



OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DELEGATE

Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites



July 16, 2023

Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Dear Carmelites,

I have wonderful news to share with you from the General Definitory in Rome regarding the review of the expired Promises situation. This news will allow everyone's Promises to be valid if the correct protocols are observed. The ruling was forwarded to us by Fr. Ramiro Casale, the OCDS General Delegate. **This ruling is final and to be followed in its entirety; it is not open to other interpretations or implementation.** Failure to do so will result in invalid Promises for all concerned, so it is expected that all OCDS and Spiritual Assistants become familiar with the directives and take responsibility for implementing them.

Attached are two important documents. One is the official decree from the Carmelite Curia, signed by Father General Miguel Calle and the Secretary General, Fr. Angelo Lanfranchi, granting a *sanatio in radice* (Latin for "healing at the root," something that only Father General can grant). **This document grants a "general pardon" to all Fully Professed who, before June 16, 2023, made their Final Promise after the First Promise had expired; however, the pardon is conditional upon the individual making the Final Promise one more time, in person and in a formal manner within the community, according to the OCDS Rituals.** (See addendum.) Extended Members, the sick and the elderly are granted the pardon unconditionally, which means that they do not need to make the Final Promise one more time and are considered to have a valid Final Promise. In response to our questions, Fr. Ramiro states that Vows do **not** need to be remade, even if they were made under irregular/invalid Final Promises. If, in the past, the Promises/Vows were made without proper delegation or with anyone other than a priest, the *sanatio* covers those situations, too, but only through June 16, 2023.

The second document is a chart detailing the various situations that were presented to Rome and the actions that must be taken to regularize all OCDS Promises in the Washington Province. We can consider this the "great reset" for all the OCDS in the Province so that, going forward, everyone's Promises will be valid **if the correct protocol is observed**. With this chart we have also included the actual words from Fr. Ramiro that address each situation. It is the responsibility of **BOTH the Council and the individual** to make sure that these protocols are followed. Some extremely important, non-negotiable points (mandated by Rome) to remember:

- The First Promise expires 3 years ***to the day*** from when it was made.
- If the First Promise expires, even by one day, ***the person is no longer considered to be a member of the Discalced Carmelite Order.***
- If the First Promise expires before the person has made the Final Promise, the person must re-make the First Promise, using the original formula, ***and wait one year*** before making the Final Promise.
- ***Only a priest*** (either the approved Spiritual Assistant or a priest who has received delegation from the OCDS Provincial Delegate) may conduct Clothings and receive Promises/Vows on behalf of the Order in order for these to be valid.

In the interests of transparency, I felt it was important to include Fr. Ramiro's comments so you could see how much time and effort was expended in Rome to help regularize the Promises of almost 3,800 OCDS in the Province. Going forward, with full compliance to these directives, we should never have to address this situation again in the Secular Order. Thanks be to God!

I have been edified by the grace, detachment, obedience and love which many OCDS communities have demonstrated re: the original news about invalid Promises. Part of belonging to an Order is being compliant with, and obedient to, the legislation as determined by legitimate authority; in this case, the Carmelite Curia in Rome. We are not a club; we are a religious Order. We may not always agree or like what we are told to do, but your OCDS Promise clearly states that you "sincerely promise to the Superiors of the Order of the Teresian Carmel" that you are willing to subject yourself to the "spirit of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience, and of the Beatitudes." Let us all – friars, nuns and seculars – treasure our vocations and do everything in our power to embrace what it means to belong to a religious Order in the Catholic Church.

Shalom,

Fr. Leonard R. Copeland, OCD
OCDS Provincial Delegate