

THE LAY CARMELITES

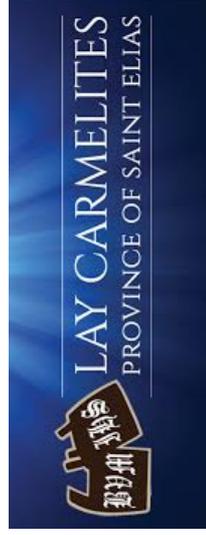
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“The name Carmel conjures attractive and fascinating images of mountain, loving encounter, fraternity, and justice. It suggests beauty and dwells on what is most essential in the life of the human person. Carmel has a way of speaking about God that helps people to know more and more that the Lord is our God; there is no other, and we are to love God with all our heart and mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. There is a beauty in Carmel that can inspire us. We have a feeling that Carmel might be the very thing that people everywhere are seeking today.” -

*Most Rev. Fr. Miceal O’Neill, O.Carm.
Prior General, Order of Carmelites*



SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE LAY CARMELITES

HOW IS LAY CARMELITE LIVING MEANINGFUL IN THE CHURCH TODAY?

The Lay Carmelite is called to the Family of Carmel to be deeply involved in the mission of the Church, to contribute to the sanctification or transformation of the secular world. Profession of promises as a member of the Lay Carmelites is an intensified expression of one's baptismal promises. Being a Lay Carmelite is not just a devotion added to life; it is a way of life. It is a vocation. By entering the Order the Lay Carmelite takes upon himself or herself the Carmelite charism. The call to Carmel, a call to seek God's will in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life, roots the Lay Carmelite in a love of those with whom they live and work, in recognition of God's presence in all circumstances, and in solidarity with God's People everywhere.

WHAT IS THIS RELATIONSHIP THAT CARMELITES HAVE WITH OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH?

The two models of the Carmelite Order are Mary, the Mother of God and Elijah the Prophet who we read about in the Book of Kings. Mary is Patroness, Sister and Mother to all Carmelites. Lay Carmelites live this relationship, imitating her virtues, listening to the Word of God in and through daily life. The Prophet Elijah is an example of a life spent in the service of God, and the motto of the Carmelites is taken from the Prophet Elijah which we read in the Kings 1, "I have been very zealous for the Lord."

Carmelite Websites

Official Website of the Carmelite Order www.ocarm.org

Saint Elias Province (SEL) <http://carmelites.com>

Most Pure Heart of Mary Province (PCM) <http://carmelnet.org>

Carmelite Institute (North America) www.carmeliteinstitute.net

PCM Lay Carmelite Office <http://laycarmelitespcm.org>

National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel www.ourladyofmfcarmelshrine.com

Carmelite Gift Store www.ourladyofmfcarmelshrine.com/giftstore

Liturgy of the Hours www.ibreviary.com

British Province of the Carmelite Order <http://carmelite.org>

Irish Province of the Carmelite Order www.carmelites.ie

Australian Province of the Carmelite Order www.carmelites.org.au

Other Helpful Websites

The Official Vatican website www.vatican.va

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops www.usccb.org

HISTORY



The Carmelite way of life began in the Holy Land at the end of the 12th Century on Mount Carmel near a spring known as the "Fountain of Elijah". The original Carmelites were hermits who asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem, St. Albert Avogadro for a formal rule around 1206. This document in the form of a letter outlined a standard of living that is the basic guide for all Carmelites. It was first approved by the Holy See in January of 1226 by Pope Honorius II. Several adaptations were made while maintaining the wholeness of St. Albert's original letter and the final text used today is that by Pope Innocent IV in 1247.

Lay Carmelites

The Carmelite brothers moved from Mount Carmel into Europe. Once settled as a mendicant order of the Church they welcomed lay people to join them. Blessed John Soreth, Prior General at the time, opened the way for others to be part of the Carmelite Order. With the Bull Cum Nulla issued by Pope Nicholas Von October 7, 1459 he established the second and third orders of Carmel.

The Lay Carmelites are a part of the Third Order branch of the Carmelite Order. They are an international public association of laity erected by Apostolic privilege with the purpose of working towards Christian perfection. 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. (see Living the Carmelite Way, The Third Order Rule #50)

Throughout the world there are many Lay Carmelite Communities. In the North Americas the Lay Carmelites are under the jurisdiction of two Provinces of the Ancient Observance:

The Province of Saint Elias (SEL)

In the late 1800's four Irish Carmelite friars came to the United States to minister to the people of America. These four friars established the Province of Saint Elias in New York. By 1927 there were many friars serving in various areas. In many of these areas Lay Carmelite Communities developed. The Provincial offices were originally located in New York City. In 2006 the Province relocated its offices, including the Lay Carmelite Office, to Middletown, New York on the property of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO FORMATION?

A candidate must be at least 18 years old and be a Catholic in good standing who feels called by God to live more deeply her or his 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.

WHAT DOES THE LAY CARMELITE FORMATION PROCESS ENTAIL?

Formation is divided into four specific periods. The first is preparation for Reception and lasts a minimum of twelve months but may extend up to two years. This period comprises a series of elementary instructions about Carmel, its charism and traditions. After Reception (by which one becomes a Lay Carmelite if approved the Community Council) follows preparation for Temporary Profession. This two to three year formation period entails a course of instruction that will deepen one's prayer life, one's sense of community and one's call to ministry. This phase ends with Temporary Profession, if approved by the Community Council. The third period is preparation for Final or Perpetual Promises. During this period of three years, one engages in on-going formation with the Lay Carmelite Community and deepens his or her living of the Carmelite way as a means of discerning the call to Final or Perpetual Profession.



OUR CHARISM

The Lay Carmelite way of life is based on the three-fold Charism of: **Prayer, Community, and Service.**

- **Prayer:** For Carmelites prayer (both personal and communal) is a continuation of the Eternal Heavenly Liturgy, so we make every effort to participate in daily Eucharist. We pray the Universal Prayer of the Church, Liturgy of the Hours – Morning, Evening, and Night. We are those who find ourselves gifted by God with a special desire and grace to prayer without ceasing. Lay Carmelites commit to a life of prayer, especially mental prayer and orient themselves toward receiving the gift of contemplation by their fidelity to prayer and learning how to meditate at least 30 minutes every day.
- **Community:** The Lay Carmelites are the Third Order of the worldwide family of the Brothers and Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. In this call to community life we are expected to attend regularly scheduled monthly community meetings, annual retreat, and days of prayer. Those who wish to intensify their spiritual and community life, do so being present at gatherings of Lay Carmelites at the Regional, National and even International levels.
- **Service:** Our call to Carmel is the call to seek God's will in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life. We find in Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and in the Prophet Elijah the models for this way of Gospel living. Mary reminds us to listen to God's Word and to cooperate with His will for the salvation of all people. In Elijah, we are shown an example of prophetic action. We are shown a life spent in the service of God—service which finds its source in a profound experience of God through prayer.



YOU ARE CALLED TO CARMEL

- If you are a person of prayer, naturally inclined to solitude, contemplation and detachment.
- If you seek spiritual formation and growth in the spirit of Carmel.
- If you wish for an opportunity to share your spiritual journey with likeminded souls, in the world-wide family of Carmel.

More Information Available at
www.laycarmelite.com

