

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability serves two major purposes: to empower us to reach our goals and to bring order into the process of formation. Other purposes served by holding ourselves accountable are:

1. To aid discernment (for example, of growth in ability to persevere in commitments)
2. To demonstrate care and respect in relationships
3. To bring growth
4. To inform
5. To focus energy to learn and to give service
6. To bring truth to situations in place of the fantasy of how we imagine ourselves
7. To keep ourselves focused on task
8. To bring order
9. To assist in giving ourselves to the community in a meaningful way

The Order – from the general superior through the provincial superior to the local OCDS community, acting through the Director of Formation and the other members of the Council, individual community members, and the candidates themselves – has responsibility for different aspects of this multi-dimensional process. In this section of the guidelines, we will set forth methods for holding ourselves accountable in specific areas of responsibilities with an explanation of the purposes served.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND METHODS

The Community at large sets an example for accountability by regular attendance and willingness to assist where needed with a spirit of joy. Cooperation among the president, formation director, and councilors is most necessary for any successful formation

program. This community mentoring will assist the candidate to embrace the Carmelite way of life.

With respect to their discernment, the aspirants and candidates in formation are accountable to the community through its council. The months and years of genuine prayerful discernment have their foundation in careful observance and patient, understanding interaction. Candidates and Aspirants may use a self-evaluation form¹.

The Council, as the governing body of the Community, has the duty of fully implementing these formation guidelines in the community's formation program.

“All Council members must be aware of their obligation to prayerfully observe all candidates, so as to be able to discern whether or not each individual has demonstrated the ability to live the norms and obligations of the vocation on a daily basis. Initiate friendly conversation at [the meetings]. Look at the person's record of attendance at the monthly meeting. Is he/she familiar with the Saints of the Order through reading? Is the person able to live in fraternal charity in the community? Is enthusiasm for the vocation and love of the Order demonstrated by helping when asked to help in the community? Has the person participated in the events of the Order? Does the person volunteer to help in small jobs in the community? Is obedience to the legitimate authority of the Order a problem?”²

Tools such as “Points that Councillors May Want to Consider about the Candidate prior to Conducting an Interview”³ assist with mutual accountability in formation. This could be very useful to Council members in order to conduct a proper interview.

Council members must make a sincere effort to know the aspirants and candidates in formation. Recognizing that God has made each of us unique, our discernment must also be imbued with common sense and sensitivity to recognize sincere devotion, charity and

¹ Examples of self-evaluation forms taken from the *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation: Information and Guidelines* (Copyright number 1016582) can be found on pages 125 - 127. We are deeply indebted to our brothers and sister in the Canadian Province for their generous permission to quote extensively from their Manual of Formation.

² *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation*, p. 49, par. 84.

³ *Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation*, p. 121 - 122, included in these *Guidelines* on page 128.

love. A true vocation may be overlooked by strictly adhering to any single criterion, such as academic performance.

The Director of Formation must be willing to give much time, patience and energy to the position. A formation program, with accountability, is only effective when the Director of Formation is well informed, prepared, disciplined and gives correction with charity and humility.

The Director of Formation and all other members of the Council must be available to hear and to bring to the Council any formation concerns that may arise, especially those that come from the candidates. The highest confidentiality within the Council is required so that personal matters can be discussed with confidence. Council members must take advantage of the services of the Spiritual Assistant with respect to concerns about raising sensitive matters in Council.

The members of the formation team have a unique opportunity to communicate with the candidate and with the Council. Assignments are also an element of the dialogue, providing much information about the candidate's interest and commitment.

The Spiritual Assistant has a part to play in this dialogue.

RECORD KEEPING

Good record keeping is essential at all levels of formation. The advantages of complete records become apparent at the time of ceremonies and elections.

Communities must keep the following records:

- Attendance
 - General monthly meeting
 - Formation classes

- Attendance records include a notation of whether or not notice of absence was given.
- Necrology
- Dates of ceremonies for each person
- Copies of completed OCDS Central Office forms (application and permanent record form a, ceremonies form b, change of address form c, death form d, form for inter- and intra- province transfers)

Many communities find it helpful to keep the following records:

- Attendance
 - Retreat
 - Other OCDS events (but care must be taken to avoid the impression that these are mandatory)
- Reasons for absences
- Meetings with councilors
- Service to community
- Eligibility for moving from one stage in formation to another

When there is a change in officers (and formators) at election time or if a replacement is necessary, a notebook containing forms of attendance sheets, any evaluation and questionnaire material, etc. should be passed on to the new officers and formators.

So far we have addressed various methods of accountability in certain specific areas. We have not specified all the areas or methods for accountability. This has been a deliberate choice, in order to leave communities as free as possible to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. Some additional areas for accountability may include the following:

- Responsible stewardship of community finances
- Private prayer time
- Participation in community life, congresses, ordinations, jubilees, events of the Order

- Participation in the community apostolate
- Relationship with the OCDS Central Office
- Confidentiality (especially council meetings, minutes, and personal information)
- Fulfillment of obligations of office

We have mutual accountability to one another for the fulfillment of our Christian responsibility. When someone notices a failure in fulfilling a responsibility, that person has an obligation to address it in charity through appropriate means, usually the council. OCDS Communities should resolve through their councils any problems that arise, in consultation with the Spiritual Assistant.