

Questions and Answers by *Teresa Martinez, ocds*

May OCDS use the prefix of Brother or Sister before their name?

The Rite Booklet: On page six in ceremony booklet for the Rite of Admission to the Discalced Carmel Secular Order it states:

“The celebrant gives each candidate a Bible and copy of the Rule of St. Albert and Constitutions of the Secular Order, saying to each as he does:

Celebrant:

“Brother (or Sister)

The rule of St. Albert of the Secular Carmel is this:

To live in allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ, following the doctrine and example of St. Teresa of Jesus and of St. John of the Cross.

May the Word of Christ dwell abundantly in your heart.

In all that you do, whether in words or in works,

Do it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Copied from the Ritual book of the OCDS)

The opening words of the ceremony address the individual/s being invested with the Scapular. Using the word Brother or Sister, at the start of the ceremony is not a title given, rather it is a fraternal greeting to welcome the candidates into the family of Carmel, because all of the children of Teresa and John are members of the family of the Teresian Carmel that makes us all fraternal spiritual brothers and sisters in the Order.

If the fraternal greeting of **Brother** or **Sister** given at the start of an OCDS Investiture ceremony is not understood for what it really

is or means as a fraternal greeting, it could be misunderstood and perpetuate the fallacy in the minds of others, as well as the OCDS themselves that when a person is admitted into the Order the title Sister or Brother used during the ceremony, may be used in front of their name, or that they may call one another Sister or Brother like the Nuns or Friars are addressed. This is incorrect and could mistakenly indicate to the public or to new aspirants that OCDS Members are entitled to call one another Brother or Sister, or to use the title in front of their name like a Friar or Sister does in front of their name

In light of this and as a precaution, the Director of Formation when preparing candidates for the Investiture Ceremony, must explain well before a ceremony takes place what the correct policy is on this matter, so that our members are clear on this point and not think that once they are received that they are entitled to put the prefix of Brother or Sister before their name or to be called Brother or Sister.

It must also be well understood that not having the title Sister or Brother in front of one’s name in no way whatsoever denigrates the vocation in the Secular Order, nor does it make us less holy or unworthy of belonging to a Religious Order. After death we will all be judged by how we obeyed and lived God’s will for us here on earth.

OCDS are viable members of the Religious Order of Discalced Carmelites, and have the same duty as our OCD Friars and OCD Sisters to seek sanctity to become holy according the teachings of the Church and the charism of our Holy Founders as interpreted for each individual branch of our Order by its own Constitutions based on the Rule of St. Albert, which were drawn up to be lived specifically according to the state of each branch’s particular way of life, i.e. our

Friars are mendicants, our Sisters are cloistered, and we, the members of the Secular Order, seek our sanctity through the duties of lay life in the world.

It is an insult to the Secular vocation to try to be pretending Nuns or Priests, which we are not. We have to be the best Catholic Teresian seculars possible.

As lay people who are members of a Religious Order, albeit living in the world, our missionary territory starts and is lived in family life, our work, our Parish, recreation and in the marketplace. This must be well understood so that we appreciate our vocation in the Teresian Carmel and therefore live the vocation effectively. This can only be done by correctly understanding where and what we have been called to do and to be as Secular Order members. This particular calling is what God has chosen for us. The only way to live it correctly is to understand it correctly.

When we die we will be judged on how we have lived and fulfilled God's will for us in the world. The Friars and Sisters will also be accountable according to how well they have lived their particular calling.

It is helpful to, and it also imparts, great inner peace to do God's will for us! He knows and wants only what is best for us, plus He is far-sighted, we are not.