

# BYLAWS OF THE PRIESTLY CONFRATERNITY OF THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS

## TABLE OF CONTENT

|                                                              |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Introduction</b> .....                                    | P. 2  |
| <b>Mision Statement</b> .....                                | P. 2  |
| <b>Chapter 1: In the Spirit of St. Francis</b> .....         | P. 2  |
| <b>Chapter 2: The Confraternity</b> .....                    | P. 3  |
| <b>Chapter 3: The Way of Life</b> .....                      | P. 4  |
| <b>Chapter 4: Prayer Life</b> .....                          | P. 7  |
| <b>Chapter 5: Apostolic Life</b> .....                       | P. 8  |
| <b>Chapter 6: Fraternal Life</b> .....                       | P. 10 |
| <b>Chapter 7: Formation</b> .....                            | P. 11 |
| <b>Chapter 8: Entrance into the Confraternity</b> .....      | P. 12 |
| <b>Chapter 9: Corrections, Penalties and Dismissal</b> ..... | P. 13 |

## **INTRODUCTION**

We priests, members of the Priestly Fraternity of the Third Order of St. Francis, called by Baptism to holiness, and by virtue of our ordination and a desire for deeper union with You, Most High God, commit, under Your divine inspiration, to follow the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ, Your Son, the inspiration and center of his life.

By imitating as far as humanly possible the six-winged Seraphs, the celestial beings whose only one desire is to worship You with an ardent love, and being purified from human impurities by a penitential way of life by means of the Rule of 1883 promulgated by Pope Leo XIII for the Third Order Secular, we desire to reach perfect charity through union with You and be re-formed into the image of Christ.

Accepting the call to greater cruciformity, filled with the Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, we place ourselves fully to Your service, Most High Supreme God, declaring with St. Paul the Apostle, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Gal 2:20)

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Inspired by the example of St. Francis of Assisi, the spiritual theology of our Seraphic Father, St. Bonaventure, OFM, and under the patronage of St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe, OFM Conv, to bear witness to Your voice, in word and deed, and make known to all that there is no other Almighty besides You, my Lord.

## **CHAPTER 1** **In the Spirit of St. Francis**

“Consider, brothers, the humility of God and "pour out your hearts before Him, and be ye humbled that ye may be exalted by Him. Do not therefore keep back anything for yourselves that He may receive you entirely who gives Himself up entirely to you.”  
St. Francis of Assisi

- 1.1 As presbyters (presbyteros, “elder”), by the very nature of our ordination, we are called and consecrated to serve You Lord and our Holy Mother Church in priestly ministry as “witnesses and stewards of a life other than the life here on earth.” (1). As such, we seek,

with Your divine assistance, evangelical perfection to conform ourselves more perfectly to Your Son Jesus Christ, the Servant and Good Shepherd, by living according to the Gospel while serving as instruments of His eternal priesthood.

- 1.2 We are called to seek this evangelical perfection and serve as Your instrument by following the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the salvific center of his life in relationship to God, neighbor, and all creation. We do this as Franciscan Tertiaries, sharing in the grace and mission of the Order, while serving under the pastoral jurisdiction of our own local Bishop.
- 1.3 Guided by the words of St. Francis in his Testament, “And the Lord gave me brothers...” our life as priests and as members of the Third Order of St. Francis is lived in community. This community, or *confraternity*, is bonded together by our love of Christ and our firm desire to walk in the footsteps of our Seraphic Father.

(1) Vatican Council II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* [PO], Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 3.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **The Confraternity**

*“The Tertiary priest knows that he is not fighting this battle (worldliness) alone but that there is the invisible choir of the Tertiaries spread all over the world that are with him. In such a thought lies great encouragement and potent inspiration.” (2)*

- 2.1 The name of our confraternity is “The Priestly Confraternity of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis.”
- 2.2 The Priestly Confraternity of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis, herein after referred as “the Confraternity” or “TOFP”, is an organic union of Third Order Franciscan priests established on the feast day of St. Maximilian Kolbe, OFM Conv., August 14, 2024 under the spiritual direction of the Order of Friars Minor of the Province of the Immaculate Conception.
- 2.3 The Confraternity is an association of the Christian faithful and a third order according to the precepts of the Code of Canon Law. “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.” (CIC 303)

- 2.4 Our Confraternity adopts, as our program of sanctification and way of life, the Rule of 1883, promulgated by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII for the Franciscan Third Order Secular, adapted for priests.
- 2.5 The Confraternity is organized and functions in conformity with the Code of Canon Law, and the following documents of the Franciscan Third Order: the Rule, the Constitutions, the Statutes of The Franciscan Tertiaries of the Order of Friars Minor Province of the Immaculate Conception and these Confraternity By-Laws.

(2) Survey of a Decade Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States, The Third Order and the Priest, Rev. Charles P. Bruehl, Meeting of Priests and Seminarians, October 4, 1926, p. 200

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **The Way of Life**

*“Consider your dignity, brothers, priests, and be holy because He Himself is holy.”*  
St. Francis of Assisi

- 3.1 Uniting ourselves more perfectly to Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, by virtue of our baptism and ordination, we, the members of the Priestly Confraternity of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis seek to encounter Christ through prayer, fraternal and eucharistic living, the apostolate, faithful liturgical celebrations and the careful and attentive study of Your Word, which form the principal *rule of life* in the Franciscan Family. As noted by Thomas of Celano, St. Francis “was the man with the evangelical vocation in truth and in faith the servant of the Gospel... His supreme desire, his ardent wish and his highest principle was to observe the Gospel in all things and above all things.”
- 3.2 Francis’ exhortation to penance leads us to its deeper understanding, of its purpose, and its benefits.
  - a. Drawn to You by Seraphic-like love, Almighty God, and being purified from human impurities by a penitential way of life, which indelibly marks the spirit of the TOFP, we desire to be re-formed into the living image of Christ, Your Son. Only then, we can truly become the “spouses, brothers and mother of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and being filled with the Holy Spirit, we can carry Him in our hearts and bodies.
  - b. For us members of this Confraternity, the pathway of penance is the means to remove any encumbrance to living a truly spiritual life in conformity with the light of the Gospel of

peace, praying in the Spirit on all occasions and putting on the *full armor of God* in truth, righteousness, readiness, faith, salvation and according to the Word of God in opposition to the rulers, authorities, and powers of this present darkness (cf. Eph 6:10-17).

- 3.3 As Troubadours of the Great King, Heralds of the Gospel, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God who cultivate a truly spiritual life in ourselves and others, we seek to live in a spirit of *minority* (humble and efficacious servants of Christ's redemption), *fraternity* (living in communion with others through charity), and *poverty* (detached from material goods combined with kenotic self-giving) in imitation of Christ, who though in the form of God emptied Himself and took the form of a servant to His brethren. We see ourselves as co-laborers with our Bishop who is a common spiritual father to the vineyard of the local church, as well as guardians, household stewards, and elder brothers to the deacons and lay faithful we serve. Contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation and life-giving crucifixion of Christ is the joyful inspiration of a greater resurrection and ascension with Him in the soul to the Heavenly Father, leaving behind the weight of sin and attachment to material possessions while taking up the easy yoke of the Gospel.
- 3.4 Loving the Most High and Glorious Lord and Creator of all things who made them very good, and seeking to praise Him by joining the canticle of His creation, we will treat with respect and care all of God's creatures while cultivating a great appreciation for the wisdom, order, and beauty of the natural world and its conservation.
- 3.5 As St. Francis wished his Tertiaries to practice as far as possible the religious life, we Tertiary priests shall observe the evangelical counsels. (3)
  - a. Poverty: As children of the Poverello, we shall seek to develop in ourselves the spirit of poverty and detachment, as well as the spirit of reliance upon the fatherly providence of our Father who is in Heaven. For this purpose we shall take pleasure in reading and meditation on the Sermon on the Mount.
  - b. Chastity: as Tertiary priest we shall surround every act of the sacred ministry with prudent circumspection and preserve intact even our reputation for sacerdotal chastity. In memory of the Passion of our Savior and the protracted fasts of St. Francis, we shall perform daily some act of voluntary mortification, and we shall faithfully observe the two fast days prescribed by the Rule (Ch II, 4).
  - c. Obedience: We shall make our own the Franciscan motto: "The word of the Pope, the watchword of God!" The orders and wishes of our bishop we shall regard as the commands and counsels of God.
- 3.6 Conscious that to be effective leaders in the exercise of our presbyterate we must be men of virtue, we shall strive to cultivate the six essential virtues symbolized in St. Francis' vision of the six-winged seraph (cf. Bonaventure, *Six Wings of the Seraph*):
  - a. Zeal for Righteousness: This requires demonstrating a love for souls and a desire to lead others "into glory with Him through His teaching and work." We must be willing to deal effectively with wrongdoing in the parish, encouraging instead those qualities that are necessary for salvation and spiritual progress.

- b. Compassion: “When a member of the community needs help, the head should offer the wine of fervent zeal and the oil of comforting brotherly love.” Opportunities to show the deepest compassion, are considered to be blessings, for “the more generous our mercy and the more unselfish our charity, the more clearly do we show ourselves to be merciful and charitable, rather than calculating.”
- c. Patience: Because shepherding is a call to suffering due to the number of arduous tasks, seeing little return for our labors, and often being subject to complaints and criticism for our work, we need “a shield of threefold patience” (St. Bonaventure). These three are:
- to know how to answer everyone with modesty, maturity and kindness;
  - to seek to be a peacemaker by avoiding resentments and revenge for wrongs suffered;
  - to persevere in fulfilling faithfully and with joy the duties entrusted to us as priests in the community.
- d. Good Example: We should seek to be living icons of Christ’s way of life to the parish, so that we “can imprint it more deeply” on the lives of the individual members (St. Bonaventure). This can be accomplished in three ways:
- Conforming in our practice to all of the distinctives that make up the common life of the parish. Certain obvious dangers to the community are averted by the leader’s presence and full participation in the common life. “For if the shepherd cuts himself out of the flock, he exposes the sheep to the tricks of the wolves.” (St. Bonaventure);
  - humbly showing kindness to all people. We are to avoid thinking too high of ourselves, and actually fear the role that has been entrusted to us, fulfilling it only out of necessity and preferring a subordinate role. We should be “pleasant spoken, so that (members) can discuss their needs with him trustfully,” performing every kindness and offering instruction and “prompt exhortation” as necessary. The atmosphere should encourage great brotherly affection between us and the people, taking pains to be “more loved than feared” so that he will be more “willingly obeyed”, thus making the obedience more spiritually profitable for the followers because of its voluntary nature (St. Bonaventure);
  - providing a good example by conducting ourselves with maturity in all matters, avoiding trivializing weightier matters, using jokes and phrases that may seem funny but are only hurtful to others, ensuring that our “conduct... be such that all the members of the community trust him and confide in him as their best friend, each one taking his love for granted.” We should “do nothing to cause another person to feel that his head scorns him and arbitrarily prefers others.” (St. Bonaventure)
- e. Discernment: We will strive to do whatever good we can accomplish while demonstrating good judgement in how, when, where and why it is done. We will actively cultivate this virtue, for “without discretion, zeal turns to immature and headstrong rashness... (compassion) declines into sentimentality... patience robs authority of its proper vigor... (and) good example loses its power to build up other Christians... just as good food needs salt for better taste” (St. Bonaventure). We can accomplish this in four ways:

- First, by helping people grow in the Christian life by assigning them roles and responsibilities within the parish that match their “habits, abilities and consciences” and encouraging them to strive after spiritual perfection;
  - Second, by correcting misbehavior on the part of members of the parish;
  - Third, by engaging in business and administrative duties intrinsic to the office while not losing sight of more essential duties;
  - Fourth, by governing oneself and providing for one’s own spiritual needs.
- f. Devotion to God: We will seek after this font and summit of all the others virtues of leadership. As Bonaventure explains, “love for God gives us zeal for good deeds, strengthens our patience, and clarifies our judgement. It is the foundation of all good example and the motive for brotherly compassion. Love of God is a spiritual anointing that teaches us everything that leads to salvation.” We can develop devotion to God in three primary ways:
- The first way is through public prayers in common, which imitates the heavenly choirs of angels and saints in “Jerusalem above,” commemorates God’s “loving deeds on our behalf,” stirs up “our devotion and fuels the fire of our love of God,” and helps those who struggle to establish a regular life of prayer (St. Bonaventure).
  - The second way is through personal or private prayer. While it may be difficult for us to maintain a devotional life, we can find true “refreshment” for our spirit after the example of Jesus who “while preaching to the crowd by day, spent his nights in solitary prayer,” (St. Bonaventure).
  - The third and final way is by the constant remembrance of the burning presence of God in daily life. For us, this constancy requires an inner awareness of God’s task and grace that He has given us, a “determination to please God in every speech and action,” and the practice of preparing for everything “with prayer, at least mentally” (St. Bonaventure).

(3) Survey of a Decade Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States, Rule of Life, Meeting of Priests and Seminarians, October 4, 1926, p. 217

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Prayer Life**

*“Prayer and meditation are the salvation of the priest. The Tertiary Rule will not allow him to neglect these powerful and unfailing means of salvation. The Blessed Eucharist is the perennial fountain from which he draws strength and courage; the Rule of the Third Order will put him into more intimate relationship with the Sacrament of the Altar.” (4)*

4.1 Our holy father St. Francis was above all a man of prayer. To imitate him we shall

observe the following (5):

- a. Mindful of the repeated pressing recommendations of St. Francis, we shall cherish a great veneration for the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every day we will make a special visit to the Blessed Sacrament. We will take care to have our churches, and especially the altar cloths and linens, in the best state of neatness.
- b. Every time we enter the church, or pass a church while abroad, we shall repeat in the spirit of faith the salutation left us by St. Francis in his Testament: “We adore Thee, most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Thy churches of the whole world, and we bless Thee, because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.”
- c. Upon the recitation of the Divine Office, we shall seek to penetrate ourselves more and more with the spirit of adoration inculcated by St. Francis.
- d. To nourish in ourselves the love of the Passion of our Lord, which was so dear to St. Francis, we shall make the holy Way of the Cross on Fridays, which may take the place of the daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament.
- e. We will daily make the evening’s examination of conscience prescribed by the Rule, and we shall make it in a manner that will be really conducive to our sanctification.

- 4.2 Following the example of St. Francis, we shall love dearly the Blessed Virgin and see that she is loved. As her spiritual offspring, *Queen of the Seraphic Order* and *Virgin Made Church*, our prayer and work will be imbued by a Marian spirit of humility and a ready *fiat* to the word and will of God in every moment. Entrusting ourselves and our labors to her as Immaculate mediatrix, Protectress and Advocate of our priestly ministry and charism, we will cultivate an ardent filial love for her in ourselves and others after the words and example of St. Francis and the prayers of the Church.

(4) Survey of a Decade Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States, The Priest as a Tertiary, Meeting of Priests and Seminarians, October 4, 1926, p. 200

(5) Survey of a Decade Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States, Rule of Life, Meeting of Priests and Seminarians, October 4, 1926, p. 216

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Apostolic Life**

*“And as the Lord God has honored you above all through this mystery, even so do you also love and reverence and honor Him above all.”*

St. Francis of Assisi

- 5.1 Called by Christ to greater cruciformity to rebuild the Church through a faithful spiritual life and evangelical apostolate, we desire through the grace and power of your Holy



Spirit to faithfully serve in our pastoral office and assignments, cultivating the virtues needed to do well all that we do with love for You, God of love. Uniting ourselves in humble charity, prayer, peace, and good will with the Pope of Rome, our local Bishop, our brother priests and deacons, and all of the lay faithful, we strive in every action to edify and strengthen the Church in her life and mission by building up the living stones of the People of God into a temple of the Spirit with Christ as the cornerstone offering praise and service to you, O God.

- 5.2 Seeing ourselves as sons of the Heavenly Father in the Son and companions in the Holy Spirit, as well as humble servants of the Church's Shepherds (Bishops) especially our own, our life in confraternity should extend in charity and patience to our brother clergy, seeking to live as elder brothers, heirs, and rulers of the kingdom of heaven- poor in spirit, yet rich in the virtues of Christ which we seek to make our own according to the spirit of the Beatitudes.
- 5.3 As members of the Confraternity we shall strive in all things to be faithful to the teachings of the Gospel as taught faithfully by the Scriptures, Holy Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, and serve as seraphic intercessors for the Church in support of her ministry, identity, and mission as the Kingdom of God in her earthly sojourn to the Heavenly Jerusalem.
- 5.4 Mindful that we are servants of the Incarnate and Ascended Lord "sitting on a throne, high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1) and mediators between God and their parishes (cf. Bonaventure, *Six Wings of the Seraph*), we strive to be faithful to the Franciscan-Seraphic tradition of fraternal teaching and guardianship. As we live the six essential virtues (see Art. 3.6) in the exercise of our presbyterate as a means of both action and defense in the community we learn how, in the words of St. Bonaventure, to "exercise authority over other Christians" in a way that would be useful and meritorious to those we serve, knowing that a "person responsible for teaching others to practice the virtues ought to possess them all in the highest degree" (cf. Bonaventure, *Six Wings of the Seraph*).
- 5.5 St. Francis was consumed by his zeal for souls. "Erat vir apostolicus." To imitate him (6):
  - a. We shall be conscientious in the preparation of our instructions and sermons;
  - b. the ministry of the confessional we shall look upon as the chief of our duties;
  - c. the sick shall be the object of our very special attention, and we shall visit them often;
  - d. we shall take pleasure in devoting ourselves to the spiritual and, as far as circumstances will permit, also the temporal interest of the poor;
  - e. we shall respond to the exhortations of the Popes regarding the propagation of the Third Order and its spirit;
  - f. wherever we shall have Tertiaries or a fraternity to direct, we shall make special efforts to develop in their souls the spirit of St. Francis.
- 5.6 As members of the Priestly Confraternity we will avail ourselves to serve in the apostolate of initial formation and spiritual counsel of communities of Franciscan Tertiaries, as well as for the spiritual needs of individual members if requested.

- 5.7 Mindful of the approach of Sister Bodily Death and in the steadfast hope of a future resurrection to eternal life, we shall always seek to be in the will of God by the keeping of His ordinances and commandments, praising and blessing the Lord and giving Him thanks and serving Him with great humility. We shall avail ourselves at least monthly of the sacramental mystery of repentance, and always be ready to reconcile others through this ministry of mercy and the service of holy anointing. We shall avail ourselves to lead a Franciscan Wake Service to those Franciscan brothers and sisters called by Sister Death.

(6) Survey of a Decade Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States, Rule of Life, Meeting of Priests and Seminarians, October 4, 1926, p. 218

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **FRATERNAL LIFE**

*“And the Lord gave me brothers...”*  
St. Francis of Assisi

- 6.1 “In joining a fraternity we share the spiritual life of the whole Franciscan family. By fraternal bonds we are united with the great and glorious giants of sanctity of the Franciscan Order. The honor of becoming the brother of St. Louis, of the Cure of Ars, of Pere Foucauld, and other such saintly persons- to become the sister of St. Clare of Assisi, St. Joan of Arc, Margaret Sinclair- these are graces whose true value we shall know only in the next world.” (7)
- 6.2 Members of the Confraternity meet by virtual means for their Quarterly Community Gatherings, as their responsibilities allows. Although not required, attendance is highly recommended as a means to grow in love of God and neighbor in the spirit of St. Francis.
- 6.3 The quarterly gatherings are a time for prayer, formation in the Franciscan way of life, spiritual direction and fellowship.
- 6.4 The quarterly gatherings impart life and vigor to the Confraternity and are the means of preserving and developing the spirit of the Order. At these gatherings, its members are instructed in their duties, encouraged in the pursuit of perfection, and guided and protected in the exercise of zeal. Love for the Tertiary vocation and interest in the Order and the fraternity are awakened and nourished. The day of the gatherings is a day of spiritual renewal. These meetings promote solidarity and mutual charity. The members constitute a religious community- all have the same religious principles and aspirations, observe the same Rule, wear the same Third Order habit, and as brothers in the Seraphic

Patriarch are united in one family. (Adapted from Handbook of The Third Order Secular of St. Francis of Assisi, p. 316-317)

(7) Face to the World, by John Francis Motte, OFM.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Formation**

*“Give us many priestly imitators of St. Francis and the world will be speedily regenerated.” (8)*

- 7.1 The priestly Franciscan vocation is a “vocation within a vocation.”
- 7.2 Formation in Franciscan spirituality is an ongoing process which starts before entrance into the Order and continues throughout life. Its goal is ongoing conversion to a life of love of God and love of neighbor by following in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.
- 7.3 Formation takes place in two stages:
  - a. Initial Formation: Initial Formation is the first stage of formation, lasting at least 1 ½ years. Sessions are monthly, taking place in conjunction with the laity discerning entering the Third Order, and each session lasts 2 hours. Although it is not mandatory for priests to attend all sessions, attendance is highly recommended as one’s responsibilities allows. These sessions will provide the priest a deeper understanding on living the Franciscan spirit as a Tertiary. Initial Formation is comprised of two stages:
    1. The Inquiry Period: this period, which lasts 6 months, introduces the inquirer to the Third Order of St. Francis, the Tertiary Office and basic facts about St. Francis and his spirituality. During this period the inquirer is asked to read a good biography of the saint, such as *The First Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, by Thomas of Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi: A Biography*, by Omer Englebert or *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, by St. Bonaventure.
    2. The Novitiate: this period, which lasts for 12 months, delves deeper into the Tertiary Rule of Pope Leo XIII, the Constitutions and the tertiary’s way of life, including prayer, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, love of the Cross, devotion to Our Blessed Mother, and additional Franciscan spiritual practices and devotions.

Initial Formation ends at the time of profession into the Third Order.
  - b. Ongoing Formation: as our need of conversion is an ongoing process throughout our lives, the formation that takes place after profession into the Third Order is referred as “Ongoing Formation.” Although most of the ongoing formation is done by the tertiary on his own, there are opportunities for formation as a community, especially under the fraternal instruction of the TOFP Guardian of Franciscan Spirituality and grounded in the spiritual theology of the Franciscan

tradition, especially Saint Bonaventure. These include the virtual monthly gatherings of Isolated Tertiaries and the Quarterly meetings of the members of the TOFP.

- 7.4 Drawing on the font of the Franciscan intellectual tradition of the Church, TOFP members shall seek to learn from the teachings and example of the Omnibus of sources pertaining to the words and deeds of both St. Francis and St. Clare, as well as the theological vision of St Bonaventure, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Blessed John Duns Scotus, and later saints like St. Maximilian Kolbe. In this regard they should strive to understand and appropriate the spiritual teachings of the Church in relationship to the Absolute Primacy of Christ the King and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Theotokos. A list of recommended books and papal encyclicals on the Third Order is available in the TOF website.

(8) Survey of a Decade Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States, Rule of Life, Meeting of Priests and Seminarians, October 4, 1926, p. 201

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Entrance into the Confraternity**

- 8.1 Entrance into the Confraternity is one's response to the Divine call of the Holy Spirit to seek evangelical perfection, conform ourselves more perfectly to Jesus Christ and serve in our priestly ministry by following the Gospel in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.
- 8.2 A priest discerning entering the Third Order of St. Francis shall go through the process of Initial Formation (Inquiry and Novitiate) as outlined in Chapter 7 of these Bylaws. A Bishop is eligible for immediate entry into the TOFP.
- 8.3 Although not actually a member of the TOFP until his profession into the Third Order, a priest attending Initial Formation can, and is encouraged to, attend the Quarterly Meetings of the Priestly Confraternity.
- 8.4 After completion of the Inquiry Period, if so discerned, and if accepted by the community's Spiritual Guardian, the inquirer will celebrate the Ceremony of Reception into the Novitiate. At this ceremony the new novice will be invested with the novice habit: the scapular and a brown 5-knot cord. This ceremony makes the new novice a member of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis.
- 8.5 After completion of the Novitiate Period, if so discerned, and if accepted by the community's Spiritual Guardian, the novice will celebrate the Ceremony of Holy Profession into the Third Order Secular of St. Francis. At this ceremony he will receive a white 5-knotted cord to wear with the scapular received at the Novitiate ceremony.

- 8.6 Priests who have professed into the Tertiary community will become members of the Priestly Confraternity (TOFP) by the fact of their profession into the Third Order.
- 8.7 Seminarians discerning a call to the Third Order of St. Francis are welcome (provided that all necessary permissions have been obtained) to enroll in the Initial Formation process and, after completion, become a member of the Third Order. Upon ordination they will become members of the Priestly Confraternity (TOFP).

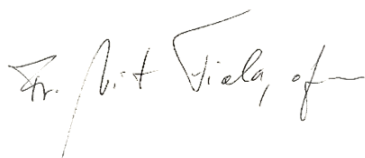
## **CHAPTER 9**

### **Corrections, Penalties and Dismissal**

- 9.1 The Tertiary profession is of its nature perpetual. The promise is made for life. The Church accepts this promise. There is a bilateral commitment between the Tertiary and the Church. Such a commitment cannot be dissolved by one party without the consent of the other. Resignation from the Third Order has no effect unless it is accepted by the Franciscan superior or his delegate (ref: Handbook of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis of Assisi, Ch. XI, Basil Gummermann, OFM Cap, p.120).
- 9.2 Corrections, penalties and dismissal from the Priestly Confraternity of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis
  - a. The Spiritual Guardian shall strive to lead the erring member to a better way of life and shall always act with charity and with prudence according to the biblical mandate. On the first and second occasion the Spiritual Guardian shall warn the erring member in a fatherly way. On the third time he shall suspend the erring member temporarily from the TOFP quarterly meetings and TOF functions such as fraternity or Isolated Tertiaries' monthly meetings (ref: Constitutions Art. 147, 148).
  - b. If after the third warning the erring member do not amend, he shall be dismissed from the Priestly Confraternity and TOF functions. Such a one will be an "Isolated Tertiary" but without the benefit of a community.
  - c. The Spiritual Guardian may dismiss a member immediately from the TOFP in the event of a grave transgression or scandal, if his priestly functions have been revoked, or in the event of dismissal from the Third Order.
  - d. The imposition of suspension and of dismissal must always be communicated in writing and must be noted in the register of the Confraternity.
  - e. Those who have been suspended or dismissed from the TOFP and TOF functions enjoy only the favors and privileges to which isolated tertiaries have a right; and they remain bound by the obligations of the rule and constitutions as isolated tertiaries. (ref: Constitutions Art 154).

### 9.3 Dismissal from the Third Order

- a. Anyone who has apostatized from the Catholic Faith, or who has joined a society `condemned by the Holy See, or who has notoriously incurred a censure, or who is living as a public sinner, shall be dismissed from the order after the necessary warning (ref: Constitutions Art. 152).
- b. Dismissal from the Third Order itself pertains to the provincial and the general commissaries (ref: Constitutions Art. 150)
- c. The imposition of suspension and of dismissal must always be communicated in writing and must be noted in the register of the fraternity (ref: Constitutions 151).
- d. Those, however, who have been dismissed from the order are deprived of all favors and privileges and are freed from all the regulations of the rule and constitutions (ref: Constitutions Art. 154).

**BYLAWS APPROVED BY:**


October 7, 2025

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 Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM

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 Date

Spiritual Guardian of the Priestly Confraternity of the TOF  
and Spiritual Director of the Tertiaries of the  
OFM Province of the Immaculate Conception

*“Almighty, eternal, just, and merciful God, give to us wretches to do for Thee what we know  
Thee to will and to will always that which is pleasing to Thee; so that inwardly purified, inwardly  
illuminated and kindled by the flame of the Holy Ghost, we may be able to follow in the footsteps of  
Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by Thy grace alone come to Thee the Most High, who in  
perfect Trinity and simple Unity livest and reignest and gloriest God Almighty forever and ever.*

*Amen.”*

St. Francis of Assisi

