

****We are deeply indebted to our brothers and sisters in Canada for their generous permission to quote these portions of the Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation*

GUIDELINES FOR ALL INTERVIEWS

"Be an example for all believers in speech and conduct, in love, faith and purity." *1 Tim 4:12*

Before the interview, the Council must know about the individual through attendance records, observation of the candidate in community, and have feedback from the candidates' discussion group leader.

- Faithfulness to the norms and obligations of the vocation?
- Faithfulness to the assigned readings?
- How was attendance at the OCDS events?
- How responsive is the candidate in Community life?
- Draw as much as possible from the Candidate's letter.
- Note what is positive or anything that may cause concern.
- Reinforce the positive, to build up ..
- Should there be an area of concern, discuss this prior to the interview to decide the most charitable and honest way for this to be handled.
- After observing the individual over a period of years, the Council should have a good understanding of whether or not the candidate is called to Carmel.
- Is the Carmelite vocation given first priority? Or,
- Do other groups take priority?
- Does the candidate have a good understanding of the vocation?
- Is candidate familiar with the Constitutions?
- Is the candidate able to live in fraternal charity in community?
- Does the candidate understand the need for the combined practice of prayer with the evangelical counsels?
- Is a love of the vocation, the Order and its Saints demonstrated?
- Does the vocation fulfill an interior need?

- Does the candidate participate in community life and group discussions?
- Are job responsibilities accepted, volunteered for and carried out in community?
- Is there an understanding of the responsibilities inherent in the profession of promises?
- Does the candidate collaborate in community apostolate initiatives? Or,
- Participate in apostolate activities the Order invites us to?
- Does the candidate have a grasp of the relationship between Christian and Carmelite vocation and mission in the Church and world?

Tips for Interviews

Use the self-evaluation sheet that the candidate has been given as a question guide.

While the candidate has been asked to make some spiritual preparation during the discernment period prior to the interview, it is also very important that Councillors do the same spiritual preparation for the task ahead.

Our task must be conducted in faith by prayerful preparation. In hope and confidence in God's help, we must keep in mind that we are the visible face of God by our charity to all God's creatures.

Be sure that the area where the interview is conducted provides privacy to instill confidence in the individual to speak freely. Respect confidentiality.

Inform the person that what is being discussed here is confidential.

- Be gracious in your welcome to the person. Take great care to make the person feel at ease and relaxed.
- Remember the individual may be feeling nervous or apprehensive. Be kind. This is no time for a power trip.
- Make sure not to allow personal likes or dislikes influence your judgment one way or another.

- Be impartial, just and fair. We are accountable to God.
- Peace, charity and understanding must be the overtone of the interview.
- Begin the interview with a prayer.
- The President explains that we are gathered together to
- help the candidate discern if they are ready to make the commitment of First Promise/Definitive Promise.
- Thank the candidate for their letter. Acknowledge the fact that the individual wishes to continue their journey in Carmel.
- Point out the positive aspects of the candidate's letter and encourage and affirm them.
- Draw to the fullest from the letter submitted by the candidate.
- Ask questions in a non-threatening manner, so that the individual will not feel anxious, and understands that we are there to help them.
- Invite the candidate to comment on any concerns that they may have expressed in their letter, or otherwise, for example, is there any area in Carmelite studies or in living the norms and obligations of our Constitutions that need extra help or work on?
- If the Council has further concerns, ask the questions in a non-judgmental manner.
- Questions asked should be open-ended, so that they elicit more than just a yes or no answer. In this way concerns can be addressed to everyone's satisfaction.
- Find out if they have been faithful to all daily norms and obligations of the vocation?
- Do they understand the vocation? Do they love the vocation?
- Is the vocation fulfilling an inner spiritual need?
- Have they grown spiritually since joining the Order?
- Does their family know about this commitment that they wish to make?
- Is the family supportive of the vocation in Carmel?
- Is the vocation causing conflict at home?

- Are they prepared to do the necessary spiritual reading to learn more about their Christian and Carmelite vocation?
- How is participation in community life?
- Have they volunteered or given any help in small community tasks?
- Do they feel that they fit in with the community?
- Do they get along with members?
- Do they come to the meeting with the assigned reading prepared?
- Do you participate in the reading-group discussion?
- Is there any area in your Carmelite studies or in living our norms and obligations that you need extra help with?
- Do you understand what is being promised?

When the interview is concluded, if the candidate is accepted, joyfully and warmly congratulate them and welcome them to the family of Carmel. Each vocation to the Order is a gift from God. Treasure it, appreciate it, and nurture it in compassion and charity.

Encourage the candidate/s to make special spiritual preparation for their day of grace.

If a candidate requires more time before being admitted to the Promises, be sure to explain with kindness and understanding, that our path to God is not measured by a yardstick. This extra time does not mean that anyone is a failure, we all move at different paces. Explain that the Order understands this and allows the extra time.

Canadian OCDS Manual of Formation, pg 125-129.