

## Community Attendance

Community life is central to the Carmelite charism. [Statutes VIII.4] To underscore this centrality, every community should have a written attendance policy. It should be made available to every member and reviewed in community on an annual basis. Attendance at meetings is expected. Unjustifiable absences should be lovingly addressed by the local council [Constitutions Art. 24.c] Adjustments may be made if the policy is not worded well, not working well, or is not in line with the OCDS Constitutions and Provincial Statutes.

Local Councils should be thoroughly familiar with Article 24 of the OCDS Constitutions and Section VIII of the Provincial Statutes before composing the community's attendance policy.

For members in difficult circumstances, see Provincial Statutes, Section VIII(5-8), regarding Aged/Infirm, Isolate, Extended Excused Absence, and Leave of Absence.

It is in the discretion of each local Council whether and when to count participation in a meeting by video conference (such as Zoom) as being present for the meeting.

### Note to local Councils:

***This document is for reference and guidance only. Please do not simply copy and paste. Instead tailor a policy pastorally suited to the needs of your community. Remember, too, that the policy may be revisited as needed.***

### The policy should include:

- The identity of who the members are to call if they are going to be absent.
- The identity of who the members are to call if they were absent and were not able to call beforehand.
- The maximum number of days a member may be absent from meetings, including retreat and day of recollection, within a year before the local Council addresses the situation (i.e., specify what constitutes persistent absenteeism).
- Guidance on what type of absence is excused (whether serious, unavoidable, or related to the person's duties of life).
- A statement that attendance at an OCDS provincial, national, or international event (i.e. Congress, workshops, symposiums) should not count as an absence.
- How absences are to be addressed by the Council, especially excessive absences.
- How missed formation sessions are to be made up (for those in formation for clothing or the Promise).

The policy should address whether excessive absences:

- Extend formation periods.
- Indicate a lack of vocation.
- Bar members from voting at the next election.
- Bar members from being placed on the ballot for an elected position on council.