



**OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DELEGATE**  
**Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites**



June 5, 2023

**RE: EXPIRATION OF TEMPORARY PROMISES**

Dear Carmelites,

May the peace of the Lord be with you and your community!

I come to you with a matter of urgent importance that needs to be addressed immediately by all Councils and Leadership Teams. The issue concerns the validity of Final/Definitive Promises that are made after the First/Temporary Promise has expired.

In order to make a Definitive Promise, you must still be in your Temporary Promise. The Temporary Promise expires three years to the day from the date it is made. This means that either the Definitive Promise ceremony needs to take place within the three-year Temporary Promise time frame or the Temporary Promise needs to be renewed prior to the Definitive Promise being made. This is the case even if the Temporary Promise will have expired by only a few days beyond making the Definitive Promise. The Council/Leadership Team can set the date for Definitive Promise at the time the Candidates make their Temporary Promise.

I know this will beg the question: What about the validity of current Definitive Promises that were made after the Temporary Promise expired? This topic was discussed at the May 2023 General Definitory held in Rome and we are awaiting guidance on this issue. Once we receive the decree from Rome, we will share it with you. In the meantime, there is no need for worry. We all are blessed to belong to the same Order and we will work through the details together. I'd appreciate it if you would not contact the Main Office as we do not currently know more than I have shared and I will let you know as soon as we do.

One final thought. This situation reminds me of when St. Thérèse was due to make her final vows in January 1890, but the date was postponed until September. The nine-month wait was difficult for Thérèse – but purifying. In the process of waiting, Thérèse realized how much self-will was contained in making her vows according to her own timetable. May each of us find great spiritual joy in mitigating our own self-will and increasing our detachment as we work through this process.

Thank you in advance for your understanding, cooperation, prayers and obedience.

In Carmel,

Fr. Leonard R. Copeland, OCD  
OCDS Provincial Delegate