, and make the response to Him from your heart. This is the time for St. Teresa’s intimate conversation with the One we know loves us. Be spontaneous.
4. *Contemplatio.* Read the Sacred Scripture a final time, lingering with and resting in the presence of the Word, while the Holy Spirit speaks to your deepest self in and through the silence.
5. Be flexible with the timing, responding to God’s action in your soul.
6. Make a formal conclusion to your prayer, perhaps using a line from the selected passage that has particular significance.

LECTIO DIVINA
Individual Application

1. *Lectio.* Read the selected passage of Scripture slowly and attentively. Let it sink in. Make sure you understand what it says, in itself. Consider the meaning of each phrase. “Listen” in silence.
2. *Meditatio.* Relate the passage to other Biblical texts. Ponder what Jesus is saying to you personally in the passage. Reflect on these insights.
3. *Oratio.* Read the passage again, slowly and attentively. Ask what response Jesus wants from you, and make the response to Him from your heart. This is the time for St. Teresa’s intimate conversation with the One we know loves us. Be spontaneous.
4. *Contemplatio.* Read the Sacred Scripture a final time, lingering with and resting in the presence of the Word, while the Holy Spirit speaks to your deepest self in and through the silence.
5. Make a formal conclusion to your prayer, perhaps using a line from the selected passage that has particular significance.
6. Be flexible with the timing, responding to God’s action in your soul.

SAMPLE FORMS

The samples that follow are included as examples of forms a community might develop for its own use in implementing these guidelines. Some could be used without adaptation; others will need to be adapted to serve a community's formation program. Even in those areas in which a community must keep records, there is no requirement to use these particular forms. If, however, the OCDS Central Office issues a form, it must be used.

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OCDS COMMUNITY NAME – YOUR TOWN, STATE

ROSTER OF MEMBERS

Spiritual Advisor:

Father Cares About You, OCD

Discalced Carmelite Friars

Name of Monastery

P.O. Box 0000

City, STATE ZIPCODE

Phone: (000) 000-0000

Email: _____

Aster, Sally

of St. Therese

1231 Anywhere Avenue

Some City, CA 90000

Phone: (510) 000-0000

Email:

Aspirancy: 9/18/92

Candidate in Formation: 3/18/93

Temporary Promise: 7/21/95

Definitive Promise: 7/19/98

Vows: 7/16/00

Begood, Mary

of the Sacred Heart

11 C St.

Your Town, CA 00000

Phone: (510) 000-1234

Email:

Aspirancy: 9/21/03

Candidate in Formation: 12/19/04

Fontiveros, John

of the Cross

123 Main Drive

Another City, CA 00000

Phone: (925) 123-4567

Email:

Aspirancy: 9/16/95

Candidate in Formation: 12/20/96

Temporary Promise: 12/99

Definitive Promise: 12/15/02

Note: Every year, each community or group should send an updated roster that includes the information above to the Central Office, after verifying with the members that all the information is correct. A good time to do this is after ceremonies. All members of the community should be listed alphabetically, last name first. The list should include only those who have been received into formation; do not include aspirants. There should be no separate breakdown of people into the stages of formation (those who have made vows; those who have made definitive promises, etc.). Aspirants can be listed on a separate sheet. Send another separate sheet for those who are no longer attending meetings for valid reasons, and who still want to receive mailings.

**FORMATION TRACKING FORM
ASPIRANCY**

Name _____ PhoneNumbers _____

Address _____

Email _____

Pre-Aspirancy (Date Began_____)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bible												
Catechism												
Self-Study (specify)												

Aspirancy (Date Began_____)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Catechism Part Two, #1066 - 1209												
Intro to Prayer: Rule, Constitutions 17-24												
Hist. & Structure of Order: Rule of St. Albert, Constitutions 37-60												
Scapular: Catechesis & Ritual												
Community Life: Const. 9, 13-15,26, 34, 40, Epilogue, Provincial Statutes												
Marian Dimension: Constitutions 4, 24-31; Provincial Statutes												
Evangelical Counsels & Beatitudes, Constitutions 10-16, 22, Provincial Statutes												
Discernment of OCDS Vocation												
Impediments: Catechism, Constitutions, Provincial Statutes												
Mission: Const. 25-28 and Epilogue												
Liturgy of the Hours												

Council Members Interaction with Aspirant	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1 st Councilor (name)												
2 nd Councilor (name)												
3 rd Councilor (name)												
President (name)												
Formation Director (name)												

Notes:

**FORMATION TRACKING FORM
FORMATION I YEAR 1**

Name _____ Phone Numbers _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Formation I, Year 1 (Date Began_____)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Marialis Cultus</i> : Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary												
The Way of Perfection w/ Catechism Part Four												
Rule of St. Albert												
OCDS Constitutions and Statutes monthly												
Liturgy of the Hours review												
Prayer: Catechism Pt. 4 #2558–2865 + Lectio by Fr. Anthony Morello OCD												
Structure of the Order												
Discernment of OCDS Vocation, 6 mos.												

Council Members Interaction with Candidate	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1 st Councilor (name)												
2 nd Councilor (name)												
3 rd Councilor (name)												
President (name)												
Formation Director (name)												

**FORMATION TRACKING FORM
FORMATION I YEAR 2**

Name _____ Phone Numbers _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Formation I, Year 2 (Date Began _____)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> : Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity												
Biography of St. John of the Cross												
<i>The Living Flame of Love</i>												
OCDS Constitutions (monthly)												
Counsels and Beatitudes in Relation to the Promise by Fr. Doran, OCD												
Discernment of an OCDS Vocation by Fr. Deeney, OCD												
Discernment by Fr. Lindekugel, SJ												
Scriptural meditation												
Daily meditation on the words of the Promise												

Council Members Interaction with Candidate	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1 st Councilor (name)												
2 nd Councilor (name)												
3 rd Councilor (name)												
President (name)												
Formation Director (name)												

**FORMATION TRACKING FORM
FORMATION II YEAR 1**

Name _____ **Phone Numbers** _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Formation II Year 1 (Date Began.....)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church</i>												
<i>Story of a Soul</i>												
OCDS Constitutions and Provincial Statutes												
Scripture Study												

Theme for preparation and discernment for the definitive promise: charity

Council Members Interaction with Candidate	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1st Councilor (name)												
2nd Councilor (name)												
3rd Councilor (name)												
President (name)												
Formation Director (name)												

**FORMATION TRACKING FORM
FORMATION II YEAR 2**

Name _____ Phone Numbers _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Formation II Year 2 (Date Began.....)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
<i>Christifidelis Laici</i> : The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People											
<i>Interior Castle</i>											
OCDS Constitutions and Provincial Statutes											
Scripture Study											

Theme for preparation and discernment for the definitive Promise: obedience, poverty and chastity

Council Members Interaction with Candidate	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
1 st Councilor (name)											
2 nd Councilor (name)											
3 rd Councilor (name)											
President (name)											
Formation Director (name)											

**FORMATION TRACKING FORM
FORMATION II YEAR 3**

Name _____ Phone Numbers _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Formation II Year 3 (Date Began.....)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Novo Millennio Inuente: At the Beginning of the New Millennium</i>												
<i>Ascent of Mt. Carmel</i>												
OCDS Constitutions and Provincial Statutes												
Scripture Study												

Theme for preparation and discernment for the definitive promise: the Beatitudes

Council Members Interaction with Candidate	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1 st Councilor (name)												
2 nd Councilor (name)												
3 rd Councilor (name)												
President (name)												
Formation Director (name)												

FORMATION REPORT
(For consideration by the Council)

Formation Report for:

Date:

Date Received into Formation:

Date of First Promise:

Attendance:

Assignments:

Participation:

Positive Indications:

Areas for Concern:

My recommendation:

**SECULAR ORDER DISCALCED CARMELITES
ASPIRANT'S REVIEW**

Name: _____ Email: _____

Home Telephone: () _____ Work Telephone: () _____

Address (include zip-code):

<u>Review of progress</u>	<u>3 mos.</u> <u>(*)</u>	<u>6 mos.</u> <u>(**)</u>
Have you been able to attend the Aspirant program regularly?	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to an allotted time for mental prayer?	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to an allotted time for spiritual reading?	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to praying the Liturgy of the Hours?	_____	_____
Have you been able to socialize & participate in your community?	_____	_____
Have you attended daily Mass when possible?	_____	_____

Signatures

(*) 3 months signature of aspirant: _____ Date: _____
3 months Review of progress to continue as a candidate
By: _____ Date: _____
Instructor's Signature

Signatures

(**) 6 months signature of aspirant: _____ Date: _____
6 months Review of progress to continue as a candidate
By: _____ Date: _____
Instructor's Signature

Final Review
I recommend/do not recommend above candidate for admission into Formation
because: _____

Instructor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**SECULAR ORDER DISCALCED CARMELITES
FORMATION REVIEW OF FORMATION I FOR TEMPORARY PROMISES**

Name: _____ Email: _____
 Home Telephone: () _____ Work Telephone: () _____
 Address (include zip-code):

<u>Review of progress</u>	<u>12 mos.</u> <u>(*)</u>	<u>18 mos.</u> <u>(**)</u>	<u>22 mos.</u> <u>(***)</u>
Have you been able to attend the Formation program regularly?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to an allotted time for mental prayer?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to an allotted time for spiritual reading?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to praying the Liturgy of the Hours?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been able to balance active apostolate and prayer time?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been able to socialize & participate in your community?	_____	_____	_____
Have you attended the annual weekend retreats?	_____	_____	_____
Have you attended daily Mass when possible?	_____	_____	_____

<u>Signatures</u>	
(*) 12 months signature of member: _____	Date: _____
12 months Review of progress to continue formation	
By: _____	Date: _____
Instructor's Signature	
(**) 18 months signature of member: _____	Date: _____
18 months Review of progress to continue formation	
By: _____	Date: _____
Instructor's Signature	

(*) 22 months: Final Formation I Review.**
I recommend/do not recommend above candidate to make Temporary Promises
because: _____

Instructor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

SECULAR ORDER DISCALCED CARMELITES
FORMATION REVIEW OF FORMATION II FOR DEFINITIVE PROMISES

Name: _____ Email: _____
 Home Telephone: () _____ Work Telephone: () _____
 Address (include zip-code):

<u>Review of progress</u>	<u>12 mos.</u> <u>(*)</u>	<u>24 mos.</u> <u>(**)</u>	<u>34 mos.</u> <u>(***)</u>
Have you been able to attend the Formation program regularly?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to an allotted time for mental prayer?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to an allotted time for spiritual reading?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been faithful to praying the Liturgy of the Hours?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been able to balance active apostolate and prayer time?	_____	_____	_____
Have you been able to socialize & participate in your community?	_____	_____	_____
Have you attended the annual weekend retreats?	_____	_____	_____
Have you attended daily Mass when possible?	_____	_____	_____

<u>Signatures</u>	
(*) 12 months signature of member: _____ 12 months Review of progress to continue formation By: _____ Instructor's Signature	Date: _____ Date: _____
(**) 24 months signature of member: _____ 24 months Review of progress to continue formation By: _____ Instructor's Signature	Date: _____ Date: _____

(*) 34 months: Final Formation II Review.**
I recommend/do not recommend above candidate to make Definitive Promises
because: _____

Instructor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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