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CARMEL AND FOLLOWING OTHER SPIRITUALITIES (2021 ED.)

The Interprovincial Commission for Lay Carmelites determined at its extraordinary session held in Sunnyvale California on Saturday, July 18, 1996, that in order to preserve the unique charism of Carmel and its rich heritage which it contributes to the universal Church it is necessary to insist that Lay Carmelites commit themselves exclusively to a Carmelite way of life and spirituality. Concern was expressed about Lay Carmelites belonging simultaneously to other third orders or to various movements who offer spirituality different from Carmel. Canon Law currently permits the faithful to belong to more than one Third Order. Legislation in the current Statutes indicates that Lay Carmelites within the St. Elias and Most Pure Heart of Mary provinces may not belong to other third orders (Statutes, Chapter 1, article #4, page 63). The interpretation of this article of the Statutes includes the following:

At this point in time, we do not permit members of the Lay Carmelites to join any other “spiritual” group. That is, it is not permissible to be active as a member of the Lay Carmelites and at the same time, belong to another society, organization, institute or order, which has a formal formation program, has a period of probation or learning extension time, profess promises and/or vows, or which follows a charism which is different from Carmel.¹

From the Preface of The Rule for the Third Order of Carmel, we read: ... “The Rule of St. Albert is like a spring from which the river of the charism flows. The values that it expresses have been translated into ever new forms which are suited to lay people in various places in different periods. This has enabled lay people to incarnate the Carmelite charism in a concrete way and to live out its spirituality in a way proper to them.”

For one trying to live out Carmel’s spirituality in a way proper to the Lay Carmelites, it seems inappropriate, it is inappropriate, for that Lay Carmelite to latch on to some other form of spirituality that of itself is not Carmel. It is very unwise to try to be a “casserole” Carmelite – that is, a little bit of this practice, a little bit of that devotion, on and on, with whatever attracts you at this point in time. Mix it all up with your Carmelite vocational commitment, and pretty

¹ Current unapproved spiritual groups are: Association of Mary: Queen of all Hearts; The Divine Will Movement; Flame of Love; Legion of Mary; Spiritual Movements in the name of or consisting of the teachings of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort; Marian Helpers; Oblates of Missionaries of Mary Immaculate; Opus Angelorum; Jesuit Sodality of our Lady.

soon, you will not really be focused on the Carmelite way of life, which you promised to observe at the time of your profession into the Carmelite Order.²

It takes a lifetime to truly live out your commitment to Carmel. If you were called to follow the Carmelite vocation, as your way of living in allegiance to Jesus Christ, then you cannot also choose another way of living that allegiance. True, there are many ways of living in allegiance to Jesus Christ. As good as these many ways are, one person cannot follow many “ways.”

The sole purpose of this guideline is to keep our Lay Carmelite focused on Carmelite spirituality and not have it diluted by elements, no matter how good, which are foreign to it. This practice is consistent with the expectations put on the members of the first and second order and on the third order religious.

Editions: 1998, 2006, 2018, 2021

Approved by: Cindy A. Perazzo, Provincial Coordinator

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² Candidates for Reception are to relinquish membership to unapproved spiritual groups prior to being received into the Order. Candidates for Temporary or Final Profession will be given an appropriate amount of time to discern their Carmelite vocation.

Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary