

Carmel's Call



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Twelfth Edition

Acknowledgment

The first edition of *Carmel's Call* appeared in 1948. It consisted of a collection of articles intended for use in the formation of Third Order Lay Carmelites. Succeeding editions of this handbook and resource manual for Lay Carmelites took on various forms, with the content (legislative, spiritual, liturgical, instructional) varying from edition to edition.

This twelfth edition of *Carmel's Call* continues to provide the basic resources to help guide and support the Lay Carmelites of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and Saint Elias Provinces of North America along with their missions.

In 2015 new formation manuals for both Provinces were issued; therefore changes, corrections, and clarifications were made to update the Statutes. With the approval of the Prior Provincials and Councils for both Provinces in July 2021, these edits are presented here in a similar format to all manuals.

We are grateful to all who worked on this project, both past and present Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission members. Other sections of this *Carmel's Call* edition will be added in the future, such as the Rituals for Ceremonies.

For now, we thank:

Fr. Francis Amodio, O.Carm.
Fr. Joseph Atcher, O.Carm.
Cheryl Baltru, T.O.Carm.
Desi Byerley, T.O.Carm.
Kenneth Cavalli, T.O.Carm.
Sr. Libby Dahlstrom, O.Carm.
Fr. Mario Esposito, O.Carm.
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Sr. Mary Martin, O.Carm.
Margie McCalester, T.O.Carm.
Edith Matlock, T.O.Carm.
Fr. Peter McGarry, O.Carm.
Rebecca Moak, T.O.Carm.
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Kathleen Richardville, T.O.Carm.
Patricia Whitlock, T.O.Carm.

Section I

**Spiritual
Documents
and Legislation**

**The Carmelite Way of Life:
The Rule of St. Albert**

The Rule of St. Albert is also known historically as the Carmelite Rule. In more recent times, the Rule has been referred to as the Carmelite Way of Life. Given in the form of a letter to the original hermits on Mount Carmel almost eight-hundred years ago by St. Albert Avogadro, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1206-1214), this document defines all Carmelite living and it is our adherence to the spirit of this text that makes us Carmelites. The Rule is that charismatic spiritual document that stands at the beginning of all forms of Carmelite life. In this short text are the essential elements of the Carmelite charism in embryonic form. The original text, then called a formula of life, from St. Albert of Jerusalem, was first approved by the Holy See in January of 1226 by Pope Honorius III; it was confirmed by Pope Gregory IX in April of 1229 and again by Pope Innocent IV in June of 1245. Pope Innocent IV approved it finally, definitely, and solemnly as a true and proper rule in October of 1247. He added several adaptations to the document while practically maintaining the wholeness of St. Albert's original letter. The text of the Rule of St. Albert that we have today is that from Pope Innocent IV in 1247.

Chapter 1

Albert, called by God's favor to be Patriarch of the Church of Jerusalem, bids health in the Lord and the blessing of the Holy Spirit to his beloved sons in Christ, B. and the other hermits under obedience to him, who live near the spring on Mount Carmel.

Chapter 2

Many and varied are the ways in which our saintly forefathers laid down how everyone, whatever his station or the kind of religious observance he has chosen, should live a life in allegiance to Jesus Christ - how, pure in heart and stout in conscience, he must be unswerving in the service of the Master.

Chapter 3

It is to me, however, that you have come for a rule of life in keeping with your avowed purpose, a rule you may hold fast to henceforward; and therefore:

Chapter 4

The first thing I require is for you to have a Prior, one of yourselves, who is to be chosen for the office by common consent, or that of the greater and maturer part of you. Each of the others must promise him obedience - of which, once promised, he must try to make his deed the true reflection - and also chastity and the renunciation of ownership.

Chapter 5

If the Prior and the brothers see fit, you may have foundations in solitary places, or where you are given a site suitable and convenient for the observance proper to your Order.

Chapter 6

Next, each one of you is to have a separate cell, situated as the lie of the land you propose to occupy may dictate, and allotted by disposition of the Prior with the agreement of the other brothers, or the more mature among them.

Chapter 7

However, you are to eat whatever may have been given you in a common refectory, listening together meanwhile to a reading from Holy Scripture where that can be done without difficulty.

Chapter 8

None of the brothers is to occupy a cell other than that allotted to him, or to

exchange cells with another, without leave of whoever is Prior at the time.

Chapter 9

The Prior's cell should stand near the entrance to your property, so that he may be the first to meet those who approach, and whatever has to be done in consequence may all be carried out as he may decide and order.

Chapter 10

Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers unless attending to some other duty.

Chapter 11

Those who know how to say the canonical hours with those in orders should do so, in the way those holy forefathers of ours laid down, and according to the Church's approved custom. Those who do not know the hours must say twenty-five 'Our Fathers' for the night office, except on Sundays and solemnities when that number is to be doubled so that the 'Our Father' is said fifty times; the same prayer must be said seven times in the morning in place of Lauds, and seven times too for each of the other hours, except for Vespers when it must be said fifteen times.

Chapter 12

None of the brothers must lay claim to anything as his own, but you are to possess everything in common; and each is to receive from the Prior - that is from the brother he appoints for the purpose - whatever befits his age and needs.

Chapter 13

You may have as many asses and mules as you need, however, and may keep a certain amount of livestock or poultry.

Chapter 14

An oratory should be built as conveniently as possible among the cells, where, if it can be done without difficulty, you are to gather each morning to hear Mass.

Chapter 15

On Sundays too, or other days if necessary, you should discuss matters of discipline and your spiritual welfare; and on this occasion the indiscretions and failings of the brothers, if any be found at fault, should be lovingly corrected.

Chapter 16

You are to fast every day, except Sundays, from the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross until Easter Day, unless bodily sickness or feebleness, or some other good reason, demand a dispensation from the fast; for necessity overrides every law.

Chapter 17

You are to abstain from meat, except as a remedy for sickness or feebleness. But as, when you are on a journey, you more often than not have to beg your way, outside your own houses you may eat foodstuffs that have been cooked with meat, so as to avoid giving trouble to your hosts. At sea, however, meat may be eaten.

Chapter 18

Since man's life on earth is a time of trial, and all who would live devotedly in Christ must undergo persecution, and the devil your foe is on the prowl like a roaring lion looking for prey to devour, you must use every care to clothe yourselves in God's armor so that you may be ready to withstand the enemy's ambush.

Chapter 19

Your loins are to be girt with chastity, your breast fortified by holy meditations, for as Scripture has it, holy meditation will save you. Put on holiness as your breastplate, and it will enable you to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Faith must be your shield on all occasions, and with it you will be able to quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked one: there can be no pleasing God without faith; and the victory lies in this - your faith. On your head set the helmet of salvation, and so be sure of deliverance by our only Savior, who sets his own free from their sins. The sword of the spirit, the word of God, must abound in your mouths and hearts. Let all you do have the Lord's word for accompaniment.

Chapter 20

You must give yourselves to work of some kind, so that the devil may always find you busy; no idleness on your part must give him a chance to pierce the defenses of your souls. In this respect you have both the teaching and the example of Saint Paul the Apostle, into whose mouth Christ put his own words. God made him preacher and teacher of faith and truth to the nations: with him as your teacher you cannot go astray. We lived among you, he said, laboring and weary, toiling night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you; not because we had no power to do otherwise but so as to give you, in your own selves, as an example you might imitate. For the charge we gave you when we were with you was this: that whoever is not willing to work should not be allowed to eat either. For we have heard that there are certain restless idlers among you. We charge people of this kind, and implore them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they earn their own bread by

silent toil. This is the way of holiness and goodness: see that you follow it.

Chapter 21

The Apostle would have us keep silence, for in silence he tells us to work. As the Prophet also makes known to us: Silence is the way to foster holiness. Elsewhere he says: Your strength will lie in silence and hope. For this reason, I lay down that you are to keep silence from after Compline until after Prime the next day. At other times, although you need not keep silence so strictly, be careful not to indulge in a great deal of talk, for as Scripture has it - and experience teaches us no less - sin will not be wanting where there is much talk, and he who is careless in speech will come to harm; and elsewhere: The use of many words brings harm to the speaker's soul. And our Lord says in the Gospel: Every rash word uttered will have to be accounted for on judgement day. Make a balance then, each of you, to weigh his words in; keep a tight rein on your mouths, lest you should stumble and fall in speech, and your fall be irreparable and prove mortal. Like the Prophet, watch your step lest your tongue give offence, and employ every care in keeping silent, which is the way to foster holiness.

Chapter 22

Your brother B., and whoever may succeed you as Prior, must always keep in mind and put into practice what our Lord said in the Gospel: Whoever has a mind to become a leader among you must make yourself servant to the rest, and whichever of you would be first must become your bondsman.

Chapter 23

You other brothers too, hold your Prior in humble reverence, your minds not on him but on Christ who has placed him over you, and who, to those who rule the Churches, addressed these words: Whoever pays you heed pays heed to me, and whoever treats you with dishonor dishonors me; if you remain so minded you will not be found guilty of contempt, but will merit life eternal as fit reward for your obedience.

Chapter 24

Here then are a few points I have written down to provide you with a standard of conduct to live up to; but our Lord, at his second coming, will reward anyone who does more than he is obliged to do. See that the bounds of common sense are not exceeded, however, for common sense is the guide of the virtues.

**Living the Carmelite Way:
The Rule for the Third Order of
Carmel**

Living the Carmelite Way, the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel, was authored by the Prior General, Father Joseph Chalmers, and his Council. The text was approved by the Holy See in April of 2003 and was promulgated for all Third Order Lay Carmelites by the Prior General in July of 2003. This newest Carmelite Third Order Rule replaces the one written and promulgated by then Prior General Father Falco Thuis and his Council in 1977. The Rule for the Third Order of Carmel enunciates and clarifies for contemporary Lay Carmelites how the Rule of St. Albert is adhered to by members of the Third Order today. As Father Joseph Chalmers wrote in 2002: "Carmelite religious have Constitutions by means of which the Rule of St. Albert is applied to the conditions of the present day. In the same way, the Third Order members have a Rule which, like the Constitutions of the religious, seeks to make the connection between the Carmelite ideal and the present reality of those who pledge themselves to live by it". The Lay Carmelites of the Provinces of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and Saint Elias are using the new Rule for the Third Order of Carmel as the Constitutions for the Third Order Secular in North America.

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Preface

*Many and varied are the ways*¹ through the lived experience of religious that the Lord has inspired forms of lay spirituality which are rich and appealing. For many centuries now Carmel has been a pre-eminent and sure road to holiness for many lay people.² The Rule of St. Albert is like a spring from which the river of the charism flows. The values that it expresses have been translated into ever new forms which are suited to lay people in various places and in different periods. This has enabled lay people to incarnate the Carmelite charism in a concrete way and to live out its spirituality in a way proper to them.³

Part I

The Spirituality and the Charism

Chapter 1—The Vocation to Holiness

1. God wanted to make known, the inner reality of the Trinity and this revelation was made by involving humanity in a dialogue woven of love and mercy.⁴ God has made known to us his will for communion, calling men and women to share in his life. This plan is being fulfilled through the Holy Spirit in Christ who is the final and supreme Word of the Father⁵ and beyond whom God has nothing more to reveal. In Jesus Christ, born of Mary, the invisible God speaks to all people as a friend and dwells amongst them to bring them into communion with God and with one another with a view to the unity of the human race in the kingdom.⁶ Through the sacrament of Baptism, human beings are brought into divine life becoming, in the Holy Spirit, adopted children of the Father and brothers and sisters of Christ.⁷ They are enabled to be a part of that great assembly of brothers and sisters that is the Church, the people of God, *sacrament - sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of the unity of the whole human race.*⁸

2. Therefore, all the faithful, of whatever state, are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love: from this holiness a more human lifestyle is fostered, even in earthly society.⁹ The counsels that Jesus proposed to his disciples in the Gospel, favor in a special way a path of holiness and transformation of the world in accordance with the spirit of the Beatitudes. These counsels are lived in various stable forms of life raised up by the Holy Spirit and regulated by the Church.

3. In the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church, the same Spirit has frequently raised up a variety of gifts and charisms, such as those of the various religious families. They offer their members the advantages of a greater stability in following a teaching backed by the lived experience of holy people. In this way the members of these families reach evangelical perfection through communion in the service of Christ and in a freedom strengthened by obedience.¹⁰

4. Some lay people have a particular call to participate in the charisms of religious families which are a common patrimony of the people of God and which become for them too a source of energy and a school for life. The Church approves and encourages lay people in this and invites them to strive to make their own the particular characteristics of the spirituality of these families.¹¹

Chapter 2—The Carmelite Secular Third Order

5. The Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel has its origins at the end of the 12th century and beginning of the 13th century in a group of men who were attracted by the evangelical call of the Holy Places. In a life of penance and prayer, they consecrated themselves to the one who had shed his blood¹². They settled on Mount Carmel, near the spring of Elijah. They requested and received a *Form of Life* from Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, (1206-14) which made them into a single community of hermits gathered around a chapel dedicated to Mary. After confirmation of this document by Honorius III (1226) and Gregory IX (1229), Innocent IV in 1247 completed the process of foundation. By some changes to their *Form of Life*, he placed them among the ranks of the new orders of Apostolic Fraternity (Mendicants) and called on them to unite contemplative life with a concern for the salvation of their neighbor.

6. Once settled in Europe, the friars welcomed lay people into their houses and also considered them Carmelites in a certain sense. These lay people were *oblates* or *donati* in that they gave their goods to the houses that henceforth supported them. The majority, being women, needed their own houses and they were called *mantellate* because they wore a habit similar to that of the friars.

7. Over the course of time, these lay people were organized into groups of like-minded men and women with similar obligations to those of the friars. The first juridical, ecclesiastical approval came with the bull *Cum nulla* issued by Pope Nicholas V on 7 October 1452. This Bull laid the foundations – with various phases of development – for the Second and Third Orders. The Bull authorized superiors of the Order to organize various groups of women and to specify their lifestyles. The permission granted in *Cum nulla* was made explicit in another bull *Dum attenta* of Sixtus IX on 28 November 1476. These two pontifical documents are at the root of the current structure of the Carmelite Family.

8. The bull *Cum nulla* recognized the existence of distinct groups with solemn or simple vows. Gradually some of these women, who could also live outside the convent, identified themselves as a Third Group in the Carmelite Family and thus began to be called *Tertiaries*. In 1476 Pope Sixtus IV allowed the Carmelite Order to organize its various lay groups along the same lines as the third orders of other mendicants.

9. About the same time, confraternities sprang up and asked to enjoy the privileges of the Scapular. The Prior General, Theodore Straccio (1632-1642), attempted to clarify the situation by establishing a Third Order of the continent¹³ in which brothers and sisters

made vows of obedience and chastity according to their state. All the other lay people joined one of the various Scapular confraternities.

10. Already in the 19th and 20th centuries, there was an attempt to encourage the *secular* aspect of the Tertiaries' life. This culminated in the approval of their Rule after the Second Vatican Council. Today, therefore, Tertiaries are called to a task which is proper to them, that is, to illuminate and rightly value all temporal realities in such a way that these things are brought to fulfilment according to Christ's values. In this way they offer praise to the Creator, the Redeemer and Sanctifier¹⁴ in a world so secularized that it seems to live and act as if God no longer existed. Lay Carmelites are expected to cooperate in the new evangelization that permeates the entire Church. For this reason, they try to overcome in themselves the division between the Gospel and life. They are called to make every effort in their many daily activities in the family, at work and in society to reestablish a unity of life which finds in the Gospel inspiration and strength for its full realization.¹⁵

Chapter 3—Bonds with Carmel

11. The members of the Third Order recognize in the Prior General a spiritual father, head and bond of unity. They receive from the Order direction and encouragement to promote, to stimulate and to favor the achievement of the aims of the Third Order.¹⁶ At the same time, the lay Carmelites are left a wide measure of autonomy in taking initiatives and running individual groups according to their own statutes.¹⁷ The lay people themselves are to elect their own leaders, assisted spiritually by a priest, who may or may not be a Carmelite, or by a Carmelite brother or a sister.

12. The fundamental bond between the Tertiary and Carmel is profession. This commitment is made explicit in some form of promise, or otherwise in keeping with our ancient custom, by the profession of vows of obedience and chastity according to the obligations of one's state. In this way, the Tertiary is consecrated more deeply to God and is able to offer more intensive worship. By means of profession, the Tertiaries seek to strengthen their baptismal promises to love God more than anything else and to renounce Satan and all temptation. The uniqueness of this profession is to be found in the means that are chosen to reach full conformity with Christ. Indeed, Carmelites learn to appear before Christ empty-handed, by placing all their love in Christ Jesus, who becomes personally their holiness, their justice, their love and their crown.¹⁸ Jesus' message – to love God with all one's being and one's neighbor as one's self – demands from the Tertiary a constant affirmation of the primacy of God,¹⁹ the categorical refusal to serve two masters²⁰ and the pre-eminence of love for others which fights against all forms of egoism²¹ and self-centeredness.

13. The spirit of the evangelical counsels, common to all Christians, becomes for the Tertiaries a plan for life which touches the areas of power, of sensuality and of material goods. The vows are an ever-greater demand not to serve false idols, but to attain that freedom of loving God and neighbor which is above all forms of egoism. Holiness lies in

the fulfilment of this double command to love.

14. By their profession, Tertiaries take on the responsibility of living the Gospel radically according to their state in life. They are free to make their profession with vows, or without vows by simply undertaking to live out this Rule. Tertiaries who make vows are called to obedience to the Order's superiors and to the Chaplain in all things that are asked of them by virtue of the Rule for their spiritual well-being. By the vow of chastity, they undertake to live this virtue according to their state in life.

15. Tertiaries recognize in Carmelites who are consecrated in the religious life, valid spiritual guides. They are accompanied by them on the road to becoming contemplative and active in a world which is ever more complex and demanding while at the same time searching desperately for spiritual values. So lay people must be accompanied in their living of the Carmelite charism in spirit and in truth, open to the Holy Spirit's works and moving towards a full participation and communion in the Carmelite charism and spirituality. This will lead to a new charismatic interpretation of their lay nature and to a fully co-responsible share in the task of evangelization and in the ministry specific to Carmel. In this way Carmelite Tertiaries become fully members of the Carmelite family.²²

16. Carmelite friars and sisters who are consecrated in the religious life recognize the spiritual advantages and enrichment which enhance the whole family of Carmel from the lay faithful who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, answer a particular call from God and freely and decisively promise to live the Gospel according to the spirit of Carmel. As past experience shows, their participation can in fact bring fruitful insights to some aspects of the charism, renewing its interpretation and giving rise to new apostolic movements, *through the invaluable contribution of their being in the world and their specific service*

Chapter 4—The Specific Call of the Lay Carmelite

17. Spiritual life, or life in the Spirit, has its origin in the Father's initiative who through the Son and in the Spirit gives to each man and woman their life and their holiness. God calls each one to live in a mysterious relationship of communion with the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. The Father searches out individuals, draws them to himself and towards his Son;²⁴ the Spirit urges them to be attentive, to listen to the voice of God, to welcome the Word and to open themselves to the divine transforming action. The Lay Carmelites' search for God, their submission to the Lordship of Christ is a response, elicited by the Spirit, to the dialogue between friends which God sets up in the Word made flesh.²⁵ The Tertiaries' ascent begins with their act of faith which impels them to accept Jesus and the Easter event as the meaning of their existence. It also makes them want to look to him for guidance and have him, and not themselves, as the center of their lives. Rooted in this way in the love of the merciful God, Lay Carmelites prepare themselves for the ascent of Mount Carmel whose summit is Jesus Christ.²⁶

18. The ascent of the mountain by lay people implies in the first place following Jesus

Christ with all one's being, *servicing him faithfully pure in heart and stout in conscience.*²⁷ The spirit of Jesus should permeate their being to such a degree that they can repeat with St. Paul, *it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.*²⁸ In this way all their actions take place with *the Lord's word for accompaniment.*²⁹

19. Gradually Jesus must become the most important person in the lay Carmelites' existence. This means having a personal, warm, affectionate and constant relationship with Jesus. This bond is nourished by the Eucharist, the liturgy in general, by Holy Scripture and by various forms of prayer. All these encourage the Tertiaries to recognize Jesus in their neighbor and in daily events; it propels them to give witness along the highways and byways of the world to the decisive nature of his presence.

20. The Father's call to follow Christ through the life-giving Spirit is realized in fully belonging to the Church. Through the sacrament of Baptism, which makes each person a member of the mystical Body of Christ, Tertiaries receive their call to holiness. Their greatest dignity consists in enjoying the divine life and love of God which is poured into their hearts by the Spirit.³⁰ So together with others, according to the call and gifts of each one, they can contribute to that great work of building up the one Body of Christ.³¹

21. Human nature, weak and limited in its poverty, lets itself be guided by divine action and embraces a deepening life of conversion. By involving the person at every level of their life, conversion brings a radical re-alignment towards a gradual change. Guided by the Spirit, Tertiaries seek to overcome obstacles and to avoid all that might draw them away from the path to the summit. Indeed, admitting their possible limitations or reluctance, they undertake without hesitating or wavering a gradual path towards those chosen ideals of change and transformation.³²

22. Ascending the mountain implies a desert experience in which the living flame of God's love transforms and detaches the lay Carmelite from everything; even their image of God is purified and transformed. By putting on Christ, they begin to shine like his living image, being a new creation in him.

23. This gradual transformation enables Tertiaries to be more discerning of the signs of the times and the presence of God in history. It also strengthens in them a sense of community as well as in a serious commitment to the transformation of the world.

Chapter 5—Sharing in Jesus' Mission

24. Through baptism, lay Carmelites are sharers in the mission of Christ which they continue in the Church, becoming as it were *another humanity*³³ for him which is transformed into *praise of his glory.*³⁴ Lay people are recognized as having *their own absolutely necessary participation in this mission.*³⁵

25. By reason of their baptismal priesthood and the charisms that they have received, lay Carmelites are called to build up the ecclesial³⁶ community by a *fully conscious, and active*

participation in its liturgical life.³⁷ They are to commit themselves to extending such celebration into daily life itself. This means that the fruits of their encounter with God are seen in all the activities, prayers, apostolic initiatives, married and family life, daily work and spiritual and physical rest, especially in the trials of life – if borne with patience³⁸ and – as Carmel’s saints teach us – if accepted with thanks.

26. Through sharing in the prophetic office of Christ and the Church, Tertiaries undertake, in all walks of life,³⁹ to assimilate the Gospel through faith and to proclaim it by their works. This commitment includes not hesitating to denounce evil courageously.⁴⁰ Tertiaries are also called to take part in the Church’s sense of faith, which cannot err as regards its belief,⁴¹ and in the grace of the Word.⁴²

27. Through belonging to Christ, Lord and King of the Universe, Tertiaries share in his royal office through which they are called to the service of God’s kingdom and to its spread throughout history. Christ’s kingship implies, above all, a spiritual combat to defeat the tyranny of sin in ourselves.⁴³ Through the gift of ourselves, we undertake to serve, in justice and charity, Jesus himself, who is present in all his brothers and sisters, especially in the little ones and those on the fringes of society.⁴⁴ This means restoring creation to its original goodness. In ordering creation for the true good of humanity, an activity which is supported by the life of grace, Tertiaries share in the exercise of that power by which the Risen Christ draws all things to himself.⁴⁵

Chapter 6—Secularity

28. *All Carmelites are in the world in some way, but the vocation of lay people is precisely to transform the secular world.*⁴⁶ So Tertiaries, in as much as they are committed lay people, have this secular characteristic by which they are called to treat the things of the world correctly and to order them according to God’s will. Their life, lived in the world in the midst of the people, is dedicated to the cares and tasks of the world, in the ordinary ups and downs of family and of society. Tertiaries are invited by God to contribute to the holiness of the world: they are to have the spirit of the gospel in their work and to be guided by Carmelite spirituality. It is their calling to illuminate and order the world’s activities so that these may be carried out according to Christ’s intention and be a source of praise to the glory of the creator.⁴⁷

29. There should be no conflict between temporal well-being and the realization of God’s kingdom, given that the natural and the spiritual orders both come from God. But there is a danger of misusing temporal goods. Hence the pursuit of the ideal of directing scientific and technological discoveries to the improvement of human life in both material and spiritual terms.⁴⁸

Chapter 7—Sharing in the Charism of the Order

30. The Carmelite Order is present in the Church in the friars, the enclosed nuns, the

active sisters and the lay people who all share, to varying degrees, the charism and spirituality of the Order. Lay people can share in the same call and same mission of Carmel.⁴⁹ The Order recognizes their vocation, welcomes them and organizes them in a way appropriate to them. It communicates to them the richness of the Carmelite spirituality and tradition, and enables them to share in all the spiritual benefits and good works carried out by all members of the Carmelite family. For lay people, the fullest form of belonging is by profession in the Third Order of Carmel. In this way, they share in a way proper to lay people the charism of the Order. Carmel favors the membership of couples, of families and of young people who wish to know and to live Carmelite spirituality including also new ways of doing so.⁵⁰ It offers the Third Order as an established and recognized form of membership which is open to receiving new life blood through these initiatives. The Carmelite charism, proven over the centuries in various cultures and traditions, offers a sure way to reach holiness and a high standard of ordinary Christian living.⁵¹

31. Following the path opened by the Second Vatican Council, Carmel has clarified its own charism in a concise way in various recent documents using the following terms: *to live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ, in a contemplative attitude which fashions and supports our life of prayer, fraternity and service.*⁵² We recognize in the Virgin Mary and the Prophet Elijah inspiring and exemplary models of this faith experience. They are sure guides along a difficult trail which brings us *to the peak of the mountain, Christ the Lord.*⁵

Chapter 8—The Contemplative Dimension of Life

32. Lay Carmelites too are called to live in the presence of the living and true God who in Christ has come to live among us. They look for every possibility and occasion to reach divine intimacy. Letting themselves be guided by the action of the Holy Spirit, lay Carmelites are open to a transformation of mind and heart, of their vision and of their actions. Their whole person and whole existence awaken to a recognition of the caring and merciful action of God in the life of each one. Lay Carmelites discover that they are brothers and sisters, called to share a common path towards the fullness of holiness and to bring to all the news that we are children of the one God, brothers and sisters in Jesus. They become enthusiastic about the great works God performs and for which is required their commitment and contribution.

33. *In Carmel, humanity, taken up as it is with so many concerns, needs to be reminded that absolute priority must be given to the search “for the kingdom of God and his righteousness”.*⁵⁴ (Mt 6:33). So in the family, in the workplace, in the professions, in social or Church responsibilities, in the deeds of everyday life and in relationships with others, lay Carmelites look for hidden signs of God. They recognize these and cultivate the seed of salvation according to the spirit of the Beatitudes. They achieve this through a humble and constant exercise of those virtues of honesty, justice, sincerity, courtesy, and strength of spirit without which there cannot be a truly human and Christian life.⁵⁵

Chapter 9—Mary and Elijah: Presence, Inspiration and Guide

34. Like Mary, first among the humble and the poor of the Lord, lay Carmelites discover that they are called to sing of the wonders that the Lord has performed in their lives.⁵⁶ With her, the image and first flowering of the Church, they learn to measure the often tortuous ups and downs of daily life against the Word of God.⁵⁷ They learn from her to welcome the Word, to be open to it and to embrace it fully. Mary, in whom the Word was made flesh, inspires lay Carmelites to be faithful to their mission, to actions which are animated by charity and by a spirit of service and to practical co-operation in the work of salvation.⁵⁸ Together with Mary, they travel along the paths of history, alert to authentic human needs,⁵⁹ ready always to share with the Lord the sacrifice of the Cross and to experience with him the peace of new life.⁶⁰ Mary is a singular and eminent member of the Church. In her own way she has shared increasingly in the unique mediation between God and humanity, made real in Jesus Christ, and which today the Church carries and mediates in history.⁶¹ Lay Carmelites let themselves be accompanied by Mary in gradually taking on responsibility for co-operation in salvation and for the communication of grace given in the Church. In Carmel, this was traditionally seen in terms of the motherly love of Mary for Carmel. Carmelites are aware of being loved by such a great and tender mother and cannot but love her in return.⁶² Hence comes the idea of losing oneself in God, in the maternal warmth of the Blessed Virgin.⁶³

35. Lay Carmelites also share the zeal of the prophet Elijah for the Lord and his law. They are ready to defend the rights of those who are downtrodden. They learn from the prophet to leave everything to go into the desert in order to be purified, made ready for their meeting with the Lord and to welcome his word. They feel impelled, like the prophet, to support true religion against false idols. Together with Elijah, lay Carmelites learn to feel the presence of the Lord which comes to humanity with strength and gentleness. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Strengthened by this transforming and lifegiving experience, lay Carmelites are able to face the realities of the world, confident that God holds the destiny of each one and the whole of history itself.⁶⁴

Chapter 10—A Life of Prayer

36. Lay Carmelites live a life of intense prayer, focused on a personal dialogue with the Lord, the true friend of humanity. As St. Teresa of Jesus says, *Prayer ... is nothing more than an intimate and frequent dialogue of friendship with the one whom we know loves us.*⁶⁵ Personal and community, liturgical and informal prayer - these all make up the fabric of a personal relationship with the Triune God who inspires the whole being of the lay Carmelite. In prayer, the *essence is not in much thinking, but in much loving.*⁶⁶ More than an exercise, it is an attitude which implies the recognition of God's hand, the openness to accept gratuitous love as gift – a real gift, and not just something acknowledged out of habit. It implies a deeper awareness that God's action pervades the whole of one's life,

as witnessed to by St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. *Prayer is life, it is not an oasis in the desert of life*, claimed Blessed Titus Brandsma.⁶⁷ John Paul II confirms that in Carmel *prayer becomes life and life flourishes in prayer*.⁶⁸

37. Sacramental life, centered on the Eucharist, is the source of the spiritual life. Lay Carmelites are called to a deep sharing in the sacraments. Every day, if possible, they should approach the sacrifice of the altar and the banquet of life in which the Church finds all her richness, *that is, Christ himself, our Pasch and the living bread*.⁶⁹ They should regularly receive forgiveness for their sins and the grace to continue the journey. If they are married, they should live their own call to matrimonial holiness energetically and resourcefully.

38. The Liturgy of the Hours represents a reminder during the day of the grace that wells up from the Eucharist and nourishes an authentic encounter with God. According to their circumstances, lay Carmelites should celebrate, at least, Morning, Evening and Night Prayer. Place and circumstances will indicate other possible forms of liturgical prayer. Inspired by Mary, lay Carmelites also desire to make present the saving work of Jesus in space and in time through the celebration of the divine mysteries. Mary invites us to celebrate the liturgy with her own outlook and attitude: putting God's word into practice, meditating on it with love, praising God with enthusiasm and giving thanks with joy. It means serving God and neighbor with a generosity which includes giving one's life for them, praying to the Lord with confidence and perseverance, and waiting watchfully for the coming of the Lord.⁷⁰

39. The scope of spiritual life is not limited to the liturgy. Although all Christians are called to common prayer, they are also asked to go into their rooms and pray to their Father in secret.⁷¹ Indeed, according to Christ's teaching,⁷² reiterated by the Apostle Paul,⁷³ Christians are to pray unceasingly. Lay Carmelites, according to the constant tradition of Carmel, very diligently cultivate prayer in all its forms. Great importance is to be given to a prayerful listening to God's word: *lectio divina* involves and transforms the believer's entire existence. Other forms which have found a place in the Carmelite tradition are mental prayer, the practice of the presence of God, aspirative prayer, silent prayer, as well as other devotional practices.

40. Lay Carmelites hold in great honor the holy Scapular, symbol of Mary's motherly love who has taken the initiative in holding her Carmelite sisters and brothers in her heart. She inspires them to imitate her eminent virtues: universal charity, love of prayer, humility, purity and modesty.⁷⁴ Those who wear the Scapular, are called to be interiorly clothed with Christ and to show in their lives his saving presence for the Church and for humanity.⁷⁵ The scapular reminds us of Mary's protection which is given throughout the course of life, particularly in the moment of passage to the full enjoyment of glory. It also reminds us that Marian devotion, more than a collection of pious practices, is a real habit, that is, a permanent orientation of Christian conduct.⁷⁶

41. Gathered by Mary, like the disciples, in the upper room, lay Carmelites come together

to praise the Lord in the mysteries of his life and that of his mother: the devout practice of the Rosary can become an inexhaustible source of genuine spirituality which nourishes daily life.⁷⁷

Chapter 11—The Family life of Carmel

42. Lay Carmelites are sustained by grace and guided by the Spirit who encourages them to live the Christian life concretely by following the tried and tested ways of Carmel. They recognize that they are the sisters and brothers of whoever is called to share in the Carmelite charism. *Lay Carmelites can create community in various ways: in their own families, where the domestic church is to be found; in their local parish, where they worship God with their fellow parishioners and take a full part in the community activities; in their lay Carmelite community in which they find support for the spiritual journey; in their workplace and where they live.*⁷⁸

43. The communal life of lay Carmelites must shine with simplicity and authenticity. Every group must be a family in which everyone feels at home, welcomed, known, appreciated, encouraged on the path they are following and possibly even corrected with charity and kindness. Lay Carmelites commit themselves to co-operating with other members of the Carmelite family and with the whole Church so that it may realize its calling to be missionary in every circumstance and situation.⁷⁹

44. The family life of Carmel is also reflected in dealings with the outside world. Every lay Carmelite is like a spark of love thrown into the forest of life: they must be able to enflame anyone who approaches them. Family life, the workplace, professional and Church areas where lay Carmelites are found will all receive from them some warmth from their contemplative hearts which can see the image of God in others. The lay Carmelite community becomes a center for life which is authentically human because it is authentically Christian. From the experience of recognizing each other as brothers and sisters comes the need to involve others in that fascinating human and divine undertaking which is the construction of God's Kingdom.

45. In a world which is ever more united by multiple and complex bonds, lay Carmelites can be witnesses to an authentic universality because they know how to give value to the richness and potential of each person. They are conscious of being part of an international family, they support opportunities for meetings that may give rise to sharing between members of the Order.

Chapter 12—Service

46. The purpose of the Church is to spread the kingdom of Christ on earth so that all may share in that salvation brought about by the Cross.⁸⁰ *Like all Carmelites, the lay Carmelite is called to some form of service which is an integral part of the charism given to the Order by God.*⁸¹ St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus discovered this dimension of her Carmelite

identity when, reading the sacred scriptures, she found that she was *love in the heart of the Church*.⁸² For many Tertiaries this may well be their main contribution to the building of the Kingdom. Since it is the proper calling of lay people to live in the world and in the midst of secular affairs, they are called upon by God to carry out this mission of the Church so that there is a Christian yeast in the temporal activities which they are deeply engaged in.⁸³ The faithful cannot renounce their participation in *public life*, in the many and various social, economic, legislative, administrative and cultural ventures which are meant to promote the common good institutionally.⁸⁴

47. Saint Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi reminds us that one cannot quench one's thirst for contemplating Christ without making progress in satisfying his thirst for souls who are to be redeemed through a union of prayer and apostolate.⁸⁵ Lay Carmelites, ready to witness to their faith by their works, receive the strength to draw people to God who may become the praise of God's glory.⁸⁶ In times of loss and change, they can give many people reliable direction. So too the prophet Elijah was caught up in a world in the process of great change and which led many people to abandon the true God. They thought that they were self-sufficient. Elijah was sustained by his certainty that God was stronger than any crisis or any danger. So lay Carmelites live in a world which is ever more uncertain in the face of fundamental questions, and in an era which has presented new problems for faith, morals and society.⁸⁷ They strive to create opportunities for proclaiming Christ, offering again that ever new message that he is the Lord of life, and of history, that he is a sure point of reference for all.

48. The desert experience which was so determining in the life of the Prophet, becomes an obligatory phase for lay Carmelites who are called to be purified in the desert of life in order to meet the Lord authentically.⁸⁸ Lay Carmelites must travel along this road, in the desert of interior mortification. This is so that they may listen to the Lord who speaks to their heart in new and surprising ways of the world, and also in signs which are sometimes hard to interpret, or in the silent and barely perceptible voice of the Spirit. They come back enthused after this encounter and realize that they are to be tireless in giving life to the setting in which they are called to work. Inspired by this encounter, they can proclaim it as the only answer to the ever present temptation to deny God or to be proudly self-sufficient. Sustained by the Spirit, Tertiaries do not let themselves be disappointed by apparent failure, by meagre results, by indifference or by the success of those who live contrary to the gospel.

49. Lay Carmelites understand and show in their lives that temporal activities and material work are themselves a sharing in the ever creative and transforming work of the Father.⁸⁹ This is a real service offered to humanity and its authentic promotion.⁹⁰ Witnesses in a world which neither fully appreciates, nor totally rejects that intimate and living relationship with God⁹¹ in daily life, lay Carmelites know and share with empathy the expectations and deepest aspirations of the world because they are called to be *salt of the earth* and *light of the world*.⁹² They proclaim the knowledge of salvation to the people.⁹³

Part II

General Statutes: Structures

Chapter 1—General Characteristics

50. The Third Order of Carmel (TOC), or the Secular Carmelite Order (SCO) is an international public association⁹⁴ of laity erected by Apostolic privilege⁹⁵ with the purpose of working towards Christian perfection and of dedicating themselves to the apostolate.⁹⁶ It does this at the very least by offering prayer and sacrifice for the needs of the Church and by taking its place in the world according to the Carmelite charism. It sets out to do this by living the Gospel in the spirit of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel under the supreme direction of the Order itself.⁹⁷

51. The Carmelite Order considers itself enriched by the faithful who, inspired by the Holy Spirit and answering a specific call from God, freely and definitively promise to conduct their lives according to the norms of the Gospel in the spirit of Carmel. The Third Order of Carmel, like other lay Carmelite groups, has its own influence on the structure and on the spirit of the whole family of Carmel. The Order undertakes to help lay Carmelites to reach the objective they have set themselves: to heal and to develop human society with the leaven of the Gospel.⁹⁸

52. The Third Order of Carmel, or Carmelite Secular Order, together with other communities who are inspired by the Carmelite Rule, by its traditions and by values expressed in Carmelite spirituality, are a constituent part of the Carmelite Family in the Church.⁹⁹

53. As spiritual father, head and bond of unity of the whole Carmelite Family, it is the task of the Prior General of the Order of Carmel to ensure in an effective way the spiritual good of the Third Order, to promote its growth and vitality¹⁰⁰ by means of a General Delegate for Lay Carmelites.¹⁰¹

Chapter 2—Family Life in Carmel

54. The Third Order of Carmel is divided into communities, called by various names i.e., groups, associations, chapters etc. These are run by lay people according to the norms of this present Rule and the statutes of each community, under the supreme direction of the superiors of the Order or their delegates.¹⁰²

55. According to an old tradition, some members of the Third Order are called to live in communities which are governed by particular statutes.

56. Communities are erected canonically by the Prior General of the Order, with the consent of his Council, with the previous written consent of the Prior Provincial and that of the Diocesan Bishop. However, the consent given by the Diocesan Bishop for the erection of a house of the Order is valid also for the erection of a Third Order community

attached to the same house or church.¹⁰³

Chapter 3—Spiritual Care

57. In order to encourage an ever growing involvement of lay Carmelites in the Order and in the Church, the General Council,¹⁰⁴ and particularly the Priors Provincial, in person or through a delegate, are to take spiritual care of the Third Order, according to each province's statutes.¹⁰⁵ They are to help particularly the individual communities of the Third Order within the framework of their jurisdiction so that these may be permeated with the genuine spirit of Carmel.¹⁰⁶ They are to ensure that in their activities the members of the Third Order remain faithful to the Order's principles and directives. They are also to take care that individual communities help in the activities of existing apostolates in the dioceses where they operate, working under the direction of the Ordinary of the place, and with other associations of the faithful in the diocese which have the same aims.¹⁰⁷

58. The local Chaplains are normally priests of the Order. When this is not possible, the service of Chaplain may be entrusted to a brother or a sister from a community of the Order, or to other priests, preferably members of the Third Order who are able to carry out this task in a Carmelite spirit. The Chaplains are appointed for a limited period of five years, renewable,¹⁰⁸ by the Prior General or Prior Provincial after having consulted the principal officers of each community.¹⁰⁹ If a non-Carmelite priest is involved, then the approval of his Ordinary is necessary.

Chapter 4—Government

59. The supreme governing body is the General Assembly of the association or community made up of all its members. The relevant statutes will lay down the competence and procedures of the Assembly.

60. Every community or group is directed by a Council. This Council is made up of the Chaplain, a moderator (or leader) and two or more councillors (but not more than four) according to the number of members of the community and according to the provisions of the local statutes. The Formator is also part of the Council.

61. It is the Council's and, especially the Moderator's task, with the help of the Chaplain, to do everything possible to promote the community's interests. This is so that the members of the community can respond in the best possible way to their calling to be lay people engaged in the construction of Christ's kingdom, in themselves and in the world, according to the spirit and charism of Carmel to which they have been called by the Spirit, who distributes gifts as he wills.¹¹⁰ This task is to be carried out in a spirit of evangelical service, avoiding all forms of autocratic power.

Chapter 5—The Establishment of the Officials

62. The members of the Council, except the Chaplain, are elected by the General Assembly

of the community for a three-year period. The Moderator must be confirmed by the Prior General or the Prior Provincial.¹¹¹

63. The elections of members of the Council are presided over by the Chaplain and they are to be conducted in accordance with the statutes, respecting the norms of the common law of the Church.¹¹²

64. The Council, for its part, appoints the Secretary, the Treasurer and other office holders according to the needs and the size of the community. The local statutes will determine the functions of the various major office holders, as well as their tasks and responsibilities. If the statutes so provide, the Secretary and the Treasurer are members of the Council.

65. In special circumstances, if grave reasons so require, the ecclesiastical authority, that is, the Prior General or Prior Provincial, can nominate a Commissary who in his name is to direct the community for a time.¹¹³

66. Moderators may be removed for a just cause by whomever confirmed them in office, after, however, having heard the Moderator in question and the officials of the community, according to the statutes. The Chaplain may also be removed for a grave reason, according to canons 192 to 195 by the one who appointed him, observing the same conditions.¹¹⁴

Chapter 6— Administration of Goods

67. Both the Carmelite Third Order as such, and the individual communities of Tertiaries which are canonically constituted, acquire through the decree of erection a juridical personality according to canon law. They also receive, as required, their mission for the purposes that they have set themselves in the name of the Church.¹¹⁵

68. The Third Order of Carmel as such and its individual communities in as much as they are public juridical persons are subjects that are capable of acquiring, retaining, administering and alienating temporal goods according to the norms of canon law.¹¹⁶ All their goods are ecclesiastical goods, and their use is governed by the common law of the Church, as well as statutes¹¹⁷ which in harmony with the law, determine the way goods are administered.

69. The statutes of individual communities set out who is to administer its goods. This person can carry out all acts of ordinary administration. For the execution of acts of extraordinary administration there must be:

- a) the authorization of the Prior General with the consent of his Council as well as
- b) the permission of the Holy See for those acts whose value is more than the sum fixed by the Holy See or if goods are of artistic or historical value or have been donated *ex voto*.¹¹⁸

70. The patrimony of the Third Order and its individual communities is made up of all the fixed and liquid assets however acquired. In particular, it includes the contributions to individual members and from benefactors, as well as income from activities, gifts, legacies and bequests by any right.

Chapter 7—Extinction and Suppression

71. Individual communities may be suppressed for a grave reason by the Prior General with the consent of his council, having first consulted the Prior Provincial and the principal officers of the community in question. Local statutes are to set out the procedure for extinction, otherwise the norms of common law prevail.¹¹⁹ It is always necessary to consult the competent authorities of the Order before embarking on such a procedure.

72. In the case of suppression or disappearance of a Third Order community, the goods and rights of patrimony, and in the same measure, the obligations of the suppressed or former community, pass to the next highest juridical person, or if there is not such, to the Prior Provincial of the Order in whose jurisdiction the community was located. If the community was outside any province of the Order, the patrimonial goods and rights pass to the Order itself.¹²⁰

Chapter 8—The Law Proper to the Third Order and Its Interpretation

73. The communities of Tertiaries are governed by this Rule, as approved by the Holy See. Nevertheless, it is advisable that at national, provincial, and local level, there be specific statutes which contain provisions proper to the place to which they refer. These statutes must be approved by the competent authority of the Order,¹²¹ that is, the Prior General or the Prior Provincial with the consent of their respective councils, as set out in the statutes.

74. Mutual co-operation and unity between the various communities will be fostered by setting up councils at various levels: national, regional, and international. These councils must be governed by their own statutes and approved by the competent authority in the Order.

75. The competent authority for authentic interpretation of this Rule is the Holy See. The Prior General of the Order, with the consent of his Council, can give a practical interpretation on occasion when necessary.

Part III **Membership and Formation**

Chapter 1—Admission

76. Those who meet the following conditions may be members of the Third Order: those

who profess the Catholic faith, live in communion with the Church, have good moral conduct,¹²² accept this Rule and who desire to live and act in the spirit of Carmel. Diocesan clerics may be members of the Third Order for all effects and purposes and can take a full part in all its activities, although without lay characteristics insofar as this would be incompatible with their clerical state.

77. Those who seek admission to the Third Order are assigned to a community by its Chaplain, or by the Prior Provincial on whom it depends, or by the Prior General or his delegate, with the consent of the relative councils and having regard for article 82 of this Rule.

78. Those who live far from any community and cannot take part in its life for specific reasons, can be admitted to the Third Order without being enrolled in a particular community. They are to live according to the Third Order Rule under the direction of superiors, or their own confessor, with due respect for the norms regarding admission and profession. Nonetheless, frequent contact is recommended with the Chaplain of the nearest community. Special statutes are to provide for the initial and ongoing formation of these candidates.

79. Candidates for the Carmelite Third Order must be practicing Catholics, be at least 18 years old, unless the local statutes provide otherwise, and they must present a letter of recommendation from their parish priest or another priest who knows them. There is no reason why they should not belong to another third order or to other associations,¹²³ unless the local statutes provide otherwise.

Chapter 2—Formation

80. After an adequate period of discernment, as set out in the statutes, candidates are admitted to a period of spiritual formation in accordance with these statutes.

81. This period of initial formation is to last at least a year, during which time the candidates are to study and to live the Rule of the Third Order. They are to get to know Carmelite spirituality and history, as well as the major figures of the Order. All this is to be done under the guidance of the one in charge of formation. With the whole council, the formator bears the responsibility for assuring sufficient instruction, if necessary, having recourse to other qualified people and the most appropriate means.

82. At the end of the period of preparation, the Council may admit those who feel especially moved by the Spirit to bind themselves more closely to God through vows or promises. In the spirit of their baptism the bonds will call them to a fuller practice of the Gospel, following the provisions of the Rule. For admission to vows or promises the procedure in No. 77 is to be followed.

Chapter 3—Profession

83. Profession is to be made following the proper ritual of the Third Order.
- a. First profession is made for a period of three years during which time the brothers or sisters will live fully the life of the community, continuing the formation process, and deepening various aspects of Carmelite life.
 - b. At the end of three years, having discerned and obtained the approval of the local council, the candidate can make final or perpetual profession.
 - c. It is recommended that every year, on the occasion of the Solemn Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, that members of the Third Order renew their profession either communally or individually.
84. The visible sign of joining the Third Order can be through the giving of the traditional habit or the scapular. Local statutes will determine the procedure.
85. Every community must have a register of members where names, dates of profession and other information deemed useful are to be noted.
86. Members of Third Order communities who are destined for Holy Orders may, where the statutes so provide, be incardinated through ordination to the diaconate in the Carmelite Order after their definitive incorporation in the Third Order. From that moment, they depend on the Prior General as their Ordinary, apart from the obligations that come from their membership of the Third Order community. In this case, relations between the clerical Tertiary and the Carmelite order must be fixed by the local statutes of the group and agreed by the Prior General in a special accord.
87. Each community is to set up a program of ongoing formation.

Chapter 4—Apostolate

88. Members of the Carmelite Third Order are called to the apostolate in various forms: from prayer to a commitment to shared responsibility in various ecclesial activities, including the offering of one's suffering in union with Christ.
89. The local statutes set out the forms of apostolic activities. In practice these can be whatever modern life requires. Through action together lay Carmelites increase the perfection of their lives. Some might be engaged in the promotion of the Christian message, others in carrying out apostolic works of evangelization, of mercy and of charity, always with the aim of animating the temporal order with the Christian spirit.¹²⁵ Any sort of work or professional activity exercised by the individual or by the community can be a way of answering the call to the apostolate.

Chapter 5—Rights and Obligations

90. All members of the Carmelite Third Order have the same rights and the same obligations as set out in the provincial or local statutes.

91. Third Order Carmelites should meet periodically, according to the frequency and way laid down by the statutes so that they may form community in the midst of which Christ dwells. They are to encourage one another in assimilating the charism of the Order to which they belong so that they become living members of the Church. They should share in the goals, the initiatives and the activities of the whole Carmelite family, so that, in turn, it can fully carry out its mission entrusted to it by the Lord in the Body of Christ.

92. Communities must set out in their local statutes how they are to help spiritually brothers and sisters who are advanced in years or who are sick.

93. They should be readily inspired in this by the spirituality and teachings of the great saints that God has raised up in Carmel.

94. Every member is free to leave the Third Order by asking the council in writing and the council is authorized to accede to this request. Members may also be dismissed for a just cause, that is, for reasons set out in common law or for the repeated and unjustified failure to meet obligations. The decision belongs to the council according to the statutes, after having heard and warned the party concerned. They always have the right to appeal to the competent ecclesiastical authority, that is, the Prior General or Prior Provincial.¹²⁶

Epilogue

The members of the Third Order of Carmel commit themselves to incarnate the Carmelite vocation set out in this Rule. Let them undertake this one brief voyage¹²⁷ of earthly life as a colony of citizens whose homeland is heaven.¹²⁸ Let them strive, with the help of the saints, to understand all the dimensions of the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge,¹²⁹ hurrying with a fervent and true desire to reach that place that the Lord as he was leaving this earth, promised to prepare for us.¹³⁰ Rooted and grounded in charity, always alert and holding lanterns alight they are aware that *in the evening of life they will be examined on love*.¹³¹ Let them multiply their talents so that at the hour of their death they will deserve to hear the Lord's invitation to enter into his joy.¹³²

Footnotes

- 1 *Carmelite Rule*, No. 2. See Heb 1:1.
- 2 See John Paul II, Letter to the Carmelite Order (2001), *I Learnt with Joy...*, No. 1 in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*
- 3 See Joseph Chalmers, *Into the Land of Carmel*: Letter to the Carmelite Family on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of the Bull *Cum nulla*, AOC 53 (2002) 65-68, Nos. 41-42
- 4 See *Dei verbum*, No. 2
- 5 See St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, II, 22, 5-6
- 6 See *Dei verbum*, No. 2
- 7 See *Lumen gentium*, Nos. 2 & 4
- 8 *Lumen gentium*, No. 1 & see No. 13
- 9 See *Lumen gentium*, No. 41
- 10 See *Lumen gentium* No. 43
- 11 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, No. 4
- 12 See Urban IV in the bull *Ex vestrae religionis*, 5th August 1262. See *Bullarium Carmelitanum*, I, p.523.
- 13 These were not only single men and women, but married people who freely observed periodic continence, for example during Lent, etc.
- 14 See *Lumen gentium*, No. 31
- 15 See *Christifideles laici*, No. 34
- 16 This is the so-called *altius moderamen* or “overall direction” that the Code of Canon Law refers to in canon 303. See *Communicationes* 18 (1986) p. 232. This is a technical term which means that the Third Order depends in some way on the “first” Order.
- 17 See CIC, can. 317, § 3.
- 18 See St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, *Offering of myself as a Victim of Holocaust to the Merciful Love of God*
- 19 See Matt 22:37.
- 20 See Matt 6:24.
- 21 See Matt 22:9.
- 22 See the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting out afresh from Christ*.
- 23 *Vita Consecrata*, No. 55
- 24 See Hos 2:16 and John 6:43
- 25 See *Ratio institutionis vitae carmelitanae* (Rome, 2000), No. 29
- 26 See *Carmelite Missal*, Collect for the Mass of 16th July: Solemn Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel.
- 27 *Rule*, Ch. 2
- 28 Gal 2:20
- 29 *Rule*, Ch. 15
- 30 See Rom 5:5

- 31 See Rom 2:3-8; *Lumen gentium*, n. 32; *Vita consecrata*, n. 31
- 32 See *Ratio institutionis vitae carmelitanae 2000*, No. 3
- 33 The original text reads: “*une humanité en surcroît*”; Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, Elevation to the Most Blessed Trinity: ‘*My God, Trinity whom I adore.*’
- 34 See Eph 1:12, 14; as Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity signed herself towards the end of her life, for example see C. De Meester (ed) *Elizabeth of the Trinity Works*, Vol I, p. 183, Letter 28.
- 35 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, No. 1
- 36 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, Nos. 2, 3
- 37 Sacrosanctum concilium, No. 20
- 38 See *Lumen gentium*, No. 34
- 39 See *Lumen gentium*, No. 1
- 40 See *Christifideles laici*, No. 14
- 41 See *Lumen gentium*, No. 12
- 42 See Acts, 2:17-18; 9:10; *Christifideles laici*, No. 14
- 43 See Rom 6:12
- 44 See Matt 25:40
- 45 See *Christifideles laici*, No. 17
- 46 Joseph Chalmers, *Into the Land of Carmel*, letter to the Carmelite Family, No. 40
- 47 See *Lumen gentium*, Nos. 31, 36
- 48 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, No. 7; *Gaudium et spes*, No. 30
- 49 See *Carmelite Constitutions (1995)*, No. 28 on the sharing of lay people in the charism and in the mission of the religious. *Christifideles laici*, No. 29; *Vita consecrata* Nos. 54-56
- 50 See John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris consortio* No. 72
- 51 See John Paul II, Apostolic letter, *Novo millennio ineunte*, No. 31
- 52 *Ratio institutionis vitae Carmelitanae 2000*, No. 4 and see *Constitutions 1995*, No. 14.
- 53 See *Carmelite Missal*, Collect for the Mass of 16 July: Solemn Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel.
- 54 John Paul II, Letter to the Carmelite Order, *I have learnt with joy...*, No. 3
- 55 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, No. 4 and *Christifideles laici*, No. 32
- 56 See Luke 1: 49-56
- 57 See Luke 2:19, 51
- 58 See Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis cultus*, No. 35
- 59 See John 2:1-12
- 60 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, No. 4
- 61 See John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris missio*, No. 40
- 62 See B. M. Xiberta, ‘Amando se constringit amari’ in *Charlas a las contemplativas*, No. 33 p. 195. See ‘Amando si fa amare’ in *I trionfi della Bruna*, giugno 1951, pp. 5-6
- 63 See B. M. Xiberta, *Charlas a las contemplativas*, No. 4, p. 15.
- 64 See 1 Kings 17-19
- 65 St. Teresa of Jesus, *Life*, Chp. 8,5

- 66 St. Teresa of Jesus, *Interior Castle*, IV, 1,7
- 67 Bl. Titus Brandsma, 'Notes for a retreat' in S. Scapin (ed.), *Nella notte della libertà. Tito Brandsma, giornalista, martire a Dachau con un'antologia dei suoi scritti* (Rome, 1985), p. 198
- 68 John Paul II, Letter to the Carmelite Order, *I have learnt with joy...*, No. 3
- 69 *Presbyterorum ordinis*, No. 5
- 70 See *Votive Masses of the B. Virgin Mary*, Introduction, No. 17
- 71 See Matt 6:6 and cf *Constitutions 1995*, No. 77
- 72 See Lk 18:1
- 73 See 1 Thess 5:17
- 74 See Pius XII, Letter to the Carmelite Order, *Neminem profecto latet*.
- 75 See John Paul II, Letter to the Carmelite Order, *The providential event...*, No. 5.
- 76 See *ibid*.
- 77 See *Constitutions 1995*, No. 86; Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis cultus*, 45; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 5, 10
- 78 Joseph Chalmers, Letter to the Carmelite Family, *Into the Land of Carmel*, No. 47
- 79 See *Christifideles laici*, Nos. 32-44; *Redemptoris missio*, Nos. 71-72; *Vita consacrata*, Nos. 54-56.
- 80 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, No. 2
- 81 Joseph Chalmers, Letter to the Carmelite Family, *Into the Land of Carmel*, No. 46
- 82 St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, *Manuscript B*, Letter to Sr. Marie du Sacre Coeur, p. 254
- 83 See *Lumen gentium*, n. 31; *Christifideles laici*, No. 15
- 84 See *Christifideles laici*, No. 41
- 85 See St. Maria Magdalene de' Pazzi, 'Renovatione della Chiesa' in *Tutte le opere VII*, 34, 82
- 86 See Eph 1: 6, 12, 14. See also note 31: the motto of Blessed Elisabeth of the Trinity.
- 87 See *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 6
- 88 See 1 Kgs 19:1-18
- 89 See *Gaudium et spes*, n. 34
- 90 See *idem*, n. 35
- 91 See *idem* n. 19
- 92 Matt 5:13-14
- 93 See Lk 1:77
- 94 See *Code of Canon Law (1983)*, can. 301, § 3.
- 95 See Code, can. 312, § 1, 3^o; Pope Nicholas V, in the bull *Cum nulla fidelium*, 7 October 1452, edited in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum* 17 (1952) 6; Pope Sixtus V in the bull *Dum attentat*, 28 November 1476.
- 96 See Code, Canon 298 § 1.
- 97 See Code, Canon 303. See above note 16.
- 98 See *Constitutions 1995*, No. 109
- 99 See *idem*, No. 28
- 100 See *idem*, No. 275

- 101 See *idem*, No. 109
102 See *Code*, Canon 303
103 See *Code*, Canon 312, § 2
104 See *Constitutions 1995*, No. 303
105 See *idem*, No. 109
106 See *Code*, Canon 677, § 2.
107 See *idem*, Canon 311
108 See The Pontifical Council for the Laity, *Priests in Associations of the Faithful*.

Identity and Mission

- 109 See *Code*, Canon 317, §§ 1 and 2
110 See Hebrews 2: 4
111 See *Code*, Canon 317, §§ 1 and 2
112 See *idem*, Canon 119, n. 1
113 See *idem*, Canon 318
114 See *idem*, Canon 318, § 2
115 See *idem*, Canon 313
116 See *idem*, Canon 1255
117 See *idem*, Canon 1257 and 319
118 See *idem*, Canon 1291 and 1292
119 See *idem*, Canon 120 and 320
120 See *idem*, Canon 123
121 See *idem*, Canon 314
122 *Idem*, Canon 316, § 1
123 See *idem*, Canon 307, § 2
124 See *idem*, Canon 266, § 2
125 See *idem*, Canon 298, § 1
126 See *idem*, Canon 308 and 316, § 2
127 See Heb 9:27; *Lumen gentium* No. 48
128 See Philip 3:20
129 See Eph 3:17-19
130 See Jn 14:2-3; Heb 4:11
131 St. John of the Cross, *Words of Light and Love. Advice and decisions*, 59
132 See Matt 25: 23

**Provincial Statutes of the
Provinces of the Most Pure
Heart of Mary & Saint Elias**

The first Provincial Third Order Lay Carmelite Statutes in North America were promulgated during the last quarter of the 19th century, as the first Third Order Chapters were established in Kansas, Pennsylvania, Ontario and New Jersey. Provincial Statutes are regularly rewritten or amended in order to bring Lay Carmelite Communities into harmony with directions set by the Order or the Church. This occurs in several situations: when new legislation is given to the Lay Carmelites by the Order or by the Province; when changes occur in Canon Law; when new documents are issued by the Holy See; when a new Third Order Rule is promulgated by the Order; when new documents are issued by the Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission. Provincial Statutes enunciate and clarify how Third Order Lay Carmelites live out the Rule of St. Albert as well as the General Statutes found in the Third Order Rule of Carmel at this time in history. The Provincial Statutes printed here are for all Lay Carmelites belonging to the Provinces of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and of Saint Elias. In 2015 new formation manuals were issued by the Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission, therefore changes, corrections and clarifications have been made to update these Statutes. They were promulgated in July 2021.

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**Statutes for the Lay Carmelites
of the Provinces of
Saint Elias
and
The Most Pure Heart of Mary**

PREAMBLE

Vatican Council II called the Church to new life in service of the Kingdom of God in our modern world. All of the baptized, centered in Christ and strengthened by God's word and sacrament, form one community of faith, hope and love. To all who would lead and serve within the Church, there is a challenge to witness to the holiness of God's gracious and loving presence among us.

Within this ecclesial setting, the Carmelite Order has always offered a spirituality to help God's people meet the demand for a holy way of life in the midst of an ambivalent and pluralistic world. The Carmelite tradition has served the Church and the world with tradition centered on prayer, community and service. Its prophetic and Marian heritage has enkindled new life in every age.

These Statutes are offered as a synopsis of that tradition and as a fundamental direction in our time for all called to the secular branch of Carmel.

These Statutes take precedence over all previous Statutes, other publications of the Lay Carmelite Provincial Offices, local customs, and exemptions given by previous Provincial Officials of the Lay Carmelites. They can be countermanded only by the General Law of the Church and the legislation of the General Chapter or Council of the Order, or the legislation of the Provincial Chapter or Council of the Province to which the Lay Carmelite is affiliated.

Part 1

Nature and Spirituality

Chapter I - Nature of the Order

1. The Lay Carmelite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel (historically known as the Third Order) is an association mainly of lay persons. Its members, responding to a special call of God, freely and deliberately commit themselves *to live in the following of Jesus Christ*¹ according to the traditions and spirit of Carmel under the authority of the Prior General of the Carmelite Order. The members, though not in Religious Life, choose to live out their baptismal commitment according to the spirit of the Carmelite Order. Carmelite spirituality stresses purity of heart and *Vacare Deo*,¹ the emptying of self so that God can be our all. The call to Carmel, a call to seek God's will in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life, roots Lay Carmelites in a love of those with whom they live and work, in the search for God's presence in all circumstances, and in solidarity with God's people everywhere.
2. Lay Carmelites, through their promises, become associated with the Carmelite Order and share in the spiritual benefits of the Order. Endowed as they are by the Holy Spirit with their own unique gifts, they share these gifts individually and collectively in a spirit of true communion with the entire family of Carmel, of which they form an integral part. Their mission is the mission of the Church and of the Order itself, to live the Gospel message and to bring Christ to others through their lives.
3. Diocesan clergy may be admitted to the Lay Carmelite Order, adapting its goals and spirit to their state of life as ordained priests or deacons. A diocesan Priest or Deacon is given the designation *Third Order Carmelite*.
4. Members of the Lay Carmelite Order within the provinces of Saint Elias and of the Most Pure Heart of Mary shall be called *Lay Carmelites*. They ordinarily will be gathered in groups to be known as Lay Carmelite Communities. Lay Carmelites are prohibited from belonging simultaneously to other Third Orders, or as a monastic oblate, or various movements that offer a spirituality different from Carmel.

Chapter 2 - Purpose of the Order

Through Jesus Christ, Son of the Father and *firstborn of all creation*² we (Carmelites) live in union with God and with our neighbors in a new way. And so, we share in the mission of the Incarnate Word in this world, and we form the Church³ which is in Christ as a sacrament—a sign and instrument of communion with God, and the unity of the whole human race.⁴

Living in allegiance to Jesus Christ⁵ and embracing his Gospel as the supreme norm of our lives, by the power of his Spirit who distributes his gifts to each according to his

will⁶, we seek to live together in mutual service of one another and of all people. In this way we cooperate in God's plan to gather all men and women into one Holy People.⁷

1. The members of the Order of Carmel seek to live in union with God and with our neighbor. We do this through a commitment to seek the face of the living God (the contemplative dimension of life), by developing a genuinely familial style of community, and through service in the midst of all the peoples of the human family (the ministerial dimension of our life).⁸ The laity of the Order participate fully with the Religious in this mission. Indeed, from the earliest times, the friars have invited the laity to full and genuine membership in the Order as Lay Carmelites, or as traditionally called, Tertiaries or members of the Third Order Secular, so that they may live the Gospel Way of Life according to the Carmelite Tradition.
2. The Carmelite family draws its inspiration from the lives of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Prophet Elijah. Mary is our Patroness, Mother and Sister. An appreciation of her deep influence in our lives is given in the statement *Carmelus totus marianus est* (Carmel is profoundly Marian). In her we find the model of all that we desire and hope to be.⁹
3. Elijah is the prophet of Mount Carmel and our spiritual father as Carmelites. With an ardent desire for the true and living God, he spent his whole life in faithfully testifying to Yahweh's presence in the world.¹⁰
4. This Gospel way of living which Lay Carmelites seek to live, a life of contemplative prayer, of community and of ministry, is summed up by one word: love. St. Therese of the Child Jesus, a great saint of Carmel, helped us better articulate the vocation of the Carmelite when she cried out: *O Jesus, my love...my vocation, at last I have found it...my vocation is Love!*

Chapter 3 - Call to Prayer

1. The challenge of Carmel is to seek God's presence in prayer while living an active, busy life in the midst of the world. This was the situation faced by the first Carmelite hermits who migrated to Europe, men used to praying in solitude and now called to be involved in active ministry. The practice of the presence of God and ministry to our neighbor are mutual companions according to our traditions. Our awareness of God's presence develops a center of faith which reaches out generously to others while involvement with others often energizes the movement to prayer. It is an attempt to prayerfully live in the Divine Presence in a busy world. It is a vitality which has graced the Church over the centuries.
2. The sacramental life of the Church is central to the heart of a Lay Carmelite and the very center of our life is the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist, banquet and sacrifice, is the chief prayer of each and every Carmelite.

3. After the Eucharistic Liturgy, the priority in our prayer is to share in some portion of the Liturgy of the Hours, the prayer of the Church, which extends the Eucharistic sacrifice throughout the day in a sacrifice of praise. By praying all or part of the Liturgy of the Hours, we are united more closely to the Church, since the Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer of the Church.
4. Carmelites are also called to enter profoundly into contemplative prayer, prayer rooted in the Word of God. Our Way of Life tells us *The sword of the Spirit, that is the Word of God, must abound in your mouths and in your hearts. Let all that you do be done with the Word of the Lord for accompaniment.*¹¹ When not occupied with the daily demands of life, we are called by the Carmelite Way of Life to listen quietly to the Word which is formed in our hearts. This stillness and prayerful reflection on Scripture will lead to contemplative prayer after the pattern of Mary, our Mother, who *treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart* (Luke 2:19).
5. Carmelites also cherish the vast treasury of devotional prayers and practices of the larger Church. Today we see an increased practice of Eucharistic Adoration. While this practice has not figured largely in the Carmelite tradition, it is the source of great grace and a wonderful opportunity for quiet attentiveness to the Presence of Christ. The rosary, especially prayed in quiet solitude, can be an occasion for entry into a more contemplative prayer. The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a devotion meant for the laity at a time that the Liturgy of the Hours was available only in Latin, continues as a beautiful devotion. It is not, however, to be used ordinarily in place of the Liturgy of the Hours, which constitutes the official Prayer of the Church. These and other devotional prayers and practices are not normally meant for communal prayer, but can be rich resources for the individual in private prayer, preparing him or her for deeper contemplative prayer.
6. Through these efforts, the Lay Carmelite community shall become a clear sign to all others of the Church at prayer.

Chapter 4 - Call to Community

1. Carmel is not an organization, even a Christian organization, but a Christian community committed to leading an evangelical life. It is one way among many in which Christians can live out their baptismal call to discipleship. Consequently, the Call to Carmel is a vocation. Entry to Carmel must be rooted in careful discernment of this vocation. This vocation, like all vocations, requires not only careful discernment, but careful maintenance as the grace of a vocation implies a commitment to perseverance in that vocation.
2. The Carmelite Order through the establishment of lay communities provides a means by which the members of those communities are helped to be faithful to the commitment called forth by their Baptism, that is, to live with others a Gospel way of

life. This *call to community* is deeply reflected in the original Carmelite Way of Life, also known as the Carmelite Rule or the Rule of Saint Albert. This Way of Life has mandated from the first days of the Order that Carmelites are to live as a community, celebrating the Eucharist, praying the psalms (later the Liturgy of the Hours) together in common, meeting frequently to encourage one another and manifesting a spirit of poverty, detachment and contemplative prayer in their personal lives. All Carmelites Religious and Lay, are to pattern themselves on the early Christians, being *of one heart and one mind, devoting themselves to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers* (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32). This relationship of mutual love, though difficult to achieve, provides the power by which the members in a spirit of loving, active cooperation are strengthened to promote God's work (which is to establish the reign of God) in a secularized and often hostile world. This spirit of love shall extend not only to Carmelites but to all people, and especially to the poor and marginalized, in an effort to establish peace and justice in our modern world. For the laity, membership in the Order sanctions no neglect of the duties of one's state in life as a single or married person. In particular, married members of the Order must remember that the sacramental nature of their marriage commitment endows their married and family life with a priority over their membership in Carmel.

3. Lay Carmelite communities usually take the name of the parish or religious house where they are established, but they may take another name, if the membership so decides. The Lay Carmelite Office may also decide to give the community its name, especially if it is an emerging or developing community.
4. Lay Carmelite communities are called to be witnesses to Christian community within the Church and to the world.

Chapter 5 - Call to Ministry

1. Lay Carmelites, as all baptized persons, are called to be deeply involved in the mission of the Church. Immersed in the world as they are, they shall reflect a Christian spirit of service to their families, in their work or professional surroundings, in their social responsibilities and relations with others and in every action of their day.
2. They will find in the person of Elijah a valid inspiration for this witness. It was he who said, *I have been most zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts* (I Kings 20:10). In doing battle with the false prophets of his day Elijah proclaimed the Word of God and labored for its establishment. The Lay Carmelite in the spirit of Elijah is called to critique and reject the values, actions, systems and goals which are hostile to the Gospel.
3. Our mother Mary, too, is a wonderful example for ministry, accompanying Jesus in spirit every step of the way, even to the foot of the Cross.
4. Ministry in our day involves a sacrifice of time, talent and treasure on the part of the individual. The Lay Carmelite accepts this obligation of stewardship, taking seriously

the invitation of the Lord that we deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily and follow Him.

5. Any ministry undertaken by individuals or the local communities should flow from our Carmelite tradition, and bring about the sanctification of our families, our work and society. These ministries shall be integrated with the other areas of Carmelite life.
6. Participation in the apostolate *exclusively* by prayer is a vocation proper to the enclosed nuns of the Order. The Carmelite Laity, like the Friars and the Religious Sisters of the Order, are called to an active participation in the ministry of the Church. Nevertheless, praying for others is a valid ministry for all. As we age or suffer from illnesses, laity and Religious alike, our ministry may become primarily, or even exclusively, the apostolate of prayer. St. Therese of Lisieux viewed prayer as redemptive - praying and sacrificing for others. Many of our older Carmelites find the most fruitful years of their apostolate are those in which their ministry is limited exclusively to prayer. While we are able to work in the Lord's vineyard, however, we are called to do so in union with the shepherds Christ has appointed over his Church.

Chapter 6 - Mary and the Saints of Carmel

1. The Blessed Virgin Mary, in her earthly existence, showed herself to be the perfect image of the disciple of Christ, being the mirror of all the virtues, and putting into practice in her life the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus Christ. (Mt. 5:1-12) All Carmelites, Religious and Lay, look to her as our primary model of Christian life.
2. From its beginning, the entire Carmelite Family has been specially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, we have always been known as the Brothers and Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Therefore, all Lay Carmelites shall honor Our Lady with a special love and devotion. She is the model of all that we desire and hope to be.
3. Carmelites have always put themselves under the maternal care of Our Lady, invoking her as Mother, as Sister, as Model and as Queen. The Order enjoys her special patronage. The Brown Scapular is a sign of Mary's protection over the Order and its members, and is a symbol of the Carmelite's devotion to Our Lady.
4. The Carmelite is called to live a life of discipleship, loyally following Jesus Christ, who is our only Savior.¹² We look to Mary as the model of discipleship and we imitate her in order to better follow him.
5. Marian devotion in the Carmelite family excludes pious stories and the legends which, while often touching, detract from the credibility of the Church and Order. Like St. Therese of Lisieux, we want to know the Mary of the Gospels better. Marian devotion includes:
 - a. imitating her role as a woman of faith attentive to the Word of God and to the

service of the Kingdom. We do this primarily by our commitment to daily prayerful reflection on the Word of God

- b. fostering devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the wearing of the Brown Scapular. As the habit of the Order and a sacramental of the Church, it is a fitting symbol for expressing our devotion and consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel and the affiliation of the faithful to the Carmelite family. It is also an efficacious means for making Mary known to God's people
 - c. celebrating her feast days with honor when possible—especially the Solemn Commemoration on July 16 and also celebrating the feasts of St. Joseph, her husband, and the protector of the Order ¹³
 - d. having a blessed image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the home of every member
 - e. praying the Rosary and other Marian devotions.
6. Elijah is the prophet of Carmel. His prophetic spirit in combating the evils of his day is an integral part of any Carmelite life. Members should incorporate this Elian spirit in their ministry. The Elian spirit gives us a particular thrust towards matters of social justice as the Carmelite, like Elijah, faithfully proclaims justice, both human and divine, in an unjust world. Blessed Titus Brandsma is a modern-day example of such a spirit.
 7. Saints John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila have shown us through their lives and their writings the way to contemplative union with God. Members should familiarize themselves with teachings of these Doctors of the Church.
 8. St. Therese of the Child Jesus is a modern-day example of the spirit and charism of Carmel. Her writings, though theologically deep, are more approachable for the lay person than those of Saints Teresa and John of the Cross. Through her *Little Way*, St. Therese speaks to the Church of our modern era as few other writers have done. St. John Paul II declared her a Doctor of the Church. The *Little Way* of St. Therese is highly recommended as a way of love of neighbor and oblation to the Father.
 9. Carmelite spirituality is also well exemplified in the lives and writings of Elizabeth of the Trinity, Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi, Edith Stein and many others. They provide us with a rich heritage that can foster our spiritual growth.
 10. Retreats, days of recollection, study programs, visiting speakers and other sources of input for local Lay Carmelite Communities should stress the teachings of the great saints of Carmel. It is important to strive for sound teaching in these areas, moving beyond pious legends.

Part II

Local Structures

Chapter 1 - Establishment of Communities

1. The Lay Carmelite Order is a true branch of the Carmelite Order and as such is under the jurisdiction of the Prior General of the Order. As the spiritual father, head and sign of unity of the family, he delegates the care and spiritual good of the Lay Carmelites of each Province to the local Provincial and his Council. In our provinces, the Prior Provincial and his Council appoints any or all of the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials: Delegate, Coordinator and Associate Delegates to assist him in his ministry to the Lay Carmelites. All references in the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel to the Prior Provincial are interpreted as applying to or referring to his appointed Provincial Officials.
2. In order to begin as a developing community, it is desirable that there be at least ten to twelve members who are either professed or prepared to begin Initial Formation, as in Phase I of the formation process.¹⁴ Permission to start with less than ten members requires an explicit waiver from the Officials.
3. Ordinarily a Lay Carmelite community is officially established by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials when it has twelve or more professed members. Once it demonstrates that it can maintain a stable membership of at least twelve professed, it may request that the Officials apply for a Charter from the Prior General of the Order. To apply for this charter, the previous written consent of the Ordinary of the diocese in which it is established must have been obtained by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials.
4. The Officials may, at its discretion, allow a group who is not yet at ten in number to form a developing community.

Chapter 2 - Developing Community

1. Any group that wishes to become an official developing community must apply for and receive explicit approval from the Officials. The appropriate application form is available from the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. The Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary will normally require there be ten to twelve potential members for a developing community to be formed. The Province of Saint Elias will consider each case on an individual basis.
2. A Developing Community may be established either from initial inception, or as a branch from an Established Community, or as a natural outcome from a Discussion Group.
3. A Developing Community must have an approved sponsoring institution and have in

place an organizational structure similar to that of an Established Community. A typical sponsoring institution may be a parish or other Catholic institution, a Carmelite foundation of friars, nuns or active-sister groups, or a secular institute. At a minimum, the sponsoring institution should be able to provide a meeting place for the community.

4. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials reserves the right to appoint Directors for developing communities, but this right will often be delegated to the community. If there are at least ten professed members, a developing community may be permitted to elect a director and two councilors. If there are less than ten professed members, the Officials will direct how leadership is to be chosen. The Officials may appoint the leadership, or in rare cases may permit the non-professed members of a developing community to vote with the professed in an election. The Officials also reserves the right to name the Formation Director but may delegate this to the local council once it is chosen.

Chapter 3 - Established Community

1. A group assumes the designation of an *Established Community* when it has twelve (12) professed members. The professed members of a Lay Carmelite Community are called the *General Assembly* in the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel (No. 59).
2. At the time it becomes an Established Community, it attains the right to elect its Director and Council, if it has not already been given that right by the Officials.

Chapter 4 - Chartered Community

1. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials, at the request of an established community, may petition the Prior General and his Council for a Charter. The Charter confers juridical recognition from the Order on the community, what the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel refers to as being *Canonically Constituted* (No. 67). This juridical designation does not, however, bestow any added right or privileges on the community. All previous legislation notwithstanding, if the community moves location, the document establishing this juridical status remains with the community, not a sponsoring institution.
2. Application to the Prior General and his Council for a canonical establishment must be processed through the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. The Lay Carmelite Office will contact the appropriate Diocesan Office to request the signature of the local Ordinary, (bishop of the diocese or prefecture) as required by the Rule of the Third Order of Carmel (No.56).

Chapter 5 - Government in the Lay Carmelite Community

1. The unity of the Order, founded on charity and sharing a common dedication, is strengthened by leadership. This leadership inspires us to be faithful to our vocation

and ministers in a spirit of service for the good of all and of the community according to the words of Christ, *If anyone wishes to rank first, he must remain the last one of all and the servant of all* (Mark 9:35).

2. Each Lay Carmelite community is governed by a Council composed of the Director of the community and two to four elected Councilors depending on the size of the community. The Director referred to in these Statutes is the person known as the Moderator in the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel (No. 60). The Formation Director, the Secretary, and Treasurer and a Spiritual Assistant (given that one is available) are also members of the Council, as is envisioned by the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel (No. 64). The *elected members* of the council include the Director and Councilors. The *elected members* of the Council choose a Formation Director, a Secretary and a Treasurer from their own ranks or from the community at large. The Formation Director, Secretary and Treasurer, if chosen from the community at large, also become members of the Council with full voting rights. The council may in necessity choose a non-professed for Treasurer or Secretary, but such appointees, while they may participate in the discussion of the council, may not vote.
3. The Spiritual Assistant of the community is appointed by the Officials at the request of the local community, and may be a Priest, Deacon or Religious. S/he is an advisory member of the council without voting privileges. If no Spiritual Assistant is available, the community may function without one.
4. The jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assistant comes from the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials but this is in no way meant or may be used to detract from the lawful authority of the Bishop of the Diocese or the Rector of the Institution which sponsors the community.
5. It is the duty of the Council to serve for the good of the community, enabling the members to live up to their baptismal vocation of striving to extend the reign of Christ within themselves and in the world. The community should be formed according to the spirit and charism of Carmel, a formation guided by the example of Our Blessed Mother, the prophet Elijah and the saints of Carmel. The Council, working cooperatively with the Director, is responsible to guide the community according to the spirit of Carmel as directed by the legitimate authority of the Order through the Officials. Council meetings are to be held monthly, if possible, but never less than quarterly, and apart from the regular monthly meeting of the community. In their deliberations, all shall share their views openly and honestly in a spirit of charity, responsibly working together for the good of the community. All members of the community have an obligation to cooperate with the Council and honor its decisions regarding the good of the community's life.
6. The community shall be faithful to the Carmelite Way of Life envisioned in the Rule of St. Albert, the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel, the pertinent documents for the Lay Carmelites or Third Order that come from the Order or the Province, and these

Provincial Statutes. According to its own charism and spirit, it may set up its own local community customs, though never in a spirit contrary to the Carmelite Way of Life and other pertinent Third Order documents. Any matters not covered by these Provincial Statutes may be locally determined. Any local customs are subject to review by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials.

Chapter 6 - Duties of the Community Officers

1. The Director of the Community, first among the members, serves the rest of the members, leads the Council and guides the community in its life and spirit. The Director shall prudently and charitably encourage the following of these Provincial Statutes and any community customs by insuring that all resolutions of the Council are carried out. The Director shall ensure that the officers perform their duties and that peace and a good spirit of cooperation exist and flourish.
2. The Formation Director, who should be knowledgeable of the Order and its spirit, directs the preparation period for candidates to the community. The Formation Director also is responsible for ongoing formation. The Formation Director shall implement the programs of formation mandated by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials. This will insure that the candidate receives sufficient instruction in the Lay Carmelite life. The Formation Director presents candidates to the Council for Reception and Professions upon completion of their instructions and fulfillment of the minimum time requirement for each period of formation. An assistant (or a formation team of several members) may be appointed to help in the formation if needed. It is recommended that the Formation Director keep a record of each member, giving the date of instruction periods and type of instructions, dates of any interviews, dates of Reception and Professions, and other matters which might be related to formation and status in the Order.
3. The Spiritual Assistant provides support to the local Lay Carmelite Community. S/he is appointed by the Prior Provincial/Delegate at the request of the community council. If one is available, the Spiritual Assistant is, preferably, a Carmelite Friar or Carmelite Religious. It may be a diocesan priest, deacon or religious familiar with Carmelite Spirituality. If the Spiritual Assistant is a priest, he celebrates the Eucharist when possible (e.g. Carmelite Feasts) outside of community monthly meetings. The parish priest should always be informed when a priest or deacon is visiting a Lay Carmelite Community in their parish or parish church. The Spiritual Assistant is primarily a source for clarity/understanding of spiritual and theological matters for the community. S/he is an advisory member of the council without voting privileges. The Spiritual Assistant should not lead or conduct sessions (e.g. give talks or conferences) in either initial or on-going formation in monthly meetings. A priest Spiritual Assistant may never ask or insist on being the confessor of the Lay Carmelite Community he serves. S/he generally should not be a spiritual director of members of the community.

4. The Secretary records the minutes of the Council and monthly community meetings, keeps members informed of these meetings, attends to other correspondence when applicable, and maintains the records of community membership, which include the dates of Reception, Professions, and death of members and any other pertinent information. The Secretary or Director should also keep the Regional Coordinator and Regional Formation Coordinator informed about the community. The Secretary sends into the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mails of the Director and Council Members whenever there is an election or when any change of information occurs.
5. The Treasurer is concerned with the collecting and banking of funds belonging to the community, and the maintenance of any financial accounts as well as the disbursement of monies as needed. The Treasurer shall make the community aware whenever the treasury becomes low and incapable of meeting future needs. An up-to-date financial statement should be a regular submission of the Treasurer at every meeting of the Council. The treasurer should make a brief financial report at the monthly community meeting. The Treasurer is responsible to collect the annual dues for the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office and for sending the dues to the Office along with the list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of those who have paid the dues. Dues should be sent into the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office before May of each year.
6. The Community Council has the added responsibility that the following areas of life as a community are embraced:
 - a. reflect the Carmelite Charism of Prayer
 - b. promote attendance at Days of Recollection, Retreats and when a Guest Speaker is at a community meeting
 - c. give special attention to the sick and shut-ins of the community
 - d. oversee that greeting cards are sent to members for birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
 - e. coordinate vocations activities to foster new vocations
 - f. encourage a spirit of ministry among the members
7. All committees formed by the local community are accountable to the Council and ideally shall have a councilor as a member.

Chapter 7 - Elections

1. Elections are conducted for the Community Director and Councilor positions only. The Prior Provincial, as the Chaplain of the Province's Lay Carmelite communities, may preside at all such elections in accord with the Rule of the Third Order of Carmel (No.

63) or he may delegate this role to another friar, to another Carmelite religious, to a Spiritual Assistant, to the Provincial Coordinator, to a Regional Coordinator or to another qualified Lay Carmelite. In accord with the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel (No. 62), the Lay Carmelite who is elected the Director of a community, must be confirmed in office by the Provincial Officials. The Councilors who are elected are not confirmed in office. If the Provincial Official decides not to confirm a person elected as Director of a Lay Carmelite community, then the community must immediately elect another person as Director who must also be confirmed in office by the Provincial Officials. The elected members of the Council then appoint the Formation Director, Secretary and Treasurer. In those small developing communities where the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials have not delegated a right of election to the community, but have appointed the Director and Councilors, the Officials will either appoint a Formation Director, Treasurer and Secretary or instruct the Director and appointed councilors to choose a Formation Director, Treasurer and Secretary.

2. The Director and councilors are elected for a term of three years and may be reelected once to the same office, after which time they may not be reelected to the same office unless there is a lapse of three years. In necessity, the holding of the same office for three or more terms is possible only with approval by the Officials. This permission will be given very rarely. A community that has become dependent on a single individual for leadership has become unhealthy.
3. A person may serve two terms on the Council and be elected Director of the Community, even though this keeps the person on the Council for more than two consecutive terms. Similarly, a person who is outgoing Director may be elected to the Council, even though this keeps the person on the Council for more than two consecutive terms. However, any person who has been on the council for four consecutive terms because of moving from Council to Directorship or Directorship to Council, is ineligible for these elected positions for one term, that is three years. Where necessary the Provincial Lay Carmelite Officials can waive this restriction. The Officials must approve the appointment of a Formation Director, Treasurer, or Secretary, who, by their being chosen for that role, will be on the council for more than four consecutive terms.
4. The appointment of the Formation Director, Secretary and the Treasurer cease each time a new council is elected. The Formation Director, Treasurer, and Secretary are appointed by the new Council either from their own membership or from the community at large. If they are appointed to a position that would give them more than a fourth consecutive term on the community council, the Officials must approve that appointment. The purpose here is that ordinarily no one should serve more than four consecutive terms, i.e., twelve years, on the council except in rare instances and due to special circumstances. Healthy communities have regular changes of leadership.
5. All professed members of the community who meet the attendance requirements

enjoy active voice (they can vote in all elections) and passive voice (they can be nominated for and hold a Council position). The positions of Director and Formation Director should be held by a Final Professed member. Any variance must have the approval of the Provincial Officials.

6. Transfer members must be in their NEW community for three years before having active and passive voice in any election.
7. Those who are not yet professed members, although they are in fact members of the community, do not have active or passive voice. The non-professed members of the community may at the discretion of the community be part of the nominating process for candidates for Director and Council though they may not vote in the actual election. In the rare instance of a developing community with only a few professed members, the non-professed may be permitted by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Officials to vote for Director and Council. In such a community with only a few professed members, the Provincial Officials may also permit non-professed to serve on the Council, prohibiting them, however, from participation in the deliberations regarding their own Reception or Profession.
8. Consult the Community Manual before elections.
9. For elections, everyone with active or passive voice is to be notified. Members need not be personally notified, but there shall be at least a notification in a specific letter to community members about the election, or in the community newsletter.
10. To be eligible to vote (active voice), assuming the member is Professed, one must have attended at least seventy-five percent of the meetings and other functions of the community during the three-year period prior to the election. Requests for variances must be approved by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office.
11. In order to be eligible for election (passive voice), a nominee must have attended a minimum of seventy-five percent of the meetings and other functions of the community during the three years previous to the election. A Professed Member already on Council, in various positions, for up to 12 years consistently, is not eligible for election for one term (three years). Requests for variances must be approved by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office.
12. Members must be present to vote. Absentee ballots are not permitted.
13. All elections to the Council are to be by secret vote.
14. To be elected to office, a member must receive an absolute majority of the votes cast on the first or second round of balloting. If balloting goes to a third round, only those two members who have the majority of the votes remain on the ballot. If there is a tie after the third ballot, the senior by Profession date is elected to office. If the Profession dates are the same for both, the senior by age is elected.

15. If the Prior Provincial, the Provincial Delegate, Provincial Coordinator, or one of the Associate Delegates is present, they preside at the election. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office can also delegate someone, most fittingly the Regional Coordinator to preside at the election. In the absence of such a presider, someone within the community should be appointed by the Council to be the presider for any given election. The function of the presider is to insure that the election is conducted properly and in a just and equitable way, including resolution of any procedural question that may arise. If the presider is a Lay Carmelite, s/he is not eligible for election, though s/he may—if s/he is eligible—vote in the election. Should the Lay Carmelite presiding at an election, be nominated and wish to run, s/he must step down as presider over the election and the Council needs to appoint another.
16. Regional Coordinators have the right to attend elections in communities within their region if they wish to do so, or if they are requested to do so by either their respective Provincial Lay Carmelite Office or the community in question. A Regional Coordinator may also be called upon by the local Council to preside at a community election.
17. If any office becomes vacant within six months prior to an election, the Council shall immediately elect a successor to complete the term. If the office becomes vacant with more than six months until the next election, the Council shall arrange for the community to elect a successor to complete the unfilled term. Such an election should take place within two months of the vacancy.

Chapter 8 - Admission and Reception

1. For admission, a candidate must be a Catholic in good standing who feels called by God to live more strongly his/her baptismal vocation as a member of the Carmelite family through a deeper formation in Christian values according to the particular charism of the Carmelite Order. Candidates must be at least eighteen years old.
2. Lay Carmelites belong to a local community. Candidates for Reception will apply for membership through the local Council, with the explicit or implicit approval of the Provincial Officials.
3. Candidates are received into the Order after a formal introductory program. This program is for a minimum of one year. They may then be received with the approval of the local community Council, or the Director and Formation Director if no Council yet exists as in the case of a new community that is being formed. The candidates should be interviewed jointly by the community Director, Formation Director and/or at least one councilor before Reception. They will be invested at Reception in the large Carmelite Brown Scapular/Ceremonial Scapular as a symbol of their membership. Normally there is not more than one Reception of candidates a year in any community.
4. The Formation Guides, the Phase I and Phase II manuals, contain the formation program that must be used for valid Reception and Profession into the Order. Among

the subject areas they cover, and which are essential to the formation process are:

- a. the definition of Religious Orders, the Carmelite Order, and the Carmelite Third Order
 - b. The Carmelite Way of Life (The Rule of St. Albert)
 - c. The Rule for the Third Order of Carmel
 - d. an introduction to the prayer life of Carmel, the Carmelite Order, and the Carmelite Family
 - e. the history of Carmel
 - f. a brief introduction to Mariology, with emphasis on devotion to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
 - g. Carmelite Saints, Blessed and Venerable.
 - h. The Brown Scapular and its significance in the life of a Lay Carmelite
 - i. living in a Lay Carmelite Community
 - j. ministry (or apostolic service) for a Lay Carmelite
 - k. the structure of the Order, and the Order in North America
 - l. the pertinent documents and norms for Lay Carmelites
 - m. the Provincial Statutes
 - n. the Rites of Reception and Professions.
5. With the recommendation of the Formation Director, the Community Council shall approve each prospective member for admission, i.e., Reception. The Council establishes the times for Reception and Professions, normally once a year, and even in a large community, not more than twice a year.

Chapter 9 - Formation and Professions

1. Formation is divided into four specific periods: preparation for Reception; preparation for Temporary Promises, preparation for Final Promises, and Ongoing Formation. The local Council is responsible to insure that the formation program and instructions presented in the Formation Guides are presented properly.
2. The first phase of formation is preparation for Reception into the Order. The candidate shares in the lessons outlined in the Phase I manual. This phase normally lasts a minimum of twelve months and may extend to two years if necessary. When the candidate has completed Phase I and the Council has determined that s/he is ready

to continue, s/he is received into the Order and becomes a Lay Carmelite. The Council needs to take the responsibility of approving a candidate for Reception very seriously. A person who is a negative influence on the life of the Community should not be admitted to Reception but dismissed. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office may bar a candidate from being received into the Order but will not ordinarily do so without the advice of the local council.

3. Reception incorporates the new candidates into the Carmelite Order. A period of special formation begins upon Reception of new members. Under the guidance of the Formation Director, they are provided with a course of instruction that will deepen their prayer life, their sense of community and their call to ministry. In all things, the purpose of this formation is to increase their desire to follow Christ, abandoning everything so that they may respond to Christ's call to the rich, young man, *Come, follow me* (Mt. 19:21). The topics to be covered during the period of preparation prior to Temporary Promises shall include a review of one's call to Carmel, a comprehensive consideration of the prayer life of Carmel, a study of Carmelite role models, and the meaning of commitment in one's Carmelite vocation. These topics are all addressed in the twenty-four instructions that are presented in the Phase II Formation Guide.
4. With this Lay Carmelite Vocation, we are called to deepen our Baptismal Promises. Baptism is the source of new life in Christ from which the entire Christian life springs forth. It is through the Sacraments of Initiation we are given our Christian name, and sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵
5. The period of formation between Reception and Temporary Promises shall last a minimum of two years. For a good reason the Council may prolong this period on a case-by-case basis for a period usually not to exceed one year. At the completion of this period of formation, the received member is eligible with the approval of the Council to make a free and deliberate choice to profess Temporary Promises as a Lay Carmelite. Before Profession, the candidate should meet with the Community Director, the Formation Director, and/or at least one Councilor for an interview to determine his/her readiness for Temporary Profession. The entire Council, however, votes to approve the Profession. A person who desires not to profess promises may freely leave the Order at any time during this period.
6. The local community has a very serious obligation to evaluate the suitability of candidates for Profession and this obligation is not to be taken lightly. If the candidate has not demonstrated fidelity to the Carmelite Way of Life and to the life of the local community, if his/her attitude is contentious, if his/her influence on others is negative, and if s/he demonstrates by word or deed a spirit of discord with the bishop or pastor, s/he should not be admitted to Profession. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office ordinarily should not overrule the local community Council and profess someone whom they have rejected. The Office may, however, bar the Profession of someone whom it sees as unfit for membership in the Order even if the local Council approves

it.

7. A Profession of Final Promises may be made after a minimum of three years of active membership from the time one professes Temporary Promises. This is a special time of discernment on the part of the individual as well as the local community and of living the life of a Lay Carmelite. Study continues during this time through ongoing formation at the monthly community meeting.
8. Reception and Profession rites are normally conducted according to the rite prescribed for the respective ceremonies. If the Prior Provincial, Provincial Delegate, Provincial Coordinator, or the Associate Delegate are present, they conduct the Reception or receive the Professions, even if they are not priests (Only a priest or deacon can bless the Ceremonial Scapular). The Prior General or the Prior Provincial takes precedence over any and all other presiders. The ceremonies should increase in solemnity with Receptions taking place during Liturgy of the Hours; Professions during the Celebration of the Eucharist.
9. In danger of death, the Council or a Provincial Official may admit a new member to Profession. If recovery occurs, the newly professed member must resume the regular program of formation.
10. As a community, the Renewal of Profession by the professed members shall be made together annually, appropriate date determined by the Council.
11. Formation meetings should normally be about two hours in duration. They are not to be held at the same time as the regular monthly community meeting, though they may follow or precede it. This is because candidates are expected to be at the normal monthly community meeting.
12. Ongoing Formation may not be held at the same time as the Phase I and Phase II formation sessions.
13. If there is an additional enrichment session, such as a book club etc., it should not conflict with the Ongoing Formation of the Community.
14. Ongoing Formation is normally part of the agenda of the monthly community meeting. This enables all to be present for Ongoing Formation.
15. Ongoing Formation needs to follow the guidelines and parameters of the respective Provincial Lay Carmelite Office which will continue to develop or recommend new material. All Community members are required to attend Ongoing Formation.
16. New members, including those in formation, should attend all the regular meetings of their community.
17. Ongoing formation is significantly strengthened through attendance at any of the Regional or Provincial Conferences of the Order. Many good books, magazines,

webinars, and other materials on Carmelite spirituality are readily available. The Community Council shall learn of such resources and encourage its membership to avail themselves of such helps. The Regional Formation Coordinator is available as a resource person.

18. References to the profession of vows in the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel are ordinarily understood as referring to the profession of promises. The additional profession of vows is accorded to the individual Lay Carmelite under certain conditions.
19. At the end of some years after Final Promises, not less than seven years, professed members may decide under the advice of their Personal Spiritual Director to renew their Profession, taking the vows of chastity and obedience according to their state in life.
 - a. These vows, which oblige in conscience (which bind under pain of sin), are private vows and as such are distinguished from the vows taken by Carmelite Religious. They add no rights, responsibilities, or privileges to the Lay Carmelite. Because the vows are private, it is not appropriate to use any external sign of such profession.
 - b. A person wishing to take private vows as a Lay Carmelite submits a letter of petition for the taking of these vows to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. S/he will be then given specific instructions to follow in the process of taking Private Vows.
 - c. This private vow does not dispense one of one's conjugal duties toward one's spouse.
20. A Final Professed Lay Carmelite taking private vows:
 - a. will take a vow of chastity according to his or her state of life
 - b. will profess obedience according to the Carmelite Way of Life and the documents proper to the Lay Carmelites toward all Superiors in the Carmelite Order and the Catholic Church
 - c. does not take a vow of poverty.
21. The virtue of poverty remains at the heart of the Carmelite charism and all Lay Carmelites should strive to live more simply and free themselves of excessive preoccupation with material concerns. They should be most generous in the financial support they give the Carmelite Order and the Church, in an especially compassionate outreach to the poor.
22. Profession, whether by profession of promises or vows, ceases immediately when one leaves the Order with a dispensation by the Provincial Officials. In such a case, the one wishing to leave, after prayerful deliberation, must submit a request in writing to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. The letter of dispensation will be sent to the person

and a copy to his or her community director.

23. Persons who transfer to our Order from any other Order are expected to complete Phase I and Phase II materials before they are professed as Lay Carmelites. If they have made a Final Profession in another Order, they may make a Final Profession as a Lay Carmelite on the completion of Phase II. They do not lose their membership in the other Order until they make Profession as a Lay Carmelite.
24. Those who transfer from the Secular Discalced Order (OCDS) are a special matter:

A Final Professed OCDS

- a. spends a minimum of two years as an active member of the community
- b. becomes familiar with formation material
- c. does not have to go through the entire Phase I and Phase II formation program
- d. will be assisted by the Formation Director about Carmelite life as a TOC
- e. requests permission from the Community Council to renew profession in the name of the O.Carm. Prior General.

A Temporary Professed OCDS

- a. continues as a Temporary Professed for the required three years of which at least two years have been as an active member of the TOC as a Lay Carmelite
- b. follows b, c and d above
- c. requests permission from the Community Council to make their Final Profession as a TOC.

A Received OCDS is required to begin Initial Formation with the Phase II formation program.

An OCDS Candidate will participate in all of the Initial Formation Programs of the Lay Carmelites.

No pressure is ever to be made on an OCDS to transfer, or to prevent a transferee from returning to the OCDS

25. Final Professed persons may be involuntarily dismissed from promises to the Third Order Lay Carmelites for just cause. Just cause constitutes the repeated and unjustified failure to meet obligations as a Lay Carmelite.
- a. Certain forms of behavior such as insubordination to the authorities of the Order, blatant immorality, sacrilegious actions, etc. can result in immediate dismissal from the Order by the Provincial Officials after an investigation.

- b. The Council may decide to write a letter to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office recommending dismissal. In this case, the Community Council must have compiled a written record documenting over a reasonable period, minimally six months, the unacceptable behavior of the member in question. Witnesses to this unacceptable behavior must be named and listed in this documentation. The Final Professed person in question must be allowed to discuss the matter with the whole Council in person before the decision is made whether or not to ask for dismissal. An accurate record of this person's meeting with the Community Council must be added to the recommendation sent to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. The Provincial Official acts on this recommendation, taking into consideration all the evidence. The Provincial Official then informs the person in question and the Community Council of the final decision.

Chapter 10- Symbol of Membership

1. The Lay Carmelite Habit, like the habit for all Carmelites, consists essentially of the Brown Scapular. The scapular is a reminder to the Lay Carmelite of his/her incorporation into and union with the Carmelite Family throughout the Universal Church.
2. The Lay Carmelite Scapular consists of two brown panels, approximately 8" x 6". This has traditionally been decorated with the initials BVM (Blessed Virgin Mary on the front panel) and IHS (Greek name for Jesus Christ on the back panel). This is known as the Ceremonial Scapular. It is worn outside normal street clothing during functions of the community and the Carmelite Order. Respecting the Ceremonial Scapular as the habit of a Lay Carmelite, there are to be no other decorations on it. The traditional small brown cloth scapular or scapular medal may be worn under one's clothing in daily life.¹⁶
3. In daily life, and especially while engaged in the service of the Church, Lay Carmelites may choose to wear a pin, pendant, or ring with the Carmelite shield as a sign of their membership in the Order. When wearing one's Lay Carmelite Scapular or any insignia of the Order, one must be very conscious of one's responsibility to act in a way that brings only credit to the Order.
4. When gathering as members of a Lay Carmelite Community or when asked to represent the Carmelite Order at a Parish or Diocesan function, one may wear the Lay Carmelite Ceremonial Scapular.
5. The Ceremonial Scapular is normally worn or placed in the casket for burial. Some prefer the ancient custom of wearing a habit similar to the Religious in the Order for burial which the individual would have pre-arranged. The Lay Carmelite Community must defer to the members of the family regarding the burial arrangements of their loved one.

6. There is a custom of Lay Carmelites using the initials T.O.Carm. or TOC after their names. The initials are used only within the confines of the Carmelite family where they are known, understood, and not subject to being confused with the designation of Religious members: Friars, Brothers, Nuns and Sisters of the Order.
7. When a Lay Carmelite wishes to use the initials on a publication which is meant for distribution beyond the Order, even if it is in a Catholic journal or periodical, the materials must be submitted to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office for approval. In the same way, if a Lay Carmelite is being advertised as a Lay Carmelite for a talk or lecture, even in a parochial or diocesan setting, s/he must submit a synopsis of the talk to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. When we are identified as Carmelites in our speaking or writing, we are speaking or writing as members of the Order and we must exercise due caution in this matter.

Chapter 11 - Categories of Membership

1. *An Active Member*. An active member is a Lay Carmelite who regularly attends and participates in scheduled community meetings, days of recollection, retreats, and other community functions, and who is attempting to lead and develop a spiritual life by following the traditions of the Carmelite Order as expressed through the Carmelite Way of Life and the pertinent documentation of the Third Order of Lay Carmelites including these Statutes.
2. *An Inactive Member* is a Professed Lay Carmelite who temporarily or indefinitely due to age, illness, extended travel, family necessity, personal decision etc., does not participate in regular monthly community meetings or other scheduled activities of the community.
 - a. These members continue to enjoy membership in the Lay Carmelite Community except that the professed lose active and passive voice in such matters as community elections and other decision-making matters.
 - b. A Lay Carmelite who is unable to attend meetings because of declining health remains an inactive member.
 - c. There are other circumstances in which the local community may decide that the reasons for not attending community functions are beyond the individual's control and such a member remains inactive.
 - d. It is expected that inactive members continue living the Carmelite Way of Life recommended for all Lay Carmelites as circumstances permit. And, if possible, continue to offer financial support to the Lay Carmelite Office and his/her local community through their annual dues and fundraising appeals.
3. If a Candidate is received but not professed and is absent from his/her Phase II Formation sessions for three consecutive months, he or she must begin Phase II

Formation again. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office may waive this in certain cases.

4. For Professed members in either Temporary or Final Promises, or those who have professed Vows, twenty-four months should be considered sufficient for the member, local council and/or Lay Carmelite Office to discuss and decide if association with the Lay Carmelites is to be extended.
5. After twenty-four months, if the reason for non-attendance is personal choice, the Council sends the name of the individual to the Lay Carmelite Office and that person will be placed on Leave of Absence status by the Provincial Officials as defined in the Community Manual.
6. Isolate Members. An Isolate Lay Carmelite is a Final Professed member who has been given specific permission to be in this status by the Provincial Officials. Ordinarily, no one is to be accepted as a Candidate i.e., entered into the Phase I formation program, as an isolate member. Normally one will not be allowed to function as an isolate Lay Carmelite if an active community is located within a reasonable distance. A *reasonable distance* is a determination reserved to the Provincial Officials of the province with which the individual in question is affiliated. As an Isolate Lay Carmelite, s/he is still expected to financially support the Lay Carmelite Office through the annual dues.
7. Isolates should never presume or be resigned to remain in this status for life, but clearly understand that being part of a community is the preferred and usual condition for a Lay Carmelite. Consequently, they should do all within reason either to become part of an active community in some way or to work to form a new community of their own.
8. Leave-of-Absence status. A member may find himself or herself on a leave of absence status under any of the following situations:
 - a. s/he is a Professed member who has been suspended by the Provincial Officials from attending or participating in regular community functions, or any other regional, provincial. or national Lay Carmelite event. This disciplinary measure to protect the local community from disruptive behavior lasts until the Provincial Officials determines that the individual is no longer harmful to the good of the local community.
 - b. s/he is a Professed member but as a matter of personal choice has been inactive for some twenty-four months
 - c. the Community Council requests, for just cause, by letter and documentation to the Provincial Officials a professed member be placed on a leave of absence
 - d. a Final Professed member makes an official request to the Provincial Officials that s/he be placed on a leave of absence for the purpose of discernment regarding his/her Carmelite Vocation.

9. The Leave of Absence status normally lasts up to twelve months. The Provincial Officials can extend it to a further twelve months. Any individual wishing to return from Leave of Absence status must notify the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office and the local Council and begin attending local community meetings regularly. S/he may be returned by the decision of the local council to active and passive voice when the individual has attended seventy-five percent of meetings over a three-year period.

Chapter 12 - Living in Community

1. The common life of love in Carmel is to peak whenever possible in the celebration of the Eucharist as a group. Daily Eucharist is a tradition that goes back to the Way of Life St. Albert gave the first hermits on Mount Carmel. Praying the Liturgy of the Hours and Lectio Divina in common is done at regular community meetings and other occasions when Lay Carmelites gather. Daily Morning and Evening Prayer belong to the oldest layer of the Church's tradition and through this practice the Carmelite joins himself or herself to the Universal Church at prayer.
2. Since the 12th Century, the gift of contemplative prayer has been one of the richest treasures of the Order, giving birth to some of the greatest saints and mystics of the Church. Members shall cultivate this spirit of prayer in their lives. The Council promotes growth in contemplative prayer through its ongoing formation choices and by encouraging participation in Carmelite retreats, days of recollection, convocations and other Carmelite events.
3. The Lay Carmelite also uses devotional prayers, in his/her daily life, but devotional prayers should be kept to a reasonable minimum at community meetings so that the Official Prayer of the Church not be overshadowed.
4. Members shall strive to communicate and dialogue in a spirit of openness, especially in regard to community proposals. They shall be mutually supportive of one another as St. Paul states, *be kind to one another, compassionate and mutually forgiving, just as God has forgiven you in Christ* (Eph. 4:32).
5. Unless prevented by serious reasons, members should attend all the meetings of the community including events such as days of recollection and retreats. If a member cannot attend a regularly scheduled community meeting or other event scheduled by the community, that member should inform the Director or one of the Councilors.
6. A special concern shall be shown to the sick and homebound members of the community. Care shall be taken that they are visited according to their need. In serious illness or in danger of death, the Council shall notify the members so that the prayers of all may assist the person who is ill.
7. Our spirit of community calls us to commend our deceased brothers and sisters to the Lord, especially on November 15th, the commemoration of all the deceased members

of the Carmelite family. When a brother or sister dies, members are encouraged to attend the Liturgy of Christian burial or a Mass offered for the deceased. The community shall also propose certain prayers to be offered for a member who dies, especially, if possible, the Office of the Dead. The Lay Carmelite Office should be notified of any member's death.

8. Community life is also strengthened through outreach. Any communal apostolic activities, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, in which all members can participate will be determined by the Council.
9. Each community is encouraged to publish a newsletter or bulletin to keep the members aware of the goals, programs, ministries and other activities of the community and of the Order. This communication is especially valuable for members unable to attend meetings. Newsletters should be sent to the respective Lay Carmelite Office, their Regionals and also to the Directors and Formation Directors of other communities in one's region.
10. Each community is responsible to collect funds for the following purposes:
 - a. to support the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office in its ministry of support to all local communities through the payment of dues
 - b. to defray the travel costs of the Lay Carmelite Office Visitor
 - c. to help cover the expenses of the Regional Coordinator and Regional Formation Coordinator of their area
 - d. to provide stipends and cover expenses for speakers at meetings, days of recollection and retreats
 - e. to make available books, and other materials on Carmelite Spirituality
 - f. to help the community carry out its apostolic endeavors
 - g. to help subsidize payment of dues for members in need
 - h. to help sponsor participation in Carmelite Events.

Fund-raising projects are advisable at times to help the community meet these financial needs.

11. While recognizing that the most fruitful means for inviting new members is one-to-one contact and personal example, the community shall initiate and carry on programs to foster new vocations to the Lay Carmelites. Some recommended means are:
 - a. establishing a committee to foster new vocations with a Councilor appointed as liaison
 - b. distributing prepared vocational materials to interested persons and churches

- c. conducting informational meetings in the local areas at which the Spirituality of Carmel is introduced
- d. using available local media resources to promote Carmelite events.

Chapter 13 - Transfers

1. Lay Carmelites often find that they must relocate for family or employment reasons. If there is a Lay Carmelite Community in the new location, they will need to transfer to that community. Where there is no Lay Carmelite Community within a reasonable distance they will request Isolate Status. If they wish to begin to establish a community, it is hoped that the Lay Carmelite, working with his/her pastor, can begin a community rather than moving into Isolate status. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office will do whatever it can to help facilitate the beginning of a new community. There are other various reasons a Lay Carmelite is not able to remain in his/her current community and will request a transfer from one community to another, although such transfers should not be done lightly. To establish a process by which the Lay Carmelite will carefully discern the reasons for a transfer, the following guidelines are established.
2. Any policy regarding transfers pertains to professed members. When a person relocates during Phase I or Phase II formation, and wishes to join another community, ordinarily s/he must begin formation anew so that his/her entire formation previous to Temporary Profession is within a single community. Exceptions may be granted by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office.
3. If a candidate is dismissed during initial formation and wishes to join another community, the community to which they apply must receive a letter from the first community outlining the reasons for dismissal. This letter is to be considered very seriously before the candidate is reconsidered for initial formation. Exceptions must be granted explicitly by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office.
4. Any Transferred Professed member must be in their NEW Lay Carmelite Community for a minimum of three years before being eligible to vote (active voice) and to be eligible for election (passive voice) provided s/he meets the attendance requirements.
5. Community to community within the same province: The decision about a member transferring from one community to another within the same province must involve not only the member, but also the councils of both communities, the RC/RFC team if the communities are in a defined region, and the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. Among the considerations in this transfer is the status of the member, transfer of an accurate record of members attendance, and Reception and Professions information.
6. When an individual transfers from community to community within the same province s/he must:
 - a. complete the transfer form from the Community Manual Appendix

- b. If the Regional Coordinator and the two respective Community Councils all agree to the transfer, only a copy of the transfer form needs to be sent to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office
 - c. If any of the parties involved has an objection to the transfer, it should be brought to the attention of the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office for resolution.
7. Transfers between O.Carm. Provinces: With one major exception, all of the criteria that pertain to community-to-community transfers within the same province apply to any member's transferring between the PCM and SEL provinces. The exception is that the individual is expected to obtain approval signatures from both Provincial Lay Carmelite Offices using the transfer form in the Community Manual Appendix. As applicable, the respective RC/RFC teams also need to be advised of such transfers.
 8. From T.O.Carm. to OCDS; from OCDS to T.O.Carm.: It is the case that occasionally a member of one branch of the Carmelite Family discovers his/her true vocation is in the other branch and wishes to transfer. This should be done only with careful spiritual advice. When one moves to an area where there is only the other tradition, the person is welcome to be a guest as stated in # 13.
 9. Accepting a Secular Carmelite. The OCDS must receive information from their Secular Carmelite Community regarding level of formation completed in order for a transfer level to be evaluated. As outlined in Chapter 9 – Formation and Professions, the level of formation as an OCDS will determine the acceptance procedure. In all cases, a good understanding of all of the material in our Phase I and Phase II Formation Guides is the desirable objective for the transferring OCDS person to accomplish when joining his/her new Lay Carmelite Community.
 10. The transfer is completed when the OCDS. renews his/her Profession in the name of the Prior General of the Carmelite Order (O.Carm.). The permission to renew the Profession in the name of the O.Carm. Prior General is given by the Provincial Officials upon the recommendation of the Community Council. Normally the OCDS should spend a minimum of two years with the T.O.Carm. community before renewing Profession.
 11. Lay Carmelite to Secular Carmelite community: a Professed member requesting transfer to a Secular (OCDS) community must send the transfer form from the Community Manual Appendix to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. This office will send the Lay Carmelite his/her release. If the member in question has not yet been Professed, none of these approvals are required.
 12. If already Professed, one remains a Lay Carmelite until s/he makes Profession as a Secular (OCDS) Carmelite.
 13. Guest Status: A special case presents itself where an Isolate Lay Carmelite or an Isolate Secular Carmelite resides within the vicinity of an active community of the other

tradition, or when a Lay or Secular Carmelite may be visiting for either a brief or extended period of time in an area where there is no active community of one's own particular tradition. In these cases, the T.O.Carm. community is to show every hospitality to the OCDS Isolate and the OCDS Isolate is to be welcomed to attend any and all community functions and meetings of the local T.O.Carm. community, on the same basis as any Lay Carmelite. Similarly, the T.O.Carm. Isolate is encouraged to accept any and as much hospitality as offered him or her by the OCDS community. The guest has neither active nor passive voice. The primary reason for attendance is to support the continued development of the community element of one's call to Carmel. However, it is important to understand that proselytization in either direction is to be carefully avoided.

Part III

Provincial Government of the Lay Carmelites

Chapter 1 - The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office

1. The government and activities of the Lay Carmelites of the Provinces of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and of St. Elias are overseen and coordinated by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Offices currently located respectively in Darien, Illinois, and Middletown, New York. The Prior Provincial and his Council appoints any or all of the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials: a Delegate, Coordinator and Associate Delegates to assist him in his ministry to the Lay Carmelites. All references in the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel to the Prior Provincial are interpreted as applying to or referring to his appointed Provincial Officials. (In accord with No. 57 of the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel).
2. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office has the responsibility of:
 - a. keeping the status and historical records of all individual Lay Carmelites and communities including meeting time and place, its Director, Formation Director, Secretary, Treasurer, and Spiritual Assistant
 - b. keeping financial records of individual and community dues and donations
 - c. providing the formation material and other information needed by individual Lay Carmelites and their communities as they develop in their personal Carmelite vocation and as a community
 - d. striving to communicate by letters, newsletters, social media such as e-mail, website, and Facebook with articles of interest to Carmel and news of Lay Carmelites and their communities in the United States, Canada and the whole Order
 - e. appointing the Regional Coordinators and Regional Formation Coordinators as

needed for the various geographical areas of the Province

- f. conducting or overseeing official visitations of the Lay Carmelite communities. When the visitor comes, s/he represents not only the respective province, but the whole Carmelite Order, and it is essential that every member of the community make an effort to be present
 - g. assisting people asking about a Lay Carmelite Vocation
 - h. providing and promoting opportunities for Retreats, Days of Recollection and Workshops for Lay Carmelites and their communities.
3. The Provincial Officials may appoint a *Commissary* within a Lay Carmelite community if, for grave reasons, it is troubled or disruptive. The Commissary acts in the Officials name, in accord with the Rule for the Third Order of Carmel (No. 65), and directs the Lay Carmelite community in question for a reasonable length of time determined by him/her. Normally, this Commissary is a Regional Coordinator, or the Director of another Lay Carmelite Community.

Chapter 2 - The Lay Carmelite Inter-Provincial Commission

1. An Inter-Provincial Commission for the Lay Carmelites acts as an advisory body for the Priors Provincial of the Province of St. Elias and the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. The Commission is appointed by the Prior Provincial and Councils of the respective provinces. It is composed of the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office Officials and other assigned Lay Carmelites. The Provincial Officials serve on the commission for the duration of their terms as Provincial Officials. The assigned Lay representatives serve a term of three years and may be appointed for more terms at the discretion of the Prior Provincial. The time will not ordinarily exceed two more consecutive terms.
2. The Commission was formed primarily to oversee and support the Lay Carmelites in the Provinces and ordinarily it meets twice each year.
3. The Commission's role is to:
 - a. update formation materials
 - b. prepare any updates of Provincial Statutes of the Provinces of the Most Pure Heart of Mary and Saint Elias when necessary
 - c. organize Convocations
 - d. communicate with the Prior General Delegate assigned to oversee the Lay Carmelites.

Chapter 3 - Regional Coordinators

1. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office has the authority to appoint Regional Coordinators (RC's) in regions of the United States and Canada where the clustering of Lay Carmelite communities warrants this support. RC's are appointed for a term of three years and may be appointed for more terms at the discretion of the Provincial Officials. The time will not ordinarily exceed two more consecutive terms.
2. The RC serves as a liaison between a particular geographic area and the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. The specific duties and responsibilities of an RC insofar as his/her relationship with the communities within the region are to:
 - a. facilitate the communication between the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office and the local communities. Any local community is free to contact their RC on matters important to them. It will be the duty of each community to keep their RC informed of its activities. The RC remains an active member in good standing of his/her own community
 - b. maintain contact by phone, letter, e-mail with each community in the region three or four times a year
 - c. conduct an official visitation with each community in his or her region every three years
 - d. submit visitation reports as designated by his or her respective Lay Carmelite Office
 - e. insure that directives and information sent from the Lay Carmelite Office to the community Directors and members have indeed been implemented
 - f. assist any Lay Carmelite Office representative coming to his or her region—including scheduling whenever requested to do so
 - g. if needed or requested, help communities in his or her region with the structure and format of their monthly meetings so that good content and pacing will be assured for the benefit of all
 - h. each year, endeavor to promote a gathering of all the communities within his or her region for one of the following:
 - i. a retreat or a day of recollection
 - ii. a special celebration, e.g., on the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
 - iii. a regional conference at which a speaker or speakers could be invited.
 - i. make the Lay Carmelite presence known in the diocese through the diocesan directory, diocesan newspaper (if one is available), etc.

- j. attend scheduled regional and provincial meetings for not only his/her own personal development and renewal, but to take advantage of networking with other RC's and RFC's from both provinces
 - k. inform the Lay Carmelite Office of any major problem in a local community that needs to be addressed by the Lay Carmelite Office. However, every attempt should be made to resolve problems at the local level
 - l. ensure community officers keep accurate, up-to-date records of their membership
 - m. insure that required reports are submitted to the Lay Carmelite Office by communities.
3. RC's have no authority to legislate any rules or procedures which would bind a local community.
 4. The RC has a right to attend any meeting of a local community or its council, but he or she does not have voting rights on the local councils or in the local communities other than the community to which he or she belong.
 5. The RC is directly responsible and accountable to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office.
 6. The RC and RFC must function as a team if their individual effectiveness, as well as their work as a team, is to be optimized.
 7. Communities should offer monetary support to help offset expenses that the RC incurs as s/he makes visitations and works to support the communities within his/her region.
 8. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office shall inform the RC's of any requests for new communities or discussion groups developing within their areas. Likewise, the RC shall inform the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office of any requests for new communities to begin.

Chapter 4 - Regional Councils

1. Regional Coordinators are encouraged to establish a Regional Council if deemed necessary or helpful in their area as a means to assist the RC/RFC team and advise the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office.
2. This Council should be organized and administered by the RC with the assistance of the RFC.
3. Council membership includes the RC and the RFC as well as each Community Director. If a Community Director cannot participate in the Regional Council, another member of the local community council should be chosen to be the representative member. As needed for expertise, others may occasionally be invited to meet with the Regional Council in a non-voting capacity.

4. At a minimum, the Regional Council should address regional challenges, the promotion of growth of the Lay Carmelites in their area, and the organization of periodic regional conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. They should also identify potential sites for new communities and advise the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office of the suitability of proposed new communities.
5. The Council should meet preferably twice each year, but at the discretion and need of the Regional Coordinator.
6. It is recommended that the Regional Council set up a system of regional dues to offset expenses incurred in the performance of regional duties as well as to share in the cost of regional activities.

Chapter 5 - Regional Formation Coordinators

1. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office will appoint Regional Formation Coordinators (RFC's) in regions of the United States and Canada where the clustering of Lay Carmelite communities warrants this support. RFC's are appointed for a term of three years and may be appointed for more terms at the discretion of the Provincial Officials. The time will not ordinarily exceed two more consecutive terms.
2. The RFC serves as a liaison between a particular geographic area and the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office in matters pertaining to the formation program of the communities within the region. The specific duties and responsibilities of an RFC insofar as his/her relationship with the communities within the region are to:
 - a. see that the local communities are implementing the formation policies set by the Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission and the respective Provincial Lay Carmelite Office
 - b. assist community Formation Directors, as requested or as needed, in setting up and maintaining the records that are necessary for a successful formation program in their community
 - c. respond to communities' inquiries on formation matters that are important to them, or that need clarification. It will be the duty of each community to keep their RFC informed of its activities in regards to their formation program
 - d. establish and maintain communication with the Formation Director in every group within the region
 - e. maintain a record of every community in the region including the name, location, meeting place and time of formation meetings, as well as the name of the Formation Director and his/her formation team members, if any
 - f. provide assistance whenever possible to insure that community Formation

- Directors become aware of their counter-parts in other communities within the region, and encourage ongoing communication among these individuals
- g. schedule a visitation to each community. This visit either may be in conjunction with the RC's visit, or at some other time
 - h. submit a visitation report to his or her respective Provincial Lay Carmelite Office
 - i. inform the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office of any major problem in a local community, insofar as formation is concerned, and that should be addressed by the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office. However, every attempt should be made to resolve problems at the local level
 - j. assist the RC with informational programs about the Lay Carmelites, and make a concerted effort to keep informed about any Discussion Groups or new Developing Communities within his or her region
 - k. attend scheduled regional and provincial meetings for not only his/her own personal development and renewal, but to take advantage of networking with other RFC's from both provinces
 - l. offer assistance to a Developing Community when necessary
 - m. insure that communities are aware of formation requirements for Reception and Professions, and know how to procure the appropriate formation material for their situation. The RFC should offer personal assistance as necessary
 - n. be available to any discussion groups in their region that wish to progress into a Developing Community
 - o. provide community Formation Directors with a brief written summary of his/her visit. A brief annual summary of individual community formation evaluations should also be sent to the respective Lay Carmelite Office. Of particular interest is the status of the use of Phases I and II and Ongoing formation materials in the local communities
 - p. organize an annual workshop, seminar, etc., for community Formation Directors, their respective teams, and any other Lay Carmelites in his or her region who may have a special interest in formation leadership. These events should certainly be done in coordination with the RC of the region to take advantage of such periodic gatherings organized by the RC. A team effort is to be preferred.
3. RFC's have no authority to legislate any rules or procedures which would bind a local community.
 4. The RFC has the right to attend any local community formation meeting in the region.
 5. The RFC is directly responsible and accountable to the Provincial Lay Carmelite Office

6. The RC and RFC must function as a team if their individual effectiveness, as well as their work as a team, is to be optimized.
7. Communities should offer monetary support to help offset expenses that the RFC incurs as s/he makes visitations and works to support the communities within his/her region.

Chapter 6 - Inter-Provincial, Provincial, and Regional Events

1. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Offices shall promote a Convocation of all Lay Carmelites from both Provinces, which should be open to all interested persons, usually every four years in a city chosen by the Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission.
2. The Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission will contact the Lay Carmelite community or communities located in the area of the Convocation. Their assistance with the Convocation preparation and responsibilities during the event will be requested for the success of the Convocation.
3. The theme of the Convocation shall be determined by the Inter-Provincial Lay Carmelite Commission.
4. In the off years when there is no Inter-Provincial Convocation or Provincial Conference, RC/RFC teams are strongly encouraged to organize Regional Conferences if at all possible. The Regional Council or a committee selected from Lay Carmelites in the area should be delegated to host these events. Special circumstances may determine a yearly regional conference in some cases.
5. The primary purpose of Inter-Provincial, Provincial, and Regional events is to gather Carmelites together in common witness, to promote the spiritual and apostolic life of the Lay Carmelites, and to improve communication and mutual support among the communities and their members.

Footnotes

1. Vacare Deo: The word *Vacare* means *to be empty; to be free from*; to have time for and the word *Deo* means God. In Carmelite usage the preferred meaning seems to be *occupation with God*. *The Carmelite Directory of the Spiritual Life, 1951*, The Carmelite Press, Chicago, IL, part 4, forward p 353 speaking of the Carmelite Life: The Contemplative Life, sums it up: *These two things, the purification of the heart and occupation with God, must be done together*.
2. Col. 1:15.
3. More precisely, we play our particular role in forming the Church, as the Church is much wider than our Carmelite family.
4. Lumen Gentium, *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, paragraph I.
5. Prologue to the Carmelite Rule or Way of Life.
6. 1 Corinthians 12: 11.
7. Lumen Gentium 9, Gaudium et Spes 32. The above passage is taken from Chapter 1, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the *1995 General Constitutions of the Carmelite Order*.
8. cf.. *1995 Carmelite General Constitutions*, Chapter II, paragraph 1b.
9. A literal translation would be that Carmel is totally Marian, but this phrase must be understood in the context of the Carmelite Tradition, which predates the Marian spirituality of St. Louis de Montfort and his disciples. Carmelite Spirituality always finds its center and organizing principle in Jesus Christ and His teaching. In this sense, the Marian characteristic of the Order is always subordinated to its Christocentric direction. The Carmelite Way of Life given to the first hermits on Mount Carmel by Saint Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, declares that the purpose of the Order is to live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ (in obsequio Ihesu Christi). There is a much stronger Marian-centered spirituality found in the writings of Ven. Michael of St. Augustine (1621-84), especially his *The Mary-form and Marian Life in Mary*, but this doctrine has not been reflected in either the Order's teaching or the writings of the Order's great Doctors or leading spiritual writers.
10. Yahweh is the proper Name of God as Elijah knew Him and called Him.
11. *Carmelite Way of Life*, chapter 19.
12. *Way of Life*, chapter 19.
13. This commemoration, (a Solemnity on the Carmelite Calendar), is sometimes translated to the nearest or subsequent Sunday.

14. The Provincial Lay Carmelite Office may lower this number in certain circumstances.
15. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition. #1254; #2156; #1300.
16. cf.. *The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Catechesis and Ritual*, prepared under the direction of the North American Provincials of the Carmelite Order, both of the Ancient Observance (O.Carm.) and the Discalced Carmelites (OCD) 2000.