

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.