

CALLED & COMMISSIONED

A Two-Year Formation in Prophetic Discipleship & Witness

Rooted in Scripture, the Carmelite tradition, and Catholic Social Teaching

PENTECOST → PENTECOST → PENTECOST

YEAR ONE	YEAR TWO
Hearing the Word Certificate in Prophetic Discipleship Affirmation of Calling at Pentecost	Bearing the Word Diploma in Prophetic Witness Commissioning at Pentecost

Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACS)

Developed from the School of Prophets • Carmelite Priory, Boars Hill, Oxford

Worked example cohort: Pentecost 2027 – Pentecost 2029

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Programme Overview

Called & Commissioned is a single, continuous two-year formation in prophetic discipleship and witness, rooted in Carmelite spirituality, Sacred Scripture, and the Church's living tradition of discernment. It grows out of the Centre's acclaimed School of Prophets — the original Becoming Prophets course — but where that programme ran for six intensive months, this is a sustained, unhurried journey: one curriculum arc travelled over two academic years, with room for the slow work the Spirit does in a praying heart.

The name holds the double movement at the heart of all Christian prophecy. Every disciple is first called by God into deep, listening friendship; and every such friendship issues in a commission — a sending forth to witness, to speak truth, to serve the common good. The programme is therefore built as a journey from call to commission, and it is structured so that the rhythm of the Church's year carries the rhythm of formation.

Crucially, the programme runs **Pentecost to Pentecost**. Each year opens in the Upper Room of Pentecost — “Come, Holy Spirit” — and each year closes at the next Pentecost, the birthday of the prophetic Church and the day the Spirit was poured out on all flesh. Across two years the cohort passes through **three Pentecosts**: one to begin; one at which the call is affirmed and the Certificate conferred; and one at which the cohort is commissioned and the Diploma conferred. There is no commissioning in Year One — commissioning is reserved for the sending-out at the end of the whole journey.

One arc, two awards

This is not two separate courses. It is one formation with two completion points:

After Year One	Certificate in Prophetic Discipleship — conferred at the Affirmation of Calling, a Pentecost rite ending the first year in which each participant's call is recognised and affirmed and they are sent deeper into Year Two. Foundational formation in prophetic identity, contemplative prayer, and the biblical and Carmelite theology of discernment.
After Year Two	Diploma in Prophetic Witness — conferred at the Commissioning, a Pentecost rite ending the second year in which the cohort is sent out for mission. Year Two goes deeper: the authenticity and signs of true discernment, prophetic engagement with Church and world, and a supervised Prophetic Mission Project.

Most participants will travel the whole journey. Those who can evidence prior formation may apply to join the second year directly. Both years culminate in a Commissioning at Pentecost.

Programme Vision & Aims

Called & Commissioned aims to form prophetic disciples who can hear and heed God's voice from within the noise and tumult of our time, discern it truly from the many other voices that clamour for attention, and bear credible, courageous witness to it in Church and world.

Core aims

- ▶ To grow in deep, listening friendship with Jesus Christ, the model prophet and perfect discerner of the Father's will
- ▶ To form a contemplative, Scripture-rooted prophetic identity
- ▶ To learn the art of discernment from the biblical prophets and the Carmelite masters of prayer
- ▶ To distinguish the voice of God from the counterfeit voices of the age — to “test the spirits”
- ▶ To read the signs of the times through the lens of faith and Catholic Social Teaching
- ▶ To find, own, and exercise one's own particular prophetic voice and mission
- ▶ To grow as a community of prophetic disciples who discern together and encourage one another

The Carmelite Prophetic Tradition

The Carmelite Order traces its spiritual origins to the prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel — a man who listened for God in silence, who confronted the powers of his day, and who gathered a community of disciples around the living God. “The Lord lives, in whose presence I stand” (1 Kings 17:1) became the motto of the Order. This prophetic inheritance runs through the whole programme.

The Carmelite values indispensable to prophetic witness — solitude, silence, communal prayer, contemplation, collaborative work, presence, listening, discernment, hospitality, and integration — provide the spiritual architecture of both years. They are not background decoration; they are the conditions under which a human being becomes capable of hearing God at all.

“After the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of sheer silence.” — 1 Kings 19:11–12

A Programme Built on Discernment

Discernment is the beating heart of Called & Commissioned. The prophet is not merely someone who speaks; the prophet is first someone who listens, and who can tell the difference between the word of the Lord and the words of the crowd, the ego, or the spirit of the age. Before Isaiah cries “send me,” he must first hear (Isaiah 6). Before any disciple is commissioned, they must learn to discern. For this reason discernment is not one topic among many in this programme — it is the thread on which the whole curriculum is strung, and it is the literal hinge between the two years.

The biblical school of discernment

Scripture itself gives the test of every spirit, movement, or claimed word of God: authenticity — the congruence between what a person professes and how they actually live. True discernment is therefore not a mood or a feeling but a reading of fruit and life against the pattern of the Gospel. It rests on the New Testament command to “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21) and on the biblical “two ways,” and on the conditions under which discernment becomes possible at all: humility and a listening, correctable heart — “the humble hear, the simple see.”

Scripture is itself a long apprenticeship in this discernment. The programme draws deeply on its key moments:

- ▶ **The boy Samuel** — learning that the voice in the night is the Lord’s, and answering “Speak, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3) — discernment begins as listening.
- ▶ **Elijah at Horeb** — finding God not in wind, earthquake, or fire but in “the sound of sheer silence” (1 Kings 19) — the foundational Carmelite text on where God’s voice is heard.
- ▶ **Solomon** — asking not for riches but for “an understanding heart to discern” (1 Kings 3:9).
- ▶ **Jeremiah against Hananiah** — the agonising task of distinguishing the true prophet from the false (Jeremiah 23 and 28; Deuteronomy 18).
- ▶ **Jesus in the desert** — discerning and refusing three plausible voices (Luke 4); and in Gethsemane, discerning the Father’s will in agony (Luke 22).
- ▶ **“By their fruits”** — Jesus’ own rule for telling true from false (Matthew 7:15–20), read alongside the Beatitudes as the prophet’s charter.
- ▶ **The Jerusalem Council** — the Church discerning together: “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15) — the model of communal and synodal discernment.
- ▶ **The apostolic counsel** — “Test everything; hold fast to what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21); “do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits” (1 John 4:1); “be transformed... so that you may discern the will of God” (Romans 12:2).

From these patterns the tradition draws a set of signs by which an authentic movement of God can be recognised: God-directedness, new love, a readiness for the cross, frugality, an uncluttered freedom, sound doctrine, being at odds with the prevailing spirit of the world, unity, and obedience freely given. Genuine discernment is then verified twice over — inwardly, in a habitual and humble peace, and

outwardly, in the fruit it bears and the confirmation of the community. The conviction at the heart of this programme is that authentic discernment is prophetic: it issues in a clear and faithful word.

Righteousness as discernment: the Matthean key

Alongside this, the programme reads discernment through the understanding of righteousness in the Gospel of Matthew. For Matthew, righteousness (*dikaiosynē*) is not mere legal correctness but a threefold loyalty — to the law, to one's neighbour, and to the will of God — and it consists precisely in the congruence between rightly interpreting God's word and actually doing it. So understood, righteousness is itself a form of discernment: the criterion by which the true reading of God's will is told from the false, enacted in mercy.

- ▶ **Joseph the Just** — Joseph, “a righteous man” (Matthew 1:19), models discernment as mercy. His righteousness expresses itself not in condemnation but in the protection of Mary — a “matrix of mercy” in which righteousness is redefined.
- ▶ **The sheep who did not know** — In the judgement of the nations (Matthew 25:31–46) the righteous served Christ in the least without knowing it. Discernment lives at the meeting-point of “not-knowing” — being moved by the Spirit — and “knowing” — actively seeking God's will.
- ▶ **Justice as the criterion** — For Matthew, doing justice is itself the act of discerning rightly: righteousness is a criterion both in discerning the correct interpretation of the law and in discerning its correct doing.

This is why, in *Called & Commissioned*, the formation of a discerning heart and the formation of a merciful, just life are one task. To discern is to grow in righteousness; to grow in righteousness is to discern.

The Carmelite school: John of the Cross and the Ascent

If Scripture gives the grammar of discernment, the Carmelite masters give its lived practice — and none more fully than John of the Cross, whose *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (the *Subida*) can be read as a sustained treatise on discernment: a guide for telling the genuine action of God from everything that counterfeits it on the way to union. This Sanjuanist wisdom is the heart of the programme's Carmelite formation.

Following John, the programme takes up four moves:

- ▶ **The end — union with God** — All discernment is ordered to one goal: loving union with God. A path is discerned to be of God only insofar as it leads there.
- ▶ **The means — faith** — Faith, the theological dynamism, is the proximate means of union and the true light for discernment — beyond anything reason or feeling can supply on their own.
- ▶ **The condition — purification (the “nada”)** — Disordered appetites and attachments cloud the soul's sight. Only as they are stilled and purified — John's *nada*, the night of sense and spirit — does clear discernment become possible.
- ▶ **The test — harms and benefits** — John judges spirits and experiences by their effects: the *daños y provechos*, the harm or good they actually leave behind. He reads experience through opposed

pairs — God and creature, the good and the evil spirit, spirit and sense — and tests every movement by two “crossed lights”: faith with reason, and Scripture with experience.

From this John draws practical criteria for the discerning disciple: the Christian exercise of self-denial and renunciation; humility and charity; a true and sober devotion, free of “illuminism” and the craving for extraordinary experiences; and the accompaniment of a wise spiritual director or confessor. His signs for the passage from meditation to contemplation teach the soul to recognise God’s quiet, hidden action and not to mistake it for mere dryness.

Teresa of Ávila stands beside him: in the Interior Castle she teaches the discernment of inner experience, testing locutions, visions, and graces against humility, Scripture, and the Church (“Let nothing disturb you”). And Thérèse of Lisieux shows, in her Little Way, that faithful discernment is most often the small, hidden, daily “yes” — “my vocation is love” — rather than the dramatic sign.

A complementary note: the Ignatian tradition

The programme’s discernment is biblical and Carmelite at its root. Where it is useful, it also draws on the wider Ignatian tradition — the discernment of spirits and the reading of consolation and desolation — but only as a reference that amplifies what Scripture and Carmel already give. John of the Cross’s “harms and benefits” and the biblical signs already train disciples to read the fruit of the spirits; the Ignatian vocabulary can name that movement helpfully, without ever becoming the framework.

Discernment as a daily, communal practice

These streams — the biblical school of discernment, the gospel of righteousness, and the Carmelite school of prayer — are never left as theory. Across both years participants keep a discerning journal, learn a contemplative review of the day, and bring what they are sensing to Scripture, to prayer, and to the shared discernment of the community, where it can be tested and confirmed against the signs of an authentic spirit.

“Discernment is the gift of recognising, among the many voices within us and around us, the one true voice of the Spirit — and the authenticity of a life that follows it.”

The Shape of the Journey: Five Movements Across Two Years

The whole programme is one journey in five movements — Called, Contemplate, Discern, Witness, Commissioned. The movements flow continuously; they do not reset between the years. Discernment, the central movement, deliberately straddles the boundary between Year One and Year Two: participants cross the first Pentecost gate in the very middle of learning to discern, which is fitting, for Pentecost is the gift of the Spirit who makes discernment possible.

Movement	What it forms	Where it sits
1. CALLED	Prophetic identity — the baptismal call, the biblical prophets, Jesus the prophet, the art of listening	Year One · early
2. CONTEMPLATE	The Carmelite school of prayer and silence — Elijah, Teresa, John of the Cross; lectio and the review of the day	Year One · autumn
3. DISCERN	Discernment drawn from Scripture and the Carmelite masters (above all John of the Cross) — foundations, then depths. The hinge of the whole programme	Year One late → Year Two early
4. WITNESS	Prophetic engagement with Church and world — mystics as prophets, CST, contemplative activism, the arts	Year Two · autumn–winter
5. COMMISSIONED	Mission and sending — the Prophetic Mission Project, the Prophetic Credo, the Vigil of Pentecost	Year Two · spring → Pentecost

Structure at a glance

	Year One — Certificate	Year Two — Diploma
Title	Hearing the Word	Bearing the Word
Teaching cycle	Pentecost 2027 → late Jan 2028	Pentecost 2028 → late Jan 2029
Opens with	Pentecost retreat session	Pentecost retreat session (renewal)
Sessions	15 two-hour sessions, in 3 blocks	15 two-hour sessions, in 3 blocks
Movements	Called · Contemplate · Discern (foundations)	Discern (depths) · Witness · Commissioned
Breaks	August & all of December — accompaniment groups	late summer & all of December — accompaniment groups
Capstone	Personal prophetic statement; group	Prophetic Mission Project + Prophetic

	witness	Credo
Closes with	Affirmation of Calling at Pentecost — Certificate	Commissioning at Pentecost — Diploma & sending

Each year runs as one cycle from Pentecost to late January, in three fortnightly teaching blocks — summer, autumn and January — with August and all of December kept free for accompaniment groups (peer support and shared discernment; no teaching). Spring is given to reflection and, in Year Two, the Mission Project. Every session runs two hours, online, on Sundays from 4:00 to 6:00 pm (UK time), and follows the contemplative rhythm set out below. A detailed dated calendar accompanies this document.

Shape of a session

Each two-hour session (4:00–6:00 pm UK) unfolds in the same rhythm:

Part of the session	Minutes
Gathering & opening prayer — settling into silence; a contemplative opening (lectio divina, Carmelite silence, or a Taizé chant)	20
Teaching & input — the session's theme from Scripture, the Carmelite tradition and, where relevant, Catholic Social Teaching	40
Contemplative pause	5
Group sharing — small accompaniment groups; prophetic dialogue, listening and testing what is stirring	30
Contemplative practice & journaling / break — taking it inward	15
Plenary — gathering the fruit of the groups	7
Closing & sending — a closing prayer and a word to carry into the fortnight	3

The two Pentecost opening sessions keep this shape but give their closing to a ritual.

YEAR ONE • HEARING THE WORD • CERTIFICATE IN PROPHETIC DISCIPLESHIP

Overview & aims

Year One forms participants in the foundations of prophetic discipleship. Opening at Pentecost in the Upper Room, it moves through three movements — Called, Contemplate, and the first half of Discern — and culminates in the Certificate at the following Pentecost. The year answers the question: how does a disciple learn to hear, and to tell God's voice from the rest?

By the end of Year One, participants will be able to:

- ▶ Articulate a theologically grounded understanding of the prophetic vocation
- ▶ Identify and reflect on the prophetic figures of Scripture and the Carmelite tradition
- ▶ Practise contemplative forms of prayer — lectio divina, the prayerful review of the day, Carmelite silence — that open them to prophetic listening
- ▶ Recognise the marks of an authentic movement of the Spirit by its fruit
- ▶ Apply the Beatitudes, “by their fruits,” and Matthean righteousness as criteria of discernment
- ▶ Begin to read the signs of the times through faith and Catholic Social Teaching
- ▶ Name and begin to exercise their own prophetic gifts within a discerning community

Year One — full session schedule

15 sessions in three blocks — summer (S1–6), autumn (S7–13) and January (S14–15) — opening with the Pentecost retreat session and closing in late January. August and all of December are kept free for accompaniment groups. See the accompanying dated calendar for exact Sundays.

#	Session theme	Movement	Key content
1	The Prophetic Vocation: Called by Name	CALLED	Opening retreat; closing ritual. What is prophecy? The baptismal commission; Jeremiah 1
2	The Biblical Prophets: A Communion of Witnesses	CALLED	Major and minor prophets, and the women prophets — Miriam, Deborah and Huldah, and in the New Testament Elizabeth and Anna; patterns, qualities, and true and false prophecy
3	Encountering Jesus the Prophet	CALLED	Christ as model prophet and perfect discerner; the prophetic shape of the Gospels, including Luke's distinctive portrait; Jesus' prophetic use of questions
4	Samuel and the Art of Listening	CALLED	“Speak, Lord, your servant is listening” (1 Sam 3); discernment begins as listening

#	Session theme	Movement	Key content
5	Elijah and the Sound of Sheer Silence	CONTEMPLATE	1 Kings 19; the Carmelite charism; where the voice of God is heard
6	Teresa of Ávila: Prayer as Friendship	CONTEMPLATE	The Interior Castle; the discerning heart; “Let nothing disturb you”
7	John of the Cross: Listening in the Dark	CONTEMPLATE	The Ascent of Mount Carmel; faith as the night that guides; purification for clear sight
8	Lectio Divina & the Review of the Day	CONTEMPLATE	Practical contemplative method; keeping a discerning journal
9	The Marks of an Authentic Spirit	DISCERN	Authenticity as the congruence of life and word; reading the fruit; Romans 12:2; Solomon’s discerning heart (1 Kings 3)
10	Testing the Spirits & the Two Ways	DISCERN	1 John 4; 1 Thess 5:21; Jeremiah vs Hananiah; the conditions for discernment
11	The Signs of the Holy Spirit	DISCERN	Signs of an authentic movement of the Spirit; reading the fruit; inner and outer verification
12	By Their Fruits: The Beatitudes as Template	DISCERN	Matthew 7 and Matthew 5; the Beatitudes as the prophet’s charter and criterion
13	Righteousness as Discernment	DISCERN	Matthew 25:31–46; Joseph the Just; righteousness as mercy and justice
14	Reading the Signs of the Times & Naming Prophetic Gifts	DISCERN	Social discernment (See–Judge–Act); charism mapping; vocation in community
15	Toward the Affirmation of Calling	—	Spiritual autobiography; the personal prophetic statement; closing session

The cycle closes in late January; spring is given to accompaniment groups and reflection. **Affirmation of Calling — Feast of Pentecost** (the same Pentecost that opens Year Two): a liturgical rite in which each participant’s call is recognised and affirmed, and the Certificate in Prophetic Discipleship is conferred. (There is no commissioning in Year One.)

Year One — assessment & certification

There are no traditional examinations. Formation is evidenced through:

- ▶ Regular participation in sessions (minimum 80%)
- ▶ A reflective discernment journal kept across the year, submitted as a brief portfolio
- ▶ Active contribution to the group witness project
- ▶ A short personal prophetic statement (500 words) shared at the Affirmation of Calling

Participants who fulfil the above receive the Certificate in Prophetic Discipleship at the Affirmation of Calling on the Feast of Pentecost. They are then warmly invited to continue into Year Two.

YEAR TWO • BEARING THE WORD • DIPLOMA IN PROPHETIC WITNESS

Overview & aims

Year Two takes up the journey where Year One left it — in the middle of the Discern movement — and carries it into the depths. Participants move from prophetic identity and the foundations of discernment into mature discernment of spirits and sustained prophetic witness: theological depth, ecumenical and interfaith engagement, contemplative activism, and a supervised Prophetic Mission Project. The year ends by sending the cohort out, commissioned, at Pentecost.

By the end of Year Two, participants will be able to:

- ▶ Practise mature discernment, integrating Scripture, the Carmelite masters, and Catholic Social Teaching
- ▶ Demonstrate a prophetic theology that integrates Scripture, tradition, and lived experience
- ▶ Engage the prophetic dimensions of ecumenical and interfaith encounter
- ▶ Analyse complex social and ecclesial questions through a prophetic and CST lens
- ▶ Design, undertake, and present a Prophetic Mission Project addressing a real need
- ▶ Articulate and inhabit a personal prophetic vocation in a written Prophetic Credo
- ▶ Lead or contribute to a community of prophetic witness and discernment

Year Two — full session schedule

15 sessions in three blocks — summer (S16–21), autumn (S22–28) and January (S29–30) — opening with the Pentecost retreat session. The taught cycle closes in late January; the Mission Project is then carried out through the spring (see below), with presentations at the Commissioning on Pentecost.

#	Session theme	Movement	Key content
16	The Signs of an Authentic Spirit: Going Deeper	DISCERN	Opening retreat; ritual. Deeper reading of the signs; inner and outer verification
17	Teresa's Discernment of Experience	DISCERN	Locutions, visions and graces; humility, Scripture and Church as touchstones
18	John of the Cross & the Ascent: Discernment toward Union	DISCERN	The Ascent of Mount Carmel (the Subida); faith as the means, the nada as condition; discerning by harms and benefits
19	Communal Discernment: The Jerusalem Council	DISCERN	Acts 15; the prophetic church of Luke–Acts; “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”; synodality and shared listening
20	The Mystics as Prophets	WITNESS	Teresa, John, Thérèse, Titus Brandsma, Edith Stein as prophetic witnesses

#	Session theme	Movement	Key content
21	Contemplative Activism	WITNESS	Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Etty Hillesum; prayer and protest held together
22	Prophets at the Margins	WITNESS	Voices from the Global South; the poor as a locus of discernment
23	Catholic Social Teaching: Advanced Praxis	WITNESS	Laudato Si', Laudate Deum, Fratelli Tutti, and Pope Leo's Magnifica Humanitas (human dignity in the age of artificial intelligence); prophets for the ecological and digital age
24	Prophetic Leadership & the Institution	WITNESS	When prophecy provokes; Jeremiah in the court; truth-telling within community
25	The Prophetic Imagination & the Arts	WITNESS	Brueggemann; poetry, story and icon; lament and hope as prophetic speech
26	Public Speech & Proclamation	WITNESS	Prophetic rhetoric; the homily and the speech; the prophetic art of the question (Jesus' subversive questions); witness in the digital age
27	The Prophetic Mission Project: Discernment & Design	COMMISSIONED	Scoping and discerning the project — audience, method and message — with a supervisor
28	Writing Your Prophetic Credo	COMMISSIONED	Articulating a personal vocation; the statement of witness
29	Mission Project: Shaping & Supervision	COMMISSIONED	Firming up the plan, timeline and support for the spring; pairing with a supervisor
30	Sending into the Mission Project	COMMISSIONED	Closing session; the cohort is sent into the spring project phase

After the taught cycle closes in late January, the Prophetic Mission Project is carried out through the spring, supported by accompaniment groups and one-to-one faculty supervision. Commissioning — Feast of Pentecost: Mission Project presentations, conferral of the Diploma in Prophetic Witness, and the sending forth of the cohort for prophetic mission.

Year Two — assessment & diploma award

Formation across Year Two is evidenced through:

- ▶ Participation in sessions (minimum 80%)
- ▶ A Year Two reflective discernment journal, submitted ahead of commissioning
- ▶ The Prophetic Credo — a personal statement of vocation and witness (800–1,000 words)
- ▶ The Prophetic Mission Project — written portfolio and presentation

Participants who complete both years and fulfil the above receive the Diploma in Prophetic Witness at the Commissioning Ceremony on the Feast of Pentecost.

The Prophetic Mission Project

The Prophetic Mission Project is the heart of Year Two. Each participant, individually or in pairs, discerns, designs, undertakes, and presents a sustained prophetic witness addressing a specific real need — in their parish, community, diocese, workplace, or wider society. The project is:

- ▶ Born of, and accompanied by, prayer and discernment throughout
- ▶ Theologically grounded in Scripture, tradition, and Catholic Social Teaching
- ▶ Supported by a faculty supervisor across the year
- ▶ Presented to the cohort for peer discernment
- ▶ Submitted as a written portfolio (2,000–3,000 words) with a creative artefact

Projects may take the form of a ministry initiative, a community engagement programme, a creative work (art, writing, music, film), a formation resource, a social-action project, or any other form discerned with the supervisor.

How the project unfolds

The project runs on the back of the teaching cycle, not alongside a busy term:

- ▶ Discerned and designed in the taught sessions of Year Two (sessions 27–30), each participant leaves the January close with a clear plan, a timeline, and a named faculty supervisor.
- ▶ Carried out through the spring (roughly February to May), when there are no teaching sessions — the time is deliberately freed for the work itself.
- ▶ Accompanied throughout by the participant's accompaniment group and by one-to-one supervision, with check-ins at agreed points rather than fixed classes.
- ▶ Presented at the Commissioning on the Feast of Pentecost, where the cohort shares its projects before the community and the Diploma is conferred.

Pentecost: Affirmation & Commissioning

Both years end on the Feast of Pentecost — but with two distinct rites. Pentecost is the moment the Spirit was poured out on all flesh, when ordinary disciples became bold witnesses, and the prophetic promise of Joel was fulfilled: “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17). The programme deliberately distinguishes the two endings: Year One affirms a calling; only Year Two commissions for mission.

The Affirmation of Calling — end of Year One

At the close of Year One the cohort gathers for the Affirmation of Calling. This is not a commissioning but a recognition — a threshold. In it:

- ▶ Each participant names the prophetic call they have begun to discern
- ▶ The community affirms and prays over that call

- ▶ The Certificate in Prophetic Discipleship is conferred
- ▶ Continuing participants are sent deeper, into the second year of formation

The Commissioning — end of Year Two

Only at the end of the whole journey does the Commissioning take place — the graduation and sending of Called & Commissioned. To be commissioned at Pentecost is to be sent as the first disciples were sent. In it:

- ▶ Participants make a personal statement of prophetic witness
- ▶ The community prays over and sends forth each participant
- ▶ The Diploma in Prophetic Witness is conferred
- ▶ Alumni are invited to return and witness to their ongoing prophetic journey
- ▶ The cohort is sent — commissioned — for prophetic witness in the world

Both rites may take place online or in person at the Carmelite Priory, Boars Hill, Oxford. Where possible, an in-person Pentecost gathering is warmly encouraged.

Retreats & Immersive Formation

The teaching rhythm is held within a wider rhythm of prayer and companionship — essential to a formation in discernment, which is learned more in silence than in talk:

- ▶ A Pentecost retreat session opening each year's cycle — closing with a ritual, entering the prophetic year in prayer
- ▶ Accompaniment groups through the breaks (August and all of December) — peer support and shared discernment when teaching pauses
- ▶ An Advent quiet day within the December break — watching and waiting; the discernment of longing
- ▶ The Pentecost gatherings — the Affirmation of Calling (Year One) and the Commissioning (Year Two): celebration and sending

Year Two participants are also invited to join one of the Carmelite pilgrimages (Holy Land, Spain, or Ireland) as part of their formation in prophetic witness through encounter with sacred geography.

Worked Calendar: The 2027–2029 Cohort

Each year's teaching cycle opens at Pentecost and closes in late January; the milestones fall at Pentecost, whose date shifts a little each year with Easter. The cohort beginning in 2027 follows this pattern (exact session dates are in the accompanying Session Calendar):

Stage	When	Marker
Programme opens	Pentecost — Sun 16 May 2027	Retreat session; Year One cycle begins
Year One teaching	May 2027 – late Jan 2028	15 sessions in 3 blocks; August & December free (accompaniment groups)
Affirmation of Calling	Pentecost — Sun 4 June 2028	Certificate in Prophetic Discipleship (no commissioning); also opens Year Two
Year Two teaching	June 2028 – late Jan 2029	15 sessions in 3 blocks; late summer & December free
Mission Project	Spring 2029	Projects carried out with supervision; no teaching sessions
Commissioning	Pentecost — Sun 20 May 2029	Mission Project presentations; Diploma in Prophetic Witness; sending forth

Note: the Year One Affirmation of Calling and the Year Two opening retreat fall on the same Pentecost (4 June 2028) — a single hinge on which one cohort's call is affirmed and the Certificate conferred, while the continuing cohort opens the deeper year.

Programme Features

Scripture and living tradition

The curriculum draws on the biblical prophets from Moses to the Revelation of John, and the saints of Carmel — Elijah, Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, Thérèse of Lisieux, Titus Brandsma, and Edith Stein. Prophetic figures from the wider Christian tradition — Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Etty Hillesum — also inform the journey.

Contemplative method

Each session opens with thirty minutes of prayer. Contemplative practices woven through the programme include lectio divina, a prayerful review of the day, Carmelite silent prayer, and communal Taizé-style prayer. Formation in listening — to God, to one another, to the world — is the thread that holds all content together.

Participative and communal

The programme forms a community, not merely a class. Participants practise prophetic dialogue, mutual accountability, and shared discernment across the two years. Online gatherings are structured so that relationship, not just information, can grow.

Catholic, ecumenical and interdisciplinary

Prophets work at boundaries — between the religious and the social, the Church and the world, tradition and innovation. The programme gathers input from Scripture studies, theology, ethics, social science, the arts, and Catholic Social Teaching.

Led by a religious and lay team

Facilitators bring their lived experience as lay people, religious, and clergy. The team currently includes Fr Alexander Ezechukwu OCD (programme director and Scripture scholar), John Dalla Costa and Fr Rathan Almeida OCD (theologians and programme co-leads), and Fr Liam Finnerty OCD (retreat ministry and mentoring).

Entry Requirements & Pathways

Entry point	Requirements
Year One (Certificate)	Open to all. No prior qualifications required — a commitment to Christian discipleship and a willingness to engage prayerfully across the two-year journey.
Direct entry to Year Two	The Year One Certificate, or demonstrated equivalent formation (spiritual-direction training, a theology degree, or recognised retreat-ministry experience). Subject to interview with the programme director.
Continuing from Year One	Participants completing Year One are invited to continue into Year Two, subject to the programme director's recommendation and personal discernment.

Cost

Fees reflect the full cost of provision and are offered at a rate accessible to serious disciples. Concessions and bursaries are available — no one should be prevented from attending by financial hardship.

	Full payment	Instalments
Year One — Certificate	£650	5 × £130 monthly
Year Two — Diploma completion	£650	5 × £130 monthly
Full Diploma — both years (paid together)	£1,200	10 × £120 monthly

For bursary enquiries, please contact Fr Alex Ezechukwu OCD • admin@carmelite.org.uk

Our Team

Fr Alexander Ezechukwu OCD — Programme Director

Carmelite priest and Prior of the Carmelite community at Boars Hill, Oxford. A trained spiritual director with many years of pastoral experience, he holds a Licence in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome.

John Dalla Costa — Theologian & Ethicist (Programme Co-Lead)

Author, theologian and ethicist. For over a decade he taught ethics at the Schulich School of Business, York University, Toronto. He is currently a member of an interdisciplinary team at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), developing the new economy envisioned in Pope Francis's social teaching.

Fr Rathan Almeida OCD — Theologian (Programme Co-Lead)

Fr Rathan Nicholas Almeida is a Discalced Carmelite Friar who holds a doctorate in Systematic Theology, specialising in Christology, from the University of Vienna, Austria. He is a Professor of Theology and is involved in Christian formation programmes in the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia, which encompasses the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Yemen.

Fr Liam Finnerty OCD — Retreat Ministry & Mentoring

Carmelite priest with degrees in Theology and Social Work from the Milltown Institute, Dublin, and the University of Glasgow. He brings many years of experience in retreat ministry and mentoring.

Booking & Further Information

Registration opens each year ahead of the Pentecost start, with an introductory Open Day. To register or enquire:

- ▶ Website: www.carmelite.uk.net/pilgrimage/school-of-prophets
- ▶ Email: admin@carmelite.org.uk
- ▶ Tel: Oxford 01865 604003

Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACS)

Carmelite Priory, Boars Hill, Oxford

Discernment: Select Sources & Further Reading

- ▶ Dubay, T. Authenticity: A Biblical Theology of Discernment (updated edition, 1997).
- ▶ Teresa of Ávila, The Interior Castle; The Book of Her Life.
- ▶ John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel; The Dark Night.
- ▶ Thérèse of Lisieux, Story of a Soul.
- ▶ Pijuan, J. El Discernimiento Espiritual.

- ▶ Pennington, J. T. (2021). 'Joseph the Just and Matthew's Matrix of Mercy: The Redefinition of Righteousness.' *Journal of Moral Theology*, 10 (Special Issue 1), 40–50.
- ▶ van Zyl, H. C. (2013). 'Discernment as “not knowing” and “knowing”: a perspective from Matthew 25:31–46.' *Acta Theologica*, 33 (Suppl. 17), 119–139.
- ▶ Welzen, H. (2013). 'A hermeneutic of justice. Justice as discernment in Matthew.' *Acta Theologica*, 33 (Suppl. 17), 96–118.
- ▶ Johnson, L. T. *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church: The Challenge of Luke–Acts to Contemporary Christians*.
- ▶ Leo XIV, *Magnifica Humanitas* — encyclical on the human person in the age of artificial intelligence (2026).

“The word of the Lord came to me: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

— Jeremiah 1:4–5