

What is the Discalced Carmelite Secular Order?

Discalced Carmelites Seculars are members of the Carmelite family of the 16th-century reform of St. Teresa of Jesus. *Discalced* means *shoeless*. St. Teresa's followers wore sandals rather than shoes, a practice which distinguished them from Carmelites of the Ancient Observance. These followers are present in the modern world as friars, enclosed nuns and Seculars.

Who are we?

Discalced Carmelite Seculars come from all walks of life, from every level of education and from every type of work. They are Catholic laypersons over the age of 18 (married or unmarried) or ordained diocesan priests or deacons.

There are more than 45,000 Discalced Carmelite Seculars worldwide and more than 6,000 in the United States. They gather in canonically erected communities or recognized study groups under the

guidance and leadership of the order.

What is the foundation of Carmelite life?

The following principles of the Rule of Saint Albert, written for the hermits on Mount Carmel in the 13th century, guide Carmelite life today:

- * Living in allegiance to Jesus Christ
- * Being diligent in meditating on the law of the Lord
- * Giving time to spiritual reading
- * Participating in the liturgy of the church, both the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours
- * Arming themselves with the practice of the virtues
- * Seeking interior silence and solitude
- * Using prudent discretion in all that they do.

(from "Constitutions of the Secular Order of the Teresian Carmel," 2003)

What is required of Discalced Carmelite Seculars?

The Secular's obligations can be summarized by the "6 Ms":

1. *Meditation*. A suggestion is 30 minutes each day.
2. *Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and, if possible, Night Prayer* from the Liturgy of the Hours.
3. *Mass*. Daily, if possible.
4. *Mary*. Every day, Seculars express devotion to Mary. Their primary devotion is to imitate Mary in "reflecting on [all these things] in her heart" (Luke 2:19).
5. *Meetings*. Seculars are called to communities whose members have made a commitment to one another. Meetings consist of formation, information and fellowship.
6. *Mission*. Seculars share in the Carmelite mission of knowing God so God can be known.

What is the timetable for becoming a Discalced Carmelite Secular?

The entire period of formation commonly requires about six years.

Aspirancy

Attendance at 12 monthly meetings of the community is required, so the Aspirant may be supported by its members as he or she learns more about Secular life and discerns whether he or she has a vocation to the order.

First period of formation

A minimum of two years is required for study and growth in prayer, the apostolate and community life. At the end of this time, the council of the community may invite the candidate to make a Temporary Promise of poverty, chastity and obedience to the order.

Second period of formation

At least three years precedes the Definitive Promise. Either period of formation may be extended if the council and the individual in

formation agree that doing so is in the best interest of the candidate.

For more information, contact:

The Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

Discalced Carmelite Seculars are practicing members of the Catholic Church who, under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and inspired by St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross, make the commitment to the Discalced Carmelite Order to seek the face of God for the sake of the church and the world.