



OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DELEGATE
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites



March 1, 2022

RE: Community Attendance Policy and Eligibility for Voting in the 2023 Triennial Election

Dear Council/Leadership Team Members,

As you know, the pandemic has presented formidable challenges to us all these past two years. Every community in the Province has been affected in one way or another (especially those whose members have succumbed to Covid). Through it all, it is consoling to know that we have relied on the prayers of our Carmelite family, one for another.

I am also aware that there are vast differences in Covid positivity rates and protocol practices among the four regions of our Province (encompassing 143 communities in 23 states, DC and the Virgin Islands), with some communities completely (and still) closed while others have remained open throughout with very little disruption to their monthly meetings. This makes it extremely difficult to formulate a “one size fits all” policy with regards to returning to the pre-pandemic, in-person attendance policy for the entire Province.

Therefore, taking into consideration the unique circumstances, challenges and variations in activity of each community, I am asking the Council of each community to develop and submit an attendance policy that they feel will best accommodate the safety and welfare of their community, while at the same time determine who will be eligible to vote in the 2023 Election (for communities eligible to hold elections). Some guidelines to keep in mind:

- All policies must be in compliance with the safety and protocol guidelines that are currently in place at both the civic and diocesan level.
- **Proposed attendance policies must be submitted to the Main Office for approval by April 15th in order to take effect by May 1st.** If the proposed policy is approved, all members must be immediately notified of the community’s new Attendance Policy and Voter Eligibility Attendance Requirement (if applicable). Until a community’s proposed policy is approved, the current Provincial attendance policy will remain in effect.
- Approved Council-determined attendance policies will be in effect from the date approved until the time I re-establish an attendance policy for the entire Province.
- Groups in Discernment, even though they will not conduct Elections in 2023, will still need to submit a proposal for a Community Attendance Policy.
- For the 2023 Triennial Election it will still be the policy of the Province that a community must have a total of 12 Active Professed (combined TP and DP) members who meet the Community Eligibility Policy in order to hold elections.

Challenging times call for creative and unique solutions. At this time, I feel that this is the best course of action to take. Be assured of my prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this matter. I bid you shalom,

Fr. Leonard R. Copeland, OCD
OCDS Provincial Delegate