

QUESTION & ANSWER

by Teresa Martinez, ocds

Q. With elections just around the corner, who may run for Office as Council Members in a Canonically Established OCDS Community?

1. All Definitively Professed Members are eligible for nomination prior to elections, provided that they are in good health; and that work and family life do not prevent a commitment to the obligations of serving on Office.

It is a serious breach, when a member commits to serve, then after the elections, reneges on what he or she committed to do.

2. The Council sets up a Nominating Committee, made up of any of the senior Professed Members in the community who know the community members well.

The Nominating Committee themselves, (as the name of the committee would indicate), after prayerful consideration and discussion among themselves, nominates a list of the names of those members who have demonstrated over the years, their commitment to the vocation and have set a good example by their generosity of service in little things for the welfare of the community, and by their ability to live in fraternal charity in community.

3. So the Nominating Committee may:

- a)** Nominate the names those members they feel would make good members of Council.
- b)** The Committee may also solicit nominations from the floor during the monthly meeting, from any individuals who voluntarily offer their services to serve on Council, because they wish to assist their community in this role. or
- c)** Members of the floor may be asked to nominate another member whom they think would do a good job as a member of Council.

4. The Nominating Committee will then privately discuss all the nominations, to discern the suitability of those nominated.

When the final list has been made up, each individual nominated will be very briefly interviewed by the committee to make sure that each nominee understands the responsibility of Office and consents to serve.

Each nominee has the right to turn down the nomination. But each member should also understand that service is not a prerogative, but an inherent part of the Christian vocation.

5. After the list of nominations has been completed:

- a)** The final list is announced, and the nominees are thanked for their generosity.
- b)** The community is asked to pray for those generous souls who have consented to run for Office.
- c)** The community is asked pray for the election as well.

**BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT
OCDS ELECTIONS
IN THE ENGLISH REGIONS OF CANADA**

Elections take place once every three years, and in the month of April, because traditionally the elections in the Generalate are held in May. Having OCDS Elections in April ensures that the OCDS communities are in place before the new Definitory is elected.

All OCDS Communities hold the triennial elections.

Elections for new communities in formation are held at the discretion of the Provincial Delegate.

HELPFUL HINTS LEADING UP TO ELECTIONS

1. **In January of an election year** - During the Business of the Order section of the monthly Meeting, the President announces that this is an election year, and that community elections will be held in April.
2. **Also in January** the Council should meet to choose a nominating committee made up of three Professed members. Charity, impartiality and common sense must prevail.
3. Communities in formation hold elections at the discretion of the Provincial Delegate.
4. During the January Meeting, the President asks the members during the coming month to pray and think about whom they might wish to nominate for Office.
5. **FEBRUARY** – Members of the nominating committee are introduced to the community.
6. **FEBRUARY** – The President invites the members of the community to submit to the nominating committee their choices, either privately at the meeting, or by phone during the month. The Nominating Committee also adds their choice of nominations to the list of nominees.
7. **DURING FEBRUARY & MARCH** (and before the day of the March monthly community meeting). – The Nominating Committee phones the nominees to find out if they will accept the nomination. So that the names can be included in the monthly community bulletin.
8. **MARCH** - During the Community Meeting, the President announces the names of all the Candidates who have accepted to run for office. During the presentation of nominees, new nominations from the floor may be solicited. If new nominees are accepted, their names are announced and put on the official list of nominations.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

1. In an election year an in-depth study is to be done by all communities, of the OCDS CONSTITUTIONS found in our Manual on pages 54 -61, and in our Statutes on pages 72 - 75
2. Only the Professed members may vote.
3. Voting by letter, proxy or phone is invalid.
4. During the election, all Professed Members sit in the front rows of the assembly. All non professed members sit behind to observe.
5. Before the end of the March monthly meeting, all Candidates running for Office are asked to stand and are introduced again, and the office that they are running for is mentioned.
This is done again at the April meeting, before the voting takes place.

My brothers and sisters, remember the prophetic mission of a vocation in Carmel, and also that: *"Baptism Is a Call to a Prophetic Career"* (Gospel Reflection for Feast of the Lord's Baptism Year C By Father Thomas Rosica, CSB TORONTO, JAN. 6, 2010 (Zenit.org)).

Communities in formation who have permission from the Provincial Delegate to hold elections, must follow as perfectly as possible OCDS election guidelines, and consult with the OCDS Secretariat Office for guidance.