

WHAT IS THE SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES?

The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS) is an association of lay people who embrace a calling to strive for Christian perfection in the world according to the spirit and ideals of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. The emphasis is on 1) vocation, 2) living in the world, and 3) following the spirit of Carmel, which is striving for close union with Christ through interior prayer. The Secular Carmelite lives a life which is both apostolic and contemplative. The ideals which the Secular Order members strive to achieve, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, are: a deep sense of God's love, fidelity to contemplative prayer, a spirit of detachment, and apostolic generosity in fraternal charity.

As Secular Carmelites strive for Christian perfection, they are supported by the Rule of Life, the spiritual ideals and tradition of the Carmelite Order, the example and teachings of its saints, the guidance of the Spiritual Assistant, and the fraternal bond that exists among each member of the Order. Following in the way of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, Secular Carmelites endeavor to make their lives as grace-filled and as fruitful as possible in every way for the whole Church and the world. They are called upon to carry into the world the witness, message and example of the Carmelite Order.

HISTORY OF THE CARMELITE ORDER

The Carmelite Order developed from a single community of hermits, of whom we first hear living "after the example of that holy man and solitary prophet Elijah" on Mount Carmel (according to one contemporary writer) in Palestine in the early 13th century. They were Latin (European) Christians and around 1210 they were given a Rule of Life by St. Albert, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Their chapel and their whole institute were dedicated to Our Lady. Carmelites have always regarded themselves as daughters and sons, in a very special way, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and also of Elijah, whom Scripture associates intimately with Mount Carmel (See 1 Kings: 18).

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR OCDS COMMUNITY

The *St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes OCDS Community* invites you to "come and see." Here are some specifics about our Danvers based community:

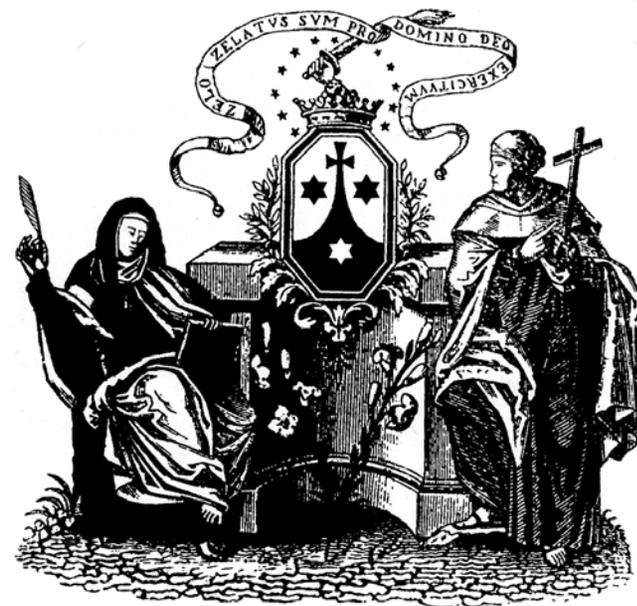
First meeting held: November 29, 1987

Canonically Established: October 8, 1996

Where we meet: Monastery of Discalced Carmelite Nuns
15 Mount Carmel Road
Danvers, MA 01923

When we meet: 2nd Saturday of every month
8:00 AM – 12:00 noon

Contact Person: Mary K. Stewart, OCDS
North Andover, MA
marykstewartocds@gmail.com
www.beautyofcarmel.com



LIFE OF A SECULAR CARMELITE

Secular Carmelites strive to develop their spiritual life by fostering a life of prayer; they “commit themselves daily to spending a time in the practice of mental prayer. This is the time to be with God and to strengthen their relationship with Him so that they can be true witnesses to His presence in the world.” (*OCDS Constitutions*) Secular Carmelites also recite Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) in union with the Church spread throughout the world. Members seek to draw strength from the liturgical life of the Church by attendance at daily Mass, if at all possible. They make frequent use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and observe days of penance prescribed by the Church or by Secular Order statutes. As an outward sign of an interior devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Secular Carmelites wear a small Brown Scapular for everyday use. They will strive to practice daily some form of Marian devotion such as praying the Rosary, reciting the Angelus and/or the Litany of Loreto and other such devotions recommended by the Church.

In addition, attendance at the Community meetings each month is considered essential to a life of fraternal charity and communion. Participation in the Community Apostolate will also be the responsibility of each member, according to their circumstances. Community Retreats and Days of Recollection also provide for spiritual growth and foster community spirit.

FURTHER INFO ABOUT THE CARMELITE ORDER & OCDS

You may find more information about the Carmelite Order (OCD) in general, and the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS), on the Web. Here are some websites, with many links, officially affiliated with the Carmelite Order:

- **Discalced Carmelite Order** (Worldwide):
www.carmelitaniscalzi.com
- **Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites**
(Washington Province):
www.ocdswashprov.org
- **St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes OCDS Community**
(Danvers, MA):
www.beautyofcarmel.com

By 1238 the Saracens overran Mount Carmel, forcing the Carmelite friars to return to Europe, where they began establishing communities. The Rule of Life was adapted in 1247 to meet the needs of an Order spreading throughout Christendom. During the second half of the 13th century, circumstances conspired to lead the Carmelites ever further from their hermit origins and they finally became a mendicant Order, modeling themselves in many ways on the Dominicans, though the old hermit way of life (embracing solitude and community) was not forgotten; indeed, it was ever present to them in their Rule.

In 1562, a Spanish Carmelite nun, **St. Teresa of Avila**, reformed the Carmelite Order, assisted by another great Carmelite, **St. John of the Cross**. They established what was to become a completely new branch of the Carmelite Order: *The Discalced Carmelites*. This reform was part of a general reform in the Church in the 16th century. “*Discalced*” comes from the Latin word meaning “*unshod*,” and they were so called because the most distinctive thing about their appearance was that, in keeping with their more austere way of life, they wore the rope sandals of the poor in place of leather shoes. This was also a sign to the world of their poverty of spirit and simplicity of life. It was a reminder of the biblical stories where the people removed their shoes to stand barefoot, humble, on holy ground in the presence of God.

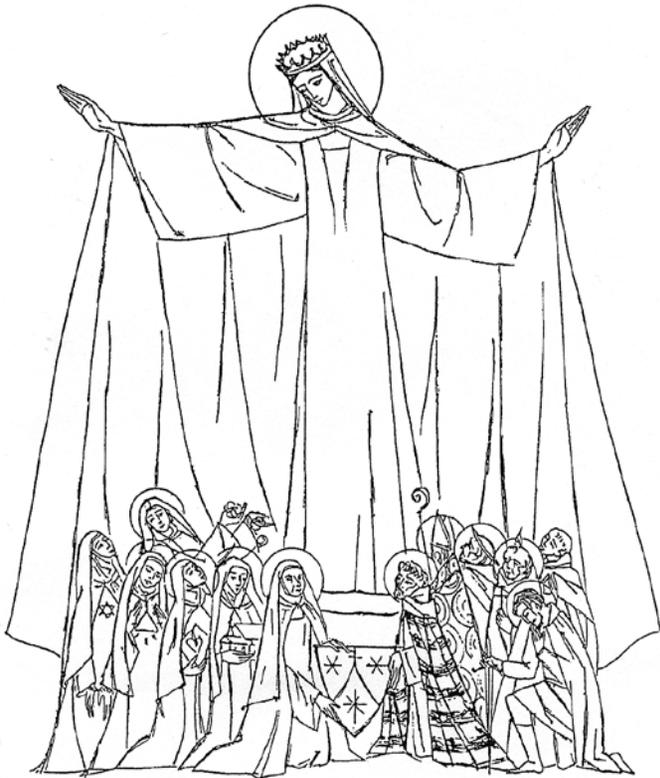
The Discalced Carmelites, both nuns and friars, aimed at a more retired and contemplative form of life, in keeping with the spirit of the original 13th century Rule of Life. Thus, it is today that there are two branches of the Carmelite family: the Ancient Observance (O. Carm.) and the Discalced (OCD). Each branch has its own Secular Order. Although updated by Vatican II, the reality of the Carmelite way of life remains the same today as almost five centuries ago: to live simply and always in the presence of God at the service of the Church.

Over the centuries many other Carmelites have been recognized by the Church for their outstanding holiness:

- **St. Thérèse of Lisieux** (“The Little Flower”)
- **St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes**
- **St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross** (Edith Stein)
- **St. Teresa Margaret Redi**
- **St. Elizabeth of the Trinity**
- **Bl. Titus Brandsma**
- **Br. Lawrence of the Resurrection**

MARIAN CHARACTER OF THE CARMELITE ORDER

“The Virgin Mary is present in a special way [in Carmel], most of all as a model of faithfulness in listening to the Lord and in service to Him and to others...She is the Mother of the Order...Secular Carmel enjoys her special protection and cultivates a sincere Marian devotion...Carmel contemplates Mary as Mother and Sister, as the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord and, as such, a model for the life of the members of the Order...For Secular Carmelites, Mary is a model of total commitment to God’s Kingdom...an ideal and inspiration for the Secular Carmelite...[She] goes before us in a pilgrimage of faith and...keeps us company so that we may imitate her life hidden in Christ and [commit ourselves] to the service of others...members of the Secular Order will celebrate and promote liturgical devotion to the Mother of God...and will practice devotional exercises in her honor.” (*OCDS Constitutions*)



MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS AND FORMATION

The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites are “faithful members of the [Catholic] Church, called to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ through a friendship with the One we know loves us and in service to the Church. Under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in the biblical tradition of the prophet Elijah and inspired by the teachings of **St. Teresa of Jesus** and **St. John of the Cross**, they seek to deepen their Christian commitment received in baptism... With sincere interest in the teachings of the Church and the spirituality of our Carmelite saints, Carmelite Seculars seek to be men and women who are mature in the practice of faith, hope and love, and in their devotion to the Virgin Mary.” (*Constitutions*)

Any member of the Catholic Church, lay person or cleric, at least 18 years of age, may apply for admission to the Aspirancy Program in a Secular Carmelite Community. This introductory program normally lasts a year, after which a candidate may be admitted into the Community’s Formation Program. At the beginning of this period of formation, a large, ceremonial Brown Scapular will be given to the candidate, an outward symbol of affiliation with the Order and a sign that the Blessed Virgin Mary is both Mother and Model of Carmel. The Formation Program is composed of three categories:

- 1) **PREPARATION FOR FIRST (TEMPORARY) PROMISE:**
a 2-year program deepening the life of prayer and preparing a candidate for making the First Promise.
- 2) **PREPARATION FOR FINAL (DEFINITIVE) PROMISE:**
a 3-year program preparing the candidate for a lifetime commitment to Carmel
- 3) **ON-GOING FORMATION:** *a lifelong program with the goal of continuing and deepening the Carmelite vocation.*

An interview with the Council of the community and a letter of intent is required at each stage of Formation.

The Secular Order is juridically dependent on the Discalced Carmelite Friars. Each community is appointed a Spiritual Assistant, usually a Carmelite friar, by the Order. “His duty is to give spiritual aid to the community so that its members may be guided in their vocation and may correspond with it as perfectly as possible.” (*OCDS Constitutions*)



SECULAR ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES:

A Marian Way of Life

**St. Teresa of the Andes
COMMUNITY PRAYER**

O God, you have called us to be a community of
Secular Carmelites under the patronage of
St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes.

Make us a community of one heart
and one mind in love towards
You and Your people.

Grant that our common vocation in Carmel
may be a loving example of Your Presence
to all whose lives we touch.

Guide Fr. Len and the Council in their work.

Acknowledge the intercessions of Your Mother,
Queen and Beauty of Carmel, on our behalf
and keep us secure in Your love forever.

Good St. Joseph, *pray for us.*

St. Teresa of Avila, *pray for us.*

St. John of the Cross, *pray for us.*

St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes, *pray for us.*

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *pray for us.*

All you saints of Carmel, *pray for us.*

www.beautyofcarmel.com
Stay connected @beautyofcarmel



**St. Teresa of Jesus of the Andes
Secular Carmelite Community**

DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS

www.beautyofcarmel.com