

RATIO INSTITUTIONIS

To the Provincial Superiors, Provincial Delegates and members of the Secular Order,

My dear brother and sister Carmelites,

The General Definitory is happy to present the **Ratio Institutionis of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites**. The text of this Ratio was developed over the period of the previous sexennium of the General Secretariat for the Secular Order. It was presented in substance to the General Chapter of Fatima in April of this present year. The Chapter members made some suggestions. After incorporating the suggestions in the text, it was presented to the General Definitory. The Definitory also made some amendments to the text and approved the English translation of the final version in June 2009. During the summer of 2009, careful attention was paid to the Italian, Spanish and French translations. All of these texts have now been finalised.

A Ratio Institutionis is not in itself a formation programme. Each jurisdiction of the Order is responsible for the design and application of its own programme of formation. The Ratio is a document which seeks to present the fundamental principles that guide the process of formation, the philosophy behind the formation of the members of the institute. Formation is done in the name of the Order in each of its territories and jurisdictions. There is always, and there must be, a local flavour to the formation given in the local community, as there is always, and there must be, a general direction that guides the formation. This document presents those guiding principles.

The document comes in two main parts. **The first part**, from numbers 1 to 93, is the Ratio, accompanied by two sections. The first section contains those numbers of the Constitutions which touch on the theme of formation. The second section is a presentation of principles to help in the discernment of the vocation to the Secular Order. **The second part** is a model¹ of a developed programme of formation. It is offered as a model. Each jurisdiction of the Order is responsible for developing its own programme of formation. Any Province that has already developed a programme and has submitted it to the General Definitory for approval will substitute its own programme in the place of this model.

I present this Ratio Institutionis in the name of the General definitory with the sincere hope that it will guide the members of our Secular Order to a deeper appreciation of their call to holiness in love of God and service to the Church.

Saverio Cannistrà, OCD
Superior General
17th September 2009

¹ The Philippine formation programme, not included

RATIO INSTITUTIONIS OF THE SECULAR ORDER

1. The aim of this *Ratio Institutionis* is to present the outlines of a programme for the formation of members of the Carmelite Secular Order and to offer the general framework of a syllabus for this formation.
2. Number 46 of the Constitutions of the Secular Order establishes in its first sentence who constitutes the 'immediate authority' over the OCDS community. In a second sentence it specifies that the 'primary responsibility' of this authority is 'the formation and the bringing to Christian and Carmelite maturity of the members of the community'. One might expect that the primary responsibility of the designated authority in an organisation would be to concern itself with the governance of that organisation. However, the OCDS constitutions indicate that his/her responsibility is to form the entire community.
3. This tells us what is the purpose of the existence of the communities of the Secular Order. Our communities have as their specific fundamental goal a permanent process of understanding the identity of the Carmelite in today's world, and discovering what is the necessary service this involves with respect to God, the Church, the Order, and the world. Governance, in the sense of control or organisation, is presented as secondary and supportive of the primary purpose. In fact, if the formation is adequate, governance need only be minimal.
4. Number 32 of the Constitutions tells us that the ultimate goal of formation is to 'prepare the person to live the spirituality of Carmel'. This sentence in the Constitutions gives us a very clear idea of the purpose of formation. It tells us which are the less important elements in the formation programme. The ultimate goal of the formation programme is not to produce academic experts in Carmelite spirituality, nor is the formation programme to be made a means for individuals to acquire a university qualification in spirituality or spiritual theology.
5. The aim is 'to prepare the person'. In other words, the formation process should focus on the actual person. Individuals who come knocking at the door of the Carmelite Secular Order almost always have busy lives taken up with family, work, or professional obligations or with other commitments. The formation programme has to be flexible enough to be adaptable to the circumstances of each person who becomes involved in the process.
6. The aim of formation is to prepare particular individual persons under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to be able to live a spiritual life according to the principles of spirituality of the Discalced Carmelites. When this is clearly understood, the Council can then help such persons individually - whether they are new members or members of long standing. Here again we see the clear necessity for the exercise of an adequate discernment as to a person's call to Carmel.
7. Good formation depends on good information. At the same time, formation is quite clearly different from mere information. The first duty of the person responsible for

formation in the Secular Order community is to accompany those being formed so as to help them understand how they can live what they are learning in the formation process. The information they acquire through reading and through the formation sessions should help them in their personal spiritual growth.

8. It will be very helpful for the development of the formation programme if the person responsible for it can on behalf of the community establish a team able to present the necessary information. It may well be that some members of the community are capable of presenting certain topics while other members are good with different ones, and so together they will provide a more effective programme. This will prevent the person responsible for formation from being overloaded with work.
9. The period of preparation necessary for someone wanting to join the Carmelite Seculars is a process that lasts six years, and it is described in the Constitutions no. 36 as 'gradual'. In addition to flexibility on the part of the beginner and of the community, there has to be patience on both sides with a process that has to go step by step. As a rule individuals who come to the Secular Order are sincere in their love for God and their desire for a deeper spiritual life. They come with a special love for the Virgin Mary and her scapular. They come to Carmel already convinced of the vital importance of prayer. In most cases however, these convictions and these desires need to be directed by sound theological, liturgical, and spiritual principles.
10. The community, the Council, the formator, those who lead the sessions, and the Spiritual Assistant of the Community must be ready to help new members of the Community by example and by guidance. For their part the newcomers need to be mentally and personally open to the new ways of spiritual living that they will learn in Carmel.
11. In the Formation Programme as it is outlined in the Constitutions it is always the Council that has the right and the obligation to discern the progress being made by the candidates. It is always the Council that has the right to admit candidates to each stage of the formation process. For this reason, the Council itself must be involved in the formation process and must support the appointed formation director in his or her task.
12. The Constitutions themselves offer the basic and most essential elements for formation. The syllabus or programme presented here is conceived as an offering for the entire worldwide Secular Order. It contains a process enabling the individual to progress through the formation material in an organised manner. However, it needs to be adapted to the circumstances of each country and region. What are presented here are the essential elements that should be included in any formation programme.

ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF FORMATION

13. Human Formation

develops:

- An aptitude for interpersonal dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance
- A readiness to be corrected and to correct others calmly
- A capacity to persevere in commitments

14. Christian formation

enhances

- Our ability to receive the theological grounding we need through the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the documents of the Church.
- Our appreciation for our baptismal consecration
- Our zeal for our own conversion, Christian commitment, and holiness of life
- Our fervour in living the demands of discipleship of Jesus by participating in his saving mission and developing our prophetic, royal, and priestly calling

15. Carmelite formation

confirms our Carmelite identity through:

- The study and spiritual reading of the Scriptures and the practice of *Lectio Divina*
- The central importance of the Church's liturgy, particularly the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours
- The spirituality of Carmel, its history, the works of the Saints of the Order
- Formation in silent prayer and meditation
- Formation for apostolate based on the teachings of the Church, so that we take up our role as Seculars in the apostolate of the Order

AGENTS OF FORMATION IN THE SECULAR ORDER OF THE TERESIAN CARMEL

The main educator: the Holy Spirit

- 16.** The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, is the main teacher of the Church. Individuals called to life in Carmel, aware of the indwelling of the Spirit by grace, must be conscious of this ineffable Presence that will lead them to a knowledge of the truth, particularly with respect to their own vocation. The Spirit, infused to awaken a new birth through baptism, impels them to live the mystery of the Trinity more and more profoundly, and also to bear abundant fruit through the gift of self (made a reality in 'good works, good works').

The Virgin Mary

- 17.** The Virgin Mary is intimately involved in the action of the Holy Spirit. Mother of Christ and our Mother, she is a part of the spiritual life of each person, but

particularly of the call to life in Carmel. Under her protection, expressed in Carmel by the scapular, all those being formed in the Order are spiritually protected. Mary, Mother of believers, is for us a model of committed and prophetic contemplation. She received the Good News with clear discernment and fulfilled its demands conscientiously. She kept the word, meditating on it in her heart, and proclaimed it freely and courageously in the Magnificat. Her contemplative-apostolic example is emphasised in the course of formation, to help those who are being formed to understand and practise what it really means to follow Christ as did Mary, the perfect model of a disciple of the Lord.

The Church

18. The Church is inseparable from Christ. He established it as sign and instrument of his salvific plan. It is the people of God who travel across time to meet the Lord. In the Church the evangelizing presence and activity of Jesus is prolonged on earth in the preaching of the word and in the sacraments, which are agents of grace to counter the agents of sin in society. In their discipleship of Christ, Secular Carmelites depend on the help of the Church. By their promises, Secular Carmelites manifest more than ever the power of the sacramental life, especially baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of reconciliation. All aspirants must therefore immerse themselves in that reality which is the Church, which invites them to seek holiness. In response, they who feel themselves to be called will experience a growing need to give themselves likewise to the Church in a suitable way.

The Carmelite Order

19. The Discalced Carmelite Order constitutes a particular juridical and charismatic family. The communities of the Secular Carmelite Order depend juridically on the Discalced Carmelite Friars (the Order of Religious), and so they have a different character from other associations. The religious superiors have a responsibility towards these communities, according to their respective Constitutions. The Constitutions which regulate the Secular Communities give them a legitimate and specific autonomy.
20. The Lord created the religious family of the Teresian Carmel, He endowed it with a special charism and He continues to direct it by His Spirit. The Secular Order receives new vocations with joy, but equally with a sense of responsibility, anticipating that in these vocations the charism can be understood more deeply every day, bear fruit, and grow. New aspirants are an enriching grace and a springboard for true spiritual renewal.
21. In addition to the example of its founders, the Teresian Carmel has its own formation programme. It has its own style, based on individuals who were so mature in their faith that they ended up being saints and authorities for the whole church: the doctors of the Church Teresa of Jesus, John of the Cross, and Therese of Lisieux. The tradition that they began as a result of a lived experience constitutes the formative

patrimony with which Carmel is infused. The task of the Order today is to continue this uninterrupted line of educators, preparing individuals in and for our own time for the Church, like St Elizabeth of the Trinity, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, and St Raphael Kalinowski.

The person in formation

22. It is those in formation themselves who have the primary responsibility to give the 'yes' to the call and accept the consequences of their response. This does not mean that they must be arbiters of their own destiny or autodidacts; deep within themselves aspirants know that they need divine and human help. It depends on them to be open to grow constantly in the wisdom of the Gospel, something for which the world has a desperate hunger.
23. Those in formation are called to a profound dialogue with God in prayer. But this would not have meaning without a trusting relationship with the members of their community, and particularly with the educators. Making appropriate progress throughout the different stages, they must get a clearer idea of the importance of, and the need for, our charism. In order to do so, they must learn from experienced seculars who are already practising it and presenting it to them, and likewise from the documents important to our family: the Constitutions and the writings of our saints.

The Community

24. The Carmelite Secular Community is an association of the faithful, inspired by the ideal of the Early Church, where they were 'of one heart and mind' (Acts 4, 32). Its members draw their inspiration from the spirituality of the Teresian Carmel.
25. The Secular Community embodies the mystery of the Church-Communion. It actually arises from the communion between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by which it is nourished: it takes part in the mission of the Church to invite everyone into this communion (*Lumen Gentium* 1,19)
26. The community life takes its initial inspiration from the 'original' rule of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel as given by St Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and confirmed by Pope Innocent IV. Faithful to the teachings of our Holy Mother Teresa, the members are conscious that their commitment cannot be worked out on a purely individual basis; community life is a special place where they go deeper, where they are formed, where they mature.
27. It is Christ in his paschal mystery who is the model and the maker of community living. This community living constitutes an evangelical way of conversion that requires the courage to renounce oneself and to accept and welcome the other within the community. This way of purification becomes a way of life, it means living as Jesus lived.

28. Consequent upon this identity of the Carmelite Secular Order, the community is the appropriate place for the formation of the candidate who is seeking admission. The community has to offer a good example of our life, even if the ideal is not attained. Only exceptionally and in extraordinary circumstances may a candidate be incorporated into the Order as an isolate. The community of the Secular Order in its totality, and each one of its members, has a responsibility for formation, and this must be carried out cooperatively between the Director of Formation and the Council.
29. The Council of the community will take special care to choose suitable seculars for the formation team, persons of prayer and culture, open-minded and desirous of sharing their Carmelite experience with those in formation. Provided the formators are in agreement as to their objectives and methods, the better qualified and the more diverse they are, the more reliable will be the formation. An important formative role in the community is played by the older members and those members who are infirm or in any way incapacitated, who in their regular contact with those who have not yet made their second Promise, give an excellent example out of their experience.

The President of the Community

30. As first among equals, Presidents, along with the Council, direct their communities in a spirit of faith; they are listened to in the same spirit in an atmosphere of dialogue. In fulfilling the service of authority, Presidents cannot but have recourse to it, but they must do so more by motivating than by controlling. Their main concern must be to establish communion in charity.
31. It is the task of the President to make sure that the Council team prepares a suitable programme, ensures its implementation, and organises Council meetings to assess the programme and consider possible changes. All this has to be done with a prudent respect for the legitimate attributes and the independence of the Formation Director and collaborators.

The Formation Director

32. The Secular Carmelite who is directly responsible for formation receives the title of Formation Director. This must be a person mature in the faith and well versed in the Carmelite life. The same should be true of any Secular who has a responsibility for the aspirants during the stages of formation.
33. Everything mentioned here is applicable to each member of the formation team; it covers the essential points requisite for each stage of formation. In due course we will detail the features proper to each stage.
34. The main task of the Director is to take care of those in formation and walk with them. The Director is the main collaborator with these members in the formation process, and a privileged co-operator with the divine grace. For this reason, Directors will see themselves as humble disciples and servants of the one Master, Jesus Christ.

At the same time, Directors will be conscious that they are fulfilling an important mediating role between those in formation and the Church on the one hand and between these members and the Order on the other. The Council of the Community can designate one or more persons to assist the Director in the actual formation work. Along with the Director they will then make up a small team which can work together harmoniously.

35. The judgement of the Directors and their assistants is owed a special respect on account of their involvement in the formation role. But the Council retains its responsibility and competence in those matters laid out in the Constitutions, that is to say with respect to the suitability of the aspirants; it is up to the Council to decide whether or not to open the door for them to be admitted to the formation period, to the first Promise, to the final promise, and to vows.

36. Suggestions for how to do formation:

1. The formation class begins and ends with a prayer
2. Morning and evening prayer with a period devoted to silent prayer
3. Discussions and talks
4. Points for reflection
5. Points for study and discussion
6. Projection of films and other audio-visual material
7. Retreat, immersion and desert experiences

37. Basic resources for a formation programme:

1. The Holy Scriptures
2. General Instructions on the The Liturgy of the Hours
3. Catechism of the Catholic Church
4. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*
5. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*
6. Dogmatic Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
7. Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*
8. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World *Christifideles Laici*
8. Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*
9. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary *Redemptoris Mater*
11. General Instructions on the Eucharist
12. The Rule of St. Albert
13. The OCDS Constitutions
14. The Provincial Statutes
15. The Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus
16. The Works of Saint John of the Cross
17. The Works of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus

18. The Works of Edith Stein
19. The Works of Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity

In addition to the references enumerated above, each region should enlarge the list of potential resources by adding any particular locally available materials or materials in the languages used in the region.

APPENDICES

[Paragraphs 1- 37 and 46 of the Constitutions are omitted here]

Discernment of a vocation to Secular Carmel

59. To discern is to seek the will of God for a person, 'it is to be led by God'. In this search the following principles act as guidelines:

God does not hide himself from us but rather reveals himself to us.

He respects the free will that he has given to us.

Human life implies responsibility, that is to say, the freedom to respond.

60. There are three agents in this process: God, the candidate, and those involved in formation.

61. The Council of the community has its role in the process too. So the responsibility for discernment falls on the candidate, the Formation Director, and the council of the community. The discernment is not limited solely to a particular moment and it does not happen all at once. Insofar as there are any special moments, they are the passages from one formation stage to the next.

62. For the discernment to be valid it is important that the formators really get to know those in formation. When the Lord calls people, we take it that He will give them a sufficient capacity to respond to that call.

63. The divine call is always a mysterious grace that cannot be reduced to a list of qualities. But there are certain qualities that indicate an aptitude for the vocation to Secular Carmel. Among them are:

64. *At the human level:*

- a stable personality
- common sense
- emotional maturity
- a capacity to trust and to be open
 - a readiness to cooperate
 - realism, tolerance, and flexibility
 - a certain degree of self-knowledge
 - faithfulness to principles

65. *At the level of the Christian life:*

- a willingness to cooperate with God in a spirit of faith
 - a real respect for prayer
 - a deep love of Holy Scripture
 - a commitment to the Church and involvement in a parish community
 - active compassionate love

66. *At the level of the Teresian charism:*

- a taste for prayer
- a desire to establish a friendly personal relationship with God
- a contemplative and active spirit
- love for the Church
- a desire to become familiar with the spirituality of Carmel

67. Some contra-indications are:

- symptoms of a lack of psychological equilibrium
- the existence of family situations which are incompatible with living the Constitutions and make that impossible
- an incapacity to fit into the life of the community for reasons of personality and attitude.
- excessive emotions such as anger, anxiety, fear, depression, or guilt
- preconceived ideas about Carmel that block the learning process and personal growth
- fundamentalist or apocalyptic ideas about the Church
- membership of organisations with a different kind of spirituality
- membership of groups based on private revelations

68. It would not be very realistic to expect aspirants to have all of these qualities before joining the Secular Order, or even at any particular stage of the formation process. However, they must have a basic aptitude for the acquisition of these qualities and should gradually mature in them. This progressive maturing, fruit of living the Teresian Carmel charism, is the most genuine sign of a vocation.

69. A secular Carmelite is:

An active member 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,
Commits to the Order to seek the face of God
In prayer and service
For the good of the Church and the needs of the world.

An active member of the Catholic Church

70. Individuals may be admitted to the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites on the condition that they

- Are practising Catholics;
- Respect the authority of the Pope and the Magisterium of the Church.

71. The word 'practising' specifies something about the person who aspires to be part of the Secular Order. A basic proof of 'practising' the Catholic faith is the capacity for taking full part in the Eucharist with a clear conscience. The Eucharist is the summit of the spiritual life and Catholic identity. If there is no moral or canonical impediment to a person taking part in the Eucharist, then there is no impediment to a person becoming a member of the Secular Order and that person is free to do so.

72. The Secular Order is an institution of the Catholic Church and to that extent subject to ecclesiastical laws. Its legislation has to be approved by the Holy See. Consequently, a person who does not belong to the Catholic Church cannot be a member of the Secular Order. Members of other Christian churches interested in the spirituality of Carmel may certainly participate in particular programmes if invited to do so by the community, but they cannot be members of the Secular Order.

Under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

73. *Secular Carmelites:*

- look to Mary as the model for their life in Carmel
- aid the Church by nurturing a mature love for Mary and the most wholehearted and genuine devotion to her.
- wear the scapular as an external expression of the maternal protection of Mary, of our dedication to her service, and as an incentive to live the theological virtue of hope
- venerate Mary daily in holy practice and commemorate her mysteries, especially in the liturgy.

74. An essential element in the vocation to Secular Carmel is the capacity for meditation. For members of the Secular Order, Mary is the model of a meditative attitude and disposition. She draws and inspires the Carmelite to the contemplative way of understanding the life of the Mystical Body of her Son, which is the Church. This quality needs to be developed in the formative process which aspirants engage in when they enter Carmel.

75. The particular characteristic of the Virgin Mary that must be present in each person called to Carmel is the inclination to 'ponder in one's heart', the expression that the Gospel of St Luke uses twice to describe the attitude of Mary in relation to her Son. Other aspects of Marian life may also be present, like devotion to the scapular and the rosary. They are however secondary with respect to genuine Marian devotion. Mary is our model of prayer and meditation. This concern to learn to meditate or the inclination to meditation is a fundamental characteristic of any Secular Carmelite and it is, perhaps, the key to vocational discernment.

Inspired by St Teresa of Jesus and St John of the Cross

76. Secular Carmelites:

- immerse themselves in the works of our saints, and especially in the works of our founding saints, Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross, so as to absorb the spirit of Carmel
- cultivate a filial dedication to our Carmelite saints and honour them on their feast days
- find inspiration and nourishment in Holy Scripture, in the Rule of St Albert and in the teaching of our saints for the formation of their interior life, and as a support in the duties of their state of life.

77. We give a particular importance to St Teresa of Jesus, whom in our tradition we call 'our holy mother'. We call her this because she was the first to receive our charism. St John of the Cross was her first collaborator in the spiritual and juridical re-foundation of Carmel. For this reason we call him 'our holy father'. Knowing their stories, their personalities, and above all their teachings, confirms individuals in their Carmelite identity.

78. The works of St Teresa of Jesus are the expression of the charism of the Discalced Carmelites. The spirituality of this religious family has very solid intellectual foundations. It embodies a doctrine. Anyone who wants to become a member of the Discalced Carmelites must take an interest in learning from the great teachers of Carmel.

79. In the formation of a Teresian Carmelite there is an intellectual aspect and there is a doctrinal basis for living the spirituality and for the formation of the identity of the individual called to the Order. Therefore every Carmelite Friar or Sister and every Secular must have a good intellectual and doctrinal formation, since as members of the Order they are its representatives and must be witnesses to a mature and profound spirituality.

80. This intellectual basis is the foundation for an attitude of readiness to study. It leads to a deeper interest in Scripture and in the teachings and documents of the Church. The tradition of spiritual reading, *lectio divina*, and time devoted to private study are the foundations of the spiritual life.

Commitment to the Order

81. The members of the community set great store by the weekly or monthly meeting as an important grace and they give it priority in their lives. It is an occasion for them to pray together, for spiritual formation, for growth in fraternal charity, and for dealing with the affairs of the community. They are regular in their attendance at the meetings for their own spiritual good and for mutual encouragement.

82. One of the essential qualities of a vocation to Secular Carmel is commitment to the Order and to the Church. There are many committed Catholics who are devotees of Mary and well acquainted with the spirituality of St Teresa or St John of the Cross or St

Therese of Lisieux, but they do not have a vocation to Secular Carmel. They may be contemplatives or hermits even, spending hours in prayer and devoting hours to study every day, but they do not have a definite vocation to be Carmelites.

83. What is it then that distinguishes those who have a vocation to Secular Carmel from those who don't? It is not about spirituality, nor is it about study or devotion to Our Lady. Putting it simply, the Secular Carmelite is the one who feels moved to commit to the Order and, through the Order, to the Church; for service of the Church through collaboration and cooperation with the calling of the Order. In addition to being an event in the life of the person who makes it, this commitment, formalised through the Promise, is an ecclesial commitment and an Order commitment.

84. So these are persons who commit to Carmel and identify themselves as Carmelites, while always bearing in mind their personal family and work situation and the responsibilities all of that entails.

85. An important aspect of this commitment is the commitment made to the community. A person who wishes to be a member of OCDS must be capable of forming community, of being part of a group with a shared aim, of showing an interest in others, of being a support to others in the quest for a life of prayer, and of being open to receive help from others. This also applies to those persons who for various reasons cannot take part actively in a community. The formation process of the community should involve a deepening of this special community spirit.

Seeking the face of God in prayer and in service

86. For the members of the Secular Order it is an honour to be an integral part of the family of Carmel. The privilege of sharing in its heritage and in its spiritual graces carries with it the responsibility to intercede for others in prayer and to be witnesses as members of the mystical body of Christ. The Secular Carmelite seeks union with Christ in the world through the lived experience of the Promise made according to the Constitutions of the Secular Order.

87. The weekly/monthly meetings are an aid to permanent formation. The study of Scripture and *Lectio divina* helps us to share with others the riches of the Word of God. Likewise, the study of the teachings of the Church and the of spirituality of Carmel encourages a deepening of our relationship with God and increases our capacity to be witnesses to the Kingdom.

88. 'Seeking the face of God'. This element expresses the content of the Promise. It could be restated in various ways: 'praying', 'meditating', 'living the spiritual life'. It is a formulation that comes close to pinpointing the nature of contemplation: a constant opening to the Word and to the work of God in history so as to know, love, and serve Him. The contemplative aspect of Carmelite life is centred on God, always with the recognition that contemplation is a gift from God, not something acquired as a result of time devoted to it. This is the commitment that leads to personal holiness. The Secular

wants to see God, desires to know him, and finds that prayer and meditation then acquire a greater importance. The Promise is a commitment to a new form of life in which 'allegiance to Jesus Christ' becomes the mark of individuals and their way of living.

89. Seeking the face of God requires a very specific discipline in the classic sense of the word – 'disciple' = 'one who learns'. We recognise that we are always disciples, never teachers. We have a capacity to marvel at what God does in the world. God is always a mystery. The call to sanctity is a fervent desire of the heart and mind of the person called to the Secular Order. It is an urgently pressing commitment. Seculars are called to prayer, and in prayer they find their home and their identity. This prayer, this quest for sanctity, this encounter with the Lord, makes Seculars into a more lively part of the Church. In that they are members of the Church, their lives are more ecclesial. Growth in the life of prayer leads to growth of fruit in the individual's personal life (growth in virtue) and ecclesial life (apostolate).

For the good of the Church and the needs of the world

90. Secular Carmelites:

Love their vocation and give thanks always and in every place for the gift they have received from the divine providence for the purpose of their own salvation and the good of the Church;

Organise their day around the commitment to set aside at least a half hour for personal prayer, so that their 'relation of friendship with the one whom we know loves us', becomes the basis of a whole life of service to the Church.

91. For St Teresa, contemplative prayer is the heart of the Church and it is essentially apostolic. Secular Carmelites aim to live the Gospel in a spirit of prophetic hope at the heart of the Church and of society.

92. Secular Carmelites, sent out by their community:

Support the work of their parish and, according to the circumstances and the personal talent of each, involve themselves in parish life, especially in areas related to prayer;

Nurture and encourage each other in group apostolates that accord with our charism, where they see a need;

Those unable to participate in the apostolate of the group support the others in prayer.

93. Formation in the Secular Order, both initial and ongoing, must aid the human and Christian maturity of community members in their life of apostolate as lived according to the spirit and charism of Carmel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

[Translated by Cyprian Blamires OCDS from the original Spanish, October 2018]