



CARMEL CONNECT

Newsletter of the OCDS Main Office



WASHINGTON PROVINCE
SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES

ocdswashprov.org

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From the Desk of the Provincial Delegate...

Dear OCDS Members,

During this Easter Season I want to assure you of my prayers and I ask for *your* prayers during this special season of our Savior's Resurrection. Alleluia! He is Risen and dwells among His people!

With the election process in full swing, I have become aware that there is a serious leadership issue present in our communities. It seems some communities with 12 or more eligible Professed Members are unable to obtain 5 members to serve on Council. This is very concerning because, as a member of a COMMUNITY, you need to keep in mind that you have not joined a CLUB. Membership in a community requires that we share our time, talent, and treasure for the wellbeing of the community. This is the commitment you made when you made your Promises and became a member of the OCDS.

In the *Formation Handbook* of the new National Formation program, this issue is addressed in this way: "If you're a member of the Secular Order there's some way in which you are being called to give of yourself. Not receive! ... if you're being called to be a member of the Discalced Carmelite family, you are being called to give yourself in some way." (p. 24)

Constitution #30 also states this: "Mary is also an ideal and inspiration for the Secular Carmelite ... She, mother and sister, who goes before us in a pilgrimage of faith and in following the Lord Jesus, keeps us company so that we may imitate her life hidden in Christ and commit to the service of others."

Lastly: "It needs to be made clear that *everyone* must be willing to take a turn serving the community in a leadership role. Some may be more suited than others, but *everyone* needs to be willing to serve on the Council or as a formator if they are asked. These roles are not to give honor and prestige, but to serve and work for others." (p. 23)

I would like to remind the members of the OCDS that it is the responsibility of each member not only to be present and active at the monthly meeting, but also to acknowledge the fact that each one is called to be responsible for *the wellbeing of the community*, and that includes service in the role of a leadership position.

Since we are called by our Baptism, and as members of the OCDS, you need to ask yourself: "How am I being called to share my time, talent and treasure with my community for its growth and wellbeing?"

Assuring you of my prayers for the discernment of your answer to the question:
HOW AM I BEING CALLED TO SERVE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN COMMUNITY?

Blessings and Peace. I bid you Shalom.

Fr. Leonard



DEVOTIONAL RENEWAL OF PROMISES

According to Constitution 12, all those in First and Final Promises are supposed to renew their Promise “*once a year at Easter time.*” As #10 of the Ritual Guidelines in the BOD states, “**The formula proposed below for the Renewal of Commitment is to be understood as a devotional act, not a liturgical one. Therefore it is to be made in a simple way at some fitting moment during common prayer.**”

To be clear:

- The devotional renewal of the Promise is to be done during the Easter Season at a community meeting during “some fitting moment during common prayer.”
- The correct formula to be used can be found on page 317 (#84) of the Book of Documents and is as follows:

I, (devotional name in Carmel), desiring to follow the Crucified and Risen Christ in the Secular Order of Carmel, renew my profession and I promise to tend toward evangelical perfection in the spirit of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, and of the Beatitudes, according to the Constitutions of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. I confidently entrust my promise to the Virgin Mary, Mother and Queen of Carmel.

- The devotional renewal is said together as a community, not individually.
- Anyone absent from the community meeting at which the devotional renewal takes place, may make the devotional renewal privately.
- The devotional renewal does not extend the three years’ duration of First Promises.

OPTIONAL INSTALLATION CEREMONY FOR NEW OFFICERS/ LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

Once the new Council or Leadership Team is in place, there is an *optional* Installation Ceremony that communities *may*, or may not, wish to use. (It is not required.) The Ceremony can be found on the OCDS website under “Resources” then “Rituals.” (<https://www.ocdswashprov.org/rituals>) The Presider should be the Spiritual Assistant or a member of the clergy. However, *there is no need for delegation* as the Presider is only invoking a blessing upon the individuals involved and not serving as a representative on behalf of the Discalced Carmelite Order.

TRIENNIAL ELECTION/LEADERSHIP TEAM FORMS DUE

All communities must submit a completed Form for the next triennium’s leadership in the community to the Main Office electronically; no hard copies will be accepted. The forms and due dates are as follows:

Proposed Leadership Team Form (for communities that did not hold elections) - Due Apr 1, ’23

Triennial Election Results Form (for communities that held elections) - Due June 1, ’23

Current Community Contacts will remain in place until the new form is submitted to the Main Office. Please do not change the Leadership Position data on the Community Roster on your own; the Main Office will do that once your community’s form has been processed. **Forms must be complete, with all required positions filled in with names, in order to be processed.**



SOME CLARIFICATIONS ON NEW NATIONAL FORMATION PROGRAM

- The new National Formation Program is to be used by all Candidates in Formation, from Aspirants to those in their last year of preparing to make the Final Promise. **All Candidates are expected to obtain a printed copy of all Formation Sessions and study them**, either by downloading and printing them from the website or purchasing the appropriate textbook from Lulu Press. (Here is the link to purchase: <https://www.ocdswashprov.org/national-formation-program>) **The lesson plans are not intended to be accessed and used by just the Formation Director or members of the Formation Team, but by everyone.** Even the Formation Handbook, written primarily for the Formation Team, is a valuable educational tool for all Candidates to read, with many insights into the scope and sequence of OCDS Formation.
- Don't forget that all communities must have the new National Formation Program in place and implemented by **June 1, 2024.**
- Remember that it is the role of the Formation Director to oversee the *implementation* of the Formation Program and compose the schedule for the Formation TEAM, appointed by the Council/Leadership Team, that assists with the teaching of the Formation Classes. "The Community Council will take special care to select suitable

seculars for the Formation Team, people of prayer and culture, open-minded and anxious to share their Carmelite experience with the candidates." (Ratio 29) For more information about the Formation Team, please also see Ratios 8 (p. 224) and 34 (p. 231) in the *Book of Documents*. The Council/Leadership Team is responsible for the approval of the Formation Program and the Formation Team in the community – not the Formation Director.

- And it wouldn't hurt to reiterate that the Washington Province Book of Documents (the "BOD") contains a *printing error with regards to the numbering of the Constitutions*. (Note: The online version of the Constitutions on the OCDS website is accurate.) Constitutions 1-18 are correctly numbered. However, beginning on page 25 (at the top) in the BOD, the numbering is incorrect. Unfortunately, Constitution #19 is typed as if it is part of Constitution #18. Constitution #19 actually begins with the words, "Occupying a privileged place in nourishing the prayer life of Carmelite Seculars ...," and ends with the words, "... for a commitment to follow Jesus," like this:

"19. Occupying a privileged place in nourishing the prayer life of Carmelite Seculars will be the study and spiritual reading of Scripture and the writings of our Saints, particularly those who are Doctors of the Church: St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. The Church's documents are also food and inspiration for a commitment to follow Jesus."

Please make note of this in your copy of the BOD so that you will not be confused when referred to the Constitutions mentioned in the new Formation Program. After this correction, all remaining Constitution numbers need to be altered by one. (e.g., The Constitution currently numbered #19 is actually Constitution #20. The Constitution currently numbered #20 is actually Constitution #21 and so on. The last Constitution currently numbered #59 on page 42 is actually Constitution #60.)

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

The terms of all current Spiritual Assistants will expire on July 1, 2023. The new application form for the Appointment or Re-Appointment of a Spiritual Assistant for the next triennium (July 1, 2023 - July 1, 2026) has not been posted on the OCDS website yet; we will notify you when it is available. Do not modify/change/edit the former Form as the new one will have some modifications. Thank you for your patience.



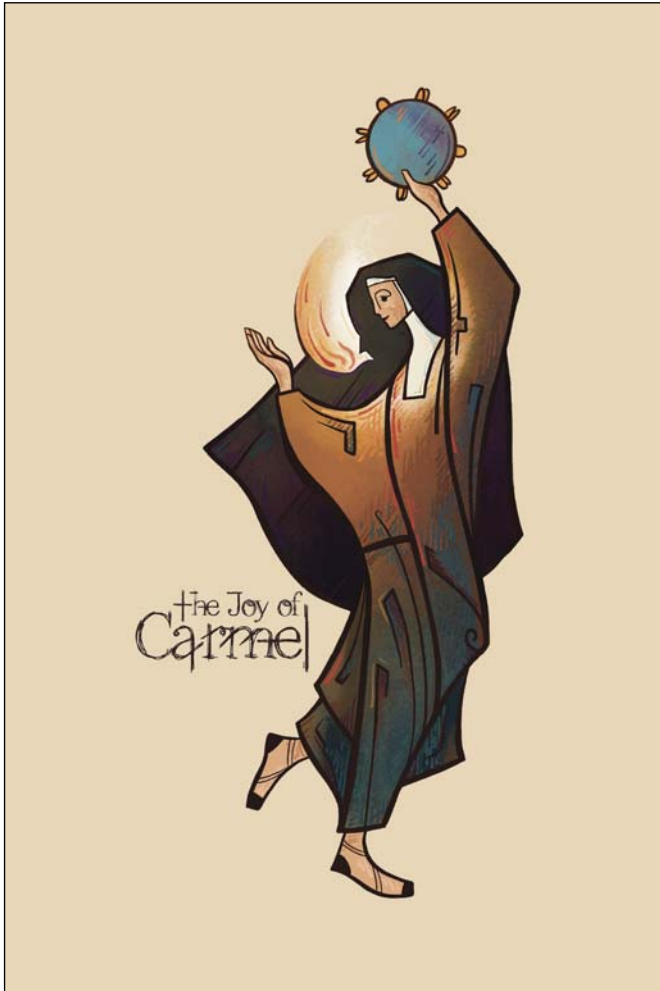
OCDS “CENSUS” STATS FOR 2023

Here are some interesting membership statistics for the past 3 years about our Province.

	2021	2022	2023
Total OCDS	3778	3792	3810
Active Members	3055	2978	2918
Total # Communities	147	144	138
Aspirants	175	178	218
Scapular	331	308	279
First Promises	489	475	425
Active Final Promises	2060	2017	1996
Extended Members	683	774	850
Leave of Absence	40	40	42

UPDATE ON 2024 CONGRESS

Plans are well underway for the 2024 OCDS Congress to be held at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel in Wakefield, MA from August 22-25 celebrating “The Joy of Carmel.” Fr. Manu Gomez, O.Carm., was commissioned to design the Congress logo, which captures St. Teresa’s zeal and exuberance in the Lord perfectly! (Note the Holy Spirit incorporated into her halo, “speaking” to Holy Mother.) More details will be available via the Congress website once launched. In the meantime, please join us in this prayer for the Congress.



*Our Lady of Mount Carmel,
look down upon your children
as they joyfully prepare for the
2024 OCDS Congress
dedicated to you and your Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Assist all those who are in any way
involved with the organization of this
Carmelite family gathering in your honor.
Help each of us to imitate your fidelity
to contemplative prayer, your promptness
in doing the Will of the Father, and
your generosity in the practice of charity
towards all, according to the promptings
of the Holy Spirit, your Spouse. Amen.*

**2024 OCDS CONGRESS
August 22 - 25**

Four Points Sheraton
Wakefield-Boston Hotel & Conference Center

2024OCDS CONGRESS.ORG

*Artwork by Fr. Emanuel “Manu” Franco-Gomez, O.Carm.
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EXTENDED MEMBERS

- “OCDS members who have been Definitively Promised and can no longer attend meetings due to reasons of distance, age or illness, will be regarded as Extended Members and retain their status as members of the Secular Order, per OCDS Constitutions #56.” (Statute 79)
 - “It is the responsibility of the President of the community to establish contact with those members and the responsibility of these members to maintain contact with the community.” (Const. 56)
- [Note: This does not mean that it is only the President’s *personal responsibility* to maintain contact with Extended Members, but s/he should see to it that an “Outreach Committee,” of some sort, should be established in the community so that contact with Extended Members may be ongoing.]
- “Definitively Promised members who become homebound due to age or illness (Const. 56) continue to be full Extended Members of the local community. The community will show fraternal charity to these valued members.” (Statute 12)
 - *Extended Members can never be arbitrarily dropped/deleted from the Roster without their specific request to Voluntarily Withdraw from the Order.* Once a person is dropped from the Roster, it means they are no longer a member of the OCDS.



As you can see, our OCDS legislation places a *high value* on the care of esteemed members who can no longer attend monthly meetings in person due to age, illness (of an ongoing nature) or distance. There are many ways in which a community can exercise fraternal charity towards Extended Members. These include:

- Occasional phone calls and visits (circumstances permitting)
- Greeting cards/spiritual bouquets for birthdays, holidays, anniversaries of Profession
- Offering transportation to community/District events such as Retreats, Days of Recollection community celebrations or Ceremonies, etc.
- Sending a small gift at Christmastime, a birthday, or any other special time
- Sending group or individual photos of community members and/or events



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