



OCDS Provincial Newsletter

California-Arizona Province of St. Joseph – May 2020

Keeping in Touch

Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers unless attending to some other duty. (Rule of St. Albert, No. 10)

How are you?	Clarification of the duties of the Secretary By Lee Ann Trunk, OCDS, Provincial Councilor
<p>The Covid-19 pandemic has provided challenges for each of us. It has also provided unexpected blessings as we rediscover the beauty of prayerful silence at home. At the same time, we are still called to share in our fraternal communion with each other.</p> <p>We would love to hear how you are keeping in touch with each other and/or how you are maintaining your vocation during the pandemic.</p> <p>If you are interested in participating, please send your submission to the editor at Lkmiyake@aol.com.</p> <p><u>Submissions should be limited to one paragraph</u> (so we can include as many as possible in an upcoming newsletter). Include your name, OCDS designation (if professed), and the name and location of your Community or Group.</p> <hr/> <p style="color: #4682b4; font-style: italic;">“...A good means to having God is to speak with His friends, for one always gains very much from this...”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">St. Teresa of Jesus <i>The Way of Perfection, Chapter 7, No. 4</i></p>	<p>Not everyone may be aware that there can be two secretaries in a Community or Group, and that there are different duties for each. There must be a Council Secretary, and there may also be a Community/Group Secretary. Our legislative documents provide guidance on how the duties for each are assigned.</p> <p>According to the OCDS Constitutions, Sec. VII, Organization and Government, #54, p. 44, “The Secretary of the Council has the responsibility of keeping up-to-date the register of the Community, recording the elections, admissions, Promises, and dismissals. The Secretary is to present the register to the Council when it meets and to the Community at the time of the elections. The Secretary attends the Council meetings and records the minutes of the meeting, <i>without the right to vote.</i>” [Emphasis added.] <u>However, part of this section of the Constitutions is superseded by the requirements of our Provincial Statutes.</u></p> <p>Provincial Statutes, Sec. XIX, Provisions for Council Actions, No. 1, p. 72, states that the Secretary of the Council is to be one of the three Councilors, hence, a <u>voting</u> member of the Council. This requirement ensures that only the five Councilors are present during confidential deliberations and decisions.</p> <p>Provincial Statutes, Sec. XV: Registers, Nos. 1–3, p. 69, lists the records to be maintained by the Secretary of the Council. No. 3 states, “The secretary of the local O.C.D.S. Council shall keep the Community/Group register and other records at all times. He/she will make the register available to Council meetings and at the time of elections.” Note that some confusion has arisen regarding the terms “roster” and “register”. These terms are used interchangeably. The required records and the responsibilities of the Secretary of the Council are the important matters, regardless of the format in which the records are maintained. The only exception is the updated membership roster that must be submitted to the Central Office annually or immediately after ceremonies. The required format (the blank roster template) is located on the ocds.info website with helpful instructions on how to complete it.</p> <p>An additional Secretary <u>may</u> be named to take the minutes of the monthly Community/Group meetings, and this person may also be assigned other duties. (See Provincial Statutes, Sec. XXVI, No 4, p. 86.) The Community/Group Secretary does not attend Council meetings.</p>

Our OCDS Constitutions and Provincial Statutes call each of us to engage in a joint or individual apostolate. Many of you know Jim Dowd as one of the current Provincial Councilors. Did you know that he also serves as a hospice chaplain?

My Call to Hospice Chaplaincy

By Jim Dowd, OCDS, Provincial Councilor

“Humility is attentive patience,” the French philosopher and mystic Simone Weil once wrote. “The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say, ‘What are you going through?’” This can often be the first words of the patient-chaplain relationship that grows over time to a friendship. This can at times enable the patient and chaplain to sit together and possibly hear the still voice that is beckoning them, as with Elijah hearing that gentle whisper of God.

My Carmelite calling and vocation is central to what I do as a hospice chaplain; praying with Mary at the feet of Jesus and then working in the kitchen with Martha in the midst of the pots and pans are both central in my life of journeying with the dying.

I recently worked with a patient who was dying of lung cancer. He grew up Catholic in the heart of Chicago. He went to the University of Notre Dame, with hopes of one day entering the priesthood, yet his life took other twists and turns, and he was called down different paths throughout the years. After graduating college, falling in love and entering marriage, he stopped attending Mass in the years preceding Vatican II. Years later, after he entered hospice care and I was invited to visit with him at his bedside, I informed him that a priest would be coming before nightfall to perform the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. I assured him that I would not leave him until the priest arrived. The man looked at me while squeezing my hand, and fearfully asked, “Do Catholics still believe in Purgatory?” I assured him that we do. He smiled and leaned back into his pillow and reflected a moment.

“Good,” he finally said, and he began to tell me his story. I sat at his side and humbly listened in silence.

For those who have never had a personal encounter with the death of a loved one while on hospice care, the term *hospice* is often misunderstood. Many people envision hospice strictly as a fixed building or place, and though this often may be the case in large cities, it is usually not so in small towns and rural communities, where hospice care is more likely to be a team of experts coming to a person’s home or an assisted living or skill nursing facility. The team, deemed so by Medicare regulations, consists of a medical director (a doctor who diagnoses and writes medical orders and prescriptions), a Registered Nurse and Certified Nursing Assistant (who provide the medical care and daily hygiene), a social worker, volunteers and a chaplain. The chaplain is a certified trained professional who works with the dying and attempts to offer spiritual support to those approaching the end of physical life, while also assisting their families. Chaplains are not called to proselytize, evangelize or attempt to convert an individual at the bedside. Rather we are meant to be with a patient and discover through conversation, reflection, life review and usually prayer, attempting to discover where the individual is in their relationship with God, whoever or whatever that might be to the person. Chaplains are trained to listen in humility, and often silently, for key words and phrases, observing different types of body language, and also hearing what is not being said.

Hospice chaplaincy is the act and art of being with a person who has been diagnosed with a life ending prognosis, and then listening to the dying speak about whatever it is they desire to talk about. The chaplain attempts to hear and support the person’s relationship with the Holy Spirit through active listening, attempting to discover what the Holy Spirit means to the person who is facing this terminal diagnosis. Hospice chaplains need to meet the person they are serving on the patient’s spiritual path, not their own. My job is not to push my love of Catholicism and Carmelite spirituality onto them. The dying person’s faith must be viewed as holy

and blessed by God, embracing the belief that each person is given their own path up the mountain. Patients at this time often talk about family, their past and present loves, their children, travels, hobbies, joys, fears, guilt, the bad and good of life and their deep passions. When they do speak of God, it can be in very individualized ways. The person dying might see God very differently than I, who as a Carmelite, might. Some relate to God through the natural world and see God in the mountains, oceans, trees and animal life surrounding them, while others find him in the Bible. Some see him as an all-powerful judge condemning their lives, some as a Savior, and even some as a figure who has deserted them long ago. Some talk about their favorite life stories where they felt God walking with them or a particular memory of a God experience. None of those I have worked with mention that they wish they could have spent more time at work or focus on careers and paychecks. Rarely do the dying desire to argue dogma, the correctness of one particular faith or a specific theology. The person usually just expects the chaplain to understand the faith system they belong to and believe in. When I went through a two year chaplaincy program, my wonderful mentor planted a special seed within me when he explained that, as chaplains, we actively listen for the Holy Spirit in someone's life and attempt to see how the person connects to Him. Chaplaincy is an attempt of entering the spiritual circle being created by God and the person who is dying, such as the one created by Jesus in the Gospel According to St. John, chapter 4. Chaplains are trained to place ourselves silently at the well of Jacob, where Jesus is sitting and waiting for the approach of the patient we are serving, and listen invisibly to the conversation that develops between Christ and the person who is dying. Much can be revealed as this seed grows and flourishes in the life of a chaplain, through what is heard, or not heard, by opening oneself up to this practice, just as in the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman.

I sit with wonder and humility each time I am invited to be in this holy circle and to observe as the patient engages with the Holy Spirit in the way he or she is called.



Soul Beauty

Oh! My Soul

You do not see your own beauty.

*It is like the dawn at daybreak –
the light rising ever so slowly
a blessing of the darkness.*

Oh! Blessed Darkness

*casting your shadows,
shadows of beauty hidden in God!*

*As daybreak shines forth
what was hidden becomes light,*

Shine Oh! Beauty of the Son.

*Sun shining brightly throughout the day,
warming all in touching radiance.*

*And as the sunset brings forth
the twilight*

*Oh! Blessed Darkness you descend
to touch my soul again.*

Oh! My Soul

You do not see your own beauty.

(Margaret Shore, OCDS)

