

Report from the General Delegate for the OCDS

Ordinary Activity of the Secretariat:

Processing of the documentation for the establishment of new communities

Since the beginning of the sexennium 33 new communities of the OCDS have been established.

Correspondence by mail or by email

A significant amount of time is spent each day in responding to emails from various sections of the OCDS world, either from members themselves, or Provincials or Provincial Delegates. I can manage the email correspondence even while traveling.

Organization of the OCDS in regions where there are no Carmelite Friars

The OCDS is present in some parts of the world where there are no Carmelite Friars, at least for the present (Malaysia, Thailand, Latvia, Transylvanian region of Romania, etc) I attempt to maintain contact with these groups both through the internet and in person. For example, there are three communities of the OCDS in Malaysia. The Ordinaries of the three dioceses have requested that I come to visit the OCDS and the Ordinaries at least twice a year.

Visits to various jurisdictions of the Order

At the invitation of various Provinces, Semi-Provinces or other jurisdictions of the Order, I have attended or organized Congresses or meetings specifically to speak about the new Constitutions.

Focus of this triennium

At the time of the General Chapter, before we presented the Constitutions to Sacred Congregation for approval, the General Chapter determined that in this sexennium the General Secretariat would prepare two items for the OCDS – a syllabus for a plan of formation and a ratio institutionis OCDS. On 10 June of 2003, Father General and the Definitory, after having made certain adjustments, approved the text of the Constitutions and presented them to the Sacred Congregation with a request of approval “ad experimentum” for five years.

On 16 June 2003, the Congregation surprised us with a definitive approval without the necessity of the waiting for 5 years. A change in the structure of the OCDS in the Constitutions is the establishment of a Provincial Council of Secular Order members and Particular Statutes for each jurisdiction. (Constitutions 57 – 59). These new structures are a reflection of the OCDS as an association of Christian faithful (Canon 303).

Over the past two years the General Secretariat has been advising and assisting different jurisdictions in the writing of the Particular Statutes. These Statutes must be submitted to the General Definitory for approval. The following jurisdictions have presented Particular Statutes for approval: Japan, Castille, Malta, Oklahoma, Australia-Samoa, New Zealand, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, English-speaking Canada, French-speaking Canada, and Navarra. I know that many other jurisdictions are involved in writing the proper Statutes because of the email, regular mail and phone calls I receive.

These particular Statutes are very important to the life of the OCDS on the Provincial level. They are also necessary on the Provincial level for the Province to claim juridical personality for the OCDS as a Province structure.

Program of Formation

As a point of departure for each jurisdiction, I offer the following outline as a basis for the development of a formation program for the OCDS. A complete syllabus is difficult to develop on a general level because there are so many differences on the level of resources, texts, personnel, etc., according to language, country and cultural differences.

Especially in those jurisdictions that do not yet have a developed program of formation, this outline can serve as a beginning to the development of a program of formation proper to the Province or jurisdiction. It is necessary that each jurisdiction take this outline and complete what is lacking according to the necessities and particularities of each jurisdiction.

In some ways, this outline is the foundation of a proper Ratio Institutionis. My plan is to present a Ratio Institutionis Ordinis Secularis to the next extraordinary definitory in preparation for the General Chapter.

OCDS FORMATION PROGRAM

The members of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites are faithful members of the Church, called to live "An allegiance to Jesus Christ through Friendship with the One we know loves us" and in service to the Church. Under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in the biblical tradition of the prophet Elijah and inspired by the teachings of St Teresa of Jesus and St John of the Cross, they seek to deepen their Christian commitment received in baptism. (Constitutions 3)

ELEMENTS OF THE VOCATION TO THE OCDS

...life lived in allegiance to Jesus Christ (Rule #2)

- pure heart and steadfast conscience
- unswerving in the service of the Lord

...perseverance in prayer

- faithful to our Lord's invitation and to example of praying without ceasing
- foster a spirit of prayer in an attitude of interior recollection and loving dialogue with God
- meditate on God's law day and night and to watch in prayer
- remain constantly in the presence of God (Constitution #16 & Rule #4)

...formation with a

- sincere interest in the teachings of the Church especially on the role of the lay person in the Church.
- spirituality of the Carmelite Saints
- mature men and women in the practice of faith, hope and love
- having an authentic devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary
- lifetime commitment (Constitution #13)

...communal love and support

- members are one heart and soul
- cultivate fraternal relations with other members of the Carmelite family
- build communities for mutual support (Constitution #6)

...apostolic service to the Church

- commitment to a presence in society.

- conforming to and participating in the apostolic goals of the local Church and the Province (Constitutions 27, 28, 58h)
- helping others to discover the inviolable dignity of every human person and solidarity of all people among themselves (Constitution #21)

Identity of the OCDS

- is practicing member of the Catholic Church
- is inspired by St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross
- is under the protection of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
- makes the commitment to the Order
- seeks the face of God
- for the sake of the Church and the World

FORMATION IN THE SCHOOL OF CARMEL

32. *The central object of the process of formation in the Secular Order is to prepare the person to live the charism and spirituality of Carmel in its following of Christ, and in service to its mission.*

33. *With sincere interest in the teachings of the Church and the spirituality of our Carmelite Saints, 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.*

34. *Both initial and ongoing 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 commitments.*

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.*

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.

36. *The gradual introduction to the life of the Secular Order is structured in the following manner:*

- a) *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, the style of life and service to the Church proper to the Secular Order of the Teresian Carmel. This period also give the community the opportunity to make an adequate discernment. The Provincial Statutes will specify this period.*
- b) *After the initial period of contact, 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. At the beginning of this period of formation, the scapular is given to the applicant. This is an outward symbol of membership in the Order, and the sign that Mary is both Mother and Model on this journey.*

- c) *At the end of this stage, with the approval of the Council of the Community, the applicant 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.*
- d) *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 to live the evangelical counsels and the spirit of the Beatitudes for life. (Constitutions 32 -36)*

Essentials of Formation

Human Formation

- develop the capacity for introspection, interpersonal dialogue, mutual respect, tolerance
- have the ability to collaborate with others in forming community and in work

Christian Formation

- receive the necessary theological base by means of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the documents of the Church
- grow in conversion and holiness of life of formation.
- grow in the appreciation of our baptismal consecration

Carmelite Formation

- confirm Carmelite identity through formation in the Scriptures, Lectio Divina, and the spiritual doctrine of Carmel
- placing the importance of the Liturgy of the Church, especially the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours
- engage in silent prayer daily

Evaluation of Candidates

- Self Evaluation
 - One must be sensitive in evaluating his/her personal spiritual growth based on his/her level of formation.
- Formator's Evaluation
 - The Directress/Director of Formation in consultation with others involved in formation, plus an evaluation by the spiritual assistant.
- Council's Evaluation
 - The Council has the responsibility of evaluating the candidates and deciding on their suitability for advancement in the process of formation.

Formators must...

- be persons of integrity with a solid prayer life
- be cautious against assertion of power and favoritism
- be open to others
- have sufficient self-knowledge and mastery of one's own personality
- challenge those in formation to live the Paschal Mystery in their lives

Nature

Our formation is a gradual process and progressive initiation to Carmelite Spirituality, community life and apostolate. It is a three stage, six-level formation program: an initial period of introduction, 2 years in preparation for the temporary promise, and 3 years in

preparation for the definitive promise. At the end of each formation stage, with the approval of the Local Council, a candidate may be promoted to the next level. (Constitution #36)

Period of introduction

Goal:

Human Formation

- To aid aspirant in gaining self-knowledge.

Christian Formation

- To introduce the aspirant to the life of prayer and service to the Church of the layperson.

Carmelite Formation

- To acquaint the aspirant with the Carmelite's daily life and formation through a study of the Order's history, the lives of Saints Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, the Constitution and Local Statutes

Material:

- General Information
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Prayer
- History of the Order
- OCDS Constitution
- Provincial Statutes

Points of evaluation:

Human:

- Awareness of true self
- Growth in interpersonal relationship
- More positive in personal outlook

Christian:

- Openness for spiritual formation
- Fidelity to prayer
- Desire for consecration

Carmelite

- Growing awareness of God's love
- Fidelity to prayer
- Acceptance of Carmel as a way of life
- Practice of the essential of Carmelite Spirituality
- Deepening of interpersonal relationship with members of the community.

Preparation for Temporary Promise I

Goal:

Human Formation

- To acquire better appreciation of one's strengths and weaknesses

Christian Formation

- To gain knowledge of the Holy Scripture
- To understand the vocation of the lay person in the Church.

Carmelite Formation

- To learn and appreciate the OCDS way of life

Material:

- The Rule of Saint Albert

- Introduction to the Old and New Testament
- Catechism of the Church
- Saint Teresa of Jesus – The Book of Her Life
- The meaning of an evangelical life
- Apostolicam Actuositatem

Points of Evaluation:

Human

- Appreciating the value of self-denial
- More loving towards others
- Becoming more responsible as a person in the community

Christian

- A growing desire to live an evangelical life
- Frequent reception of the sacraments
- Growing sense of gratitude to God

Carmelite

- Progressive understanding of the Carmelite charism and tradition
- More drawn to Our Lady and the Carmelite saints
- More aware of practicing the virtues

Preparation for Temporary Promise II

Goal:

Human Formation

- To become more tolerant and accepting of oneself.

Christian Formation

- To awaken one's consciousness in the practice of the virtues and the desire for Christian perfection.

Carmelite Formation

- To study and appreciate the life, works, and teaching of the Carmelite Doctors of the Church.
- To focus on the Promise and its meaning

Material

Life and Works (Introduction)

- St. Teresa of Jesus - Way of Perfection (Chapters 1 – 23)
 - St. John of the Cross – Spiritual Canticle (Basic introduction)
- The meaning of the evangelical counsels and the beatitudes

Points of evaluation:

Human

- appreciating the value of self-denial
- More loving toward others
- Becoming more responsible as a person

Christian

- Spending more time in spiritual reading
- Frequent reception of the sacraments
- Growing sense of gratitude and desire to praise God

Carmelite

- Progressive understanding of the Teresian Carmelite charism and tradition
- Greater understanding of Carmelite Marian devotion
- Growth in the practice of the virtues

Temporary Promise I

Goal:

Human Formation

- To acquire the capacity to transcend one's limitations & weaknesses

Christian Formation

- To deepen one's prayer life through an understanding of the stages of the spiritual journey

Carmelite Formation

- To strengthen the candidates in embracing the ideals of Carmel through the teachings of Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus.

Material:

- Way of Perfection (Chapters 23 – 42)
- Spiritual Canticle
- Christifideles Laici on the identity of the layperson

Points of evaluation:

Human

- More reliable and self-disciplined
- Persevering in doing right
- Forbearing toward the values and beliefs of others

Christian

- More willing to share with others
- Better informed on the truths of faith
- Greater love and respect for the Church
- Increasing desire to serve

Carmelite

- Keeping the interest of the Order at heart
- Persevering in prayer
- Growing desire into becoming love at the heart of the Church

Temporary Promise II

Goal:

Human Formation

- To learn to reach out to others

Christian Formation

- To acquire an understanding of the Theology of the Church

Carmelite Formation

- To help the candidate internalize the doctrine of St. John of the Cross

Material:

- Theology of the Church (CCC, part 1)
- St. John of the Cross (Ascent)

Indicators:

Human

- More reliable, trustworthy and self-disciplined
- Persevering in doing right

- More loving and caring for others

Christian

- More willing to share with others
- Better informed on and living out the truths of faith
- Increasing desire to serve the local Church

Carmelite

- Keeping the interest of the Order in heart
- Persevering towards perfect union with God
- Growing desire into becoming love at the heart of the Church

Temporary promise III

Goal:

Human Formation

- To be an effective guide and leader to others

Christian Formation

- To deepen one's understanding of the seven sacraments and vision of a renewed Church

Carmelite Formation

- To acquire the virtues of the spiritual childhood of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and integrate the teachings of the Carmelite Doctors of the Church

Material:

- Interior Castle
- Living Flame
- The Story of a Soul
- Catechism of the Catholic Church part 2

Indicators:

Human

- Increase in availability to the needs of others
- Generosity with time and talents
- Forbearing toward the values and beliefs of others

Christian

- More willing to share with others
- Better informed on the truths of faith
- Greater love & respect for the Church
- Increasing desire to serve
- Greater participation in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ

Carmelite

- Keeping the interest of the Order at heart
- Persevering towards perfect union with God
- Growing desire into becoming love at the heart of the Church

On-Going Formation

Goal:

- To continue to grow in maturity and integration as a person
- To be increasingly committed as a Catholic Christian
- To lead others in the spiritual life by example

Material:

Series I

- St. Edith Stein
- Catechism of the Catholic Church part 3
- Carmel in the particular province and nation
- Latest documents and developments of the Church and the Carmelite Order

Series II

- Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity
- Catechism of the Catholic Church part 4
- Latest documents

Series III

- Bro. Lawrence of the Resurrection
- Latest documents
- Awareness of the needs of the local Church and ways of collaboration

Series IV

- Personalities proper to local Carmelite history and spirituality
- Currents of spirituality in the local tradition and culture