

The Order of Discalced Carmelites, the Seculars together with the Friars and Nuns, forms the nucleus of the great Teresian Carmelite family. The vocation to Carmel is a gift from God, a lived experience in which we all look to the Rule of St. Albert as our fundamental inspiration. Each branch of the Order has its own Constitutions, which interpret the Rule for its members. (OCDS Constitutions, Preface articles 3 and 4)

Aspirancy

Aspirancy is the time to present an overview of what it means to live out and understand the charism and spirit of Carmel as a lay person. This includes an introduction to the Order's charism and traditions, its legislation and its spirituality within the context of the Catholic Church and the local OCDS community. Aspirancy should assist the applicant and community in the discernment of a Carmelite vocation. This period is for those who are beginning to discern a call to a vocation in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites. "The purpose of this stage is that the applicant might become more familiar with the community, the style of life and service to the Church proper to the Secular Order of the Teresian Carmel. This period also gives the community the opportunity to make an adequate discernment." (OCDS Constitutions 36a)

Formation

The purpose of formation in the school of Carmel is: "to prepare the person to live the charism and spirituality of Carmel in its following of Christ, and in its service to the mission." (Const. 32) Each person in formation must be evaluated individually to take into consideration the circumstances of his/her life against the demands of the Secular Carmelite vocation.

Good formation depends on good information. At the same time, it must be clear that formation is distinct from information. The primary role of the persons responsible for formation in the Secular Order community is to accompany those in formation to help them put into practice what they learn through the process of formation. The information they are given through reading and classes is meant to be a help to the person's spiritual growth.

Excerpt from the "Introduction"

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Aspirancy

A Journey in Carmel:

Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

