

The life of the Secular Order Discalced Carmelite is a calling from God, a true vocation in and for the Church. Prayer and the apostolate, when they are genuine, are inseparable. St. Teresa writes, “The purpose of prayer is good works.” The graces we receive in prayer ought to have an effect on us and on the whole world.

Carmel is all Mary’s.

The brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is our habit. It symbolizes that we are under the loving protection of Our Lady and that we pledge ourselves to her service. She is our Queen and Mother.

Obligations of Membership

Secular Order Discalced Carmelites belong to a local group or to a larger canonically-established community. We meet monthly, and this is an important obligation. Meetings provide for initial and on-going formation in the writings of our great Carmelite tradition, a deepening in awareness of how to live out our vocation, and fellowship and mutual support.

Each day, members of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites commit to pray Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and—when possible—Night Prayer, from the *Liturgy of the Hours*. We spend at least half an hour in personal prayer. We do our best to attend daily Mass. Members frequently avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We keep the fasting laws of the Church, and we fast on vigils of solemnities and major Carmelite feasts.

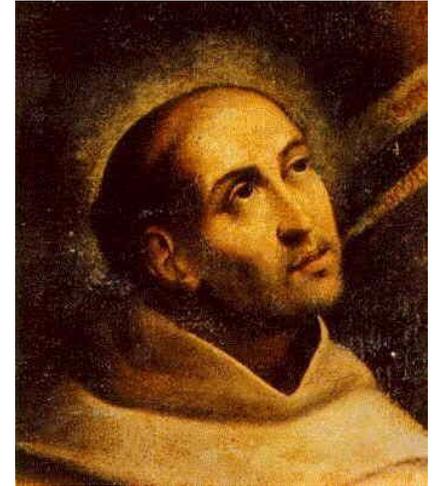


St. Teresa of Jesus

What is the timetable for becoming a Secular Order Discalced Carmelite?

After some initial visits, attendance at meetings for one year is required so that the aspirant may learn more about the OCDS life and discern with the community if this is his/her calling. The candidate may then be approved to receive the scapular and begin formal formation. After two years, he/she may be approved to make a Temporary Promise of chastity, poverty and obedience for three years. Then one may make the Definitive Promise for life.

This entire period of formation requires about six years.



St. John of the Cross

History

The Carmelite Order takes its name from Mount Carmel in the Holy Land, where in the twelfth century a band of Western hermits lived a life of prayer and penance for God. Their first chapel was dedicated to Our Lady. The Prophet Elijah was their father-figure. His powerful words, “I have been most zealous for the Lord God of hosts,” (1 Kings 19:14) are the motto of our Order. About 1208, these hermits were given a Rule of Life by St. Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem. This is the same Rule which Carmelite friars, nuns, and seculars follow today.

The Order spread throughout Europe. In the 16th century, it was renewed by St. Teresa of Avila, who called her first monastery of nuns “discalced,” from the Spanish word “descalzo,” meaning “barefoot,” or “reformed.” Together with St. John of the Cross, she founded

numerous communities of nuns and friars in Spain committed to building up the Church through love, prayer and service.

The Discalced Carmelite life thrives throughout the world. We count many Saints and Blessed among our numbers. Our rich spiritual tradition continues to draw countless men and women to God. St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and St. Thérèse have each been declared a Doctor of the Church. Other outstanding Carmelites are Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity, St. Teresa of Los Andes and St. Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta).

There have always been laypeople who have desired to share in the spiritual life of Carmel. Before Vatican II, these communities were called “Third Order.” Now they are now referred to as “Secular Order Discalced Carmelites,” abbreviated as “OCDS.”



St. Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face

Secular Order Discalced Carmelites are married or single, from all walks of life, from every level of education, and from every type of work. Ordained diocesan deacons and priests may also be members of the OCDS.

There are more than 45,000 Secular Order Discalced Carmelites throughout the world, and more than 6,000 in the United States. In the Western United States, we are organized into 38 canonically established communities and 26 beginning study groups. We are under the jurisdiction of the Discalced Carmelite friars.

For more information, contact:



DISCALCED CARMELITE SECULARS



Purpose

Secular Order Discalced Carmelites are men and women in the Catholic Church who are called to a deeper spiritual life. Under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and inspired by St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, we make a commitment to the Discalced Carmelite Order to seek God for the Church and the world. The Secular Order Carmelite longs to seek God through prayer, to find Him, and to share Him with others.