

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER – USA

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS



REGIONAL FRATERNITY HANDBOOK

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity is a union of the Secular Franciscan fraternities, reflecting a rich diversity of ethnic heritage, located in Northern and Central New Jersey, Staten Island, Manhattan, and Southern Westchester in the state of New York.

We seek to build a community among fraternity members, along with the entire Franciscan family, in our home and work situations, in our service to the Roman Catholic Church, and in the public arena. We strive to promote a life of prayer and simplicity, peace and justice, and respect for all creation. Members pledge themselves, “through their baptism and profession to proclaim the ‘good news’ by their life and words,” going from “gospel to life and life to gospel.”

Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order – USA follows the Rule of St. Francis of Assisi as approved by the Roman Catholic Church, the General Constitutions, the International Statutes (henceforth called “OFS governing documents”), the Ritual and the Code of Canon Law. We are brothers and sisters of penance, working as a force for the good of the Church and the human community.

This Regional Handbook, which may be updated from time to time, is meant to assist our fraternities in their “day to day” operations.

With the help of **Our Lady of the Angels**, our titular patroness, we promote our member fraternities by providing direction and resources for their understanding of our Rule, our Constitutions, our National Statutes, and our Regional Guidelines.

PREFACE

The Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) is a public association in the Church. It is divided into fraternities at various levels: local, regional, national and international. Each one has its own juridical personality within the Church (Constitutions 1,5).

The Holy See has entrusted the pastoral care and spiritual assistance of the OFS, because it belongs to the same spiritual family, to the Franciscan First Order and the 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 (Constitutions 1,4).

The Secular Franciscans commit themselves by their profession to live the Gospel according to Franciscan spirituality in their secular condition.

They seek to deepen, in light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the OFS:

- 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 life to Gospel;”
- In the personal and communal dimensions of this journey. (Constitutions 8,1-2).

CHAPTER ONE

THE FRATERNITY COUNCIL

According to Articles 49-51 of the Constitutions, the Council of the local fraternity is composed of the following offices: minister, vice-minister, secretary, treasurer and director of formation. Other offices (councilors) may be added according to the needs of each fraternity. The spiritual assistant (SA) of the fraternity forms part of the council by right (Constitutions 90,2).

It is the duty of the local fraternity council: (refer to articles 50-52 in the General Constitutions)

- a. 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;
- b. 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.
- c. to decide on the acceptance and admission to profession of new brothers and sisters;
- d. to establish a fraternal dialogue with members in particular difficulties and to adopt consequent measures;
- e. to receive the request for withdrawal and to decide on the suspension of a member from the fraternity;
- f. to decide on the establishment of sections or groups in conformity with the Constitutions and the statutes;

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

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.

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.

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.

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;
- 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.

The director 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 candidate for a commitment to live according to the Rule.

The treasurer 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.

CHAPTER TWO

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

A Secular Franciscan Servant Leader:

- Demonstrates spiritual and psychological maturity
- Shows respect for every member of the fraternity
- Demonstrates the Franciscan charism by their actions
- Is compassionate and just
- Is humble and open to the wisdom of others
- Is willing to collaborate with and empower others
- Possesses good communication skills, and
- Is willing and able to share necessary information with the entire fraternity

Talents of Servant Leader:

- The ability to acknowledge and encourage fraternity members to explore new horizons and grow within the fraternity
- The ability to recognize and respect the true worth of every fraternity member
- The ability to place the needs of the fraternity before their own personal needs
- Communication skills that are the binding force that pulls the fraternity together

- The foresight to accept fresh new ideas proposed by members of the fraternity
- The ability to properly focus and mobilize the energy and enthusiasm of the fraternity members
- Understands that they cannot be successful without COLLABORATION; COMMUNITY; COMMUNICATION; COMMITMENT AND CONVERSION

CHAPTER THREE

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE

As a concrete sign of communion and co-responsibility, 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 superiors as well as for a fraternal visit from those of the higher fraternities, according to the norm of the constitutions. (*OFS Rule 26*)

The Heart of Spiritual Assistance

- The spiritual and pastoral care of the OFS, 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.
- 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.

- Therefore, as a concrete sign of communion and co-responsibility, religious superiors must assure spiritual assistance to all the fraternities of the SFO.

Duty of Pastoral and Spiritual Assistance

- 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 OFS at all levels must be assured as a fundamental element of communion. (OFS *Constitutions* 89.1).
- The spiritual and pastoral care of the OFS, 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. (Statutes for Spiritual Assistance 1)
- The spiritual and pastoral care of the OFS, entrusted by the Church to the Franciscan First Order and to the TOR, is above all the duty of their general and provincial ministers.
- The Spiritual Assistant needs to be the voice of conscience among the Seculars constantly reminding us that the Rule calls us to “build a more fraternal and evangelical world do that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.” (Art. 14-19)
- The *altius moderamen* mentioned in can. 303: “Associations whose members share in the spirit of some religious institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and *strive for Christian perfection under the higher*

direction of the same institute are called third orders or some other appropriate name.”

- The goal of *the altius moderamen* is to ensure the triple fidelity to the charism, to the Church, to the Franciscan Family. Concretely it is exercised in this way:
- The general and provincial ministers exercise their office with respect to the OFS through:
 - a. the establishment of fraternities;
 - b. the pastoral visits;
 - c. the spiritual assistance to the fraternities at the various levels.
- They may exercise this office personally or through a delegate. (OFS *General Constitutions* 86.1)
- The *altius moderamen* aims to guarantee the fidelity of the OFS to the Franciscan charism, the communion with the Church and the union with the Franciscan Family, values that represent a life commitment for the Secular Franciscans.

Reference Materials – all Spiritual Assistants must have a copy of Franciscan Family Connections and the Handbook for Spiritual Assistance.

CHAPTER FOUR

VOCATIONS

“Come to Him, to that living stone, ...and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house.”(1Peter 2:4).

“Our vocation is a real vocation. Like every vocation, it is the call of God.

Vocation is the initiative of God. The response is ours. Everyone has a vocation; we only have to hear the call.” (Tibor Kauser, OFS, General Minister).

The Franciscan vocation is an explicit, free and responsible gospel choice, expressed in the act of being admitted to the Secular Franciscan Order and confirmed by profession.

“Calling” is a basic concept found throughout Scripture. It is exemplified by the call of Abraham in the Old Testament, the call of Jesus in the New Testament, and the call of St. Francis in the twelfth century.

Pope St. Paul VI highlighted this concept in his statement: “God, who reserves for Himself the right to call whom He chooses, asks, nevertheless for the collaboration of His ministers so that individuals may be able to understand the action of grace and so may be encouraged to bring to maturity the germ which has been planted within them.” Realizing that God initially “calls” a person to the Secular Franciscan Order, still, every person within the Order has the responsibility to nurture the genuine call. The purpose of the formation process is to accompany the person on their journey of discovery of God, of St. Francis, and of the individual’s own call. (Source: Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, 1985).

Various resources exist for promoting and nurturing vocations – the Vocation Toolkit, our promotional brochure, the FUN Manual and Come and See events.

Who are the Secular Franciscans? ([En-español-abajo](#))

Have you been feeling that you would like to offer something more of yourself to God?

But, you've been wondering how to do that when your life is so busy?

The answer to this desire may be the Secular Franciscan Order.

All of us are called by God to serve Him in special ways. However, those of us who are Secular Franciscans have been called to serve God by following in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

Gathering in fraternity gives you a true sense of home—of being with like-minded people all working together to live out their deepened commitment to follow Christ

- The Secular Franciscan Order was formerly known as the **Third Order of St. Francis** and even longer ago as the **Order of Penitents**. Our foundations come from the desire of ordinary people living in the times of St. Francis who wanted to join his new order but could not leave their families and their own busy lives.

The old term Third Order comes from the fact that the order of Friars was established first, the order of Poor Clares was established second, and the order of lay people was established third. Our name now, **Secular Franciscans (OFS)**, is also descriptive because it tells who we are in the present day world.

- **The Secular Franciscan Order is a true order of the church**—our Rule is approved by Rome. HOWEVER as lay people:
 - **We are not bound by vows.** At our profession we promise to live the **spirit** of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. **This simply means that we promise to live the spirit of moderation in all things according to our state in life.**
 - **We do not live in community;** we are married and single; we are young and old; we come from all different cultures and all different walks of life. Some of us are hospital workers, teachers, attorneys, factory workers, nurses, maintenance workers, or doctors. You probably know some Secular Franciscans already. St. Francis Parish has an active fraternity which has been growing. There are also many fraternities in Bergen County and in the state of New Jersey as a whole.
- As a matter of fact the Secular Franciscan Order is a world-wide Order
 - In the United States alone there are 637 local fraternities with approximately 12, 739 professed members.
 - In the world there are about 360, 000 professed Secular Franciscans
 - Our region has 34 fraternities in New Jersey, Manhattan, Westchester and Staten Island.

Our fraternities serve as our community and our Franciscan family

 - Generally, we gather in fraternity **once or twice a month** to pray, study, witness, engage in apostolic work, and share community with one another. When we are professed we promise to live the Gospel as set down in our Rule of life which has been approved by the church
 - **What this means is that we promise to live out more fully the commitment that was already made for us at our Baptism by following the example St. Francis of Assisi.**

- Although we do not go out to preach the Gospel as the Friars do, **through our example, we give witness to the message of Christ in the world.** Our Rule tells us to go from Gospel to Life and Life to the Gospel. This means that we take the teachings of Christ and apply them to our everyday lives.
- **We try to set the example of what it is to bring peace and hope into our communities and the world because as Secular Franciscans we learn to focus less on our personal needs and desires and more on what is beneficial to those around us-- whether that be in here in Hackensack or in a far away part of the world where there is war and suffering.**
- Our Rule calls us to concentrate on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in our service to others.

IF YOU FEEL THAT GOD IS CALLING YOU TO SOMETHING MORE, PERHAPS SOMETHING SPECIAL, IN YOUR LIFE AS A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN, YOU MIGHT WANT TO LOOK INTO THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER.

- The process of becoming a professed Secular Franciscan is a journey that involves **three separate stages** and culminates in a lifelong commitment to live the Gospel following the example of St. Francis of Assisi.
- **To be admitted to the OFS in the United States**, a person must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church (i.e., have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) in addition to being an actively practicing Catholic.

A person who believes he or she has been called to be a Secular Franciscan begins by attending a few fraternity meetings (up to 6) and getting to know the members and the activities of the fraternity. This is known as the period of **Orientation** which should **last no less than three months.** After this time period, we **welcome the candidate**, and he or she becomes an **Inquirer.**

Once he or she has been welcomed, the newcomer enters the period of Inquiry. This begins the time of study about the Franciscan way of life. This period usually lasts 6 months—but can take longer depending upon individual circumstances.

At the end of this initial period of study, **the newcomer enters the period of Candidacy** which lasts for **no less than eighteen months and no more than thirty-six months.** During all of this time, candidates are becoming familiar with fraternity life and with the spiritual life of a secular Franciscan. **After this time of study and participation, the candidate can become a professed member of the order.**

To find a fraternity near you, contact Our Lady of the Angels Region: OLAngels@aol.com

¿Quiénes son los franciscanos seglares?

¿Se ha sentido que le gustaría ofrecer algo más de sí mismo a Dios?

Pero, usted ha estado preguntando ¿cómo hacer eso cuando su vida está tan ocupada?

La respuesta a este deseo puede ser la Orden Franciscana Seglar.

Todos nosotros estamos llamados por Dios para servirle de una manera especial. Sin embargo, aquellos de nosotros que somos los franciscanos seglares han sido llamados a servir a Dios, siguiendo las huellas de San Francisco de Asís.

Reunirse en fraternidad le da un verdadero sentido acogedor--de estar con personas de ideas afines, todos trabajando juntos para vivir su compromiso de seguir a Cristo más profundamente.

- La Orden Franciscana Seglar se conocía anteriormente como **la Tercera Orden de San Francisco** y también como **la Orden de los Penitentes**. Nuestras raíces se encuentran en el deseo de la gente común que vivía en los tiempos de San Francisco de unirse a su nuevo orden, pero no pudieron dejar a sus familias ni sus propias vidas ocupadas.

El antiguo término Tercera Orden viene del hecho de que la orden de los Frailes se estableció primero, la orden de las Clarisas se estableció segundo, y la orden de los laicos se estableció tercero. Nuestro nombre ahora, **la Orden Franciscana Seglar (OFS)**, también es descriptiva porque dice quiénes somos en el mundo actual.

- **La Orden Franciscana Seglar es una verdadera orden de la iglesia**-nuestra Regla es aprobada por Roma. SIN EMBARGO, como laicos:

- o **No estamos obligados por votos**. En nuestra profesión nos comprometemos a vivir el **espíritu** de pobreza, castidad y obediencia. **Esto simplemente significa que nos comprometemos a vivir el espíritu de moderación en todas las cosas de acuerdo a nuestro estado en la vida.**

- o **No vivimos en comunidad**; somos casados y solteros; somos jóvenes y viejos; venimos de todas las culturas y todos los diferentes ámbitos de la vida. Algunos de nosotros somos trabajadores de hospitales, maestros, abogados, obreros, enfermeras, trabajadores de mantenimiento, o médicos. Usted probablemente conoce a algunos franciscanos seglares ya. La Parroquia de San Francisco tiene una fraternidad activa que ha estado creciendo. También hay fraternidades en el condado de Bergen y en el estado de Nueva Jersey y en Manhattan.

- De hecho, la Orden Franciscana Seglar es una Orden mundial.

- o Sólo en los Estados Unidos hay 637 fraternidades locales con aproximadamente 12, 739 miembros profesos.

- o En el mundo hay alrededor de 360,000 franciscanos seglares profesos.

- o Nuestra región cuenta con 34 fraternidades en Nueva Jersey, Manhattan, Westchester y Staten Island.

Nuestras fraternidades sirven como nuestra comunidad y nuestra familia franciscana

o Por lo general, nos reunimos en fraternidad una o dos veces al mes para orar, estudiar, dar testimonio, participar en la labor apostólica, y compartir comunidad unos con otros. Cuando nos profesamos nos comprometemos a vivir el Evangelio, según se ha establecido en nuestra Regla de vida aprobada por la iglesia.

o **Lo que esto significa es que nos comprometemos a vivir más plenamente el compromiso que ya se hizo para nosotros en nuestro bautismo, siguiendo el ejemplo de San Francisco de Asís.**

o Aunque no salimos a predicar el Evangelio del modo que lo hacen los frailes, **a través de nuestro ejemplo, damos testimonio del mensaje de Cristo en el mundo.** Nuestra Regla nos pide dedicarnos a la lectura del Evangelio pasando del Evangelio a la vida y de la vida al Evangelio. Esto significa que tomamos las enseñanzas de Cristo y las aplicamos a nuestra vida cotidiana.

o **Nosotros tratamos de dar el ejemplo de lo que es llevar la paz y la esperanza a nuestras comunidades y al mundo porque como franciscanos seculares aprendemos a enfocarnos menos en nuestras necesidades y deseos personales y más en lo que es beneficioso para los que lo rodean -- que sea aquí en Hackensack o en una parte lejana del mundo donde hay guerra y sufrimiento.**

• Nuestra Regla nos llama a concentrarnos en la Justicia, la Paz y la Integridad de la Creación en nuestro servicio a los demás.

SI USTED SIENTE QUE DIOS LE ESTÁ LLAMANDO A ALGO MÁS, TAL VEZ ALGO ESPECIAL, EN SU VIDA COMO CATÓLICO CRISTIANO, QUIZÁ DEBE INVESTIGAR LA ORDEN FRANCISCANA SEGLAR.

• El proceso de hacerse franciscano seglar profeso es un viaje espiritual que supone **tres etapas distintas** y culmina en un compromiso de toda la vida a vivir el Evangelio siguiendo el ejemplo de San Francisco de Asís.

• **Para ser admitida a la OFS en los Estados Unidos**, una persona debe ser un miembro plenamente iniciado de la Iglesia católica (es decir, que ha recibido los sacramentos del Bautismo, Confirmación y Eucaristía), además de ser un católico practicante activo.

Una persona que cree que él o ella ha sido llamado a ser un franciscano seglar comienza por asistir a algunas reuniones de la fraternidad (hasta 6) para conocer a los miembros y las actividades de la Fraternidad. Esto se conoce como el período de **orientación** que debe durar **no menos de tres meses**. Después de este período de tiempo, **damos la bienvenida al candidato**, y él o ella llega a ser un "Inquirer".

Una vez que él o ella ha sido acogido, el recién llegado entra en el periodo de **investigación**. Esto comienza el tiempo de estudio acerca de la forma de vida franciscana. Este período suele durar 6 meses, pero puede tomar más tiempo dependiendo de las circunstancias individuales.

Al final de este período inicial de estudio, **el recién llegado entra en el periodo de candidatura que tiene una duración de no menos de dieciocho meses, y no más de treinta y seis meses**. Durante todo este tiempo, los candidatos van conociendo mejor la vida de la fraternidad y la vida espiritual de un franciscano seglar. **Después de este tiempo de estudio y participación, el candidato puede llegar a ser un miembro profeso de la orden.**

Para ponerse en contacto con una fraternidad cerca de donde usted vive, mande un correo a Our Lady of the Angels Region: OLAngels@aol.com

CHAPTER FIVE

COUNCIL AND FRATERNITY MEETINGS

Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity actively embraces the conviction expressed in the Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership that every Fraternity Meeting/Gathering should contain at least these four elements:

- 1) Prayer; (of a liturgical nature, especially the Liturgy of the Hours and where possible the Mass)
- 2) Ongoing Formation; (Franciscan in nature)
- 3) Necessary Business and announcements; and
- 4) Social Time.

Although the amount of time allotted to these elements may vary from one Meeting/Gathering to the next, each of these elements should be present at every Meeting/Gathering of the Fraternity and of the Council at the local level. Priority of placement and time allocation in the agenda/schedule should ordinarily be given to Ongoing Formation to help the brothers and sisters grow in their Franciscan vocation.

(Note: The business of the fraternity is carried out by the Council).

CHAPTER SIX

ELECTION PROCEDURES

BEFORE THE ELECTION

- When the election request is received a member of the executive council is asked to preside at the election.
- One of the region Spiritual Assistants (or the fraternity Spiritual Assistant if necessary) is asked to be the Friar Witness

- The Secular Franciscan Presider should contact the fraternity minister ahead of time to go over election procedures.
- The fraternity council should discuss with its members the importance of holding office in the fraternity
- The sections of the Constitutions delineating council positions should be distributed and discussed
- A nominating committee should be appointed
- A list of candidates should be formed (every effort should be made to have more than one person nominated for each office.)
- Those nominated for office must have been professed for at least three years. Members who have transferred from another fraternity should have been a part of fraternity life for three years before running for office.
- The fraternity council should have prepared ahead of time:
 - A list of those nominated
 - A list of those eligible to vote (Candidates and Inquirers cannot vote)
 - A suitable place for the election
 - A chalkboard or a flip chart to mark down the vote
 - A basket or box to collect the ballots
 - Enough ballot sheets (quarter sheets of paper) to cover the need for two or three votes. Ballots should be blank—no names printed at all.
 - Pencils or pens for everyone

ON THE DAY OF THE ELECTION

The Presider

- Makes sure the environment is suitable for the election procedure.
- Reviews the nominations to make sure that they conform to requirements.
- Appoints the secretary of the elective chapter and two tellers. It is preferable that these three not be voting members of the fraternity.
- Announces that the friar representing the next higher fraternity is the “Friar Witness”. (As stated above, in an emergency, the Friar Witness may be the fraternity spiritual assistant.)

The Friar Witness

- Begins with the prayer service from the Ritual (p. 41).
- Takes his place before the assembled fraternity to the right or left of the President.

The President:

- Says the opening prayer from the Ritual (p. 41) and calls for complete silence.
- Confirms the number of voters, (establish quorum: number of active members in attendance/half + 1=the quorum) separates voters from non-voters and announces the number of votes required for election.
 - 2/3 on first ballot for a third term.
 - Majority for others (one half of all votes +1)
- With the help of the tellers, the President counts out the same number of ballots as voters.
- The President will ask three times for nominations from the floor in addition to those already nominated. If any, checks to be sure that these candidates fulfill the requirements—i.e. professed at least three years, member in good standing.
- Asks tellers to distribute ballots to voters
- Instructs voters to write only one name on the ballot (blank ballots or ballots with more than one name are invalid.) They may also write in any other professed member.
- Asks tellers to collect the ballots and count the votes out loud while the secretary of the election, the President and the Friar Witness tally the votes.
- If there is no **absolute majority** (one half of all votes +1) on the first ballot, repeat the vote.
- If there is no **absolute majority** on the second ballot, the top two candidates are the only nominees for the third ballot.

- In the elections for those **other** than Minister or Vice Minister, if there is no absolute majority on the first ballot, then a second ballot is taken. Only a **relative majority** (the greatest number, but not necessarily more than half) is needed to win the second ballot in these cases.
- When someone is elected, the secretary of the election announces the name and office according to the formula found on p. 42 of the Ritual:
 - **In the name of Christ, Amen. I announce that the newly elected Minister (vice-minister, secretary, etc.) of _____ Fraternity is _____**
- The Presider asks the newly elected: _____, **do you accept this election?**
- The newly elected responds: **Yes, I do.**
- The Presider then says: **In the name of the Church and the Franciscan Family, I confirm the election of _____ as the Minister (etc.) of _____ of the Secular Franciscan Order.**
- Each newly elected Council member completes the elections results form with the required information.
- At the end of the elections, the official election results form is signed by the Presider as the president of the elective chapter and by the Friar Witness.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS

- The newly elected Council recites the Creed. The Presider should provide copies of the Creed.
- The installation of the Council proceeds as *on p. 42-43 of the Ritual*:
- **Council recites together:**
 - **We, the council members of _____ Fraternity, accept this responsibility and service of leadership. Before almighty God, we promise to live daily the gospel life in the spirit of our seraphic father St. Francis and to exercise our new ministry to the best of our ability. We ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the cooperation of this fraternity, so that together as the Family of Francis we may witness to the gospel, may be instruments of peace, and may build a more fraternal and evangelical world, so that the Kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.**

- Afterwards the Presider says:
 - **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.**
 - **All: Blessed be God forever!**
- The Presider 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 more enthusiastically.**
- After a moment of silence, all join in 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.**
- The Presider will take a photo of the new Council.
- The presider will send the election results form and the photo to the Regional Minister.
- The ceremony concludes with the blessing of the Friar Witness.
- All come forward to congratulate the newly elected Council.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TRANSFER, WITHDRAWAL, SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

TRANSFER

General Constitutions, Article 55 states: “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.”

Transfers are most often requested for one of two reasons: (1) the member will be moving to another location and can no longer participate in their fraternity or (2) the local fraternity to which they belong has been deactivated.

It is important to note:

- Those requesting a transfer for reasons other than the above should first discuss their situation with the Council including the Spiritual Assistant of the fraternity of which they are a member.
- The receiving fraternity is free to accept, or to not accept a transfer request.

Procedure for transfer:

1. The professed member or candidate requesting the transfer completes relevant sections of Page 2 of the transfer form and retains a copy for themselves, and sends the entire 4-page form to the Minister of the Fraternity from which they are transferring (Fraternity of Origin).
2. The Minister of the Fraternity of Origin completes Page 3, retains a copy for the fraternity records and sends all 4 pages of this form to the Minister

of the Fraternity to which the member wishes to transfer (Receiving Fraternity).

3. Before the transfer is complete, there must be a period of discernment (a minimum of several months from the submission of the transfer papers but not more than a year). Modification of this timeframe is left to the discretion of the receiving fraternity council. During this time the transferring member and the Receiving Fraternity get to know each other. In addition, the Minister of the Receiving Fraternity must consult with the Minister of the Fraternity of Origin to obtain additional details about the transferee not contained in this form.

4. The Council of the Receiving Fraternity will interview the transferee. A council vote on whether to accept the transfer follows. The Minister of the Receiving Fraternity then completes Page 4, retains a copy for the fraternity files, and sends a copy to the Minister of the Fraternity of Origin and the Minister(s) of the Region(s) involved.

5. If questions or difficulties arise during this process the Regional Executive Council(s), and if necessary the National Executive Council, should be consulted.

If the Receiving Fraternity accepts the transfer:

1. the member is notified by the receiving fraternity,
2. the transfer is recorded in the registers of both the Fraternity of Origin and the Receiving Fraternity
3. notification is made to the next higher level to record the transfer in the National Database and
4. the Receiving Fraternity then assumes the responsibility of the Fair Share payment for the transferee.

If the Receiving Fraternity does not accept the transfer:

The member who requested the transfer may appeal to the Receiving Fraternity Council or request a review by the Regional Executive Council(s) to which the two fraternities belong or if necessary the National Executive Council.

WITHDRAWAL - TEMPORARY

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 spiritual assistant with the person concerned. If the reasons appear to be well founded, and after the brother or sister in difficulty has been given time to reconsider, the council agrees to the request.

(Constitutions, Art.56.1)

WITHDRAWAL – PERMANENT (DEFINITIVE)

The brother or sister who intends to withdraw definitively from the Order, communicates so in writing to the fraternity minister. The minister and the spiritual assistant, 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 in writing to the person concerned. The definitive withdrawal is recorded in the fraternity register and communicated to the council of the next higher level. (Constitutions, Art.58.1)

SUSPENSION

The repeated and prolonged default in the obligations in 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. Voluntary withdrawal or the provision for suspension must be noted in the register of the fraternity. Suspension and voluntary withdrawal involves exclusion from the meetings and activities of the fraternity including the right of active and passive voice, but membership in the Order is not affected. (Constitutions, Art. 56.2-3)

DISMISSAL

In case of serious causes, provided they are external, imputable and juridically proven, the minister and the spiritual assistant of the fraternity, with charity and prudence, discuss the matter with the individual and keep the Council informed. The individual is given time to reflect and discern, eventually with the help of an external and competent expert. If the time for reflection and discernment passes without any result, the fraternity Council requests the Council of the higher level to dismiss the individual from the Order. The request must be accompanied by all relevant documentation. The Council of the higher level will issue the decree of dismissal after having collegially examined the request and the relevant documentation.

A 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. The

local fraternity should offer fraternal help. The Council of the higher level, upon request of the local Council, collects the proofs and officially declares the person has ceased to be a member of the Order. The decree of dismissal, in order to become effective, must be confirmed by the national Council to whom all documentation will be sent. (Constitutions, Art 58.2-3)

CHAPTER EIGHT

MEMBER STATUS: ACTIVE, EXCUSED, LAPSED

Our Lady of the Angels Region employs the definitions for active, active/excused and lapsed members of the Order as found in the National Statutes (NS), article #18.7. The Region also embraces the descriptions for Orientation, Inquiry, and Candidacy as found in the National Statutes, articles #19.1, #19.2.a and #19.2.b along with the Newly Professed outlined in the General Constitutions, article #44.2.

ACTIVE

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.

LAPSED

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 deliberately 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.

ACTIVE EXCUSED

An active but excused fraternity member is one who does not attend fraternity meetings due to health, family, work or distance, but continues to provide financial support to the community.

CHAPTER NINE

FAIR SHARE

“Fair Share” is not dues. “Fair Share” is not a tax on individuals. “Fair Share” is not even, really, an individual responsibility. “Fair Share” is the fraternity taking care of its own, members (plural) caring for members (Source: Letter from Tom Bello, OFS, National Minister, 2014.

Secular Franciscan Rule #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.”

In addition, the Official Commentary to the Rule “prepared by the national spiritual assistants’ commission,” states, Secular Franciscan Rule 25 “points out that the voluntary contributions of the members finance the fraternity’s spiritual and temporal needs and activities. The fraternity, according to its means and agreed upon arrangements, also contributes to the support of the regional, provincial, national and international fraternities. This paragraph is a contemporary application of the traditional

Secular Franciscan values outlined in the very first rule that the members are responsible for taking care of their own in whatever way is necessary.”

This sense of co-responsibility is stressed in the General Constitutions Article 30,

“1. The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the Secular Franciscan Order 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.”

Combining Secular Franciscan Rule 25 and General Constitutions Article 30, we now visit the National Statutes, particularly Article 18.7, which reads:

“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.

So, again, Fair Share is not dues. Most fraternities pay their fair share out of their common fund using monies contributed by members throughout the year.

CHAPTER TEN

PREPARING FOR FRATERNAL AND PASTORAL VISITATIONS

The purpose of both the pastoral and fraternal visits is to revive (intensify / stimulate / encourage /animate) 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 unity of the Order, and to promote its most effective insertion to the Franciscan family and the Church (cf. Constitutions – Article 92.1)

1. Preparation: At least one month before a visit the Local Minister together with the Council should thoughtfully and prayerfully complete the Pre-Visitation Questionnaire. The completion of this Questionnaire is meant to be a collaborative effort accomplished by the Local Fraternity Council, and is not intended to be the work by one person. Ideally the Council comes together to discuss the questions and reflect upon the answers to be submitted. Please make copies of this questionnaire available to each member of the Local Fraternity Council, *as each Council member is welcome to fill out a questionnaire on their own and send it directly to the Visitors*. Please send the copy prepared by the Council to the Visitors at least **three weeks** before the actual Visitation. One copy should be retained in the records of the Local Fraternity.

2. Visitation Schedule: It is important to allow adequate time for the Visitation. The Visitors need several hours to meet and dialogue with the Local Fraternity

Council and review files and records. The Visitors will attend the Fraternity Gathering and address the Fraternity as a whole.

3. Evaluation: The Visitors will look at the following areas and methods:

Spirituality: Spiritual growth, prayer, and liturgy

Service to local fraternities: How needs are communicated and met

Communication: with the Regional Minister and Regional Executive Council, as well as public relations

Formation: Description of formation programs both initial and ongoing including text(s) used

Vocation Promotion: Methods and frequency

Financial Stewardship: Proper recording and accounting for the Region's common funds.

Record Keeping: agendas, minutes, reports. Refer to the **Visitation Binder** suggestion below.

4. The Report: After the Visitation the Fraternity will receive a written report from the Visitors.

What happens *before* and *after* the visits themselves are in many ways as important as the visit. The Local Fraternity Council needs to review the Visitation report and do their best to carry out the recommendations given. The Visitors will welcome the opportunity to speak with you regarding the report and the recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations will be a great benefit to your Fraternity and is a sign of true cooperation.

It is highly recommend that the Fraternity undertakes a review of the Visitation Report a year or so after the Visitation in order to evaluate your Fraternity's progress.

To ensure a meaningful and fruitful visitation, it is strongly recommended that the Fraternity Council maintain a **Visitation Binder**. The binder should include:

- The annual fraternity reports since the last visitation
- The Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation Report of the last visitation
- Spiritual Assistant Confirmation documentation from the Provincial Office
- The current fraternity roster
- Council Meeting agendas by year
- Council meeting minutes by year
- Fraternity meeting agendas by year
- Fraternity meeting minutes by year
- Treasurer's reports by year

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING A NEW FRATERNITY

Phase I: Newly Forming Groups

Newly forming groups are those who are exploring the possibility of establishing an OFS fraternity. There may or may not be any professed OFS in the group:

- If those wishing to form a new group belong to an existing fraternity, they submit a written request for approval to the Local Fraternity Council of that fraternity. The Local Fraternity Council acts on the request. If approved, the group is given the status of "newly forming

group.” The Minister of the fraternity informs the REC of the existence of the “newly forming group;”

- If those wishing to form a new group do not belong to an existing fraternity, or desire to separate themselves from their existing fraternity, they would submit a written request for approval to the REC, which acts on the request. If approved, the group is given the status of a "newly forming group" and is assigned to a Sponsoring Fraternity within the Regional Fraternity. If any of the professed members of the “newly forming group” are members of other fraternities, the Minister of the Sponsoring Fraternity informs those fraternities and obtains their official transfer to the Sponsoring Fraternity;
- If no Local Fraternity is available as a sponsor for a “newly forming group”, the Regional Fraternity -- in extraordinary circumstances -- acts as the Sponsoring Fraternity in accord with Article 62.2 of the General Constitutions. In such a case, the following procedure would be followed: 1. (c.1) The REC carries out all that is ordinarily expected of the Local Fraternity Council of a Local Sponsoring Fraternity;
- The liaison person of the “newly forming group” does not attend the REC meeting, but meets regularly with the Regional Minister (or an appointed delegate) of the REC.

Once the "newly forming group" is approved, it:

- Chooses one of its members as a leader and begins to meet on its own to build community;
- Provides a member of the “newly forming group” as a liaison person to the Local Fraternity Council of the Sponsoring Fraternity who may attend the Local Fraternity Council's meetings as a non-voting member;

- Requests the appointment of a competent Spiritual Assistant by the Provincial Minister (or delegate) of the Friar Province to which the Local Sponsoring Fraternity is bonded. If in accord with 79 (c) above, the Regional Fraternity is the Sponsoring Fraternity, then the “newly forming group” requests spiritual assistance from a Friar Province recommended by the Regional Spiritual Assistant/s or chosen by its own discernment;
- Appoints a Formation Director if any of the professed members of the “newly forming group” qualifies for this responsibility. Otherwise, the Sponsoring Fraternity or REC will provide a suitable person. In any case, the formation of new members in the “newly forming group” will be overseen by the formation staff of the Sponsoring Fraternity;
- Sends a semi-annual report to the Local Fraternity Council of the Sponsoring Fraternity;
- Is expected to participate in the activities of the Sponsoring Fraternity;
- The “newly forming group” begins a period of building community as a semi-autonomous section or Cell of the Sponsoring Fraternity. Included in the meetings will be the structures and procedures necessary for its operation, including prayer, formation, communications, and socializing. Opportunities will be sought for interaction within the fraternity gathering and regular interaction outside the fraternity gathering and regular interaction with other Franciscans during this time. These structures and procedures are to be approved by the Local Fraternity Council of the Sponsoring Fraternity with an accompanying system for accountability and evaluation;

Admissions and Professions of new members will be approved by the Sponsoring Fraternity Local Fraternity Council and will be received by the Minister of the Sponsoring Fraternity;

The “newly forming group” begins its first official year of preparation to become eventually an "emerging community" only after it has a minimum of five (5) professed members;

After completion of at least one year with five professed members, the “newly forming group”, after seeking the approval of the Sponsoring Fraternity Local Fraternity Council, may submit a written request to the REC that it be placed in the status of "emerging community;"

After seeking the status of "emerging community," the “newly forming group requests and receives a Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation from the Regional level to assess its suitability for the status of an "emerging community."

Phase II Developing Emerging Communities/Fraternities¹

Upon completion of the Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation, the REC acts on the request of the “newly forming group.” If approved, the group is given the status of an "emerging community or fraternity" and:

- The “emerging community” chooses its own Council and starts functioning like a fraternity, with fraternity gatherings, Council meetings, keeping minutes, records, and financial accounts;
- The leader of the “emerging community” is a non-voting member of the Local Fraternity Council of the Sponsoring Fraternity.
- Admissions and professions of new members are approved by the Council of the “emerging community” and confirmed by the Local Fraternity Council of the Sponsoring Fraternity. The Minister of the Sponsoring Fraternity has the responsibility of receiving admissions and professions according to the Ritual, but ordinarily delegates this responsibility to the leader of the “emerging community;”
- The Council of the “emerging community” provides a written quarterly report for the Sponsoring Fraternity and the REC;

¹Council of National Spiritual Assistants, August 1, 1994

- The Council of the “emerging community” enters into a formal (written) agreement of "altius moderamen" with a Friar Province by pledging affiliation with, or aggregation, to that particular Province of Friars which would best serve the permanent viability of the “emerging community” and by asking for the appointment of a definitive Spiritual Assistant by that Province. Ordinarily the “emerging community” chooses the Friar Province bonded to the sponsoring Local Fraternity unless the Regional Fraternity is the sponsor. It may happen that the “emerging community” discerns that spiritual assistance would be better provided by a different Friar Province of any of the four obediences;
- The Friar Provincial Minister (or his delegate) informs the local (Arch) Bishop about the existence and development of an “emerging community” in his (Arch) Diocese;
- The REC informs the National Executive Council of the existence and development of an “emerging community”, the place of meeting, and the contact person.

The “emerging community” establishes, for itself, the structures and procedures necessary for:

- Its operation (prayer, on-going formation, ministries, communications, socializing);
- Vocation promotion;
- Formation of those in orientation, inquiry and candidacy;
- Opportunities of interaction outside the fraternity meeting;
- Regular interaction with other fraternities and other Franciscans.

(These structures and procedures are to be endorsed by the Council of the sponsoring Fraternity and approved by the REC with an accompanying system for accountability and evaluation.)

- After the completion of at least three years, the “emerging community” may submit a written request to the REC for its Canonical Establishment as a fraternity.

- Before it accedes to the request, the REC authorizes a Fraternal Visitation of the “emerging community”, and the Regional Spiritual Assistant/s authorizes a Pastoral Visitation in conjunction with the Friar Province to which the “emerging community” is bonded or affiliated. The visits are to ascertain the community's permanent viability for life in fraternity, its faithful observance of the Rule and Constitutions, and its proper compliance in regards to minutes, records, registers, and finances.

Phase III Canonically Establishing a Fraternity²

- Upon completion of the Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation, the REC acts on the request of the “emerging community” to be Canonically Established. If approval is given, the following steps are taken:
 - The REC informs, in writing, the Friar Provincial Minister (or his delegate) that the “emerging community” is ready to be Established. The Friar Provincial Minister (or his delegate), in turn, requests the (Arch) Bishop's permission, in writing, to establish the new fraternity in his Diocese;
 - The REC provides the necessary information and requests and obtains from the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants the formal Document of Establishment, printed in quadruplicate. The Regional Minister signs and dates all four copies in the appropriate places, and passes them on to the Friar Provincial Minister (or delegate);
 - The Friar Provincial Minister (or delegate) signs and dates the four copies of the Document and obtains the signature of the (Arch) Bishop;
 - The “emerging community” arranges for the Ceremony of Canonical Establishment in conjunction with the REC, the Friar Provincial Minister (or delegate), and, where customary, the (Arch) Bishop;
 - The REC confirms, for one year, the existing Council of the “emerging community” as the first Local Council of the new fraternity in accord with 49.1 of the OFS General Constitutions.

²Council of National Spiritual Assistants, August 1, 1994

- The Ceremony of Canonical Establishment is celebrated, with due solemnity, according to the Ritual. During the ceremony the Document is signed and dated by the delegate of the Friar Minister Provincial and by the witnesses. After the ceremony:
 - One copy of the Official Document is sent to the REC to be kept in its archives one copy is sent to the archives of the Friar Province, a third is sent to the diocesan chancery for filing, and a fourth copy is preserved in the newly established fraternity's records;
 - The Regional Minister informs the National Executive Council of the Canonical Establishment of the new fraternity.
- One year after the Canonical Establishment, the new fraternity holds its first Chapter of Elections for its Local Fraternity Council. The Regional Minister (or delegate) presides at the Chapter of Elections and the Regional Spiritual Assistant (or delegate) witnesses the election.

CHAPTER TWELVE CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

Cluster Defined:

A Cluster is a loose association of Fraternities situated in a more or less contiguous geographical area within the Region. To this end the Manhattan Cluster is an association of Fraternities situated in Manhattan, the North Jersey Cluster is an association of Fraternities situated in Northern New Jersey, the Central Jersey and Staten Island Cluster is an association of Fraternities situated in Central New Jersey and Staten Island and the Westchester Cluster is an association of Fraternities situated in Yonkers and Mt. Vernon.

Cluster Activities:

All Cluster activities are conducted or managed by the members of the Fraternities in the Cluster in collaboration with the Cluster Councilor.

All Cluster activities are primarily for the benefit of the members of the cluster Fraternities. However, it is strongly encouraged that the Cluster invites to its activities, Fraternities from the other Clusters. This act of inviting other Fraternities,

however, shall not and does not make the Cluster activity a Regional Fraternity activity.

Funding for Cluster Activities:

Funding for all Cluster activities is the sole responsibility of the Cluster. It is strongly recommended that before a Cluster decides on any activity, the member Fraternities should decide or, at least, come to a consensus, as to how to finance the proposed activity.

It is perfectly possible that the Cluster will not have any standing fund to finance the initial expenses that an activity may require. In this case, the Cluster Councilor, with the approval of the member Fraternities, may request, in writing, the Regional Executive Council to advance the necessary funds. Such funds advanced to the Cluster by the Regional Fraternity is to be paid back to the Regional Fraternity within a period of three (3) months and not more than five (5) months after the conclusion of the activity.

All funds advanced to the Cluster from the funds of the Regional Fraternity are to be made by check payable to the Cluster Councilor by the Treasurer of the Regional Fraternity. The Cluster Councilor is responsible in disbursing the funds to cover the expenses of the Cluster for its activity or activities. Individual members of the Cluster who might have advanced personal funds for Cluster expenses are to submit their claim or claims for reimbursement to the Cluster Councilor, not to the Treasurer of the Regional Fraternity. The Cluster Councilor is responsible for paying back the Regional Fraternity any fund or funds advanced to the Cluster. Whenever practicable, the Cluster is to ask all participants in any activity to share the expenses equally.

Coordination With The Regional Executive Council: -

To avoid conflict with any Regional activity planned or proposed by the Regional Executive Council, the Cluster Councilor consults the Secretary of the Regional Executive Council with regard especially to the date or dates and the nature of the proposed activity or activities.

Reporting to Regional Executive Council:

Expenses incurred by the Cluster are not to be reported to the Regional Fraternity represented by the Treasurer even if funds were advanced from the Regional Fraternity to the Cluster.

The Councilor is to report informally to the Regional Executive Council the result or results of all activity or activities undertaken by the Cluster. Particular attention should be given to such things as how the Cluster initiated, managed, and funded the affair. It would also be pertinent to point out especially the difficulties that the Cluster had to contend with and how these difficulties were resolved. All these could be shared with the other Clusters for their reference.

Note: Sources used in the creation of this handbook include the Rule, Constitutions, National Statutes, the Statutes for Spiritual Assistance, Franciscan Family Connections, the Handbook for Spiritual Assistance, the Handbook for Servant Leadership, the Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order and resources from the NAFRA and Our Lady of the Angels Region websites.

FORMS

Sample forms can be found on our website: http://olangels.tripod.com/region_links.html (second column). The newly elected Regional Executive Council will revise all of our forms and redistribute in 2021.

ADDITIONAL FORMS

The link below will take you to the NAFRA Guidelines, forms and Other Resources page where you can find:

- The Rule, Constitutions, Statutes and Ritual
- Treasurer's Forms
- The FUN Manual
- Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance
- The Vocations Toolkit
- TAU Graphics
- More Visitation and Elections Resources_

<http://secularfranciscansusa.org/guidelines-forms-other-resources/>

