



OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DELEGATE  
Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites



February 17, 2023

Dear OCDS Communities of the Washington Province,

I would like to address some issues with regards to the new National Formation Program that has been adopted by all three Provinces of the United States.

The link to the new National Formation Program is now posted on the Washington Province website in the announcement banner and under “Resources/National Formation”: <https://www.ocdswashprov.org/national-formation-program>. A link to the Constitutions, referred to in the documents, may be found on the same page. At this important time, I would like to address several topics with regards to implementation of the new Program in the Washington Province:

**Implementation Responsibility**

The OCDS legislation (Constitutions, Statutes, and Ratio) state that the Council is responsible for the Formation in the Community. Because communities are in the midst of the Triennial Election process, I believe that the new Councils/Leadership Teams should implement the program. Therefore, beginning in June, all newly elected Community Councils (President, Formation Director and three Councilors) and Leadership Teams (Moderator, Advisor, and Formation Director) Teams are to review the National Formation Program and determine a schedule for implementation of each level of Formation. After careful review, and understanding that each community is different with unique needs, each Council/Leadership Team is responsible to implement the new National Formation Program as soon as they determine the community is ready. This includes the need to address where each candidate in the current Formation Program is to be located in the new Formation cycle, with the understanding that the candidates’ time in formation has not changed (one year, two years, and three years). However, every community will be required to implement the National Formation Program no later than June 1, 2024.

Each community will be responsible for owning a complete set of the new Formation Program materials: one Handbook and six Formation Manuals (one for each level). There will be two options available to do this:

- 1) Printing directly from the OCDS website. Permission to download and print the documents from the website has been granted. Candidates in Formation may also download and print their own copies.
- 2) Purchasing 8.5” x 11” softcover paperback books directly from Lulu Press at cost. Each book will be available for purchase separately. The link to purchase each book will be posted on the National Formation page (on the OCDS website) by April 1st. Prices for each book will range from \$4 to \$7 (tax and shipping not included).

**Adoption of a 12-month Formation Schedule**

The implementation of this new Formation Program provides the perfect opportunity for each community to formally adopt an annual Formation schedule whereby new Aspirants are accepted *only one month a year*, during a designated month chosen by the Council/Leadership Team. The result will be the end of “rolling

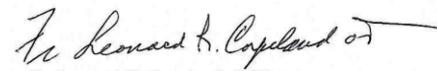
admissions” and ease the need for a community to provide more than one set of Formators per level per year. The designated month will be considered as “Session One” of a Formation Year (each Formation Year is composed of 12 sessions) and *all levels of Formation Classes will begin during that same designated month each year.*

Thus, all Formation in the community will be on a 12-month basis with the Ceremonies of Clothings, First Promises and Final Promises taking place during the 12<sup>th</sup> month annually when the Formation sessions end. Conducting Ceremonies only once a year will also conserve valuable time and effort on the part of a Spiritual Assistant or Councils/Leadership Teams needing to seek delegation for a priest or deacon to conduct Ceremonies on behalf of the Order.

If individuals present themselves after the beginning of the Formation cycle, they are to be considered Visitors and the policy for Visitors in the Book of Documents (pp. 279-280) should be followed.

I am aware that introducing a new Formation Program to the entire Province, and the country, may pose a significant challenge to communities but I have every confidence that Councils and Leadership Teams will find a way forward to best implement the Program in their particular circumstances. If you need any assistance or have questions, please contact the Main Office. I thank you in advance for your patience, cooperation and adherence to these guidelines as we embark on this new National Formation Program. Together, relying on the Holy Spirit’s wisdom to guide and empower all of us, I am certain that this new Program will prove to be a valuable gift to the OCDS in standardizing Formation, not only throughout our Province, but the entire country.

United in prayer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Leonard B. Copeland" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fr. Leonard Copeland, OCD  
OCDS Provincial Delegate