



It is most likely that each one of us has a copy of the USA Ritual. We grab it before a council or fraternity meeting; it's in our bag when we head out to an election or visitation. We read the prayers, participate in the Rites and ceremonies. But, how often do we delve into what the ritual's history and value is.

That is what the National Formation Commission plans to do this evening.



History

- Tertiary's Companion – Prior to 1955
- The Fraternity Book
- *The Ritual for Public Functions, Franciscan Third Order – 1955*

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- Let's start with some of the history and background of this special book--
- Prior to 1955, the only Ritual for the Secular Franciscan Order was contained in the **Tertiary's Companion**
- Bits of a Third Order Ritual as contained in a Latin document of the Friars Minor had been collated by Fr. Philip Marquard and published by Franciscan Herald Press with the title, ***The Fraternity Book***
- Then, in 1955, Fr. Mark Hegener, OFM, compiled and published ***The Ritual for Public Functions, Franciscan Third Order***

History

- Vatican II – 1966
- Commissaries General called for overhaul
- The Ceremonial of the OFS was to be revised

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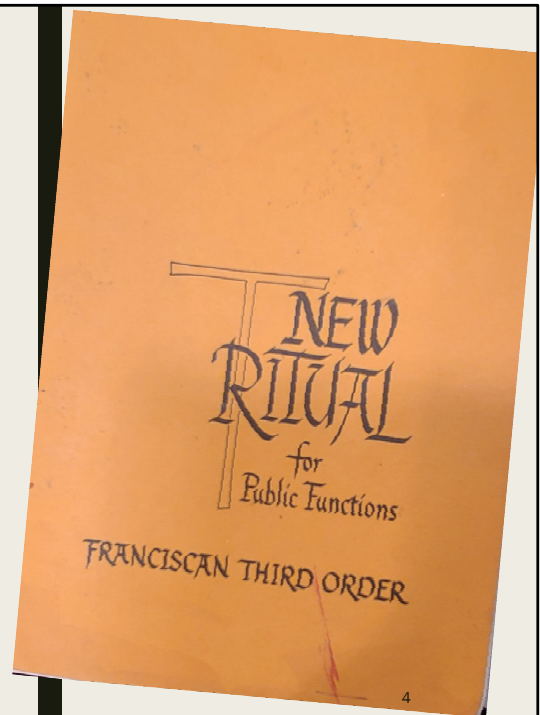


- In 1966 [in light of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II] the **Commissaries General** of the Franciscan Order urged the entire Franciscan world to engage in an overhaul of the rule, constitutions, and ritual of the Third Order, stating specifically:
 - *“That the **Ceremonial was to**, be completely revised in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.”*

The New Ritual for Public Functions 1973

- **The goals for the revision were:**
 - *Simplicity of expression*
 - *Variety of forms (alternatives and options)*
 - *Authentic experience of prayer (context)*
 - *Judicious selection of the best sources*

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- Mark Hegener, OFM. In the preface to the New Ritual for Public Functions compiled in 1973 by Benet A. Fonck, OFM, and his associates stated that the intent was that:
- “the ritual should be designed with the **proper liturgical norms**, be a major educational factor in the **formation of the Secular Franciscans**, while at the same time bringing to the **monthly fraternity meeting the reverence and dignity commensurate with awesome commitment of all the members of the Franciscan movement.**”
- If you can get a copy of this yellow book, you will find some interesting items, some of which now appear in the Tertiary’s Companion. Others

would be good to have for reference.

- For example: Prayers for Benediction; various consecrations, a Crib devotion, and a Transitus service among others.

- **Approval of the Rule of 1978**
- **Another revision to conform to the “new Rule”**
- **Latin text approved in 1984**
- **English edition approved in 1985**

The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – 1985

- With the advent of the Pauline Rule of 1978 (which some of us still call the “new Rule,” it was necessary to revise the Ritual once again.
- The Latin text of the “new Ritual” was approved by **the Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship** in 1984, and then the English edition was approved by the Sacred Congregation in 1985.

- Many of the devotional components were removed
- This Ritual contains
 - *Background information*
 - *Liturgical guidelines*
 - *Prayers*

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The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – 1985

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- The 1985 Ritual contains **background information, liturgical guidelines, and prayers used at important events.**
- In the forward to the Ritual (p. vi) we are urged to **enrich our local celebrations with signs, symbols, gestures, music, and whatever practices are appropriate to enhance the spirit of prayer** of the worshipping community.

Other presenters will help us to understand Rites and Ceremonies and speak specifically about the significance of the prayers contained in the Rites and Ceremonies most important to us.

The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – Who are we? (Section 1)

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

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First paragraph of the preface to the 1985 Ritual lets us know right off the bat that we are no longer dealing with a “devotional” book.

This Ritual is a workhorse, but we need to know how to use it.

The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – Normative Character (Section 2)

- **The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy allows for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups**
- **“...Rites which refer to Admission and Profession are to be taken as ‘normative with regard to the essential elements.’**

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Section 2 of the preface instructs us on what we can and cannot change in the various rites.

The essential elements of the Rites of Admission and Profession are considered normative and should not change substantially.

“...the Ritual has to contain a commonness with the Secular Franciscan Order everywhere in the world while expressing the particular character of a nation or culture.” Ritual p. 3 2.6

The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – Normative Character (Section 3)

- Pages 2-8 of the English Ritual give us guidance as to the elements that must be present in the rites and ceremonies
- These paragraphs should be discussed with the inquirers/candidates at the time they are being prepared

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- The third section discusses the rites that accompany the **steps of the life of a Secular Franciscan**. The **normative elements are explained in each paragraph and should be carefully reviewed by the formation team and in certain cases with the inquirers and candidates themselves.**
- In particular are mentioned the **Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming; the Rite of Admission; the Rite of Profession (Permanent Commitment); Rite of Temporary Commitment; and the Jubilee Ceremony**

The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – Normative Character

- What is normative?
 - *The disposition of the candidates*
 - *Who should be present*
 - *Where/how does the rite or ceremony take place*
 - *What should be contained in the rite or ceremony*
 - *Who presides—the role of the Spiritual Assistant and the Minister and Council*

In section 3 we get a good explanation of the importance of the Rites and what is needed when they take place.

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The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – Normative Elements

- Before Profession, the person preparing the candidates should go over in detail
 - *Paragraph 3.32 a-f found on pp.5-6 of the Ritual.*
 - *This should be done when the formator and the candidates are going over the Rite of Profession, pp. 18-26*

Each of these sections—well presented and discussed—will reinforce the solemnity of the commitment the candidate is about to make. Discussed in conjunction with the Rite, your formation teams have material for a pre-profession day of recollection.

The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – Liturgical Practice (Section 4)

- This section refers to the readings from Scripture and from the sources found in Appendix I
- You are free to consider using more up-to-date translations both of the Scriptures and the sources

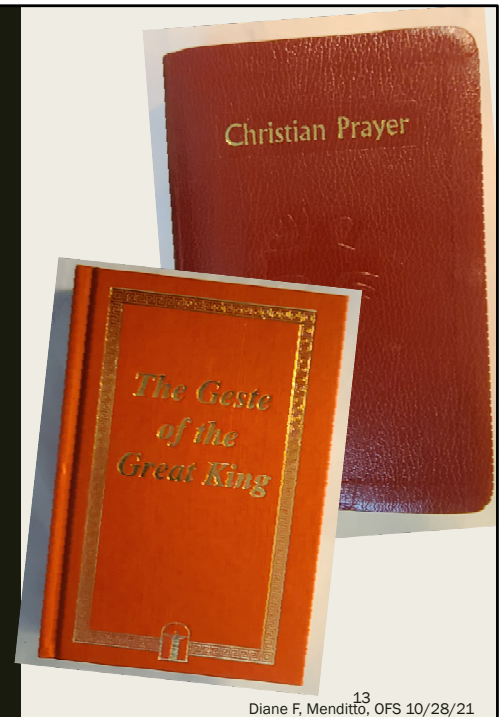
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- The fourth section of the preface talks about **liturgical practice** and refers to the readings from Scripture and from the sources found in the Appendix.
- You might want to consider **using more up-to-date translations** both from Scripture and from the early sources as found in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition books and website.

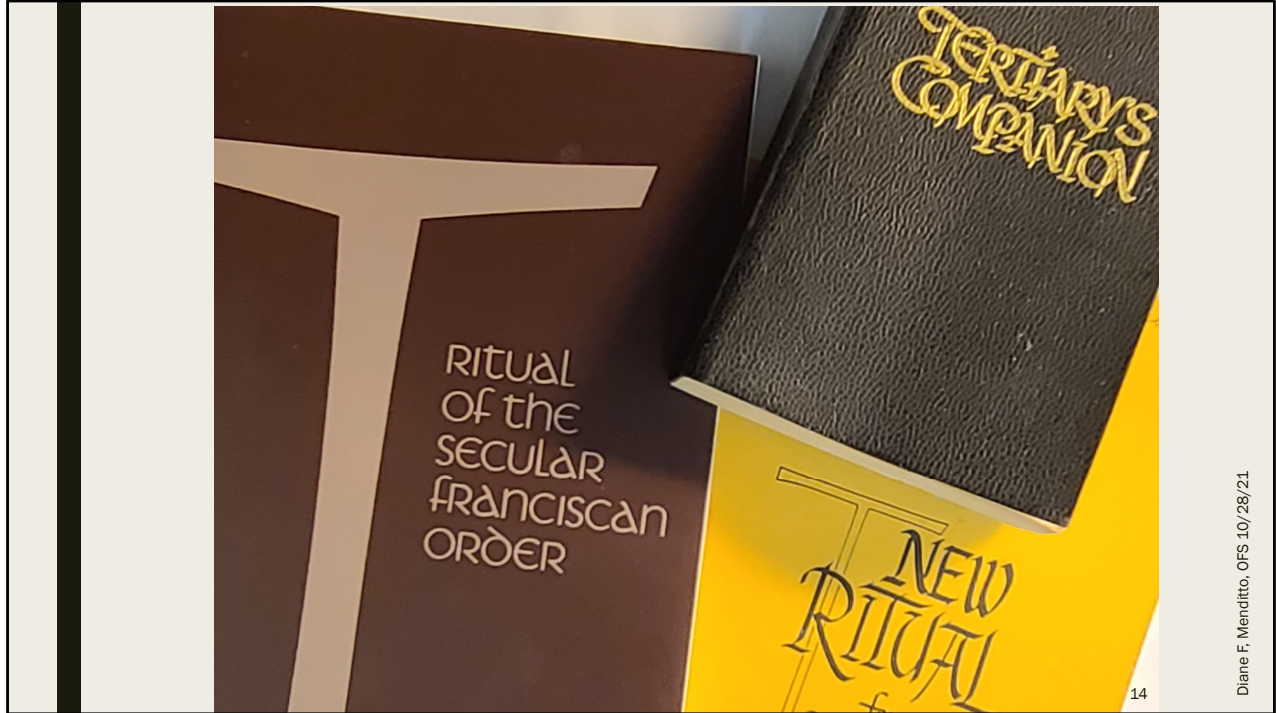
The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order – Appendix II

- Article 8 of our Rule calls for us to pray a form of liturgical prayer each day.
- On pp. 103-104, there is a handy list of seven forms of prayer
- Excellent for ongoing formation
- Important for Secular Franciscans to understand that we are not “tied” to the Liturgy of the Hours.



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Lastly, I would like to call your attention to an excellent reference found in the **second Appendix on pages 103-104**. On these pages you will find a list of the acceptable forms of **liturgical prayer** for Secular Franciscans to fulfill the responsibility called for in Article 8 of our Rule. I would suggest using the seven forms of prayer as an excellent ongoing formation series in the local fraternities. It is good for Secular Franciscans to understand that we are not “tied” to the Liturgy of the Hours as clerics are.



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So, rather than looking at our Ritual as a book to grab only at certain moments, let's look at it as a resource that will add to our personal and fraternity ongoing formation.