

WELCOME TO CARMEL

An Introduction to the Order of Discalced Carmelites

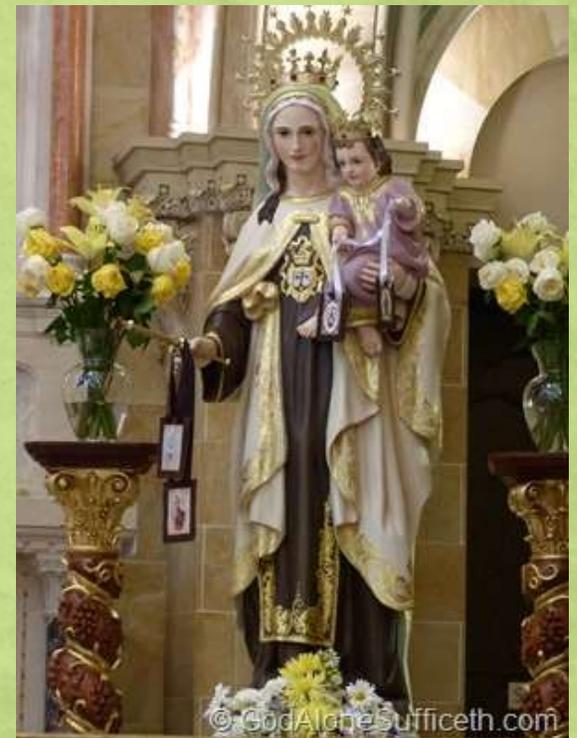


With zeal I have been most zealous
for the Lord God of hosts.
1 Kings 19:10

FLOS CARMELI PRAYER

O beautiful Flower of Carmel, most fruitful Vine,
Splendor of Heaven, holy and singular,
who brought forth the Son of God,
still ever remaining a Pure Virgin,
assist us in our necessity.

O Star of the Sea, help and protect us!
Show us that you are our Mother.
Hope of all Carmelites, pray for us.



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HISTORY OF THE ORDER

- The first reliable information dates the founding of the Order to the early 12th century, where a group of hermits were found living on Mt. Carmel, Israel; believed to be former Crusaders who turned to a life of prayer
- Early tradition viewed these hermits as successors of those gathered by the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Elisha to form a community devoted to service to God (the School of Prophets)



Ruins of 12th century chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, Mt. Carmel

HISTORY OF THE ORDER

- Known as the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, the first Carmelites have no one founder
- They recognize St. Elijah the Prophet and the Blessed Virgin as their spiritual founders
- Formal Rule of Life written for these hermits by St. Albert of Jerusalem in c. 1210



The first cells used
by the Carmelites
on Mt. Carmel

HISTORY OF THE ORDER

- The friars living on Mt. Carmel were forced to leave when the area fell under Moslem control
- Friars relocated to Europe and were eventually given approval to become one of the mendicant orders (like Franciscans and Dominicans) – their austere rule of life was adapted in 1432 to accommodate their new circumstances



Present day Carmelite monastery on Mt. Carmel with Stella Maris church

HISTORY OF THE ORDER

- Nuns became part of the order in the 15th Century
- Seculars, tertiaries, or third orders (of lay people) were found as early as the mid 15th century
- The Order, like most others, underwent several reforms, the most long lasting and impactful beginning under St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila) and St. John of the Cross in the 16th Century



Cloistered
Carmelite sisters

THE BEGINNING OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITES

- In St. Teresa's lifetime, the order still remained as one. After her death, but in the lifetime of St. John of the Cross, the order was separated into two. These remain as the two main branches:
 - The Order of the Ancient Observance (O.Carms.): These did not embrace the reform at the time and continued to live according to the revised, or mitigated, rule of life with a more active apostolate.
 - The Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD / ODC): These continued to live according to the ideals of the Teresian reform and the primitive rule and returned to a more contemplative life (known as Discalced because they wore sandals instead of shoes).



Discalced Carmelite Friars

JUST A FEW OF THE CARMELITE SAINTS...



Holy Mother St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila) founder of Discalced Carmelites



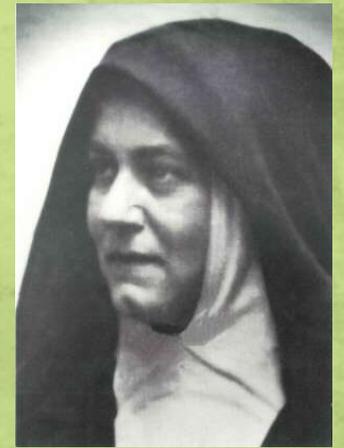
Holy Father St. John of the Cross, founder of Discalced Carmelites



St. Therese of the Child Jesus & the Holy Face (Lisieux)



St. Elizabeth of the Trinity



St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)



CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

Carmelite spirituality is centered on meditative prayer.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church begins its section on prayer with this quote from St. Therese, Discalced Carmelite nun in Lisieux, France:

- For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy. -- St. Therese of Lisieux

Similarly:

- Mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. -- St. Teresa of Avila

CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

- For Carmelites, interior prayer is our means of responding to the universal call to holiness. It requires time and space, often a sacrifice of one's time that normally might be spent on other tasks.
- The prayer time is to develop our intimate relationship with the Trinity, to be taught in the virtues and grow in them.
- Prayer is essential to directing and forming us for our apostolate, our service to the Church and others.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:19

"What we need most to progress is to be silent before this great God with our appetite and with our tongue, for the language he hears best is silent love." St. John of the Cross

"Vocal prayer . . . must be accompanied by reflection. A prayer in which a person is not aware of to Whom he is speaking, what he is asking, who it is who is asking and of Whom, I don't call prayer — however much the lips may move." St. Teresa of Avila



CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY

"All my strength lies in prayer and sacrifice. They are my invincible weapons, and I know, by experience, that they can soften the heart much better than words."
St. Therese of Lisieux

"An instant of pure love is more precious in the eyes of God and the soul, and more profitable to the Church, than all other good works together."
St. John of the Cross

- When we dedicate ourselves to prayer, we are participating in the mission of the Order as a contemplative in the world: to draw down graces upon the world. The prayer is not for our own holiness alone, but for the Church, the world, and the salvation of other souls.
- The cloistered nuns also participate in the mission of praying for priests, and our prayer also supports that mission.

THE DISCALCED CARMELITE FAMILY



The Discalced Carmelite family is comprised of friars (priests and religious), sisters, members of the lay order, and members of the Confraternity – those who wear the small brown scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel after the enrollment ceremony.

2016: 4,071 friars throughout the world

2012: 11,500 nuns (thus being the most important female Cloister Order in the Catholic world); 890 monasteries in 98 countries.

2012: 25,000 secular members throughout the world in 1,736 communities in 75 countries.

Countless members enrolled in the Confraternity of the Brown Scapular

THE SECULAR ORDER – MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Becoming a secular member of any order is a vocation that requires prayer and discernment on your part and the part of the order.

It is not like belonging to a club. It is a life-changing and life-long commitment to live the charism of the order according to your state in life.

To be accepted for formation in the Order of Discalced Carmelites, one must be:

- A practicing Catholic of at least 2 years in good standing
- At least 18 years of age
- If married, in a valid marriage according to the Church



THE SECULAR ORDER – DAILY LIFE

The commitment to life as a Secular Carmelite requires that one have the time available to set aside for prayer throughout the day.



The duties of a Secular member of the Discalced Carmelites:

- Daily: Minimum 30 minutes of silent, solitary meditation
- Daily: Morning & Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours; Night Prayer if possible
- Monthly: Attendance at community meetings
- Devotion to the Blessed Mother, primarily through the brown scapular; rosary encouraged whenever possible
- Spiritual reading, particularly of Carmelite saints
- Participation in the mission of the Church (service)
- Daily Mass when possible
- Frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation

THE SECULAR ORDER – MEMBERSHIP PROCESS



Becoming a secular member of the Discalced Carmelite Order involves ongoing, life-long formation.

It is marked by stages of formation.

- Speak to the community President or Formation Director. If appropriate, arrange to visit a community
- Aspirancy: 1 year period to learn about the history and spirituality of the Order, acceptance discerned with community
- Receive Ceremonial Scapular: Discern with community's council whether to continue formation and receive the scapular
- First Promise: After 2 years of additional formation, discern with the community's council whether to make the First Promise, a commitment to the order to live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience according to your state in life
- Final Promise: After 3 years of additional formation, discern with the community's council whether to make the Final or Definitive Promise to become a full member of the Order and to continue to live out the charism of the Order

THE SECULAR ORDER – FINDING A COMMUNITY

- There are three main provinces in the United States. We are in the Washington Province and the communities in Florida can be found at:
<http://www.ocdswashprov.org/florida-region/>
- This presentation was developed by Our Lady of Victory Community in Tampa.
 - Meets the third Saturday of the month at St. Lawrence
 - Begin with Morning Prayer following 8:30 a.m. Mass
 - Meetings consists of prayer, fellowship, food, & formation
 - Current community president is Leo Blumhagen:
leoocds@aol.com
 - Website: ourladyofvictoryocds.com
email: olvc.ocds.tampa@gmail.com



PRAYER TO SAINT TERESA OF JESUS

*Saint Teresa of Jesus, holy mother,
wholehearted servant of love,
teach us to walk with determined fidelity
along the path of interior prayer,
attentive to the presence of the Blessed Trinity,
the Lord, dwelling deep in us.*

*At the school of Mary our Mother,
strengthen within us these foundations;
a genuine humility,
a heart free from attachment,
and an unconditional love for others.*

*Share with us your intense apostolic love
for the Church.*

*May Jesus be our joy,
our hope and energy,
an unquenchable fountain
and our most intimate Friend.*

*Bless our Carmelite family.
Teach us, make your prayer our own;
"I am yours; I was born for you.
What is your will for me?"*

Amen