

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

## Introduction

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

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

## Section I

### Organization and Structure

#### Article 1. National Fraternity

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

1. is a juridic person [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canons #116 and #117] made up of the Regional and Local Fraternities of the Secular Franciscan Order (hereafter OFS) [legal title for the international body is *Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis* (OFS)] existing within the United States [cf. *Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order* (hereafter *Rule*), article #2; *General Constitutions*, articles #1.5 and #65.1; *Code of Canon Law*, canons #214 and #303];
2. is animated and guided by a Council and Minister who are duly elected;
3. is organized and functions in conformity with the *Code of Canon Law*, and the following OFS documents: the *Rule*, the *General Constitutions*, the *Ritual*, the *International Statutes* and these *National Statutes* [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #4.1].

## Article 2. Governing Body

1. The governing body of NAFRA is the National Fraternity Council. The National Executive Council acts on behalf of the National Fraternity Council when the members of the entire Council are not in session [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #66.1].
2. The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants exercises pastoral care and spiritual guidance in regard to NAFRA as one of the integral component parts of the OFS by suitable means including participation in deliberations of its governing body [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order* (hereafter *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*), articles #19 and #20].

## Article 3. National Fraternity Council

1. The National Fraternity Council is composed of the Regional Ministers, the National Executive Council, and the members of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.
2. The business of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America shall be conducted by the National Fraternity Council.
3. In addition, the National Fraternity Council has legislative, deliberative and elective powers; in conformity with the *Rule* and the *General Constitutions*, it may make legislative decisions and produce norms valid within its national confines.
4. The regular meeting of the National Fraternity shall be the annual meeting of the National Fraternity Council convoked by the National Minister, which convocation shall provide for at least two months' advance notice.
5. The National Fraternity Council meets in elective chapter every three years; the National Minister convokes this meeting at least two months in advance, indicating the place, the day and the time of the election.
6. If considered necessary by the National Executive Council, or when at least one-third of the Regional Ministers requests it, the National Fraternity Council may meet at other times during any year.
7. In addition to the duties enumerated in article #66.2 of the *General Constitutions*, the National Fraternity Council has the following duties:
  - a. To compose and approve modifications to boundaries of Regional Fraternities (see appendix A);

- b. To set the fair share amount of annual financial contributions to NAFRA from the Regional Fraternities.

#### Article 4. Structure for Property Control

1. In accordance with article #54 of the *General Constitutions*, NAFRA is incorporated under the laws of the United States of America, State of Ohio, as "The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - U.S.A." and has its statutory office at 1615 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.
2. The elected officers of the National Fraternity Council shall function as the officers of the corporation.
3. Upon the termination of existence of the corporation, all assets, real and personal, tangible and intangible, along with its library and records, shall become the property of the "juridic person immediately superior" [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon #123].
4. NAFRA is the organic union of all Local and Regional Secular Franciscan Fraternities located within the United States of America and is itself incorporated. Therefore, no Local or Regional Fraternity may itself incorporate without the specific written prior approval of NAFRA. Because of the usual requirement to incorporate for the purpose of owning real estate, no Local or Regional Fraternity may acquire real estate without the specific written prior approval of NAFRA.
5. In accord with article #54.3 of the *General Constitutions*, for the fraternities at each level, a financial audit must be done every 3 years, just prior to the end of the Council's term of office. This audit may be conducted by a professional accountant who is not a member of the fraternity Council, or by a "board of examiners" established by the particular fraternity (consisting of two or more experts selected at large by the membership who are not also members of that fraternity's Council). A written report of such audit must be given to the Council of the higher fraternity.

#### Article 5. National Executive Council

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

National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (“JPIC”) Commission may attend meetings of the National Executive Council.

3. All members of the National Executive Council have voting rights. The Chair(s) of the National Formation Commission and the National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (“JPIC”) Commission exercise a consultative role.
4. Election of the members of the National Executive Council shall proceed in accordance with **Section II** of this document.
5. The duties of the National Executive Council are:
  - a. To form, animate, guide and coordinate the OFS at the national level;
  - b. To see that the decisions of the National Fraternity Council are carried out;
  - c. To provide practical and pastoral interpretations and to clarify specific points in the *National Statutes*, with validity until the next meeting of the National Fraternity Council;
  - d. To resolve urgent problems which may arise that were not encompassed in the *General Constitutions* or *National Statutes*, until the next meeting of the National Fraternity Council;
  - e. To intervene to resolve serious and urgent problems in a spirit of reconciliation when requested by a Regional Fraternity Council or on the National Executive Council’s own initiative;
  - f. To hear appeals from decisions of dismissal from membership rendered by Regional Executive Councils where appropriate [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #59];
  - g. To establish and direct commissions and committees deemed necessary to achieve the goals and objectives determined by the National Fraternity Council;
  - h. To present to the representative of the International Fraternity and the representative of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required at the time of fraternal and pastoral visits, and also on the occasion of their presiding over and witnessing elections;
  - i. To administer the financial affairs of NAFRA, including events not foreseen in the annual budget approved at the annual meeting of

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

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

#### Article 6. Duties of Officers of the National Executive Council

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

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

2. The National Vice Minister's duties are enumerated in article #52.1 of the *General Constitutions*.

3. The National Secretary, in addition to the duties enumerated in article #52.2 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duty:

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

4. The National Treasurer, in addition to the duties enumerated in article #52.4 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duties:

- a. To ensure the deposit of all funds of the National Fraternity which may come into the hands of the National Treasurer into such bank accounts in the name of NAFRA as the National Executive Council shall designate;
- b. To provide for the payment of monies as the business of the National Fraternity may require as approved in the annual budget or on the order of the National Minister or the National Executive Council. All payments are to be made by check.
- c. To submit an annual budget to the National Executive Council for its review, and to the National Fraternity Council for its review and approval at the annual meeting.
- d. To be responsible for the financial books and records of NAFRA. Upon the written request of any member of the National Fraternity

Council to the Treasurer, these financial records shall be open for inspection.

- e. To provide the National Fraternity Council with financial reports of receipts, expenditures, and balances in NAFRA's treasury throughout the year, and at the beginning of each year, to provide a written statement of receipts, expenditures and balances in NAFRA's treasury for the preceding year.
5. The International Councilor's duties are enumerated in article #75 of the *General Constitutions* and article #7 of the *International Statutes*.
  6. The President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, in addition to the duties enumerated in article #90 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duties:
    - a. To attend meetings of the National Fraternity Council and of the National Executive Council, of which he is a member by right, collaborating with these bodies in all their activities;
    - b. To act collegially with the other National Spiritual Assistants to coordinate spiritual assistance on the national level and to cooperate in the initial and continuing formation of the brothers and sisters [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #90.3b; *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #19];
    - c. To vote in all matters which come before these bodies for decision except for financial matters and in elective chapters.

## **Section II**

### Voting and Conduct of Business

#### Article 7. Convocation

1. The regular meeting of the National Fraternity shall be the annual meeting of the National Fraternity Council called by the National Minister.
2. The National Executive Council shall meet at least twice during the period between annual meetings of the National Fraternity Council.
3. The National Fraternity Council shall meet in elective chapter once every three years.
4. The National Fraternity shall celebrate a National Congress at least once every five years, at a time and place determined by the National Executive

Council and confirmed by the National Fraternity Council.

5. The Minister of each Regional Fraternity shall receive at least two months' notice of the place, day and time of the annual National Fraternity Council meeting.

#### Article 8. Voting Rights

1. All members of the National Fraternity Council as defined in article #3.1 of these *National Statutes* may vote. No Spiritual Assistant at any level, however, shall vote on any question involving financial matters [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #90.2] or in elective chapters [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #77; *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #12.3]. This restriction applies to Secular Franciscans as well as religious friars and sisters serving as Spiritual Assistants for a particular Secular Franciscan fraternity.
2. The Minister of each Regional Fraternity has the primary responsibility for casting the vote of the Regional Fraternity in all elections and on all business that may come before the National Fraternity Council.
3. Substitutes/Delegates
  - a. In the event a Regional Minister is impeded from attending the National Fraternity Council meeting, then the delegate of the Regional Fraternity shall automatically be the Regional Vice Minister pursuant to the provisions of article #52.1.c of the *General Constitutions*.
  - b. If both the Regional Minister and the Regional Vice Minister are so impeded, then a member of the Regional Executive Council selected by that body shall attend and exercise all of the powers of a delegate for the Regional Fraternity.
4. No Regional Fraternity may cast more than a single vote on any issue or in any election.
5. Even if a person has a right to vote in his or her own name by more than one title, such person may cast only one ballot [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon #168].
6. During those meetings of the National Fraternity Council at which elections occur, the members of the outgoing and of the incoming National Executive Council, upon election and even prior to formal installation, are members with full rights of the National Fraternity Council until the end of said meeting.

## Article 9. Quorum; Majority; Counting Ballots; Procedure

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

## Article 10. Elections

1. Elections shall take place according to the norms of article #76.1 of the *General Constitutions*, the *National Statutes*, and the *International Statutes*.
2. The National Fraternity Council elects the Secular members of the National Executive Council.
3. The International Councilor is elected by the National Fraternity Council and represents NAFRA as a member of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (hereafter CIOFS) in accordance with its *Statutes*.
4. The National Fraternity Council also elects a substitute delegate for the International Councilor from among the elected members of the National Executive Council should he or she be prevented from attending the CIOFS General Chapter [cf. article #5.2 of *CIOFS Statutes*]. In the event of such impediment, the National Minister shall inform the CIOFS Presidency of it and of the substitute delegation [cf. *CIOFS Statutes*, article #8.1].
5. The convocation and nominations for the office of International Councilor shall be carried out as in article #11 of these *National Statutes*.
6. In tallying votes which are conducted by secret written ballot, each elector shall submit one vote. Then all ballots, including blanks, shall be counted to assure the validity of the vote [cf. *Code of Canon Law*, canon #173.2].



## Article 11. Convocation and Nominations

1. At least four months prior to elections, the National Executive Council shall appoint a Chair for a Nominations Committee which will, acting according to norms established by the National Executive Council, present a slate of nominees for the offices to the members of the National Fraternity Council. This presentation shall be made approximately two months prior to the date set for the elections.
2. To be eligible as a candidate for election to office in the National Fraternity, one must be a permanently professed active member of the OFS [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #30]. Candidates should be convinced of the validity of the Franciscan evangelical way of life, attentive to a broad and encompassing vision of the life of the Church and of society, open to dialogue and ready to give and receive help and collaboration [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #31.3].
3. It shall be the duty of the Nominations Committee to ensure that each candidate meets the qualifications for the office for which she or he is proposed, has reviewed the duties of that office, and is willing to serve if elected.
4. Any individual elected to a national office may not hold an elected office at the Regional Fraternity level or the Local Fraternity level. (See Article 28.)
5. The provisions of article #76 of the *General Constitutions* shall be followed for convocation of the National Fraternity Council meeting for the purpose of elections.
6. Notification of CIOFS
  - a. The National Minister shall in timely fashion contact the General Minister of the OFS, requesting that she or he or a delegate preside over forthcoming National Fraternity elections.
  - b. The National Minister shall in timely fashion contact the President of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants, requesting that he or a delegate attend forthcoming National Fraternity elections as the ecclesial witness.

## Article 12. Right to Vote at Elections

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

### Article 13. Terms of Office

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

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

### Article 14. Procedure in Voting

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

### Article 15. Provisions for Vacancies, Resignations, and Removals

1. The provisions of articles #81.1, #81.2 and #83 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the procedure to be followed in the event the National Minister

or National Vice Minister resigns or is impeded from performing the duties of the office.

2. When the office of National Councilor becomes vacant, the Executive Council will proceed to appoint someone to substitute for him or her until the end of the term for which the Councilor was originally elected. If the appointee is already an elected member of the Council, he or she retains the right to vote. If the appointee is not an elected member, he or she serves without a vote.
3. The provisions of article #84 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the procedure to be followed to secure the removal for cause of the National Minister or members of the National Fraternity Council.
4. The provisions of article #84.4 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the appeals process for any officer removed from office.

## **Section III**

### Fraternal Life

#### Article 16. Fraternity Life

1. The provisions of articles #2, #3 and #4 of the *General Constitutions* concerning the nature of the vocation to the OFS apply.
2. The fraternal life, with its vitality and sustaining force, is meant to exist on the national level as well as on regional and local levels. For this reason, the National Fraternity is so constituted by leadership and structure, vitalized by the participation of its members, and nurtured by ongoing formation and spiritual assistance as to achieve its objective of being a real fraternity; and the same is true for each Regional and Local Fraternity.
3. The Fraternities should bear in mind that they are subject to the vigilance of the local Ordinary insofar as they perform their apostolic activities within the local churches. Secular Franciscans should, therefore, dialogue with their local Ordinaries and follow their directions, inasmuch as they are the moderators of the ministry of the Word and of the Liturgy and the coordinators of the various forms of apostolate in the local Diocesan church [cf. *Rule*, article #6].
4. The external sign of the OFS in the United States is the TAU.

## Article 17. Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations

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

## Article 18. Local Fraternity

1. The Local Fraternity is the primary constituent part of the entire structure of Secular Franciscan life to which the member relates [cf. *Rule*, article #22].
2. The provisions of articles #46 and #47 of the *General Constitutions* shall govern the canonical establishment of new fraternities and determine the Franciscan friar province which assumes pastoral care [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, articles #6.1 and #11.2].
3. The Council of each Local Fraternity is composed according to the requirements of article #49.1 of the *General Constitutions*. With respect to the fraternity they assist, anyone who serves as a Spiritual Assistant is subject to the same rights and restrictions as are Franciscan religious Spiritual Assistants [cf. articles #12, #13, #15, #23 and #24, *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*]. Spiritual Assistants who are Secular Franciscans may not be elected to other positions on the Councils of fraternities they assist.
4. A Local Fraternity may pass to the pastoral care of another friar province of the First Order or Third Order Regular in one of two ways [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #47.2; *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #6.2]:
  - a. The Council and Minister of the Local Fraternity approach the Regional Executive Council, including the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s), with the request for transfer. If the Regional Executive Council, including the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s), approves the request, the Regional Spiritual Assistant asks the Provincial Ministers or Provincial Spiritual Assistants of the two friar provinces to effect the transfer.
  - b. For the sake of providing better pastoral care, the Provincial Ministers or Provincial Spiritual Assistants of two friar provinces may initiate the transfer of a Local Fraternity from the care of one province to that of the other. The Provincial Ministers or Provincial Spiritual Assistants act in consultation with the Councils, including the Spiritual Assistants, of the Local and Regional Fraternities.

5. Establishment of sections or cells
  - a. Should one or more groups desire to establish permanent sections within a Local Fraternity based on particular needs or common interests, they may do so subject to the direction of the Local Fraternity Council [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #50.2.d], so long as they continue to participate fully in the Local Fraternity's fraternal and apostolic life. The Regional Fraternity will receive notice of the formation of such groups.
  - b. Such sections remain subject to the Local Fraternity as constituent parts of it [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #34].
6. No official business may be transacted at a Local Fraternity meeting unless a quorum is present. The quorum consists of a majority of active members who are not excused from attendance.
7. The Local Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the Regional Fraternity on a fair share basis from its common fund to underwrite the costs of that fraternity [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #30.3]. A fair share contribution is made based on the number of active and excused brothers and sisters, but not for those who are deemed lapsed.
  - a. An active fraternity member is one who participates both by attending fraternity meetings and by providing financial support to the community, or whom the fraternity has excused from such obligations.
  - b. Those brothers and sisters who neither attend meetings, support the community financially, nor have valid reasons due to health, family, work or distance, and who, after personal invitations to return to fraternity, consciously and 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 [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #53.3].
8. The Local Fraternity will present to the Regional Minister or his or her delegate and to the Regional Spiritual Assistant or the representative of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required at the time of fraternal and pastoral visits, and also on the occasion of their presiding over and witnessing elections.
9. It is at the local level that activities have their greatest meaning to members of the OFS. The Local Fraternity Council should expend great care to provide for thought-provoking activities and programs to foster Franciscan life and to deepen Franciscan spirituality among fraternity members.

10. As fraternity members become unable to attend meetings on a regular basis, the Local Fraternity Council should set up a method by which regular contacts are maintained [cf. *General Constitutions*, #53.3].
11. The provisions relating to property control which appear in these *National Statutes* in the section dealing with the responsibilities of the National Fraternity shall apply to the Local Fraternities insofar as they may be adapted to the needs and circumstances of the Local Fraternity.
12. As required by article #54.2 of the *General Constitutions*, the National Executive Council shall approve statements for use by the Local Fraternities that establish “precise criteria” for their “statement of purposes” and “internal controls” which must be used in their establishing documents.
13. Affiliation with a local fraternity
  - a. Those who, without belonging to the OFS, 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.
  - b. 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” (OFS Rule Art. 13). They may share the experiences and activities of the fraternity, without the right to vote.
  - c. 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.
  - d. Regional councils have the right to establish their own guidelines for the acceptance of affiliates.

## Article 19. Formation

1. Orientation
  - a. Orientation is a time for determining a person’s interest, eligibility and disposition to enter into the initial formation process [cf. *Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States* (hereafter *Guidelines for Initial Formation*), page 25].

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

## 2. Initial Formation

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

## 3. Profession

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

## 4. Ongoing Formation

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

## 5. Form and Methodology

- a. The form (i.e., content and process; cf. *General Constitutions*, #38.2) to be employed in both initial and ongoing formation is that found in the *Guidelines for Initial Formation*.
- b. The methodology employed in formation should be both interactive and experiential in nature [cf. *General Constitutions*, #40.4].

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

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

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

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

#### Article 21. Regional Fraternity

1. The Regional Fraternities are constituted according to the provisions of the *General Constitutions*, article #61.
2. The governing body of each Regional Fraternity is the Regional Fraternity Council. The Regional Executive Council acts on behalf of the Regional Fraternity Council when the members of the entire Council are not in session [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #66.1].
3. The Regional Spiritual Assistant or the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants exercises pastoral care and spiritual guidance in regard to each Regional Fraternity as an integral component part of NAFRA and of the OFS, by the same means and manner as does the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants in regard to NAFRA [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, articles #21 and #22].

#### Article 22. Regional Fraternity Council

1. The Regional Fraternity Council is composed of the Ministers of the Local Fraternities that together form the Regional Fraternity, the Regional Executive Council, and the Regional Spiritual Assistant or the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, each of whom may vote. Regional Spiritual Assistants, however, do not vote in financial matters and in elective chapters [cf. *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*, article #12.1].
2. The Regional Fraternity Council is the representative body of all of the Local Fraternities that together compose the Regional Fraternity, and has the power to create regional guidelines in conformity with the *Rule*, the *General Constitutions* and the *National Statutes*.



3. The Regional Fraternity Council shall meet at least once a year. Every third year the Regional Fraternity Council shall meet in elective chapter in accord with the *General Constitutions* and these *National Statutes*.
4. The Regional Fraternity Council has the duties set forth in article #62 of the *General Constitutions*.

#### Article 23. Regional Executive Council

1. Between the meetings of the Regional Fraternity Council, an elected Regional Executive Council shall carry on the business and carry out the purposes of the Regional Fraternity in a spirit of ministry and service [cf. *General Constitutions*, article #62.1].
2. The Regional Executive Council is composed of the Regional Minister, the Regional Vice Minister, the Regional Secretary, the Regional Treasurer, at least one elected Councilor, and the Regional Spiritual Assistant or the President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants. In addition, the Regional Formation Director may also be elected. In those regions in which the Regional Formation Director is appointed rather than elected, she or he attends the meetings of the Regional Executive Council and exercises a consultative role.
3. All elected members of the Regional Executive Council and the Spiritual Assistant have voting rights.
4. Election of the Secular members of the Regional Executive Council shall follow the model set forth in **Section II** of these *National Statutes* which deals with the National Fraternity insofar as it may be adapted to the needs and circumstances of the Regional Fraternity.
5. The Regional Executive Council may establish and direct commissions and committees deemed necessary to achieve the goals and objectives determined by the Regional Fraternity Council.
6. When not in session, the Regional Executive Council may conduct business electronically (i.e., via e-mail, telephone, fax, etc.), provided that any decisions and determinations made in this way are reviewed and ratified at the next regular meeting of the Council.
7. The Regional Executive Council shall meet at least twice a year, at times and places to be determined by its members. The Regional Minister shall give written notice of meetings at least two months in advance.

#### Article 24. Duties of Officers of the Regional Executive Council

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

#### Article 25. Structure for Property Control for the Regional Fraternity

1. The provisions relating to property control which appear in these *National Statutes* in the section dealing with the responsibilities of the National Fraternity shall apply to the Regional Fraternities insofar as they may be adapted to the needs and circumstances of the Regional Fraternity.
2. Particular note should be taken that expenses of the Regional Executive Council and those individuals invited by this Council to serve the Regional Fraternity in some capacity shall be borne by the Regional Fraternity for attendance at required meetings.
3. The Regional Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the National Fraternity on a fair share basis from its treasury to help provide for the expenses of NAFRA.
4. As required by article #54.2 of the *General Constitutions*, the National Executive Council shall approve statements for use by the Regional Fraternities that establish "precise criteria" for their "statement of purposes" and "internal controls" which must be used in their establishing documents.

#### Article 26. Fraternal and Pastoral Visits to the Regional Fraternity

1. The provisions of article #92 through article #95 of the *General Constitutions* concerning the fraternal and pastoral visitations apply as does article #14 of the *Statutes for Spiritual Assistance*.
2. The Regional Fraternity will present to the National Minister or his or her delegate and the representative of the Conference of National Spiritual

Assistants a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required at the time of fraternal and pastoral visits, and also on the occasion of their presiding over and witnessing elections.

Article 27. Franciscan Youth and Young Adults

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

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

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

Article 29. Amendments

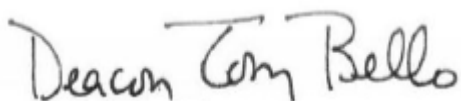
1. These *National Statutes* may be amended by two-thirds vote of the National Fraternity Council provided that a copy of the proposed amendment is distributed to the National Fraternity Council at least 60 days before the vote on said amendment is to be taken.
2. All such amendments are subject to the approval of the Presidency of CIOFS.

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

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

**ATTESTED AS AMENDED ON OCTOBER 30, 2010 BY THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL, OFS-USA.**

**CONFIRMED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENCY, JULY 24, 2013.**



Deacon Tom Bello, OFS - National Minister



Jan Parker, OFS – National Secretary

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

- # Name of Region, followed by short geographic description:
- 50 'Ohana 'O Ke Anuenue : HI.
- 51 Five Franciscan Martyrs : FL, plus up to about 31 degrees n latitude to include South GA, Lower AL around the Mobile Bay area.
- 52 St. Francis : s CA up to San Luis Obispo area.
- 53 Blessed Junipero Serra : n CA from Bakersfield n; most of NV except Las Vegas area.
- 54 Troubadours of Peace : OR, WA, ID, AK.
- 55 Queen of Peace : ND, MN, IA, most of SD except sw area around Rapid City, e 2/3 NE, w 1/4 WI.
- 56 Divine Mercy : Lower MI, plus Lucas County OH (Toledo OH area).
- 57 Saint Margaret of Cortona : VA, DC, all of MD except far w around Cumberland, s central PA around the Harrisburg/Lancaster/York area, far e WV around Martinsburg/Charles Town area.
- 58 St. Thomas More : AZ, s part NV around Las Vegas.
- 59 Mother Cabrini : ne IL including all of metro Chicago, w to Rockford and s to Kankakee.
- 60 St. Joan of Arc : LA, MS, far e TX from Houston e, s 2/3 AR from Little Rock s, far sw TN around Memphis.
- 61 Brothers and Sisters of St Francis : NC, SC, n 90% GA, AL except lower part around the Mobile Bay area, TN except far sw area around Memphis.
- 62 Exaltation of the Holy Cross : N/A.
- 63 Franciscans of the Prairie : n 3/4 IL, excluding East St Louis/Bellville area and s, excluding also ne area from Rockford to Kankakee.
- 64 Holy Trinity Region : KY, s half OH including the counties of the Diocese of Columbus (except Tuscarawas County) and part of the Diocese of Steubenville; se IN near Louisville KY.
- 65 La Verna : e 3/4 WI, Upper MI.
- 66 Our Lady of Indiana : n 3/4 IN, excluding areas around Evansville and Louisville KY.
- 67 Los Tres Compañeros/the Three Companions : central TX from OK border s to Mexico and Gulf of Mexico, w to San Angelo and Abilene, and e to (but not including) Houston.
- 68 Lady Poverty : WV except far e WV around Martinsburg/Charles Town area, w half PA except Erie, far w MD around Cumberland, far e part OH around Steubenville.
- 69 St Katharine Drexel : DE, e half PA except s central area around Harrisburg/Lancaster/York, s half NJ from Trenton s.
- 70 Maximillian Kolbe : n 1/2 OH including all of the counties in the Diocese of Cleveland, the Diocese of Youngstown, and the counties of the Diocese of Toledo, except Lucas County (Toledo area), and only the county of Tuscarawas in the Diocese of Columbus.
- 71 Bl Kateri Tekakwitha : upstate NY plus Erie PA, excluding NY counties adjacent to borders with NJ, CT, and far e PA, also excluding far ne NY around Plattsburgh, Saranac Lake and Long Lake.
- 72 Santa Maria de las Montañas : CO, UT, WY except far n area around Sheridan, sw area SD around Rapid City, w 1/3 NE to include Stratton, nw corner KS to include Atwood.
- 73 Our Lady of the Rockies : MT; far n WY around Sheridan.
- 74 St Clare : s 80% MO, n 1/3 AR excluding Little Rock and s, s 1/4 IL from East St Louis/Bellville s, far sw corner IN around Evansville.
- 75 Our Lady of Guadalupe : NM, far w TX excluding Abilene and San Angelo and e, far e AZ in Navajo reservation area around St Michaels.

- 76 Solanus Casey : CT, RI, w 1/3 MA from Holyoke/Springfield and w, s MA around Fall River /New Bedford, and part of Cape Cod, NY counties adjacent to borders with NJ, CT and far e PA except part of s Westchester County which is shared.
- 77 Our Lady of the Angels : n half NJ excluding Trenton and s; NY counties of Staten Island and Manhattan (New York County), plus part of s Westchester county.
- 78 St Elizabeth of Hungary : VT, NH, ME, e 2/3 MA excluding Holyoke/Springfield and w, also excluding s MA around Fall River /New Bedford, plus part of Cape Cod, far ne NY around Plattsburgh, Saranac Lake and Long Lake.
- 79 Tau Cross : NY counties on Long Island, plus Bronx.
- 80 Juan de Padilla : KS except nw corner around Atwood, OK, plus area around Kansas City MO.