

## O.F.S. Affiliate Educational/Instructional Plan

Referenced authority:

*General Constitutions*, Article 53.5

The national statutes can indicate special forms of association with the fraternity for those who, without becoming a member of the O.F.S., want to participate in its life and activities.

*General Constitutions*, Article 103.1

Remaining faithful to their own identity, the fraternities will take care to make the most of each occasion for prayer, formation, and active collaboration with other ecclesial groups. They should welcome with pleasure those who, without belonging to the O.F.S., wish to share its experiences and activities.

*National Statutes*, Article 18.13 Affiliation with a local fraternity.

a. Those who, without belonging to the O.F.S., 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” (*O.F.S. 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.

Prepared by the National Formation Commission (NFC)

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### Process

- Before proceeding with a request for affiliate status, have the interested individual read *Prayer and St. Francis* (attached); *Characteristics of Franciscan Spirituality* (attached) and the *Come and See Digests* ([www.SecularFranciscansUSA.org](http://www.SecularFranciscansUSA.org)). Digests: 1) *Francis Of Assisi: Spiritual Father And Guide*; 2) *Saint Clare Of Assisi: A Mother And Model For All Franciscans*; 3) *Prayer: The Soul Of All We Secular Franciscans Are And Do*; 4) *Christ the Center: The Franciscan Image Of Christ*; 5) *Make Me An Instrument Of Your Peace*; 6) *In Praise Of All Creation*; 7) *Mary: Mother And Model*; 8) *Franciscan Spirituality And Work*
- An interested individual makes a written request to the local fraternity minister and is interviewed by a member of the local fraternity council. The interested individual is encouraged to attend gatherings for [at least] six months prior to request.
- Submits letter requesting affiliate status to the local minister.
- A sponsor (professed O.F.S. member) is assigned and orientation materials are provided.

**N.B.**

- Should a person in affiliate status seek to become a professed member of the O.F.S., then the requirements of the formal formation process supersede all parts of the affiliate orientation plan. Affiliation orientation does not shorten or alter the norms of the formation process of the O.F.S.
- At the beginning of affiliate orientation the local fraternity minister and assigned sponsor must clearly advise that the affiliate, once approved, has no juridical bond, voice (right to vote & hold office), or official status within the Secular Franciscan Order. [The affiliation is with a particular Fraternity.]

**Instructional Preparation**

- The sponsor and affiliate in process meet monthly to complete 12 sessions from a primary resource approved by the local Fraternity Council. A few suggestions:
  - Bodo, Murray, *Enter Assisi: An Invitation to Franciscan Spirituality*
  - Bodo, Murray, *The Way of St. Francis: The Challenge of Franciscan Spirituality for Everyone*
  - Bohrer, John, & Stoutzenberger, Joseph, *Looking to St. Francis: The Man from Assisi and His Message of Hope for Today*
  - Foley, Leonard & Weigel, Jovian, *Live Like Francis* [This is extremely well done!]
- Concurrently with beginning the 12 sessions, the person seeking affiliate status is presented with and asked to read some selections on the life of St. Francis of Assisi. A few suggestions:
  - Bodo, Murray, *Francis: The Journey and the Dream*
  - Bodo, Murray, & Saint Sing, Susan, *A Retreat with Francis & Clare of Assisi: Following Our Pilgrim Hearts*
  - Englebert, Omer, *St. Francis of Assisi: A Biography*
  - Jørgensen Johannes, *St. Francis of Assisi*
  - North, Wyatt, *Saint Francis of Assisi: A Life Inspired*
  - Stoutzenberger, Joseph & Bohrner, John, *Praying with Francis of Assisi*
  - Thoman, Bret, *Saint Francis of Assisi: Passion, Poverty & the Man Who Transformed the Catholic Church*
- With recommendations by the sponsor and the Formation Director, the Local Minister along with the Council decides about approving the affiliate.
- Once approved, the initial affiliation is made for a period of two years and commences with a simple welcoming in the context of a fraternity social gathering, (meeting, pot-luck, picnic, but not a Mass or a Rite), and a simple Certificate of Affiliation may be presented.
- In addition, a medal of St. Francis may be presented, but not the Tau or Tau jewelry, (which are reserved for the members of the Order). [If the Fraternity has been placed under the patronage of a particular Franciscan saint, a medal honoring that saint may be presented to the person at the time of affiliation.]

**Renewal of Affiliation**

- [Affiliation is by its nature temporary.] The affiliate must express a desire to remain as an affiliate and make a written request for renewal every 2 years.
- If approved, a renewal ceremony occurs, similar to the initial welcoming.
- An affiliate continues to grow through prayer, study, and immersion into the life of the local fraternity.