

The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites Provincial Statutes for the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph

(revised December 18, 2013)

Sec. I: Our Identity, Values and Commitment (cf. Const. #1 - #9)

1. Members of the Secular Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Teresa of Jesus are faithful members of the Church who are called to live “in allegiance to Jesus Christ” [cf. *Const.* #3]. The fundamental elements of the vocation of Teresian Secular Carmelites can be summarized as follows:
 - a) to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ, supported by the imitation and patronage of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, whose way of life is, for Carmel, a model of being conformed to Christ;
 - b) to seek “union with God” by way of contemplation and apostolic activity, indissolubly joined together, for service to the Church;
 - c) to give particular importance to prayer, nourished by listening to the Word of God, by the Eucharistic Liturgy and the Liturgy of the Hours, which is conducive to relating with God as a friend, not just in prayer but in daily living. Carmelite Seculars will commit themselves daily to spending at least one half hour in the practice of prayer in an atmosphere of interior silence and solitude [cf. *Const.* #21]. To be committed to this life of prayer demands being nourished by faith, hope and, above all, charity in order to live in the presence and the mystery of the living God;
 - d) to spend some time in the practice of *lectio divina* utilizing Scripture [cf. *Const.* #35].
 - e) to infuse prayer and life with apostolic zeal in a climate of human and Christian Community;
 - f) to live evangelical self-denial from an ecclesial perspective;
 - g) to give importance to the commitment to evangelization: in the ministry of spirituality as the particular collaboration of the Secular Order, faithful to its Teresian Carmelite identity [cf. *Const.* #6 & #9].
2. Secular Carmelites are called to strive to make prayer penetrate their entire existence, in order to walk in the presence of the living God [cf. 1K 17:1], through the constant exercise of faith, hope and love, in such a way that the whole of their life is a prayer, a search for union with God [cf. *Const.* #17].
3. The value of the sacramental and liturgical life in the Secular Order leads its members to take part in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, insofar as possible. Members pray the Liturgy of the Hours, (Morning and Evening Prayer) in union with the Church throughout the world. Normally they will also pray Night Prayer [cf. *Const.* #24]. Those who are unable to participate in the celebration of daily Mass are encouraged to pray and reflect on the daily Scripture readings of the Mass.
4. Secular Carmelites will endeavor daily to nourish their prayer life by the study and spiritual reading of Scripture, particularly the Gospels, and the writings of our Carmelite Saints.
5. In order to grow in their prayer life, members are encouraged to make a serious effort to participate in an annual Carmelite Retreat [cf. *Const.* #18 & #21].

Sec. II: The Apostolate (cf. Const. #25 - #28)

1. The primary apostolate of the Teresian Carmel is prayer, and its mission is the sharing of Teresian Carmelite spirituality. Carmelite Seculars participate in this apostolate according to their state in life [cf. *Const.* #28].

2. In John 21:15-19, Jesus bids Peter, ...if he loves Him, ...to feed His lambs and feed His sheep to the point of laying down his life for them. Because we love Christ, we must express that love outwardly in service to others, leading them to Christ. This is the basis for our apostolate.
3. The Carmelite Secular is called to live and witness the charism of the Teresian Carmel in the local Church... For this reason, each one will have an apostolate either individually or collaborating with others in the Community [cf. *Const.* #27].
4. Through apostolic endeavor, resulting from their contemplative prayer, Carmelite Seculars demonstrate how it is possible to seek intimate union with God while living amidst worldly concerns and duties. For the majority, this prayer will bear fruit and will flow into their Carmelite Communities, the local Church, family, and the workplace whenever and wherever the opportunity manifests itself. Due to their life circumstances, for some Carmelite Seculars, their apostolate will simply be their prayer in service to Carmel and the Church.
5. In undertaking a Community apostolate, each OCDS Community/Group needs to be sensitive to the interests, abilities, talents, as well as the physical and financial capabilities of its members working together.
6. Formation for the apostolate, a requirement of the formation program, is based upon the theology of the Church concerning the responsibility of the laity and an understanding of the role of Seculars in the apostolate of the Order [cf. *Const.* #35, #36d, *Apostolicam actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People) and *Christifideles laici* (The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World)].

**Sec. III: Particular Acts of Devotion to the
Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Mount Carmel
(cf. *Const.* #4, #29, #30 & #31)**

1. The Virgin Mary is present in a special way, most of all as a model of faithfulness in listening to the Lord and in service to Him and to others [cf. *Const.* #4]. For Secular Carmelites, Mary is a model of obedience and total commitment to God's Kingdom. She teaches us to listen to God's Word in Scripture and in life, and to believe in it in every circumstance in order to live its demands. All this she did, without understanding many things, guided solely by faith; pondering all in her heart (Lk 2:19, 50-51) until light dawned through contemplative prayer [cf. *Const.* #29]. She is Mother, Sister and Queen, who goes before us in a pilgrimage of faith and in following the Lord Jesus, keeping us company so that we may imitate her life hidden in Christ and committed to the service of others [cf. *Const.* #30]. The Secular Order recognizes the value of pondering and praying:
 - a) the Rosary;
 - b) the Litany of Loretto;
 - c) the Angelus;
 - d) and other such devotions recommended by the Church [cf. Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis Cultus*, (For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary), Feb. 2, 1974].

The purpose of all our devotion to Mary is always to lead us to Christ.

2. The Secular Carmelite is committed to knowing her through the daily practice of devotion exercised through faith and love in her honor [cf. *Const.* #31].
3. The Secular Order strives to live the Marian spirit embodied in the latest documentation on the scapular [cf. *The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual* prepared under the direction of the North American Provincials of the Carmelite Order, October 30, 2000].

Sec. IV: Devotion to St. Joseph

1. The same aura of silence that envelops everything about St. Joseph, [himself a lay person and model for Carmelite Seculars] also shrouds his work as a carpenter in the house of Nazareth. It is a silence that reveals in a special way the inner portrait of the man. The Gospels speak exclusively of what he “did.” Still, they allow us to discover in his “actions” — shrouded in silence as they are — an aura of deep contemplation. He was in daily contact with the mystery “hidden from ages past,” and which “dwelt” under his roof. This explains, for example, why St. Teresa of Jesus, the great reformer of the Carmelites, promoted the renewal of veneration to St. Joseph in the Western Church [cf. Pope John-Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Redemptoris Custos*, (On the Person and Mission of Saint Joseph In the Life of Christ and of the Church), Aug. 15, 1989, #25].
2. As sons and daughters of St. Teresa, we honor St. Joseph as the patron of the Universal Church and the special patron and protector of our Order, as well as the patron of our Province. He is the model of attentive service to Christ, to Mary, and to the Church, and is also the “master of prayer” proposed to us by St. Teresa (Life, 6, 6-8).

Sec. V: The Secular Order Habit (cf. Const. #12, #31 & #36b)

1. The large Ceremonial Brown Scapular is given as the habit of the Secular Order at the time of admission to formation. Each Candidate is “clothed” by the Priest Celebrant assisted by the Director of Formation. The large scapular is the “*signum habitus*” or sign of the habit of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
2. The large scapular shall be a maximum of 7x9 inches in size. It shall be made of brown cloth, preferably plain [cf. *The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual*, prepared under the direction of the North American Provincials of the Carmelite Order, October 30, 2000, p. 2].
3. The large scapular may be worn internally for everyday use; otherwise a small brown scapular is worn.
4. The large scapular may be worn externally on Solemnities or Feasts of the Discalced Carmelite Order and at Carmelite meetings and events.
5. The Community Council may prescribe specific rules for the wearing of the large scapular at their meetings.
6. If a member wishes to be buried wearing the large scapular externally, prior arrangements should be made with the member’s family or closest associates [cf. *Provincial Statutes*, Sec. VIII, para. 6b].

Sec. VI: Days and Forms of Penance

1. Fast and abstinence:
 - a) In addition to the days of fasting and abstinence proper to the Church in the United States and in response to the encouragement of our Bishops “to prepare for each Church festival by a day of particular self-denial, penitential prayer and fasting”¹ and to our Carmelite traditions, our members, unless excused by reason of illness or age, will fast on the vigils of the following feast days:
 - 1) Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16)
 - 2) Solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19)
 - 3) Our Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus (October 15)
 - 4) Our Holy Father St. John of the Cross (December 14)
 - 5) The Prophet Elijah (July 20)
 - 6) St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face (October 1)
 - 7) All the Saints of the Order (November 14)

¹ Cf. *National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pastoral Statement “Penitent-Discipline in the United States.”* Washington, D.C., 1966.

- b) For sufficient reason, the above special fast days may be anticipated. Anticipation should never involve fasting on Sundays or Holy Days [cf. *Canon Law* 1249-1253].
- 2. Sacrament of Reconciliation: The Church teaches us to have a great esteem for the Sacrament of Reconciliation [cf. *Const.* #23 & #24].
- 3. Examination of Conscience:
 - a) The Secular Carmelite will endeavor to make a daily examination of conscience.
 - b) When Night Prayer (*Compline*) is recited, the examination of conscience is ideally made at its beginning.

Sec. VII: The Sick and Dying

- 1. Special attention should be directed toward members of the Community who become ill. The President shall inform the membership and commend the sick person(s) to their daily prayers. The President, with sensitivity and respect, will endeavor to have someone visit with a dying member. Members are encouraged to visit and communicate with those who are sick.

Sec. VIII: Prayers for Deceased Members

- 1. On the death of a Community/Group member:
 - a) any member learning of the death of another shall immediately ensure that the Council, or the Group Leader, are informed of the death;
 - b) the Council ensures that the entire Community is informed and provided with information regarding funeral arrangements.
- 2. The Community/Group:
 - a) will have a Mass offered for the deceased member(s);
 - b) at its next meeting should also choose from the following:
 - 1. attend Mass together;
 - 2. pray the Liturgy of the Hours — Morning or Evening Prayer;
 - 3. recite the Rosary or other suitable prayers.
- 3. Each member of the Community will if possible:
 - a) attend the vigil and/or funeral Mass;
 - b) have a Mass offered for the deceased member(s) or;
 - c) participate in a Mass and receive Holy Communion for the deceased;
 - d) and pray the Liturgy of the Hours Office for the Dead — Morning or Evening Prayer.
- 4. Carmelite Seculars should remember the deceased members of the entire Order in their daily prayers.
- 5. Each Community shall maintain a record of its deceased members [cf. *Const.* #54].
- 6. Members are encouraged to inform their families regarding:
 - a) their wish to have the Secular Carmelites notified of their death;
 - b) burial in their habit as a Carmelite Secular, namely the large Brown Ceremonial Scapular;
 - c) having the initials “OCDS” included on their headstone.

Sec. IX: The Requirements for Admission to the Secular Order (cf. Const. #36)

- 1. Those members of the Church, lay person or cleric, who are called by the Lord, are free from impediments, and conscientiously accept this special vocation and the Constitutions offered by the Secular Order may be admitted to the Secular Order in accordance with the provisions of *Constitution* #36 [cf. *Formation Guidelines*, “*Impediments to Joining the Secular Order*” by Doreen Glynn Pawski, O.C.D.S.].

2. The screening process shall include certificates of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and letters clearing impediments. [cf. *Provincial Statutes* Sec. XXII para. 5b]
3. A Candidate for admission to formation in the Secular Order must be at least eighteen years of age. Experience demonstrates there is no upper age limit to God's call to the special vocation of being a Secular Carmelite, therefore none is prescribed so long as the potential vocation appears to be valid. God always grants, along with a vocation, the necessary means to execute it without presenting a burden to the Community.
4. Sufficient contact with a Community is understood to entail an Aspirant's attendance at the meetings of the Community for not less than 1 full year [cf. *Const.* #36a]. If it is in the best interest of the Aspirant, this period may be extended for another year; but in no case longer than two years.
5. Visitors will preferably have a conversation with the President or Director of Formation before attending their first meeting. During this conversation, they will be introduced to the Carmelite Secular way of life and what is required to become a member. The schedule of the portion of the meeting-day they are invited to attend will be outlined along with the expectations for participation. Visitors can benefit from continuing attendance at meetings while waiting for an aspirancy class to begin. There will be someone assigned to guide them through the meeting, unless they have already come with a member. During this period, visitors may have the option of attending a formation class at the discretion of the Council. They should not attend the business meeting while confidential matters, such as the treasurer's report are discussed. Once the Council has approved the visitor to begin an aspirant's formation class, they must either join the class or no longer come to meetings.

Sec. X: The Period of Formation
(Cf. Const. #36)

1. At the time of admittance into Formation, a title of devotion may be added to one's baptismal name if desired.
2. There are two periods of initial Formation. The first period is the two years before admittance to a Temporary Promise, which may be extended for one year. The extension may be granted by the Council if it is determined to be in the best interest of the Candidate.
3. After making the Temporary Promise, "O.C.D.S." may be added to one's name.
4. The second period of initial Formation is the three years of living the Temporary Promise. A one year extension may be granted by the Council if it is determined to be in the best interest of the Candidate. An extension requires renewing the Temporary Promise for one year. The ceremony may take place privately in the presence of a representative of the Council and the priest with delegated faculties.
5. Ongoing Formation is the responsibility of each definitively professed member; and it should be pursued in accordance with the *Formation Guidelines* [cf. *Const.* #34].
6. The term "leave of absence" means that an active member, who has made at least the Temporary Promise and who has become unable to attend meetings regularly, may receive permission from the Council not to attend meetings for up to a year. However, that person must keep in touch with the local Community by personal contact, phone, email, letter, etc. If the Temporary Promise would expire during the leave of absence, a date must be scheduled for its renewal. Professed members returning from a leave of absence shall require an interview with the Council at the beginning of a year of discernment and formation, and another interview at the end of that year for full reintegration into the Community. A member in the Temporary Promise would resume formation at the stage when the leave of absence began. If the leave began in the middle of a formation year, the person would begin that formation year again.

Sec. XI: Formation Guidelines

1. The *OCDS Formation Guidelines for the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph* is the official Formation Program for our Province.
2. All professed members shall be provided with a copy of the *Formation Guidelines*. At the discretion of the Community Council, the *Formation Guidelines* may also be distributed to Candidates preparing for the Temporary Promise.
3. The Provincial Council is authorized to revise the *Formation Guidelines* as deemed necessary under *Const. #57* and *#58a* with the approval of the General Definitory.

Sec. XII: Serious Reasons for Shortening Initial Formation Periods (cf. Const. #47b and Provincial Statutes, Sec. VI)

1. While normally the period of initial formation is two years, there may be occasions when it becomes necessary to consider shortening this first period of initial formation. An example would be a terminally ill person desiring to make the promise. With Council approval, permission shall be sought from the Provincial Delegate.

Sec. XIII: Organization and Life

1. OCDS Communities are a local manifestation of the entire Teresian Carmelite Family.
2. The size of a Community has an impact on Community life. Communities should not become disproportionately large. Ideally, when a Community reaches 60 members, it shall begin to implement plans for a Recognized Group under the supervision of the Provincial Delegate [cf. *Provincial Statutes* Sec XXI, para. 3]. The stability and leadership of both the Community and the Recognized Group is an important consideration.
3. The local Community shall meet once a month. Each Community/Group will keep its own written attendance record. A monthly meeting should encapsulate the ideal daily Carmelite life: a conference by the Spiritual Assistant, quiet prayer, fraternal charity, the Liturgy of the Hours, devotion to Mary, formation, time for socializing and business as necessary. In order to accomplish this, the meeting ideally should be no less than four hours in length.
4. Because Community life is central to the Teresian Carmelite charism, attendance at the monthly meetings is required. Sometimes there are unavoidable demands on the secular state of life that prevent a member from being present. For Communities and Groups, a minimum of nine out of twelve meetings each year is required to progress to the next stage of formation [cf. *Provincial Statutes* Sec. X, para. 2 & 4]. Attendance at a minimum of nine out of twelve meetings prior to the elections is required for voting within a Community or serving on the Council. The Council may allow reasonable exceptions, such as for a lengthy illness. Lack of regular attendance without excuse or notification is a negative indication of a vocation.
5. Members of the Secular Order who, for reasons of distance, age, or illness, or other approved circumstances, cannot participate in the regular meetings of a Community, remain members of the Secular Order and, under the authority of the Provincial Delegate, are to be associated with a particular Community/Group. We refer to them as Extended Members in the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph. It is the responsibility of the President of the Community to establish contact with those members and the responsibility of those members to maintain contact with the Community/Group [cf. *Const. #56*].
6. The Extended Members who have had to move away from their Community/Group are encouraged to seek a transfer to the nearest Community/Group.

7. If a member has been absent for a year with no communication, the local Council sends a first letter encouraging the member to return to regular contact with the Community. If there is no response after eight weeks, a second letter shall be sent informing the member that, if there is no response within eight weeks, the Council will understand that the person no longer wants to be a part of the Community. The Provincial Delegate must be consulted. [cf. *Const.* #47e]. Then, the Council will send a formal letter stating that the person will be removed from the active roster and placed on the inactive list. The Community has no further obligation to the individual nor the individual to the Community. This person is still a member of the Carmelite Order. However, if the person seeks membership in another Community he/she must obtain permission from the Provincial Delegate.
8. For possible re-admission as an active member of the Community, the Council needs to contact the Provincial Delegate for his approval. A member who receives permission to return is reintegrated into the Community in the same manner as a person returning from a leave of absence [cf. *Provincial Statutes* Sec. X, para. 6].

Sec. XIV: Conflict Resolution
(cf. Const. Preface, #6, #24, #51)

1. All O.C.D.S. members by their vocation must demonstrate fraternal charity in the spirit of the Gospel (Mt 18:15-20), both in care and service to all the members of the group or community; fostering a spirit of Christian and Carmelite affability, being careful to avoid any undue preference for some members over others, and providing support and guidance with great kindness and patience (2 Tim 4:2), especially to any member suffering personal difficulties.
 - a) Although, it is normal that disagreements and conflicts may arise, it is encouraged that they be expressed with the fruits of the Spirit, *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”* (Gal 5:22-23) Disagreements unrelated to the community or our Constitutions and Statutes should not be addressed at community meetings.
 - b) Community life and interaction is under the authority of the local Council. It is the duty of the Council to swiftly identify and resolve any issues that may potentially disrupt or negatively affect the community. Any member who recognizes such an issue is encouraged to discretely bring it to the Council’s attention that they may facilitate a resolution.
 - c) In the Gospel, Our Lord outlines the appropriate course to resolve conflict.. It begins with a request for the conflicting parties to facilitate a dialogue in private to resolve the issue on their own, *“go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.”* (Mt 18:15)
 - d) If this has already been tried and failed, or if either side of the conflict is reluctant to do so, then it progresses to a discussion of the matter with, *“one or two others...that every fact may be established”* (Mt 18:16).In other words, it comes under the jurisdiction of the local Council to mediate a resolution. The conflicting parties will each submit their understanding of the exact issue in writing, summarizing to no more than two or three main points.
 - e) The local Council should meet as soon as possible to explore the issue as appropriate to ascertain the whole truth, and to resolve the issue judiciously. The process should consist of conversations with all involved allowing each to express their viewpoint and their desired outcome. It may also require seeking the help and advice of the Spiritual Assistant or O.C.D.S. Provincial Council as appropriate, providing them with the written complaints and notes that have been prepared. Great care must be exercised to avoid rash judgment or breaking confidentiality which may result in damage to the good name and reputation of persons.
 - f) In the case that a conflict involves the President or a Council member, the same process shall be applied and the Council shall make a decision, but not in the presence of the conflicting parties

and the Council member involved will not be allowed a vote on the conflicted issue. All written documentation of the issue will be forwarded to the O.C.D.S. Provincial Council for review.

- g) In case the complaint is against the local Council itself, or is an appeal regarding the Council's decision, the knowledgeable members of the Community regarding the issue should seek a dialogue with the Council members to clarify matters in dispute. If such a dialogue fails, the same knowledgeable members should submit a written report including all previous documentation to the O.C.D.S. Provincial Council. It will discreetly review the case, and report its findings to the Provincial Delegate for a decision.
- h) No one who has been legitimately enrolled may be dismissed from an association except for a just cause in accord with the norm of law and the statutes (*Canon Law* 308; cf. *Const.* #47e).

Sec. XV: Registers (cf. Const. #54)

1. It is essential to keep records for various reasons, but most importantly to maintain a history of the Community and member data. A Community register is required for elections, Council meetings and fraternal visits. At a minimum, the register must contain a membership roster including active and extended members, and a list of inactive members; also, a record of elections, admissions, promises, vows, dismissals, deaths and transfers. This information must be kept as a common document that can easily be reviewed. An updated copy of the membership roster, to include contact information, names in Carmel, and the date of the most recent ceremony, shall be submitted to the Central Office annually or immediately after the ceremony.
2. Other records to be maintained are: minutes, treasurer reports, agendas, copies of ceremonial forms, attendance records of community meetings and formation classes, newsletters/flyers, apostolates, special events, etc.
3. The secretary of the local OCDS Council shall keep the Community register and other records at all times. He/she will make the register available at Council meetings and at the time of elections.
4. Each Recognized Group and Study Group shall send concise monthly minutes to the Provincial Delegate.

Sec. XVI: Vows (cf. Const. #39, #47a, and #58f)

1. Any member who feels called by God to make vows of chastity and obedience for life may petition the Council not less than one year after the definitive promise.
2. With the consent of the Council, the member will commence a year of prayerful discernment.
3. The member must be fully informed of both the serious obligations and the rich graces associated with the vows.
4. Initial discernment and formation for this call will include the assistance of one's own confessor or spiritual director, the Council of the Community, and the Spiritual Assistant to the Community.
5. The member will provide the Council with the name of the priest who will be directing him/her during the one year discernment.
6. The vows are strictly voluntary. The promise makes one a full member of the Order and the vows do not change that status.
7. "While the promise was made before God to the superiors and members of the Order, the vows are made directly to God, for vows are acts of religious worship. Thus, the vows add the merit of the virtue

of religion to the observance of chastity and obedience. They constitute a more complete self-offering and therefore 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.” (cf. *Instruction of the Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites*, para. 7, cited in *OCDS Formation Guidelines for the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph*, p. 25, 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.)

8. After the year’s discernment, the member will send a formal letter to the Community Council requesting consent to make vows. A letter of recommendation from the directing priest should be sent directly to the Council indicating his belief that the member is ready to make vows.
9. When making its decision, the Council should consider the following criteria: the member must be faithful in the living the promise, the member’s life must be suitably ordered, with any major irregularities resolved so that there is no hindrance to grace, the member must have a healthy, balanced integration of the experience of God with that of daily life and there should be evidence of greater charity, detachment and humility.
10. A guided retreat and a general confession are highly recommended.
11. The Council, together with the Spiritual Assistant, will prayerfully deliberate on the request. When it has reached a decision, the Council will inform the Provincial Delegate in writing of the request, and if the decision is in the affirmative, seek his approval. If the Council’s decision is not unanimous, it will inform the Provincial Delegate of the concerns that were raised. After the Council is informed of his decision, it will notify the member.

Sec. XVII: Juridical Personality (cf. Const. #40, #41 and #48)

1. *Const. #41* makes it unmistakably clear that the OCDS is juridically dependent upon the OCD Friars. The General Superior, the Provincial Superior and the Council of the Community are the legitimate superiors of the Secular Order.
2. Juridical personality addressed in *Const. #40* is applicable only to canonically established Communities. It is not applicable to Recognized Groups who are directly supervised by the Provincial Delegate. If Recognized Groups have been granted permission by the Provincial Delegate to operate with an appointed Council, this does not constitute a grant of juridical personality. The legitimate superiors for Recognized Groups are the General Superior, the Provincial Superior and the Provincial Delegate.

Sec. XVIII: Appointment of the Spiritual Assistant (cf. Const. #43 and #44)

1. It is the prerogative of the Provincial Superior, or his Delegate, after consultation with the local OCDS Council, to appoint a Spiritual Assistant. If the Spiritual Assistant is not a member of the Order, he must have the consent of his own Superior [cf. *Provincial Statutes* Sec. XXII, 5d].
2. We are committed to the presence of the Spiritual Assistant at Council meetings, especially when evaluating Candidates [cf. *Const. #44*].
3. The Spiritual Assistant is recognized as the Order’s representative and, as such, he will be consulted in the evaluation of Candidates for acceptance into formation, the promises, the vows, as well as release from them if necessary.

Sec. XIX: Procedure for Electing the Council in Canonically Established Communities

1. The elections shall be held every three years in the spring prior to the Provincial Chapter of the Friars in May.
The Provincial Delegate must be consulted for any modification of the election procedure.
2. Elections of the President and three Councilors shall be conducted in accordance with recognized parliamentary procedures (for example, Robert's Rules of Order) with the following particular provisions:
 - a) **Two months prior** to the election a nominating committee of at least three professed members, only one of whom could be a member of the Council, shall be chosen and notified by the Council. The nominating committee will be announced to the members at a meeting one month in advance of the meeting when the election is to take place.
 - b) Also at the meeting two months prior the Council will distribute a list of members eligible to serve in office and eligible to vote. Only professed members of the Community are eligible to vote. To be eligible to vote a member must be professed, on the community roster, and in compliance with the Community attendance policy regarding voter eligibility.
 - c) Only professed members of the Community may serve as members of the Council. The President must be Definitively Professed.
 - d) 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. It is recommended that no member shall serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
 - e) **One month prior** to the election, there will be a straw vote by secret ballot at which the nominating committee will preside. The ballot will be provided by the Nominating Committee. Each member will submit a first, second and third preference for President, as well as first, second and third preferences for each office of Councilor.
 - f) Only eligible voting members shall be present. All ineligible members present and all visitors are asked to go to another suitable location to pray for the election proceedings.
 - g) The Spiritual Assistant or, in his absence, the President, shall invoke the Holy Spirit once all professed members are gathered for the straw vote.
 - h) The President will take a roll call of all eligible voting professed members. The number of voting members will be counted. This will serve to ensure that only one straw vote ballot has been submitted by each member, and that each member has submitted a ballot. A submitted blank ballot is counted as an abstention.
 - i) After the straw vote is complete, the Nominating Committee, without opening any ballot, shall count the number of all the ballots submitted and ensure that the count is exactly that of the total number of eligible voting members present. If the count does not tally, all of these ballots must be destroyed without opening any of them, and the voting process repeated. When the count tallies correctly, the Nominating Committee will retain the correctly tallied ballots.
 - j) After that meeting, but prior to the election, the Nominating Committee shall tabulate the straw vote ballots. At this time and from these results, they will contact the nominees starting with those who have received the highest number of straw votes to ask if they are willing and able to serve. From these results, they will prepare a slate of nominees which will include one list with two or three qualified nominees for the office of President and one list with four to six nominees for all three offices of Councilor, all of whom have consented to serve if elected. This will represent the desire of the Community as expressed in the straw vote. The results shall be known only to the Nominating Committee until Election Day.
 - k) **On Election Day**, duplicate the process specified in f), g), and h). The slate of nominees shall be presented by the Nominating Committee to the members of the Community. A spokesperson for the Nominating Committee shall announce the names of those who have agreed to serve for the

- office of President if elected. The President will write the names on a board or chart paper so that they are clearly visible to all voting members.
- l) The three Councilors will distribute voting papers and collect the votes for counting. Nominations will not be accepted from the floor, neither will voting by proxy, email, letter or write-in ballots be acceptable. A member desiring to abstain from voting on a particular ballot must hand in a blank ballot.
 - m) Voting is to be by secret ballot. For the purposes of an election, a quorum shall be the eligible voting members being present. A majority is one vote greater than half the legal votes cast.
 - n) The ballots will be counted audibly in the presence of the Community by the incumbent Councilors and recorded by the Secretary. First the Councilors, without opening any ballot, shall count the number of all the ballots and ensure that the count is exactly that of the total number of voting members present. If the count does not tally, all of these ballots must be destroyed without opening them, and the process repeated. When the ballot count is the same as the number of voters, the ballots shall be opened and tallied.
 - o) If one person receives at least one more than half the votes on the first ballot, that person is the newly elected President. If not, a second ballot will be held between the two members who have received the largest number of votes. Again, one person must receive at least one more than half the possible votes to be elected President. If necessary, a third and final ballot will take place. If this ballot fails to elect a President, the person who is senior in profession will be elected. If the two nominees have the same profession date, age will decide the election.
 - p) The incumbent President shall preside at the elections. After being elected, the new President shall preside over the remainder of the elections.
 - q) After the President is elected, the Nominating Committee spokesperson will announce the slate of nominees for Councilors. The new President will write those names on a board or chart paper, along with the names of those nominees for President who were not elected.
 - r) The President proceeds with the election beginning with the members' first choice for Councilor. The three incumbent Councilors collect the ballots and repeat the process as noted above for the election of the President. [cf. *Provincial Statutes* Sec. XIX, para. 2n & o]. Once a Councilor has been elected, the process will be repeated for the remaining Councilors in succession. The slate of nominees in each case contains the names of all those not previously elected.
 - s) Upon completion of the voting for each Councilor, the President officially announces the results to the entire membership.
3. At a convenient time following the election and after careful consideration, the new Council will meet to appoint the Director of Formation from among those in the Community who are definitively professed. When possible they should consult with the Spiritual Assistant. The Director of Formation may be chosen from among the newly elected Councilors [cf. *Const.* #47d and *Provincial Statutes* Sec. XIX, para. 2d].
 4. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall be named at the discretion of the newly elected Council. [cf. *Const.* #50]. The Secretary for the Council shall be one of the three Councilors and therefore have a right to vote. A Secretary for the Community may be named to take minutes of the monthly meetings of the Community and additional duties as needed.
 5. The Provincial Council recommends that the Installation Ceremony of the new officers take place at the next meeting. The Spiritual Assistant, or, in his absence, the President, presides.

Sec. XX: Guidelines for the Nominating Committee
(cf. Sec. XIX, para. 2)

1. Once appointed the Nominating Committee has the responsibility to conduct the straw vote.
2. They have the responsibility to present the slate of nominees on Election Day.
3. Members of the Nominating Committee must never influence or direct a prearranged outcome for Community elections. They must come to an agreement in their compilation of the slate of nominees.
4. In the event of a tie in straw votes, the Nominating Committee will add those names to the slate, even if it exceeds the recommended number of nominees.
5. Nominating Committee members may be on the slate of nominees if they receive straw votes.

Sec. XXI: Group Requirements for the Canonical Establishment of a New Community
(cf. Const. #49; see also #44 & #58)

1. A number of people interested in becoming Secular Carmelites may come together for that purpose with the consent and supervision of the Provincial Delegate.
2. These people may be known as a Study Group with the purpose of discerning the vocation to which they may be called.
3. A Study Group with ten members, five of whom have made the Definitive Promise, may form a Recognized Group upon the appointment of a Spiritual Assistant, a Group Leader and a Director of Formation by the Provincial Delegate [cf. Const. #43 - #45 & #58b].
4. Spiritual Assistants are to be appointed in accordance with *Constitutions* #44 - #45. The Spiritual Assistant is usually a Friar of the Order.
5. For the Canonical Establishment of a Community, it is necessary that there be at least twelve members of whom six must have made the definitive promise [cf. Const. #49].
6. A charter for Canonical Establishment must be obtained in writing from the Father General of the Order through the Provincial or his Delegate [cf. Const. #49].
7. Consent in writing must also be obtained from the Local Ordinary (Bishop) of the diocese, unless the Community is erected in association with a foundation of our Friars [cf. Const. #49].

Sec. XXII: The Provisions for Council Actions
(cf. Const. #46, #47 & #48)

1. The Council is made up of five members. The President and three Councilors are elected by the Community [cf. Const. #50]. The Director of Formation is elected by the new Council members after consulting with the Spiritual Assistant. These five members constitute the government of the Community. One of the three Councilors shall be designated as Secretary of the Council.
2. The Council shall meet at least quarterly. To quote from the *Constitutions: The primary responsibility of the Council is the formation and Christian Carmelite maturing of the members* [cf. Const. #46]. *The Council meets frequently and always when necessary in reference to taking care of formation programs and the growth of their own Community* [cf. Const. #47]. *The General Superior, the Provincial Superior and the Council of the Community are the legitimate superiors of the Secular Order* [cf. Const. #48].
3. Recognized parliamentary procedure shall be observed by the Council in its actions to the extent that they comply with the following provisions:
 - a) a quorum for the purposes of a valid action requiring the vote of the Council shall be at least three of the five Council members;
 - b) a majority of voting members present shall be required to carry a motion;

- c) the President shall cast an additional vote if necessary to break a tie;
 - d) voting by letter, e-mail or proxy shall be invalid.
4. All members of the Council, along with the Spiritual Assistant, should be able and willing to meet as often as necessary. It is especially important that the Spiritual Assistant be present for the approval of admitting Candidates to formation, the promises, and the vows.
 5. The President, the three Councilors and the Director of Formation shall actively work together in the following:
 - a) the place and general plan of the monthly meeting;
 - b) when Aspirants will be accepted and the screening process, to include certificates of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and letters clearing impediments;
 - c) the frequency and times for ceremonies;
 - d) assisting in obtaining a Spiritual Assistant as needed in consultation with the Provincial Delegate;
 - e) receiving or denying members transferring from other Communities/Groups;
 - f) all Councilors need to know every member of the Community, particularly Aspirants and those in formation;
 - g) making every effort to maintain peace and fraternal charity, the Council will handle all disciplinary problems consulting with the Provincial Delegate as needed;
 - h) assisting the Director of Formation in determining the various levels to be taught simultaneously, and the choice of the instructors; and in other ways being aware of any special formation needs;
 - i) maintaining contact with extended members;
 - j) determining the areas of service needed in the Community and asking members to assist with these;
 - k) Councils are free to establish additional duties and responsibilities for individual Councilors as they may deem appropriate within the context of the *OCDS Constitutions* and these *Provincial Statutes*.

Sec. XXIII: Finances
(cf. Const. #55)

1. The Provincial Delegate has the help of a Central Office in carrying out his duties. This office is funded and supported by an annual contribution of the membership of the Province. The Central Office, in turn, provides a portion of its funding for the General Delegate's office in Rome.
2. The OCDS Provincial Council will determine the amount of the annual donation from the members to the Central Office for its support. The Community will submit this annual donation during the month of February, along with the financial report required by *Const. #55*.
3. Members contribute according to their means to the financial needs of the Secular Order.
4. The members of each Community/Group are invited to contribute a small donation at every meeting for operational expenses. In keeping with our spirit of poverty, the Community's Council will be sensitive to those who may need assistance participating in Carmelite events, etc.
5. All members are encouraged to plan ahead for their annual Carmelite retreat and the Regional Congress.
6. Members are encouraged to support our Order; e.g., support of our Seminarians and other young men in OCD formation, and support of our Carmelite Missions, as well as apostolic works undertaken by one's Community/Group apostolate.
7. The duties of the treasurer are specified in *Const. #55*. The annual financial report to the Provincial Delegate shall be submitted not later than February.

Sec. XXIV: Transfer of Members Within the Province
(cf. Const. #11, #12, and #56)

1. A member regularly belongs to the Community/Group in which he/she makes the promise, until an official transfer is effected. A transfer is only effective when the receiving Council accepts and the original Council releases that person.
2. Even though not officially members of the Order, those admitted to a Community or Recognized Group as Clothed Candidates will need a letter and copy of their records from the Council verifying their status, level of formation, and other information useful to the receiving Community.
3. When relocated, a member should contact the nearest Community/Recognized Group and ask to attend for at least a year to allow the receiving Community and the member to decide if they wish to finalize an official transfer.
4. Individual members shall obtain the necessary transfer application form from the original Community/Group or the Central Office.
5. By mutual agreement, the member and the receiving Council complete and sign the appropriate transfer form.
6. A Council determines the conditions of further initial formation required for the acceptance of a transferring applicant who has made the Temporary Promise or who is a Clothed Candidate.
7. Councils are not obligated to accept members applying for transfer. When a transfer is accepted, the completed transfer form is sent to the Central Office.

Sec. XXV: Transfers Between Provinces

1. Carmelite Seculars fall under the juridical authority of the Province in which they are members [cf. *Const. #40*]. When a member from another Province takes up permanent residence in the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph, the same transfer procedures of Section XXIV above shall apply.
2. When a member of the California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph moves permanently into another Province, he/she should contact the OCDS Provincial Office of their new Province for information and procedures for effecting transfer into that Province. A transferring member can obtain information for U.S. Provinces from the Central Office in San Jose, California.

Sec. XXVI: Transfers between the TOC and OCDS

1. In line with the statement of the OCDS National Council of the United States of America, as approved by Fr. Aloysius Deeney, General Delegate on 27 September 2005, the transfer procedures of Lay Carmelites (TOC) to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS) are:
 - a) a Lay Carmelite, who desires to become a Secular Carmelite, by way of exception, may transfer if he/she has already made final profession as a TOC. The receiving Community determines conditions of acceptance;
 - b) a letter of recommendation, from the TOC Council to the OCDS Council to which the TOC member wishes to transfer, will be required;
 - c) the Lay Carmelite, who desires to become a Secular Carmelite, will retain his/her profession during a discernment period of directed OCDS formation agreed upon by the receiving Council;
 - d) formation time frames and curriculum will be established by the Formation Director and the other members of the receiving Council;
 - e) upon completion of formation, and after a period of at least one year of discernment, a letter of release from the Provincial Delegate of the TOC must be obtained. A definitive promise will confer membership in the OCDS.

Sec. XXVII: OCDS Provincial Council
(cf. Const. #57)

1. There shall be a Provincial Council for the Secular Carmelites. It shall be composed of five or more members of the OCDS California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph and the Provincial Delegate.
2. A Provincial Councilor must:
 - a) be definitively professed;
 - b) have served, or is currently serving, as a President, Councilor or Director of Formation;
 - c) take an active interest in the Order and in all things Carmelite.
3. The Provincial Council will be elected in accordance with the following norms:
 - a) Each Community or Group will submit to the Provincial Council one name from the Province by May 31st of an election year. The Provincial Delegate retains the right to add nominees for consideration by the Provincial Council.
 - b) The current Provincial Council will meet as soon as possible after the appointment or re-appointment of the Provincial Delegate to choose the new members of the Provincial Council.
 - c) The term of office will be three years. An individual Councilor may be re-appointed for another three years or less. Appointment for a third consecutive term would require postulation.
 - d) In the event of a death or resignation of a Councilor, the Provincial Council will appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of that term, unless this occurs in the last year of the triennium, in which case no replacement needs to be made.
 - e) The new Provincial Council shall appoint from the OCDS member Councilors a President and a Secretary who shall serve in these offices for a three year term. The meeting to appoint these officers shall be held within three months subsequent to the date of the Provincial Chapter of the Friars, or as soon as possible.
 - f) The President shall normally coordinate all activities and preside at the meetings of the Provincial Council. In the event of the absence of the President, the senior professed OCDS Councilor will preside.
4. In order that the membership of the Province have contact with their Provincial Councilors, the names and contact information of the Provincial Council will be regularly published in the OCDS Provincial Newsletter.
5. The Provincial Council shall meet at least twice a year.
6. The primary responsibility of the Provincial Council is to assist in formation and the apostolate [cf. *Const. #57*]. The Provincial Council shall also serve as an advisory body to the Provincial Superior, via the Provincial Delegate.
7. Members of the Provincial Council shall make fraternal visits to Communities and Groups. A Provincial Councilor, while making a visit, comes as a representative of the Provincial Council with the same rights and privileges of that office. He/she respects the autonomy of the local Council's authority.
8. A quorum for a valid vote consists of two-thirds of the members, one of whom must be the President or Provincial Delegate. Votes in absentia are not permitted.
9. In the case of a tie vote, the President shall cast an additional vote to break the tie.
10. Each U.S. Province shall normally hold a Regional Congress every three years. A National Congress shall be held every ten years. The Provincial Council should lend its support to the Congresses.