

Formation Handbook

The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites



The reform of the Carmelite Order initiated by Our Holy Mother St. Teresa and her collaborator, Our Holy Father St. John of the Cross, is a living expression of the Carmelite charism in its original form. The friars, nuns and seculars of Carmel complement one another and bring fullness and dynamism to the Carmelite charism of prayer.

The primary orientation of this handbook is towards the Formators and Council members of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. Carmelite Seculars come from all walks of life – men and women, young and old, married and single. Each one hears the Word of God and responds to God’s call to “meditate on the Lord’s law, day and night.” (Rule of St Albert, 10)

A Secular Carmelite is:

a practicing member of the Catholic Church who,
under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel,
and inspired by Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross,
makes a commitment to the Order
to seek the face of God in prayer and service
for the good of the Church and the needs of the world. (*Ratio* 69)

Realizing the importance of nurturing strong and mature communities of Carmelite Seculars, a proposal was made by the OCDS Generalate (Fr. Cannistrà, General Superior and Fr. Debastiani, General Delegate to the OCDS) to develop a single formation program for all Carmelite Seculars in the USA. A task force consisting of two members from each Province was created in 2017, resulting in one cohesive formation program from Aspirancy to the Definitive Promise.

Recognizing the value of a program specific to human formation, additional facts and guidelines were added to the OCDS Program of Formation. The result is this handbook: *Formation Handbook for the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites*. This handbook was developed to convey the essential elements of the OCDS Program of Formation and to assist the Councils and Formators in understanding and appreciating the transformative process of human formation. Its content is based on the Christian anthropology of the human person who is “created in His own image and likeness.” To be human, at the most profound level, is to discover the ultimate purpose and value of inner transformation.

Excerpt from the “Introduction”

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