



Carmelite Friars, Discalced (OCD)

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Carmelites trace their roots and their name to Mount Carmel in the Holy Land. There, in the 13th century, a band of European men gathered together to live a simple life of prayer and witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. In the 16th century in Spain, St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) renewed the Carmelite Order. With St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), she strengthened the Order's commitment to follow Christ through an intense life of prayer for the good of all the Church. They and their spiritual descendants were known as the Discalced—or reformed—Carmelites.

This call to prayer embraces their whole life. Sustained by the word of God and the sacred liturgy, they are led to live in intimate friendship with God. By growing in faith, hope and, above all, charity, they deepen their prayer life. With their heart thus purified they are enabled to share more closely in the life of Christ himself, and prepare the way for a more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In this way the Teresian charism and the original spirit of Carmel become a reality in their lives as they walk in the presence of the living God.

Carmelites are committed to a consecrated life of allegiance to Jesus Christ. In this they are sustained by the companionship, the example and protection of their Lady. Her life of union with Christ is regarded, as it were, the prototype of theirs.

The very nature of their charism demands that their prayer and their whole religious life be ardently apostolic, and that they put themselves at the service of the Church and of all mankind. This must be done in such a way that “their apostolic activity stems from their close union with Christ”. Indeed they must aim at that most fruitful of all apostolates which derives from the “state of union with God”.