

# OCDS Community Apostolates

Below are some ideas of what communities throughout the Oklahoma Semi-Province are doing to spread Carmelite spirituality and to serve those in need. This information may be helpful to those OCDS communities that are trying to discern an apostolate.

Those apostolates that meet the criteria for an OCDS Community **primary** apostolate are highlighted in **bold**. These apostolates should include:

- The spread of Carmelite spirituality
- Personal contact with those being reached out to
- Involvement of all (or nearly all) the community members

*Secondary* apostolates, assisting God's "little ones" are certainly worthy. Communities are highly encouraged to continue them.

## Community 1

- 1) **Invite guest speakers to our area generally twice a year. These events are open to the public. Speakers base their presentations on Carmelite topics. Sometimes they have an OCD friar speak and invite speakers with knowledge of Carmelite spirituality. The group has a table with OCDS information and books for sale at these events.**
- 2) **Attend the Diocesan Eucharistic Congress each year, selling books for ICS publications, rosaries, scapulars, and miscellaneous Carmelite items. The hope is to incorporate a scapular enrollment during one of the session breaks.**
- 3) **Support diocesan priests by giving them scapulars and scapular books at their ordination. Included in this gift is an OCDS brochure. Working on sending anniversary and birthday cards to them as a reminder that the Carmelites are praying for them. By raising awareness, it is hoped that local priests will remember to refer persons interested in deeper prayer to the Community.**
- 4) Participate in St. Francis Table for the poor. (secondary apostolate)

## Community 2

- 1) **Provide monthly teachings on Carmelite spirituality at two church parishes.**
- 2) **Provide monthly teachings on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and other matters of the Faith at a third church parish**
- 3) **Each member adopts a diocesan seminarian. Members send cards/ letters at least once a year, usually Christmas, to all seminarians in the diocese enclosing Carmelite materials such as rosaries, scapulars, prayer pamphlet, prayer cards.**
- 4) Provide cleanup apostolate for a local retreat center several times a year. (secondary apostolate)

## Community 3

- 1) **Pray for and maintain contact with the seminarians studying for the Diocese, sending small gifts and items of Carmelite spirituality.**

#### Community 4

- 1) **Distribute the ICS pamphlet, St. Teresa's The Prayer of Recollection.**
- 2) Food/charity Pantry – providing cash donations, food/supplies, and service to feed and clothe the poor. (secondary apostolate)

#### Community 5

- 1) **Participate in the Annual Mass of the Roses each October in honor of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Members serve as lectors for the Mass. Members are assigned to the various Carmelite booths – vocations, Holy Face, Carmelite saints, Carmelite readings, works of art by the Carmelite Sisters, etc.**

The children and grandchildren of the OCDS members under teenage years participate by carrying the roses up to the altar after Mass for blessing and distribution.

- 2) A prayer card is sent to all who have requested group's prayers. (secondary apostolate)

#### Community 6

- 1) **"Our media apostolate:**

Through prayerful inspiration, after much discernment from our Secular Carmelite community and with much help and support from our Carmelite Nuns at the local monastery, we began our "New Media" podcasting apostolate.

Our Podcast contains over 100 different meditations to help "jump start your prayer" and lead you into a deeper prayer and quiet meditation. The reflections we have gathered through the plethora of writings from the great Saints of Carmel (and from lesser-known Carmelite Religious) will aid in your education of the wonderful and historic tradition of mystical prayer found within the Holy Catholic Church. It is a form of prayer which begins and ends in a deep longing for loving union with the Eternal Triune God where a soul seeks "the light of truth will come to purify, enlighten and enkindle his soul." "Our new media outreach continues today with an active social media outreach via Twitter."

#### Community 7

- 1) **Sponsor Days of Recollection advertised in the Catholic newspaper statewide. Parishes are asked to put a notice in their bulletins. In the past the community sponsored Days of Recollection with our Carmelite Fathers, advertised in the same way.**
- 2) **Work at vocation booths in local parishes. The community regularly works at a vocation booth in a local parish every year, representing the Carmelite nuns and friars. Have also sponsored vocation booths at youth retreats in a local parish.**

#### Community 8

- 1) **The community shares Carmelite charism throughout the year, serving various functions at a local church**
- 2) **Each month, after their meeting, they bring food and other items to a home for the poor/homeless and share the Carmelite charism with them.**
- 3) **Members bring brochures to their individual parishes, inviting people to the community's annual retreat which focuses on Carmelite spirituality.**

*Note: It is the person-to-person sharing of Carmelite spirituality that makes all these especially suitable as primary community apostolates.*

### Community 9

- 1) Intercessory prayer

*This very small community is faithful to doing God's work as they are able.*

### Community 10

- 1) **Community brochures are displayed and distributed at the Carmelite Monastery chapel entrance and bookstore.**
- 2) **Community brochures and Prayer of Recollection brochures are distributed periodically in all the members' parishes.**
- 3) **Members distribute these materials at the annual Our Lady of Mount Carmel Feast Day Mass, to which all the area churches (12-15 of them!) and diocesan-wide churches are invited by the Carmelite Nuns.**

The Community has overseen the music for this annual Mass, serving as the choir and leading the congregation in singing

**Members serve as hosts, greeting people and talking about Carmel. They have served as hosts for the nuns' Art Sale and talked with guests about Carmel. They participated in an article written by our local diocesan Catholic newspaper.**

- 4) **Due to their small size, this community has opted to try to have a triennial timeline for these days of reflection, rather than every year. Members distributed The Prayer of Recollection brochures and Community brochures along with other materials.**
- 5) Once a month members assist the Carmelite Nuns in providing food for the homeless who come to the Carmelite Monastery to be fed. (secondary apostolate)

### Community 11

- 1) Prayer and support for priests and priestly vocations through shared prayer at meetings and diocesan vigils for vocations as a Carmelite Community. (secondary apostolate)

### Community 12

- 1) **Class on learning Lectio Divina offered at a member's home, open to OCDS members and the local church parish.**

*Note: This meets the criteria because all the members helped in some way.*

- 2) The community prayed and fasted for a month for an apostolate. The majority wanted prayer time as the community apostolate. They made a Eucharistic Adoration schedule showing which church parishes in the city and surrounding area were offering Adoration. The community decided to pray especially for the following:

- Priests
- Seminarians
- Those who have left the church
- Souls in purgatory
- Parents and caregivers
- Carmelite nuns
- Carmelite mission in Kenya
- Growth and success of community and our apostolate"

(secondary apostolate)

### Community 13

- 1) **Provide scapulars to confirmation classes and assist with their investiture by providing the parish priest with the rite from the Scapular Rite and Ritual and giving a brief presentation and talk beforehand to give those *confirmandi* receiving the scapular and a correct understanding of it.**
- 2) **Members give talks at parish and diocesan events about prayer and the Carmelite saints.**

### Community 14

- 1) **Visit local nursing homes and members who are shut-ins.**
- 2) **Serve the needs of the Missionary of Charity Sisters by providing food, goods, and volunteers. (secondary apostolate)**
- 3) **Donate to the local OCD nuns and seminary fund; donate religious prayer cards and literature for the prison ministry. (secondary apostolate)**

### Community 15

- 1) **“We are working on a new apostolate moving forward. A building is being built on the Carmelite Monastery grounds for meeting/reception group gathering space. We are hoping to bring Carmelite instruction to the local church community when the building is complete.”**
- 2) **Assisting our local Carmelite Sisters. With the arrival of our Vietnamese Sisters the community helped the Nuns in learning English. (secondary apostolate)**

### Community 16

- 1) **Host a day of Prayer: Introduction to Carmelite Spirituality**

### Community 17

- 1) **Present a series of talks on prayer open to the public.**
- 2) **Developed a brochure to be disseminated to church parishes describing the community and the OCDS vocation.**
- 3) **Offer twice a year the services of a team of 4 or 5 community members to provide parish and diocesan organization (upon their request) with presentations on the brown scapular and on prayer using audiovisual materials and relevant handouts.**

### Community 18

- 1) **Participated in parish ministry fairs.**
- 2) **Annual talk or day of reflection open to the public. The community brings in OCD friars or other speakers knowledgeable about Carmelite spirituality.**

### Community 19

- 1) **Host an annual retreat at a local retreat center and put articles in local church bulletins inviting people. The focus of the retreats includes the teachings of the Catholic Church, the writings, lives, and spirituality of Carmelite saints, and devotion to Mary.**
- 2) **Assist with the upkeep of the local retreat center and contribute financially in gratitude for the blessing of having this spiritual facility nearby. (secondary apostolate)**

### Community 20

- 1) Give talks on the Prayer of Recollection at the local church parish. Also given at the nearby prison.
- 2) Give talks at different churches on Carmelite Saints.
- 3) Booths at church festivals handing out pamphlets in English and Spanish on the Prayer of Recollection.

### Community 21

**The Community organizes a special Mass to be said by their Spiritual Assistant three to four times a year on or near Carmelite holy days. Members invite individual members of the public to attend, and those guests' written intentions are prayed for at the Mass. As many Community members as are available attend the Apostolate Masses, with some filling roles during the Mass, such as reader, altar server, song leader, and extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.**

These are all wonderful apostolates. Those OCDS Communities without a primary apostolate are encouraged to continue to discern what would fit their community's talents and resources. Apostolates do not have to be "big and burdensome." Simple and from the heart are perfectly fine. A once-a-year event would also be appropriate.

What to aim for:

- The spread of Carmelite spirituality
- Personal contact
- Involvement of all (or nearly all) members of the community

A word about that last aspect, "Not all are apostles, not all are prophets, not all are teachers..." However, each can contribute according to his or her own ability. It may be submitting bulletin announcements, it may be helping with set up or clean up, it may be greeting people as they come in, it may be providing or serving refreshments. Involving everyone in some way creates a sense of camaraderie and celebration. Ideally, community apostolates are truly community apostolates.