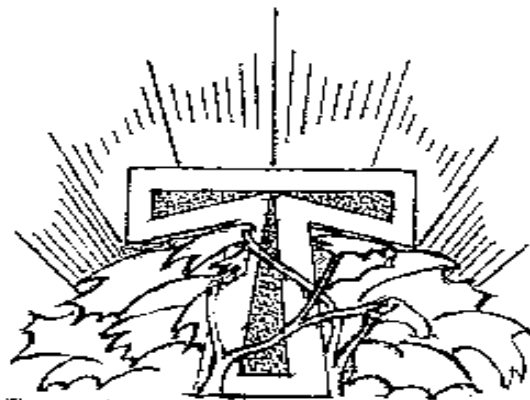


SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

LADY POVERTY REGION #68



I am the vine you are the branches
LADY POVERTY REGION
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES

1st Edition – 2011
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Mission Statement

*The Lady Poverty Region of the Secular Franciscan Order,
inspired by the Holy Spirit and our Rule,
is called, as our Seraphic Father Francis was, to rebuild the Church.*

*We seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ through
apostolic activity in fraternity and in the world,
going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel.*

Vision Statement

Our Little Portion: Rebuilding the World, One Person at a Time

Servant Leadership:

*We demonstrate vibrant leadership through humble service at the
regional and local fraternity levels.*

Apostolic Service:

*Our fraternities are engaged in evangelical and apostolic efforts for
justice, peacemaking and care of creation.*

Fraternal Life:

*United by our profession, we are called to build a more Christ-centered
world through prayer, ongoing formation, and commitment to the
Gospel life.*

Franciscan Identity:

*We live a life of simplicity, charity, and reconciliation, conforming our
thoughts and actions to those of Christ by means of daily conversion.*

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Section I

The Regional Fraternity (GC61-64: NS 21)

1. The name of the regional fraternity is Lady Poverty Region.
2. The Lady Poverty Regional Fraternity (hereafter referenced as Regional Fraternity) is an organic union officially established by the National Fraternity (NAFRA) consisting of all the local fraternities, newly forming groups and emerging communities. The given geographic area is Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and designated portions of Maryland and Ohio.
3. The Regional Fraternity is represented most fully by the Lady Poverty Regional Fraternity Council (hereafter referenced as Regional Fraternity Council).
4. The Lady Poverty Region Governance Guidelines may be amended by a two-thirds-plus-one vote of all attending members of the Regional Fraternity Council. (NS 29.1)
5. The title of the Lady Poverty Region Newsletter is *La Pobrecita*.

Section II

The Regional Fraternity Council

1. The Regional Fraternity is represented most fully by the Regional Fraternity Council. The Regional Fraternity Council has legislative, deliberative, and elective powers.
2. All duties and responsibilities of the Regional Fraternity Council and Lady Poverty Regional Executive Council (REC) (hereafter referenced as Regional Executive Council) are directed by the General Constitutions, Articles 62-64 and the National Statutes, Articles 22-25.
3. The Regional Fraternity Council is composed of the Regional Executive Council, including the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, and the ministers or authorized delegates from each local fraternity and the conference of spiritual assistants.
4. The Regional Fraternity Council suggests and approves policies to be implemented by the Regional Executive Council.
5. The Regional Fraternity Council shall elect the Regional Executive Council at a Chapter of Elections in accordance with the General Constitutions, Articles 76-84 and the National Statutes Articles 10-15.
6. The Regional Fraternity Council shall meet at least once a year to promote the life of the Regional Fraternity and the local fraternities.

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7. Notice and agenda of the Regional Fraternity Council meeting shall be given in writing by the Regional Minister at least one month prior to the meeting.
8. Fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of the attending voting membership of the Regional Fraternity Council constitutes a quorum for conducting official business at any meeting. (NS9.1)
9. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity is supported financially by its canonically established local Fraternities. The Regional Fraternity Council shall determine the annual contribution made from the common fund of each local Fraternity for each of those professed members and candidates in accordance with National norms.

Section III

The Regional Executive Council

1. The Regional Fraternity is animated and guided by the Regional Executive Council. The Regional Executive Council shall include:
 - a) Regional Minister
 - b) Regional Vice-Minister
 - c) Regional Secretary
 - d) Regional Treasurer
 - e) Regional Formation Director
 - f) Regional Councilors as deemed necessary according to the Constitution, GC 49 and NS 62, currently one regional councilor from each cluster.
 - g) The Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants (NS 21.3 NS 23.2)
2. The rules of order for the meeting of the Regional Executive Council shall be Robert's Rules of Order or Sturgis: The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure.
3. The Regional Executive Council is bound by the following conditions:
 - a) The Regional Minister may not serve concurrently as the minister of a local fraternity.
 - b) The Regional Treasurer may not serve concurrently as the treasurer of a local fraternity.
 - c) A member of the Regional Executive Council may not hold more than one (1) office on the Regional Executive Council.
 - d) The Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, and Councilors, while normally elected positions may be appointed in the case of a vacancy.
 - e) In case of a vacancy of Minister or Vice Minister the provisions of NS15 and provisions of GC 81.1 and 81.2 will be followed.

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4. The Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants is made up of one (1) representative from each of the friar Obediences, which are represented within the Region (as of 2005: OFM Cap.; OFM.; TOR)
5. The role of the Regional Executive Council is:
 - a) To be of service to the Regional Fraternity membership.
 - b) To carry out the decisions of the Regional Fraternity Council;
 - c) To make fraternal and pastoral visits to local fraternities as required every three (3) years, and according to the provisions of general and particular law;
 - d) To review and recommend guidelines for initial and ongoing formation in local fraternities;
 - e) To foster contact with other branches of the Franciscan family within the Region;
 - f) To represent Secular Franciscans with other church or civil organizations, and to promote mutual relationships with other such organizations when appropriate;
 - g) To be a voice in the public forum for Secular Franciscans;
 - h) To preside over and witness elections of local fraternities.
6. The Regional Executive Council shall meet at least four times each year, at a time and in a place determined by its membership.
7. Notice of time and place and agenda of the Regional Executive Council Meetings shall be given in writing by the Regional Minister at least one month prior to the meeting.
8. Special meetings may be called at the request of the Regional Minister or at the written request of 2 or more of the members of the Regional Executive Council.
9. Fifty (50%) percent plus one (1) of the Regional Executive Council members constitutes a quorum for doing official business at Regional Executive Council meetings.
10. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity shall be used to pay all expenses incurred by the members of the Regional Executive Council when on official business; including travel, food, and other essential expenditures. Local fraternities shall provide a stipend on occasions of fraternal visits and elections.
11. The Regional Executive Council may communicate and conduct business electronically, per NS 23.6.

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Section IV The Regional Officers

1. The Regional Minister is the chief executive officer of the Regional Fraternity.
 - a) The Regional Minister shall carry out the duties of his/her office as determined by the provisions of general and particular law.
 - b) In addition to the duties prescribed by norms of the Secular Franciscan Order, the Regional Minister shall preside at the meetings of the Regional Executive Council. The Regional Minister is the spokesperson for the Regional Fraternity in all contacts with other church and civil organizations as well as with the general public.
2. In addition to the duties assigned by general and particular law, the Regional Vice Minister performs such duties as the Regional Council may designate.
3. The Regional Secretary distributes and keeps all records of the minutes of both the Regional Executive Council and Regional Fraternity Council; preserves the important documents and correspondence of the Regional Fraternity; assists the Regional Minister in sending out announcements of forthcoming meetings of the Regional Executive Council and the Regional Fraternity Council; and performs such other duties as the Regional Executive Council requests.
4. The Regional Treasurer keeps accounts of all money and has the oversight of the property of the Regional Fraternity, unless otherwise determined by the Regional Executive Council.
 - a) The treasurer deposits all funds of the Regional Fraternity in such bank accounts as the Regional Executive Council designates. All accounts of the Regional Fraternity are to be in the name of the Regional Fraternity, and have three (3) members of the Regional Executive Council as signers on the accounts.
 - b) The Regional Treasurer pays out money, by check only, as the business of the Regional Fraternity may require, on the order of the Regional Executive Council. All expenditures over \$100 require approval of the Regional Executive Council.
 - c) The Regional Treasurer will submit an annual budget to both the Regional Executive Council and the Regional Fraternity Council for their review and approval at the annual meeting.
 - d) The Regional Treasurer shall make financial reports for acceptance at each regular meeting of the Regional Executive Council and Regional Fraternity Council.
 - e) An audit shall be conducted once a year by an independent professional accountant or two professed members selected by the Regional Executive Council who do not currently serve on the Executive Council.

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5. The Regional Formation Director provides assistance to local fraternities and their formation directors with respect to initial and on-going formation programs, resources and policies of both the Regional Fraternity and NAFRA. The Regional Formation Director will also provide training support as needed or requested by the ministers of the local fraternities within the region. Lastly, the Regional Formation Director will carry out the specific duties prescribed by the Regional Minister and Council.
6. The Councilors provide information, assistance and support for the local fraternities in the specific areas designated by the Regional Executive Council. In addition, they carry out their specific roles in support of the Regional Council and its activities.

Section V

Regional Standing Committees and Appointees

The activities of all commissions and committees of the Region are subject to the direction and approval of the Regional Executive Council.

Formation Commission

1. The Formation Commission shall be composed of the Regional Formation Director as Chair, the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) and a variable number of members representing the four geographic **clusters** appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
2. The duties of this Commission shall include:
 - a) Provide, implement, and promote initial and on-going formation programs.
 - b) Provide assistance in making formation workshops and retreat programs available throughout the Region.
 - c) Promote establishment of Regional formation teams.
 - d) Investigate and recommend to the Regional Fraternity Council means for promoting the Secular Franciscan Order.
 - e) Provide and update handbooks on practical administrative procedures and on leadership principles for the fraternity ministers and fraternity councils.

Youth and Young Adult Commission

1. The Youth and Young Adult Commission shall be composed of an appointed Chair, one of the members of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, a variable number of members of the Regional Executive Council, and a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
2. This Commission promotes the Franciscan charism among youth in collaboration with the Regional Executive Council.

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Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission

1. The Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission shall be composed of an appointed Chair, one of the members of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, a variable number of members of Regional Executive Council, and a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
2. The JPIC Team fosters and implements Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in the region by:
 - a) Writing articles for *La Pobrecita* to foster and encourage involvement in the work of the JPIC team
 - b) Promoting the work of the National JPIC Team

Finance Committee

1. The Regional Finance Committee shall be composed of the Regional Treasurer as Chair, the Regional Minister as ex-officio member, and a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
2. This committee shall prepare a proposed budget for presentation to the Regional Fraternity Council, and propose the allocation of funds for charitable and emergency purposes.

Newsletter Editor and Newsletter Editorial Board

1. The Newsletter Editor (NE) is appointed by the Regional Executive Council (REC) and serves for a renewable three-year term.
2. The NE receives payment for REC-approved services and expenses incurred.
3. The duties of the NE are as follows:
 - a) solicits information and articles for the newsletter (*La Pobrecita*) from members of the REC, local ministers, and others within the Region;
 - b) assembles, edits, and formats articles for the newsletter;
 - c) sends a draft to the Editorial Board one week prior to publication date;
 - d) publishes (in pdf format) the newsletter on a quarterly schedule: January, April, October, and December; and,
 - e) distributes the newsletter to the REC, local ministers, and the Regional Webmaster (for posting on the LPR website) via email.
4. The qualifications of the NE are:
 - a) is preferably a professed secular Franciscan member of a fraternity within Lady Poverty Region;
 - b) has the skills needed to perform the service of newsletter editor; i.e., computer skills, knowledge of word processing/editing/publishing software, skills in developing, designing, and formatting publications;
 - c) has access to a computer, appropriate software, e-mail and internet service; and,
 - d) has an understanding of copyright restrictions.

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5. The Newsletter Editorial Board shall be composed of the Newsletter Editor, the Regional Minister as ex-officio member, one Regional Spiritual Assistant, and one additional member appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
6. The duties of this Board shall be to review draft versions of the Lady Poverty Region newsletter, *La Pobrecita*, and to provide editorial guidance to the Newsletter Editor.

Web-Master

1. The Regional Web-Master (RWM) is appointed by the Regional Executive Council (REC) and serves for a renewable three-year term.
2. The RWM receives payment for REC-approved services and expenses incurred.
3. The duties of the RWM are as follows:
 - a) maintains communication with the REC personally or through a designated REC liaison;
 - b) keeps web information up-to-date;
 - c) keeps confidential the web-site log-in and password;
 - d) maintains the host (server) contract and provides the REC secretary with a copy of the contract;
 - e) periodically reviews the contract and makes recommendations to the REC as needed; and,
 - f) responds to questions, comments and requests from users of the web-site as appropriate, and communicates important questions, requests, or comments to the Regional Minister.
4. The RWM gives an annual report to REC personally or through the REC liaison. The report should include recommendations, site-use data, re-design of site, updates and similar issues.
5. The qualifications for the service of RWM:
 - a) is preferably a professed secular Franciscan member of a fraternity within Lady Poverty Region;
 - b) has the skills needed to perform the service of web-master; i.e. computer skills, skills in developing, designing, updating web-sites in a competent manner;
 - c) has access to a computer, appropriate html editing software, e-mail and internet service;
 - d) has an understanding of copyright restrictions, the characteristics of the web-site host service, and matters relating to web-site maintenance.

Database Manager

1. The Regional Database Manager (RDBM) serves for a three year term and is appointed by the Regional Executive Council (REC).
2. The RDBM receives payment for REC-approved services and expenses he/she incurs.
3. The duties of the RDBM are as follows:
 - a) maintains communication with the REC personally or through a designated REC liaison;

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- b) keeps NAFRA database information for Lady Poverty Region up-to-date;
 - c) keeps confidential the database log-in and password. The Regional Minister and other REC members may receive the log-in and password as the REC designates; this information may be shared only with the approval of the REC;
 - d) responds to routine informational questions, comments and requests from local fraternity ministers. The RDBM communicates important questions, requests, and comments to the REC personally;
 - e) communicates regularly with the REC as to the accuracy of information in the database and recommendations for corrective actions, up-dates and similar issues.
4. The qualifications for the service of RDBM:
- a) Preferably a professed secular Franciscan but another qualified person could serve.
 - b) Must have the skills needed to perform the service of database manager; i.e. computer skills, ability to navigate the NAFRA database software.
 - c) Must have a computer with e-mail and internet access.

Archivist-Historian

1. The Regional Archivist-Historian (RAH) is appointed by the Regional Executive Council (REC). He/she should possess some experience as an archivist and/or historian. The archivist should have good organizational skills as well as good writing skills. The REC will offer any necessary financial compensation for expenses that may accrue in the process of archiving our regional material.
2. The REC will develop guidelines for the RAH and membership concerning the materials to be kept in the archives of the region. Information from our national archivist can help in this regard. The REC is charged with the responsibility of collaborating with the RAH to annually review, update, and purge the archives.
3. The RAH will communicate with the region and its fraternities concerning materials that are to be kept in the archives and materials to share with the national archives. The Lady Poverty Region Archives are currently housed at the Saint Francis University Library / Learning Commons, with an annual remuneration as approved by the REC.
4. The RAH should have access to a computer and the internet as well as to our web-site. The individual will need to be skillful in the ability to use a computer and the necessary computer programs.
5. The following materials constitute the Regional Archives:
 - a) General Materials
 - i. Constitutions
 - ii. Statutes
 - iii. Guidelines
 - iv. Registers or directories of Regional membership
 - v. Establishment Documents
 - b) Recorded Histories of Individuals or Region
 - i. Regional Newsletters
 - ii. Photographs

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- c) Regional Fraternity
 - i. Annual Minister’s Meeting Agendas & Minutes
 - ii. Annual Financial Reports & Budgets
 - iii. Annual Reports to NAFRA
 - iv. Election Results
 - v. Visitation Reports
 - vi. Spiritual Assistants (documents of assigned SA’s)
- d) Local Fraternity Information
 - i. Active Fraternity
 - a. Establishment Document
 - b. Official Registers (old)
 - c. Annual Reports to Region
 - d. Visitation/Election Reports
 - e. Pertinent Historical Correspondence
 - f. Annual Financial Reports/Budgets
 - g. Checkbook registers
 - ii. De-activated Fraternity (items a through f, listed above, plus)
 - a. Inventory of Property
 - b. List of Membership
 - c. History Binder
- e) Correspondence: All correspondence should be evaluated and only kept if it has historical or establishment relevance to fraternity and/or members.

Section VI

Geographic Areas (Clusters)

1. Cluster Defined: Lady Poverty Region is divided into four fraternity clusters by geographic location: central, eastern, southwest, and northwest. The clusters are named for qualities that St. Francis exemplified: Eastern: Cluster of Perfect Joy; Southwest: Cluster of Compassion; Central: Cluster of Love; Northwest: Cluster of Goodness. Fraternities within these clusters often invite the other fraternities in their cluster to join them for events such as retreats or days of reconciliation.
2. Purpose of the Clusters: The Clusters are formed to assist the Regional Fraternity in promoting and advancing the Franciscan charism among the members of the fraternities in each Cluster.
3. Animation of the Cluster: A Cluster is animated by a Cluster Coordinator chosen from among the members of the fraternities in the Cluster. The REC Councilor- liaison assists the fraternities in choosing a Cluster Coordinator. The main function of the Coordinator is to act as an “idea resource” person for the cluster. He or she can make suggestions, but the fraternities in the cluster will plan and implement all cluster activities.

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4. Cluster Activities: Cluster activities may include Franciscan formation events, days of recollection, retreats, seminars, and/ or social events.
5. Funding for Cluster Activities: Funding for all cluster activities is the sole responsibility of the cluster.
6. Coordination with the Regional Executive Council: To avoid conflict with any regional activity planned or proposed by the Regional Executive Council, the Cluster Coordinator consults the Regional Executive Council liaison with regard to the dates of proposed activities. The Cluster Coordinator will provide a brief summary of all cluster activities to the Regional Executive Council liaison.

Section VII Membership

1. Professed Members

- a) *Active Member*: one who participates in the life of the community by attending fraternity meetings and events, participating in apostolates, and by providing financial support for the fraternity.
- b) *Excused Active Member* (see General Constitutions (hereafter GC) Art. 53.3): 1) one who has been excused from attending fraternity meetings, either on a temporary or permanent basis, but does provide financial support to the community, or; 2) one who neither attends meetings nor supports the community financially, but who the fraternity has excused from such obligations.
 - i. Excused members are professed members of a fraternity who, for good reason have been excused from one or more of the obligations of Secular Franciscans.
 - ii. A professed member may be excused from attendance at the monthly meeting because of extenuating family obligations, work obligation, poor health or distance.
 - iii. An excused member is not freed from other obligations such as praying some daily office, wearing the external sign of the Order (the Tau) [NAFRA Statutes, Art. 16.4.], and contributing to the fraternity common fund.
 - iv. Under special circumstances, if a member's income is extremely meager s/he may be excused from contributing to the common fund.
 - v. Excused status should be reviewed and renewed annually.
 - vi. Excused members are part of the fraternity membership and are reported on the Region's annual report.

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2. Temporary Provisions for Members (GC article 56 and 57) affect status in the Local Fraternity (example; Fair Share is not required in the case of Inactive), but membership in the Order is not affected. Temporary Provisions involve exclusion from the meetings and activities of the fraternity, including the right of active and passive voice, and other obligations approved by the local Fraternity council).
 - a) Inactive Members (Temporary Voluntary Withdrawal -- GC Art 56)
 - i. Professed Secular Franciscans, who do not attend meetings, nor support the community financially, and who, after personal invitations to return to fraternity, reject or ignore the invitation, will be termed inactive and will not be carried on the fraternity's membership rolls nor be reported as members of NAFRA. (cf. – GC 56.1 and 56.3)
3. Definitive Provisions for Members (GC Art 58) constitute withdrawal and/or removal from the Secular Franciscan Order.
 - a) Definitive Provisions
 - i. Voluntary Definitive Withdrawal (GC Art 58.1)
 - ii. Decree of Dismissal (GC Art 58.2,3, 4) for serious causes, rejection of the Faith and/or defection from ecclesial communion. The local council must request this action from the council of the next higher level of Fraternity. The higher Fraternity will issue the Decree of Dismissal if warranted.
 - iii. Decree of Dismissal contains the inherent right of Appeal to the Fraternity above the council who issues the decree. (GC Art 59)
4. Affiliate Members (NAFRA Statutes Art. 18 #13)
 - a) Affiliation with a local fraternity
 - i. Those who, without belonging to the Secular Franciscan Order, wish to participate in its life and activities (see GC Art. 53.5 and 103.1) according to Franciscan principles and teachings may be welcomed by the local fraternity, so as to make their communion living and effective. Individuals wishing to become affiliates should make their desire known by a written request to the local fraternity council, which makes a decision regarding the request.
 - ii. These affiliate brothers and sisters will have no juridical bond with the Secular Franciscan Order and are, therefore persons welcomed to love and be loved “as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ” (SFO Rule Art. 13). They may share the experiences and activities of the fraternity, without the right to vote.
 - iii. In order that the identity of the fraternity not be altered, the number of affiliates may not exceed 40% of the number of active professed members of a fraternity.
 - iv. Regional councils have the right to establish their own guidelines for the acceptance of affiliates.

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Section VIII

Relations with the National Fraternity

1. Pastoral and Fraternal visitations are to be requested by the Regional Executive Council as per the General Constitutions Article 63.2.g.
2. The Regional Minister is a member of the National Fraternity Council with voting rights (NS 8.3) The Regional Minister is to attend the NAFRA meetings with the travel expenses paid from the Regional Common Fund.
3. The Regional Fraternity contributes annually to the common fund of the National Fraternity (NS 25.3)

Section IX

Establishing a New Fraternity

1. Phase I: Newly Forming Groups: The provisions set forth in pages B8 through B10 of the *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order* (2005) shall constitute the manner of establishing a New Fraternity and the Newly Forming Group.
2. Phase II: Developing Emerging Communities: The provisions set forth in pages B10 and B11 of the *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order* (2005) shall constitute the manner of establishing Emerging Fraternity.
3. Phase III: Canonically Establishing a Fraternity: The provisions set forth in pages B11 and B12 of the *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order* (2005) shall constitute the manner of establishing Emerging Fraternity.

Section X

Reactivating an Established Fraternity

The provisions set forth in pages B17 and B18 of the *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order* (2005) shall constitute the manner of reactivating an Established Fraternity.

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Section XI Options for a Struggling Fraternity

A fraternity can struggle to survive in a number of ways. If it is determined that it can no longer actually survive as a functioning fraternity, there are a number of options open to the members and the fraternity itself. Some possibilities are listed here (HAS – B13):

1. The members of a struggling fraternity may have the fraternity de-activated and transfer their membership to an active fraternity and become fully participating members of that fraternity.
2. The members of a struggling fraternity may have their fraternity de-activated and transfer their membership to an active fraternity, participate in the activities of that fraternity, but maintain some self-autonomy by gathering occasionally on their own, in accordance with article 34 of the OFS General Constitutions:

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 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.

3. The members of the struggling fraternity may have their fraternity de-activated, transfer to an active fraternity, but establish themselves as a cell or satellite of an active fraternity in the spirit of article 18 (below) of the OFS General Constitutions and according to the norms or guidelines established by the regional fraternity. They may have one of their members attend the council meetings of the active fraternity as a non-voting member, representing the needs of the cell or satellite.

Article 18

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 50.2d), so long as they continue to participate 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)*

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Section XII

De-activating an Established Fraternity

1. When a canonically established fraternity no longer has the viability and stability to maintain its Secular Franciscan life, fraternity, and mission, it may be declared de-activated by the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity is bonded.
2. A canonically established fraternity can be de-activated for any one or more of the following reasons:
 - a) it no longer has at least five active professed members to allow for a minimum of a complete elected council (OFS Rule 21 & 22, Gen. Const., 46.2 & 49.1);
 - b) it no longer has regular fraternity meetings (a minimum of eight per year) for a period of three years (OFS Rule 24, Gen. Const., 53);
 - c) it no longer participates in the activities of the Regional Fraternity nor cooperates with the Regional Executive Council (OFS Rule 24, Gen. Const. 30.2 & 61.1 & 93.2);
 - d) it no longer contributes to the common fund or supports the higher level of fraternity (OFS Rule 25, Gen. Const. 30.3);
 - e) it has not had a new perpetual profession for at least three years (OFS Rule 23, *Ritual* p. 24);
 - f) it has not sought a pastoral or fraternal visitation for at least five years (OFS Rule 26, Gen. Const. 92.2);
 - g) it no longer has a sense of its Franciscan ecclesial and apostolic mission as a fraternity (OFS Rule 22, Gen. Const. 1.3 & 3.3 & 50).
3. The official de-activation of a fraternity happens in the following manner:
 - a) The Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants takes the initiative to conduct a pastoral visitation and the Regional Executive Council takes the initiative to conduct a fraternal visitation;
 - b) The Regional Executive Council discerns whether to approach the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity is bonded and records its discernment in its minutes as a result of the findings of the visitations;
 - c) The Regional Minister communicates in writing the request and advice of the Regional Executive Council to that Provincial Spiritual Assistant;
 - d) The Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity is bonded issues the decree of de-activation to the fraternity Minister with copies to the Regional Minister and the local bishop.

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4. When a fraternity is de-activated:

- a) provision will be made with the help of the Regional Executive Council for the remaining members to transfer their membership to the nearest active fraternity [(cf. Gen. Const. 55) See Art. 5];
- b) the goods of the fraternity, its library and records are acquired by the Regional Executive Council and kept in the Regional Fraternity's archives (Gen. Const. 48.1) [note: see these *Guidelines* Section V.H.5.d.ii for a list of fraternity property to be transferred to the archives];
- c) the common fund and other assets are either to be disposed of according to the decision of the remaining members or are put in an interest-bearing escrow account managed by the Regional Executive Council (Canon 122-123);
- d) a copy of the document of establishment (with the date of deactivation recorded on it) and a copy of the last list of active members are to be sent to the archives of the friar province to which the fraternity is affiliated and to the archives of the regional fraternity, and to the archives of the appropriate diocese.

5. Attaching a Disintegrating Fraternity to an Active Fraternity:

A disintegrating fraternity (one which would fall under the qualifications for deactivation according to the General Constitutions) that does not wish to completely disband could attach itself to an active fraternity in a variety of ways:

- a) The members of the disintegrating fraternity may have their own fraternity de-activated, transfer their membership to the active fraternity, and become full participating members of that fraternity.
- b) The members of the disintegrating fraternity may have their own fraternity de-activated, transfer their membership to the active fraternity, participate ordinarily in that fraternity's activities, but may maintain some self-autonomy by meeting occasionally (perhaps quarterly) on their own, in accordance with Article 34 of the General Constitutions.
- c) The members of the disintegrating fraternity may have their own fraternity de-activated, transfer their membership to the active fraternity, and may establish themselves as an autonomous satellite or cell community of the active fraternity in the spirit of Article 18 of the General Constitutions and according to the norms or guidelines established by the regional fraternity.

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Section XIII

Suspending a Canonically Established Fraternity

1. A canonically established fraternity can be suspended for the following reasons:
 - a) the repeated and prolonged or habitual default of the members in their corporate obligations for life in fraternity of observance of the Rule or fidelity to the Franciscan charism (Gen. Const. 56.2); (e.g., lack of visitations and/or elections; nonpayment of Fair Share; lack of participation at regional or national level; lack of apostolic action, etc.);
 - b) serious opposition or obstinacy toward the mandates of the OFS Rule, General Constitutions, and particular statutes (Gen. Const. 56.2);
 - c) the communal public rejection of the faith or the communal defection from ecclesial communion (Gen. Const. 58.3);
 - d) a communal act which is grave, external, imputable, officially documented and juridically proven (Gen. Const. 58.2).
2. The suspension of the fraternity is officially incurred in the following manner:
 - a) The Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants takes the initiative to conduct a pastoral visitation, and the Regional Executive Council takes the initiative to conduct a fraternal visitation.
 - b) As a result of the visitation, if the reason for suspension is not corrected by dialogue and personal presence, the Regional Executive Council issues three warnings signed by the Regional Minister and the president of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, each one at least three months after the preceding.
 - c) If the warnings produce no positive results, the Regional Executive Council discerns whether to request suspension from the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity is bonded and records its discernment in its minutes.
 - d) The Regional Minister communicates in writing the request and advice of the Regional Executive Council to that Provincial Spiritual Assistant.
 - e) The Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity is bonded enacts the decree of suspension and sends it to the fraternity Minister with copies to the Regional Minister and the local bishop.
3. When a fraternity is suspended:
 - a) Provision will be made with the help of the Regional Executive Council for the fraternity members to transfer their membership to the nearest active fraternity (cf. Gen. Const. 55) unless:

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- i. Article 56.2 of the General Constitutions is to be followed for the temporary suspension of individual members of the fraternity from life in the fraternity.
 - ii. Article 58 (nos. 2, 3, & 4) of the General Constitutions is to be followed for the definitive dismissal of individual members of that fraternity from the Secular Franciscan Order.
- b) The goods of the suspended fraternity, its library and records are acquired by the Regional Executive Council and kept in the regional fraternity archives (Gen. Const. 48.1);
 - c) The common fund and other assets of the suspended fraternity are to be frozen in an interest-bearing escrow account managed by the Regional Executive Council (Canon 122-3);
 - d) A copy of the document of establishment (with the date of suspension recorded on it) and a copy of the last list of active members are to be sent both to the archives of the friar province to which the fraternity is bonded, to the archives of the regional fraternity, and to the archives of the diocese;
 - e) The local ordinary of the diocese where the fraternity has been established is to be notified by the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the suspension and the reasons for it.

Section XIV

Fair Share

1. The Fair Share refers to an amount of money which each local fraternity contributes to the Common Fund of the Region in order that the Region may meet its operational expenses and the Region's Fair Share contribution to the National Fraternity. Each local fraternity's Fair Share contribution to the Region is based on a per capita amount set by the Region and based on the size of the fraternity's membership.
2. The amount of money needed to operate the Region each year is planned out and itemized by the Regional Treasurer, who is assisted by up to three members appointed by the Regional Executive Council (see these *Guidelines* Section V—Regional Finance Committee). This tentative budget is then submitted to the Regional Fraternity Council at the annual Regional Chapter for amendment or adjustment and a final vote.

Section XV

Financial Assistance Guidelines for Spiritual Assistants

A. Local Spiritual Assistant

1. The ordinary monthly stipend for a local Spiritual Assistant (when not a member of the fraternity) includes:

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- a) travel expenses at the approved mileage rate for attending the council meetings and fraternity gatherings;
 - b) the ordinary one-time ministry offering used in the diocese of the fraternity for meetings attended; **and**,
 - c) reimbursement for receipts submitted for office or ministerial supplies.
2. The ordinary monthly stipend for a local Spiritual Assistant (when a member of the fraternity) includes:
- a) travel expenses at the approved mileage rate for attending council meetings; **and**,
 - b) reimbursement for receipts submitted for office or ministerial supplies.

B. Regional Spiritual Assistant

1. The ordinary regular stipend for each Regional Spiritual Assistant from the Regional Council includes:
 - a) travel expenses at the approved mileage rate for attending the meetings of the Regional Executive Council;
 - b) an average of the ordinary one-time ministry offering used in the dioceses covered by the Regional Fraternity for meetings attended;
 - c) and, reimbursement for receipts submitted for office or ministerial supplies.
2. The special stipend for pastoral visits and for witnessing elections includes:
 - a) travel expenses;
 - b) a common offering agreed upon by a Regional Council for the fraternities in the Region.

Section XVI

Choosing a Spiritual Assistant

1. The initiative for choosing a “suitable and well prepared” Spiritual Assistant may come from either the fraternity itself, from the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the religious community to which it is bonded, and/or from the Regional Spiritual Assistants.
 - a) The council of a local fraternity:
 - 1) First, takes the initiative in requesting from the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the Province to which the fraternity is bonded a “suitable and well prepared” Spiritual Assistant when:
 - i. it is without an appointed Spiritual Assistant of any sort whatsoever, or;
 - ii. there are concerns about its current Spiritual Assistant that remain unresolved after dialog with him or her at the fraternity level, or;
 - iii. the current Spiritual Assistant is moving on and a replacement is to be found.

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- 2) Next, informs the Regional Minister and Regional Spiritual Assistants of the need for a local Spiritual Assistant. If the fraternity knows of a possible candidate(s) in their area who is (are) suitable and well-prepared to serve as a Spiritual Assistant, please forward the name(s) and relevant background to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant and Regional Executive Council for consideration.
 - 3) Once the Provincial Spiritual Assistant is made aware of possible candidates within his own community and/or beyond, he will explore the options and then consult with the Provincial Minister to determine who is (are) the top candidates. He will then notify the fraternity of the recommendations of the Province and, if agreeable to them, invite the candidate(s) to attend a council and/or fraternity meeting where all parties can mutually interview each other and explore whether there is a good fit between them. NOTE: It is recommended that the fraternity be familiar with the SA job description and provide additional activities desired from the potential SA so that he/she is aware of the fraternity's expectations.
 - 4) Awaits the appointment of the local Spiritual Assistant by the appropriate Provincial Spiritual Assistant. Finally, the appointment of the new Spiritual Assistant is ratified by the Regional Executive Council. [NOTE: a local fraternity council does not decide upon, obtain the services of, contract with, hire, or appoint a Spiritual Assistant on its own authority].
- b) A Provincial or Regional Spiritual Assistant:
- 1) May take the initiative in seeking out a "suitable and well prepared" Spiritual Assistant for a local fraternity when:
 - i. the Regional or Provincial Spiritual Assistant is aware of a vacancy in spiritual assistance and no initiative is being taken on the part of the local fraternity;
 - ii. an outgoing Spiritual Assistant has recommended replacement;
 - iii. a particular problem requires the intervention of the Provincial or Regional Spiritual Assistant.
 - 2) Must consult with the council of the local fraternity needing assistance as to whether the proposed Spiritual Assistant is both acceptable as a person and suitable for the needs of the fraternity.
 - 3) Must obtain the clearance of the appointee's religious or diocesan superior if the candidate is a member of the diocesan clergy or a member of a religious institute other than one's own province (even friars of the same obedience).
 - 4) Ascertains, for the appointment of a lay OFS member, whether the appointee has the qualifications and experience in OFS spirituality and mission.
 - 5) Appoints the Spiritual Assistant according to the statutes or traditions in force within a particular friar province, always keeping in mind that any appointment is ultimately – either in person or by delegation – the responsibility of the friar Provincial Minister.

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Section XVII

Transferring *Altius Moderamen*

The steps for transferring a Fraternity to the *Altius Moderamen* of another Friar entity are:

1. The Local Minister:
 - a) with the consent of the Council of the fraternity (or emerging community) wishing to transfer to the care of another friar province of the same obedience to that of another jurisdiction – writes to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the province to which the fraternity wishes to bond itself, detailing the reasons for the transfer to another entity and providing copies of pertinent documentation and correspondence, particularly a copy of the Document of Establishment or a verification or affidavit of canonical establishment; and,
 - b) with the consent of the council of the fraternity (or emerging community) wishing to transfer to the care of another friar province of the same obedience or to that of another jurisdiction – asks the Regional Minister and the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants to write letters of recommendation to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity desires to transfer its bonding; and,
 - c) with the consent of the council of the fraternity (or emerging community) wishing to transfer to the care of another friar province of the same obedience or to that of another jurisdiction – informs the friar province of the origin of its desire to transfer bonding, detailing the reasons for the move.
2. The Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity is bonded writes to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the province to which the fraternity desires to transfer bonding, giving his consent to the transfer.
3. If the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the friar province to which the fraternity desires to transfer its bonding accepts this transfer of *altius moderamen* after having consulted with the friar Provincial Minister, then he issues an official letter, in the name of the friar Provincial Minister, to accept the responsibility of *altius moderamen* for the fraternity and appoints a Spiritual Assistant for the fraternity.

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Section XVIII

The Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation

1. Procedure for initiating the visitation:
 - a) Each fraternity is ultimately responsible for its spiritual and temporal development. Therefore, a fraternity should request a Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation from the Regional Executive Council at least three months prior to the three-year anniversary date of the previous visitation (Rule #26).
 - b) Ideally, a visitation should occur approximately eighteen months after a new Council is elected.
2. Goals of the visitation (Rule #26):
 - a) to promote fidelity to the Franciscan Charism;
 - b) to promote observance of the Rule; and,
 - c) to promote support in the life of the Fraternity.
3. Role of the pastoral and fraternal visitors:
 - a) to help the Fraternity to evaluate itself;
 - b) to provide inspiration and information; and,
 - c) to provide an experience of unity with the Region and the Order.
4. Stipends:
 - a) Stipends and travel expenses for both the Fraternal and Pastoral visitors will be provided by the fraternity.
 - b) As of 2016, the approved all-inclusive stipend for Lady Poverty Region is \$50 per visitor. No mileage reimbursement is required.

Section XIX

The Chapter of Election

1. In the Chapter of Election, the local fraternity meets for the purpose of electing its Council every three years. The Chapter will follow the norms presented in the OFS governing documents and these Regional Guidelines.
2. At least three months prior to the Chapter of Elections, the Local Fraternity Minister, with the approval of the Local Fraternity Council, shall advise the Regional Minister and the Regional Spiritual Assistant of the date of the proposed Chapter and respectfully request that they provide a presider and an ecclesial witness.

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3. At least three months prior to the Chapter, the Local Fraternity Council shall appoint a Chair for a Nominating Committee which will present a slate of nominees to the members of the Local Fraternity and the Regional Executive Council. This presentation shall be made **one** month prior to the date of the Chapter.
4. Nominating Committee members generally are not permitted to be nominated for office; however, a Nominating Committee member may be nominated from the floor during an election.
5. Ideally, nominees for Local Fraternity Minister, Vice-Minister and Formation Director should be permanently professed for at least three (3) years.
6. Nominees for all other positions must be professed for no less than one (1) year.
7. Individuals who transfer from one local fraternity to another are precluded from being elected to the Council of the fraternity into which they have transferred until they have been members of that fraternity for at least twelve (12) months.
8. A member who has been absent from fraternity life for a majority of the twelve (12) months prior to an election shall not be considered for nomination to serve as Minister, Vice-Minister or Formation Director. *See SFO General Constitutions, Article 30 and Article 53.3.*
9. It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee and the presider of the Chapter of Elections to assure that the requirements for nomination have been met.
10. Absentee nominees are permitted *provided* they have submitted in writing their willingness to accept nomination for a specific position (or positions) and their willingness to serve, if elected.
11. The Regional Spiritual Assistants may delegate the local Spiritual Assistant as ecclesial witness at a Chapter of Elections on the Local level.
12. An out-going Minister cannot be elected Vice-Minister (GC 79.2).
13. It is strongly recommended that the out-going minister not serve in any position of a new Council.
14. Stipends:
 - a) Stipends and travel expenses for both the Regional Executive Council presider and friar witness will be provided by the fraternity.
 - b) The approved Chapter of Election all-inclusive stipend for Lady Poverty Region is \$50 per visitor. No additional mileage reimbursement is required.