

Question & Answer, by *Teresa Martinez, ocds*

What is the relationship between the OCD Sisters and the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order?

This question is being addressed in our Carmel-Lights Magazine to clarify and answer for all the OCDS in our Jurisdiction, a question sincerely asked by a member at our last Workshop.

The Discalced Carmelite Order is made up of three different branches, the Friars, the Cloistered Sisters and the Secular Order members.

What is the tie between the OCD Sisters and the OCDS?

The tie between all three branches of the Order - the OCD Friars, the OCD Sisters and the OCDS lies in the fact that we are all sons and daughters of St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila), and we all live the same Teresian charism, albeit in the way that is appropriate to our particular way of life.

We all obey the Rule of St. Albert, which is interpreted by the individual Constitutions of each branch of the Order to suite the particular way of life of each branch of the Order.

So the tie between the OCD Friars, the Cloistered OCD Sisters and the OCD Secular Order members is one of fraternal solicitude in every way.

Do the OCD Sisters have any authority or governing responsibilities for the OCDS?

The OCD Sisters have no authority whatsoever to govern an OCDS Community,

and I feel pretty safe in saying, neither would they want to.

The OCDS do not have to seek directives from the Sisters as to how the monthly community meeting should be conducted or run; or what books the community should be reading, neither do the Sisters have any responsibility or say in the matters pertaining to the acceptance of Aspirants into the Order; the acceptance of Candidates to the Profession of Promises or the Vows. Discerning a vocation is the responsibility of the Candidate and the Council of the community.

Who are the OCDS Juridically dependent on?

C. 41 – “The Secular Order is juridically dependent on the Discalced Carmelite Friars[34]. The Superior General establishes the local communities and makes pastoral visitations. He may dispense, in particular cases from the Constitutions and local statutes and can grant juridical exceptions. He has the authority to resolve cases which are not foreseen by this legislation and which cannot be resolved by local authorities. A general Delegate assists the Superior General. His responsibility is to further relations between the Religious and the Seculars to maintain contact with the Provincial Delegates and the Assistants to each community to insure the purpose and well-being of the Secular Order.

What are Council Responsibilities?

C.47 - The Council has the authority
a) to admit candidates to formation, the Promises, and the Vows;
b) to reduce, for adequate reasons, the period of formation before the temporary Promises, with the permission of the Provincial;

- c) to convene the community for the triennial elections;
- d) to replace, for a serious reason, a member of the council itself [39].
- e) to dismiss a member of the community, should this be necessary, after consulting the Provincial [40].
- f) to receive a member transferring from another community;
- g) if a matter should arise that is outside the competence of the Council, it is the obligation of the President to bring it to the attention of the Provincial. “

“C.52 The responsibility of the three Councilors is to form, with the President, the government of the community and to support the director of formation. Generally they are community members with definitive promises. In particular circumstances, members with first promises can serve as councilors.”

The Council meets frequently and always when necessary to monitor the quality, adequacy and efficacy of the community's formation program; to take care of business of the Order and the growth of their own community. The Council is the immediate governing body of the community, and the Provincial Delegate to the OCDS is our immediate Superior.

The cloistered OCD and the OCDS communities each have superiors/directors in their particular groups. What is the distinction regarding obedience in the cloistered OCD Carmelite community and an OCDS community?

OCD/S members in all three branches of the Order owe total obedience to the individual Constitutions of the particular branch of the Order that the individual belongs to.

While all three branches of the Order live the Rule of St. Albert, their individual Constitutions interpret Albert's Rule for the particular state of life of each branch, i.e. for the mendicant way of life of our Friars, for the Cloistered way of life for our Sisters, and for the lay life of the OCDS.

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