

WHAT ABOUT PERSONAL FAVOURITE DEVOTIONAL HAND-OUTS AT THE MONTHLY MEETING?

Good point raised! Because some in their enthusiasm, while not thinking about the implications of their actions, at times bring all kinds of non-Teresian Carmelite devotional literature to share with the members at the monthly Community Meeting, or decide to take upon themselves to act upon or to do things that they feel are for the good of the community.

As well intentioned as their enthusiasm may be, there is a correct way, a correct time and a proper place for everything. The monthly OCDS Community Meeting is definitely not the correct time or the correct place to “push” personal favourite devotions, especially without consulting the Council. Our monthly Community Meeting is the formal time and place that God gives us to participate together in many ways, as we pray, study and learn together each month, how to live the Teresian Carmelite vocation authentically and how to correctly integrate the vocation into lay life, through a correct understanding and appreciation of the Secular Order vocation and its implications for the co-responsibility of the laity in the welfare of Mother Church.

We attend the monthly community meeting specifically to be guided on how to live both our Christian and the vocation authentically and as perfectly as possible. (See C.# 44), so that the vocation can do what it was born to do, that is, to render its prophetic mission effective, through being correctly understood and correctly lived.

Monthly Community Meetings also provide all members with opportunities for conversion, first, through the death-to-self sacrifice that faithful attendance each month demands. Then, through a conscientious participation in the formation study program, we learn to embrace the ample, but difficult opportunities of putting into practice the evangelical counsels, the charity of the beatitudes and the virtues of obedience, humility and forgiveness, that Community life afford. When we do so, it can make saints out of us when we embrace these opportunities to do so.

Council Members, with the Director of Formation, have the sacred duty and responsibility, to plan for the formation of their community, and also to safeguard the welfare of the community, to keep it faithful to its chrism, its purpose, its function and its prophetic mission. They do so by following the ample and approved Teresian Carmelite teaching schemas on formation that must be followed in order to live the vocation authentically.

Any distracting activities that interrupt or interfere with Community life, no matter how inspiring, holy or well intentioned they may be: a) that do not have the prior approval of the Council, and b) that rob members of the full time dedicated to and allocated for prayer and the formal formation teaching time on the Teresian Carmelite vocation and the study-group discussions, is an activity that becomes counter productive to the goals of the OCDS Meeting, because the time of the monthly meeting is encroached upon, by either non-Carmelite material and or are replaced by unplanned for time-consuming extra activities at the meeting, which could and should not be done without prior permission to do so. Or which could be done privately by members at other times during the month at their leisure and on their own time.

When members have hand-outs that are related to Teresian Carmelite spirituality or other wise, they should give it to the President who after reviewing the literature with the Council who keep in mind the welfare of the community, decide if it is authentic Teresian teaching, and then they do what is in the best interest of the community, for we come to community, among other things, to be taught and to learn how to live St. Teresa's way of perfection. .

Individual members may not take it upon themselves to give formation in community, by deciding to read aloud during the monthly Community Meeting, spiritual material they deem fit, without the prior knowledge of, or without the permission of the Council of the Community. Doing so, takes time away from the formal and approved teaching schema that must be covered. It is also disruptive to the meeting itself, can cause divisions and tensions in a community, and it sets a poor example for others, who may wish to do the same thing. If everyone were allowed to do this during the monthly meeting, the meeting would eventually become chaotic, and would be spent doing what it was not meant to do, and members would be robbed of their just expectation of learning the Teresian Carmelite vocation.

A Discalced Carmelite Secular Order Community is not a prayer group, but is the third branch of a Religious Order, which makes us juridically dependent on the OCD Friars and therefore distinct from other pious groups. We are obliged to give formation to our members according the OCDS Constitutions and the Local Statutes approved by our Definitory General in Rome. Council Members are always open to suggestions that enhance, serve and protect the integrity and the purpose of the monthly Community Meeting. But Members must first bring their suggestions to the attention of Council of their Community before taking matters into their own hands. Ultimately, living in community teaches us humility and obedience, both of which crucify our egos, and without which spiritual growth cannot take place.