

Procedure for Petitioning for Canonical Status

Updated April 2018

This is intended as a short description of what commonly happens in a canonical establishment. It is not to set policy, but only to outline current practice. The Provincial Delegate is the ultimate authority, and will guide the local Council through what needs to be done.

Overview

A Study Group may formally petition for canonical status when invited to do so by the Provincial Delegate.

See the Constitutions art. 49, and the Statutes sections XII and XIII.9 for basic information on establishing a canonical community. The documents under *Study Group Policies* on the OCDS provincial website give more specific information.

It is especially helpful for the Study Group Council to consult with their visitorator about what they need to work on.

Process

The Provincial Delegate visits the Study Group to consult with the local Council, talk with the members, and make an evaluation. He will ask the Council for whatever documents he needs. He may ask to review the community's records—membership, financial, attendance, formation—just as for a normal visitation. He is usually assisted by a member of the Provincial Council, either the president or the Study Group's current visitorator.

After the visitation, the Provincial Delegate, with the help of the Provincial Council, continues the discernment and makes a recommendation to the Provincial. The Provincial Delegate informs the Study Group whether or not they have been approved.

If approved by the Provincial, the Provincial Delegate coordinates the application to the OCD Generalate in Rome. The Provincial Delegate continues to work with the local Council throughout the process.

Constitutions art. 49 “For the establishment of a new community it is necessary to present to the General Secretary of the Secular Order the following documents:

- a) a list of the current members, at least 10 members are required to form a community, two of whom must have made definitive promises;
- b) a letter from the Provincial Delegate requesting the establishment of the community;
- c) the permission of the Ordinary of the Diocese in writing;
- d) the title of the community;
- e) the place of the community meeting.”

It is usual for the Generalate to require a brief history of the group, one or two pages. The local Council provides this.

Once the final approval is received, the Provincial Delegate visits the community again to formally establish their canonical status, using the ceremony given in the Ritual.

Please be aware that it takes some time for everything to be accomplished. Patience, docility, and cooperation go a long way toward smoothing the path.