

Discernment Interviews of OCDS Members

adapted from an article by the New Caney Council

Revised February 2018

This is offered by way of example only. Communities are free to use methods that work well for their local circumstances. Please adapt the questions to fit individuals, there is no one-size-fits-all for every person in formation.

Discernment for clothing or the Promise takes into account the formation goals and spiritual maturity proper to the candidate's formation level. The Council may agree upon a series of questions to help in evaluating a candidate's readiness for clothing or the Promise. The candidate reflects on and answers the questions truthfully and openly. Honesty opens a person to self-knowledge, and is the first step towards growth in holiness.

Questions for admission to Formation I (clothing):

What does it mean to you to be part of an OCDS community?

What did you learn in formation that touched your heart and was instilled into your spirit?

How well have you integrated that inspiration into your state of life?

How consistent and faithful are you in applying what you have learned in Carmel?

Was it difficult attending the monthly meetings this past year?

Is there anything that may hinder your attending the monthly meeting?

Do you want to continue in the community and follow Jesus in the spirit of Carmel?

Questions for admission to the First Promise:

What have you learned these past two years in Carmel and how has it affected your spiritual walk with Christ?

What has changed or developed in your prayer life in the past two years?

How does your family feel about your monthly meetings and yearly retreats?

Do you feel ready to make your profession and why?

What do you think will change if you make the Promise?

Why do you think that God is calling you to this decision?

Questions for admission to the Definitive Promise:

How has the OCDS experience affected you, your family, and your spiritual life these last six years?

What have the monthly meetings meant to you and have you had difficulty attending faithfully?

How has your spiritual life improved your personal life, work life (if applicable), and your church community activities?

How do you feel about making this commitment for the rest of your life; what does it mean to you and your family?

Why do you think that God is calling you to this decision?

After the interview:

Most Councils take a week to a month to prayerfully reflect on the candidate's responses. The Council meets again to discuss their impressions with each other and vote on whether or not to admit the candidate or perhaps give an extension. They look for progress and commitment, not perfection.

Most Councils meet with the candidate's **formator** to receive a report on the candidate's progress in studies and interaction in the formation class. The candidate's interpersonal behavior and interest in learning are important signs of spiritual growth.