

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER



*Essential
Documents
of the
Secular
Franciscan
Order*

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Contents

Message of the Holy Father John Paul II to the
Secular Franciscan Order

Section 1 - The Rule of the Secular Franciscan
Order

Section 2 - General Constitutions of the Secular
Franciscan Order 2000

Section 3 - Statutes of the National Fraternity of
the Secular Franciscan Order in the
United States of America
includes Appendix A; Composition of
Regions (with map); Statement of
Purposes; Internal Controls and
Treasury Guidelines

Section 4 - Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order

Section 5 - Statutes of the International Fraternity
of the Secular Franciscan Order

Section 6 - Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral
Assistance to the Secular Franciscan
Order

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THE MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. I receive you all with joy and give to each one my hearty welcome: to the members of the Presidency of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, both new and previous, to all the participants in the Tenth General Chapter and, through you, to all the Secular Franciscans and members of Franciscan Youth present in the world.

In this General Chapter you have brought to a close the up-dating of your fundamental legislation. You now have in your hands the Rule, approved by my predecessor Paul VI, of happy memory, on the 24th June 1978; the Ritual, approved on the 9th March 1984; the General Constitutions definitively approved on the 8th of December 2000; and the International Statutes, approved in this Chapter. It is now necessary to look to the future and to set out: *Duc in altum!*

The Church expects from the Secular Franciscan Order, one and only, a great service in the cause of the Kingdom of God in the world of today. The Church desires that your Order should be a model of organic, structural and charismatic unity on all levels, so as to present itself to the world as a “community of love” (cf. *Regula* OFS 26). The Church expects from you, Secular Franciscans, a courageous and consistent testimony of Christian and Franciscan life, leaning towards the construction of a more fraternal and gospel world for the realization of the Kingdom of God.

2. The reflection, carried out during this Chapter, on "*The vital reciprocal communion in the Franciscan Family*" pushes you to commit yourselves evermore in the promotion of meeting and understanding especially within your Order, then before other Franciscan brothers and sisters and finally, with maximum care, as St. Francis wished, in your relations with the hierarchical authorities of the Church.

Your **renewed legislation** gives you optimal instruments for carrying out and fully expressing the unity of your Order and its communion with the Franciscan Family within precise coordinates. In it there is, above all, provision for the service of animation and guidance of the Fraternities, "co-ordinated and connected according to the norm of the Rule and the Constitutions"; such service is indispensable for communion between the Fraternities, for the coordinated collaboration between them and for the unity of the Secular Franciscan Order (cf. *General Constitutions SFO* 29.1). Also the "spiritual assistance as a fundamental element of communion", to be carried out collegially on the regional, national and international levels is important (cf. *General Constitutions SFO* 90.3). Of decisive importance is finally the collegial service of the *altius moderamen*, "entrusted by the Church to the Franciscan First Order and to the Third Order Regular", to which the Secular Fraternity has been attached for centuries (cf. *General Constitutions SFO* 85.2; 87.1).

I earnestly hope that the new Presidency of the International Council of the SFO (CIOFS) will continue the path undertaken by the preceding one towards the goal of a true and single body, in fidelity to the charism received from St. Francis and to the fundamental line of the **renewed legislation** of your Order.

3. In the meeting of more than twenty years ago, on the 27th September 1982, with the participants of the General Assembly of your International Council, I exhorted you to: **"Study, love, live the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order**, approved for you by my predecessor Paul VI. This is an authentic treasure in your hands, harmonized with the spirit of the II Vatican Council and corresponding to what the Church expects from you" (cf. *Teachings*, V/3, 1982, page 613). I am pleased to be able to address analogous words to you today: **study, love, live also your General Constitutions!** These exhort you to accept the help that, in order to fulfill the will of the Father, is offered to you through the mediation of the Church by those who have been established in authority and by your Confreres.

You are called on to give your own contribution, inspired by the person and message of St. Francis of Assisi, in speeding up the advent of a civilization in which the dignity of the human person, co-responsibility and love will be a living reality (cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 31 ss). You must deepen the true foundations of the worldwide Fraternity and create everywhere the spirit of welcome and the atmosphere of brotherliness. Commit yourselves firmly against all forms of exploitation, discrimination and marginalization and against all attitudes of indifference towards others.

4. You Secular Franciscans, by vocation, live belonging to the Church and to society as inseparable realities. Therefore, you are asked, above all else, to bear personal witness before all in the environment in which you live: "in your family life; in your work; in your joys and sufferings; in your associations with all men and women, brothers and sisters of the same Father; in your presence and participation in the life of society; in your fraternal relationships with all creatures." (cf. *General Constitution SFO* 12.1). Perhaps blood martyrdom will not be asked of you; you are certainly asked

for the testimony of consistency and firmness in fulfilling the promises made at Baptism and at Confirmation, renewed and confirmed in your Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order. In virtue of this Profession, the Rule and General Constitution must represent for each one of you the reference point for everyday experience, on the basis of a specific vocation and precise identity (cf. *Promulgation of the General Constitutions of the SFO*). If you are truly spurred on by the Spirit to achieve the perfection of charity in your secular state, "it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity" (cf. *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 31). It is necessary to commit oneself with conviction to the "high measure of ordinary Christian life" to which I invited all the faithful at the end of the Great Jubilee of 2000.

5. I do not want to conclude this message without recommending you to consider your family as the primary environment in which to live the Christian commitment and the Franciscan vocation, giving within it space for prayer, to the Word of God and to Christian catechesis, and making every effort to respect all life, from conception and in all situations, until death. It is necessary to act in such a way that your families "show convincingly that it is possible to live marriage fully in keeping with God's plan and with the true good of the human person: of the spouses and especially of the children who are more fragile" (cf. *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 47).

In this context, I exhort you to take up the Holy Rosary, which, "by age-old tradition, has shown itself particularly effective as a prayer that brings the family together. Individual family members, in turning their eyes towards Jesus, also regain the ability to look one another in the eye, to communicate, to show solidarity, to forgive one another and to see their covenant of love renewed in the Spirit of

God" (cf. *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* 41). Do it with your gaze on the Virgin Mary, the humble servant of the Lord, disposed to his Word and to all his appeals, who was surrounded with inexpressible love and was designated Protector and Advocate of the Franciscan Family by Francis. Give witness to her of your burning love, in imitation of her unconditional availability and in the effusion of a confident and conscious prayer (cf. *SFO Rule* 9).

With this wish, I heartily impart to you, Secular Franciscans and to you, members of Franciscan Youth, a special Apostolic Blessing.

The Vatican, 22nd November 2002

John Paul II

Section 1

*The Rule
of the
Secular
Franciscan
Order*

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

Prologue: Exhortation of St. Francis to the Brothers and Sisters in Penance (circa 1210-1215)

In the name of the Lord!

Chapter One: Concerning Those Who Do Penance

All who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength (cf. Mk 12:30), and love their neighbors as themselves (cf. Mt 22:39) and hate their bodies with their vices and sins, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and produce worthy fruits of penance:

Oh, how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them, because “the spirit of the Lord will rest upon them” (cf. Is 11:2) and he will make “his home and dwelling among them” (cf. Jn 14:23), and they are the sons of the heavenly Father (cf. Mt 5:45), whose works they do, and they are the spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Mt 12:50).

We are spouses, when by the Holy Spirit the faithful soul is united with our Lord Jesus Christ, we are brothers to him when we fulfill “the will of the Father who is in heaven” (cf. Mt 12:50).

We are mothers, when we carry him in our heart and body (cf. 1 Cor 6:20) through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to him through a holy life which must give light to others by example (cf. Mt 5: 16).

Oh, how glorious it is to have a great and holy Father in heaven! oh how glorious it is to have such a beautiful and admirable Spouse, the Holy Paraclete!

Oh, how glorious it is to have such a Brother and such a Son, loved, beloved, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable, and desirable above all: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave up his life for his sheep (cf. Jn 10:15) and prayed to the Father saying:

“O holy Father, protect them with your name (cf. Jn 17:11) whom you gave me out of the world. I entrusted to them the message you entrusted to me and they received it. They have known that in truth I came from you, they have believed that it was you who sent me. For these I pray, not for the world (cf. Jn 17:9). Bless and consecrate them, and I consecrate myself for their sakes. I do not pray for them alone; I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word (cf. Jn 17:20) that they may be holy by being one as we are (cf. Jn 17: 11). And I desire, Father, to have them in my company where I am to see this glory of mine in your kingdom” (cf. Jn 17:6-24).

Chapter Two: Concerning Those Who Do Not Do Penance

But all those men and women who are not doing penance and do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and live in vices and sin and yield to evil concupiscence and to the wicked desires of the flesh, and do not observe what they have promised to the Lord, and are

slaves to the world, in their bodies, by carnal desires and the anxieties and cares of this life (cf. Jn 8:41):

These are blind, because they do not see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ; they do not have spiritual wisdom because they do not have the Son of God who is the true wisdom of the Father. Concerning them, it is said, “Their skill was swallowed up” (cf. Ps 107:27) and “cursed are those who turn away from your commands” (cf. Ps 119:21). They see and acknowledge, they know and do bad things and knowingly destroy their own souls.

See, you who are blind, deceived by your enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, for it is pleasant to the body to commit sin and it is bitter to make it serve God because all vices and sins come out and “proceed from the heart of man” as the Lord says in the gospel (cf. Mt 7:21). And you have nothing in this world and in the next, and you thought you would possess the vanities of this world for a long time.

But you have been deceived, for the day and the hour will come to which you give no thought and which you do not know and of which you are ignorant. The body grows infirm, death approaches, and so it dies a bitter death, and no matter where or when or how man dies, in the guilt of sin, without penance or satisfaction, though he can make satisfaction but does not do it.

The devil snatches the soul from his body with such anguish and tribulation that no one can know it except he who endures it, and all the talents and power and “knowledge and wisdom” (cf. 2 Chr 1: 17) which they thought they had will be taken away from them (cf. Lk 8: 18; Mk 4:25), and they leave their goods to relatives and friends who take and divide them and say afterwards, “Cursed be his soul because he could have given us more, he could have acquired more than he did.” The worms eat up the body and so they have lost

body and soul during this short earthly life and will go into the inferno where they will suffer torture without end.

All those into whose hands this letter shall have come we ask in the charity that is God (cf. 1 Jn 4: 17) to accept kindly and with divine love the fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ quoted above. And let those who do not know how to read have them read to them.

And may they keep them in their mind and carry them out, in a holy manner to the end, because they are “spirit and life” (cf. Jn 6:64).

And those who will not do this will have to render “an account on the day of judgment” (cf. Mt 12:36) before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 14: 10).

(Cajetan Esser O.F.M., *Die Opuscula des hl. Franziskus von Assisi*. Nuova Ediz. Critica, Grottaferrata, 1976; translated by Marion A. Habig O.F.M.)

Chapter I

The Secular Franciscan Order

1. The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church,¹ unites all members of the people of God - laity, religious, and priests - who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.²

In various ways and forms but in lifegiving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.³

2. The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world

and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.⁴

3. The present rule, succeeding *Memoriale Propositi* (1221) and the rules approved by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

Chapter II

The Way of Life

4. The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.⁵

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.⁶

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.⁷

5. Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the

Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of Saint Francis, who often said “*I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood,*” should be the inspiration and pattern of their eucharistic life.

6. They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.⁸

7. United by their vocation as *brothers and sisters of penance*,⁹ and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls *conversion*. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.¹⁰

On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.¹¹

8. As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.¹²

Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

9. The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family.¹³ The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.¹⁴
10. United themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will into the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfill the duties proper to their various circumstances of life.¹⁵ Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to him even in difficulties and persecutions.¹⁶
11. Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life,¹⁷ even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children.

Thus, in the spirit of *the Beatitudes*, and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father,¹⁸ they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

12. Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they

have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.¹⁹

13. As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters,²⁰ so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord²¹ and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.²²

14. Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone *who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself*, let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.²³
15. Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.²⁴
16. Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.²⁵
17. In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.²⁶

By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.²⁷

18. Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which *bear the imprint of the Most High*,²⁸ and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.
19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.²⁹

Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.³⁰

Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.³¹

Chapter III

Life In Fraternity

20. The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels - local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own

moral personality in the Church.³² These various fraternities are coordinated and united according to the norm of this rule and of the constitutions.

21. On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister (or president) who are elected by the professed according to the constitutions.³³

Their service, which lasts for a definite period, is marked by a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community.

Within themselves the fraternities are structured in different ways according to the norm of the constitutions, according to the various needs of their members and their regions, and under the guidance of their respective council.

22. The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.³⁴
23. Requests for admission to the Secular Franciscan Order must be presented to the local fraternity, whose council decides upon the acceptance of new brothers and sisters.³⁵

Admission into the Order is gradually attained through a time of initiation, a period of formation of at least one year, and profession of the rule.³⁶ The entire community is engaged in this process of growth by its own manner of living. The age for profession and the distinctive Franciscan sign³⁷ are regulated by the statutes.

Profession by its nature is a permanent commitment.³⁸

Members who find themselves in particular difficulties should discuss their problems with the council in fraternal dialogue.

Withdrawal or permanent dismissal from the Order, if necessary, is an act of the fraternity council according to the norm of the constitutions.³⁹

24. To foster communion among members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups. It should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life of fraternity.⁴⁰ This communion continues with deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them.⁴¹
25. Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity and the needs of worship, of the apostolate, and of charity, all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means. Local fraternities should contribute toward the expenses of the higher fraternity councils.⁴²
26. As a concrete sign of communion and coresponsibility, the councils on various levels, in keeping with the constitutions, shall ask for suitable and well prepared religious for spiritual assistance. They should make this request to the superiors of the four religious Franciscan families, to whom the Secular Fraternity has been united for centuries.

To promote fidelity to the charism as well as observance of the rule and to receive greater support

in the life of the fraternity, the minister or president, with the consent of the council, should take care to ask for a regular pastoral visit by the competent religious superiors⁴³ as well as for a fraternal visit from those of the higher fraternities, according to the norm of the constitutions.

Blessing of St. Francis (1226):

*May whoever observes all this be filled
in heaven with the blessing of the most high Father,
and on earth with that of his beloved Son,
together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.*

¹ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), 43.

² Pius XII, Allocution to Tertiaries (“*Nel darvi*”), #1 (July 1, 1956); *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. 48, pp. 574-575.

³ Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity), 4m.

⁴ Code of Canon Law (“CCL”), 702:1.

⁵ 1 Celano 18, 115.

⁶ John 3:16, 14:6.

⁷ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 30h.

⁸ Paul VI, Allocution to Tertiaries (“*Salutiamo volentieri*”), #3 (May 19, 1971); *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. 63, pp. 545-546.

⁹ Primitive Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis (Earlier Exhortation and Prologue to the Rule of 1978).

¹⁰ *Lumen Gentium*, 8.

¹¹ Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests), 18b.

¹² *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4a, b, c.

¹³ 2 Celano 198.

¹⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, 67; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 40.

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- ¹⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, 41.
- ¹⁶ *Lumen Gentium*, 42b.
- ¹⁷ St. Francis, “Letter to All the Faithful,” 5.
- ¹⁸ Romans 8: 17; *Lumen Gentium*, 48.
- ¹⁹ St. Francis, “Admonitions,” 16; “Letter to All the Faithful,” 70.
- ²⁰ Romans 8:29.
- ²¹ 2 Celano 85; “Letter to All the Faithful,” 26; 1 OFM Rule, 7: 13.
- ²² 1 OFM Rule, 9:3; Mt 25:40.
- ²³ *Lumen Gentium*, 31; Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), 93.
- ²⁴ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 14.
- ²⁵ *Gaudium et Spes*, 67:2; 1 OFM Rule, 7:4; 2 OFM Rule, 5:1.
- ²⁶ Rule of Leo XIII, 2:8.
- ²⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, 41e; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 30b, c.
- ²⁸ 1 Celano 80.
- ²⁹ Rule of Leo XIII, 2:9; 3.
- ³⁰ “Admonitions,” 21; 1 OFM Rule, 7:15.
- ³¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, 78:1-2.
- ³² CCL, 687.
- ³³ CCL, 687.
- ³⁴ Pius XII, Allocution to Tertiaries (“*Nel darvi*”), #3 (July 1, 1956); *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. 48, p.577.
- ³⁵ CCL, 694.
- ³⁶ *Memoriale Propositi*, chap. X (5, 6, 7, 8).
- ³⁷ 1 Celano 22.
- ³⁸ *Memoriale Propositi*, chap. X (5, 6, 7, 8).
- ³⁹ CCL, 696.
- ⁴⁰ CCL, 697.
- ⁴¹ *Memoriale Propositi*, chap. IX (1, 2).
- ⁴² *Memoriale Propositi*, chap. VII (2).
- ⁴³ Rule of Nicholas IV, chap. 16.

Section 2

*General
Constitutions
of the
Secular
Franciscan
Order
2000*

CHAPTER I

THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Article 1

1. All the faithful are called to holiness and have a right to follow their own spiritual way in communion with the Church.¹
2. *Rule 1* There are many spiritual families in the Church with different charisms. Among these families, the Franciscan Family, which in its various branches recognizes St. Francis of Assisi as its father, inspiration, and model, must be included.
3. *Rule 2* From the beginning, the Secular Franciscan Order² has had its own proper place in the Franciscan Family. It is formed by the organic union of all the Catholic fraternities whose members, moved by the Holy Spirit, commit themselves through profession to live the Gospel in the manner of St. Francis, in their secular state, following the Rule approved by the Church.³

¹ See Can. 210; 214; *Lumen Gentium* 40.

² It is also called "Secular Franciscan Fraternity", or "Franciscan Third Order" (TOF). See *Rule 2*, footnote 4. Canon 303 of the CCL defines third orders: "Associations whose members live in the world, but share in the spirit of some religious institute, under the overall direction (*altius moderamen*) of the same institute, and who lead an apostolic life and strive for Christian perfection, are known as third orders, or are called by some other suitable title."

³ After the Rules approved by Pope Nicholas IV in 1289 and by Pope Leo XIII in 1883, the present Rule was approved by Pope Paul VI, June 24, 1978.

4. The Holy See has entrusted the pastoral care and spiritual assistance of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO), because it belongs to the same spiritual family, to the Franciscan First Order and Third Order Regular (TOR). These are the "Institutes" who are responsible for the *altius moderamen*, referred to by Canon 303 of the Code of Canon Law.⁴
5. The Secular Franciscan Order is a public association in the Church.⁵ It is divided into fraternities at various levels: local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own juridical personality within the Church.

Article 2

1. The vocation to the SFO is a specific vocation that gives form to the life and apostolic activity of its members. Therefore, those who are bound by a perpetual commitment to another religious family or institute of consecrated life cannot belong to the SFO.
2. The SFO is open to the faithful of every state of life. The following may belong to it:
 - the laity (men and women);
 - the secular clergy (deacons, priests, bishops).

Article 3

1. The secular state characterizes the spirituality and the apostolic life of those belonging to the SFO.

⁴ See *General Constitutions SFO* 85, 2. When the Constitutions are cited without any other specification, the reference is to the present text.

⁵ See Can. 116; 301,3; 312; 313.

2. Their secularity, with respect to vocation and to apostolic life, expresses itself according to the respective state, that is:
 - for the laity, contributing to building up the Kingdom of God by their presence in their life-situations and in their temporal activities;⁶
 - for the secular clergy, by offering to the people of God the service which is properly theirs, in communion with the bishop and the presbytery.⁷Both are inspired by the gospel options of Saint Francis of Assisi, committing themselves to continue his mission with the other components of the Franciscan Family.
3. The vocation to the SFO is a vocation to live the Gospel in fraternal communion. For this purpose, the members of the SFO gather in ecclesial communities which are called fraternities.

Article 4

1. The SFO is governed by the universal law of the Church, and by its own: the Rule, the Constitutions, the Ritual, and the particular statutes.
2. The Rule establishes the nature, purpose, and spirit of the SFO.
3. *Rule 3* The Constitutions have as their purpose:
 - to apply the Rule;
 - to indicate concretely the conditions for belonging to the SFO, its government, the organization of life in fraternity, and its seat.⁸

⁶ See Can 225, and the Discourse of Pope John Paul II to the SFO, September 27, 1982 in *L'Osservatore Romano*, September 28, 1982.

⁷ See Can. 275 ff, *Presbyterorum ordinis* 12; 14; 15 ff.

⁸ See Can. 304.

Article 5

1. *Rule 3* The authentic interpretation of the Rule and of the Constitutions belongs to the Holy See.
2. The practical interpretation of the Constitutions, with the purpose of harmonizing its application in different areas and at the various levels of the Order, belongs to the General Chapter of the SFO.
3. The clarification of specific points which require a timely decision is the competence of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO (CIOFS). Such a clarification is valid until the next General Chapter.

Article 6

1. The international fraternity of the SFO has its own statutes approved by the General Chapter.
2. National fraternities have their own statutes approved by the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO.
3. The regional and the local fraternities may have their own statutes approved by the council of the higher level.

Article 7

All regulations not in accordance with the present Constitutions are abrogated.

CHAPTER II

FORM OF LIFE AND APOSTOLIC ACTIVITY

Title I

THE FORM OF LIFE

Article 8

1. The Secular Franciscans commit themselves by their profession to live the Gospel according to Franciscan spirituality in their secular condition.
2. They seek to deepen, in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the SFO:
 - *Rule 7* in a continually renewed journey of conversion and of formation;
 - *Rule 4,3* open to the challenges that come from society and from the Church's life situation, "going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel;"
 - in the personal and communal dimensions of this journey.

Article 9

1. *Rule 5* The spirituality of the Secular Franciscan is a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ,⁹ rather than a detailed program to be put into practice.

⁹ See *Rule of 1221*, Chapt. 22; *Second Letter to All the Faithful* 51.

2. *Rule 4,3* The Secular Franciscan, committed to following the example and the teachings of Christ, must personally and assiduously study the Gospel and Sacred Scripture. The fraternity and its leaders should foster love for the word of the Gospel and help the brothers and sisters to know and understand it as it is proclaimed by the Church with the assistance of the Spirit¹⁰.

Article 10

Rule 10 "Christ, poor and crucified", victor over death and risen, the greatest manifestation of the love of God for humanity, is the "book" in which the brothers and sisters, in imitation of Francis, learn the purpose and the way of living, loving, and suffering. They discover in Him the value of contradictions for the sake of justice and the meaning of the difficulties and the crosses of daily life. With Him, they can accept the will of the Father even under the most difficult circumstances and live the Franciscan spirit of peace, rejecting every doctrine contrary to human dignity.

Article 11

Mindful that the Holy Spirit is the source of their vocation and the animator of fraternal life and mission, Secular Franciscans should seek to imitate the faithfulness of Francis to His inspiration. They should listen to the exhortation of the Saint to desire above all things "the Spirit of God at work within them."¹¹

¹⁰ See *Dei verbum* 10.

¹¹ *Rule of 1223*, Chapt. 10.

Article 12

1. Gaining inspiration from the example and the writings of Francis and, above all, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, each day the brothers and sisters faithfully live the great gift which Christ has given: the revelation of the Father. They should bear witness to this faith before all:
 - in their family life;
 - in their work;
 - in their joys and sufferings;
 - in their associations with all men and women, brothers and sisters of the same Father;
 - in their presence and participation in the life of society;
 - in their fraternal relationships with all creatures.
2. *Rule 10* With Jesus, obedient even to death, they should seek to know and do the will of the Father. They should give thanks to God for the gift of freedom and for the revelation of the law of love. In order to carry out the will of the Father, they should accept the help which is offered to them through the mediation of the Church by those who are constituted as authority in her and by their confreres. They should take on the risk of courageous choices in their life in society with decisiveness and serenity.
3. *Rule 8* The brothers and sisters should love meeting God as His children and they should let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. They should seek to discover the presence of the Father in their own heart, in nature, and in the history of humanity in which His plan of salvation is fulfilled. The contemplation of this mystery will dispose them to collaborate in this loving plan.

Article 13

1. *Rule 7* Secular Franciscans, called in earlier times "the brothers and sisters of penance," propose to live in the spirit of continual conversion. Some means to cultivate this characteristic of the Franciscan vocation, individually and in fraternity, are: listening to and celebrating the Word of God; review of life; spiritual retreats; the help of a spiritual adviser, and penitential celebrations. They should approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently and participate in the communal celebration of it, whether in the fraternity, or with the whole people of God.¹²
2. In this spirit of conversion, they should live out their love for the renewal of the Church, which should be accompanied by personal and communal renewal. The fruits of conversion, which is a response to the love of God, are the works of charity in the interactions with the brothers and sisters.¹³
3. Traditional among Franciscan penitents, penitential practices such as fasting and abstinence should be known, appreciated, and lived out according to the general guidelines of the Church.

Article 14

1. Aware that God wanted to make of us all a single people and that he made his Church the universal sacrament of salvation, the brothers and sisters should commit themselves to a faith-inspired reflection on the Church, its mission in today's world and the role of the Franciscan laity within it. They should take up the challenges and

¹² *Ordo Poenitentiae. Praenotanda* 22 ff.

¹³ See *Second Letter to All the Faithful* 25 ff.

accept the responsibilities that this reflection will lead them to discover.

2. *Rule 8* The Eucharist is the center of the life of the Church. Christ unites us to himself and to one another as a single body in it. Therefore, the Eucharist should be the center of the life of the fraternity. The brothers and sisters should participate in the Eucharist as frequently as possible, being mindful of the respect and love shown by Francis, who, in the Eucharist, lived all the mysteries of the life of Christ.
3. They should participate in the sacraments of the Church, attentive not only to personal sanctification, but also to fostering the growth of the Church and the spreading of the Kingdom. They should collaborate in achieving living and conscious celebrations in their own parishes, particularly in the celebrations of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and the anointing of the sick.
4. The brothers and sisters, as well as the fraternities, should adhere to the indications of the Ritual with respect to the different forms of participating in the liturgical prayer of the Church, giving priority to the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours¹⁴.
5. In all places and at all times, it is possible for true worshippers of the Father to give him adoration and to pray to him. Nevertheless, the brothers and sisters should try to find times of silence and recollection dedicated exclusively to prayer.

Article 15

1. *Rule 11* Secular Franciscans should pledge themselves to live the spirit of the Beatitudes and, in a special way, the

¹⁴ *Ritual SFO*, Appendix 26, 27.

spirit of poverty. Evangelical poverty demonstrates confidence in the Father, creates interior freedom, and disposes them to promote a more just distribution of wealth.

2. Secular Franciscans, who must provide for their own families and serve society by means of their work and material goods, have a particular manner of living evangelical poverty. To understand and achieve it requires a strong personal commitment and the stimulation of the fraternity in prayer and dialogue, communal review of life, and attentiveness to the instructions of the Church, and the demands of society.
3. Secular Franciscans should pledge themselves to reduce their own personal needs so as to be better able to share spiritual and material goods with their brothers and sisters, especially those most in need. They should give thanks to God for the goods they have received, using them as good stewards and not as owners. They should take a firm position against consumerism and against ideologies and practices which prefer riches over human and religious values and which permit the exploitation of the human person.
4. They should love and practice purity of heart, the source of true fraternity.

Article 16

1. *Rule 9* Mary, Mother of Jesus, is the model of listening to the Word and of faithfulness to vocation; we, like Francis, see all the gospel virtues realized in her.¹⁵
The brothers and sisters should cultivate intense love for the most holy virgin, imitation, prayer, and filial abandonment. They should manifest their own devotion

¹⁵ *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

with expressions of genuine faith, in forms accepted by the Church.

2. Mary is the model of fruitful and faithful love for the entire ecclesial community.

Secular Franciscans and their fraternities should seek to live the experience of Francis, who made the Virgin the guide of his activity. With her, like the disciples at Pentecost, they should welcome the Spirit to create a community of love.¹⁶

¹⁶ See 2 *Celano*, 198.

Title II

ACTIVE PRESENCE IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

Article 17

1. *Rule 6* Called to work together in building up the Church as the sacrament of salvation for all and, through their baptism and profession, made "witnesses and instruments of her mission," Secular Franciscans proclaim Christ by their life and words. Their preferred apostolate is personal witness¹⁷ in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world.
2. The preparation of the brothers and sisters for spreading the Gospel message "in the ordinary circumstances of the world"¹⁸ and for collaborating in the catechesis within the ecclesial communities should be promoted in the fraternities.
3. Those who are called to carry out the mission of catechists, presiders of ecclesial communities, or other ministries, as well as the sacred ministers, should make the love of Francis for the Word of God their own, as well as his faith in those who announce it, and the great fervor with which he received the mission of preaching penance from the Pope.
4. Participation in the service of sanctification, which the Church exercises through the liturgy, prayer, and works

¹⁷ See *Rule 1221*, 17,3; *Legend of the Three Companions* 36; *Second Letter to All the Faithful* 53.

¹⁸ *Lumen Gentium* 35.

of penance and charity, is put into practice by the brothers and sisters above all in their own family, then in the fraternity and, finally, through their active presence in the local Church and in society.

For a Just and Fraternal Society

Article 18

1. Secular Franciscans are called to make their own contribution, inspired by the person and message of Saint Francis of Assisi, towards a civilization in which the dignity of the human person, shared responsibility, and love may be living realities.¹⁹
2. *Rule 13* They should deepen the true foundations of universal kinship and create a spirit of welcome and an atmosphere of fraternity everywhere. They should firmly commit themselves to oppose every form of exploitation, discrimination, and exclusion and against every attitude of indifference in relation to others.
3. *Rule 13* They should work together with movements which promote the building of fraternity among peoples: they should be committed to "create worthy conditions of life" for all and to work for the freedom of all people.
4. Following the example of Francis, patron of ecologists, they should actively put forward initiatives that care for creation and should work with others in efforts that both put a stop to polluting and degrading nature and also establish circumstances of living and environment which would not be a threat to the human person.

¹⁹ See *Gaudium et Spes* 31 ff.

Article 19

1. *Rule 14* Secular Franciscans should always act as a leaven in the environment in which they live through the witness of their fraternal love and clear Christian motivations.
2. In the spirit of minority, they should opt for relationships which give preference to the poor and to those on the fringe of society, whether these be individuals or categories of persons or an entire people; they should collaborate in overcoming the exclusion of others and those forms of poverty that are the fruit of inefficiency and injustice.

Article 20

1. *Rule 14* Secular Franciscans, committed by their vocation to build the Kingdom of God in temporal situations and activities, live their membership both in the Church and in society as an inseparable reality.
2. As the primary and fundamental contribution to building a more just and fraternal world, they should commit themselves both to the generous fulfillment of the duties proper to their occupation and to the professional training that pertains to it. With the same spirit of service, they should assume their social and civil responsibilities.

Article 21

1. *Rule 16* For Francis, work is a gift and to work is a grace. Daily work is not only the means of livelihood, but the opportunity to serve God and neighbor as well as a way to develop one's own personality. In the conviction that work is a right and a duty and that every form of occupation deserves respect, the brothers and sisters should commit themselves to collaborate so that all

persons may have the possibility to work and so that working conditions may always be more humane.

2. Leisure and recreation have their own value and are necessary for personal development. Secular Franciscans should maintain a balance between work and rest and should strive to create meaningful forms of using leisure time.²⁰

Article 22

1. *Rule 15* Secular Franciscans should "be in the forefront ... in the field of public life." They should collaborate as much as possible for the passage of just laws and ordinances.
2. The fraternities should engage themselves through courageous initiatives, consistent with their Franciscan vocation and with the directives of the Church, in the field of human development and justice. They should take clear positions whenever human dignity is attacked by any form of oppression or indifference. They should offer their fraternal service to the victims of injustice.
3. The renunciation of the use of violence, characteristic of the followers of Francis, does not mean the renunciation of action. However, the brothers and sisters should take care that their interventions are always inspired by Christian love.

Article 23

1. *Rule 19* Peace is the work of justice and the fruit of reconciliation and of fraternal love.²¹ Secular Franciscans

²⁰ See *Gaudium et Spes* 67; *Laborem exercens* 16 ff.

²¹ See *Gaudium et Spes* 78.

are called to be bearers of peace in their families and in society:

- they should see to the proposal and spreading of peaceful ideas and attitudes;
 - they should develop their own initiatives and should collaborate, individually and as a fraternity, with initiatives of the Pope, the local Churches, and the Franciscan Family;
 - they should collaborate with those movements and institutions which promote peace while respecting its authentic foundations.
2. While acknowledging both the personal and national right to legitimate defense, they should respect the choice of those who, because of conscientious objection, refuse to bear arms.
 3. To preserve peace in the family, the brothers and sisters should, in due time, make a last will and testament for the disposition of their goods.

In the Family

Article 24

1. *Rule 17* Secular Franciscans should consider their own family to be the first place in which to live their Christian commitment and Franciscan vocation. They should make space within it for prayer, for the Word of God, and for Christian catechesis. They should concern themselves with respect for all life in every situation from conception until death.

Married couples find in the Rule of the SFO an effective aid in their own journey of Christian life, aware that, in the sacrament of matrimony, their love shares in the love that Christ has for his Church. The way spouses love each other and affirm the value of fidelity is a profound witness for their own family, the Church, and the world.

2. In the fraternity:
 - the spirituality of the family and of marriage and the Christian attitude towards family problems should be a theme for dialogue and for the sharing of experiences;
 - they should share the important moments of the family life of their Franciscan brothers and sisters and they should give fraternal attention to those — single, widows, single parents, separated, divorced — who are living difficult situations;
 - *Rule 19* they should create conditions suitable for dialogue between generations;
 - the formation of groups of married couples and of family groups should be fostered.
3. The brothers and sisters should collaborate with the efforts undertaken in the Church and in society to affirm both the value of fidelity and respect for life and to provide answers to the social problems of the family.

Article 25

Out of the conviction of the need to educate children to take an interest in community, "bringing them the awareness of being living, active members of the People of God"²² and because of the fascination which Francis can exercise on them, the formation of groups of children should be encouraged. With the help of a pedagogy and an organization suitable to their age, these children should be initiated into a knowledge and love of the Franciscan life. National statutes will give appropriate orientation for the organization of these groups and their relationship to the fraternity and to Franciscan youth groups.

²² *Apostolicam actuositatem* 30.

Messengers of Joy and Hope

Article 26

1. Even in suffering, Francis experienced confidence and joy from:
 - the experience of the fatherhood of God;
 - the invincible faith of rising with Christ to eternal life;
 - the experience of being able to meet and praise the Creator in the universal fraternity of all creatures.²³

Rule 19 Following the Gospel, Secular Franciscans, therefore, affirm their hope and their joy in living. They make a contribution to counter widespread distress and pessimism, preparing a better future.
2. In the fraternity, the brothers and sisters should promote mutual understanding and they should see to it that the atmosphere of their meetings is welcoming and that it reflects joy. They should encourage one another for the good.

Article 27

1. *Rule 19* The brothers and sisters, progressing in age, should learn to accept illness and increasing difficulties and to give a deeper sense to their life. This should be undertaken with increasing detachment as they set out for the Promised Land. They should be firmly convinced that the community of those who believe in Christ and who love one another in Him will go forward into eternal life as the "communion of saints."
2. Secular Franciscans should commit themselves to create in their environment and, above all, in their fraternities, a climate of faith and hope so that "Sister Death" may be

²³ See 2 Celano, 125; *Legend of Perugia* 43; *Major Life*, 9.

regarded as a passage to the Father, and all may prepare themselves with serenity.

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN FRATERNITY

Title I

GENERAL ORIENTATIONS

Article 28

1. The fraternity of the SFO finds its origin in the inspiration of Saint Francis of Assisi to whom the Most High revealed the essential gospel quality of life in fraternal communion.²⁴
2. *Rule 20* "The SFO is divided into fraternities of various levels," the purpose being to promote, in an orderly form, the union and mutual collaboration among the brothers and sisters and their active and communal presence in both the local and the universal Church. The SFO shall also support the commitment of the fraternities in their service to the world, and specifically to the life of society.
3. The brothers and sisters gather in local fraternities established in connection with a church or a religious house, or in personal fraternities, constituted for specific and valid reasons recognized in the decree of establishment.²⁵

²⁴ See *Constitutions* 3,3; *Testament* 14.

²⁵ See Can. 518.

Article 29

1. Local fraternities are grouped into fraternities at various levels: regional, national and international according to criteria that are ecclesial, territorial, or of another nature. They are co-ordinated and connected according to the norm of the Rule and the Constitutions. This is a requirement of the communion among the fraternities, of the orderly collaboration among them, and of the unity of the SFO.
2. *Rule 20* These fraternities, that each have their own juridical personality in the Church, should acquire, if possible, a civil juridical personality for the better fulfillment of their mission. It pertains to the national councils to give guidelines concerning the motivations and the procedures to be followed.
3. National statutes should indicate the criteria for the organization of the SFO in the nation. The application of these criteria is left to the prudent judgement of the leaders of the fraternities concerned and of the national council.

Article 30

1. The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the SFO as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world.
2. The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration, in accordance with each one's situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity.

3. *Rule 25* In a family spirit, each brother and sister should make a contribution to the fraternity fund, according to each one's means, to provide the financial means needed for the life of the fraternity and for its religious, apostolic, and charitable works. The brothers and sisters ought to provide the means necessary for supporting the activities and the operations of the fraternities at higher levels, both by their financial assistance and by their contributions in other areas as well.

Article 31

1. *Rule 21* "On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister (or president)." These offices are conferred through elections, in accordance with the Rule, the Constitutions, and their own Statutes. Only by way of exception or in the first phase of their establishment may fraternities exist without a regular council. The council of the higher level will make the arrangements necessary for this inadequate situation only for the specific amount of time it takes to get a fraternity back on sure footing or to establish a new fraternity; to give its leaders the proper formation and to carry out the elections.
2. The office of minister or councilor is a fraternal service, a commitment to hold oneself available and responsible in relation to each brother and sister and to the fraternity so that each one will realize his or her own vocation and each fraternity will be a true community, ecclesial and Franciscan, actively present in the Church and in society.
3. The leaders of the SFO at every level should be perpetually professed, convinced of the validity of the Franciscan evangelical way of life, attentive to the life of the Church and of society with a broad and encompassing vision, open to dialogue, and ready to give and receive help and collaboration.

4. The leaders should see to the spiritual and technical preparation and animation of the meetings, both of the fraternities and of the councils. They should seek to inspire life and soul into the fraternities by their own witness, suggesting appropriate means for the development of the life of the fraternity and of apostolic activities in the light of the fundamental Franciscan options. They should see to it that the decisions made are carried out and they should promote collaboration among the brothers and sisters.

Article 32

1. The ministers and councilors should live and foster the spirit and reality of communion among the brothers and sisters, among the various fraternities, and between them and the Franciscan family. They should, above all, cherish peace and reconciliation in and around the fraternity.
2. *Rule 21* The ministers' and councilors' task to lead is temporary. The brothers and sisters, rejecting all ambition, should show love for the fraternity with a spirit of service, prepared both to accept and to relinquish the office.

Article 33

1. In the guidance and co-ordination of the fraternities and of the Order, the personality and capacity of the individual brothers and sisters and of the individual fraternities should be promoted. The plurality of expressions of the Franciscan ideal and cultural variety must be respected.
2. The councils of higher levels should not do what can be adequately carried out either by the local fraternities or by a council of a lower level. They should respect and promote their vitality so that they fulfil their duties

properly. The local fraternities and councils concerned should commit themselves to carry out the decisions of the international council and of the other councils of higher levels, and to implement their programs, adapting them when necessary to their own situation.

Article 34

Where the situation and the needs of the members require it, sections or groups which gather members sharing particular needs, common interests, or the same choices, may be established within the fraternity under the guidance of the one council.

Such groups can give themselves specific norms relative to their meetings and activities, firmly remaining faithful, however, to the requirements which arise from membership in the one fraternity. National statutes may establish criteria suitable for the formation and functioning of these sections or groups.

Article 35

1. Secular priests who recognize that they are called by the Spirit to participate in the charism of Saint Francis of Assisi within the secular fraternity should find in it specific attention in conformity with their mission among the People of God.
2. Secular Franciscan priests may also gather in personal fraternities in order to pursue the ascetical and pastoral incentives which the life and doctrine of Francis and the Rule of the SFO offer them to live their vocation in the Church better. It is proper that these fraternities have their own statutes which envision concrete forms for their composition, their fraternal meetings and for spiritual formation as well as for making their communion with the whole Order living and functional.

Article 36

1. The brothers and sisters who commit themselves with private vows to live in the spirit of the beatitudes and to make themselves more disposed to contemplation and to the service of the fraternities, can be a great help in the spiritual and apostolic development of the SFO.
2. These brothers and sisters may gather in groups according to statutes approved by the national council, or when these groups spread beyond the borders of a nation, by the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO.
3. Such statutes should be in harmony with the present Constitutions.

Title II

ENTRANCE INTO THE ORDER AND FORMATION

Article 37

1. *Rule 23* Membership in the Order is attained through a time of initiation, a time of formation, and the profession of the Rule.
2. The journey of formation, which should develop throughout life, begins with entrance into the fraternity. Mindful that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of formation and always attentive to collaboration with Him, those responsible for formation are: the candidate, the entire fraternity, the council with the minister, the master of formation, and the assistant.
3. The brothers and sisters are responsible for their own formation, developing in an ever more perfect way the vocation received from the Lord. The fraternity is called to help the brothers and sisters in this journey by means of a warm welcome, prayer, and example.
4. The elaboration and adoption of means of formation, adapted to the local situations and offered as a help to those responsible for formation in the individual fraternities, belong to the national and regional councils in common agreement.

The Time of Initiation

Article 38

1. *Rule 23* The time of initiation is a phase preparatory to the true and proper time of formation and is intended for the discernment of the vocation and for the reciprocal acquaintance between the fraternity and the aspiring member. It should guarantee the freedom and the seriousness of entrance into the SFO.
2. The duration of the time of initiation and the forms employed in its development are established by the national statutes.
3. It belongs to the fraternity council to decide possible exemptions to this time of initiation, keeping in mind the guidelines of the national council.

Admission to the Order

Article 39

1. *Rule 23* The request for admission to the Order is presented by the aspirant to the minister of a local or personal fraternity by a formal act, in writing if possible.
2. Conditions for admission are: to profess the Catholic faith, to live in communion with the Church, to be of good moral standing, and to show clear signs of a vocation.²⁶
3. The council of the fraternity decides collegially on the request, gives a formal answer to the aspirant, and communicates this to the fraternity.

²⁶ See Can. 316.

4. The rite of admission is performed according to the Ritual.²⁷ The act is to be registered and preserved in the records of the fraternity.

The Time of Formation

Article 40

1. *Rule 23* The time of formation lasts at least one year. The national statutes can establish a longer period. The purpose of this period is the maturation of the vocation, the experience of the evangelical life in fraternity, and a better knowledge of the Order. This formation should be carried out with frequent meetings for study and prayer and with concrete experiences of service and of apostolate. These meetings should be held, as far as possible and opportune, in common with the candidates of other fraternities.
2. The candidates are guided to read and meditate on Sacred Scripture, to come to know the person and writings of Francis and of Franciscan spirituality, and to study the Rule and Constitutions. They are trained in a love for the Church and acceptance of her teaching. The laity practice living their secular commitment in the world in an evangelical way.
3. Participation in the meetings of the local fraternity is an indispensable presupposition for initiation into community prayer and into fraternity life.
4. A style of teaching which is Franciscan in character and which fits the mentality of the persons concerned should be adopted.

²⁷ See *Ritual SFO*, Preface n. 10 ff.; Chapt. I.

The Profession or Promise of Evangelical Life

Article 41

1. *Rule 23* Having completed the time of initial formation, the candidate submits to the minister of the local fraternity a request to make his or her profession. Having heard the master of formation and the assistant, the fraternity council decides by secret ballot on the admission to profession, gives its reply to the candidate, and informs the fraternity.
2. The conditions for the profession or promise of evangelical life are:
 - attainment of the age established by the national statutes;
 - active participation in the time of formation for at least one year;
 - the consent of the council of the local fraternity.
3. Where it is held to be opportune to lengthen the time of formation, it must not be extended to more than a year beyond the time established by the national statutes.

Article 42

1. Profession is the solemn ecclesial act by which the candidate, remembering the call received from Christ, renews the baptismal promises and publicly affirms his or her personal commitment to live the Gospel in the world according to the example of Francis and following the Rule of the SFO.
2. *Rule 23* Profession incorporates the candidate into the Order and is by its nature a perpetual commitment. Perpetual profession, because of objective and specific pedagogical reasons, may be preceded by a temporary

profession, renewable annually. The total time of temporary profession may not be longer than three years.²⁸

3. Profession is accepted by the minister of the local fraternity or by his or her delegate in the name of the Church and of the SFO. The rite is carried out according to the norms of the Ritual.²⁹
4. Profession does not only commit those professed to the fraternity, but also, in the same way, it commits the fraternity to be concerned with their human and religious well-being.
5. The act of profession is registered and preserved in the records of the fraternity.

Article 43

The national statutes establish:

- *Rule 23* the minimum age for profession which, however, may not be less than eighteen years completed;
- the distinctive sign of membership in the Order (the "Tau" or other Franciscan symbol).

Continuing Formation

Article 44

1. Begun by the preceding stages, the formation of the brothers and sisters takes place in a permanent and continuous way. It should be understood as an aid in the

²⁸ See *Ritual SFO*, Preface n. 18.

²⁹ See *Ritual SFO*, Preface n. 13 ff.; Part I, Chapter II.

conversion of each³⁰ and everyone and in the fulfillment of their proper mission in the Church and in society.

2. The Fraternity has the duty to give special attention to the formation of the newly professed and of the temporarily professed, to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging.
3. Ongoing formation – accomplished by means of courses, gatherings, and the sharing of experience – aims to assist the brothers and sisters:
 - *Rule 4* in listening to and meditating on the Word of God, "going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel;"
 - in reflecting on events in the Church and in society in the light of faith, and with the help of the documents of the teaching Church, consequently taking consistent positions;
 - in discerning and deepening the Franciscan vocation by studying the writings of Saint Francis, Saint Clare and Franciscan authors.

Promotion of Vocations

Article 45

1. The promotion of vocations to the Order is a duty of all the brothers and sisters and is a sign of the vitality of the fraternities themselves.
The brothers and sisters, convinced of the validity of the Franciscan way of life, should pray that God may give the grace of the Franciscan vocation to new members.
2. Although nothing can substitute for the witness of each member and of the fraternity, the councils must adopt appropriate means to promote the Secular Franciscan vocation.

³⁰ See *Constitutions* 8; 1 *Celano* 103.

Title III

THE FRATERNITY AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS

The Local Fraternity

Article 46

1. *Rule 22* The canonical establishment of the local fraternity belongs to the competent religious major superior at the request of the brothers and sisters concerned and with the prior consultation and collaboration of the council of the higher level to which the new fraternity will be related according to the national statutes.
The written consent of the local Ordinary is necessary for the canonical establishment of a fraternity outside the houses or churches of the Franciscan religious of the First Order or the TOR.³¹
2. For the valid establishment of a local fraternity, at least five perpetually professed members are required. The admission and profession of these first brothers and sisters will be received by the council of another local fraternity or by the council of a higher level which will have provided for their formation in appropriate ways. The acts of admission and profession and the decree of establishment are preserved in the records of the fraternity. Copies are sent to the council of the higher level.

³¹ See Can. 312.

3. If there is not yet a fraternity of the SFO in a nation, it belongs to the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO to make provision in this regard.

Article 47

1. *Rule 22* Each local fraternity, the primary cell of the one SFO, is entrusted to the pastoral care of the religious Franciscan Order that canonically established it.
2. A local fraternity may pass to the pastoral care of another religious Franciscan Order in the ways determined by the national statutes.

Article 48

1. In the case of cessation of a fraternity, the patrimonial goods of the same, the library and the records are acquired by the fraternity of the immediately higher level.
2. In the case of revival according to the canonical laws, the fraternity will repossess any remaining goods, its own library, and records.

The Fraternity Council

Article 49

1. The council of the local fraternity is composed of the following offices: minister, vice-minister, secretary, treasurer, and master of formation. Other offices may be added according to the needs of each fraternity. The spiritual assistant of the fraternity forms part of the council by right.³²

³² See *Constitutions* 90,2.

2. The fraternity, meeting in an assembly or chapter, discusses questions regarding its own life and organization. Every three years, in an elective assembly or chapter, the fraternity elects the minister and the council in the way established by the Constitutions and statutes.

Article 50

1. It is the duty of the council of the local fraternity:
 - to promote the initiatives necessary for fostering fraternal life, for improving the human, Christian, and Franciscan formation of its members and for sustaining their witness and commitment in the world;
 - to make concrete and courageous choices, appropriate for the situation of the fraternity, from among the numerous activities possible in the field of the apostolate.
2. The duties of the council are also:
 - a. to decide on the acceptance and admission to profession of new brothers and sisters;³³
 - b. to establish a fraternal dialogue with members in particular difficulties and to adopt consequent measures;
 - c. to receive the request for withdrawal and to decide on the suspension of a member from the fraternity;
 - d. to decide on the establishment of sections or groups in conformity with the Constitutions and the statutes;
 - e. to decide on the destination of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters concerning financial management and the economic affairs of the fraternity;
 - f. to assign duties to the councilors and to the other professed members;

³³ See *Constitutions* 39, 3; 41, 1.

- g. to request from the competent superiors of the First Order and the TOR suitable and prepared religious as assistants;
- h. to perform such other duties as are required by these Constitutions or which are necessary to carry out its proper purposes.

The Offices in the Fraternity

Article 51

1. While firmly upholding the co-responsibility of the council to animate and guide the fraternity, the minister, as the primary person responsible for the fraternity, is expected to make sure that the directions and the decisions of the council are put into practice and will keep the council informed about what he or she is doing.
2. The minister also has the following duties:
 - a. to call, to preside at, and to direct the meetings of the fraternity and council; to convoke, every three years, the elective chapter of the fraternity, having heard the council on the formalities of the convocation;
 - b. to prepare the annual report to be sent to the council of the higher level after it has been approved by the council of the fraternity;
 - c. to represent the fraternity in all its relations with ecclesiastical and civil authorities. When the fraternity acquires a juridical personality in the civil order, the minister becomes, when possible, its legal representative;
 - d. to request, with the consent of the council, the pastoral and fraternal visits, at least once every three years.
 - e. to put into effect those acts which the Constitutions refer to his or her competence.

Article 52

1. The vice-minister has the following duties:
 - a. to collaborate in a fraternal spirit and to support the minister in carrying out his or her specific duties;
 - b. to exercise the functions entrusted by the council and/or by the assembly or chapter;
 - c. to take the place of the minister in both duties and responsibilities in case of absence or temporary impediment;
 - d. to assume the functions of the minister when the office remains vacant.³⁴
2. The secretary has the following duties:
 - a. to compile the official acts of the fraternity and of the council and to assure that they are sent to their respective proper recipients;
 - b. to see to the updating and preservation of the records and the registers, noting admissions, professions, deaths, withdrawals, and transfers from the fraternity;³⁵
 - c. to provide for the communication of the more important facts to the various levels and, if appropriate, to provide for their dissemination through the mass media.
3. The master of formation has the following duties:
 - a. to co-ordinate, with the help of the other members of the council, the formative activities of the fraternity;
 - b. to instruct and enliven the inquirers during the time of initiation, the candidates during the period of initiation formation, and the newly professed;
 - c. to inform the council of the fraternity prior to profession, concerning the suitability of the

³⁴ See *Constitutions* 81,1.

³⁵ Each local fraternity is to have at least a register of enrollments (admissions, professions, transfers, deaths, and every other important annotation relative to the individual members), the register of minutes of the council and the register of administration.

candidate for a commitment to live according to the Rule.

4. The treasurer, or bursar, has the following duties:
 - a. to guard diligently the contributions received, recording each receipt in the appropriate register, with the date on which it was given, the name of the contributor, or the one from whom it was collected;
 - b. to record in the same register the items of expense, specifying the date and the purpose, in conformity with the directions of the fraternity council;
 - c. to render an account of his or her administration to the assembly and to the council of the fraternity according to the norms of the national statutes.
5. The provisions regarding the rights and duties of the vice-minister, the secretary and the treasurer apply, with the appropriate adaptations, to all levels.

Participation in the Life of the Fraternity

Article 53

1. *Rule 24* The fraternity must offer to its members opportunities for coming together and collaborating through meetings to be held with as great a frequency as allowed by the situation and with the involvement of all its members.
2. *Rule 6; 8* The fraternity should come together periodically, also as an ecclesial community to celebrate the Eucharist in a climate which strengthens the fraternal bond and characterizes the identity of the Franciscan family. Where, for whatever reason, this particular celebration may not be possible, they should participate in the celebration of the larger ecclesial community.

3. Insertion into a local fraternity and participation in fraternity life is essential for belonging to the SFO. Appropriate initiatives should be adopted according to the directives of the national statutes, to keep those brothers and sisters united to the fraternity who — for valid reasons of health, family, work, or distance — cannot actively participate in community life.
4. The fraternity remembers with gratitude its brothers and sisters who have passed away and continues its communion with them by prayer and in the Eucharist.
5. The national statutes can indicate special forms of association with the fraternity for those who, without becoming a member of the SFO, want to participate in its life and activities.

Article 54

1. In cases where the fraternity of whatever level has property or real estate at its disposal, the procedures necessary for that fraternity to acquire a juridical personality in the civil order must be followed in conformity with the national statutes.
2. Based on the respective civil legislation, the national statutes must establish precise criteria regarding the purpose of the juridical person, the administration of its material goods and the relevant internal controls. They must also contain instructions so that the establishing document may provide for the disposal of its property in case the juridical person ceases to exist.
3. The national statutes must also set up precise criteria for local fraternities that possess or administer property or real estate, so that the respective council, before its term of office is finished, has the fraternity's financial and real estate situation audited either by an expert who

is not a member of the council or by the fraternity's board of examiners.

Transfer

Article 55

If a brother or sister, for any reasonable cause, desires transfer to another fraternity, he or she first informs the council of the fraternity to which he or she belongs and then makes the request, including the reasons for the transfer, to the minister of the fraternity to which he or she wishes to belong. The council makes its decision after having received the necessary information in writing from the fraternity of origin.

Temporary Provisions

Article 56

1. *Rule 23* Members who find themselves in difficulty may ask, with a formal act, temporary withdrawal from the fraternity. The council will evaluate the request with love and prudence, after a fraternal dialogue between the minister and the assistant with the person concerned. If the reasons appear to be well founded, after the brother or sister in difficulty has been given time to reconsider, the council agrees to the request.
2. The repeated and prolonged default in the obligations of the life of the fraternity and other conduct in serious opposition to the Rule have to be discussed by the council in dialogue with the person at fault. Only in the case of obstinacy or relapse may the council decide, with a secret vote, to suspend someone. It communicates its decision in writing to the person concerned.

3. Voluntary withdrawal or the provision for suspension must be noted in the registers of the fraternity. It involves exclusion from the meetings and activities of the fraternity, including the right of active and passive voice, but membership in the Order itself is not affected.

Article 57

1. In the case of voluntary withdrawal or of suspension from the fraternity, the Secular Franciscan may ask to be readmitted by addressing an appropriate written request to the minister.
2. After examining the reasons offered by the person involved, the council evaluates whether the causes which led to the withdrawal or suspension can be considered as overcome. If the conclusion is affirmative, it readmits him or her and the decision is recorded in the proceedings of the fraternity.

Definitive Provisions

Article 58

1. The brother or sister who intends to withdraw definitively from the Order, communicates so in writing to the minister of the fraternity. The minister and the assistant of the local fraternity, with charity and prudence, discuss the matter with the person concerned and keep the Council informed. If the brother or sister confirms the decision in writing, the Council takes notice and communicates it in writing to the person concerned. The definitive withdrawal is recorded in the register of the fraternity and communicated to the council of the higher level.

2. In case of serious causes, provided that they are external, imputable, and juridically proven, the minister and the assistant of the local fraternity, with charity and prudence, discuss the matter with the brother or sister concerned and keep the council informed. The brother or sister is given time to reflect and to discern, eventually with the help of an external and competent expert. If the time set aside for reflection passes without any result, the council of the fraternity requests the council of the higher level to dismiss the brother or sister from the Order. The request must be accompanied by all the documentation relative to the case.
The council of the higher level will issue the decree of dismissal after having collegially examined the request with the relative documentation and having verified observance of the directives of the Law and of the Constitutions.
3. The brother or sister who publicly rejects the faith, or defects from ecclesiastical communion, or upon whom an excommunication is imposed or declared, by the fact itself ceases to be a member of the Order. This does not mean, however, that the council of the fraternity should not discuss the matter with the person concerned or offer fraternal help. The council of a higher level, upon request of the council of the local fraternity, collects the proofs and officially declares that the person has ceased to be a member of the Order.
4. The decree of dismissal or the declaration that the person has ceased to be a member of the Order, in order to become effective, must be confirmed by the national council to whom all the documentation will be sent.

Article 59

If anyone is convinced that he or she has been wronged by a measure adopted, that person may appeal within

three months to the council above the one that adopted the decision in question and, in successive cases, to further levels all the way up to the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO and, in the final instance, to the Holy See.

Article 60

What is said in these Constitutions with respect to the local fraternities is valid, to the extent that it is applicable, for the personal fraternities also.

The Regional Fraternity

Article 61

1. The regional fraternity is the organic union of all the local fraternities existing in a territory or which can be integrated into a natural unity, either by geographic proximity, or by common problems and pastoral circumstances. It assures the link between the local fraternities and the national fraternity in respect to the unity of the SFO and in accord with the cooperative efforts of the Franciscan religious orders to provide spiritual assistance within the area.
2. It is for the national council to compose the regional fraternity according to the Constitutions and to the national statutes. The competent religious superiors, from whom spiritual assistance must be sought, should be informed of it.
3. The regional fraternity:
 - is animated and guided by council and a minister;
 - is ruled by the national statutes and by its own statutes;
 - has its own seat.

Article 62

1. The regional council is constituted according to the provisions of the national statutes and of its own regional statutes. At the heart of the regional council there can be set up an executive council (or board) whose duties are determined by those same statutes.
2. The regional council has the following duties:
 - a. to prepare the celebration of the elective chapter;
 - b. to promote, animate, and co-ordinate the life and activities of the SFO and its insertion into the local Church within the regional area;
 - c. to detail the action plan of the SFO within the region according to the directives of the national council and in collaboration with it and to publicize that program to the local fraternities;
 - d. to communicate the directives of the national council and of the local Church to the local fraternities;
 - e. to provide for the formation of those responsible for animation;
 - f. to offer to local fraternities activities which support their formative and operative needs;
 - g. to discuss and approve the annual report to the national council;
 - h. to schedule, when circumstances recommend so, the fraternal visit to the local fraternities, even if it is not requested;
 - i. to make decisions regarding the use of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters regarding the financial management and the economic affairs of the regional fraternity;
 - j. to have, before its term of office is finished, the regional fraternity's financial and real estate situation audited either by an expert who is not a member of the council or by the fraternity's board of examiners;

- k. to perform such other duties as are indicated by the Constitutions or necessary to achieve its own aims.

Article 63

1. While firmly preserving the co-responsibility of the council for the animation and guidance of the regional fraternity, it is the duty of the minister, who has the primary responsibility, to see that the directions and decisions of the council are put into practice. He or she will keep the council informed concerning his or her activities.
2. In addition, the regional minister has the duty:
 - a. to convoke and preside at the meetings of the regional council; to convoke every three years the elective chapter of the fraternity after having listened to the council on the formalities of the convocation;
 - b. to preside at and to confirm the elections of the local fraternities either in person or through a delegated member of the regional council, with the exception of the spiritual assistant;
 - c. to make fraternal visits to the local fraternities, personally or through a delegate who is a member of the council;
 - d. to participate in the meetings called by the national council;
 - e. to represent the fraternity whenever it has acquired a juridical personality in the civil order;
 - f. to prepare the annual report to the national council;
 - g. to request the pastoral and fraternal visits with the consent of the council, at least once every three years.

Article 64

The regional chapter is the representative organ of all the fraternities existing within the confines of a regional fraternity, with elective and deliberative power.

The national statutes provide for the formalities of convocation, its composition, frequency and powers.

The National Fraternity

Article 65

1. The national fraternity is the organic union of the local fraternities existing within the territory of one or more states which are joined and co-ordinated among themselves through regional fraternities, wherever they exist.
2. It is the duty of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO to provide for the establishment of new national fraternities upon request and in dialogue with the councils of the fraternities concerned. The competent religious superiors of the nation, of whom spiritual assistance will be requested, should be informed.
3. The national fraternity:
 - is animated and guided by a council and a minister;
 - is governed by its own statutes;
 - has its own seat.

Article 66

1. The national council is constituted according to the provisions of the national statutes. At the heart of the national council there can be set up an executive council (or board) whose duties are determined by those same statutes.
2. The national council has the duty:
 - a. to prepare the celebration of the national elective chapter, according to its own statutes;

- b. to make known and to promote the Secular Franciscan spirituality in the whole area of its own national fraternity;
- c. to decide upon programs of annual activities of a national character;
- d. to seek, indicate, publish, and distribute the necessary instruments for the formation of the Secular Franciscans;
- e. to animate and co-ordinate the activities of the regional councils;
- f. to maintain the connection with the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO;
- g. to make sure that the national fraternity be represented in the international council and to assume the responsibility for the expenses involved;
- h. to discuss and approve the annual report to Presidency of the International Council of the SFO;
- i. to see to the presence of the SFO in the ecclesial bodies at the national level;
- j. to schedule, when circumstances recommend so, the fraternal visit to the regional and local fraternities, even if it is not requested;
- k. to make decisions regarding the management of the available funds and, in general, regarding the economic affairs of the fraternity;
- l. to have, before its term of office is finished, the national fraternity's financial and real estate situation audited either by an expert who is not a member of the council or by the fraternity's board of examiners;
- m. to perform such other duties as are indicated by the Constitutions or necessary to achieve its own aims.

Article 67

1. While firmly preserving the co-responsibility of the council for the animation and guidance of the national fraternity, it is the duty of the minister, who has the primary responsibility, to see that the directions and decisions of

the council are put into practice. He or she will keep the council informed concerning his or her activities.

2. In addition, the national minister has the duty:
 - a. to convoke and preside at the meetings of the national council; to convoke every three years the elective chapter of the national fraternity, according to the national statutes, after having listened to the council on the formalities of the convocation;
 - b. to direct and co-ordinate with the national leaders the activities at the national level;
 - c. to give a report to the national council and chapter on the life and activity of the SFO in the country;
 - d. to represent the national fraternity in contacts with ecclesiastical and civil authorities. When the national fraternity has a civil juridical personality, its legal representation belongs to the minister;
 - e. to preside at and to confirm the elections of the regional fraternities either in person or through a delegated member of the regional council, with the exception of the spiritual assistant;
 - f. to make fraternal visits to the regional councils, personally or through a delegate who is a member of the national council;
 - g. to request the fraternal and pastoral visits, with the consent of the council, at least once every six years.

Article 68

1. The national chapter is the representative organ of the fraternities existing within the confines of a national fraternity. It has legislative, deliberative, and elective powers. In conformity with the Rule and the Constitutions, it may make legislative decisions and give norms valid within its national confines. The national statutes determine the composition of the national chapter, its frequency, its powers, and how to convoke it.

2. The national statutes may envisage other forms of meetings and assemblies to promote the life and apostolate at the national level.

The International Fraternity

Article 69

1. The international fraternity is constituted by the organic union of all the Catholic Secular Franciscan fraternities in the world. It is identical to the SFO. It has its own juridical personality within the Church. It is organized and it functions in conformity with the Constitutions and its own statutes.
2. The international fraternity is guided and animated by the International Council of the SFO (CIOFS), with its seat in Rome (Italy), by its Presidency and by the general minister or international president.

Article 70

1. The international council is composed of the following members, elected according to the norms of the Constitutions and its own statutes:
 - professed brothers and sisters of the SFO;
 - representatives of the Franciscan Youth.In addition, the four General Assistants to the SFO form part of the international council.
2. The Presidency of the International Council of the SFO is constituted within the international council of which it forms an integral part.
3. The International Council convened in General Chapter is the highest governing body of the SFO with legislative, deliberative, and elective powers. It can make legislative

decisions and give norms in conformity with the Rule and the Constitutions.

4. The international council meets every six years in elective general chapter, and at least once between two elective general chapters, according to the norms established by the Constitutions and by the international statutes.

Article 71

1. The purposes and duties of the International Council of the SFO are:
 - a. to promote and sustain the evangelical life according to the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi within the secular condition of the faithful living throughout the world;
 - b. to increase the sense of unity of the SFO while respecting the pluralism of the persons and groups, and to strengthen the bond of communion, collaboration, and sharing among the national fraternities;
 - c. to harmonize the sound traditions, according to the original nature of the SFO, with advances in theological, pastoral, and legislative fields, with a view to a specific evangelical Franciscan formation;
 - d. to contribute, in line with the tradition of the SFO, to the spreading of ideas and initiatives which are valuable for promoting the availability of Secular Franciscans in the life of the Church and of society;
 - e. to determine the orientations and establish priorities for the actions of its Presidency;
 - f. to interpret the Constitutions according to article 5,2.
2. The international statutes specify the composition of the international council and how to convoke its meetings.

Article 72

1. The Presidency of the International Council of the SFO is composed of:
 - the general minister;
 - the vice-minister;
 - the presidency councilors;
 - a member of the Franciscan Youth;
 - the general assistants of the SFO.
2. The presidency councilors are elected according to the international statutes, which determine their number and the areas represented.

Article 73

The duties and tasks of the Presidency are:

- a. to see that the decisions and orientations of the general chapter are carried out;
- b. to co-ordinate, animate, and guide the SFO at the international level, in order to make the interdependence and reciprocity of the SFO a reality at the various levels of fraternity;
- c. to intervene in a spirit of service, according to the circumstances, providing fraternal aid in the clarification and resolution of grave and urgent problems of the SFO, informing the national council concerned and the next general chapter;
- d. to strengthen reciprocal relationships of collaboration between the SFO and the other components of the Franciscan family at the world level;
- e. to organize meetings or assemblies, according to the norms of the international statutes, to promote the life and the apostolate of the SFO at the international level;
- f. to collaborate with organizations and associations which defend the same values;

- g. to fulfill the other duties indicated in the Constitutions or needed in order to reach its own proper goals.

Article 74

1. While firmly preserving the co-responsibility of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO in the guidance and animation of the international fraternity, it belongs to the general minister, who has the primary responsibility, to see that the directions and decisions of the general chapter and of the Presidency are put into practice and to inform them concerning his or her activities.
2. In addition, the general minister has the duty:
 - a. to convoke and preside at the meetings of the Presidency according to its own statutes;
 - b. to convoke the meetings of the general chapter, with the consent of the Presidency, and to preside at them;
 - c. to be a visible and effective sign of the communion and life-giving reciprocity between the SFO and the general ministers of the Franciscan First Order and the TOR, among whom he or she represents the SFO, and to preserve the bond with the conference of general assistants;
 - d. to represent the SFO at the world level before ecclesiastical and civil authorities. When the international fraternity has a civil juridical personality, its legal representation belongs to the minister;
 - e. to make the fraternal visit to the national councils, personally or through a delegate;
 - f. to preside at the elections of the national councils, personally or through a delegate;
 - g. to request, with the consent of the Presidency, the pastoral visit by the Conference of the General Ministers of the First Order and the TOR;

- h. to intervene in urgent cases, informing the Presidency of them;
- i. to sign the official documents of the international fraternity;
- j. to exercise, with the consent of the Presidency, the property rights of the international fraternity together with another councilor of the Presidency designated by that same body;
- k. before every general chapter, have the financial and property situation of the international fraternity verified by a qualified accountant who is not involved in the economic and financial management of the Presidency.

Article 75

The specific duties of the international councilors are determined by the international statutes.

Title IV

ELECTION TO AND TERMINATION OF OFFICES

Elections

Article 76

1. The elections at the various levels will take place according to the norms of the law of the Church³⁶ and of the Constitutions.

The convocation should be carried out at least one month in advance, indicating the place, the day, and the time of the election.

2. The elective assembly, or chapter, will be presided over by the minister of the immediately higher level, or by his or her delegate, who confirms the election.

The president or the delegate cannot preside over the elections in his or her local fraternity, nor the elections of the council of a higher level, of whose council he or she is a member.

The spiritual assistant of the immediately higher level or his delegate is to be present as a witness of the communion with the First Order and the TOR.

A representative of the Conference of General Ministers of the First Order and the TOR presides at and confirms the elections of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO.

3. The president of the chapter and the assistant of the higher level do not have the right to vote.

³⁶ See Can. 164 ff.

4. The president of the chapter designates, among the members of that chapter, a secretary and two tellers.

Article 77

1. In the local fraternity, the perpetually professed of the same fraternity have active voice, that is can elect, and passive voice, that is can be elected. The temporarily professed have only active voice.
2. At the other levels, the following have active voice: the secular members of the outgoing council, the representatives of the immediately lower level and of the Franciscan Youth, if professed. It belongs to the particular statutes to establish more concrete norms in application of the preceding norm, taking care to assure the broadest elective base. The perpetually professed Secular Franciscans of the corresponding area have passive voice.
3. Both the national and the international statutes – each for its own area – can establish objective qualifications regarding who can be elected to the various offices.
4. The presence of more than half of the number of those having the right to vote is required for the valid celebration of an elective chapter. For the local level, the national Statutes can establish a different norm.

Article 78

1. An absolute majority of the votes of those present, cast in secret, is required for the election of the minister. After two inconclusive ballots, the voting continues between the two candidates who have obtained the largest number of votes or, in case there are more than two, between the two candidates who are oldest by

profession. If there is still a tie after the third ballot, the older by profession will be considered elected.

2. The election of the vice-minister proceeds in the same manner.
3. For the election of the councilors, after a first ballot without an absolute majority, a relative majority of the votes of those present, cast in secret, is sufficient, unless the particular statutes require a greater majority.
4. The secretary announces the result of the elections; the president confirms the election according to the Ritual³⁷ if all has been carried out properly and those elected have accepted their office.

Article 79

1. The minister and vice-minister may be elected for two consecutive terms of three years each. For a third and final successive election to the office of minister or vice-minister, a majority of two-thirds of the votes of those present, which must be obtained on the first ballot, will be necessary.
2. The out-going minister cannot be elected vice-minister.
3. The councilors may be elected for additional successive terms of three years. Beginning with the third successive election, a majority of two-thirds of the votes of those present, which must be obtained on the first ballot, will be necessary.
4. The general minister, vice-minister and presidency councilors can only be elected for two consecutive terms of six years.

³⁷ See *Ritual SFO*, Part II, Chapt. II.

5. The council of the higher level has the right and duty to invalidate the elections and to call them anew in all cases of inobservance of the preceding norms.

Article 80

The particular statutes may include further directives concerning elections, as long as they are not contrary to the Constitutions.

Vacant Offices

Article 81

1. When the office of minister remains vacant as a result of death, resignation or other impediment of a definitive character, the vice-minister assumes the office until the end of the term for which the minister was originally elected.
2. If the office of vice-minister becomes vacant, one of the councilors is elected to the office of vice-minister by the council of the fraternity, to serve until the next elective chapter.
3. When the office of councilor becomes vacant, the council will proceed to substitute for him or her in conformity with its own statutes, to serve until the next elective chapter.

Incompatible Offices

Article 82

The following are incompatible:

- a. the office of minister at two different levels;

- b. the offices of minister, vice-minister, secretary and treasurer at the same level.

Resignation of Office

Article 83

1. When a minister of whatever level resigns during a chapter, that same chapter can accept the resignation. When a minister resigns outside the time of chapter, that resignation must be presented to the council. If the resignation is accepted, it must be confirmed by the minister of the higher level; if the general minister is resigning, the confirmation comes from the Conference of General Ministers of the First Order and the TOR.
2. The resignation of other offices is presented to the minister and to his or her council, who are competent to accept the resignation.

Removal

Article 84

1. In the case in which the minister does not fulfill his or her duties, the council concerned manifests its concerns in a fraternal dialogue with the minister. If this does not produce positive results, the council should inform the council of the higher level whose competence it is to examine the case and, if needed, by secret ballot, decide to remove the minister.
2. For a serious, public, and proved reason, the council of a higher level, after a fraternal dialogue with the person concerned, may, by a secret ballot, order the removal of a minister of a lower level.

3. When there is a serious reason to remove those who hold other offices of the council, it is the responsibility of that council to which they belong to make its decision by a secret ballot after there has been a fraternal dialogue with the person involved.
4. A recourse, which by itself suspends the action to remove someone from office, can be presented within thirty days to the council of the level immediately higher than the one which imposed the sanction.
5. The removal of the general minister belongs to the competence of the Conference of the General Ministers of the First Order and the TOR.
6. When there is a case of serious lack of concern or evidence of irregularities on the part of a minister or a council, the council of the next higher level conducts a fraternal visit of the council in question and, eventually, requests a pastoral visit. With charity and prudence, it will evaluate the circumstances uncovered and decide on the best way to proceed, not excluding the eventual removal of the council or leaders involved.

Title V

SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL ASSISTANCE OF THE SFO

Article 85

1. As an integral part of the Franciscan family and called to live the charism of Francis within the secular dimension, the SFO has particular and close relations to the First Order and the TOR³⁸.
2. The spiritual and pastoral care of the SFO, entrusted by the Church to the Franciscan First Order and the TOR, is the, above all, of their general and provincial ministers. The *altius moderamen*, of which Canon 303 speaks, belongs to them. The purpose of the *altius moderamen* is to guarantee the fidelity of the SFO to the Franciscan charism, communion with the Church and union with the Franciscan family, values which represent a vital commitment for the Secular Franciscans.

Article 86

1. The general and provincial ministers exercise their office with respect to the SFO through:
 - the establishment of fraternities;
 - the pastoral visits;

³⁸ From Franciscan history and from the Constitutions of the First Order and the TOR, it is clearly evident that these Orders recognize that they are committed to the spiritual and pastoral assistance of the SFO in virtue of their common origin and charism and by the will of the Church. See Constitutions OFM, 60; Constitutions OFM Conv., 116; Constitutions OFM Cap., 95; Constitutions TOR, 157; Rule of the Third Order of Pope Leo XIII, 3,3; Rule approved by Paul VI, 26.

— the spiritual assistance to the fraternities at the various levels.

They may exercise this office personally or through a delegate.

2. This service of the religious ministers completes but does not substitute for the secular councils and ministers to whom belong the guidance, co-ordination, and animation of the fraternities at the various levels.

Article 87

1. For all that concerns the SFO as a whole, the *altius moderamen* must be exercised by the general ministers collegially.
2. It belongs to the Conference of General Ministers of the First Order and the TOR:
 - a. to take care of the relations with the Holy See concerning the approval of the legislative or liturgical documents, which need to be approved by the Holy See;
 - b. to visit the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO;
 - c. to confirm the election of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO.
3. Each general minister, for his own Order, sees to the interest of the religious for the SFO and to their preparation for service to it according to the respective Constitutions and the Constitutions of the SFO.

Article 88

1. The provincial ministers and the other major superiors, in the area of their own jurisdiction, guarantee the spiritual assistance to the local fraternities entrusted to the jurisdiction. They see to it that their own religious

are interested in the SFO and that capable and well-prepared persons are appointed for the service of spiritual assistance.

2. It is the specific competence of the major superiors, in name of their jurisdiction:
 - a. to establish, canonically, new local fraternities and guarantee them spiritual assistance;
 - b. to animate spiritually and visit the local fraternities assisted by their own jurisdiction;
 - c. to keep themselves informed on the spiritual assistance given to the SFO.
3. The major superiors are responsible for the spiritual assistance to the local fraternities which they have established.
4. The major superiors with jurisdiction in the same territory, are to establish together the most adequate means to guarantee spiritual assistance to local fraternities which, because of causes beyond their control, could remain without such assistance.
5. The major superiors with jurisdiction in the same territory, are to establish together the most adequate means for carrying out collegially their mission with respect to the regional and national fraternities of the SFO.

Article 89

1. By virtue of the vital reciprocity between the religious and the secular members of the Franciscan Family and in regard to the responsibilities of major superiors, spiritual assistance to the fraternities of the SFO at all levels must be assured as a fundamental element of communion.

2. The spiritual assistant is the person designated by the competent major superior to carry out this service for a specific fraternity of the SFO.
3. To be a witness of Franciscan spirituality and of the fraternal affection of the religious towards the Secular Franciscans, and to be a bond of communion between his Order and the SFO, the spiritual assistant should be a Franciscan religious, member of the First Order or the TOR.
4. When it is not possible to give such a spiritual assistant to the fraternity, the competent major superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to:
 - a. religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institutes;
 - b. diocesan clerics or other persons, specially prepared for such service, who are members of the SFO;
 - c. other diocesan clerics or non-Franciscan religious.
5. The previous authorization of the superior or the local ordinary, when needed, does not exempt the Franciscan major superior of the responsibility for the quality of the pastoral service and of the spiritual assistance given.

Article 90

1. The principal task of the assistant is to communicate Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the brothers and sisters.
2. The spiritual assistant is by right, with vote, a member of the council of the fraternity to which he or she gives assistance and collaborates with it in all activities. The spiritual assistant does not exercise the right to vote in financial questions.

3. Specifically:
 - a. the general assistants give their service to the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO, form a conference, and collegially see to the spiritual assistance to the SFO as a whole;
 - b. the national assistants give their service to the national council, see to the spiritual assistance to the SFO in the whole territory of the national fraternity and, at the national level, to the co-ordination of the regional assistants. If they are more than one, they form a conference and give their service collegially;
 - c. the regional assistants give their service to the regional council and see to the spiritual assistance to the regional fraternity. If they are more than one, they form a conference and give their service collegially;
 - d. the local assistants give their service to the local fraternity and its council.

Article 91

1. The council of the fraternity at each level requests suitable and prepared assistants from the competent superiors of the First Order and the TOR.
2. Specifically:
 - a. the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO requests the general assistant from the respective general minister;
 - b. the national council requests the national assistant from the major superior, indicated collegially by the major superiors with jurisdiction in the territory of the national fraternity;
 - c. the regional council requests the assistant from the major superior, indicated collegially by the major superiors with jurisdiction in the territory of the regional fraternity;

- d. the local council requests the assistant from the major superior of the jurisdiction responsible for the assistance.
3. The competent major superior, having heard the council of the fraternity concerned, appoints the assistant according to the norms of these Constitutions and of the *Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order*.

Title VI

THE FRATERNAL VISIT AND THE PASTORAL VISIT

Article 92

1. *Rule 26* The purpose of both the pastoral and fraternal visits is to revive the evangelical Franciscan spirit, to assure fidelity to the charism and to the Rule, to offer help to fraternity life, to reinforce the bond of the unity of the Order, and to promote its most effective insertion into the Franciscan family and the Church.
2. With the consent of the appropriate council, the request for the fraternal visit as well as for the pastoral visit is made:
 - a. by the minister of the local and regional fraternity, at least every three years, to the council of the immediately higher level and to the respective conference of spiritual assistants;
 - b. by the national minister, at least every six years, to the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO and to the conference of general assistants;
 - c. by the general minister, at least every six years, to the Conference of General Ministers.
3. For urgent and serious reasons or in case of failure on the part of the minister or the council to request it, the fraternal and pastoral visit may be carried out upon the initiative of the respectively competent council or conference of spiritual assistants.

Article 93

1. In the visits to the local fraternities and to the councils at the various levels, the visitor will verify the evangelical and apostolic vitality, the observance of the Rule and Constitutions, and the insertion of the fraternities into the Order and into the Church.
2. In the visits to the local fraternities and to the councils at the various levels, the visitor will in time communicate the object and the program of the visit to the interested council. He or she will examine the registers and the records, including those relative to the preceding visits, to the election of the council and to the administration of goods.
The visitor will draw up a report of the visit carried out, appending it to the records in the appropriate register of the fraternity visited, and will inform the council of the level which has held the visit.
3. In the visit to the local fraternity, the visitor will meet with the entire fraternity and with the groups and sections into which it is divided. He or she will give special attention to the brothers and sisters in formation and to those brothers and sisters who may request a personal meeting. Where required, he or she will proceed to the fraternal correction of the shortcomings eventually encountered.
4. If it is useful for the service of the fraternity, the two visitors, secular and religious, may make the visit at the same time, agreeing beforehand on the program, in a way most consonant with the mission of each of them.
5. The fraternal and pastoral visits, carried out by the immediately higher level, do not deprive the visited

fraternity of the right to appeal to the council or to the conference of spiritual assistants of a higher level.

The Fraternal Visit

Article 94

1. The fraternal visit is a moment of communion, an expression of the service and concrete interest of the secular leaders at the various levels, so that the fraternity may grow and be faithful to its vocation.³⁹
2. Among the various initiatives to achieve the purpose of the visit, the visitor will give special attention:
 - to the validity of the formation, both initial and permanent;
 - to the relations entertained with other fraternities at the different levels, with Franciscan youth, and with the entire Franciscan family.
 - to the observance of the directives and of the guidelines of the International Council of the SFO and of the other councils;
 - to the presence in the local Church.
3. The visitor will check the report of the previous audit or verification of the financial and property management of the Council, the register of the accounts and every document pertaining to the property of the fraternity and, if applicable, the condition of the juridical personality in the civil order, including the fiscal aspects. In the absence of the required audit of the financial and property management of the council, the visitor can commission such an audit, to be paid by the visited fraternity, to an expert who is not a member of the council concerned. Wherever he or she deems it opportune, the visitor will obtain the assistance of a competent person in these aspects.

³⁹ Cfr. *Constitutions* 51,1c; 63,2g; 67,2g.

4. The visitor will check the records of the election of the council. He or she will evaluate the quality of the service offered to the fraternity by the minister and by the other leaders, and will study with them the solution to problems which may arise.
If, for whatever reason, he or she should find that their service does not meet the needs of the fraternity, the visitor will promote appropriate initiatives, taking into account also the provisions concerning resignation and removal from office, given special circumstances⁴⁰.
5. The visitor may not carry out the visit of his or her own local fraternity, nor of the council of another level of which he or she is a member.

The Pastoral Visit

Article 95

1. The pastoral visit is a privileged moment of communion with the First Order and the TOR. It is carried out also in the name of the Church and serves to guarantee and promote the observance of the Rule and the Constitutions and fidelity to the Franciscan charism. The visit is carried out with respect to the organization and the law proper to the SFO itself.
2. Having verified the canonical establishment of the fraternity, the visitor will give attention to the relations between the fraternity and its spiritual assistant and the local Church. The visitor will meet the pastors (bishop or parish priest) when this is opportune for fostering communion and service for building up the Church.
3. The visitor will promote collaboration and a sense of co-responsibility among the secular leaders and the religious assistants. The visitor is to examine the quality

⁴⁰ Cfr. *Constitutions* 83; 84.

of the spiritual assistance given to the visited fraternity, encourage the spiritual assistants in their service and promote their continuing spiritual and pastoral formation.

4. The visitor will give special attention to programs, methods and experiences of formation, to the liturgical and prayer life, and to the apostolic activities of the fraternity.

Title VII

THE FRANCISCAN YOUTH

Article 96

1. The SFO, by virtue of its very vocation, ought to be ready to share its experience of evangelical life with the youth who feel attracted to Saint Francis of Assisi and to seek the means of adequately presenting it to them.
2. The Franciscan Youth (YouFra), as understood by these Constitutions and in so far as the SFO considers itself to be particularly responsible for it, is formed by those young people who feel called by the Holy Spirit to share the experience of the Christian life in fraternity, in the light of the message of Saint Francis of Assisi, deepening their own vocation within the context of the Secular Franciscan Order.
3. The members of the Franciscan Youth consider the Rule of the SFO as an inspirational document for the growth of their own Christian and Franciscan vocation either individually or in a group. After a suitable period of formation, of at least one year, they confirm this option with a personal pledge before God and in the presence of the brothers and sisters.
4. The members of the Franciscan Youth who wish to belong to the SFO should satisfy the requirements of the Rule, the Constitutions, and the Ritual of the SFO.
5. The Franciscan Youth has a specific organization, methods of formation, and teaching methods adequate for the needs of the world of youth, according to the existing realities in the various countries. The national

statutes of the Franciscan Youth should be approved by the respective national council of the SFO, or in its absence, by the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO.

6. The Franciscan Youth, as a component of the Franciscan family, requests from the competent secular leaders and religious superiors, respectively, fraternal animation and spiritual assistance.

Article 97

1. The SFO fraternities will promote the vocation to the Franciscan Youth by means of appropriate and dynamic initiatives. They should see to the vitality and the expansion of the Franciscan Youth fraternities and will accompany the youth in their journey of human and spiritual growth with proposals for specific activities and contents.
2. The SFO fraternities commit themselves to give to the Franciscan Youth fraternities a fraternal animator, who together with the spiritual assistant and the council of the Franciscan Youth guarantees an adequate Secular Franciscan formation.
3. To promote a close communion with the SFO, all leaders of the Franciscan Youth at the international level and at least two members of the national council of the Franciscan Youth are to be professed Secular Franciscan youth.
4. A representative of the Franciscan Youth is to be designated by his or her council to form part of the SFO council of the corresponding level; a representative of the SFO, designated by his or her own council, forms part of the council of the Franciscan Youth of the same level. The representative of the Franciscan Youth has a

vote in the SFO council only if he or she is a professed Secular Franciscan

5. The representatives of the Franciscan Youth in the international council of the SFO are elected according to the international statutes which also determine how many there are, what fraternities they represent, and what their responsibilities are supposed to be.

Title VIII

IN COMMUNION WITH THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY AND THE CHURCH

Article 98

1. *Rule 1* Secular Franciscans should seek to live in life-giving reciprocal communion with all the members of the Franciscan family. They should be ready to promote common initiatives or participate in them with the religious of the First, Second and Third Orders, with Secular Institutes, and with other lay ecclesial groups that recognize Francis as a model and inspiration in order to work together to spread the Gospel, remove the causes of marginalization, and serve the cause of peace.
2. They must cultivate a special affection, which expresses itself in concrete initiatives of fraternal communion, towards the sisters of the contemplative life who, like Saint Clare of Assisi, bear witness in the Church and in the world and by whose mediation they expect the abundance of grace for the fraternity and for the works of the apostolate.

Article 99

1. *Rule 6* As a living part of the people of God and inspired by the Seraphic Father, the Secular Franciscans, "living in full communion with the Pope and the bishops", should seek to know and deepen the doctrine proposed by the teaching Church through its more important documents and they should be attentive to the presence of the Holy Spirit who vivifies the faith and charity of the people of

God.⁴¹ They should collaborate in the initiatives promoted by the Holy See, in a particular way in those areas in which they are called to work by virtue of their secular Franciscan vocation.

2. The SFO, as an international public association, is connected by a special bond to the Roman Pontiff from whom it has received the approval of its Rule and the confirmation of its mission in the Church and in the world.

Article 100

1. The vocation to "rebuild" the Church ought to induce the brothers and sisters sincerely to love and to live the union with the local Church in which they develop their own vocation and realize their apostolic commitment, aware that in the diocese the Church of Christ is truly functioning⁴².
2. The Secular Franciscans should fulfil with dedication the duties with which they are occupied in their relations to the local Church. They should lend their help to activities of the apostolate as well as to the social activities existing in the diocese.⁴³ In the spirit of service, they should make themselves present, as the fraternity of the SFO, within the life of the diocese. They should be ready to collaborate with other ecclesial groups and to participate in pastoral councils.
3. Fidelity to their own charism, Franciscan and secular, and the witness of building fraternity, sincerely and openly, are their principal services to the Church, which is the community of love. They should be recognized in it by their "being," from which their mission springs.

⁴¹ *Lumen Gentium* 12.

⁴² *Christus Dominus* 11; Can. 396; See 2 *Celano* 10; 1 *Celano* 18.

⁴³ See Can. 311.

Article 101

1. The Secular Franciscans should collaborate with the bishops and follow their directions in so far as they are the moderators of the ministry of the Word and of the Liturgy and the co-ordinators of the various forms of apostolate in the local Church.⁴⁴
2. The fraternities are subject to the vigilance of the Ordinary in so far as they perform their activities within the local Churches.⁴⁵

Article 102

1. The fraternities established in a parish church should seek to co-operate in the animation of the parochial community, in the liturgy and in fraternal relations. They should integrate themselves into the pastoral apostolate as a whole, with preference for those activities more congenial to the Secular Franciscan tradition and spirituality.
2. In the parishes entrusted to Franciscan religious, the fraternities constitute the mediation and the secular witness of the Franciscan charism in the parochial community through their exercise of the fruitful life-giving reciprocity. Therefore, united with the religious, they see to the spreading of the gospel message and of the Franciscan lifestyle.

Article 103

1. Remaining faithful to their own identity, the fraternities will take care to make the most of each occasion for prayer, formation, and active collaboration with other ecclesial

⁴⁴ See Can. 394; 756; 775 ss.

⁴⁵ See Can. 305; 392.

groups. They should welcome with pleasure those who, without belonging to the SFO, wish to share its experiences and activities.

2. The fraternities will promote, wherever possible, fraternal relations with non-Catholic associations inspired by Francis.

Approved by the Vatican December 8, 2000

Section 3

*Statutes of
The National
Fraternity
of the
Secular
Franciscan
Order
in the
United States
of America*

Statutes of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America

Introduction

We, the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America, called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, in order to provide for the life of the Order and specifically for its organization and function, do establish and adopt these *Statutes*.

All regulations not in accordance with these present *National Statutes* are abrogated [cf. *General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order* (hereafter *General Constitutions*), article #7].

Section I

Organization and Structure

Article 1. National Fraternity

The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America (hereafter NAFRA)

1. is a juridic person [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canons #116 and #117] made up of the Regional and Local Fraternities of the

NAFRA Statutes

Secular Franciscan Order (hereafter SFO) [legal title for the international body is *Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis* (OFS)] existing within the United States [cf. *Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order* (hereafter *Rule*), article #2; *General Constitutions*, articles #1.5 and #65.1; *Code of Canon Law*, canons #214 and #303];

2. is animated and guided by a Council and Minister who are duly elected;
3. is organized and functions in conformity with the *Code of Canon Law*, and the following SFO documents: the *Rule*, the *General Constitutions*, the *Ritual*, the *International Statutes* and these *National Statutes* [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #4.1].

Article 2. Governing Body

1. The governing body of NAFRA is the National Fraternity Council. The National Executive Council acts on behalf of the National Fraternity Council when the members of the entire Council are not in session [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #66.1].
2. The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants exercises pastoral care and spiritual guidance in regard to NAFRA as

NAFRA Statutes

one of the integral component parts of the SFO by suitable means including participation in deliberations of its governing body [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order* (hereafter *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*), articles #19 and #20].

Article 3. National Fraternity Council

1. The National Fraternity Council is composed of the Regional Ministers, the National Executive Council, and the members of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.
2. The business of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America shall be conducted by the National Fraternity Council.
3. In addition, the National Fraternity Council has legislative, deliberative and elective powers; in conformity with the *Rule* and the *General Constitutions*, it may make legislative decisions and produce norms valid within its national confines.
4. The regular meeting of the National Fraternity shall be the annual meeting of the National Fraternity Council convoked by the National Minister, which

NAFRA Statutes

convocation shall provide for at least two months' advance notice.

5. The National Fraternity Council meets in elective chapter every three years; the National Minister convokes this meeting at least two months in advance, indicating the place, the day and the time of the election.
6. If considered necessary by the National Executive Council, or when at least one-third of the Regional Ministers requests it, the National Fraternity Council may meet at other times during any year.
7. In addition to the duties enumerated in article #66.2 of the *General Constitutions*, the National Fraternity Council has the following duties:
 - a. To compose and approve modifications to boundaries of Regional Fraternities (see appendix A);
 - b. To set the fair share amount of annual financial contributions to NAFRA from the Regional Fraternities.

Article 4. Structure for Property Control

1. In accordance with article #54 of the *General Constitutions*, NAFRA is incorporated under the laws of the United States of America, State of Ohio, as "The

NAFRA Statutes

National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - U.S.A." and has its statutory office at 1615 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

2. The elected officers of the National Fraternity Council shall function as the officers of the corporation.
3. Upon the termination of existence of the corporation, all assets, real and personal, tangible and intangible, along with its library and records, shall become the property of the "juridic person immediately superior" [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon #123].
4. NAFRA is the organic union of all Local and Regional Secular Franciscan Fraternities located within the United States of America and is itself incorporated. Therefore, no Local or Regional Fraternity may itself incorporate without the specific written prior approval of NAFRA. Because of the usual requirement to incorporate for the purpose of owning real estate, no Local or Regional Fraternity may acquire real estate without the specific written prior approval of NAFRA.
5. In accord with article #54.3 of the *General Constitutions*, for the fraternities at each level, a financial audit must be done every 3 years, just prior to the end of the Council's term of office. This audit may

NAFRA Statutes

be conducted by a professional accountant who is not a member of the fraternity Council, or by a "board of examiners" established by the particular fraternity (consisting of two or more experts selected at large by the membership who are not also members of that fraternity's Council). A written report of such audit must be given to the Council of the higher fraternity.

Article 5. National Executive Council

1. Between the meetings of the National Fraternity Council, an elected National Executive Council shall carry on the business and carry out the purposes of the National Fraternity in a spirit of ministry and service [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #66.1].
2. The National Executive Council is composed of the National Minister, the National Vice Minister, the National Secretary, the National Treasurer, at least one elected Councilor, and the International Councilor. The President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants is by right a member of this Council. The Chair(s) of the National Formation Commission and the National Commissions' Coordinator may attend meetings of the National Executive Council.

NAFRA Statutes

3. All members of the National Executive Council have voting rights. The Chair(s) of the National Formation Commission and the National Commissions' Coordinator exercise a consultative role.
4. Election of the members of the National Executive Council shall proceed in accordance with **Section II** of this document.
5. The duties of the National Executive Council are:
 - a. To form, animate, guide and coordinate the SFO at the national level;
 - b. To see that the decisions of the National Fraternity Council are carried out;
 - c. To provide practical and pastoral interpretations and to clarify specific points in the *National Statutes*, with validity until the next meeting of the National Fraternity Council;
 - d. To resolve urgent problems which may arise that were not encompassed in the *General Constitutions* or *National Statutes*, until the next meeting of the National Fraternity Council;

NAFRA Statutes

- e. To intervene to resolve serious and urgent problems in a spirit of reconciliation when requested by a Regional Fraternity Council or on the National Executive Council's own initiative;
- f. To hear appeals from decisions of dismissal from membership rendered by Regional Executive Councils where appropriate [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #59];
- g. To establish and direct commissions and committees deemed necessary to achieve the goals and objectives determined by the National Fraternity Council;
- h. To present to the representative of the International Fraternity and the representative of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required at the time of fraternal and pastoral visits, and also on the occasion of their presiding over and witnessing elections;
- i. To administer the financial affairs of NAFRA, including events not foreseen in the annual budget approved at the annual meeting of the National Fraternity Council,

NAFRA Statutes

such as extraordinary (non-budgeted) expenditures, not to exceed five per cent (5%) of the annual budget.

6. When not in session, the National Executive Council may conduct business electronically (i.e., via e-mail, telephone, fax, etc.), provided that any decisions and determinations made in this way are reviewed and ratified at the next regular meeting of the Council.

Article 6. Duties of Officers of the National Executive Council

1. The National Minister, in addition to the duties enumerated in article #67 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duty:

To approve when necessary extraordinary (non-budgeted) expenditures, not to exceed one per cent (1%) of the annual NAFRA budget.

2. The National Vice Minister's duties are enumerated in article #52.1 of the *General Constitutions*.
3. The National Secretary, in addition to the duties enumerated in article #52.2 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duty:

NAFRA Statutes

To maintain and supervise the archives of the National Fraternity in accordance with instructions of the National Executive Council.

4. The National Treasurer, in addition to the duties enumerated in article #52.4 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duties:
 - a. To ensure the deposit of all funds of the National Fraternity which may come into the hands of the National Treasurer into such bank accounts in the name of NAFRA as the National Executive Council shall designate;
 - b. To provide for the payment of monies as the business of the National Fraternity may require as approved in the annual budget or on the order of the National Minister or the National Executive Council. All payments are to be made by check.
 - c. To submit an annual budget to the National Executive Council for its review, and to the National Fraternity Council for its review and approval at the annual meeting.
 - d. To be responsible for the financial books and records of NAFRA.

NAFRA Statutes

Upon the written request of any member of the National Fraternity Council to the Treasurer, these financial records shall be open for inspection.

- e. To provide the National Fraternity Council with financial reports of receipts, expenditures, and balances in NAFRA's treasury throughout the year, and at the beginning of each year, to provide a written statement of receipts, expenditures and balances in NAFRA's treasury for the preceding year.
- 5. The International Councilor's duties are enumerated in article #75 of the *General Constitutions* and article #7 of the *International Statutes*.
 - 6. The President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, in addition to the duties enumerated in article #90 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duties:
 - a. To attend meetings of the National Fraternity Council and of the National Executive Council, of which he is a member by right, collaborating with these bodies in all their activities;

NAFRA Statutes

- b. To act collegially with the other National Spiritual Assistants to coordinate spiritual assistance on the national level and to cooperate in the initial and continuing formation of the brothers and sisters [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #90.3b; *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #19];
- c. To vote in all matters which come before these bodies for decision except for financial matters and in elective chapters.

Section II

Voting and Conduct of Business

Article 7. Convocation

- 1. The regular meeting of the National Fraternity shall be the annual meeting of the National Fraternity Council called by the National Minister.
- 2. The National Executive Council shall meet at least twice during the period between annual meetings of the National Fraternity Council.
- 3. The National Fraternity Council shall meet in elective chapter once every three years.

NAFRA Statutes

4. The National Fraternity shall celebrate a National Congress at least once every five years, at a time and place determined by the National Executive Council and confirmed by the National Fraternity Council.
5. The Minister of each Regional Fraternity shall receive at least two months' notice of the place, day and time of the annual National Fraternity Council meeting.

Article 8. Voting Rights

1. All members of the National Fraternity Council as defined in article #3.1 of these *National Statutes* may vote. No Spiritual Assistant at any level, however, shall vote on any question involving financial matters [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #90.2] or in elective chapters [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #77; *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #12.3]. This restriction applies to Secular Franciscans as well as religious friars and sisters serving as Spiritual Assistants for a particular Secular Franciscan fraternity.
2. The Minister of each Regional Fraternity has the primary responsibility for casting the vote of the Regional Fraternity in all elections and on all business that may come before the National Fraternity Council.
3. Substitutes/Delegates

NAFRA Statutes

- a. In the event a Regional Minister is impeded from attending the National Fraternity Council meeting, then the delegate of the Regional Fraternity shall automatically be the Regional Vice Minister pursuant to the provisions of article #52.1.c of the *General Constitutions*.
 - b. If both the Regional Minister and the Regional Vice Minister are so impeded, then a member of the Regional Executive Council selected by that body shall attend and exercise all of the powers of a delegate for the Regional Fraternity.
4. No Regional Fraternity may cast more than a single vote on any issue or in any election.
5. Even if a person has a right to vote in his or her own name by more than one title, such person may cast only one ballot [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon #168].
6. During those meetings of the National Fraternity Council at which elections occur, the members of the outgoing and of the incoming National Executive Council, upon election and even prior to formal installation, are members with full

NAFRA Statutes

rights of the National Fraternity Council
until the end of said meeting.

Article 9. Quorum; Majority; Counting Ballots; Procedure

1. No official business may be transacted at a National Fraternity Council or National Executive Council meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as the presence of more than half of the number of those having the right to vote [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #77.4].
2. A majority, sometimes designated an *absolute* majority, is more than half of the total number of votes cast. A *relative* or *simple* majority is the highest number of votes cast on a motion or in an election [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon #119].
3. Where questions arise concerning procedures that are not covered by the *Code of Canon Law*, the *General Constitutions* or the *National Statutes*, reference may be made to *Robert's Rules of Order*. The President of the Elective Chapter (i.e., the Secular Franciscan who presides), after taking advice, retains the authority to determine any matter of procedure.

Article 10. Elections

1. Elections shall take place according to the norms of article #76.1 of the *General*

NAFRA Statutes

Constitutions, the National Statutes, and the International Statutes.

2. The National Fraternity Council elects the Secular members of the National Executive Council.
3. The International Councilor is elected by the National Fraternity Council and represents NAFRA as a member of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (hereafter CIOFS) in accordance with its *Statutes*.
4. The National Fraternity Council also elects a substitute delegate for the International Councilor from among the elected members of the National Executive Council should he or she be prevented from attending the CIOFS General Chapter [cf. article #5.2 of *CIOFS Statutes*]. In the event of such impediment, the National Minister shall inform the CIOFS Presidency of it and of the substitute delegation [cf. *CIOFS Statutes*, article #8.1].
5. The convocation and nominations for the office of International Councilor shall be carried out as in article #11 of these *National Statutes*.
6. In tallying votes which are conducted by secret written ballot, each elector shall submit one vote. Then all ballots, including blanks, shall be counted to

NAFRA Statutes

assure the validity of the vote [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon #173.2].

Article 11. Convocation and Nominations

1. At least four months prior to elections, the National Executive Council shall appoint a Chair for a Nominations Committee which will, acting according to norms established by the National Executive Council, present a slate of nominees for the offices to the members of the National Fraternity Council. This presentation shall be made approximately two months prior to the date set for the elections.
2. To be eligible as a candidate for election to office in the National Fraternity, one must be a permanently professed active member of the SFO [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #30]. Candidates should be convinced of the validity of the Franciscan evangelical way of life, attentive to a broad and encompassing vision of the life of the Church and of society, open to dialogue and ready to give and receive help and collaboration [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #31.3].
3. It shall be the duty of the Nominations Committee to ensure that each candidate meets the qualifications for the office for which she or he is proposed, has reviewed the duties of that office, and is willing to serve if elected.

NAFRA Statutes

4. Any individual elected to a national office may not hold an elected office at the Regional Fraternity level or the Local Fraternity level. (See Article 28.)
5. The provisions of article #76 of the *General Constitutions* shall be followed for convocation of the National Fraternity Council meeting for the purpose of elections.
6. Notification of CIOFS
 - a. The National Minister shall in timely fashion contact the General Minister of the SFO, requesting that she or he or a delegate preside over forthcoming National Fraternity elections.
 - b. The National Minister shall in timely fashion contact the President of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants, requesting that he or a delegate attend forthcoming National Fraternity elections as the ecclesial witness.

Article 12. Right to Vote at Elections

The right to vote in elective chapters has been defined in article #8 of these *National Statutes*.

NAFRA Statutes

Article 13. Terms of Office

In addition to the provisions enumerated in article #79 of the *General Constitutions*, the following apply:

1. Length of Terms
 - a. The Secular members of the National Executive Council are elected for a term of three years.
 - b. The term of the International Councilor is governed by the provisions of article #5.4 of the *International Statutes*.
 - c. The term of the President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants is determined by the members of that Conference.
2. For a third and final successive election to the office of National Councilor (which includes every elected office except those of National Minister and National Vice Minister) or International Councilor, a majority of two-thirds (2/3) of the votes of those present, which must be obtained on the first ballot, will be necessary.
3. The outgoing National Minister cannot be elected to any other office on the National Executive Council. (See Article 28.)

NAFRA Statutes

Article 14. Procedure in Voting

1. The vote shall be taken and completed as to each office before proceeding to the next, commencing with the office of National Minister. Persons not elected to the first office voted upon may be nominated for remaining offices.
2. Further nominations shall be received or at least solicited from the floor at the elective chapter.
3. The election procedure shall follow the provisions of articles #76 and #78 of the *General Constitutions*.
4. The election of National Councilors proceeds in the same manner as provided for in article #78.1 of the *General Constitutions*.

Article 15. Provisions for Vacancies, Resignations, and Removals

1. The provisions of articles #81.1, #81.2 and #83 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the procedure to be followed in the event the National Minister or National Vice Minister resigns or is impeded from performing the duties of the office.
2. When the office of National Councilor becomes vacant, the Executive Council will proceed to appoint someone to

NAFRA Statutes

substitute for him or her until the end of the term for which the Councilor was originally elected. If the appointee is already an elected member of the Council, he or she retains the right to vote. If the appointee is not an elected member, he or she serves without a vote.

3. The provisions of article #84 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the procedure to be followed to secure the removal for cause of the National Minister or members of the National Fraternity Council.
4. The provisions of article #84.4 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the appeals process for any officer removed from office.

Section III

Fraternal Life

Article 16. Fraternity Life

1. The provisions of articles #2, #3 and #4 of the *General Constitutions* concerning the nature of the vocation to the SFO apply.
2. The fraternal life, with its vitality and sustaining force, is meant to exist on the national level as well as on regional and local levels. For this reason, the National Fraternity is so constituted by leadership

NAFRA Statutes

and structure, vitalized by the participation of its members, and nurtured by ongoing formation and spiritual assistance as to achieve its objective of being a real fraternity; and the same is true for each Regional and Local Fraternity.

3. The Fraternities should bear in mind that they are subject to the vigilance of the local Ordinary insofar as they perform their apostolic activities within the local churches. Secular Franciscans should, therefore, dialogue with their local Ordinaries and follow their directions, inasmuch as they are the moderators of the ministry of the Word and of the Liturgy and the coordinators of the various forms of apostolate in the local Diocesan church [cf. *Rule*, article #6].
4. The external sign of the SFO in the United States is the TAU.

Article 17. Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations

The provisions of articles #92 through #95 of the *General Constitutions* and article #14 of the *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance* concerning the fraternal and pastoral visitations apply.

Article 18. Local Fraternity

1. The Local Fraternity is the primary constituent part of the entire structure of

NAFRA Statutes

Secular Franciscan life to which the member relates [cf. *Rule*, article #22].

2. The provisions of articles #46 and #47 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the canonical establishment of new fraternities and determine the Franciscan friar province which assumes pastoral care [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, articles #6.1 and #11.2].
3. The Council of each Local Fraternity is composed according to the requirements of article #49.1 of the *General Constitutions*. With respect to the fraternity they assist, anyone who serves as a Spiritual Assistant is subject to the same rights and restrictions as are Franciscan religious Spiritual Assistants [cf. articles #12, #13, #15, #23 and #24, *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*]. Spiritual Assistants who are Secular Franciscans may not be elected to other positions on the Councils of fraternities they assist.
4. A Local Fraternity may pass to the pastoral care of another friar province of the First Order or Third Order Regular in one of two ways [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #47.2; *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #6.2]:
 - a. The Council and Minister of the Local Fraternity approach the Regional Executive Council,

NAFRA Statutes

including the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s), with the request for transfer. If the Regional Executive Council, including the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s), approves the request, the Regional Spiritual Assistant asks the Provincial Ministers or Provincial Spiritual Assistants of the two friar provinces to effect the transfer.

- b. For the sake of providing better pastoral care, the Provincial Ministers or Provincial Spiritual Assistants of two friar provinces may initiate the transfer of a Local Fraternity from the care of one province to that of the other. The Provincial Ministers or Provincial Spiritual Assistants act in consultation with the Councils, including the Spiritual Assistants, of the Local and Regional Fraternities.

5. Establishment of sections or cells

- a. Should one or more groups desire to establish permanent sections within a Local Fraternity based on particular needs or common interests, they may do so subject to the direction of the Local Fraternity Council [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #50.2.d], so long as they continue to participate

NAFRA Statutes

fully in the Local Fraternity's fraternal and apostolic life. The Regional Fraternity will receive notice of the formation of such groups.

- b. Such sections remain subject to the Local Fraternity as constituent parts of it [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #34].
- 6. No official business may be transacted at a Local Fraternity meeting unless a quorum is present. The quorum consists of a majority of active members who are not excused from attendance.
- 7. The Local Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the Regional Fraternity on a fair share basis from its common fund to underwrite the costs of that fraternity [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #30.3]. A fair share contribution is made based on the number of active and excused brothers and sisters, but not for those who are deemed lapsed.
 - a. An active fraternity member is one who participates both by attending fraternity meetings and by providing financial support to the community, or whom the fraternity has excused from such obligations.

NAFRA Statutes

- b. Those brothers and sisters who neither attend meetings, support the community financially, nor have valid reasons due to health, family, work or distance, and who, after personal invitations to return to fraternity, consciously and eliberately reject or ignore the invitation, will be termed “lapsed” and will not be carried on the fraternity membership roll nor be reported as a member to higher fraternity Councils [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #53.3].
- 8. The Local Fraternity will present to the Regional Minister or his or her delegate and to the Regional Spiritual Assistant or the representative of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required at the time of fraternal and pastoral visits, and also on the occasion of their presiding over and witnessing elections.
- 9. It is at the local level that activities have their greatest meaning to members of the SFO. The Local Fraternity Council should expend great care to provide for thought-provoking activities and programs to foster Franciscan life and to deepen Franciscan spirituality among fraternity members.

NAFRA Statutes

10. As fraternity members become unable to attend meetings on a regular basis, the Local Fraternity Council should set up a method by which regular contacts are maintained [cf. *General Constitutions*, #53.3].
11. The provisions relating to property control which appear in these *National Statutes* in the section dealing with the responsibilities of the National Fraternity shall apply to the Local Fraternities insofar as they may be adapted to the needs and circumstances of the Local Fraternity.
12. As required by article #54.2 of the *General Constitutions*, the National Executive Council shall approve statements for use by the Local Fraternities that establish “precise criteria” for their “statement of purposes” and “internal controls” which must be used in their establishing documents.

Article 19. Formation

1. Orientation
 - a. Orientation is a time for determining a person’s interest, eligibility and disposition to enter into the initial formation process [cf. *Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States* (hereafter

NAFRA Statutes

Guidelines for Initial Formation), page 25].

- b. The period of orientation shall consist of not less than three (3) months.

2. Initial Formation

- a. Inquiry – The period of Inquiry, which begins with the Ceremony of introduction and Welcoming [cf. *Ritual*, page 9], shall consist of not less than six (6) months.
- b. Candidacy – The period of Candidacy, which begins with the Rite of Admission [cf. *Ritual*, page 11], shall consist of not less than eighteen (18) months and not more than thirty-six (36) months.
- c. All persons in initial formation, in addition to attending their formation sessions, must participate in the meetings of the Local Fraternity as this is an indispensable presupposition for initiation into community prayer and into fraternity life [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #40.3].
- d. To be admitted to the SFO in the United States, a person must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church (i.e., having

NAFRA Statutes

received the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation/Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) in addition to being an actively practicing Catholic.

3. Profession

- a. The minimum age for perpetual profession as a Secular Franciscan in the United States is twenty-one (21) years.
- b. The minimum age for temporary profession as a Secular Franciscan in the United States is eighteen (18) years.

4. Ongoing Formation

Ongoing formation is the responsibility of all professed members consonant with article #44 of the *General Constitutions*.

5. Form and Methodology

- a. The form (i.e., content and process; cf. *General Constitutions*, #38.2) to be employed in both initial and ongoing formation is that found in the *Guidelines for Initial Formation*.
- b. The methodology employed in formation should be both interactive and experiential in

NAFRA Statutes

nature [cf. *General Constitutions*, #40.4].

- c. Opportunities for fraternities to meet together for the purposes of common ongoing and initial formation shall occur whenever possible at all levels of fraternity [cf. *General Constitutions*, #40.1].

6. Provisions for Remote Initial Formation

In those rare instances in which a person is legitimately impeded from participating in the normal formation process of a Local Fraternity, recourse may be had to the *Guidelines for Remote Initial Formation in the United States* as adopted by the National Executive Council in June 2000.

Article 20. Transfer, Withdrawal, Suspension and Dismissal from the Fraternity and from the Order

The provisions set forth in articles #55 through #59 of the *General Constitutions* shall constitute the manner and means for transfer, withdrawal, suspension and dismissal from the fraternity and from the Order.

Article 21. Regional Fraternity

1. The Regional Fraternities are constituted according to the provisions of the *General Constitutions*, article #61.

NAFRA Statutes

2. The governing body of each Regional Fraternity is the Regional Fraternity Council. The Regional Executive Council acts on behalf of the Regional Fraternity Council when the members of the entire Council are not in session [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #62.1].
3. The Regional Spiritual Assistant or the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants exercises pastoral care and spiritual guidance in regard to each Regional Fraternity as an integral component part of NAFRA and of the SFO, by the same means and manner as does the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants in regard to NAFRA [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, articles #21 and #22].

Article 22. Regional Fraternity Council

1. The Regional Fraternity Council is composed of the Ministers of the Local Fraternities that together form the Regional Fraternity, the Regional Executive Council, and the Regional Spiritual Assistant or the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, each of whom may vote. Regional Spiritual Assistants, however, do not vote in financial matters and in elective chapters [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #12.1].

NAFRA Statutes

2. The Regional Fraternity Council is the representative body of all of the Local Fraternities that together compose the Regional Fraternity, and has the power to create regional guidelines in conformity with the *Rule*, the *General Constitutions* and the *National Statutes*.
3. The Regional Fraternity Council shall meet at least once a year. Every third year the Regional Fraternity Council shall meet in elective chapter in accord with the *General Constitutions* and these *National Statutes*.
4. The Regional Fraternity Council has the duties set forth in article #62 of the *General Constitutions*.

Article 23. Regional Executive Council

1. Between the meetings of the Regional Fraternity Council, an elected Regional Executive Council shall carry on the business and carry out the purposes of the Regional Fraternity in a spirit of ministry and service [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #62.1].
2. The Regional Executive Council is composed of the Regional Minister, the Regional Vice Minister, the Regional Secretary, the Regional Treasurer, at least one elected Councilor, and the Regional Spiritual Assistant or the

NAFRA Statutes

President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants. In addition, the Regional Formation Director may also be elected. In those regions in which the Regional Formation Director is appointed rather than elected, she or he attends the meetings of the Regional Executive Council and exercises a consultative role.

3. All elected members of the Regional Executive Council and the Spiritual Assistant have voting rights.
4. Election of the Secular members of the Regional Executive Council shall follow the model set forth in **Section II** of these *National Statutes* which deals with the National Fraternity insofar as it may be adapted to the needs and circumstances of the Regional Fraternity.
5. The Regional Executive Council may establish and direct commissions and committees deemed necessary to achieve the goals and objectives determined by the Regional Fraternity Council.
6. When not in session, the Regional Executive Council may conduct business electronically (i.e., via e-mail, telephone, fax, etc.), provided that any decisions and determinations made in this way are reviewed and ratified at the next regular meeting of the Council.

NAFRA Statutes

7. The Regional Executive Council shall meet at least twice a year, at times and places to be determined by its members. The Regional Minister shall give written notice of meetings at least two months in advance.

Article 24. Duties of Officers of the Regional Executive Council

1. The Regional Minister has the duties set forth in article #63 of the *General Constitutions*.
2. The duties of the Regional Vice Minister, Secretary, and Treasurer shall follow the model set forth in that portion of these *National Statutes* which deals with the National Fraternity insofar as it may be adapted to the needs and circumstances of the Regional Fraternity.
3. Each Regional Fraternity shall follow the model set forth in that portion of these *National Statutes* which deals with the National Fraternity in connection with policies and procedures to be followed in the event of resignation or removal from office on the part of any elected Officer.

Article 25. Structure for Property Control for the Regional Fraternity

1. The provisions relating to property control which appear in these *National Statutes* in the section dealing with the

NAFRA Statutes

responsibilities of the National Fraternity shall apply to the Regional Fraternities insofar as they may be adapted to the needs and circumstances of the Regional Fraternity.

2. Particular note should be taken that expenses of the Regional Executive Council and those individuals invited by this Council to serve the Regional Fraternity in some capacity shall be borne by the Regional Fraternity for attendance at required meetings.
3. The Regional Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the National Fraternity on a fair share basis from its treasury to help provide for the expenses of NAFRA.
4. As required by article #54.2 of the *General Constitutions*, the National Executive Council shall approve statements for use by the Regional Fraternities that establish “precise criteria” for their “statement of purposes” and “internal controls” which must be used in their establishing documents.

Article 26. Fraternal and Pastoral Visits to the Regional Fraternity

1. The provisions of article #92 through article #95 of the *General Constitutions* concerning the fraternal and pastoral visitations apply as does article #14 of the *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*.

NAFRA Statutes

2. The Regional Fraternity will present to the National Minister or his or her delegate and the representative of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required at the time of fraternal and pastoral visits, and also on the occasion of their presiding over and witnessing elections.

Article 27. Franciscan Youth and Young Adults

The provisions of articles #96 and #97 of the *General Constitutions* concerning Franciscan Youth and Young Adults apply.

Article 28. Applicability of These *Statutes* to All Levels of Fraternity

The various provisions set forth in these *National Statutes* for NAFRA administration shall be used as a model for elections, conduct of business, structures for control of property, composition and duties of the Fraternity Minister and of the Fraternity Council, replacement of officers who are unable to continue in office, and similar business of the fraternity at any level. However, Articles 11.4 and 13.3 do not apply to regional and local fraternities. A member of a regional council may also be a member of a local fraternity council.

Article 29. Amendments

1. These *National Statutes* may be amended by two-thirds vote of the

NAFRA Statutes

National Fraternity Council provided that a copy of the proposed amendment is distributed to the National Fraternity Council at least 60 days before the vote on said amendment is to be taken.

2. All such amendments are subject to the approval of the Presidency of CIOFS.

**ATTESTED AS APPROVED ON OCTOBER 18, 2002
BY THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL, SFO-
USA.**

**ATTESTED AS AMENDED ON JUNE 6, 2003 BY THE
NATIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL, SFO-USA.**

**APPROVED AND RATIFIED BY THE
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENCY, JULY 4, 2003**

William Wicks, SFO - National Minister

Elizabeth Allen, SFO - National Secretary

NAFRA Statutes

**ATTESTED AS AMENDED ON May 11, 2004 BY THE
NATIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL, SFO-USA.**

**CONFIRMED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENCY, JUNE 12, 2004.**

Carol Gentile, SFO - National Minister

Elizabeth Allen, SFO – National Secretary

**ATTESTED AS AMENDED ON OCTOBER 22, 2004
BY THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL, SFO-
USA.**

**APPROVED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENCY ON JANUARY 8, 2005.**

Carol Gentile, SFO – National Minister

Elizabeth Allen, SFO – National Secretary

Appendix A

National Statutes Article 3.7.a: Composition of the Regional Fraternities

#	Name of Region, followed by short geographic description:
50	Ohana O Ke Anuenue : HI.
51	Five Franciscan Martyrs : FL, plus up to about 31 degrees n latitude to include South GA, Lower AL around the Mobile Bay area.
52	St. Francis : s CA up to San Luis Obispo area.
53	Blessed Junipero Serra : n CA from Bakersfield n; most of NV except Las Vegas area.
54	Troubadours of Peace : OR, WA, ID, AK.
55	Queen of Peace : ND, MN, IA, most of SD except sw area around Rapid City, e 2/3 NE, w 1/4 WI.
56	Divine Mercy : Lower MI, plus Lucas County OH (Toledo OH area).
57	Saint Margaret of Cortona : VA, DC, all of MD except far w around Cumberland, s central PA around the Harrisburg/Lancaster/York area, far e WV around Martinsburg/Charles Town area.
58	St. Thomas More : AZ, s part NV around Las Vegas.
59	Mother Cabrini : ne IL including all of metro Chicago, w to Rockford and s to Kankakee.
60	St. Joan of Arc : LA, MS, far e TX from Houston e, s 2/3 AR from Little Rock s, far sw TN around Memphis.
61	Brothers and Sisters of St Francis : NC, SC, n 90% GA, AL except lower part around the Mobile Bay area, TN except far sw area around Memphis.
62	Exaltation of the Holy Cross : N/A.
63	Franciscans of the Prairie : n 3/4 IL, excluding East St Louis/Bellville area and s, excluding also ne area from Rockford to Kankakee.
64	Holy Trinity Region : KY, s half OH including the counties of the Diocese of Columbus (except Tuscarawas County) & part of the Diocese of Steubenville; se IN near Louisville KY & Cincinnati OH.
65	La Verna : e 3/4 WI, Upper MI.
66	Our Lady of Indiana : n 3/4 IN, excluding areas around Evansville & Louisville KY & Cincinnati OH.

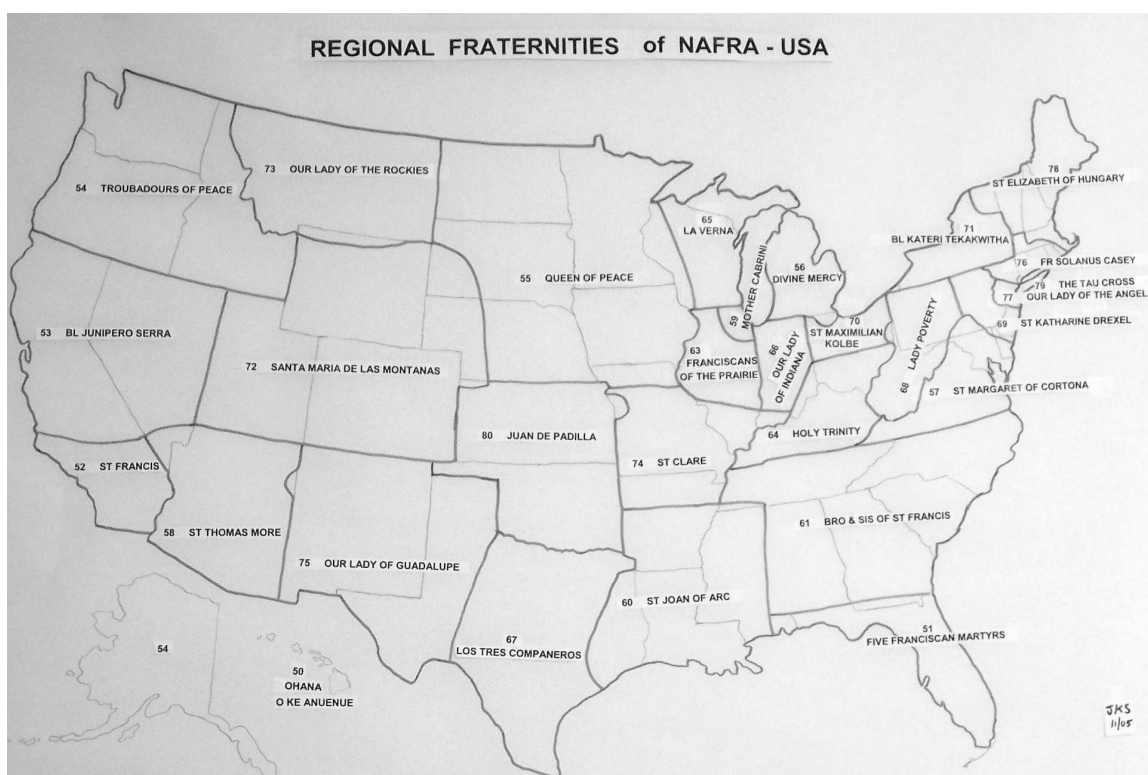
- 67 Los Tres Companeros : central TX from OK border s to Mexico and Gulf of Mexico, w to San Angelo and Abilene, and e to (but not including) Houston.
- 68 Lady Poverty : WV except far e WV around Martinsburg/Charles Town area, w half PA except Erie, far w MD around Cumberland, far e part OH around Steubenville.
- 69 St Katharine Drexel : DE, e half PA except s central area around Harrisburg/Lancaster/York, s half NJ from Trenton s.
- 70 Maximillian Kolbe : n 1/2 OH including all of the counties in the Diocese of Cleveland, the Diocese of Youngstown, and the counties of the Diocese of Toledo, except Lucas County (Toledo area), and only the county of Tuscarawas in the Diocese of Columbus.
- 71 Bl Kateri Tekakwitha : upstate NY plus Erie PA, excluding NY counties adjacent to borders with NJ, CT, and far e PA, also excluding far ne NY around Plattsburgh, Saranac Lake and Long Lake.
- 72 Santa Maria de las Montanas : CO, UT, WY except far n area around Sheridan, sw area SD around Rapid City, w 1/3 NE to include Stratton, nw corner KS to include Atwood.
- 73 Our Lady of the Rockies : MT; far n WY around Sheridan.
- 74 St Clare : s 80% MO, n 1/3 AR excluding Little Rock and s, s 1/4 IL from East St Louis/Bellville s, far sw corner IN around Evansville.
- 75 Our Lady of Guadalupe : NM, far w TX excluding Abilene and San Angelo and e, far e AZ in Navajo reservation area around St Michaels.
- 76 Solanus Casey : CT, RI, w 1/3 MA from Holyoke/Springfield and w, s MA around Fall River /New Bedford, and part of Cape Cod, NY counties adjacent to borders with NJ, CT and far e PA except part of s Westchester County which is shared.
- 77 Our Lady of the Angels : n half NJ excluding Trenton and s; NY counties of Staten Island and Manhattan (New York County), plus part of s Westchester county.
- 78 St Elizabeth of Hungary : VT, NH, ME, e 2/3 MA excluding Holyoke/Springfield and w, also excluding s MA around Fall River /New Bedford, plus part of Cape Cod, far ne NY around Plattsburgh, Saranac Lake and Long Lake.
- 79 Tau Cross : NY counties on Long Island, plus Bronx.

80 Juan de Padilla : KS except nw corner around Atwood,
OK, plus area around Kansas City MO.

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Composition 082205

REGIONAL FRATERNITIES OF NAFRA - USA

Contributed by John Sanborn, SFO



REGIONS & NUMBERS

Geographic composition – Appendix A National Statutes

50	OHANA O KE ANUENUE	66	OUR LADY OF INDIANA
51	FIVE FRANCISCAN MARTYRS	67	LOS TRES COMPANEROS
52	ST FRANCIS	68	LADY POVERTY
53	BL JUNIPERO SERRA	69	ST KATHARINE DREXEL
54	TROUBADOURS OF PEACE	70	ST MAXIMILIAN KOLBE
55	QUEEN OF PEACE	71	BL KATERI TEKAKWITHA
56	DIVINE MERCY	72	SANTA MARIA DE LAS MONTANAS
57	ST MARGARET OF CORTONA	73	OUR LADY OF THE ROCKIES
58	ST THOMAS MORE	74	ST CLARE
59	MOTHER CABRINI	75	OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
60	ST JOAN OF ARC	76	FR SOLANUS CASEY
61	BRO & SIS OF ST FRANCIS	77	OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS
63	FRANCISCANS OF THE PRAIRIE	78	ST ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY
64	HOLY TRINITY	79	THE TAU CROSS
65	LA VERNA	80	JUAN DE PADILLA

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

The Secular Franciscan Order is an “Association of the Christian Faithful.”¹ More specifically, it is an association whose members lead an apostolic life and strive for Christian perfection while living in the world and who share the spirit of some religious institute [i.e. one of the branches of the Franciscan First Order and the Third Order Regular] under the higher direction of that same institute....”² It is governed by the universal law of the Church, and by its own: the Rule, the Constitutions, the Ritual, and the particular statutes.³ The Constitutions have as their purpose: to apply the Rule; to indicate concretely the conditions for belonging to the SFO, its government, the organization of life in fraternity, and its seat.⁴ The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels — local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own moral personality in the Church⁵. These various fraternities are coordinated and united according to the norm of the rule and of the constitutions.⁶ In order to implement the “...precise criteria regarding the purpose of the juridical person” [i.e., the individual fraternity at each level] required by Article 54.2 of the General Constitutions as apply in the civil law, the National Fraternity Council of the SFO-USA has approved the following statement for local and regional fraternities to be included in their establishing documents:

=====

The fraternity as an individual, component unit is organized to promote the purposes of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America through fraternal activities at the local and regional levels for the benefit of the Secular Franciscan Order, and to do any thing or act incidental to or connected with the foregoing purposes or advancement thereof but not for the pecuniary profit or financial gain of its members, directors (i.e. council members) or officers. All income and earnings of the fraternity shall be used exclusively for the fraternity's purposes and

¹ See Code of Canon Law, Can. 298.

² See Code of Canon Law, Can. 303.

³ See General Constitutions, Article 4, 1.

⁴ See General Constitutions, Article 4, 3; *also* Code of Canon Law, Can. 304.

⁵ See Code of Canon Law, Can. 687 [309,313].

⁶ See Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, 20.

no part of the net income, net earnings or assets of the fraternity shall inure to the benefit or profit of any private individual, firm, corporation or association.

The fraternity is organized exclusively for tax-exempt purposes as that term is defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and shall not carry out any activities not permitted to be engaged in by an entity exempt from federal income tax. No substantial part of the activities of the fraternity shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation and the fraternity shall not participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public service.

No member, trustee or officer of the fraternity or any other private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the fraternity's assets upon the dissolution of the fraternity. No member, director or trustee of the fraternity shall receive any salary, other compensation or pecuniary profit of any kind for services as such member, director or trustee other than reimbursements of actual and necessary expenses in the performance of his or her duties as such member, director or trustee.

In the event of the dissolution of the fraternity or the winding up of its affairs, the fraternity's property shall not be conveyed or distributed to any individual or organization created or operated for profit or to any individual for less than fair market value but shall, after necessary expenses thereof, (including payment of the fraternity's debt) be distributed to the next higher fraternity (which has been created and operated for non-profit purposes similar to those of this fraternity and qualifies under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.)

Approved ____November 2003____ by the National Executive Council.

Certified by ____Elizabeth Allen, SFO____, Secretary.

FRATERNITY INTERNAL CONTROLS AND TREASURY GUIDELINES

Introduction

Canon 1284 of the Code of Canon Law⁽¹⁾ provides that all administrators are to perform their duties with the diligence of a “good householder.”

Internal control has been defined as the overall plan of organization and the methods employed to safeguard assets, ensure the reliability of accounting data, promote efficient operations and ensure compliance with established policies. An internal accounting control system should provide reasonable assurance that: assets are safeguarded; the financial records reflect all financial transactions that have occurred; financial reports are accurate; and, there is proper oversight of the person(s) responsible for cash custody and accounting.

In accordance with Article 54.2 of the General Constitutions, which calls for “...precise criteria regarding... the administration of its material goods and the relevant internal controls,” the National Fraternity- SFO-USA has approved the following guidelines for use by local and regional fraternities. *[NAFRA National Statutes, Article 18(12) states: “As required by article #54.2 of the General Constitutions, the National Executive Council shall approve statements for use by the Local Fraternities that establish “precise criteria” for their statement of purposes” and “internal controls” which must be used in their establishing documents. Article 25(4) is identical except for reference to Regional Fraternities.]*

General

[Note: General Constitutions, Article 51(5) states: “...The provisions regarding the rights and duties of ...the treasurer apply, with the appropriate adaptations, to all levels.”]

1. The treasurer, whether appointed or elected, must have the necessary skills to adequately discharge the duties incumbent upon this important office (Note: In fraternities in which the councilors are elected as a block instead of by individual offices, the new council portions out the responsibilities at its first official meeting. (See CNSA,

"Suggested Election Procedures To Complement and Clarify the Norms Established by NAFRA", 17(b)).

2. It is never appropriate to have the minister or spiritual assistant act as treasurer. *[General Constitutions, Article 82 states: "The following are incompatible: ...(b) The offices of minister, vice-minister, secretary and treasurer at the same level."]* However in emergency situations, e.g., the treasurer resigns, or is temporarily unable to carry out his or her duties, the minister may function as treasurer for two or three months while a replacement is sought or the treasurer is able to resume his or her duties.

3. It is the council's responsibility to make sure the treasurer is maintaining adequate records and discharging the duties of the office in a Franciscan manner. At a minimum, the council should provide for an audit of the treasurer's records at least just prior to the end of his or her term of office. *[General Constitutions, Article 62(2) states: "The regional council has the following duties: ...(j) To have, before its term of office is finished, the regional fraternity's financial and real estate situation audited either by an expert who is not a member of the council or by the fraternity's board of examiners." Also, NAFRA National Statutes, Article 4, #5 states: "In accord with article #54.3 of the General Constitutions, for the fraternities at each level, a financial audit must be done every 3 years, just prior to the end of the Council's term of office. This audit may be conducted by a professional accountant who is not a member of the fraternity Council, or by a "board of examiners" established by the particular fraternity (consisting of two or more experts selected at large by the membership who are not also members of that fraternity's Council). A written report of such audit must be given to the Council of the higher fraternity."]*

Books of Account

4. The treasurer shall have custody of all funds and securities and shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the fraternity and shall deposit all moneys and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the fraternity in such depositories as may be designated by the council. It is the treasurer's duty to protect the financial interests of the membership in their contributions and other payments into the common fund and any other fund established by the council.

5. The treasurer shall record each contribution received in the appropriate register, with the date and the name of the contributor (*See NAFRA National Statutes, Article 18(7)*). Confidential annual statements prepared from (or a photocopy of) the member's record, signed by the treasurer, should be sent to the individual members who request it, summarizing his/her contributions to the fraternity. In regional fraternities, the treasurer shall record each local fraternity's per capita contributions separately in a register maintained for that purpose. The record should include, along with the amount of per capita paid, the number of professed members, candidates, and inquirers so that the correct membership numbers are available for the annual report to the national fraternity. [*General Constitutions, Article 51(4) states: "The treasurer, or bursar, has the following duties: ...(a) To guard diligently the contributions received, recording each receipt in the appropriate register, with the date on which it was given, the name of the contributor, or the one from whom it was collected."*]

6. The treasurer shall disburse the funds of the fraternity as may be ordered by the council, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements in a timely manner. [*General Constitutions, Article 51(4), states: "The treasurer, or bursar, has the following duties: ...(b) To record in the same register the items of expense, specifying the date and purpose, in conformity with the directions of the fraternity council."*]

Cash and Banking

7. Every established and emerging fraternity must have its own bank account(s) which should be in the name of "Secular Franciscan Order, ... ", followed by appropriate fraternity, region, etc., name, and use the appropriate federal identification number. (Note: The term "bank" used in this document means any appropriate financial institution including a credit union.)

8. All bank accounts must have signature authority for the minister and the treasurer, i.e., either one can sign checks and make withdrawals. This is necessary to insure the payment of bills in case of a temporary vacancy in the office of treasurer or the temporary inability of the treasurer to discharge his or her duties. (See number 2, above).

9. Ideally, cash receipts such as common fund donations received at local fraternity meetings, should be counted by two persons. A note of the amount received should be given to the minister.

10. Ideally, all mail should be opened by the secretary or minister.

11. The treasurer shall perform a monthly reconciliation of book to net bank balances. If a discrepancy is noted during the reconciliation process, the treasurer shall promptly determine the source of the error and make appropriate correction to the records.

12. All moneys shall be deposited intact as soon as possible after receipt. All checks should be endorsed with "For Deposit Only" and the name of the fraternity. The practice of accepting checks made out to the name of the treasurer should be avoided. Under no circumstances shall payments be made from undeposited cash receipts. If cash is needed for immediate expenditure, it should be taken from a petty cash fund authorized by the council, and the payment noted on a suitable petty cash voucher (inexpensive pads of these vouchers are available from any office supply store).

13. All expenditures (other than from petty cash) must be made by check drawn on the fraternity's bank account. Expenditures of a routine nature are pre-approved by the council in the form of an annual budget. Extraordinary expenses (up to a maximum of 5% of the annual budget total) must be approved by the council before payment, or on the alternative, by the minister (up to 1% of the annual budget), and reported to the council.

14. All Petty Cash Funds must be reimbursed periodically by check (using the "Imprest" method).

15. Where it is deemed appropriate by the council, the treasurer may advance funds to council members, for their future budgeted expenses. These funds must be fully accounted for by the council member before any further advances can be made.

Financial and Other Reports

16. The treasurer must make an annual or more frequent financial reports to the membership and council that shows details of all

income, expenses, cash balances, investments and any moneys held in trust, and to the next higher council as part of the fraternity's annual report. *[General Constitutions, Article 51(4) states: "The treasurer, or bursar, has the following duties: ... (c) To render an account of his or her administration to the assembly and to the council of the fraternity according to the norms of the national statutes.."]* A local fraternity treasurer should publish the annual report in the fraternity bulletin or newsletter. In addition that same report must be given to the regional council. The regional treasurer's report should be disseminated to the membership through the fraternity ministers or the newsletter. The regional financial report should also be delivered to NAFRA as part of the region's annual report. In addition, the treasurer should provide a written financial report periodically to the council; in regional fraternities to the executive council.

17. An annual written report by the council of the fraternity must be made to the council of the next higher fraternity. Such report must include:

- a. Details of membership
- b. Description of activities, goals and accomplishments
- c. Treasurer's annual financial report
- d. Budget for the upcoming year

Other Treasurer's Duties

18. In addition to the above, the treasurer has the duty to promptly submit all records for review by the council when requested, and by the higher council upon fraternal visitation.

19. The treasurer should assist the council in preparing an annual budget showing estimated income and expenses for the upcoming period, in order to help the council plan for future needs. In regional fraternities, the treasurer should assist the regional executive council in preparing an annual budget for submission to the regional fraternity council for its approval. *[General Constitutions, Article 50(2) states: "...The duties of the council are also: ... (e) To decide on the destination of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters concerning financial management and economic affairs of the fraternity. Article 62(2) states: "The regional council has the following duties: ... (I) To make decisions regarding the use of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters regarding the financial management and the economic affairs of the regional fraternity."]*

20. When a fraternity is de-activated, the treasurer shall dispose of the moneys remaining in the fraternity's treasury either according to the decision of the remaining members, consistent with the "Statement of Purposes" as adopted by NAFRA, or transfer them to the regional executive council where they will be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account managed by the regional executive council [*See CNSA Guidelines For De-activating an Established Fraternity*]. In the case of a suspended fraternity, the treasurer must immediately transfer the moneys in the fraternity's treasury to the regional executive council where they will be frozen in an interest-bearing escrow account managed by the regional executive council [*See CNSA Guidelines For Suspending a Canonically Established Fraternity*].

21. Treasurer's records should routinely be kept for 6 years. Equipment warranties should be retained for as long as they are effective. However records relating to large acquisitions such as cars, or furniture and equipment with a value of over 1% of the annual budget should be retained for 6 years after disposal of the asset. In addition, records having ongoing importance such as deeds and titles and those relating to the fraternity's Federal ID number, and State tax exemption status should be retained permanently.

22. Reference should be made to:

- a. General Constitutions (2000), Art. 52.4 and 52.5
- b. NAFRA Statutes (2002), Art. 6.4, Art. 24.2 and Art. 28.

(1) *See also Canon 1028 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, which governs the Eastern Catholic Churches.*

Approved "*ad experimentum*" on November 27, 2003 by the National Executive Council.

Certified by _____Elizabeth Allen, SFO_____, National Secretary.

File: internal controls & treasury guidelines final 11272003 jks

Section 4

*Ritual
of the
Secular
Franciscan
Order*

RITUAL OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

English translation approved August 5, 1985 by the
Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship
Prot. 956/85

+ Vergilius Noè
Tit. Archb. of Vercaria
Secretary

SACRA CONGREGATIO
PRO SACRAMENTIS
ET CULTU DIVINO

Prot. n. CD 1615/85

**THE FRANCISCAN FAMILIES
OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER**

At the request of Very Reverend Father José Angulo, Minister General of the Third Order Regular of St Francis, in the name of the Ministers General of the Franciscan Families and of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, by letters issued on the 5th day of *October 1983*, by Virtue of the faculties given to this sacred Congregation by the Supreme Pontiff JOHN PAUL II, we gladly approve or confirm the text of the Ritual of the *Secular* Franciscan Order written in the Latin language and attached to this Decree.

The confirmation granted by the Apostolic See is to be mentioned in the printed text. Moreover, two samples of the same printed text are to be forwarded to this Sacred Congregation.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the offices of the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, on the 9th day of March, 1984, in the Jubilee Year of the Redemption.

(Joseph Card. Casoria)
Prefect

+ Vergilius Noè
Tit. Archb. of Vercaria
Secretary

Part I:

Rites for Entering the Secular Franciscan Order

Preface

I. The Nature of Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order

1. Many men and women, married and single, and many members of the diocesan clergy are called by God to follow the way of perfection of the gospel life after the example and manner of Francis of Assisi, to share his charism, and to make it present in the world. They promise to follow Jesus Christ and to live the gospel in fraternity by entering the Secular Franciscan Order. In this way they manifest the priceless gift of baptism and realize it in a fuller and more fruitful way.

2. The Church has always esteemed highly this form of life prompted by the Holy Spirit “for the good of the Church and the human community”¹. By means of the rules approved by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV, Leo XIII and Paul VI, the Church has made sure that this form of life is suitably adapted to her needs and expectations in the conditions of changing times.

3. The Secular Franciscans, gathered together in fraternity and in oneness of spirit with all the People of God, celebrate the mystery of salvation, revealed and communicated to us in Christ, with prayers and thanksgiving, and by renewing their commitment to a new life.

¹ PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter “Seraphicus Patriarcha” (24 June 1978), in AAS 70(1978) 454.

II. The Normative Nature of the SFO Ritual and its Adaptation

4. The Constitution “Sacrosanctum Concilium” states: “Provided that the substantial unity of the Roman Rite is maintained, the revision of liturgical books should allow for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands”². In accord with this criterion, the Secular Franciscan fraternities scattered throughout the whole world, conscious that experience itself has a specific value, want to continue to bring to completion in any people and in any given culture the mystery of the Incarnate Word, the Savior of all people.

5. The rites and prayers presented in these celebrations are inspired by the traditions of the Secular Franciscan fraternity and by the rituals being used experimentally in the various nations. They need to be adapted to the mentality and to the different circumstances of the fraternities scattered in so many parts of the world.

6. It is the task of the SFO National Councils particularly to carry out this work of adaptation.

The rites that refer to admission and profession are to be taken as normative with regard to the essential elements that will be indicated as such in each rite.

7. The SFO Ritual should manifest the gift of the Spirit proper to the Secular Franciscan Order and also its commitment to the gospel life, in a way that is suitable for any nation and in any cultural context.

On the one hand, this implies the assimilation of the valid cultural elements of each region, and, on the other hand, it presumes fidelity to the Secular Franciscan vocation and to its universality, that is, to unity among all the fraternities with the Church.

² VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy “Sacrosanctum Concilium”, n. 38.

III. The Rites that Accompany the Steps of SFO Life

8. The steps by which the new members and the candidates are incorporated into the Secular Franciscan Order after a time of inquiry and preparation are the time of formation of at least one year; and profession of the rule or commitment to the gospel life. The renewal of profession is added to these.

The whole fraternity is involved in this gradual journey.

9. Through the priest and the president (minister), who represents the fraternity, the Church accepts the commitment and the profession of those who profess the life and rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. By her public prayer the Church entreats the help and grace of God for them. She imparts her blessing over them, and accompanies their commitment or profession with the Eucharistic sacrifice.

1. Rite of Admission

10. The rite of admission, which precedes the time of formation, should be simple and plain. It is appropriate that this entrance take place within the celebration of the Word of God with the fraternity present.

11. The elements that should be clearly and evidently highlighted for the candidate are the following:

- a. the request and the will to experience to the gospel life, like Francis of Assisi;
- b. having in mind that the request is related to a possible future commitment to live this way of life, with the help of a fraternity, in communion and harmony with the whole Franciscan Family.

12. Present at this rite are:

- a. the candidates;
- b. a priest who is SFO spiritual assistant or the superior of a Franciscan religious community to which the secular fraternity is especially connected and who presides over the

liturgical rite. In case of necessity another priest can be delegated.

- c. the president (minister) of the fraternity who receives the new members in the name of the fraternity council³. The president (minister) should occupy a significant place in the celebration to bring out the meaning of the office.
- d. the formation director or the delegate for formation, where there is one;
- e. the local fraternity.

If, for good reasons, the rite of admission is celebrated without the presence of a priest, the president (minister) presides at the celebration as well as receiving the candidates for the time of formation.

A fraternal social gesture of welcome to the newcomers can precede or follow the rite of entry, as an expression of joy and a pledge of fraternal support.

2. The Rite of Commitment to the Gospel Life or Profession

13. Since by its very nature profession is a public and ecclesial act, it should be celebrated in the presence of the fraternity. It is fitting that the profession be made during the celebration of the Eucharist or at least within an appropriate celebration of the Liturgy of the Word.

14. The nature of commitment to the gospel life is:

- a. the renewal of one's consecration and promises made at baptism and confirmation. This means dedicating oneself to God through his People with all the consequences flowing from it, up to the present moment, in order to live in union with God and to hold firm to his plan of salvation, by means of a consecration that is to be lived in the world;
- b. the desire to live the gospel by following St. Francis of Assisi;
- c. incorporation into the Secular Franciscan Order, which is the harmonious union of all the members who promise to live the gospel after the example of St. Francis of Assisi, while remaining in their secular vocation;

³ SFO RULE, art. 23

- d. the desire to live in the world and for the world. In this regard, profession aims to be a gospel leaven and also a commitment to collaborate in building a more fraternal world. Members of the diocesan clergy by their profession confirm the appropriate pledges and promises of their specific episcopal, prebyteral or diaconal vocation.
- e. the desire to live the gospel for the whole of one's life. This dimension is the expression of a person's generosity in sharing the fullness of one's innermost being, and also the acceptance of the risks that are inseparable from any human choice that is so permanent and important;
- f. the candidate's confidence, supported by the help of the SFO Rule and the fraternity. For the candidate will feel led and helped by the Rule approved by the Church and will experience the joy of sharing the journey of gospel life with many brothers and sisters, from whom one can receive something and to whom a person can also give something. Being incorporated into the local fraternity, which is an integral part of the Church, he/she will contribute toward rebuilding the whole Church.

15. The elements considered above should be united in a single formula of profession, or even be expressed in the form of a dialogue. Some of these fundamental concepts, such as service of God and of his Church, simply cannot be expressed explicitly in a formula, since they are repeated constantly throughout the whole celebration, or they may always be presupposed in the very act of commitment to the gospel life.

16. The commitment to the gospel life is received by the president (minister) in the name of the Church and of the fraternity. The priest presides over this rite as the witness of the Church and of the Franciscan Family.

17. In exceptional circumstances, when a lack of priests calls for it or makes it necessary, the candidates pronounce their profession before the fraternity. The president (minister) of the fraternity presides at the celebration of the Word (or has another preside), if

the circumstances require it, and also receives the profession, while the professed members of the fraternity act as witnesses.

3. *The Rite of Annual Renewal of Commitment to the Gospel Life or Profession*

18. Profession or permanent commitment can be preceded and prepared for by a temporary promise or commitment, renewed annually, but not extended beyond three years, since it is a preparation for permanent commitment.

19. This option is offered for pedagogical reasons, namely, to facilitate a suitable and gradual formation and entry of members into the Secular Franciscan Order. For that reason, the renewal is made with the same frame of mind in order to respond to the goal of this pedagogical preparation.

20. The rite of annual renewal can be performed in a celebration of the Word of God with a very simple formula. The readings and the whole rite may be arranged to suit the circumstances. If it is performed in some kind of liturgical celebration, the celebrant may give a short homily.

Chapter One

Rite of Admission into the Secular Franciscan Order

1. The rite of admission, which precedes the time of formation, begins with a suitable hymn.
2. The rite is to be simple and performed within the fraternity.

Description of the Rite

3. It is fitting that the rite of admission take place within an appropriate celebration of the Word of God.

Opening Rites

4. The rite begins with the sign of the cross and with a few words of greeting from the presiding priest.
5. Then an admonition is given by one of the members or by the priest himself, in these or similar words:

The Lord has called us
to live the gospel way of life in fraternity,
as he showed it to St. Francis of Assisi.
He brings us together today
to receive those who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
have asked to be admitted into the Secular Franciscan
Order
and want to begin their time of formation
which will culminate in their profession
or commitment to the gospel life.
We will now renew our faith in the Holy Spirit

and call on him:
May he give us the grace
to encourage and sustain their proper formation
and to walk with them to attain their goal.

6. After the admonition, the priest says:

Let us pray.
Lord our God,
you have sent your Son Jesus Christ
to be for us the way, the truth, and the life.
Grant that these your people
who are asking to be admitted
into the Secular Franciscan Order,
and all of us,
may hear the words of the gospel fully
and may observe them attentively.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

7. Before the first reading these words of exhortation of St. Francis may be read from the *Letter to All the Faithful* (14:2-3):

Let us hear the Word of God
in the spirit of our blessed father Francis
who encourages us:
“In that love which is God,
I beg and implore you to hear these fragrant words
of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and love,
putting them into practice with all gentleness
and observing them perfectly.”

8. First Reading: Rom 6:3-11 “*Let us live a new life*”

9. Responsorial Psalm: Ps 23:1-2,3-4,5-6

R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas,
on the waters he made it firm. *R.*

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things,
who has not sworn so as to deceive his neighbor. *R.*

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob. *R.*

10. Second Reading: Mk 1:12-15 "*Repent, and believe the Good News*"

11. The celebrant gives a brief homily. According to circumstances he can invite the participants to share their reflections on the Word of God.

Rite of Admission

12. One of the candidates in the name of all (or all together) expresses their desire to enter the Secular Franciscan Order. The president (minister) receives their request in the name of the fraternity. This can be done in the form of a dialogue, in these or similar words:

President (Minister):

Would those who are asking to be admitted into the fraternity please come forward, namely, N.N.

Candidates:

We here present ask to enter this fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order,
so that we may live more intensely and faithfully
the grace and dedication of our baptism
by following Jesus Christ
according to the teachings and example of St. Francis of Assisi.

In this way we intend to be of service to all through our secular state of life
for the glory of God and to fulfill his plan of love in behalf of all people.

President (Minister):

This fraternity is pleased to accept your request.
I, therefore, receive you into the Secular Franciscan Order
so that you may begin your time of formation
and experience our Franciscan life.

Priest Celebrant:

The Church and the Franciscan Family
accept and confirm your sincere intention.
May the Lord allow you to persevere in this desire
and to be a leaven of gospel life within the world.

All: Amen. Thanks be to God.

This acclamation can be replaced by a hymn or a suitable gesture, according to local custom.

Presentation of the Gospel and the Rule

13. The president (minister) or the celebrant, according to local custom, presents the Gospel and the Rule to each one, saying:

The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this:
to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi,
who made Christ the inspiration and the centre
of his life with God and with people.
May this too be your way of life.

14. According to local custom, the president (minister) may give the distinctive sign of the Order (the Tau emblem or another one) to each member.

15. The General Intercessions and the Lord's Prayer follow.

16. Then the minister (president) addresses the new members of the fraternity in these or similar words:

N.N., the Secular Franciscan Fraternity of N.N.
very gladly promises to help you in your journey
with friendship, prayer, and the witness of its life.
You, on the other hand, strengthen our fraternity in
numbers,
by virtue of your presence and participation,
and through the sharing of your special gifts.
You are most welcome!

17. The members exchange a sign of peace. Meanwhile a suitable hymn is sung.

Blessing

18. The rite concludes with the Blessing of St. Francis:

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

All: Amen.

May his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

All: Amen.

May he look upon you with kindness, and give you his
peace.

All: Amen.

May the Lord bless you, ± the Father, and the Son, and
the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Chapter Two

Rite of Commitment to the Gospel Life or Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order Within the Mass

19. The rite that is described in this chapter is celebrated during the Mass.

20. The Mass formula to be used may correspond to the liturgy of the day; or, if the rubric permit, the votive Mass of St. Francis or of St. Louis King or St. Elizabeth of Hungary may also be chosen. With regard to the hymns and exhortations during the celebration, the text of Chapter Two of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order should be kept in mind, as well as the biblical texts that support the SFO way of life.

21. The president (minister) of the fraternity receives the profession at a suitable place in the sanctuary. Places for those to be professed are to be arranged in the sanctuary so that the whole liturgical action can be clearly seen by the whole congregation.

22. All that is necessary for celebrating the Eucharist and for the rite of profession is to be adequately prepared beforehand.

Entrance Rite

23. After the people and the fraternity members have assembled, and everything is properly prepared, the entrance hymn of the Mass is sung while the priest proceeds to the altar. Those to be professed arrange themselves in the places designated for them.

24. After the celebrant's greeting, a fraternity member or the priest himself gives an admonition in these or similar words:

We are assembled as a community
to take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice.
In this celebration of the Eucharist
N.N. are going to make their profession
of the gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order.

While giving thanks to the Father through Christ
for all the gifts we have received from him,
we have a special reason for gratitude today:
the gift of his grace, which he has given
to those about to be professed to live in the world
according to the spirit of the Beatitudes
and also the gift of his grace
which he has given to the whole community
by adding new members to the fraternity.

Especially today, after the example of Christ
and in union with his own act of thanksgiving,
we are invited to present ourselves before the Father
as living sacrifices of praise for the life of the world.

25. Mass continues in the usual way. It might be appropriate to amplify the penitential rite in order to highlight the pervading spirit of penance.

Liturgy of the Word

26. Everything is done as usual in the Liturgy of the Word, with the exception that:

- a. the readings can be taken either from the Mass of the day or from the texts offered in Appendix I, part 1;
- b. the Creed may be omitted.

Profession or Commitment to the Gospel Life

Request:

27. After the reading of the Gospel the celebrant and the people sit. Those who are to be professed stand. The president (minister) of the fraternity invites those who are to be professed to present themselves and to express their intention publicly. The candidates can do this either singly, each in one's own words, or else by means of one candidate speaking in the name of all. In this case, the request may be made in these or similar words:

We ask to be admitted to profession
of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.
The experience during our time of formation
has strengthened us in our conviction
that the Lord is calling us
to observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
by following the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

President (Minister):

The fraternity accepts your petition
and is united with you in your prayer.
May the Holy Spirit confirm in you the work he has
begun.

Homily or Talk:

28. Those to be professed are seated, and a homily is given. The biblical readings as well as the commitment to the gospel life and its theological implications are fittingly explained.

Questioning:

29. After the homily those to be professed stand. The celebrant questions them in these or similar words:

Celebrant:

Before this fraternity and the other members of the
People of God gathered here, I ask you to express your
will:

Do you wish to embrace the gospel way of life
by following the example and words of St. Francis of
Assisi,
which is at the heart of the Rule of the Secular
Franciscan Order?

Candidates, replying all together:

Yes, this is what I want.

Celebrant:

You have been called to give witness to the Kingdom of
God
and to build a more fraternal world based on the gospel
together with all people of goodwill.
Do you wish to be faithful to this vocation
and to practice the spirit of service proper to Secular
Franciscans?

Candidates:

Yes, this is what I want.

Celebrant:

You have been made members of the People of God by
your baptism,
and strengthened in confirmation by the new gift of the
Spirit,
in order to proclaim Christ by your life and your words.
Do you wish to bind yourself more closely to the Church
and to work intently to rebuild the ecclesial community
and fulfill its mission among all people?

Candidates:

Yes, this is what I want.

President (Minister)

The local fraternity is a visible sign of the Church,
a community of faith and love.

Together with all the members you now pledge
yourselves
to spend your efforts to make the fraternity
a genuine ecclesial assembly and a living Franciscan
community.

Prayer for Divine Grace:

30. Then the celebrant prays for divine help, saying:

Let us pray.

And in a manner customary to the community all pray in silence
for a while. Then:

Lord, watch over these your servants.
May the Spirit of your love penetrate their hearts,
so that your grace will strengthen them
to keep their commitment to the gospel life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Profession or Commitment to the Gospel Life:

31. After the prayer, two professed members stand beside the president (minister) of the fraternity, acting as special witnesses. Those to be professed approach the president (minister) one at a time and read the formula of profession before him/her:

I, N.N.,
by the grace of God, renew my baptismal promises
and consecrate myself to the service of his kingdom.
Therefore, in my secular state (*or*: as a member of the diocesan
clergy)
I promise to live all the days of my life (*or*: for one year)
the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order
by observing its rule of life.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit,
the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary
and our holy father Saint Francis,
and the fraternal bonds of community always be my
help,
so that I may reach the goal of perfect Christian love.

32. After the formula, the president (minister) adds:

Thanks be to God!
As the president (*or*: minister) I receive you
into this fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order.
Your membership in the fraternity is a cause of great joy
and hope for the members of this community.

33. When all the candidates have made their profession and the president (minister) has accepted it, the celebrant speaks to them in these or similar words:

I confirm your commitment in the name of the Church.
Our Seraphic Father himself encourages you
in the words of his Testament:
“May whoever observes all this
be filled in heaven with the blessing of the most high
Father,
and on earth with that of his beloved Son,
together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
and all the powers of heaven and all the saints.

34. If tradition to the local culture calls for it, suitable emblems of the Secular Franciscan Order can be presented here.

35. When all this is finished, the members present may come forward to congratulate each newly professed with an appropriate sign of peace and goodwill. Meanwhile, a suitable hymn may be sung.

Conclusion of the Rite of Profession:

36. The rite is concluded with the General Intercessions.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

37. While a hymn is sung at the Presentation of the Gifts, some of the newly professed members may appropriately present the bread, wine, and water for the Eucharistic sacrifice.

38. At communion it is fitting that the Eucharist be received under both species.

39. At the end of the Mass, the solemn blessing “throughout the year” may be given. It is placed first in the restored Roman Missal, and it is the Blessing of St. Francis, as found at the end of Chapter One (n. 18).

Chapter Three

Annual Renewal of Profession

40. The president (minister) of the fraternity and two witnesses must be present for the renewal of profession or the commitment to gospel life. It is very appropriate, however, that the whole fraternity takes part in this rite as much as possible.

41. The rite is to be performed within some kind of liturgical celebration and in a very simple way (cf. Preface, n. 20)

42. If the rite is performed within a celebration of the Word of God, the readings may be taken from Appendix I, part 1.

Admonition Before the Rite of Renewal

43. Before the celebrant proceeds to the renewal of profession, he addresses those present in these or similar words:

Moved by the power of the gospel,
we all experience the call always to begin again
and to bring about a continuing inner conversion,
so that we may be conformed to Christ
and with him be given over to the service of the Father
and of our brothers and sisters as well.
In this journey toward an ongoing change of heart,
perseverance is a gift of God.
Let us pray, therefore, that,
as we make progress in loving one another,
we will remain faithful to the end.

All reply to the celebrant's words:

O Lord,
look kindly upon those whom you have called

to the holiness of gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order.

Grant them the grace to fulfill their commitment to the gospel life which they have embraced with spirit and generosity. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Renewal of Commitment

44. Those renewing their commitment to the gospel life may use formula n. 31 above or this one following:

I, N.N.,
renew for one year my commitment
to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,
after the example of St. Francis of Assisi,
according to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Then the celebrant adds in these or similar words:

May whoever observes all this
be filled in heaven with the blessing of the most high
Father,
and on earth with that of his beloved Son,
together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
and all the powers of heaven and all the saints.

All: Amen.

Acceptance of the Renewal of Commitment

45. After the formula, the president (minister) of the fraternity says:

As the president (minister) of the fraternity,
I accept the renewal of your profession.
All our brothers and sisters unite with you
in thanking God for this gift.

Conclusion of the Rite

46. The rite concludes with the General Intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, and the following prayer:

Hear our prayers, o Lord,
and grant that these our brothers and sisters,
who spend their daily lives in the service of others,
may imbue their earthly affairs with a genuine gospel
spirit.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Chapter Four

On the Anniversary of Profession

47. It is a praiseworthy custom to celebrate the twenty-fifth and the fiftieth anniversary of profession in the Secular Franciscan Order. If this jubilee is celebrated within the context of the Eucharist, the Mass corresponding to the liturgy of the day may be said, with the prayers “In Thanksgiving”, according to the rubrics. The Masses mentioned in n. 20 above may also be used.

Admonition after the Homily

48. After the homily, the president (minister) of the fraternity or one of the other members present gives an admonition in these or similar words:

Today with great joy we are celebrating
the twenty-fifth (*and/or*: fiftieth) anniversary
of N.N in the Secular Franciscan Order.
During these years, they have made a sincere effort
“to make present the charism of their seraphic Father
in the life and mission of the Church”
and to build a more fraternal and evangelical world
so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more
effectively.”
Let us, therefore, join in their thanksgiving
and in their commitment to an ongoing change of heart.

Renewal of Commitment

49. The members who are celebrating their jubilee renew their commitment in these or similar words:

We thank you, Lord,

for calling us to the Secular Franciscan Order.

We ask your pardon

for all our shortcomings, weaknesses and transgressions
against our commitment to the gospel life and against the
Rule.

We pray that you will allow us to experience once again
the fervor and readiness of that first day when we
entered the fraternity.

We renew once again our commitment to the gospel life,
according to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order,
until the end of our days.

Grant also that we may live in harmony
with our brothers and sisters,

and may give witness to younger people
of the great gift we received from you:

our Franciscan calling

to “go forth as witnesses and instruments
of the Church’s mission among all people,
proclaiming Christ by our life and words.”

Amen.

50. After the renewal of commitment, the celebrant offers this
prayer:

Lord our Lord, Father of all,
we thank you for the love and goodwill
that you have shown toward your people.

And so we ask you

to help our brothers and sisters, who today celebrate
their anniversaries in the Secular Franciscan Order,
to fulfill their commitment to the gospel life
which they once took upon themselves.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Conclusion of the Rite

51. The rite is concluded with a sign of congratulations shared by all. Meanwhile, the “Canticle of the Creatures” or another suitable hymn is sung.

Part II:

Prayers for Fraternity Meetings

Preface

1. Local fraternity gatherings as well as meetings of regional, national, and international councils are held in the Secular Franciscan Order.
2. The goals of these gatherings and meetings are indicated in the Rule, namely, to promote charity among the members and to foster their Franciscan and ecclesial life⁴.
3. There are different kinds of gatherings within a fraternity: sometimes for prayer, other times for planning work or accomplishing projects, and still other occasions for fraternizing and socializing.
4. The following gatherings of the fraternity are required by statutes:
 - a. a time for getting to know one another as brothers and sisters;
 - b. a time for hearing the Word of God and sharing it⁵;
 - c. a time for study and work (when opportunities arise);
 - d. a time for the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist and The Liturgy of the Hours.
5. In all of these, there is ample room for the creative initiative of the council and members of the fraternities.
6. The prayers given here are taken mainly from the writings of St. Francis.

⁴ SFO RULE, art. 22, 24.

⁵ SFO RULE, art. 5.

Chapter One

Opening and Closing Prayers for Fraternity Meetings

1. The prayers suggested in the following number are given only as a sample.

Opening prayers

2. When the members have gathered together in a suitable place, before any business is taken up, the one chairing the meeting may begin the community prayer in a manner similar to this:

Chairperson:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Chairperson:

Most high, all-powerful, good God,
praise, glory and honor and all blessing are yours.

All:

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
and serve him with great humility.

Chairperson:

Let us pray.

All-powerful, most holy, most high and supreme God,
all good, supreme good, total good, you who alone are
good:

we give you all praise, all glory, all thanks,
all honor, all blessing and every good.

So be it. So be it.

All: Amen.

or:

Let us pray.
Most high, glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of our hearts
and give us right faith, firm hope and perfect charity,
with wisdom and insight, o Lord,
that we may accomplish your holy and true will.

All: Amen.

3. A short reading may follow, from Sacred Scripture (Appendix I, part 1). or from the writings of St. Francis (Appendix I, part 2).

Closing Prayers

4. If it is opportune, there may be a time for spontaneous prayer or for intercessions for the general needs of the Church and the particular needs of the fraternity. Then the chairperson may use the prayer of St. Francis, as follows, or another of his/her own choice.

Chairperson:

Let us pray.
Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God:
grant us in our misery that we do for your sake alone
what we know you want us to do,
and always want what pleases you;
so that, cleansed and enlightened interiorly
and fired with the flame of the Holy Spirit,
we may be able to follow in the footsteps of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
and so make our way to you, Most high,
by your grace alone,
you who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple
Unity,
and are glorified, God all-powerful, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

or:

Let us pray.

Most generous God,

you are the giver of peace and the lover of charity.

Grant to us your people true harmony with your will

and help us to overcome all temptations that could

disturb our peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

5. If a priest is present, he may give St. Francis' Blessing to Brother Leo (cf. Part One, n. 18).

Chapter Two

Celebration of the Fraternity's Chapter of Elections

6. After the invocation of the Holy Spirit and a short reading from the Sacred Scriptures (Appendix I, part 1) or from the writings of St. Francis (Appendix I, part 2), the one presiding at the elections offers this prayer:

Almighty, most high and supreme God, Father,
holy and just, Lord, King of heaven and earth:
we give you thanks for yourself.
Of your own will you created all things spiritual and
physical,
and made us in your own image and likeness,
and gave us a place in paradise,
through your only Son, in the Holy Spirit.
We trust in you and we ask for your light
so that we may choose those
who will properly serve our fraternity through their
leadership.
Help us to select those who are able
to animate and guide us by their example,
their virtues and prudent decisions
so that the gospel of Jesus in the spirit of St. Francis
may come alive in our community.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

7. The elections follow in accordance with the Constitutions. When the election process is finished, those elected give witness to their Franciscan vocation and to their readiness to be of service.

8. After all this is completed, the one presiding at the elections says to those newly elected:

May the God of hope
bring you such joy and peace in your faith
that the power of the Holy Spirit
will remove all bounds to hope (Rom 15:13)

All: Blessed be God forever!

The one presiding continues:

Let us pray for those who have been elected.
Through their service of animating and guiding the
fraternity,
may we all live our faith more deeply,
witness to Christ more bravely,
and work to prepare the kingdom of God.

All join in this prayer:

Most generous Father,
grant, through the dedicated efforts of our new leaders
who have been called to serve our fraternity,
that all of us may know you better, and make you known
to all.
May we live more vigorously the gospel way of life
that you inspired through Francis of Assisi.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chapter Three

The Establishment of a New Fraternity

9. The rite described in this chapter is performed in a suitable place.

10. The one who has the faculty to establish a fraternity canonically presides at the ceremony.

Introduction

11. After a word of welcome and a brief introduction from the president (minister) of the fraternity, article 22 of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order is read:

The local fraternity is to be established canonically.
It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order
and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love.
This should be the privileged place for developing
a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation
and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

12. The one presiding at the establishment of the new fraternity offers the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord our God, as we gather here in your name,
may our lives together in fraternity
help us to experience the presence of your Son our Lord
Jesus Christ, so that our joy in St. Francis may come to fulfillment.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading

13. Then there is a reading from the Bible; Rom 12:4-13 is suggested.

Reading and Signing of the Document of Establishment

14. After the scripture reading, the document of the establishment of the new fraternity is now formally read and signed. Also, the names of the members of the fraternity are recorded, as well as the leaders who constitute the council of the new fraternity.

15. When this is finished, it is appropriate to read a short text from St. Francis' "Letter to All the Faithful".

16. On this occasion some appropriate words can be offered either by the one presiding at the establishment or by a regional or national leader present.

Prayer in Common and Conclusion

17. A prayer can be offered in common after the style of general intercessions, which is concluded with the following prayer:

Our Father, almighty God, source of love and unity:
grant that this new fraternity of the Secular Franciscan
Order,
united and animated by the Holy Spirit,
may be ready to hear your Word and keep it.
May all its members pray together with one mind and
heart.
May they find in the community
the strength and inspiration to bring about a more
fraternal world
and to carry the message of joy and peace to everyone.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

18. It is appropriate to conclude with a hymn to Our Lady.

Appendix

Part One

Optional Texts for the Celebration of the Commitment to the Gospel Life

A. First Reading

1. Gal 6:14-18

"The only thing I can boast about is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Brothers and sisters: The only thing I can boast about...

2. Eph 1:3-10

"He determined that we should become his adopted sons through Jesus Christ."

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

3. Col 3:9-17

"Put on love over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them."

4. 1 Pt 2:9-17

"Always behave honorably among pagans."

Brothers and sisters: you are a chosen race ... (as far as) fear God.

5. Jas 2:12-18

"If good works do not go with faith, it is quite dead."

Brothers and sisters: talk and behave...

6. 1 Cor 12:4-11

"The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose."

Brothers and sisters: there are a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit ...

B. Responsorial Psalm

7. Ps 15:1-2a,5, 7-8,11
R. (5a): O Lord, you are my inheritance.
8. Ps 97:1-4
R. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, for he has made known his salvation.
9. Ps 132
R. Let us love one another, for love is from God.
10. Ps 36:3-4,5-6,30-31
R. The law of the Lord is in the heart of the just.
11. Ps 24:2-5,8-10
R. Make me walk in your truth, o Lord.
12. Ps 91:2-3,6-7,13-14
R. (6a): How great are your works, o Lord!

C. Alleluia and Verse Before the Gospel

13. Phil 1:21
Life to me is Christ, but then death would bring me something more.
14. Mt 11:25
You have hidden these things from the learned and the clever and revealed them to mere children.
15. Col 3:14-15
Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts.
16. Lk 10:1,9
Start off now; tell the towns, "The kingdom of God is very near to you".
17. Jn 15:8
It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.
18. Ps 132:1
How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers live in unity!

D. Gospels

19. Mt. 5:1-12

"How happy are the poor in spirit, the gentle, the merciful."

20. Mt 11:20-30

"You have hidden these things from the learned and the clever and have revealed them to mere children."

At that time: Jesus began to reproach the towns...

21. Mt 12:46-50

"Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother."

At that time: Jesus was still speaking to the crowds.

22. Lk 10:1-9

"Start off now; I am sending you."

At that time: The Lord appointed ...

23. Jn 15:1-8

"It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit."

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine ..."

24. Jn 17:20-26

"May they be one in us, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you."

At that time: Jesus was praying, and he said, "I pray not only for these...

Part Two

Franciscan Readings

25. At fraternity gatherings, especially at the ordinary meetings of the fraternity and at the celebration of the chapter of elections, it is a good idea to have on hand the writings of St. Francis or other writings taken from the early Franciscan sources, in order to provide topics and ideas for the members to reflect upon.

Here only a few of the writings of St. Francis of Assisi are indicated:

- a. “The Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters in Penance”;
- b. “Letter to All the Faithful”;
- c. the “Unconfirmed Rule of 1221”, chapters 22 and 23;
- d. prayers and hymns from the “Office of the Passion”

Part Three

Liturgical Prayer

For the Members of the Secular Franciscan Order

26. According to the SFO Rule (art. 8), the members of the Secular Franciscan Order are to join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of Christ.

27. These prayers may be:

- a. Morning and evening prayer from The Liturgy of the Hours, either in common or in private. These celebrations are to be preferred at the fraternity meeting.
- b. A shortened form of The Liturgy of the Hours according to forms adapted to the local Churches.

- c. The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- d. The office of the Passion written by St. Francis of Assisi
- e. The office of the twelve Our Fathers in one of its many versions that have been enriched with short biblical readings and also adapted to the structure of The Liturgy of the Hours, especially since this form of prayer still thrives in many parts of the world and is a useful way of praying in everyday circumstances.

Indulgences of the Secular Franciscan Order⁶

SACRA PAENITENTIARIA APOSTOLICA SECTIO DE INDULGENTIIS

Prot. 4/72

Holy Father,

The Interobediential General Council⁷ of the Secular Third Order of Saint Francis of Assisi⁸ humbly asks for a revision of the indulgences given by the Holy See to the members of the Secular Third Order, in accordance with the norms of the Apostolic Constitution «*Indulgentiarum doctrina*» of January 1, 1967, n. 14.

And God etc.

January 22, 1972

The Sacred Penitentiary, by virtue of the special and explicit faculties given by the Holy Father, benignly concedes a plenary Indulgence to the members mentioned above, provided they make or renew, at least privately, their promise to observe faithfully the

⁶ These indulgences, still valid today, were granted to the Secular Franciscan Order in 1972, six years before the SFO Rule was approved by Pope Paul VI on June 24, 1978. All footnotes are added by the translator to explain words no longer in common use.

⁷ The predecessor of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO.

⁸ The Secular Franciscan Order.

Statutes of their association⁹, having dutifully fulfilled the usual conditions (confession, communion and prayer to the intention of the Supreme Pontiff):

1. on the day of their admission and of their profession, and at the conclusion of an official visitation;
2. on the feast-days of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Saint Francis of Assisi; Saint Louis, King; Saint Elizabeth; Blessed Luchesius; Saint Clare; Saint Margaret of Cortona and all the Saints of the Three Orders of Saint Francis.

The present decision will be in force immediately and perpetually, without any time limit.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

In name of his Eminency

G. Sessolo, Regent
M. Venturi, Secretary

⁹ In other words: To obtain the plenary indulgence, the members of the SFO should renew their Promise of Evangelical Life (Profession of the SFO Rule) in addition to confession, communion and prayer to the intention of the Pope.

Section 5

*Statutes
of the
International
Fraternity
of the
Secular
Franciscan
Order*

**STATUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL
FRATERNITY**

**OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN
ORDER**

*Approved by the General Chapter on
November 18, 2002*

Rome, 2002

STATUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

INTRODUCTION

The Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) is a public association within the Church (cfr. *GC* 1.5). “It consists of Fraternities at local, regional, national and international levels” (*Rule* 20), co-ordinated among themselves in conformity with the provisions of the Rule and of the General Constitutions.

To promote the life of the International Fraternity and to provide for its organisation and functioning, the Secular Franciscan Order establishes and adopts the present Statutes (cfr. *GC* 6.1; *CIC* 304.1).

THE INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY

Definition and Organisation

Article 1

The International Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (FIOFS):

1. is formed by the organic union of all the Catholic Secular Franciscan Fraternities in the world. It corresponds to the SFO in its entirety. It has its own juridical personality within the Church (cfr. *Rule* 2; *GC* 69.1);
2. is organised and functions in conformity with the Rule, the General Constitutions, the Ritual and the present Statutes (cfr. *GC* 69.1);
3. is guided and animated by the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS), its Presidency and

Statutes of the International Fraternity

the General Minister (or International President), who ensure the observance and fulfilment of the Rule, the General Constitutions and the Ritual (cfr. *GC* 69.2; 92.2);

4. has its seat in Rome, Italy, and its official title is **ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS**;
5. has four official languages for communication and correspondence: English, French, Italian and Spanish.

Governing Bodies of the International Fraternity

Article 2

The governing bodies of the International Fraternity of the SFO are:

- the International Council (CIOFS);
- the CIOFS Presidency;
- the Minister General.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Composition

Article 3

The International Council (cfr. *GC*. Art. 70.1) consists of:

- International Councillors elected by the National Fraternities;
- secular members of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO;
- representatives of the Franciscan Youth;
- the four General Assistants of the SFO.

Statutes of the International Fraternity

International Councillors representing National Fraternities

Article 4

1. Every National Fraternity, formally constituted by the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO, has the right to one representative on the International Council (cfr. *GC* 66.2.g).
2. For emerging National Fraternities, representation in the International Council of the SFO can be assured, with the approval of the Presidency, through:
 - a. the International Councillor of a nearby National Fraternity; or
 - b. constitution of a group of National Fraternities that present similar situations and characteristics. The group of National Fraternities will have the right to one International Councillor. To assure an equitable representation in the International Council of the SFO, the National Fraternities concerned will also propose to the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO the method of rotation or of alternation among themselves.

Article 5

1. The representative of the National Fraternity, to which Art. 4.1 of the present Statutes refers, may be, in conformity with his or her National Statutes, the National Minister or an International Councillor elected for the purpose, who will become a member of the National Council. He or she is elected by the National Chapter in conformity with the General Constitutions, the present Statutes and the respective National Statutes.
2. The National Chapters will elect a substitute for the International Councillor in conformity with the same regulations.

Statutes of the International Fraternity

3. For the election of the International Councillors to which Article 4.2.b of the present Statutes refers, the procedure will be by means of a proposal to which all the National Fraternities concerned have agreed. When the Fraternities concerned meet difficulties in arriving at an agreement, the Presidency will designate the Councillor from among the nominees proposed, and will give notice of the designation to the Councils concerned.
4. The term of office of the International Councillors and their substitutes is three years. They may be re-elected for consecutive periods according to the regulations of the General Constitutions, Art. 79.3.

International Councillors Representing Franciscan Youth

Article 6

The Presidency of the International Council of the SFO, after consulting the National Councils of the SFO and of the Franciscan Youth, will determine the number, maximum six, and the method of election of the International Councillors representing the Franciscan Youth (*GC* 97.5).

Duties of International Councillors

Article 7

1. The duties of the International Councillors of the SFO are (cfr. *GC* 75):
 - a. to participate in the General Chapter;
 - b. to speak during the General Chapter in the name of the National Fraternity that they represent, and to

Statutes of the International Fraternity

- present what has been entrusted to them by decision of their respective National Council;
- c. to present to the General Chapter, in the manner established by the Presidency, the report prepared and approved by the respective National Council, including updated statistical data;
 - d. to inform their National Fraternity of the decisions made and the initiatives undertaken by the General Chapter;
 - e. to maintain frequent and regular contacts of communication and dialogue with the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO, with the Minister General, with the Secretariat and with their respective National Council.
2. With the proper adaptations, the duties described apply to the International Councillors representing emerging national Fraternities or Franciscan Youth Fraternities. Together with the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO, they shall contribute to the development and consolidation of the Fraternities they represent.

Vacancy and Removal Provisions

Article 8

1. When the office of the International Councillor remains vacant due to death, renunciation, or another impediment of a definitive character, the person elected as substitute (*Art. 5.2 of the present Statutes*) takes up the duty until the end of the mandate for which the Councillor was elected. The National Council concerned informs the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO and elects a new substitute within six months.
2. The request to renounce the office of International Councillor must be presented in writing to the National Council concerned, which has the competency to accept the request.

Statutes of the International Fraternity

3. The removal of an International Councillor, negligent in his or her duties in a continual form or manner, is the competency of the National Council to which the Councillor belongs and is expressed by a secret ballot after a fraternal dialogue with the person concerned (cfr. *GC* 84.3). In the case of inertness of the National Council, the regulations of the General Constitutions, Art. 84.6 apply.

Meetings of the International Council

Article 9

The International Council, meeting in Assembly, constitutes the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order (cfr. *GC* 70.3). Members of the General Chapter with full rights are those indicated under Art. 3 of the present Statutes. In the case of an elective chapter, both the outgoing and the incoming Presidency are members.

The General Chapter

Article 10

1. The General Chapter :
 - a. is the highest governing organ of the SFO, with legislative, deliberative and elective powers (cfr. *GC* 70.3);
 - b. is convoked by the Minister General, with the consent of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO. The convocation is made preferably with six months' notice and, in any case, not less than three months, and by means of communication in the official languages of the International Council (cfr. *GC* 74.2.b);

Statutes of the International Fraternity

- c. meets as an elective General Chapter once every six years (cfr. *GC* 70.4) to elect the Minister General and the secular members of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO;
 - d. meets in plenary at least once between two elective General Chapters;
 - e. gives orientations for the development of the life of the SFO;
 - f. has the competency to give a practical interpretation of the General Constitutions (cfr. *GC* 5.2);
 - g. clarifies and resolves the questions and/or problems that are submitted to it;
 - h. comments on the report of the Minister General;
 - i. comments on the financial report, and on the verification of the financial and patrimonial management of the Presidency;
 - j. approves a three-year budget for the International Fraternity and the Presidency, in which the projected costs and the “pro capite” quota for the annual financial contribution are fixed.
2. Observers and experts with a consultative function may be invited to the General Chapter, at the discretion of the Presidency.
 3. The General Chapter will be carried out in conformity with its own Regulations.
 4. The deliberations, agreements and decisions made by the General Chapter must be approved by the absolute majority, i.e. more than half of those present (cfr. *CIC* 119), except for cases in which a qualified majority, i.e. two thirds of those present, is required.
 5. The proposals voted as suggestions or “desiderata”, that require further reflection by the Presidency or by appropriate study Commissions appointed by the Presidency, have only an indicative character.

Statutes of the International Fraternity

THE PRESIDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SFO

Composition of Presidency

Article 11

1. The Presidency is composed of (cfr. *GC* 72.1):
 - the Minister General;
 - the Vice-Minister;
 - seven Presidency Councillors;
 - a member of the Franciscan Youth;
 - the four General Assistants of the SFO.
2. Every elective General Chapter determines the areas to be represented, based on linguistic, cultural and geographical criteria (cfr. *GC* 72.2).

Election of the Presidency

Article 12

1. The General Chapter of the SFO elects the secular members of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO according to the norms of the General Constitutions and of the present Statutes.
2. For their election, the following characteristics must be considered (cfr. *GC* 77.3):
 - a. the competency and the readiness to deal with the affairs of the Order at the international level;
 - b. the knowledge of one of the four official languages of the SFO, in addition to their own when it is not one of the official languages of the International Fraternity.
3. The Presidency members will be elected by absolute majority in the first two ballots and, in the eventuality of a third ballot, between the two candidates who had obtained the largest number of votes (cfr. *GC* 78).
4. The Minister General, the Vice Minister and the Presi-

Statutes of the International Fraternity

dency Councillors may be elected only for two consecutive six-year periods (cfr. *GC* 79.4).

5. If the Minister General elected is not present at the Chapter, he or she must be called urgently to be present. If he or she cannot come, his or her acceptance will be requested by the most efficient and reliable means. When the Chapter has received the acceptance, it continues under the presidency of the Vice-Minister or, in his or her absence, of the Presidency Councillor who is older by profession in the SFO.
6. The term of office for the Presidency Councillors is six years. Their office is incompatible with the office of National Minister or International Councillor.

Duties of the Presidency

Article 13

1. In addition to the duties described under Article 73 of the General Constitutions, the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO is responsible:
 - a. to clarify specific points of the General Constitutions with validity until the next General Chapter (cfr. *GC* 5.3);
 - b. to identify the criteria for achieving adequate formation and preparation of leaders and formators; to collaborate in identifying the criteria for the formation and preparation of the spiritual assistants;
 - c. to ensure that the proper rights of the International Fraternity are guaranteed in the civil forum;
 - d. to give consent to the Minister General for the convocation of the General Chapter (cfr. *GC* 74.2.b);
 - e. to support emerging Fraternities (cfr. *GC* 46.3), taking care of their establishment, growth and maturation, normally through the particular Councillor of the Presidency concerned;

Statutes of the International Fraternity

- f. to approve the establishment of new National Fraternities (cfr. *GC* 65.2);
- g. to approve National Statutes (cfr. *GC* 6.2);
- h. to decide on the fraternal visit to the National Fraternities, even if not requested, when required by circumstances (cfr. *GC* 92.3);
- i-j. to examine and decide on all the disputes that may arise within the Fraternities at the various levels, always provided that they have been defined by the Councils of the lower levels. The decision on the matter treated may be contested only before the Holy See (cfr. *GC* 59; 84.4);
- k. to decide, in addition to the powers of the Minister General, on the concession of powers of legal representation, which it may consider to be opportune, to the Presidency Councillors;
- l. to decide on the destination of available funds and, in general, on the financial affairs of the International Fraternity;
- m. to set up commissions as necessary for the achievement of the aims and objectives established by the General Chapter and to assign specific duties to individual Councillors;
- n. to guarantee and approve the adequate translation of the official documents of the SFO;
- o. to request suitable and prepared General Assistants from the respective Ministers General of the First Order and the TOR, who have the competency to appoint them (cfr. *GC* 91.2.a);
- p. to confirm the election of the International Councillors as provided for in Articles 4.2.b and 6 of the present Statutes.
- q. to appoint the General Secretary and the General Treasurer;
- r. to distribute the responsibilities of communication among the Presidency Councillors and the International

Statutes of the International Fraternity

Councils included in the respective areas of responsibility.

2. The Presidency entrusts one of its members with the duty to closely follow up the field of justice, peace and care for creation, the ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue and all those situations which require immediate intervention.
3. To facilitate the duties of the Minister General, the Presidency may designate one of its members to closely follow up the activity of the Secretariat in order to identify the current activities and those requiring immediate notification to the Minister General. This Councillor may be delegated by the Minister General to keep up ordinary contacts with the General Curias of the First Order and TOR, with the ecclesial bodies and the civil authorities in Rome, keeping the Minister General continuously updated and following his or her directives.

Duties of the Presidency Councillors

Article 14

1. The duties of the Presidency Councillors are:
 - a. to share, in a spirit of collegiality, the responsibility of the Minister General in the tasks of animation, guidance and co-ordination of the entire Order (cfr. *GC* 73.b);
 - b. to participate in the meetings of the Presidency and in the General Chapter;
 - c. to exercise the functions that are entrusted to them by the Presidency;
 - d. to maintain continual communication with the International Councillors and with the National Councils of their respective areas of responsibility;
 - e. to foster international contacts in the area of their responsibility.

Statutes of the International Fraternity

2. The Presidency may entrust the task of helping in the animation of the National Fraternities to the Councillor of the area, if necessary.
3. The Presidency may entrust to one of the Presidency Councillors the co-ordination of possible Congresses, meetings, etc. among the National Fraternities of the respective area, collaborating actively in their organisation.
4. With proper adaptations, the duties described apply to the Presidency Councillor representing the Franciscan Youth.

Meetings of the Presidency

Article 15

1. The Presidency meets at least once each year or when at least a third of the members requests it.
2. For the validity of the resolutions of the Presidency, the presence of at least two-thirds of its members is required.
3. International Councillors, consultants and observers may be invited to the meetings of the Presidency for the purpose of consultation and providing information.
4. The General Secretary and the Treasurer participate in the meetings of the Presidency, without a deliberative vote, as far as needed to carry out their duties.

Vacancy and Removal Provisions

Article 16

1. When the office of Minister General becomes vacant through an impediment of a definitive character, the Vice-Minister assumes the office until the end of the period for which the Minister was elected (cfr. *GC* 81.1).

Statutes of the International Fraternity

2. To fill the office of Vice-Minister, the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO elects a person from among its own members, with validity until the next elective General Chapter (cfr. *GC* 81.2).
3. When the office of a Councillor of the Presidency becomes vacant, the Presidency elects one of the International Councillors of the same area, with validity until the next elective General Chapter (cfr. *GC* 81.3).
4. In the case of grave negligence on the part of a Presidency Councillor, the Minister General will establish a fraternal dialogue with the person concerned and, if necessary, propose the removal with the consent of the Presidency, expressed by a secret ballot. (cfr. *GC* 84.3).
5. If the negligence is on the part of the Minister General, the Councillors of the Presidency will manifest their concerns in a fraternal dialogue with him or her. If this dialogue does not produce a positive result, the Presidency Councillors will request the intervention of the Conference of Ministers General of the First Order and of the TOR, through a pastoral visit, and, if necessary, they will propose the removal of the Minister General (cfr. *GC* 84.1 and 5).

THE MINISTER GENERAL AND VICE-MINISTER GENERAL

Duties of the Minister General

Article 17

1. The Minister General of the SFO is the visible and effective sign of the unity and communion within the Secular Franciscan Order.

Statutes of the International Fraternity

2. In addition to the duties described under Article 74.2 of the General Constitutions, the Minister General is responsible:
 - a. to represent the SFO before the Holy See, excepting that which is foreseen in the General Constitutions under Article 87.2;
 - b. to ensure that tasks entrusted to the Presidency Councillors are carried out;
 - c. to entrust to the Secretariat the powers necessary for carrying out the resolutions of the Presidency and of the General Chapter within the limits of the responsibilities proper to the Secretariat;
 - d. to present to the General Chapter a report on the situation of the Order at the world level, a report on the activity of the International Council of the SFO and of the Presidency and the state of the financial accounts.

Duties of the Vice-Minister General

Article 18

The duties of the Vice-Minister General are:

- a. to collaborate with the Minister in a fraternal spirit and to support the Minister in carrying out his or her service;
- b. to exercise the functions that are entrusted to him or her by the Chapter and/or the Presidency;
- c. to substitute the Minister in his or her competencies and responsibilities in the case of absence or temporary impediment;
- d. to assume the office of Minister General when the office remains vacant (cfr. *GC* 81.1).

SECRETARY AND SECRETARIAT

Article 19

1. The International Council has its own Secretariat. Its structure and seat in Rome are established by the Presidency, taking into account its operative requirements.
2. The Secretariat will be entrusted to the care of the General Secretary. The ordinary administrative functions are carried out within it under the direction of the Minister General and/or the designated Presidency Councillor. The Acts of the General Chapters and of the meetings of the Presidency, the documents and the archives of the Secular Franciscan Order are preserved there.
3. The General Secretary is a professed Secular Franciscan, not a member of the International Council, appointed by the Presidency with the following responsibilities:
 - a. to ensure constant connection between the Secretariat, the Minister General and the members of the Presidency, using the quickest means of communication (telephone, fax, electronic mail, etc.);
 - b. to compile the acts of the meetings of the Presidency and send them to their respective recipients;
 - c. to keep the archives of the Order up to date;
 - d. to communicate important events to the National Fraternities and to the ecclesial and/or social areas;
 - e. to fulfil all the other tasks entrusted to him or her.
4. After consulting the Minister General, the General Secretary may choose from among the members of the Secular Franciscan Order some volunteers to help him or her in the task. When necessary, he or she may ask the Presidency to take in one or more technicians.
5. The General Secretary is entitled to a fixed expense reimbursement established by the Presidency.

TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMISSION

Article 20

1. For the financial and patrimonial management of the International Fraternity, the Presidency of the International Council will appoint a Treasurer and establish a Finance Commission, of which the Treasurer is a member by right.
2. The Treasurer is a professed Secular Franciscan, professionally qualified, not a member of the International Council of the SFO. He or she is appointed by the Presidency with the following responsibilities:
 - a. to administrate the general fund of the International Council of the SFO under the direction of the Presidency;
 - b. to work through a bank account and to sign the cheques or orders of payment jointly with the Minister General or another secular member of the Presidency designated for that purpose;
 - c. to ask, with the collaboration of the General Secretary, for the annual contributions from the National Councils;
 - d. to present every year, in the first meeting of the Presidency, the report of receipts and expenses of the preceding financial period;
 - e. to prepare for the General Chapter a three-year report of receipts and expenses;
 - f. to ask the Presidency to take in one or more technicians to help with accountancy when he or she considers it to be necessary.
3. The Presidency will take the opportune initiatives to insure the Treasurer against the risks connected with the

Statutes of the International Fraternity

management of the funds of the International Council of the SFO.

4. The Treasurer is entitled to a fixed expense reimbursement established by the Presidency.

Article 21

1. The Finance Commission will be responsible:
 - a. to prepare a three-year budget, that must be approved by the General Chapter;
 - b. to compare the annual financial statement with the budget, to point out any differences to the Presidency and to propose practicable solutions;
 - c. to verify, together with the accountant appointed by the Minister General, the financial and patrimonial situation of the International Fraternity that he or she has prepared, in order to illustrate the results at the General Chapter (cfr. *GC* 74.2.m)

Financial Contributions

Article 22

1. In order to provide for the necessities of the International Fraternity, the National Councils and the Fraternities of the SFO will have to take into account and carry out what is foreseen for under Article 25 of the Rule and Article 30 of the General Constitutions.
2. To cover the expenses of the functioning of the Presidency and of the Secretariat, a minimum “pro capite” annual contribution will have to be paid to the Treasury of the International Council of the SFO within the first six months of the calendar year, without excluding other contributions according to the possibilities of each National Council and according to the principle of the sharing of goods.

Statutes of the International Fraternity

3. The Presidency of the International Council of the SFO will promote the creation of solidarity funds which it will administer to subsidise specific and/or urgent necessities of the National Fraternities.

FRATERNAL AND PASTORAL VISITS

Article 23

1. The fraternal and pastoral visits will be carried out according to the spirit of the Rule, the dispositions of the General Constitutions (Art. 87.2; 94; 95) the present Statutes and the Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the SFO.
2. For a better development of the visits, whether fraternal or pastoral, the Visitors will prepare beforehand, taking care:
 - a. to obtain from the Secretariat reports on the previous visits and any other important information;
 - b. to communicate to the Councils concerned the program and the purpose of the visit;
 - c. to ask the Councils of the National Fraternities for an updated report on the situation of their Fraternity;
 - d. to be open to the suggestions of the Fraternity concerned.
3. Normally within two months following the visit, the Visitor will compile a report of the visit, with his or her recommendations, addressing it to the Council concerned and to the Presidency. If not jointly compiled, these reports must be exchanged between the fraternal and pastoral Visitors and are preserved in the archives of the General Secretariat.
4. The Visitor may not make decisions about matters that require collegial deliberations of the Presidency, according to the norms of the General Constitutions and of the

Statutes of the International Fraternity

present Statutes. In such a case, he or she will inform the Presidency, and the visit, if necessary, will remain open.

5. The Presidency, after an adequate lapse of time, will ask the Council visited for information on the deliberations and on the decisions made as a consequence of the visit.

COMING INTO FORCE AND AMENDMENTS OF THE STATUTES

Article 24

1. The Statutes of the International Fraternity come into force when approved by the General Chapter (cfr. *GC* 6.1).
2. The Statutes of the International Fraternity may be amended by the General Chapter at the proposal of the Presidency or of one third of the members of the Chapter.

Section 6

*Statutes
for
Spiritual
and
Pastoral
Assistance
to the
Secular
Franciscan
Order*

STATUTES FOR SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL ASSISTANCE TO THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Rome, 2002

CONFERENCE OF GENERAL MINISTERS OF THE FRANCISCAN FIRST ORDER AND THE TOR

Rome, March 28, 2002

Dear Br. Valentín,

In a letter of last February 13, in the name of the Conference of General Assistants of the Secular Franciscan Order, you sent us the *Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order*, revised after a careful and thorough study and based on the General Constitutions of the SFO, definitively approved on December 8, 2000 by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

It is my pleasure to inform you that our Conference of General Ministers of the First Order and the TOR, at its meeting of March 25, 2002, **approved these Statutes** which, by the act of approval, enter immediately into force, substituting the preceding ones approved in 1992.

The general Ministers entrust to the Conference of General Assistants the task making these new Statutes known to all

brothers of the Franciscan First Order and the TOR and to foster its understanding and study. This instrument can thus serve as a basis for our fraternal service to the SFO and guide us all in our relations with the SFO according to our own vocation and the specific nature of the SFO itself.

On this occasion, also in name of the other general Ministers, I thank you and the other general Assistants of the SFO for your generous and constant service.

Wishing you and the other Assistants a Happy Easter,

Your Brother,

Fr. Joachim Giermek OFMConv
General Minister
President

C.c.: Emanuela De Nunzio

Fr. VALENTÍN REDONDO, OFMConv.
President of the Conference of General Assistants
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STATUTES FOR SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL ASSISTANCE TO THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Title I: General Principles

Art. 1

1. The spiritual and pastoral care of the SFO, in virtue of its belonging to the same spiritual family, is entrusted by the Church to the Franciscan First Order and the TOR, to whom the Secular Fraternity has been united for centuries ^[1].
2. Religious and Secular Franciscans in fact, in various ways and forms but in life-giving union with each other, aim to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church and of society ^[2].
3. Therefore, as a concrete sign of communion and co-responsibility, religious superiors must assure spiritual assistance to all the fraternities of the SFO ^[3].

Art. 2

1. The spiritual and pastoral care is provided as a two-fold service:
 - the fraternal office of the *altius moderamen* on the part of the major Superiors ^[4];
 - spiritual assistance to the fraternities and their Councils.
2. The purpose of the *altius moderamen* is to guarantee the

fidelity of the SFO to the Franciscan charism, communion with the Church and union with the Franciscan family ^[5] .

3. The purpose of spiritual assistance is to foster communion with the Church and with the Franciscan Family through witness and sharing of Franciscan spirituality, to cooperate in initial and on-going formation of secular Franciscans and to express the fraternal affection of the religious towards the SFO ^[6] .

Art. 3

1. This two-fold service completes but does not substitute for the secular councils and ministers whose responsibility it is to guide, coordinate, and animate the fraternities at the various levels ^[7] .

2. It is exercised according to these present Statutes, common to the four religious Orders (OFM, OFMConv, OFMCap, TOR) and must be performed collegially at all levels above the local level ^[8] .

Art. 4

1. The purpose of the present Statutes is to define, in a unified and concrete way, the service of the spiritual and pastoral care of the SFO, taking into account the unity of that same Order.

2. These Statutes are approved by the Conference of General Ministers. The Conference has the right of modification and authentic interpretation.

3. Those provisions which do not agree with the present Statutes are abrogated.

Title II: The Role of the Major Superiors

a. General Principles

Art. 5

1. The spiritual and pastoral care of the SFO, entrusted by the Church to the Franciscan First Order and the TOR, is the duty above all of their general and provincial ministers ^[9].

2. They exercise their office through:

- the establishment of local fraternities;
- pastoral visits;
- spiritual assistance.

They may exercise this office personally or through a delegate ^[10].

3. The Franciscan major Superiors remain responsible for the quality of spiritual assistance and pastoral care, even in those cases where previous approval from a religious Superior or from the local Ordinary is needed to appoint the Assistant ^[11].

4. They should also foster the formation and the interest of their own religious in the SFO and ensure a specific preparation for the Assistants so that they will be suitable and well-prepared ^[12].

Art. 6

1. The canonical establishment of new fraternities is done at the request of the secular Franciscans concerned and with the prior consultation and collaboration of the SFO council at the higher level, to which the new fraternity will be related according to the national statutes. The written consent of the local Ordinary is necessary for the canonical establishment

of a fraternity outside the houses or churches of the Franciscan religious of the First Order or the TOR ^[13] .

2. Any transfer of a local fraternity to the pastoral care of another religious Franciscan Order is done according to the procedures established by the national statutes of the SFO ^[14] .

3. The pastoral visit is a privileged moment of communion of the First Order and the TOR with the SFO. It is carried out also in the name of the Church and serves to guarantee fidelity to the Franciscan charism and to foster communion with the Church and with the Franciscan Family ^[15] .

Art. 7

1. The major superiors of the First Order and the TOR are to establish together the most adequate means to guarantee spiritual assistance to local fraternities which, because of causes beyond their control, could remain without such assistance ^[16] .

2. They also take care to keep in touch with local Ordinaries who have erected local fraternities of the SFO in accordance with its specific legislation, taking upon themselves the responsibility for their spiritual assistance and pastoral care or entrusting it to one of their priests or to a religious Institute.

b. The General Ministers

Art. 8

1. The general Ministers exercise collegially the *altius moderamen* and the pastoral assistance in regard to the SFO as a whole ^[17] .

2. It belongs specifically to the Conference of General Ministers of the First Order and the TOR:

- to conduct relations with the Holy See concerning legislative or liturgical texts requiring the approval of the Holy See;
- to visit the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO [\[18\]](#) ;
- to preside over and to confirm the election of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO [\[19\]](#) ;
- if the case arises, to accept the resignation of the general Minister of the SFO [\[20\]](#) .

Art. 9

1. The general Ministers exercise their office towards the SFO in accordance with the universal law of the Church, with their own Constitutions and with full respect for the specific laws of the SFO. They have the faculty to establish, visit, and meet the local SFO fraternities which are assisted by their own Order.
2. In relation to his own Order, it is the responsibility of each general Minister:
 - to appoint the general Assistant of the SFO, who, under the authority of the general Minister, looks after all things regarding service to the SFO [\[21\]](#) ;
 - if needed, to confirm or to appoint the national Assistants belonging to his own Order.

c. Provincial Ministers

Art. 10

1. The provincial Ministers and the other major Superiors exercise their responsibilities towards the SFO in the territory of their own jurisdiction.
2. Where more than one major Superior have jurisdiction in the same territory, they are to establish together the most

adequate means for carrying out collegially their mission with respect to the regional and national fraternities of the SFO ^[22] .

3. They are likewise to jointly draw up procedures for the appointment of the national and regional Assistants and also to establish from which Superiors the national and regional Councils of the SFO should request an Assistant ^[23] .

Art. 11

1. The provincial Ministers and the other major superiors assure spiritual assistance to the local fraternities entrusted to their own jurisdiction ^[24] .

2. It is their specific competence, in the name of their jurisdiction:

- to canonically establish new local fraternities and to guarantee them spiritual assistance;
- to animate spiritually, to visit, and to meet the local fraternities assisted by their own Order;
- to keep themselves informed about the spiritual assistance given to the SFO and the Franciscan Youth ^[25] ;
- to appoint the spiritual Assistants ^[26] .

Title III: The Role of the Spiritual Assistants

a. General principles

Art. 12

1. The spiritual assistant is the person designated by the competent major superior to carry out this service for a specific fraternity of the SFO and of the Franciscan Youth ^[27] .

2. In order to be a witness of Franciscan spirituality and of the fraternal affection of the religious towards the secular Franciscans, and to be a bond of communion between his Order and the SFO, the spiritual assistant should preferably be a Franciscan religious, a member of the First Order or the TOR ^[28] .

3. The spiritual assistant is by right a voting member of the council and of the chapter of the fraternity to which he or she gives assistance and collaborates with it in all activities. Only in economic matters and in elections at any level does he or she not enjoy the right to vote ^[29] .

Art. 13

1. The principal task of the assistant is to foster a deeper insight into Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the secular Franciscans ^[30] .

2. In the Council of the fraternity and in elective and ordinary Chapters the assistant will be respectful of the responsibilities and role of the secular Franciscans, giving them priority with regard to the guidance, co-ordination, and animation of the fraternity.

3. The assistant participates actively and votes in the discussions and decisions taken by the Council or by the Chapter. He or she is specifically responsible for the animation of liturgical celebrations and spiritual reflections during the meetings of the Council or of the Chapter.

Art. 14

1. The pastoral visit is a privileged moment of communion of the First Order and the TOR with the SFO. It is carried out also in the name of the Church and serves to revive the evangelical Franciscan spirit, to assure fidelity to the charism

and to the Rule, to offer help to fraternity life, to reinforce the bond of the unity of the SFO, and to promote its most effective insertion into the Franciscan family and the Church^[31] .

2. The visitor strengthens the fraternity in its presence and mission in the Church and in society; verifies the relation between the secular and religious fraternities; gives special attention to programs, methods, and experiences of formation; gives attention to the collaboration and sense of co-responsibility among the secular leaders and the spiritual assistants; examines the quality of the spiritual assistance given to the visited fraternity; encourages the spiritual assistants in their service and promotes their continuing spiritual and pastoral formation^[32] .

3. At the request of the respective Council, a delegate of the Conference of Assistants carries out the pastoral visit, fully respectful of the SFO's own organization and law^[33] . For urgent and serious reasons or in case of failure on the part of the minister or the council to request it, the pastoral visit may be carried out upon the initiative of the conference of spiritual assistants, having consulted the Council of the SFO of the same level^[34] .

4. It is recommended that the pastoral and fraternal visits be carried out together, with agreement beforehand on the program. The visitor or the visitors will in good time communicate the object and the program of the visit to the council concerned. They will examine the registers and the records, including those relating to previous visits, to the election of the council and to the administration of goods. They will draw up a report of the visit they have conducted, appending it to the records in the appropriate register of the fraternity visited, and will inform the council of the level which has conducted the visit^[35] .

5. In the visit to the local fraternity, the visitor or visitors will meet with the entire fraternity and with the groups and sections into which it is divided. They will give special attention to the brothers and sisters in formation and to those brothers and sisters who may request a personal meeting. Where required, they will proceed to the fraternal correction of the shortcomings possibly encountered [\[36\]](#) .

Art. 15

1. The Assistant is appointed by the competent major Superior, after consultation with the council of the fraternity concerned [\[37\]](#) .
2. Where more than one major Superior is involved in the appointment of an Assistant, the norms established jointly by the Superiors with jurisdiction in the territory should be followed [\[38\]](#) .
3. The appointment of the Assistant is made in writing and for a limited time, which accumulated cannot be more than twelve years.
4. When it is not possible to give the fraternity a spiritual Assistant who is a member of the First Order or the TOR, the competent major Superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to:
 - religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institutes;
 - secular Franciscans, cleric or lay, specially prepared for such service;
 - other diocesan clerics or non-Franciscan religious [\[39\]](#) .

Art. 16

1. At the international, national, and regional level, the Assistants, if there are more than one, form a Conference and give their service collegially to the SFO and to the Franciscan Youth [\[40\]](#) .

2. Each Conference of Assistants functions according to its own internal by-laws.
3. The national and regional Statutes of the SFO establish the number of Assistants who are members of the national or regional Council.

b. General Assistants

Art. 17

1. The general Assistants are appointed by their respective general Minister, after consultation with the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO ^[41].
2. They give their service to the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO, form a conference, and collegially see to the spiritual assistance to the SFO as a whole ^[42].
3. It is the responsibility of the Conference of general Assistants:
 - to collaborate with the international Council and its Presidency in the spiritual and apostolic animation of the SFO and in a special way in the formation of the secular leaders;
 - to co-ordinate, at the international level, the spiritual assistance to the SFO and the Franciscan Youth;
 - to foster the interest of the friars and their Superiors in the SFO and in the Franciscan Youth;
 - to provide for the pastoral visits of the national Councils of the SFO ^[43] and the presence at the national elective Chapters ^[44].

Art. 18

1. The general Assistant must keep his general Minister and his Order informed on the life and activities of the SFO and the Franciscan Youth.
2. He shall also deal with matters regarding the service of assistance given by his Order to the SFO and to the Franciscan Youth, meet the local fraternities assisted by his own Order and keep constant fraternal contacts with the assistants of his own Order.

c. National Assistants

Art. 19

1. The national Assistants of the SFO and the Franciscan Youth are appointed by the competent major Superior, after consultation with the respective national council ^[45]. Where more than one major Superior is involved in the appointment, the norms established together by the Superiors with jurisdiction in the national territory shall be followed ^[46].
2. They give their service to the national council and see to the spiritual assistance to the national fraternity. If they are more than one, they form a Conference and render their service collegially ^[47].
3. It is the responsibility of the Conference of national Assistants, or to the national Assistant if there is only one:
 - to collaborate with the national Council in the task of spiritual and apostolic animation of the secular Franciscans in the life of the Church and the society of the country, and in a special way in the formation of the leaders;
 - to provide for the pastoral visits of the regional Councils of the SFO ^[48] and to ensure a presence at the regional elective Chapters ^[49] ;
 - to coordinate, at the national level, the service of spiritual

assistance, the formation of the assistants, and the fraternal union among them;

-- to foster the interest of the friars in the SFO and in the Franciscan Youth.

Art. 20

1. The national Assistant must keep the major Superiors and his Order informed on the life and activities of the SFO and the Franciscan Youth in the country.

2. He shall also deal with matters regarding the service of assistance given by his Order to the SFO and to the Franciscan Youth, meet the local fraternities assisted by his own Order and keep fraternal and constant contacts with the regional and local assistants of his own Order.

d. Regional Assistants

Art. 21

1. The regional Assistants to the SFO and the Franciscan Youth are appointed by the competent major Superior, after consultation with the respective regional council ^[50]. Where more than one major Superior is involved in the appointment, the norms established jointly by the Superiors with jurisdiction in the territory of the regional fraternity shall be followed ^[51].

2. They give their service to the regional council and see to the spiritual assistance to the regional fraternity. If they are more than one, they form a conference and render their service collegially ^[52].

3. It is the responsibility of the Conference of regional Assistants, or to the regional Assistant if there is only one: -- to collaborate with the regional Council in the task of spiritual and apostolic animation of the secular Franciscans

in the life of the Church and of society in the region, and in a special way in the formation of the leaders;

-- to provide for the pastoral visits of the local Councils of the SFO ^[53] and to ensure a presence at the local elective Chapters ^[54] ;

-- to coordinate, at the regional level, the service of spiritual assistance, the formation of the Assistants and the fraternal union among them;

-- to foster the interest of the friars in the SFO and in the Franciscan Youth.

Art. 22

1. The regional Assistant must keep the major Superiors and his Order informed on the life and activities of the SFO and of the Franciscan Youth in the region.

2. He shall also deal with matters regarding the service of assistance given by his Order to the SFO and the Franciscan Youth, meet the local fraternities assisted by his own Order in the region and keep constant fraternal contacts with the local assistants of his own Order.

e. Local Assistants

Art. 23

1. The local Assistant is appointed by the competent major Superior, according to the law of his own Order, having heard the council of the fraternity concerned ^[55] .

2. The local assistant fosters communion within the fraternity and between the fraternity and the First Order or the TOR. In harmony with the local Guardian or Superior, the assistant sees to it that between the religious and the secular fraternities a real life-giving union with each other exists. He or she fosters the active presence of the fraternity in the Church and in society.

Art. 24

1. The local Assistant, together with the Council of the fraternity, is responsible for the formation of the candidates [\[56\]](#) and expresses his or her assessment of each of the candidates before profession [\[57\]](#) .

2. Together with the Minister, the assistant discusses with the brothers or sisters in difficulty, who want to retire from the fraternity or who act in serious opposition to the Rule [\[58\]](#) .

1. See *SFO Const* 85.1: “From Franciscan history and from the Constitutions of the First Order and the TOR, it is clearly evident that these Orders recognize that they are committed to the spiritual and pastoral assistance of the SFO in virtue of their common origin and charism and by the will of the Church. See *Constitutions OFM*, 60; *Constitutions OFM Conv.*, 116; *Constitutions OFM Cap.*, 95; *Constitutions TOR*, 157; *Rule of the Third Order of Pope Leo XIII*, 3,3; *Rule approved by Paul VI*, 26.
2. see *SFO Rule* 1
3. see *SFO Const* 89.1
4. see *CCL* 303
5. *SFO Const* 85.2
6. see *SFO Const* 89.3; 90.1
7. see *SFO Const* 86.2
8. see *SFO Const* 87.1; 88.5; 90.3
9. see *SFO Rule* 26; *SFO Const* 85.2
10. see *SFO Const* 86.1
11. see *SFO Const* 89.5

12. see *SFO Const* 87.3; *SFO Rule* 26
13. *SFO Const* 46.1
14. see *SFO Const* 47.2
15. see *SFO Const* 95.1 and 3
16. *SFO Const* 88.4
17. *SFO Const* 87.1
18. see *SFO Const* 92.2-3
19. see *SFO Const* 76.2
20. see *SFO Const* 83.1
21. see *SFO Const* 91.2-3
22. *SFO Const* 88.5
23. see *SFO Const* 91.2
24. see *SFO Const* 88.1
25. see *SFO Const* 88.2
26. see *SFO Const* 89.2; 91.3
27. see *SFO Const* 89.2; 96.6
28. see *SFO Const* 89.3
29. *SFO Const* 90.2; 77.1-2
30. see *SFO Const* 90.1
31. see *CCL* 305.1; *SFO Const* 92.1; 95.1
32. see *SFO Const* 95
33. see *SFO Const* 92.2
34. see *SFO Const* 92.3

35. see *SFO Const* 93.2 and 4
36. *SFO Const* 93.3
37. see *SFO Const* 91.3
38. see *SFO Const* 91.2; see *above* art. 10
39. *SFO Const* 89.4
40. see *SFO Const* 90.3
41. see *SFO Const* 91.3
42. see *SFO Const* 90.3
43. see *SFO Const* 92.2
44. see *SFO Const* 76.2
45. see *SFO Const* 91.2
46. see *SFO Const* 91.2
47. see *SFO Const* 90.3
48. see *SFO Const* 93.1-2
49. see *SFO Const* 76.2
50. see *SFO Const* 91.2
51. see *SFO Const* 91.2
52. see *SFO Const* 90.3
53. see *SFO Const* 93.1-2
54. see *SFO Const* 76.2
55. see *SFO Const* 91.2
56. *SFO Const* 37.2
57. *SFO Const* 41.1
58. *SFO Const* 56.1-2; 58.1-2

Index

Index to SFO Governing Documents*

**Compiled by
Theresa "Terri" Leone, SFO
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* The SFO General Constitutions (GC 4.1) states that the SFO is governed by the universal law of the Church (Code of Canon Law), its own Rule, Constitutions, Ritual, and particular statutes. We have included references to the *Code of Canon Law* for canons referenced in our governing documents and to the *Statutes for the Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order*.

Reference Abbreviations used:

CCL	= Code of Canon Law (1983)
R	= SFO Rule (1978)
GC	= SFO General Constitutions (2000)
IS	= FIOFS International Statutes (2002)
NS	= SFO-USA National Statutes (2003)
SSA	= Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO (2002)
Rit.	= SFO Ritual

Numbers listed after referenced document indicate article of document, then paragraph then subparagraph if indicated, e.g. GC 24 = article 24 of General Constitutions; NS 19.2b = article 19 of National Statutes; paragraph "2"; sub-point/sub-paragraph "b" of paragraph "2".

A

abolishment / abrogation of previous regulations (GC 7; NS Intro.)

absolute majority = more than half (GC 78.1; IS 10.4; NS 9.2)

abstinence (GC 13.3)

accountant, (GC 74.2k; NS 4.5)

"act as heaven" (R 14; GC 19.1)

active

Catholic (NS 19.2d)

participation in fraternity (GC 30, 53.3; NS 18.7a)

"presence in the Church & in the World" (R 6; GC 17.4, 17-27)

Secular Franciscan (R 22-24; GC 30; NS 16.2, 18.7a)

"voice" = can elect (GC 77)

activities, "thought provoking" (NS 18.9)

additional directives/norms re elections (CCL 173.2; GC 80; NS 9.3, 11.6, 14)

administration of goods (GC 93.2)

admission to Order: (R 3; GC 39; NS 19.2d)

approval authority = council (R 23; GC 39.3)

by formal act to Minister (GC 39.1)

conditions for (CCL 316; GC 39.2)

of members to a fraternity prior to its canonical establishment (GC 46.2)

registered (GC 39.4, 52.2b)

request for admission (R 23; GC 39.1)

Rite of (GC 39.4; Rit. pp. 5, 10)

admonish - see "fraternal correction"

advance notice of convocation/gathering (NS 3.4)

age for profession (R 23; GC 43; NS 19.3b)

aggrievances [sense of having been "wronged" by Council decision] (GC 59)

allocation of patrimonial goods (CCL 121 - 123; GC 48; NS 4.3)

"altius moderamen" (CCL 303; GC 1.4, 85.2, 87.1; NS 18.3, 18.4; SSA 2, 3, 8.1)

ambition (GC 32.2)

amendments (IS 24; NS 29)

“animate & guide” (R 21; GC 4, 31.1, 51-52, 61.3-63, 65-67, 73b; IS 10.1e, 14.1a, 14.2; NS 1.2, 5.5a, 18.9)
 animation
 of fraternities (SSA 13.2)
 of liturgical celebrations & spiritual reflections (SSA 13.3)
 annual
 budget (NS 5.5i, 6.4b, 6.4c)
 meeting (NS 3.4, 5.5i, 6.4c, 7.1, 7.5)
 Renewal of Profession (Rit. pp. 7, 20)
 report (GC 51.2b, 62g, 63.2f, 66.2h)
 another religious family, bound by perpetual commitment (GC 2.1)
 apostolate (NS 16.3)
 apostolic
 activities/works (CCL 311, 315; GC 2.1, 30.3, 31.4, 95.4; NS 16.3)
 life (GC 2.1, 3, 93.1; NS 18.5a)
 appeal(s), right of (GC 59, 84.4, 93.5; IS 13.1i-j; NS 5.5f, 15.4)
 application
 of *General Constitutions* (R 20, 21, 23, 26; GC 49.2, 60, 61.2, 62.1)
 of *Natl. Statutes* (GC 25, 29.3, 34, 38.2, 41.2, 41.3, 43, 46.1, 47.2, 49.2, 52.4c, 53.3, 54, 61.2, 61.3, 64, 65.3, 68.1, 68.2; NS 28)
 application & interpretation of *Rule* (R 3)
 appointment
 of Councilor (NS 15.2)
 of Spiritual Asst. (R 26; GC 50.2g, 89, 91; SSA 11.2, 15, 17.1, 19.1, 21.1, 23.1)
 archives (IS 19.3c; NS 6.3)
 aspirant [in USA use term “Inquirer”] (GC 39)
 assurance/ guarantee of spiritual assistance [refer to “spiritual assistance”]
 attend meetings (R 22, 24; GC 28.3, 30.2, 31.4, 49.2, 62.2a, 63.2, 66.2a, 67.2a, 68.1, 70.3, 74.2; IS 10, 14.1b, 15; NS 3.4-3.6, 18.7b)
 attitude of indifference (GC 18.2)

audit, financial/property (GC 54.3, 62.2j, 66.2l, 74.2k; NS 4.5, 18.11, 25.1)
authority re elections (NS 9.3)

B

ballot
 blank (NS 10.6)
 secret (GC 78.1, 78.3; NS 8.5, 10.6)
Baptism (R6; GC 17.1, 42.1; NS 19.2d)
bear arms (GC 23.2)
"bearers of peace" (R 19; GC 23.1)
Beatitudes, live the spirit (R 11; GC 15.1, 36.1)
Bishop, relations with (GC 3.2, 46.1, 95.2, 99.1, 101; NS 16.3)
Bl. Virgin Mary (R 9; GC 16)
"board of examiners" (GC 62.2j, 66.2l; NS 4.5)
bond of communion (SSA 12.2)
books (GC 52.4a & b; NS 6.4d)
"brothers & sisters of penance" (R 7; GC 13.1)
budget (GC 50.2e; IS 10.1j; NS 5.5i, 6.4c)
"build a more fraternal & evangelical world" / "build the Kingdom of God"(R 14; GC 3.2, 20.1)
bursar = treasurer (GC 52.4)
business (NS 3.2, 5.1)
 electronic (NS 5.6, 23.6)
 reviewed and ratified (IS 10.4; NS 3.2, 5.1, 23.1, 23.6)

C

candidacy (NS 19.2b)
candidate
 in formation (GC 37.2, 40, 41, 42)
 for election = nominee (NS 11.2)
Canon Law, Code of (GC 1.4, 85.2; NS 1.3, 9.3)
 116: (NS 1.1)
 117: (NS 1.1)
 119: (NS 9.2)
 123: (NS 4.3)
 168: (NS 8.5)
 173.2: (NS 10.6)
 214: (NS 1.1)

303: (GC 85.2; NS 1.1)
 Canonical establishment of fraternity (R 22; GC 46, 95.2; NS 18.2)
 care for creation (R 18; GC 18.4)
 casting one ballot (CCL 168; NS 8.5, 10.6)
 catechesis (GC 17.2, 24.1)
 catechists (GC 17.2)
 Catholic Faith (GC 39.2)
 Cell {section or group w/i fraternity} (GC 34, 36.2, 50.2d, 93.3; NS 18.5)
 Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming (SAMP *Ritual*, p. 9;¹ NS 19.2a)
 Cessation of fraternity (GC 48.1)
 monies & property (CCL 121-123; GC 48.1; NS 4.3, 18.11)
 Chair of Nominations Committee & Committee (NS 11.1, 11.3)
 chapter = assembly, gathering or meeting of
 fraternity (GC 49.2, 51.2; NS 3.5)
 elective (GC 76 - 80)
 general (GC 70.3, 70.4; IS 10, 11.2, 12.1)
 national (GC 66.2a, 67.2a, 67.2c; NS 3.4 - 3.6, 7.1 - 7.3)
 regional (GC 62.2a, 63.2a, 64; NS 22.3, 23.7)
 charisms (GC 1.2)
 charitable works (GC 13.2, 17.4, 30.3)
 chastity [see purity of heart]
 Checks as payment (NS 6.4b)
 Children (R 17, 24; GC 25, 96, 97; NS 27)
 choices (GC 12.2, 23.2, 50.1)
 Chrismation (NS 19.2d)
 "Christ, poor & crucified" is "the book" (R 10; GC 10)
 Christian
 commitment (GC 24.1)
 love (R 12, 13; GC 22.3)
 motivation (GC 19.1)
 spirit of service (R 14)
 Church (GC 24.1, 92.1, 93.1)
 doctrine (GC 99.1)
 duties & services (GC 100, 101, 102)
 events (GC 44.3)

Law (GC 4.1, 76.1)
 teachings (GC 40.2)
 rebuild (GC 100.1)
 Church & Sec. Franciscans (R 3, 5-8, 17, 22, 24; GC 14, 17, 40.2; NS 16.3)
CIOFS = Intl. Council of SFO (GC 5.3, 69.2; IS 1, 2; NS 10.3, 11.6, 29.1)
 civil
 authorities (GC 51.2, 63.2e, 67.2d, 74.2d; IS 13.1c)
 legislation (GC 54.2)
 responsibilities (R 15; GC 20.2, 22)
 Clare of Assisi (GC 98.2)
 clarification/interpretation of SFO Rule & Gen. Const. (GC 5; IS 10.1f, 13.1a)
 clergy, secular (GC 2.2, 35)
CNSA = Conference of Natl. Spir. Assts. (GC 76.2, 93; NS 2.2; SSA 19, 20)
 collaborating/contributing (R 1, 13, 14; GC 14.1, 14.3, 15.2, 23.1, 28.2, 29.1, 30, 31.3, 31.4, 53.1, 62.2c-62.2g, 71.1b, 73d, 95.3, 98, 99.1, 100-103; NS 3.7b, 11.2, 18.7, 25.3)
 collaboration & co-responsibility
 among First Order/TOR (SSA 1.3, 2.3, 3, 6.3, 7.1, 17.2, 19.1, 23.2)
 with Local Ordinary (SSA 7.2)
 collegial
 acts (CCL 119; NS 6.6b)
 spiritual assistance (SSA 3.2, 8, 10.2)
 Commissions (IS 13.1m; NS 5.5g, 23.5)
 commitment
 perpetual/permanent (R 23; GC 42.2)
 to another religious family (GC 2.1)
 Committees (IS 13.1m; NS 5.5g, 23.5)
 common
 charism (GC 85.1; SSA 1.2)
 "Fund" / "Fair Share" (R 25; GC 30.3; NS 18.7)
 interests (GC 34, 35; NS 18.5a)
 interest groups (GC 34; NS 18.5)
 mission to Church & to society (SSA 1.2)
 ongoing formation (R 22-24; NS 19.5c)

communication, responsibility (GC 62.2d; IS 13.1r,
14.1d, 14.1e)

communion

among fraternities & other Fran. groups (R 24; GC
3.2, 29.1, 61.1, 71.1b, 73d; NS 1.1, 16.2) [see
also "spiritual assistance"]

among members - living & deceased (R 24;
GC 15.2, 27, 32.1, 36.1, 53.1, 53.4; NS 18.9,
18.10)

"of saints" (GC 27.1)

with the Church - Pope, bishops, etc. (R 3, 5-8,
17, 22, 23.1, 24.3; GC 1.1, 14, 15.2, 17, 23.1,
39.2, 73f, 85.2, 98-102; NS 16.3) [see also
"spiritual assistance"]

Community (R 13; GC 8.2, 28-36)

"of love" (R 23; GC 16.2)

prayer (R 8, 24; GC 40.3, 103.1; NS 19.2c;
Rit. p. 26)

Conclusion of elections (GC 78.4)

conditions

for admission to SFO (GC 39.2)

for profession to SFO (GC 41.2)

work & life (R Chap. 2; GC 18.3)

Conduct of business (R Chap. 3; NS 2.1, 3.2, 9.1,
18.6, 23.1, 23.6, 28)

Conference of

Assistants at various levels (SSA 16, 17.3,
19.3, 21.3)

General Ministers (SSA 4.2, 8, 9, 17.2, 17.3)

General Spiritual Assistants (GC 74.2c, 90.3a,
92.2b; NS 5.5h; SSA 17,)

National Spiritual Assistants (GC 90.3b; NS 2.2,
3.1, 6.6, 26.2; SSA 19.2, 19.3)

Regional Spiritual Assistants (GC 90.3c; NS 18.8;
SSA 21.2, 21.3)

Confirmation (NS 19.2d)

conscientious objectors (GC 23.2)

Constitutions (R 3, 20, 21, 23, 26; GC 4.1, 29.1, 31.1,
36.3, 40.2, 50.2d, 50.2h, 51.2e, 58.2, 60, 62.2k,
68.1, 69.1, 73g, 76.1, 87.3, 91.3, 93.1, 96.2)

abolished regulations (GC 7)

- interpretation (GC 5)
 - authentic (GC 5.1)
 - practical (GC 5.2, 71.1f; IS 10.1f)
 - timely (GC 5.3)
 - purposes (GC 4.3)
 - timely clarification (GC 5.3)
- Consultative role (IS 10.2, 15.3; NS 5.3, 23.2)
- consumerism (R 13, 18; GC 15.3)
- contact
 - of homebound (R 23, 24; GC 27.1; NS 18.10)
 - maintained (NS 18.10)
- Contemplation (R 8; GC 12.3, 36.1)
- continuing/on-going formation (GC 44.3)
- Contribution, financial (R 25; GC 30.3, 52.4a; IS 22; NS 18.7, 25.3)
- conversion/radical interior change (R 7; GC 8.2, 13.1, 13.2)
- Convocation (CCL 164; GC 51.2a, 76.1; NS 3.4, 7, 11, 11.5)
- Co-responsibility (GC 30, 51.1, 52, 63.1, 67.1; NS 18.7, 18.9, 18.10; SSA 1.3)
- Council (GC 31.1, 31.4, 32.1, 33.2, 37.2, 38.3, 39.3, 41.1, 41.2, 45.2, 46, 49-52, 58, 62, 66, 70, 71, 76.2, 77.2, 79.5, 83, 84, 91.1, 91.2, 92.2, 92.3, 93.5, 94.3, 94.4, 96.5, 97.2- 97.5; NS 2.1) [see various fraternity levels]
 - composition and duties (GC 31, 32.1, 49.1, 50, 62, 66, 71; NS 2, 3, 5, 6, 18.3, 18.9, 18.10, 22-24, 28)
 - filling vacancies (GC 81, 83)
 - forming fraternities (GC 31.1)
 - higher vs. lower (GC 33.2)
 - temporary task (R 21; GC 32.2)
 - various levels (GC 31.1)
- Councilor (GC 50.2f; NS 5.2, 13.2) [See various fraternity levels]
 - appointment (NS 15.2)
 - duties of [see various fraternity levels]
 - live/ foster communion (GC 32.1)
 - terms of office [See elections - various levels]
 - vacancy (GC 81, 83; NS 15.2)

Counting ballots (CCL 173; GC 78; NS 9)
"courageous initiatives" (R 15; GC 22.2)
"create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed
by Christ" (R 13; GC 18.3)
creatures (GC 12.1)
criteria for organization (R 21 - 26; GC 29; NS 1)
"crosses" & "contradictions" (GC 10)

D

deactivation of fraternity (CCL 120; GC 46.2, 48.1, 49.1;
NS 4.3)
death (R 19, 24; GC 24.1, 27.2, 52.2b)
decisions (GC 5.3, 38.3, 50, 51, 55; NS 5.5b)
decree of dismissal (GC 58.2, 58.4)
defense, legitimate (GC 23.2)
delegates (NS 8.3)
delegation of spiritual assistance (SSA 5.2; GC 86.1,
89, 91)
deliberative powers (GC 62.2i, 64, 68; IS 10.1a; NS 3.3)
deposit of funds (IS 20.2b; NS 6.4a)
detachment from temporal goods, spirit of (R 11; GC 15,
27.1)
dialogue
 fraternal (R 19, 23; GC 15.2, 22.2, 24.2, 50.2b,
 56.1, 93.3; NS 11.2)
 with negligent member (GC 56.2, 58.1, 58.2,
 58.3)
difficulties, members with (R 23; GC 10, 50.2b, 56.1)
Diocesan church (GC 46.1, 100, 101; NS 16.3)
discrimination (GC 18.2)
disenfranchised, help of (R 13; GC 19.1)
dismissal from SFO (CCL 308, 309, 316; GC 55-59, 58.2-
58.4; NS 5.5f, 20)
Disposition re SFO (NS 19.1a)
Distance from local fraternity (GC 53.3; NS 18.7b, 19.6)
distinctive sign of SFO (R 23; GC 43; NS 16)
distress, countering (GC 26.1)
"divine seed", presence of (R 19)
documents (legislative & liturgical), approval of (GC 87.2)
"Do Penance" (R Prologue)
"do the will of the Father" (R 10; GC 12.2)

Documents (R 2, 3, 20, 21, 23, 26; GC 4-6, 28.3, 39.4, 42.5, 46.1, 46.2, 48.1, 57.2, 58.1, 58.4; NS 18.12)
"Duly elected" (NS 1.2)

Duties of

- Conf. of Gen. Min. o/t First Order and TOR (SSA 4.2, 8 & 9; GC 76.2, 83.1, 87.1 87.3, 91.2-.3, 92.2-.3)
- Conf. Of National Spiritual Assts. (SSA 19.3; GC 76.2, 93)
- Conf. Of Regional Spiritual Assts. (SSA 21.3; GC 76.2, 90.3, 93.1-2)
- General/Provincial Ministers (R 26; GC 85.2, 86.1, 87.3, 88, 89.5; SSA 5-7; 10, 11)
- Individual Professed Secular Franciscans (R 1, 6, 10; GC 30, 44, 45, 53.3, 53.4, 56.1, 58.1, 96.1, 97.1, 98, 99.1, 100, 101, 102, 103)
- International Fraternity Council (IS 7, 9)
- Local Fraternity Council (see "Local Fraternity")
 - General (GC 50 & 53; NS 18.3)
 - Minister (GC 51)
 - Vice Minister (GC 52.1)
 - Secretary (GC 52.2)
 - Formation Director or "Master of Formation" (GC 52.3)
 - Treasurer (GC 52.4)
- National Fraternity Council (NS 5.5)
 - Officers of Nat'l Exec Council (NS 6, 11.3)
- Regional Fraternity Council (NS 22)
 - Officers of Regional Executive Council (NS 23, 24)

E

E-mail (NS, 5.6, 23.6)

Ecclesial

- act (GC 42.1)
- Authority/Witness,
 - need for "competent" (CCL 305; R 1 & 26; GC 76.2, 76.3; NS 11.6b; SSA 17.3)
 - SFO representative (GC 51.2c, 63.2e, 66.2I, 67.2d, 74.2d)

- communities (R 6, 8; GC 3.3, 17.2, 17.3, 53.2)
- groups (GC 98.1, 100.2, 103)
- Ecclesiastical
 - authorities (51.2c)
 - communion (GC 58.3)
- Ecology (R 18; GC 18.4, 26.1)
- economic affairs of fraternity (GC 30.3, 50.2e)
- Ecumenism (GC 103)
- elderly (GC 27.1; NS 18.10)
- Elections, Chapter of: (CCL 119; R 21; GC 31.1, 49.2, 51.2a, 63.2a, 63.2b, 67.2e, 76-80; IS 12; NS 3.5, 6.6c, 7.3, 8.6, 9-12, 14, 28)
 - absolute majority = more than half (GC 78.1)
 - accept office (GC 78.4)
 - "active" voice = can elect (GC 77)
 - additional directives/norms (CCL 173.2; GC 80; NS 9.3, 11.6, 14)
 - authority (NS 9.3)
 - call anew (GC 79.5)
 - conclusion of elections (GC 78.4)
 - confirm (GC 76.2, 78.4)
 - convocation: (CCL 164; GC 51.2a, 76.1; NS 7.3, 11.1)
 - casting one ballot (CCL 168; NS 8.5, 10.6)
 - delegate/substitute (NS 8.3)
 - Ecclesial Witness: (GC 76.2, 76.3; NS 11.6)
 - election
 - confirmation (GC 76.2)
 - of councilors (GC 78.3, 79.3, NS 13.2)
 - of minister & vice minister (GC 78.1, 78.2, 9.1, 79.2)
 - elective
 - assembly (GC 49.2, 76.2)
 - powers (IS 10.1a; NS 3.3)
 - elector (NS 10.6)
 - eligible
 - candidate (GC 31.3, 77.3; NS 11.2-11.4)
 - voters (NS 8.1-8.3, 12)
 - Local Frat. (GC 77.1)
 - other levels (GC 77.2; NS 8.1, 12, 28)

- holding more than one elected office (NS 11.4, 13.3, 28)
- incompatible offices (GC 82; NS 11.4, 13.3, 28)
- ineligible voters (GC 76.3)
- invalidate elections, right & duty (GC 79.5)
- majority of votes requirements (GC 78)
- Nomination Requirements (NS 11.2; RG 8d)
- norms (GC 76, 77)
- not elected on first ballot (GC 78.1, 78.3; NS14.1)
- Offices: (GC 49.1; NS 24.3)
- "outgoing Minister" (GC 79.2)
- "outgoing Natl. Minister" (NS 13.3)
- "passive" voice = can be elected (GC 77)
- Presider/President
 - (GC 76.2 - 76.4, 78.4; NS 9.3, 11.6a, 18.8, 26.2)
- qualification of candidates (GC 31.377.3; NS11.2)
- "quorum" = # voters needed: (GC 77.4; NS 9.1)
- Removal from office: (CCL 318; GC 84; NS 15.3)
- resignation
 - Minister (GC 83.1; NS 15.1)
 - Other Council Members (GC 83.2; NS 15.2)
- results/majority: (GC 78.4; NS 9.2)
- Secy. & Tellers/ "scrutineers": (CCL 173.2; GC 76.4, 78.4)
- term limits (GC 79; NS 13)
- tie (GC 78.1)
- third ballot, if needed (GC 78.1)
- "third & final successive election as Councilor" (NS 13.2)
- vacant office (GC 81; NS 15)
- votes required: (GC 78.1 - 78.3)
- electronic business/ e-mail (NS 5.6, 23.6)
- eligible
 - candidate for nomination (GC 31.3, 77.3; NS 1.2-11.4)
 - voters
 - Local Frat. (GC 77.1)
 - other levels (GC 77.2; NS 8.1-8.3, 12, 28)
- "encounter Christ in brothers & sisters" (R 5)
- enrollment (CCL 306, 307)

Establishing Documents (NS 18.12, 25.4)
 establishment of
 local fraternities (CCL 313; GC 46, 47, 86.1, 88.2;
 NS 18.2; SSA 5.2, 6.1, 11.2)
 Sections or Cells (GC 34, 50.2d; NS 18.5)
 Notice of (NS 18.5a)
 eternal life (GC 26.1, 27.1)
 Eucharist (R 5, 8; GC 14.2, 53.2; NS 19.2d)
 "center of life of fraternity" (GC 14.2)
 Evangelical
 formation (GC 71.1c)
 life (GC 8.2, 40.1, 41.2, 71.1a, 96.1)
 poverty (GC 15)
 vitality (GC 92.1, 93.1)
 way of life (GC 40.2; NS 11.2)
 example (GC 12.1, 37.3)
 exclusion (GC 18.2)
 excommunication (GC 58.3)
 Excused (R 23; NS 18.7, 18.7a)
 expense reimbursement (NS 18.8, 25.2)
 expenses, local & "higher fraternities" (R 25; GC 52.4b;
 NS 18.7)
 "experiential & interactive" formation (NS 19.5b)
 exploitation (R18; GC 15.3, 18.2)
 External sign of Secular Franciscan (R 23; GC 43;
 NS 16.4)
 extraordinary expenditures (NS 5.5i, 6.1)

E

"Fair Share" / "Common Fund" (R 25; GC 30.3; IS 10.1j;
 NS 3.7b, 18.7, 25.3)
 faith (GC 8.2, 27.2, 44.3, 58.3)
 faithfulness/ fidelity (GC 11, 24)
 Family life (R 17; GC 12.1, 15.2, 17.4, 23.1, 24, 25, 53.3;
 NS 18.7b, 18.9, 18.10)
 children (R 17; GC 25)
 dialog in fraternity (GC 24.2)
 first priority (R 17; GC 17.4, 24.1; NS 18.9)
 marital fidelity (R 17; GC 24.1, 24.3)
 meeting sharing (GC 24.2; NS 19.5c)
 spouses (R 17; GC 24.1; NS 18.4)
 fasting (GC 13.3)

Fatherhood of God (GC 12, 14.5, 15.1, 26.1)
fax [see email / electronic business]
financial responsibilities (CCL 319; R 25; GC 30.3, 50.2e,
62.2i & j, 66.2g, 66.2k, 66.2l; IS 10.1i, 13.1l, 22; NS
3.7b, 4.5, 5.5h, 5.5i, 18.7, 18.8, 25.2, 25.3)
annual budget (GC 50.2e, 62.2I, 66.2k, IS 10.1j,
21.1a, 21.1b; NS 6.4c)
audit (GC 52.4c, 62.2j, 66.2j; NS 4.5)
books (GC 52.4a & b; NS 6.4d)
deposits (NS 6.4a)
reports (GC 52.4c, 62.2i, 66.2k; IS 10.1i, 20.2d;
NS 6.4e)

FIOFS = International Fraternity of SFO [see Intl.
Fraternity]

Formation: (R 23; GC 8.2, 37, 38.1, 40 - 41, 50.1,
62.2e, 66.2d, 103.1; IS 13.1b; NS 19)
3 mos. (NS 19.1b)
6 mos. (NS 19.2a)
18 mos. (NS 19.2b)
36 mos. (GC 42.2; NS 19.2b)
1 yr. (R 23; GC 40.1, 41.2, 41.3)
18 yrs. (GC 43; NS 19.3b)
21 yrs. (NS 19.3a)
Admission/Entrance: (R 23; GC 37, 39, 46.2,
50.2a; NS 19.2d)
Agents of (R 23; GC 11, 37.2, 37.3)
as Journey (GC 37.2)
Candidacy/candidate (NS 19.2b-19.2d)
Rite of Admission (Rit. pp. 5, 10)
"common" [several fraternities together] (NS 9.5c)
Constitutions study (GC 40.2; NS 19)
Continuing/ "On-Going": (R 7; GC 8.2, 44; NS
16.2, 18.1, 18.9, 19.4)
discerning vocation (R 23; GC 38.1)
duration time (R 23; GC 38, 40.1, NS 19)
Exception to Time Frame: (GC 38.3, 41.3)
form & methodology (GC 37.4, 38.2, 40.1, 40.4.;
NS 19.5)
Formation Director / "Master of Formation": (GC
52.3; IS 13.1b)

Fraternity Members' duty (R 23; GC 37.2, 37.3, 38.1, 44.2; NS 18.1)
 "fully initiated member of Catholic Church" (NS 19.2d)
 Initiation as Preparation (R 23; GC 37.1, 38; NS 19)
 Inquiry/Inquirer (NS 19.2a, 19.2c)
 Ceremony of Introduction & Welcoming (SAMP Ritual p. 9)
 Inter-fraternal Formation (GC 40.1; NS 19.5c)
 lengthening time of (GC 40.1, 41.3)
 means of belonging to (R 23; GC 37.4)
 meeting participation (GC 40.1, 40.3; NS 19.2c)
 mentality of candidate (GC 40.4)
 Newly Professed: (GC 44.2)
 of children (R 17; GC 25)
 of Secular Franciscans (SSA 2.3, 13.1, 17.3, 19.3, 21.3, 24.1)
 of spiritual assistants (SSA 5.4, 14.2; GC 95; IS 13.1b)
 "forming & interesting friars in service to SFO" (SSA 5.4, 19.3, 21.3)
 Orientation (NS 19.1)
 participation in Fraternity: (R 23; GC 30, 40.3, 53; NS 16.2)
 Profession/ Promise of Evangelical Life: (R 23; GC 1.3, 2.1, 8.1, 17.1, 37.1, 41 - 43, 46.2, 50.2a, 52.2b; NS 19.3)
 accepted by (GC 42.3)
 conditions for (GC 41)
 Minimum Age: (R 23; GC 43, NS 19.3)
 Rite of Profession (Rit. pp. 6, 13)
 temporary (GC 42.2, 44.2; NS 19.3b; SAMP Ritual p. 27²)
 purpose (GC 40.1)
 Remote Initial Formation (NS 19.6)
 responsibility of (GC 37.2, 37.3; IS 13.1b; NS 16.2, 18.9)
 Rule study (GC 40.2)

Sacred Scripture (GC 40.2)

Who's Responsible (CCL 329; GC 37.2, 37.3; IS 13.1b; NS 16.2, 18.9)

Formation Terminology:

aspirant: (GC 39) **USA:** Inquirer: (NS 19.2A)

candidate: (GC 40-42; NS 19.2b)

Master of Formation: (GC 37.2, 41.1, 49.1, 52.3)

USA: Director of Formation (NS 19)

Phases/Stages of Initial Formation:

Orientation: (GC 38; NS 19.1)

Inquiry: (GC 38; NS 19.2a)

Candidacy: (GC 40; NS 19.2b)

Profession: (R 23; GC 41, 42, 43; NS 19.3)

Francis of Assisi (R 1, 5; GC 1.2, 3.2, 10, 14.2)

charism (R 1; GC 85.1)

example/model/inspiration (R 1, 2, 5, 6, 9; GC 12.1, 42.1, 98.1)

message of (GC 18.1, 85.2, 96.2)

person (GC 40.2)

spirit of (R 5, 6; GC 71.1a)

writings (GC 12.1, 40.2)

Franciscan

Charism (GC 85.2, 92.1, 95.1, 100.3, 102.2)

Churches (GC 102.2)

Family (R 1, 2; GC 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 3.2, 23.1, 32.1, 47.1, 53.2, 85, 89.1, 92.1, 94.2, 96.6, 98.1)

lifestyle (GC 102.2)

live Gospel (R 4; GC 1.3)

major superior (GC 88, 89, 91.3)

meeting sharing (GC 24.2)

obedience (GC 47.2, 61.1)

protectress (R 9)

religious (GC 87.3, 88.1, 89.1, 89.3, 89.4, 102.2)

sign/symbol (GC 43)

spirit (GC 10, 92.1)

spirituality (R 1; GC 89.3, 90.1, 102.1)

union of fraternities (R 1, 2; GC 1.3; NS 1.1)

Youth (GC 70.1, 94.2, 96, 97; NS 27; SSA 11.2, 19, 20, 21)

Franciscans

First Order (R 26; GC 1.4, 46.1, 50.2g, 70.1,

74.2c, 74.2g, 76.2, 84.5, 85, 89.3, 91.1, 95.1, 98.1)

Second Order = "Poor Clares" (GC 98)

Third Order Regular [TOR] (R 26; GC 1.4, 46.1, 50.2g, 70.1, 74.2c, 74.2g, 76.2, 84.5, 85, 89.3, 91.1, 95.1, 98.1)

fraternal

communion (GC 3.3, 28.1, 40.3, 46.2, 53.3, 98)

correction (GC 93.3, 94.4)

dialog (R 23; GC 22.2, 24.2, 50.2b, 56.1, 56.2, 58.1, 58.2, 58.3; IS 16.4, 16.5)

 between generations (GC 24.2)

life (R 20 - 26; GC 11, Chap. III- art. 28 - 103)

love (R Chap. II - art. 4 - 19; GC Chap. II - art. 8-27)

unity (R 1, 2, 20-22, 24,26; GC 1.3, 1.5, 3.3, 19.2, 24.2, 26.2, 28-36, 53)

Visit:

 action for failure to provide service (GC 94.4)

 audit items (GC 94.3, 94.4)

 defined (R 26; GC 94.1)

 not requested (GC 62.2h)

 request (R 26; GC 51.2d, 62.2h, 63.2c, 63.2g, 66.2j, 67.2f, 67.2g, 74.2e, 74.2g, 92, 93, 94)

 special attention given to (GC 94.2)

 visitor restrictions (GC 94.5)

Fraternal/Pastoral Visit (R 26; GC 51.2d, 62.2h, 66.2j, 92-95; IS 13.1h, 23; NS 17, 18.8, 26; SSA 14; SAMP Ritual p. 50)³

 appeal right (GC 93.5)

 audit of (GC 93.1, 93.2)

 authority to request (R 26; GC 63.2g, 84.6, 92.2, 92.3; NS 5.5h, 17, 18.8, 26.0)

 communicate object/program of (GC 93.2)

 composition of group visited (GC 93.2)

 governing statutes (GC 84.6, 92-95; IS 23; NS 17, 26; SSA 14)

 interaction with individuals (GC 93.3)

 number/composition of visitors (GC 93.4)

purpose of both (GC 92.1, 93.1, 93.3)
 report of (GC 93.2; IS 23.3)
 requesting individual (GC 92.1)
 stipend (NS 5.5h, 18.8, 26.2)
 under urgent and serious cause (GC 92.3)

fraternity

- animated/guided by (R 21; GC 31.1; IS 1.3; NS 1.2; SSA 3.1)
- cessation (GC 48.1)
- Chapter of Elections (Rit. p. 29)
- Council Gathering (SAMP Ritual p. 38)⁴
- co-ordinated/governed (R 20, 21; GC 4, 28 - 34; IS 2; NS 2, 18.3, 21)
- council (R21, 23, 24, 26; GC 31; IS 3; NS 3, 18.3, 22)
- duties/responsibilities of members (GC 17, 30, 40.3) [see "members"]
- establishment (R 22; GC 31.1, 46, 86.1, 88.2; NS 18.2; SSA 5.2, 6.1, 11.2; Rit. p. 31)
- Gathering: Opening & Closing Prayers (Rit. p. 26)
- involvement in "meeting place" activities (GC 102)
- levels of (R 20; GC 1.5, 28.2, 29.1; IS Intro.; NS 1.1, 16.2)
- local, response to higher councils (GC 33.2)
- Minister (R 21; IS 2, 17; NS 6.1, 24.1)
- patrimonial goods (GC 48, 62.2j, 66.2l, 94.3; IS 10.1i, 20.1, 21.1c; NS 4, 18.11, 25, 28)
- personal (GC 35.2, 60)
- personality promoted (R 21, 22; GC 33.1)
- prayer life (R 4, 5, 8, 9; GC 9.2, 12.3, 14, 17.4, 24.1, 30.2, 95.4, 103.1)
- records & registers (GC 39.4, 42.5, 46.2, 48, 52.2, 52.4, 56.3, 57.2, 58.1, 93.2, 94.3, 94.4; NS 6.4d, 6.4e)
- "regular & frequent meetings" (R 24; GC 53; NS 18.9)
- revival (GC 48.2)
- special groups within (GC 34, 35.2, 36.2; NS 18.5)

Fraternity Life:

- active participation is essential (R 22 - 25; GC 30, 53.3)

apostolic activities (GC 17 - 27, 95.4, 100 - 102)
common interest groups (GC 34, 50.2; NS 18.5)
opportunities to gather (R 24; GC 53; NS 18.9, 18.10)
various levels (R 2, 20, 25; GC 46-75; NS 1.1, 16.2)
vitality of (R 26; GC 92.1, 93 - 95)
vocation (GC 2 - 4; NS 16.1)
vocation promotion (GC 45)

Fraternity "levels" / types

Local (See Local Fraternity)
International (See International Fraternity)
National (See National Fraternity)
Regional (See Regional Fraternity)

freedom (GC 12.2, 15.1, 18.3)

frequent meetings (R 22, 24; GC 53.1; NS 18.9)

"fulfill duties proper to their various circumstances of life"
(R 10; GC 20.2)

G

General

Assistants of SFO (SSA 9.2, 17, 18; GC 70.1, 72.1, 74.2c, 90.3a, 91.2a; IS 11.1, 13.1o)

Chapter (GC 5.2, 6.1, 70.3, 70.4, 73a, 74.2b, 74.2k; IS 9, 10, 11.2, 12.1, 13.1d)

Constitutions, interpretation (R 3, 20, 21, 23; GC 4, 5, 7; IS 10.1f, 13.1a; NS 1.3, 5.5d, 9.3)

Ministers (SSA 5, 8, 9; GC 74.2g, 85.2, 86, 87, 91.2a; IS 13.1o)

Principles (SSA 1 - 7)

Spir. Asst. (SSA 12-16, 17& 18; GC 90.3, 91.3, 92.2)

Conference of (SSA 17.3; GC 76.2, 92.2)

General Minister/Minister General of SFO (GC 85.2; IS 2, 11.1, 17; NS 11.6a)

Gospel (R 2, 4, 7, 11; GC 1.3, 8, 9.2, 17.2, 26.1, 42.1, 98.1, 102.2)

"from G. to life..." (R 4, 7; GC 8.2, 9.2)

governance (CCL 309; R 20, 21; GC 4.1; IS 2; NS 2, 18.3, 21, 28)

groups [see "cell"]

guaranteed spir. assistance (SSA 10, 11; GC 88.1)
Guidelines for Initial Formation in SFO in USA (NS 19.1a, 19.5a)
Guidelines for Remote Initial Formation in USA (NS 19.6)

H

habitual default (GC 56.2, 84.1, 84.3, 84.6; IS 8.3; NS 15.3)
health of member (GC 53.3; NS 18.7)
help, give & receive (GC 12.2, 13.2, 15, 18.2, 19.2, 20.2, 22.2; NS 11.2)
"higher" Fraternity Council vs. "lower" (GC 33.2)
holiness (GC 1.1)
Holy See (R 3; GC 1.5, 5.1, 59, 87.2, 99)
Holy Spirit (R 4; GC 1.3, 9.2, 11, 12, 16.2, 37.2, 96.2, 99.1)
hope (GC 26.2, 27.2)
human
 development (GC 22.2)
 dignity (GC 10, 18.1, 22.2)
 values (GC 15.3)
humanity (GC 12.3)
humility (R 10, 11)

I

illness (GC 27.1)
incoming council (NS 8.6)
incompatible offices (GC 82; NS 11.4, 13.3, 28)
incorporate (NS 4.1, 4.4)
indifference (GC 18.2, 22.2)
individuality promoted (GC 33.1)
ineligible voters (GC 76.3)
Initial Formation (NS 19)
initiation (R 23; GC 37.1, 38; NS 19.2c)
injustice (GC 19.2, 22.2)
Inquiry [see Formation]
insertion into & participation in local fraternity (GC 53.3)
installation of new Council (NS 8.6)
Institutes (GC 1.4, 2.1)
"internal controls" (NS 18.12, 25.4)
International Fraternity = FIOFS (GC 6.1, 69-75)

animated & guided (GC 69.2, 92.2; IS 1.3, 10, 14.1a)
 CIOFS Presidency (GC 5.3, 6.2, 33.2, 36.2, 46.3, 59,
 65.2, 66.2f - 66.2h, 70.2, 72, 73, 79.4, 87.2b &c,
 90.3a, 91.2a, 96.5; IS 11 - 16, 19.1)
 Council (GC 70, 71)
 Councilors (GC 72.2; IS 11.1, 12-15, 16.3-16.5)
 definition (R 2; GC 1.5, 69.1; IS 1.1)
 Finance Commission (IS 19.5, 20, 21)
 Financial Contributions (R 25; GC 30; IS 10.1j, 20.2c,
 22)
 Fraternal & Pastoral Visits (GC 74.2e, 74.2g; IS 23)
 General Chapter (GC 5.2, 70.3; IS 10; 13.1d)
 Intl. Council = CIOFS (GC 5.3, 70, 71, 91.2a;
 IS 3 - 8)
 Intl. Councilors (GC 66.2, 75; IS 4-7, NS 10.3-10.5,
 13.1b, 13.2)
 meetings (GC 70.4, 73e; IS 9, 10.1b- 10.1d, 15)
 Minister General (GC 74.2, 87.2; IS 10.1h, 16.1, 17)
 official languages (IS 1.5)
 organization (GC 69.1; IS 1.2)
 Secy. & Secretariat (IS 13.319)
 Treasurer (IS 10.1i, 10.1j, 20)
 Vice Minister General (GC 81.1; IS 16.2, 18)
 Statutes (GC 71.2, 87.2a)
 invalidate elections, right & duty (GC 79.5)
 invitations to re-activate member (NS 18.7b)
 involvement in "meeting place" activities (GC 102)
 irregularities by Minister or Council (GC 84.6)

J

joy (GC 12.1, 26)
 Juridic Persons (CCL 113 - 118; GC 1.5, 29.2, 51.2c,
 54.1, 54.2, 63.2e, 67.2d, 69.1; IS 1.1; NS 1.1)
 "Changes in juridic person" (CCL 120)
 just laws, passage (R 15; GC 22.1)
 justice (R 10; GC 10)
 in the forefront in promoting (R 15, 19; GC 22,
 23.1; IS 13.2)
 social (R 15; GC 10, 22, 18-23)

K

Kingdom of God (R 14; GC 3.2, 17.1, 20.1, 99.1)

L

lack of concern by Minister or Council (GC 84.6)

laity (R 1, 17; GC 2.2, 3.2, 14.1, 40.2)

last will and testament (R 19; GC 23.3)

"lapsed" member (NS 18.7b)

legislative decisions/powers (R 3, 20, 21, 23, 26; 68.1, 70.3; IS 10.1a; NS 3.3)

leisure (GC 21.2)

levels of fraternity (R 20; GC 28.2, 29.1, 31, 60; IS Intro.; NS 1.1, 16.2, 28)

"Life in Fraternity" (R Ch.3; GC 53-54, 28-103; NS 18)

"life-giving reciprocal communion" within Franciscan Family (R 1; GC 98.1, 102.2)

liturgical prayer (R 8; GC 14.4)

Liturgy (GC 14.2, 17.4, 101.1, 102.1)
of the Hours (GC 14.4)

"live the gospel" (R 4; GC 8, 9, 17.2, 17-27, 42.1, 44.3)
in fraternal communion (R 22; GC 3.3, 28.1, 40.3, 46.2, 53.3, 98)

"living in full communion with the Pope and the bishops" (R 6; GC 99.1)

local churches/bishop, relations with (GC 12.2, 13.1, 14, 16, 17, 23.1, 24.1, 24.3, 28.2, 100, 101, 102.1; NS 16.3)

Local Fraternity (R 20 - 26, 22; GC 46-48; NS 4.4, 16.2, 18)

annual report (GC 51.2b)

appoint Spir. Asst. (CCL 317; R 26; GC 50.2g, 89.2, 91.2d; SSA 11.2)

"basic unit of whole Order" (R 22; GC 47.1; NS 18.1)

"carry out decisions of higher fraternities" (GC 33.2)

cessation / suppression of (CCL 320; GC 48.1)

"Common Fund" (R 25; GC 30.3; NS 18.7)

"community of love" (R 23)

contact with "shut-ins" (R 24; NS 18.10)

"coordinated & connected" (GC 28.1, 29.1, 29.3)

council responsibilities (CCL 328, 329; R21, 23, 24, 26; GC 9.2, 31.2, 31.4, 32.1, 33.2, 39.3, 41.1, 49-

52, 55, 56; NS 18.3, 18.4a, 18.7b, 18.9)
 establishment of (CCL 312 & 313; R 22; GC 46; NS
 18.2; SSA 5.2, 6.1, 11.2)
 "establishing documents" (GC 28.3, 46.2; NS 18.12)
 existing without a regular council (GC 31.1)
 financial responsibilities (CCL 319; R 25; NS 18.7,
 18.8)
 Formation Director/"Master of Formation" (GC 52.3)
 formation responsibilities (R 23 & 24; GC 37.2, 38.3,
 39.3, 41, 44.2, 46.2; NS 19)
 "implement programs" (GC 33.2; NS 18.9)
 Local Spir. Asst. role (SSA 12-16, 23 & 24; GC 37,
 41.1, 56, 58 & 91; NS 18.3)
 Master of Formation - see "Formation Director"
 Minister (GC 37.2, 39.1, 41.1, 42.3, 51)
 "privileged place" (R 22; GC 47.1; NS 18.2)
 revival (GC 48.2)
 Secretary (GC 52.2, 81.3)
 transfer of pastoral care (GC 47.2; NS 16.4)
 Treasurer (GC 52.4)
 Vice Minister (GC 52.1, 81.1)
 "visible sign of the Church" (R 22)

Local

Ordinary/Bishop (R 6; GC 46.1; NS 16.3)
 Spir. Asst. (SSA 12-16, 23 & 24; GC 37, 41.1, 56,
 58 & 91; NS 18.3)
 love (GC 10, 12, 15.4, 18.1)
 for Church (R 6; GC 40.2, 99.1, 100, 101.1, 102)
 fraternal (R 14; GC 19.1, 24.2)
 "I. God & brothers & sisters" (R 12, 13; GC 12.3)
 Gospel (R 4, 8, 10; GC 9.2)
 marital (R 17; GC 24.1, 24.3)

M

Major Superiors (GC 88, 89, 91.3; SSA 2, 5-11, 12.1, 15,
 19.1, 21.1, 23.1)
 Majority (GC 78; NS 9)
 absolute = "more than half" (GC 78.1; NS 9.2)
 relative or simple (GC 78.3; NS 9.2)
 qualified = 2/3 (IS 10.4)
 marginalization (R 13-15; GC 15.3, 18, 19, 22, 24.3,

98.1)
 married couples, groups (GC 24.2)
 Mary (R 9; GC 16)
 mass media/public relations (GC 52.2c)
 material goods (R 11; GC 15)
 meetings (R 22, 24; GC 26.2, 31.4, 49.2, 53.1) [see specific
 frat. "level"]
 members
 active (R 22-24; GC 30; NS 18.7a)
 deceased (R 24; GC 53.4)
 involvement in "meeting place" activities (GC 102)
 isolated (GC 53.3)
 lapsed (NS 18.7b)
 responsibilities (R 23, 25; GC 18.1, 20.2, 30, 31.4,
 37.3, 53.1, 53.3, 53.4)
 membership (R 2; GC 1.3, 2.2, 37.1)
 Church/society = inseparable (R 14; GC 20.1)
 exclusion from active participation (GC 56.3)
 "messengers of perfect joy" (R 19; GC 26, 27)
 minimum profession age (R 23; GC 43; NS 19.3)
 Minister (R 21, 23; GC 31.1, 31.2, 32, 49.1, 51, 58.1,
 58.2, 79.2, 82, 94.4) [refer to specific Fraternity Level]
 death of (GC 81.1)
 duties of (GC 51)
 election of (GC 78.1)
 removal of (GC 84.1, 84.6)
 resignation (GC 81.1, 83.1)
 term (GC 79.1)
 minority = spirit of poverty (R 11, 13; GC 15, 19.2)
 mission (GC 14.1, 24, 98.1, 99.1, 100.2, 100.3, 101.1,
 102, 103)
 Model
 be a (R Chap. 2; GC 8-27)
 NAFRA as (NS 23.4, 24.2, 24.3, 28)
 monetary contributions (R 25; GC 30.3) [refer to
 "common fund", "fair share", financial responsibilities]
 Motion (NS 9.2)

N

NAFRA = SFO-USA National Fraternity (NS 1) [see Natl.

Frat.] organization (NS 1.3)

National

- Assistants (GC 90.3b, 91.2b)
- Chapter (GC 68.1)
- Commissions' Coordinator (NS 5.2, 5.3)
- Congress (IS 14.3; NS 7.4)
- Formation Commission (NS 5.2, 5.3)
- Fraternity (GC 65-68, 71.1b)
 - animated & guided (GC 4.1, 65.3; IS 14.2; NS 1.2, 5.5a)
 - as model (NS 23.4, 24.2, 24.3, 28)
 - councilors (NS 13.2, 14.4, 15.2)
 - defined (GC 65.1; NS Intro., 1.1)
 - establishment (GC 65.2; IS 13.1e, 13.1f)
 - expenses (NS 5.5h, 5.5i, 25.3)
 - external sign of SFO (R 23; GC ; NS 16.4)
 - fraternal life (NS 16.2)
 - functions (NS 1, 5.5, 16.2)
 - Governing Bodies: (NS 2.1)
 - Conference of Natl. Spiritual Assts.= **CNSA** (NS 2.2)
 - National Exec. Council (**NEC**) (GC 66.1; NS 2.1, 3.1, 5, 18.10)
 - composition (NS 5.2)
 - duties (GC 66.1; NS 5.1, 5.5, 6, 26.2)
 - Minister duties (GC 65.3, 67; NS 6.1)
 - Intl. Councilor (GC 75; IS 4, 5, 7; NS 5.2, 6.5)
 - Pres. Of CNSA (SSA 19; GC 90; NS 6.6)
 - Secy. (GC 52.2, 52.5; NS 6.3)
 - Treas. (GC 52.4, 52.5; NS 6.4)
 - Vice Minister (GC 52.1, 52.5; NS 6.2)
 - meetings (NS 5.1, 7.2)
 - resignations (NS 15.1, 15.2)

- terms of office (NS 7.3, 13)
- vacancies (NS 15)
- voting rights (NS 5.3)
- Fraternity Council (**NFC**) (GC 66.2; NS 2.1, 3, 5)
 - business (GC 66.2; NS 3.2, 5.6, 9.1)
 - composition (NS 3.1)
 - Chapter of Elections (GC 66.2a; NS 3.5, 5.4, 7-14)
 - convocation (NS 3.5, 11)
 - nominations (NS 11.1-11.3, 14.1, 14.2)
 - delegates/substitutes (NS 8.3)
 - duties (GC 29.2, 29.3, 37.4, 38.3, 58.4, 61.2, 62.2c, 62.2d, 66, 67.1, 91.2b, 96.5; NS 3.7, 5.5)
 - Intl. Councilor (NS 3, 6)
 - interpretation of Natl. Stat. (NS 5.5c)
 - meetings (NS 3.4, 3.6, 7)
 - powers & rights (NS 3.3, 8, 10.2)
- Spir. Asst. (SSA 9.2, 10.3, 12-16, 19 & 20; GC 90, 91; NS 6.6, 13.1c)
 - Conference of (SSA 19.3; GC 76.2, 93; NS 6.6)
- Statutes (GC 6.2, 25, 29.3, 34, 46.1, 47.2, 49.2, 52.4c, 53.3, 53.5, 54, 61.2, 61.3, 64, 68)
 - amendment of (NS 29)
 - applicability (GC 29.3; NS 28)
 - approval (GC 6.2; IS 13.1g)
 - formation (R 23; GC 38.2, 40.1, 41.2, 41.3, 43)
 - interpretation & clarification (NS 5.5c, 5.5d)
 - work with youth/young adults (GC 25)
- nature (R 8; GC 12.3, 18.4)

NEC = Natl. Executive Council (NS 5, 6)
new fraternity (R 22; NS 18.2)
NFC = Natl. Fraternity Council (NS 2, 3)
Nomination Requirements (NS 11.2; RG 8d)
Nominations Chair/Committee (NS 11.2, 11.3)
non-budgeted expenses (GC 50.2e, NS 5.5I, 6.1)
non-elected offices/services (GC 49.1, 50.2f)
norms/procedures (NS 3.3)
 elections (GC 76, 77; NS 9-15)
 not elected on first ballot (NS 14.1)
notice of meetings (NS 7.5, 23.7)

O

obedience (R 10, 22; GC 10, 12.2)
obligations, default in (GC 56.2)
"Observe the Gospel" (R 4, 19; GC 3.3, 8.1, 9.2, 13.1, 26.1, 28.1, 44.3)
obstinacy (GC 56.2)
occupation (GC 20.2, 21.1)
Offices (GC 49.1; NS 5.2, 23.2)
 duties (GC 51, 52, 63, 67, 73-75; IS 7, 13, 14, 17-21; NS 6, 24.3)
 incompatible (GC 82; NS 11.4, 13.3, 28)
 removal from (GC 84; IS 16; NS 15.3)
 resignation of (GC 83; IS 16; NS 15.1, 15.2)
 vacant (GC 81.1; IS 16; NS 15)
official
 business (IS 10.4, 10.5; NS 3.2, 5.6, 9.1, 18.6)
 documents (GC 74.2i, 87.2a; IS 13.1n)
 languages (IS 1.5)
OFM = Order of Friars Minor (a "First Order")
OFM Cap = Order of Friars Minor Capuchin (a "First Order")
OFM Conv = Order of Friars Minor Conventual (a "First Order")
OFS = *Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis*
oldest by profession (GC 78.1)
On-going Formation (GC 44; NS 16.2, 18.9, 19.4)
oppression (GC 22.2)
Orderly collaboration (GC 29; NS 19.5c)
Ordinary (GC 46.1, 101.2)

Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis = **(OFS)** official title of SFO
(IS 1.4; NS 1.1)

"outgoing Council" (GC 77.2; NS 8.6, 28)

"outgoing Minister" (GC 79.2; NS 13.3, 28)

P

parish involvement (GC 14.3, 102.1)

participate in fraternity gatherings (R 22-24; NS 18.5a, 18.7a)

"passive" voice = can be elected (GC 77)

pastor (GC 95.2)

pastoral care - see spiritual assistance

Pastoral

councils (GC 100.2)

Visit (CCL 305.1; R 26; GC 51.2d, 63.2g, 67.2g, 86.1, 88.2b, 92, 93.5, 95; NS 5.5h, 17, 18.8, 26; SSA 5.2, 6.3, 11.2, 14, 17.3)

combined w/ Fraternal Visit (GC 93.4; NS 17, 26; SSA 14.4, 14.5)

report needed (GC 93.2 - 93.4; SSA 14.4)
requested by (GC 92.2; SSA 14.3)

patrimonial goods (GC 48.1, 62.2i, 66.2l, 74.2k, 94.3; NS 4, 25, 28)

payment of monies (NS 5.5h, 6.4, 18.8, 26.2)

peace (R 19; GC 23.1, 23.3, 32.1, 98.1))

peacemakers (R 19; GC 10)

pedagogy (GC 25, 40.4; NS 19.5)

Penance (R 7; 17.3, 17.4)

Sacrament of (R 7; GC 13.1)

penitential practices (GC 13.3)

People of God (GC 25, 99.1)

permanent dismissal/withdrawal (R 23; GC 56.1, 57.1, 58.1; NS 20)

permanently Professed (R 23; GC 42.2; NS 19.3a)

personal

fraternities (GC 28.3, 35.2, 36)

needs (GC 15.3)

pledge (GC 96.3)

witness (GC 17.1)

personality of individuals & fraternities (GC 33)

pessimism (GC 26.2)

plurality of expressions (GC 33.1, 71.1b)
 pollution (R 18; GC 18.4)
 Poor Clares (GC 98.2)
 Pope/Holy Father/Roman Pontiff (R 3, 6; GC 1.4, 5.1, 17.3, 23.1, 99)
 possessions & power (R 11; GC 15.3)
 poverty (R 10, 11; GC 15, 19.2)
 practicing Catholic (NS 19.2d)
 Prayer & Contemplation (R 8, 9; GC 12.3, 14.5, 15.2, 17.4, 24.1, 30.2, 37.3, 40.3, 103.1; NS 19.2c)
 "precise criteria" (GC 54.2; NS 18.12, 25.4)
 preference for the poor (R 13; GC 19.2)
 preferred apostolate (GC 17.1)
 "presence of divine seed" (R 19)
 Presidency of CIOFS (IS 2, 11-16; NS 29.2)
 Presider/President of Chapter of Elections (GC 76.2 - 76.4, 78.4; NS 9.3, 11.6a, 18.8, 26.2)
 priests, secular/diocesan (GC 35)
 Priorities of responsibilities for Sec. Fran. (GC 12.1, 17.4)
 priority of spiritual assistance (R 26; GC 88; SSA 15.4)
 private vows (GC 36)
 "privileged place" for developing vocation (R 22; NS 18.9)
 problems (GC 61.1, 73c, 93.3, 93.5)
 procedures/norms (NS 3.3)
 profession [see under "formation"]
 promote justice (R 15)
 promotion & support of SFO: (CCL 298; OFM GC 60; GC 45)
 property (GC 54, 94.3; NS 4, 18.11)
 Provincial Minister/Prov. Spir. Asst. (SSA 5-7, 10 & 11; GC 85.2, 86, 88; NS 18.4)
 public
 life (R 15; GC 20.2, 22.1)
 relations/ mass media (GC 52.2c)
 purity of heart (R 12; GC 15.4)

Q

qualifications for elected office (GC 31.3, 77.3; NS 11.2, 11.3)
 qualified majority = 2/3 (IS 10.4)
 Quorum = # voters needed: (GC 77.4; NS 9.1, 18.6)

R

readmission to fraternity after withdrawal or suspension (GC 57)

"ready & willing spirit" (R 21)

real estate (GC 54, 62.2j, 66.2i; NS 4.4, 18.11, 25)

"real fraternity" (NS 16.2)

"rebuild the Church" (R 6; GC 100.1)

Reconciliation

 "fruit of ..." (R 19; GC 23.1, 32.1)

 Sacrament (R 7; GC 13.1; NS 5.5e)

recording / records / registers

 Admission (GC 39.4, 46.2)

 decree of dismissal (GC 58.4)

 decree of fraternity's canonical establishment (GC 46.2)

 definitive withdrawal (GC 58.1)

 Profession (GC 42.5, 46.2)

 reviewed during visitation (GC 93.2, 94.3, 94.4, 95.2)

 secretary (GC 52.2; IS 19.3; NS 6.3)

 suspension (GC 56.3)

 voluntary withdrawal (GC 56.3)

recreation (GC 21.2)

"reduce personal needs" (GC 15.3, 30.3)

Regional

 Chapter (GC 64)

 Council (GC 61.3, 62, 63.1, 63.2a, 66.2e)

 Fraternity (R 20; GC 6.3, 61 - 64, 65.1, 90.3c; NS 16.2, 21)

 animation & organization (R 21; GC 61.3, 62.1, 63.1; NS 21.2)

 boundaries (GC 61.1; NS 3.7a)

 Chapter of Elections (R 21; GC 62.2, 63.2a; NS 23.4)

 commissions & committees (NS 23.5)

 composition (GC 61.2; NS 22.1, 23.2)

 duties (GC 62, 91.2c; NS 22.2, 22.4, 24)

 financial responsibilities (GC 62.2g, 62.2i, 62.2j; NS 3.7b, 25.2, 25.3, 26.2)

 Fraternal/Pastoral Visits (GC 63.2g, 92-95;

NS 26; SSA 14)
 governing bodies:
 Reg. Exec. Council (REC) (GC 52.5, 62.1; NS 5.5f, 18.4a, 21.2, 23 – 26)
 Reg. Frat. Council (RFC) (GC 37.4, 62.2; NS 5.5e, 21.2, 22)
 meetings (GC 63.2a, 64; NS 22.3, 23.7)
 property control (GC 54; NS 4, 25.1)
 Guidelines (GC 61.3; NS 22.2)
 Minister (GC 63; NS 3.1, 7.5, 8.2, 8.3, 24.1)
 Spir. Asst. (R 26; GC 63.2b, 76, 90-93, 95; SSA 5-7, 10.3, 12-16, 21, 22; NS 18.4, 21.3, 22.1)
 Conference of (SSA 21.3; GC 76.2, 90.3, 93.1-2, NS 22.1)
 Statutes (GC 6.3, 61.3)
 regular & frequent meetings (R 24; GC 53.1-53.3; NS 16.2, 18.9, 18.10)
 relating to others (R 13)
 relationship with the friars (GC 85.1)
 "relative majority" = simple majority (NS 9.2)
 religious Orders, other (GC 2.1)
 remote Initial Formation (NS 19.6)
 "removal for cause" from office (CCL 318; GC 84; IS 8.3; NS 15.3, 15.4, 24.3)
 renewal, personal & communal (GC 13.2)
 renunciation of violence vs. renunciation of action (GC 22.3)
 replacement of officers (GC 81, 83; NS 15.1, 15.2, 28)
 reporting members (NS 18.7)
 requesting spiritual assistance/a spiritual assistant [see "spiritual assistance", "spiritual assistant"]
 resignation from office
 Minister (GC 83.1; IS 8.1; NS 15.1, 24.3)
 other Council Members (GC 83.2; IS 8.2; NS 15.2, 24.3)
 resolve urgent problems (GC 73c; IS 13.1I-j; 5.5d-e; NS 5.5d, 5.5e)
 respect for
 creation (R 18)
 life (R 17; GC 24.1, 24.3)

- occupation (R 16; GC 21.1)
- responsibilities [see "members", various levels of fraternity, "spiritual assistance"]
- retreats (13.1)
- revival of fraternity (GC 48.2)
- right
 - to designate procedures (GC 29; NS 3.3)
 - right of Secular Franciscans to animate, guide & coordinate own fraternities (SSA 13.2)

Rite of

- Admission (Rit. pp. 5, 10)
- Profession (Rit. pp. 6, 13)
- Ritual* [SFO] (GC 4.1, 14.4, 39.4, 42.3, 78.4, 96.4; NS 1.3, 19.2a, 19.2b)
- Roberts Rules of Order* (NS 9.3)
- role of "Minister", "Spiritual Assistant", etc. [see specific office for level of fraternity]
- Rome (GC 69.2; IS 1.4)
- Rule* [SFO] (R 2-4, 20; GC 4, 5.1, 8.2, 24.1, 31.1, 35.2, 40.2, 42.1, 68.1, 92.1, 96.3)
 - approval (GC 99.2)
 - establishes nature, purpose, etc. of SFO (GC 4.2)
 - interpretation (R 3; GC 5.1)
 - observance of (GC 91.2, 93.1, 95.1)
 - opposition to (GC 56.2)

S

Sacrament of

- all (GC 14.3)
- Eucharist (R 8; GC 14.2)
- Matrimony (R 17; GC 24.1, 24.2)
- Reconciliation (R7)
- salvation = Church (GC 14.1, 17.1)

Sacred

- ministers (GC 17.3)
- Scripture/Gospel/Word of God (R 2, 4, 5, 7; GC 9.2, 13.1, 17.3, 24.1, 40.2, 44.3)
- salvific plan (R 8; GC 12.3)
- sanctification (GC 17.4)
- scrutineers/tellers of election (GC 76.4)
- secret written ballot (GC 41.1, 56.2, 78.1, 84.3; NS 10.6)

- Secretary (GC 52.2; IS 19; NS 6.3, 24.2)
 - of Elections & Tellers (CCL 173.2; GC 76.4, 78.4)
- Sections or Cells (GC 34, 50.2d; NS 18.5)
- secular
 - clergy (GC 2.2, 3.2, 35)
 - institutes (GC 98.1)
 - Franciscan as spiritual assistant (NS 18.3)
 - Franciscan Order
 - animation & guidance (GC 4, 11)
 - co-responsibility of members (See various fraternity levels)
 - description (R 2 & 3; GC 1.5, 2-4, 99; IS Intro.)
 - dismissal from (GC 58.2-58.4; N 5.5f, 20)
 - entrusted to First Order & TOR (CCL 303; GC 1.4, 60, 85.2; SSA 1.1)
 - Form of Life (GC 8-16)
 - mission (GC 99.2)
 - "open to all" (GC 2.2)
 - organization according to (GC 29.1)
 - origin (GC 1.3, 28.1)
 - "priorities" (GC 12, 17.4)
 - Spirituality (R 4-19; GC 9, 3.1, 8 - 16)
 - suspension (GC 56.2, 56.3)
 - traditions (GC 71.1c)
 - withdrawal (R 23; GC 56.1, 56.3, 58.1)
 - Orders, other (GC 2.1)
 - state (R 10, 16, 17; GC 3.1, 3.2)
- self-defense (GC 23.2)
- serenity (R 19; GC 27)
- service (GC 3.2, 17-27, 40.1, 100.2)
 - as SFO leaders (R 21; GC 32.2)
- SFO** = Secular Franciscan Order (in USA)
- shared
 - experiences (GC 24.2)
 - responsibility (GC 18.1, 26.2, 27.2, 30, 31.4)
- simple majority (NS 9.2)
- Sister Death (R 19, 24; GC 23.3, 27)
- slate of nominees (NS 11.1)
- social justice involvement (R 4, 13 - 18; GC 8.2, 12.1, 15, 17.4, 20.2, 18-23, 28.2, 44.1, 71.1d)

special/common interest groups (GC 34, N 18.4)

spirit of

detachment from temporal goods (R 11; GC 15)

"ministry & service" (R 14, 21; GC 28.2, 32.2, 73c;
NS 5.1, 11.3)

minority (R 13; GC 19.2)

welcome (R 13; GC 18.2, 26.2)

spiritual

adviser (GC 13.1)

assistance / pastoral care (GC 1.4, 61.2, 85-91,
95.3, 96.6)

altius moderamen (SSA 2, 8; GC 85.2,
87.1; NS 18.4)

appoint Spiritual Asst. (SSA 11.2; R 26; GC
50.2g, 89, 91.3; NS 18.3)

assurance of (R 1, 2, 26; GC 85.2, 88.1,
88.4, 89.1; SSA 1-4, 5.1, 7, 12-16)

collaboration, communion & co-
responsibility between SFO & First
Orders/TOR (SSA 1.3, 2.3, 3, 6.3; GC
85.1, 86.2, 89.1; IS 13.1b; NS 6.6,
16.2, 18.3)

collegial spir. asst. (SSA 3.2, 8, 10.2;
GC 87, 88.4, 88.5; NS 6.6b)

Conf. of Gen. Min. o/t First Order and TOR:
duties (SSA 4.2, 8 & 9; GC 76.2, 83.1,
87, 91.2-.3;)

delegation of Spiritual Asst. (SSA 5.2; GC
86.1, 89, 91)

Ecclesial Witness of SFO Elections (SSA
17.3; GC 76.2; NS 11.6b)

entrusted to (GC 1.4, 85.2)

establishment of local fraternities (CCL
313; GC 46, 47; SSA 5.2, 6.1, 11.2;
NS 18.2)

General Ministers/Provincial Ministers duties
(R 26; GC 85.2, 86.1, 87.3, 88, 89.5,
91.2; SSA 5-7; 10, 11)

major superiors/provincial ministers:

duties (GC 88, 89, 91.3; SSA 5-7)

guaranteed spir. assistance (SSA 10,

- 11; GC 88.1, 91.3)
- responsible to local fraternities (GC 88.3 & 88.4)
- minister/council responsibility (GC 86.2)
- purpose of (SSA 2.3)
- transfer of (GC 47.2; SSA 6.2; NS 18.4)
- to youth (GC 88.2, 89.2, 96.6; SSA 11.2, 12.1)
- types of
 - altius moderamen* (GC 85.2, 87.1; SSA 2, 3, 8.1)
 - Pastoral Visit (R 26; GC 86.1, 88.2, 94, 95; SSA 5.2, 6.3, 14)
 - preferred (GC 89.3; SSA 12.2)
 - other (GC 89.4)
- spiritual assistant (SSA 12 - 24)
 - appointed by (R 26; GC 89, 91.3; SSA 12.1, 12.2, 15)
 - non- member of First Order or TOR (SSA 15.4; GC 89.4)
 - designated by (R 26; GC 89.2; SSA 12.1)
 - for limited time (SSA 15.3)
 - formation of (SSA 5.4, 14.2; GC 87.3, 95.3; IS 13.1b)
 - liturgical activity (SSA 13.3)
 - priority of (R 26; GC 88; SSA 15.4)
 - purpose of spiritual assistance (SSA 2.3)
 - requesting authority (R 26; GC 50.2g, 91; IS 13.1o)
 - role (R 26; CCL 312; GC 37.2, 49.1, 89.3, 90; SSA 12-16)
 - role in SFO formation (SSA 2.3, 13.1, 17.3, 19.3, 21.3, 24.1)
 - Secular Franciscan as (GC 89.4b; NS 18.3)
 - types of:
 - General Spir. Asst. (SSA 12-16, 17 & 18; GC 90.3a, 91.2a, 92.2)
 - Conference of (SSA 17.3; GC 76.2, 92.2)
 - Local (SSA 12-16, 23 & 24; GC 37, 41, 56, 58 & 91; NS 18.3)

Provincial Minister/Prov. Spir. Asst. (SSA 5-7, 10 & 11; GC 85.2, 86, 88)
 Regional Spir. Asst. (R 26; GC 76, 90-93, 90.3c, 91.2c, 95; NS 18.4, 21.3, 22.1; SSA 5-7, 10.3, 12-16, 21, 22)
 Conference of (SSA 21.3; GC 76.2, 90.3, 93.1-2)
 Major Superiors (SSA 5 - 11)
 National Spir. Asst. (SSA 10.3, 12-16, 19& 20; GC 90.3b, 91.2b)
 Conference of (SSA 19.3; GC 76.2, 93; NS 2.2, 6.6)
 with fraternity council (SSA 3.1, 13.2, 13.3)
 voting rights (SSA 12.3, 13.3; GC 77.1, 77.2, 90.2; NS 6.6c, 8.1, 18.3, 22.3)
 spirituality, Secular Franciscan (R 4-19; GC 3, 8-16, 17-27)
 "statement of purposes" (GC 54.2; NS 18.12, 25.4)
 Statutes
 amendment of /revision of (CCL 314; IS 24.2; NS 29)
 approval (CCL 314; GC 6.1; IS 13.1g; 24.1; NS 29.2)
 need for (CCL 304; R 3, 20, 21, 23, 26)
 types
 International, SFO (GC 6.1)
 National, SFO (GC 6.2)
 personal fraternities (GC 35.2, 36.2, 36.3)
 Regional (GC 6.3, 61.3)
 Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to SFO (GC 91.3)
 stewardship (R 11, 18, 22, 24, 25; GC 3, 15.3, 17.4, 18-20, 30; NS 18.7-10)
 stipend (NS 5.5h, 18.8, 25.2, 26.2)
 "Structure for Property Control" (GC 54; NS 4, 18.11, 25, 28)
 "subject to the local Ordinary"/Bishop (GC ; NS 16.3)
 subsidiarity [allowing "lower" levels of fraternity to do what they can] (GC 33.2)
 substitutes/delegates (NS 8.3, 10.4)
 suffering (R 10; GC 10, 12.1, 24.2, 26, 27)

suspension from local fraternity (R 23; GC 50.2c, 56.2, 56.3, 57; NS 20; SSA 24.2)

I

tallying votes (GC78; NS 10.6)

Tau (GC 43; NS 16.4)

telephone, business by (NS 5.6, 23.6)

Tellers of Elections (CCL 173.2; GC 76.4, 78.4)

temporal activities (GC 3.2, 20.1)

temporary

 profession (GC 42.2; NS 19.3b)

 service (R 21; GC 32.2)

 Voluntary Withdrawal from local fraternity (R 23; GC 50.2c, 56.1, 56.3, 57; NS 20)

term of office (GC 79; NS 4.5, 13)

theological fields (GC 71.1c)

third

 ballot, if needed (GC 78.1; IS 12.3)

 “t.. & final successive election as

 Councillor” (GC 79.3; NS 13.2)

 Minister or Vice Minister (GC 79.1)

 “t.. orders”, definition (CCL 303)

 term (NS 13.2)

“Those who do/do not do Penance” (R Prologue)

time frames

 2 mos. (IS 23.3)

 3 mos. (NS 19.1b)

 6 mos. (NS 19.2a)

 18 mos. (NS 19.2b)

 36 mos. / 3 years (GC 42.2, 51.2a, 51.2d, 63.2a, 63.2g, 67.2a, 79.1, 79.3, 92.2a; IS 5.4, 10.1j, 21.1a; NS 3.5, 4.5, 7.3, 13.1a, 19.2b, 22.3)

 1 yr. (R 23; GC 40.1, 41.2, 41.3)

 5 yr. (NS 7.4)

 6 yrs (GC 70.4, 79.1, 92.2b, 92.2c; IS 10.1c, 12.6)

 18 yrs. (GC 43; NS 19.3b)

 21 yrs. (NS 19.3a)

TOR= Third Order Regular (priests, brothers, sisters living in community)

transfer request of

member (R 23; GC 52.2b, 55; NS 20)
pastoral assistance/*altius moderamen* (GC 47.2;
NS 18.4; SSA 6.2)
"transforming power of love & pardon" (R 19)
translation of official SFO documents (IS 13.1n)
Treasurer: (GC 52.4, 52.5; IS 20, 21; NS 6.4, 24.2)
two-thirds
 majority on 1st ballot (NS 13.2)
 vote (NS 29.1)

U

unable to attend meetings (R 23; NS 18.7b, 18.10)
understanding, mutual (GC 26.2)
unity
 & harmony through dialog (R 19)
 of Order (GC 1.3, 29, 61, 71.1b; IS 10.1g, 13.1i-j,
 17.1; NS 5.5d-5.5f)
universal
 church (R 20; GC 28.2)
 kinship (R 13; GC 18, 26.1)

V

vacant offices
 Minister (GC 81.1, 83.1; IS 16.1; NS 5.2, 15.1)
 Vice Minister (GC 81.2; IS 16.2; NS 15.1)
 Councilors (GC 81.3; IS 8.1; IS 16.3; NS 15.2)
 "removal for cause" (GC 84; IS 8.3, 16.4, 16.5; NS
 15.3, 15.4)
Vice Minister: (GC 52.1, 78.2, 81.1; IS 11.1, 18; NS 5.2,
6.2, 15.1, 23.2, 24.2)
violence (R 10, 12, 19; GC 22.3)
Visits (Pastoral & Fraternal) (R 26; GC 92-95; IS 23; NS
5.5h, 17) [see "Fraternal" & "Pastoral Visits"]
vitality of fraternity (GC 45.1, 93.1)
Vocation(s) (R 1, 2, 7, 12; GC 2.1, 3.2, 3.3, 11, 13.1,
16.1, 20.1, 24.1, 37.3, 39.2, 44.2, 45, 96.2, 99.1,
100.1; NS 16.1)
 as grace (GC 45.1)
 of children (R 17; GC 25, 96)
 discernment (R 23; GC 38.1)
 promotion of (GC 45, 62.2b, 66.2b, 71.1a)

Voluntary Temporary Withdrawal from local fraternity
(R 23; GC 56.1, 56.3, 57; NS 20)

Voting Rights

“active voice” = can elect (GC 77.1, 77.2)

“cast one ballot” (CCL 168; NS 8.5)

general (GC 56.3; NS 8 - 12, 22.1, 23.3)

of Spir. Assts. (GC 77.1-.2, 90.2; NS 6.6c, 8.1, 18.3,
22.1; SSA 12.3, 13.3)

“passive voice” = can be elected (GC 77.1, 77.2)

procedure (GC 76, 78; NS 13.2, 14)

two-thirds vote (NS 29.1)

vows, private (GC 36)

W

“Way of Life” (R Ch.2)

wealth (R 11; GC 15)

welcome, spirit of (R 13, 14; GC 18.2, 26.2, 37.3, 102,
103)

will, last (R 19, GC 23.3)

withdrawal:

definitive & permanent from SFO (R 23; GC 50.2c,
52.2b, 58.1, 58-60; NS 5.5f, 20; SSA 24.2)

voluntary & temporary from local fraternity (R 23;
GC 50.2c, 52.2b, 56.1, 56.3, 57; NS 20; SSA
24.2)

witness(ing) (R 17; GC 24, 30.2, 31.4, 45.2, 50.1, 89.3)

“witnesses & instruments of Church’s mission”
(R 6, 17; GC 17.1, 19.1)

witnessing elections (NS 5.5h, 18.826.2)

work (R 16; GC 12.1, 15.2, 18.3, 20.2, 21.1, 21.2, 53.3;
NS 18.7b)

“w.. of justice” (R19; GC 23.1)

X

Y

youth (R 17; GC 25, 96, 97; IS 3, 6, 11.1; NS 27)

Franciscan [YouFra] (GC 70.1, 72.1, 77.2, 96, 97)

role of SFO (R 24; GC 96, 97; IS 6, 7.2, 14.4;

NS 27; SSA 11.2, 16.1, 18)
spiritual assistance to (GC 96.6; SSA 11.2, 19, 20,
21)

Z

¹ SAMP Ritual refers to the 1985 publication of Saint Anthony Messenger Press by Benet A. Fonck, OFM.

² SAMP Ritual

³ SAMP Ritual

⁴ SAMP Ritual

