

Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum Sacularis

OCDS Provincial Statutes

Washington Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

This is the text of the Statutes definitively approved by the General Definitory on June 8, 2015

I. WITNESSES TO THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD [Cf. Const., Section III]

1) Secular Carmelites are faithful members of the Catholic Church who are called by the Holy Spirit to “live in allegiance to Jesus Christ” [cf. Const. #3]. They seek evangelical perfection and union with God in the Order of the Teresian Carmel for his greater Glory and the good of his Church. In response to that call, members willingly submit to the “gentle yoke” (Mt. 12:30) of obligations and commitments contained in The Rule of St. Albert, our Constitutions and our Provincial Statutes.

- 2) Practicing Roman Catholics, who are in full communion with the Church, may be admitted to the Secular Order provided they are:
- a) Ordinarily between 18 to 65 years of age,
 - b) able to provide a current official Church copy of their Baptismal Certificate, [Note: Alternative, approved documentation may be necessary if this document is not available].
 - c) able to provide some documentation showing proof of a valid marriage in the Catholic Church, where applicable.
 - d) living the Catholic faith for a minimum of 18 months after Baptism before being eligible to enter Aspirancy.
 - e) not already members of any other group that requires promises or vows [Note: It is the local council’s responsibility to research local associations of the faithful in the area to determine approval of the diocese and whether or not promises are made].

Daily Life

- 3) The foundation and essence of our vocation is prayer. Therefore in imitation of our Blessed Mother Mary and heeding the call of Jesus, her Son, to “pray always without becoming weary”(Lk. 18:1) Secular Carmelites will seek union with God and strive to live in the constant awareness of his presence.

They ought to:

- a) Practice mental prayer for at least 30 minutes each day in an atmosphere of interior silence and solitude.
- 4) Secular Carmelites will unite their prayers with those of the universal Church by participating in the Church’s liturgical celebrations.
 - a) Morning and Evening Prayer of The Liturgy of the Hours are to be prayed each day. The praying of Night Prayer is highly encouraged.
 - b) They will seek, within the limits imposed by their secular state, to participate in daily Mass whenever possible. When attendance at daily Mass is not possible, reflection on the

scripture readings of the day is encouraged.

- 5) Called to continual conversion, Secular Carmelites will seek to identify and place before God any obstacles and impediments to union with him. Confident in God's loving mercy, they will:
 - a) Engage in a daily examination of conscience, ideally just before retiring or at the beginning of Night Prayer.
 - b) Participate frequently in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance).

- 6) The early hermits on Mount Carmel, following in the footsteps of our Lord and of our Holy Father Elijah, sought the solitude of the desert to pray and to listen for the "still small voice"(1 Kings 19:12) of the Holy Spirit. Echoing this practice and tradition, Secular Carmelites are encouraged to:
 - a) Attend at least one retreat per year – preferably a Carmelite and/or community retreat when possible.
 - b) Participate in days of recollection.
 - c) Where possible, retreats and days of recollection may be cooperative efforts involving more than one Community. (*Constitutions #24d*)

Community Life

- 7) Our Carmelite vocation is lived out in community. Communities shall meet at least monthly allowing sufficient time for:
 - prayer: Morning or Evening prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours/Divine Office and if feasible, mental prayer as a community
 - formation
 - socializing/fellowship
 - business meeting.

- 8) Every Secular Carmelite will strive to place the good of the community and fraternal charity above self-interest and will give the community meeting primacy of place in the ordering of his/ her schedule. The desire and ability to attend community meetings are signs of an authentic vocation. There are no secular member Isolates in the Washington Province.

- 9) The Secular will:
 - a) faithfully attend monthly meetings [*NOTE: Absences should be for serious reasons and in accordance with the Provincial Attendance Policy*].
 - b) share in the duties and responsibilities of the community as designated by the local council
 - c) participate, in some way, in the Community apostolate.

10) Provincial Attendance Policy

Participation in community life is an essential part of the Secular Carmelite's vocation. To highlight the importance of community, there is a Provincial Attendance Policy to underscore this facet of our vocation and to provide unity throughout the Province. Attendance at monthly meetings determines a member's participation in:

- Community membership (Active vs. Inactive)
- Community elections
- Formation for making Promises

a) An active member is one who is professed and regularly attends and participates in monthly meetings. The order recognizes that members have legitimate obligations and God-given responsibilities that may at times conflict with responsibilities of the OCDS community. However, such conflicts should be the exception in an OCDS vocation.

- When a member needs to be absent from the monthly meeting, s/he must notify the community according to the procedures determined by the local council.
- Members who miss 5 meetings in any given calendar year must contact the local council, who will then determine if the member can maintain active status in the community.
- Should a member not be in communication with the local council after missing 5 meetings, written notice, in the form of a certified letter, should be sent to the member inviting them back and informing them that they are not fulfilling the obligation to attend monthly meetings (Statutes: Community Life #7). S/he should be given a 60 day deadline to return to the community or to seek an appointment with the council.
- If the council does not receive any response from the member within 60 days, the council will send a second certified letter explaining that if the local council does not hear from the said member within 45 days, the community will understand that s/he no longer wants to be a part of the community.
- The letter should state that s/he will be removed from the roster and classified as “Inactive” in the OCDS Main Office database. They are not considered extended members of the community and have essentially withdrawn themselves from the community.
- Minutes from council meetings should document the process and the circumstances of decisions that deem a member inactive.
- Once a member has been dropped from the roster, they cannot return to the community or active status without meeting with the local council and being approved to return. If approved, Provincial dues and *Clarion* subscription fee for the current year will be collected by the council and sent to the Main Office. Payment of community dues for the current year will be collected at the discretion of the local council.
- Members returning to active status will be required to undergo a refresher program of formation as determined by the local council.

b) Any member missing 5 or more meetings in the 12 months prior to the month in which the triennial Nominating Committee is appointed (normally January; Statutes: Local Community Elections #63a) is ineligible to:

- (1) serve on the Nominating Committee,
- (2) serve on the community’s Council (i.e., President, Formation Director or Councilor)
- (c) serve as Secretary or Treasurer,

(4) or vote in the triennial election itself.

Members may only vote in the community of which they are an official member.

c) Attendance requirements for completing the three periods of formation (Aspirancy, Preparation for First/Temporary Promise and Preparation for Definitive Promise) are more rigorous and it is the responsibility of the local council to ensure that the formation requirements are fulfilled. Those in formation should expect to make up missed sessions (on tape, via written assignments, etc.) and/or have their time in formation extended.

11) While the size and unique circumstances of various communities point to a local approach to the specifics of attendance policies, some general principles with regard to the Provincial Attendance Policy should be kept in mind:

a) The need for each member to complete formation (initial and ongoing).

b) Recognition that members have legitimate obligations and God-given responsibilities that may at times conflict with responsibilities of the OCDS community. Such conflicts should be the exception in an OCDS vocation.

12) Definitively Promised members who become homebound due to age or illness (Constitutions #56) continue to be full extended members of the local community. The community will show fraternal charity to these valued members.

13) Only local councils may grant a Leave of Absence to any Promised member who is unable to attend meetings due to a temporary change in life circumstances. Any Leave of Absence:

(1) Will be granted for 1 year.

(2) May be extended, at the discretion of the council, for 6-month increments, up to a maximum leave of two years.

(3) At the end of the two-year period, if the member is unable to faithfully return to monthly community meetings, then h/she must make a decision as to membership in the Order.

(4) Council members who are granted a Leave of Absence must resign from the Council. Replacement council members must be elected by the council members, not appointed by the president. It is the responsibility of the president to notify the Provincial Delegate and the Main Office of any changes in council leadership during the triennium of their service. (Const. #47d)

After consulting with the Council, members on Leave of Absence may return prior to the expiration date of the leave.

14) Members who stop attending meetings without communicating with the local council will be dropped from the community roster and will be considered inactive members if they do not respond after two certified letters from local Councils.

15) A member who has been dropped from the roster must contact the Council if they are interested in returning to active status. The Council will then inform the Main Office of the member's return.

16) Circumstances for Voluntary Withdrawal from the Order: When those in Definitive Promise can no longer faithfully attend monthly meetings due to changes in their life circumstances for some reason other than age, illness or distance, which are excused by #56 of the Constitutions and qualify them to be extended members, they may request in writing of the local council voluntary withdrawal. This relieves them of the obligations of their Promise, i.e., monthly meetings, praying the Liturgy of the Hours and half-an-hour of mental prayer each day.

These individuals remain in good standing with the Order and are eligible to petition the council to return to their community and request permission to renew their Promises and obligations as a member of the Order, or to request a transfer to another community and permission for renewal of promises at some future date when changes in life circumstances once again permit them to live out the obligations of their Definitive Promise. These members will be required to undergo a refresher program of formation.

17) Closing of Communities

The *Ratio Institutionis of the Secular Order* defines the purpose of the existence of OCDS communities as the formation and Christian Carmelite maturing of the community and all its members. (*Ratio*, 2 & 3).

a) In the event a Canonically Established community is unable to select a viable Council: President, (three Councilors and Formation Director), the Provincial or his Delegate may deem it necessary to close the community. If it is determined that a community must close, reception of new candidates for formation is immediately frozen and all of the members will need to:

- (1) Initiate a transfer to another OCDS community with the intent of actively living out his or her Promise in community life; recognizing that acceptance by the other community is a mutual discernment process.
- (2) Request association with another OCDS community as an extended member excused from attending meetings for reason of distance, but fulfilling all other obligations of the Promise. The Provincial or his Delegate has the ultimate authority regarding the OCDS community best suited to take extended members.
- (3) Voluntarily withdraw from the Discalced Secular Order

b) A small community may choose to close down if they do not have enough active members to be viable as per Statutes 11-a.

- (1) A majority vote of the council and community can begin the process of closing that community.
- (2) Permission of the Provincial or his Delegate must be requested.
- (3) After permission is granted:
 - Members in Definitive promise may seek to transfer to another community. If necessary, they can request to be extended members based on distance.
 - Members in Temporary Promise will need to seek to transfer to another community where they can complete their preparation for Definitive Promise.
 - Members who wish to voluntarily withdraw from the Order, may

do so by completing the voluntary withdrawal form and having the Council submit it to the Main Office.

- The council must prepare the transfer forms for all transferring members, thereby releasing them from the closed community.
- c) The OCDS Main Office should be informed of this closure by both the Provincial, or his Delegate, and the President of the community.
- d) A Group in Discernment or a Recognized Community at the discretion of the Provincial Delegate may be closed

Forms and Days of Self-Denial (Abstinences, fasting and acts of self-denial)

18) Secular Carmelites will strive to live lives of simplicity and gentle austerity, witnessing to the joy of embracing the Gospel in its fullness.

19) In addition to the days of fasting and of abstinence proper to the Church of the USA and responding to the encouragement of our bishops “to prepare for each Church festival by a day of particular self-denial, penitential prayer and fasting” (NCCB Pastoral Statement “Penitent-Discipline” to the US, Washington, DC, 1966) and to our Carmelite traditions, unless excused by reasons of illness or age, we will observe the following:

a) Members will fast on the Vigils of the following feast days:

St. Joseph the Worker	May 1
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	July 16
The Prophet Elijah	July 20
St. Thérèse	October 1
Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus	October 15
All Carmelite Saints	November 14
Holy Father St. John of the Cross	December 14

b) For a sufficient reason, the above special fast days may be anticipated.

c) Anticipated fast days should never involve fasting on Sundays or Holy Days (cf. CCL 1249-1253).

Remembrances for Our Beloved Deceased

20) Secular Carmelites should remember the deceased members of the entire Order in their daily prayers, especially on the Feast of All Souls of the Carmelite Order (November 15).

21) On the death of a Community/group member, the community:

a) will have a Mass offered for the deceased member;

b) the community may also choose from the following:

- attend Mass together;
- pray the Liturgy of the Hours – Morning or Evening Prayer;
- pray the Rosary or other suitable prayers.

- 22) Each member of the community will do one of the following (if possible):
- a) attend the vigil and/or funeral Mass;
 - b) have a Mass offered for the deceased member;
 - c) participate in a Mass and receive Holy Communion for the deceased;
 - d) pray the Liturgy of the Hours Office for the Dead – Morning or Evening Prayer.
- 23) Each community shall maintain an updated record of its deceased members. At the death of a member, notification shall be sent to the Main Office, ordinarily within two months of the member's death. [cf. Const. #54].
- 24) Ideally each person in Carmel should designate beforehand what family member should be contacted on the event of their death and what involvement the community should have at the wake and funeral. Members are encouraged to inform their families regarding:
- a) his/her wish to have the Secular Carmelites notified of their death;
 - b) burial in the habit as a Secular Carmelite, namely the large brown ceremonial scapular;
 - c) having the initials "OCDS" included on his/her headstone.

II. SERVING GOD'S PLAN [cf. Const., Section IV]

Apostolate

- 25) The mission of the Discalced Carmelite Order is to know God that he may be known. Secular Carmelites, in response to the Church and the Order are to set about spreading Carmelite spirituality in concert with the Friars, to address the need in the Church and the world for authentic spirituality and prayer as found in the teachings of St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross and St. Thérèse, while living in the world.
- 26) Each community shall strive to have a community apostolate that should flow from their collective life of prayer. Every member would be expected to contribute to the community apostolate in whatever manner possible. The implementation of formation in the apostolate is the responsibility of the local council.
- 27) In considering an apostolate, the community has to be sensitive to the interests, abilities, talents and personal circumstances of its members. Developing a community apostolate is a community exercise. The community apostolate would mature and evolve commensurate with the formation, maturity and willingness of a community and need not be static and permanent.
- 28) The apostolate, whether individual or communal, when it involves the charism of the Order or its name and reputation or the reputation of the local community is always conducted:
- within the guidelines of these Statutes [Const. #58i]
 - in coordination with Provincial Council [Const. #57] and National Council [Const.

#60], and

- in collaboration with the Provincial Superiors [Const. #26.]

With Mary, the Mother of Jesus [cf. Const., Section V]

29) Our primary devotion to Mary is to regard her as our model of contemplative life and emulate her in our mental prayer and our practice of the presence of God. In addition to placing our entire spiritual life under her guidance and care, the Secular Order recognizes the value of praying:

- the Rosary,
- the Angelus,
- the Litany of Loreto and
- other devotions recommended by the Church such as those found in *Lumen Gentium*, *Marialis Cultus*, and *Redemptoris Mater*.

30) Secular Carmelites in our Province honor St. Joseph the Worker on May 1st as a model of one who labors in the world while carrying Christ in his heart. In imitation of St. Teresa, Secular Carmelites will strive to honor St. Joseph in a special way on his Feast Day

External Signs of Membership in the Secular Order

31) The large ceremonial brown scapular shall continue to be given as the habit of the Secular Order at the time of admission to formation.

32) A smaller brown scapular or the scapular medal is worn for everyday use.

33) The ceremonial scapular may be worn at community meetings as well as at ceremonial and/or liturgical events of the Carmelite Order. It may also be worn at events at which the Carmelite Order wishes to be recognized (e.g. wakes and funerals of our members). Local councils shall determine which events fall into this latter category.

34) Intentionally left blank.

III. FORMATION IN THE SCHOOL OF CARMEL [cf. Const., Section VI]

35) A person seeking to explore a vocation to Carmel should attend several meetings as determined by the local council prior to being considered for entrance into Aspirancy.

36) There are three periods of formation:

- a. Aspirancy –12 sessions
- b. Preparation for First/Temporary Promises – 24 sessions
- c. Preparation for Definitive Promises – 36 sessions
- d. If a community's meeting schedule does not conform to the 12-month meeting requirement, then additional formation sessions must be added to

achieve the number of defined formation sessions required by the Statutes.

Discernment of a vocation is a mutual responsibility of the candidate, the Community, and the Council. “There is both an individual and a community need for formation as well as a collective and individual responsibility.” (*Constitutions 24d*)

- 37) Communities are responsible to follow the Formation Program of the Province.

- 38) Extensions to complete the courses of study may be deemed necessary by the local council for the good of the candidate and the community in the determination of a vocation. An extension of one year may be given when preparing for Temporary Promise. Up to three years may be given for preparing for Definitive Promise. If, after consultation with the Regional Assistant, further time is granted to prepare for the Definitive Promise, the member must renew their Temporary Promise to the community, for the specific period of time determined by the local council. When an extension is granted, it is the responsibility of the council to ensure there is an understanding that if the candidate is discerned by the council not to have a vocation to Carmel at the end of the extension, then h/she will be asked to leave the community.

- 39) When making the Temporary Promise, the candidate’s baptismal name is retained to which the candidate may add a devotional name. [Note: These names are not an outward sign of being a religious and therefore it is not appropriate that they be used as “titles” in lieu of the Baptismal name. These names are not assigned by the community and under no circumstances are the titles “Sister” or “Brother” appropriate].

- 40) For serious reason, and with the permission of the local council and the Regional Assistant, any of these periods of formation may be shortened.

- 41) Ongoing Formation is the responsibility of each Definitively Promised member; and should be pursued in accordance with the Formation Outline of the Province [cf. Const. #34].

- 42) At each step of formation, the local council, by a majority vote, will discern if the candidate has a vocation to Carmel and *invite* him or her to receive the Scapular or to make Temporary or Definitive Promise. This must be a face-to-face meeting of the council; telephone calls or email are not acceptable. At any time during the six years of preparation, a candidate may be “sent away” from the community and taken off the community roster. This is *not* a dismissal. It is not intended to imply that the candidate is not a good Catholic or not a great lover of Carmelite Spirituality.

III. ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT [cf. Const., Section VII]

Vows [cf. Const. #39]

- 43) “Vows are made directly to God and it is the Order acting on the authority of the Church that accepts them. This authority is conferred on her [the Church] by Jesus: “As my father sent me, so I send you.” The local community council is the competent authority to admit vows.
- 44) In the code of Canon Law we read: ‘A vow, that is, a deliberate and free promise made to God about a possible and better good, must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion.’ (Canon law 1.191.1)
- 45) One may take a vow to do some good action to which one is already obliged under some other title (for OCDS, their Definitive promise).” [Note: Taken from *Be Holy: The Commentary on the Rule of Life of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites* by Rev. Hilary Doran, O.C.D.; Dublin, 1992, pg 254-255.]
- a. Any member who feels called by God to make vows of chastity and obedience for life may petition the local community council not less than three years after the Definitive Promise.
 - b. After receiving the consent of the local council and in consultation with the Regional Assistant, the member will then begin a year of prayerful discernment under the supervision of the Director of Formation. No formal program is required.
 - c. After the year of discernment, the member will send a formal letter to the local council and their Regional Assistant requesting consent to make vows.
 - d. When making its decision, the local council should consider the following criteria:
 - i. The member must be faithful in living the Promise
 - ii. The member’s life must be suitably ordered with any major irregularities resolved so that there is no hindrance to grace
 - iii. The member must have a healthy, balanced integration of the experience of God in their daily life and there should be an evidence of growing in charity, detachment and humility
 - e. Initial discernment and formation for this call will generally include the assistance of one’s own confessor or spiritual director, the local council of the community, and/or the Spiritual Assistant to the community.
 - f. The vows are strictly voluntary. The promise makes one a full member of the Order. The vows do not change that status. The member must be informed of both the serious obligation and the rich graces associated with the vows. As with the promises, they are not binding under pain of sin.
- 46) “The vows entail a greater moral responsibility. The binding force of these vows, freely made, renders more visible the bond of love and commitment that exists between Christ and His Bride the Church.” Found in *Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites: Legislative Documents for the OCDS: Ritual for Promises and Vows*. 10 December 1990, p.78 (see especially n. 7.)

The Local Council and Provisions for its Actions [cf. Const. #46-#47, #51-#52]

47) The local council shall meet regularly, at least four times per year. It shall meet more often if the needs of the community and formation require it. Phone calls and email exchanges do not constitute a valid meeting of the council. The minutes of all council meetings are to be kept on file in the community records. To insure that the Council members are able to participate fully in the monthly meeting, the Council should avoid scheduling a meeting during the monthly community meeting if at all possible.

48) Those attending local council meetings are obliged to respect the confidential nature of these meetings and of all council business.

49) Recognized parliamentary procedure (e.g. Robert's Rules of Order), shall be observed by the council to the extent it applies, with the following provisions:

- a. A quorum for the purposes of a valid action requiring a vote by the local council shall be three council members.
- b. A majority of voting members present will be required to carry an action.
- c. The President will cast an additional vote when necessary to break a tie. If a tie vote occurs in the absence of the President, the vote shall be set aside until the President can be in attendance.
- d. Voting by letter or proxy is invalid
- e. The local council may establish additional duties for individual councilors, and appoint other members of the community to assist in those duties, within the scope of the Constitutions and these Statutes.

50) For very serious reasons, the local council may seek the dismissal of a member from the Order. All such requests must be:

- a. Documented and notarized
- b. Submitted to the Provincial in accordance with Canon Law.

51) It is the responsibility of existing council members to turn over all community records after a triennial election, or in the event a council member leaves mid-term.

Resolving Conflicts in Local Communities [cf. Const. #43, #47]

52) *The local council should make every effort to promote "dialogue, personal sacrifice, forgiveness and reconciliation."* (Constitutions #24d) Community members should be urged to seek grace in prayer for the resolution of disputes within the community. Correction should be dispassionate and administered with patience and kindness. (Matt. 18: 15-17; Const. #46, #47, #51; Canons 1713, 1733.1.)

53) In working to resolve a dispute, the President along with another member of the local council, or two councilors, should meet privately with the individual or individuals in an attempt to understand the issues involved. The local council may seek the advice of the

Regional Assistant. Parties must be given the opportunity to explain their viewpoint and to defend themselves if necessary.

- 54) The local council shall keep a confidential written record documenting the process and actions taken to resolve a dispute, attempting to accurately represent the positions of those involved. E-mail does not constitute a valid written record.
- 55) Preference should always be given to resolving disputes rather than imposing a solution, although the imposition of a solution may be necessary in some cases. [Const. #47]
- 56) In cases in which the local council is unable to bring about a resolution of a dispute, or is itself involved in a dispute, the President is obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the Regional Assistant [Const. #43, #47g].

The Canonical Establishment of Local Communities [cf. Const. #42, #49]

- 57) There are three types of groups recognized by the Order in the Washington Province. All groups in the Washington Province must have approval from the Provincial. The different types of groups/ communities are:
- a. Group in Discernment: They have obtained the Regional Assistant's permission to meet, and he has appointed a Formation Director. The Regional Assistant may replace the Formation Director at his discretion.
 - b. Recognized Community: The Regional Assistant has given permission to form a Recognized Community and has appointed a Spiritual Assistant. The council, President, and Director of Formation serve with the approval of the Regional Assistant. The Regional Assistant will inform the community when he feels it has reached sufficient maturation to hold elections. [Juridical Personality, Cf. Const. #40] Prior to canonical status, the Regional Assistant may replace any officers or members of the council at any time.
 - c. Canonically Established Community: In order for a Recognized Community to pursue Canonical Establishment, they must have been meeting as a Recognized Community for at least five years and have held at least one triennial election. The Community must show progress and growth and demonstrate the determination, cohesiveness and compatibility as a group to move toward that goal. Once a community has discerned that they want to become canonically established, they are to follow the requirements in #49 of the OCDS Constitutions and work closely with the Regional Assistant throughout the process. Upon approval by the Regional Assistant, the required paperwork will be submitted to Rome by the Main Office.
- 58) The city and town of their meeting location identify secular communities. In the event the need arises to change where a community meets, the council must first seek the approval of the Regional Assistant. Once approved, the president must notify the Main Office of the change.

Local Community Elections [cf. Const. #50-#55]

59) Community elections shall be held every three years in April, prior to the Provincial elections of the Friars. The newly elected council members shall assume their duties at the end of the meeting in which they are elected. To preserve freedom of the newly elected council, all other offices (Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, et al.) shall be vacated at the end of the same meeting.

60) To be eligible to vote a member must be:

- a. In Promises;
- b. On the community roster;
- c. In compliance with the Provincial attendance policy regarding voter eligibility.

61) Notification of elections:

- a. The date of triennial elections will be announced at the January meeting of the election year.
- b. Members eligible to vote, but not present at the meeting, will be notified.

62) Elections of the community President and three Councilors shall be conducted in accordance with recognized parliamentary procedures with the following particular provisions:

- a. A nominating committee of at least two Promised members shall be appointed by the council and the names of the committee members shall be announced to the members at the January meeting prior to the election.
- b. The nominating committee shall select qualified nominees for each office who have consented to serve if elected. Priests, deacons and seminarians are ineligible to hold a community office. For the office of President there should be two or three nominees, all of whom have made their Definitive Promise [Const. #51]. For the offices of the three Councilors there should be a minimum of three nominees (1 for each council position).
- c. Only Promised members of the community may serve as members of the council. A candidate does not have to be present at the election to be on the ballot. Spouses, children and siblings are not eligible to serve concurrently on the Council.
- d. The report of the nominating committee (list of nominees) shall be presented to the Council to verify that the nominees are qualified and in good standing or without disqualifying factors as determined by the Council. Once the nominees have been verified, the list of nominees shall be presented to the members at the February meeting prior to the election. With their consent, nominees for President may also be nominated for the Councilor ballot if not elected as President.
- e. Nominations may be made from the floor at the February meeting prior to the election. Nominations must be seconded by another member of the community and must have the consent of the nominee. Those nominated from the floor will be considered as on the election ballot unless they contact the President to decline within two weeks of their nomination. Floor nominations

will not be accepted at subsequent meetings.

f. Voting is to be by secret ballot. A quorum of eligible voting members being present, a majority shall be required for election.

g. Voting by letter or proxy shall be invalid.

63) Election of the President

a) The Spiritual Assistant shall invoke the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the absence of the Assistant, this shall be the duty of the incumbent President.

b) In order that leadership qualities be developed in our communities, the President's stay in office should be limited to two consecutive terms after which postulation shall be required from the Provincial Delegate.

c) Election of the President shall be on a separate ballot from Councilors and shall precede election of the Councilors.

d) If a majority is not reached by any nominee on the first ballot, the names of the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be placed on the second ballot. If there is a tie on the second ballot, there shall be a third and final ballot. In the event of a tie on the third ballot, seniority of profession shall be the determining factor of the election. If there is a tie on the profession date, then seniority by age shall determine the election.

64) Election of the Local Council

a. The outgoing president shall preside at the election and conduct it in accordance with item [63](#) above.

b. In order that leadership qualities be developed in our communities, Councilors shall not serve more than two consecutive terms without postulation from the Provincial Delegate.

c. The three incumbent Councilors shall count and verify the votes. The Secretary shall record them in the minutes. However the incumbent local council may exercise its discretion as to whether the actual tally of votes should be made public.

d. The three Councilors shall be elected on a single ballot. Each voter shall enter on the ballot their first, second, and third choice for Councilor. First choice candidates shall receive three points in the tabulation of the ballots. Second choice two points, and third choice one point. The candidates with the three highest points shall be elected Councilors. The candidate with the fourth highest points shall be elected Councilor only if the Director of Formation is elected by the local council from one of its newly elected members.

e. In case of ties, the same rules outlined in 64d above apply.

65) Elections – Appointments by the Local Council

a) In the election of the Formation Director [Const. # 50 & # 53] the local council may not elect a priest or deacon as Formation Director. The Formation Director may be elected for no more than two (2) consecutive terms without postulation.

b) The procedure for appointing the Secretary and Treasurer should be left to the discretion of the newly elected local council. The Secretary for meetings of the local Council does not necessarily need to be the same person who acts as Secretary for the community. [cf. Const. [#54-#55](#)]

Keeping of Local Records [cf. Const. #54]

- 66) A basic community register must contain, at a minimum, a membership roster with contact information. It should also contain a record of admissions, promises, vows, dismissals, deaths, transfers, and devotional names taken, if any. This information must be kept as a common document that can easily be reviewed. The community register is required for elections, and should be readily available for local council meetings, and visitations. An updated copy of the membership roster shall be submitted to the Main Office annually in the format requested.
- 67) Other records to be maintained are: minutes of all council and community meetings, formation forms, copies of ceremonial forms, attendance records of community meetings and formation classes, and a book of Promises and Vows.
- 68) It is strongly recommended that the community maintain duplicate records or take other measures to safeguard community records.

Local Community Finances [cf. Const. #55]

- 69) All OCDS members of the Washington Province are obligated, to the degree possible, to fulfill their financial responsibility to the Order and pay monies as requested by the Provincial Superior to the treasurer of their community. It is the community's responsibility to submit monies for each member listed on the roster. These dues, along with *Clarion* subscription fees, will be forwarded as one combined payment to the Main Office no later than January 31st of each year.
 - a. A person is obligated to begin paying dues and support other community financial responsibilities determined by the council, when they receive the scapular.
 - b. Extended members, excused from attending meetings because of distance, age, or health and members on a Leave of Absence, remain on the community roster and are expected to pay their dues directly to the community.
 - c. Inactive members do not appear on the community rosters, but their status, as reported by the community, is maintained in the OCDS database. Dues for inactive members who wish to return to active status cannot be submitted to the Main Office until the member's change in status has been approved by the Council of the local community.
- 70) Each community will submit via their treasurer, along with their annual dues, the yearly financial report required by the Constitutions #55. This report will itemize the income and outflow of community funds.
- 71) A portion of the dues submitted to the Main Office will be contributed to help support the International OCDS Office.
- 72) A portion of the dues submitted to the Main Office will also support the financial needs of the OCDS Provincial Council.
- 73) Community councils may solicit dues from their membership to support local needs. The local council will determine the amount of this contribution, as well as the timing and method

by which such donations are made.

- 74) The local council shall also determine how the local community will assist the needy in their community, including those unable to contribute local or provincial dues, and those unable to finance retreats or other community functions.
- 75) OCDS members and communities are encouraged to support the outreaches of the Order financially, such as the Carmelite missions, our seminarians, and apostolic works of OCD and OCDS, including the apostolate of one's own community; and the Provincial Congress.

The Division of Local Communities [cf. Const. #58g]

- 76) Communities are encouraged to maintain a size that is conducive to fostering a spirit of cohesion and fraternal charity.
- 77) *"In smaller communities it is possible to establish a true and deep relationship of human and spiritual friendship, as well as mutual support in charity and humility."* (Constitutions #24c) When communities become too large there is a danger of losing a sense of intimacy that exists in smaller communities. There should be serious thought given on the part of the local council as to whether those characteristics of fraternal charity and intimacy are being impeded by the size of the community. Once a community reaches sixty active members, the local council should consider the possibility of dividing the community. However, a community may at any time discern a need to divide. If a community discerns the need to divide, the local council must contact the Regional Assistant to begin the process. The Provincial or his Delegate is the sole authority to divide OCDS communities.
- 78) The new community is not considered an extension of the original community and does not share the status of being Canonically Established. The council of the original community cannot play a role in the decisions of the new community. It is to be an independent entity, which must identify its own leadership and council. If Definitive Promise members from the original community are on loan to mentor the new community, they may not serve on the new community's council.

Extended Members [cf. Const. #51, #56, #58b]

- 79) 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 the OCDS Constitutions #56. "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. (Constitutions #56)
- 80) Extended members who transfer within our Province may apply to be received by the nearest community with the understanding that both parties recognize that acceptance by the other community is a mutual discernment process and local councils make the final decision regarding a member's acceptance.

- 81) A Definitively Promised individual who has moved into an area with no OCDS communities may also petition the Regional Assistant to start a Group in Discernment under the Delegate's supervision.
- 82) Extended members are responsible to pay annual dues. If this presents a hardship, their dues and/or *Clarion* subscription should be paid for by the community as a part of the community's support of their needy, when deemed appropriate by the council.

**Transfers Within and Between Provinces
and Between Third Order Carmelites (TOC/O.Carm) and OCDS**

- 83) Transfer of members within the Province [cf. Const. #47]
- a. Recognizing that transfers may be necessary due to a move or for other serious reason, an application to transfer is made to the original member's community after a sufficient time has passed for the new community to evaluate the potential new member. It is strongly recommended that a sufficient time for this evaluation be from three to twelve months. Acceptance by the receiving community is a mutual discernment process as noted in the statute on Extended Members, #81.
 - b. The transfer form will be provided by the new community. This form will be sent to the member's current community. The pertinent dates of the individual's progress in Carmel will be stated, verified and signed by the appropriate member of the council, usually the President or Formation Director. Other official records may be copied and sent along to the receiving community. Until the member's application has been approved by the receiving community, the individual remains a member of his/her original community.

- 84) This form is then signed by the receiving community and a copy is given to:

- a. The member
- b. The Regional Assistant's Office
- c. The Main Office
- d. The releasing community

- 85) Transfer of members between provinces

- a. Secular Carmelites fall under the juridical authority of the province in which they reside. When a member from another province moves into the Washington Province the same transfer procedures as noted above in item #84 shall apply.
- b. When a member of the Washington Province moves into another province, that member shall contact the provincial office of the new province for information and procedures for transferring into that province. The transferring member can obtain contact information for the U.S. provinces from the Main Office of the Washington Province.

- 86) Transfers of members from the TOC to OCDS [Note: In line with the statement of

the OCDS National Council of the United States of America, as approved by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, O.C.D., General Delegate on September 27, 2005].

- a. The community council of the Lay Carmelites shall communicate the type of formation the candidate has already received. A letter of recommendation from the former community is to be highly expected.
- b. It is to be assumed that formation in the OCDS will be necessary even if the candidate has been Definitively Promised in the TOC.
- c. The Lay Carmelite, who desires to become a Secular Carmelite, will retain his/her TOC profession during a discernment period of directed OCDS formation agreed upon by the receiving local council.
- d. Formation time frames and curriculum will be established by the Formation Director and the other members of the receiving local council.
- e. Upon completion of formation and after a period of discernment to be established by the receiving local council a letter of release from the Provincial Delegate of the TOC must be obtained. The first promise confers membership in the OCDS.

The OCDS Provincial Council [cf. Const. #57]

- 87) The primary responsibility of the OCDS Provincial Council is to assist in formation and the apostolate [cf. Const. #57]. The Provincial Council shall also serve as a consultative body to the Provincial Superior and be of service to the Secular Order.
- 88) The OCDS Provincial Council shall consist of at least five Definitively Promised members of the Washington Province, with the right to vote on matters pertaining to our Secular Carmelite life in the Province in accordance with the Constitutions, these Statutes and the direction of the Superiors of the Order. Each shall serve a six-year term. Councilors may not serve two consecutive terms. The terms will be staggered, three councilors beginning to serve a six-year term, and three years later two councilors beginning service for a six-year term.
- 89) The OCDS Provincial Council shall meet at least once a year in person; with other meetings to be conducted by conference call or by other electronic means as needed. The President of the Provincial Council will normally coordinate all activities and preside at the meetings of the PC. The PC may be contacted through the Main Office of the Province.
- 90) A quorum for a valid vote consists of one less than the current active membership of the Provincial Council, one of whom must be the President or the presider. This number shall never be less than four. In the absence of the President, the senior Promised of the members present will be the presider. This number shall never be less than four. If a deciding second ballot is needed in order to break a tie vote, the President will cast the deciding additional ballot.
- 91) The Provincial Council shall elect a President and elect or appoint a secretary every three years. The Secretary may be someone from outside the council.
- 92) Confidentiality is required of all members and the outside secretary, if there is one.
- 93) The Provincial Council will replace any councilor who can no longer serve, unless these

events occur during the last year of the individual's term.

- 94) The Provincial Council, in concert with the Provincial Delegates, shall appoint three representatives to the National Council. At least one appointee must be a member of the Provincial Council. At least one appointee must not be a member of the Provincial Council.
- 95) The three Provinces of the United States currently intend that there be a National Congress held every ten years. Our jurisdiction shall normally hold a Provincial Congress every three years. The OCDS Provincial Council coordinates with this Congress.
- 96) The Provincial or his Provincial Delegate may appoint other consultative bodies to assist with the tasks of the Provincial Council.
- 97) At the invitation of the Provincial or his Delegate, members of Provincial Council or others deemed suitable may be asked to visit a local OCDS community. The purpose and scope of such a visitation shall be at the sole discretion of the Provincial or his Provincial Delegate.
- 98) Each local council, after prayerful consideration and consent of the nominee, may place the name of a qualified person in nomination to serve as a Provincial Councilor for a six-year term. Trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all Provincial Councilors shall be selected by lot (Acts 2:15-26) from candidates submitted by local councils, the Provincial or his Delegates or the Provincial Council.
 - a. Nominations shall be submitted by mail to the Main Office.
 - b. The Provincial Council will announce the beginning of the nomination process to the presidents of local communities in January of the year after the triennial election year. This announcement will include a restatement of the qualifications needed by the candidate contained in these Statutes, as well as the appropriate nomination form. Communities wishing to place a name in nomination must do so no later than March 15th. Names received after this date at the Main Office, will not be included in the pool of candidates.
 - c. To be considered for nomination a prospective Provincial Councilor must be Definitively Promised, demonstrate spiritual maturity, and have served as a President, Councilor, Director of Formation, or any combination thereof, for a minimum of three years. Candidates should exhibit leadership and organizational skills as determined by the OCDS Provincial Council
 - d. Any nominee who is not fully qualified to serve will be ineligible and will not be placed in the pool of candidates.
 - e. Councilors will be selected from the pool of candidates at the Annual Meeting of the OCDS Provincial Council by the Provincial or his Delegate. After invoking the Holy Spirit, the Provincial shall draw the names of the replacement Councilors. The names of the new Councilors shall be announced as they are drawn. Once the members accept, their names will be posted on the Washington Province website and announced in the *Clarion*.
 - f. The new Councilors' terms begin upon their notification.

The Main Office of the Province

- 99) The Province shall have a Main Office to assist the Provincial, his Delegates, the OCDS Provincial Council, and the OCDS of the province in their duties.
- 100) The Main Office will be the central repository for official records relating to the OCDS of the Province. The Main Office maintains records of the status of each community and records of individual formation and meeting attendance status (extended, on a leave of absence, inactive, etc.) of all OCDS members and candidates.
- 101) It is the responsibility of local councils, usually via their secretaries, to submit official records to the Main Office in a timely manner using the appropriate forms (rosters and formation). Paperwork relating to the change in status of members or prospective members should normally be submitted within two months of a change in status.
- 102) The *Clarion* is an official means of communication for the Province to the OCDS membership. All members are expected to receive it in order to stay abreast of changes and news in the Province and the Order. The Washington Province website also contains pertinent information for the OCDS membership. It is the responsibility of the community President to remain informed on the current issues in the Province and also to pass all communications from the Main Office on to the local council and entire community when asked to do so by the Main Office or Provincial.