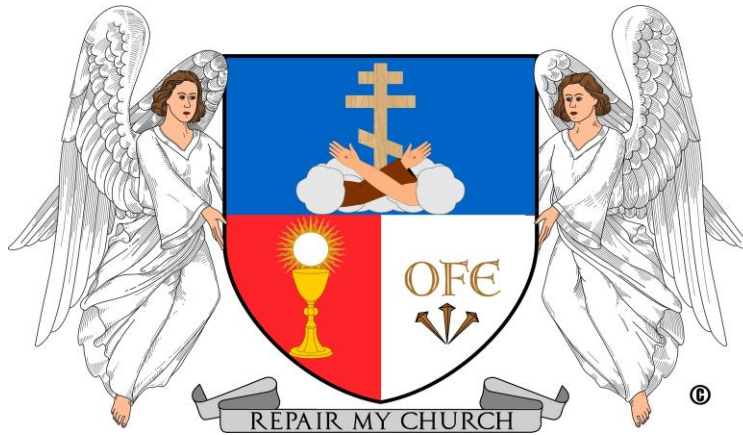


**THE GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS OF THE
ORDER OF FRANCISCANS OF THE EUCHARIST**



ROMAN CATHOLIC FRANCISCAN RELIGIOUS ORDER,
AN INTERNATIONAL ORDINARIATE

PROVINCE OF SAINT MARY THEOTOKOS

PROVINCE OF SAINT ALPHONSA

PROVINCE OF SAINT CHARLES LWANGA AND HIS COMPANIONS

PROVINCE OF SAINT BENEDICT

ABBHEY OF SAINT MARY THEOTOKOS

CHAPEL OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ORDER OF FRANCISCANS OF THE EUCHARIST

ORDER OF FRANCISCANS OF THE EUCHARIST SECULAR

SANCTIFICATION OF FAMILIES UNION OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC & AUTOCEPHALOUS BISHOPS

ALBANY, NEW YORK USA
APPROVED ON 1 NOVEMBER, 2019
SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

History of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist



2011	Est. Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos and Chapel of Saint Francis of Assisi
2011	Est. Order of Franciscans Ecumenical
2011	Order of Franciscans Ecumenical Rule of Life
2015	First professed member of Order of Franciscans Ecumenical
2015	Est. Order of Franciscans Ecumenical Secular
2015	First professed member of Order of Franciscans Ecumenical Secular
2016	Est. Order of Franciscans Culdee
2016	Est. Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi
2016	Incorporation of Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc.
2017	Est. Theotokos Association of Catholic Priests
2017	Principal Bishop Francis Joseph Patrick, SJ
2018	Est. Catholic Order of Franciscans Ecumenical
2018	Incorporation Order of Franciscans Ecumenical, Inc.
2018	Copyright OFE Logo
2019	Death of Principal Bishop Francis Joseph Patrick, SJ
2019	Bishop Protector Dermot P. Rodgers, FM
2019	Copyright of the Order of Franciscans Ecumenical Seal
2019	Disbanded Order of Franciscans Culdee
2019	Est. Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist
2019	Est. Province of Saint Mary Theotokos - North America
2019	Approval the General Constitutions
2019	Bishop Protector Dermot P. Rodgers, FM Resigned
2020	Bishop Protector Bishop Anthony J. Scuderi, NOSF
2021	Disbanded Catholic Order of Franciscans Ecumenical
2022	Disbanded Theotokos Association of Catholic Priests
2022	Bishop Protector Bishop Anthony J. Scuderi, NOSF Resigned
2022	Bishop Michael Cuozzo, OFE First Ordinary
2022	Bishop Rouville M. Fisher, III, OFE First Auxiliary
2022	Reverend Max M. Zapanta, OFE First Minister Provincial - North America

2022	Renamed Order of Franciscans Ecumenical Secular to the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist Secular
2022	Renamed the Order of Franciscans Ecumenical to the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist
2022	Corporation Renamed the Order of Franciscans Ecumenical, Inc. to the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.
2023	Est. Province of Saint Alphonsa - Asia
2023	Est. Province of Saint Charles Lwanga and His Companions - Africa
2023	Very Reverend Aneesh Jacob (Sebastian) Puthenpurackal, OFE First Minister Provincial - Asia
2023	Very Reverend Abel Makahamadze, OFE First Minister Provincial – Africa
2023	Trademark the Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist Logo
2023	Est. Province of Saint Benedict – Europe
2023	Very Reverend W.W. Augustus Dilkushan Fernando, OFE First Minister Provincial – Europe
2023	Est. International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops (ICCAB)
2025	Most Reverend Michael Cuozzo, OFE Archbishop
2025	Most Reverend Michael Cuozzo, OFE Titular Archbishop of Epiphania
2025	Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist Chartered Religious Order of The Apostolic Episcopal Church [Holy Eastern Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church]
2025	Very Reverend Noel Clarke, OFE First Assistant Minister General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Outline of Saint Francis of Assisi: The Reformer	6
The Second Letter of Saint Francis of Assisi: To the Faithful	7
Rule of our Seraphic Father Saint Francis of Assisi 1223	8
The Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi	12
An Exhortation of Our Holy Father Francis	13
The Last Words of Saint Francis of Assisi October 3, 1226	14
The Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi Made at Siena, Italy	14
An Exhortation from Our Holy Father Francis to Praise God	14
Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: Of the Imitation of the Lord	15
Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: Of Peacemakers	15
“Letter to the Faithful” of Saint Francis of Assisi	16
The Praises of God Most High of Our Holy Father Francis	16
Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: On the Body of the Lord	17
Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: On Loving	18

Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: On True Love	18
The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order of 1221	19
The Rule of The Secular Franciscan Order of 1978	23
Abbreviations and Key	27

THE GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS

Preamble	28
Chapter 1 The Order	28
Article 1.0: Mission Statement	28
Article 1.1: Our Order	28
Article 1.2: Life According to the Gospel	29
Article 1.3: The Rule of Life	32
Chapter 2 Scriptural Understanding	33
Article 2.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Follow Me	33
Article 2.1: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Food	33
Article 2.2: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Clothing	34
Article 2.3: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Shelter	35
Article 2.4: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Responsibility	37
Chapter 3 Evangelical Counsels	38
Article 3.0: Evangelical Counsels	38
Article 3.1: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Poverty	40
Article 3.2: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Chasity	41
Article 3.3: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Obedience	43
Chapter 4 Purpose	44
Article 4.0: Mission Statement, Goals, Mission, and Objective	44
Article 4.1: Charism and Apostolic Works	45
Chapter 5 Membership	46
Article 5.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Inquirers and Candidates	46
Article 5.1: Admission, Dismiss, Retire, and Ancillary Jurisdiction to the Order	47

Article 5.2: Our Profession	49
Article 5.3: Records, Report, and Communication (Fellowship)	50
Chapter 6 Prayer	51
Article 6.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of the Spirit of Prayer	51
Article 6.1: The Life of Prayer	54
Chapter 7 Instruction and Evangelization	56
Article 7.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Instruction	56
Article 7.1: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Evangelization	57
Article 7.2: The Friars [OFE Members] Have Been Called to Evangelize	59
Chapter 8 Penance	61
Article 8.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Correction	61
Article 8.1: Life of Penance	62
Article 8.2: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of the Life of Penance	62
Chapter 9 Formation	67
Article 9.0: On-going Formation	67
Chapter 10 Ministries	67
Article 10.0: Admission as an Ecclesiastical Affiliation OFE Charter	67
Article 10.1: Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi	68
Article 10.2 International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops	70
Chapter 11 Changes in the Constitutions	70
Article 11.0: Amendments to the OFE General Constitutions	70
Chapter 12 Governance	71
Article 12.0: Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.	71
Article 12.1: OFE Corporate Board of Directors and Council Members	72
Article 12.2: General and Provincial Chapters	72
Article 12.3: Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc.	73
Article 12.4: Our Scriptural Understanding: of the Leader	74
Article 12.5: Primate and Presiding Archbishop, Coadjutor Bishop, Auxiliary Bishop, and Bishop-Elect	76

Chapter 13 Community Life	78
Article 13.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of the Community Life	78
Chapter 14 Fellowship	80
Article 14.0: Fraternal Fellowship	80
Chapter 15 Peace and Humble	81
Article 15.0: Peace and Humble	81
Chapter 16 Repair My Church	83
Article 16.0: Repair My Church	83

Outline of Saint Francis of Assisi: The Reformer¹

I. Introduction

- A. Man, of contradiction: simple and humble, yet a deeply troubling and unnerving figure
- B. Represented back-to-basics evangelization with a return to the radicality of the Gospel

II. Early Years

- A. Born in 1182 in Assisi, son of Pica and Pietro Bernardone, a cloth merchant
- B. Not a proficient writer; loved to sing, especially songs of French troubadours
- C. Worked in his father's shop and liked fine clothes, money, and partying
- D. Sought fame, joined battles, eventually imprisoned
- E. Had a powerful dream where Christ asked him whom he would serve: the master or the servant
- F. Back in Assisi, the things that used to satisfy him did not anymore

III. Conversion

- A. Began to give things away to the poor
- B. Embraced leper and was filled with happiness
- C. Radical detachment from goods of the world and attachment to the purposes of God

IV. Rebuild My Church

- A. In 1206 at San Damiano, a small church in ruins, Francis heard Christ speak from the Cross, telling him to rebuild his house
- B. Sold cloth from father's shop to fund renovations
- C. Put on trial before bishop and came to renounce father and declare total devotion to God as his only Father

¹ Cf. "Saint Francis the Reformer" <https://www.wordonfire.org/wp-content/media/pp-sample-lesson-francis.pdf> Word on Fire Catholic Ministries. October-11-2019 (Date of Access).

- D. Solely dependent on God's providence; begged for sustenance
- E. Others began to join him, selling possessions to fund his mission

V. Establishment of the Order

- A. In 1209, along with twelve disciples, Francis went to see Pope Innocent III to get permission to begin an order
- B. Corruption rampant at the time; initially dismissed by pope
- C. Came back and was given permission after pope remembered a dream about il Poverello (little poor man) holding up the Lateran church
- D. Called order the "Friars Minor" as they were to take the lowest place
- E. Vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience

The Second Letter of Saint Francis of Assisi: To the Faithful

"To all those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength ² and love their neighbors as themselves ³ and hate their bodies with their vices and sins, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and produce worthy fruits of penance: Oh, how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them, since the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them ⁴ and He will make His home and dwelling among them. ⁵ They are children of the heavenly Father ⁶ whose works they do, and they are spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father Who is in Heaven; ⁸ mothers, when we carry Him in our heart and body through divine love and pure and sincere conscience and when we give birth to Him through a holy manner of working, which should shine before others as an example. ⁹ Oh, how glorious it is, how holy and great, to have a Father in Heaven! Oh, how holy, consoling, beautiful and wondrous it is to have such a Spouse! Oh, how holy and how loving, pleasing, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable, and desirable above all things to have such a Brother and such a Son: our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, gave up His life for His sheep ¹⁰ and Who prayed to the Father saying:

O Holy Father, protect those in your name ¹¹ whom you have given to me in the world; they were yours and you have given them to me ¹² and the words which you gave to me,

² Cf. Mark 12:30.

³ Cf. Matthew 22:39.

⁴ Cf. Isaiah 11:2.

⁵ Cf. John 14:23.

⁶ Cf. Matthew 5:45.

⁷ Cf. Matthew 12:50.

⁸ Matthew 12:50.

⁹ Cf. Matthew 5:16.

¹⁰ Cf. Jn 10:15.

¹¹ John 17:11.

¹² John 17:6.

I have given to them, and they have accepted them and have believed truly that I have come from you and they have known that you sent me. ¹³ I pray for them and not for the world. ¹⁴ Bless and sanctify them and I sanctify myself for them. ¹⁵ Not only for these do I pray, but for those who through their words will believe in me, ¹⁶ so that they may be made holy in being one ¹⁷ as we are one. ¹⁸ And I wish, Father, that where I am, they also may be with me so that they may see my glory ¹⁹ in your kingdom. ²⁰ Amen.”

Rule of our Seraphic Father Saint Francis of Assisi 1223

Given at the Lateran, the twenty-ninth day of November 1223

BULL OF POPE HONORIUS III Honorius, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to His Beloved Sons, Brother Francis and the other brothers of the Order of the Lesser Brothers, Health and Apostolic Benediction. The Apostolic See is accustomed to grant the pious requests and favorably to accede to the laudable desires of its petitioners. Therefore, beloved sons in the Lord, attentive to your pious prayers. We confirm with Our Apostolic Authority, and by these words ratify, the Rule of your Order, herein outlined and approved by Our predecessor, Pope Innocent of happy memory, which is as follows:

I: In the Name of the Lord begins the Life of the Lesser Brothers begins

The Rule and Life of the Lesser Brothers is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity. Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to our Lord Pope Honorius and his successors canonically elected and to the Roman Church. Let the other brothers be bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors.

II: Those who wish to adopt this life, and how they should be received

If there are any who wish to accept this life and come to our brothers, let them send them to their provincial ministers, to whom alone and not to others is permission granted to receive the brothers. Let the ministers examine them carefully concerning the Catholic faith and the sacraments of the Church. If they believe all these things, will faithfully profess them, and steadfastly observe them to the end; and if they have no wives, or if they have wives who have already taken a vow of continence and are of such an age that suspicion cannot be raised about them, and who have already entered a monastery or have given their husbands permission by the authority of the bishop of the diocese, let the ministers speak to them the words of the holy Gospel that they go and sell all they

¹³ John 17:8.

¹⁴ Cf. John 17:9.

¹⁵ John 17:19.

¹⁶ Jn 17:20.

¹⁷ John 17:23.

¹⁸ John 17:11.

¹⁹ John 17:24.

²⁰ Matthew 20:21.

have and take care to give it to the poor. If they cannot do this, their good will may suffice.

Let the brothers and the minister be careful not to interfere with their temporal goods that they may dispose of their belongings as the Lord inspires them. 8 If, however, counsel is sought, the minister may send them to some God-fearing persons according to whose advice their goods may be distributed to the poor. Then they may be given the clothes of probation, namely, two tunics without a hood, a cord, short trousers, and a little cape reaching to the cord, unless, at times, it seems good to these same ministers, before God, to act otherwise. When the year of probation has come to an end, they may be received to obedience promising always to observe this rule and life. On no account shall it be lawful for them to leave this Order, according to the decree of our Lord the Pope, for, according to the Gospel: no one who puts a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.

Those who have already promised obedience may have one tunic with a hood and another, if they wish, without a hood. And those who are compelled by necessity may wear shoes. Let all the brothers wear poor clothes and they may mend them with pieces of sackcloth or other material with the blessing of God. I admonish and exhort them not to look down upon or judge those whom they see dressed in soft and fine clothes and enjoying the choicest food and drink, but rather let everyone judge and look down upon himself.

III: The Divine Office, fasting and how the Brothers should go about in the World

Let the clerical [brothers] recite the Divine Office according to the rite of the holy Roman Church excepting the psalter, for which reason they may have breviaries. The lay [brothers], however, may say twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins, and five for Lauds; seven for each of the Hours of Prime, Terce, Sext, and None, twelve for Vespers, and seven for Compline. Let them pray for the dead. Let them fast from the feast of All Saints until the Lord's Nativity. May those be blessed by the Lord who fast voluntarily during that holy Lent that begins at the Epiphany and lasts during the forty days which our Lord consecrated by His own fast; but those who do not wish to keep it will not be obliged. Let them fast, however, during the other [Lent] until the Lord's Resurrection. At other times they may not be bound to fast except on Fridays. During a time of obvious need, however, the brothers may not be bound by corporal fast. I counsel, admonish and exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ not to quarrel or argue or judge others when they go about in the world; but let them be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle, and humble, speaking courteously to everyone, as is becoming. They should not ride horseback unless they are compelled by an obvious need or an infirmity. Into whatever house they enter, let them first say: "Peace be to this house!" According to the holy Gospel, let them eat whatever food is set before them.

IV: Let the Brothers never receive money

I strictly command all my brothers not to receive coins or money in any form, either personally or through intermediaries. Nevertheless, the ministers and custodians alone may take special care through their spiritual friends to provide for the needs of the sick and the clothing of the others according to places, seasons and cold climates, as they judge necessary, saving always that, as stated above, they do not receive coins or money.

V: The manner of working Those brothers to whom the Lord has given the grace of working may work faithfully and devotedly so that, while avoiding idleness, the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all temporal things must contribute. In payment for their work, they may receive whatever is necessary for the bodily support of themselves and their brothers, excepting coin or money, and let them do this humbly as is becoming for servants of God and followers of most holy poverty.

VI: Let the Brothers not make anything their own; begging Alms, the sick Brothers

Let the brothers not make anything their own, neither house, nor place, nor anything at all. As pilgrims and strangers in this world, serving the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go seeking alms with confidence, and they should not be ashamed because, for our sakes, our Lord made Himself poor in this world. This is that sublime height of most exalted poverty which has made you, my most beloved brothers, heirs and kings of the Kingdom of Heaven, poor in temporal things but exalted in virtue. Let this be your portion which leads into the land of the living. Giving yourselves totally to this, beloved brothers, never seek anything else under heaven for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever the brothers may be and meet one another, let them show that they are members of the same family. Let each one confidently make known his need to the other, for if a mother loves and cares for her son according to the flesh, how much more diligently must someone love and care for his brother according to the Spirit! When any brother falls sick, the other brothers must serve him as they would wish to be served themselves.

VII: The Penance to be imposed on the Brothers who sin If any brother, at the instigation of the enemy, sins mortally in regard to those sins concerning which it has been decreed among the brothers to have recourse only to the provincial ministers, let him have recourse as quickly as possible and without delay. If these ministers are priests, with a heart full of mercy let them impose on him a penance; but, if the ministers are not priests, let them have it imposed by others who are priests of the Order, as in the sight of God appears to them more expedient. They must be careful not to be angry or disturbed at the sin of another, for anger and disturbance impede charity in themselves and in others.

VIII: The Election of the General Minister of this Fraternity and the Chapter of Pentecost

Let all the brothers always be bound to have one of the brothers of this Order as general minister and servant of the whole fraternity and let them be strictly bound to obey him. When he dies, let the election of his successor be made by the provincial ministers and custodians in the Chapter of Pentecost, at which all the provincial ministers are bound to assemble in whatever place the general minister may have designated. Let them do this once in every three years, or at other longer or shorter intervals, as determined by the aforesaid minister. If, at any time, it appears to the body of the provincial ministers and custodians that the aforesaid general minister is not qualified for the service and general welfare of the brothers, let the aforesaid brothers, to whom the election is committed, be bound to elect another as custodian in the name of the Lord. Moreover, after the Chapter of Pentecost, the provincial ministers and custodians may each, if they wish and it seems expedient to them, convoke a Chapter of the brothers in their custodies once in the same year.

IX: Preachers

The brothers may not preach in the diocese of any bishop when he has opposed their doing so. And let none of the brothers dare to preach in any way to the people unless he has been examined and approved by the general minister of this fraternity and the office of preacher has been conferred upon him. Moreover, I admonish and exhort those brothers that when they preach their language be well-considered and chaste for the benefit and edification of the people, announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory, with brevity, because our Lord when on earth kept his word brief.

X: The admonition and correction of the Brothers

Let the brothers who are the ministers and servants of the others visit and admonish their brothers and humbly and charitably correct them, not commanding them anything that is against their soul and our rule. Let the brothers who are subject, however, remember that, for God's sake, they have renounced their own wills. Therefore, I strictly command them to obey their ministers in everything they have promised the Lord to observe and which is not against their soul or our Rule.

Wherever the brothers may be who know and feel they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, they can and should have recourse to their ministers. Let the ministers, moreover, receive them charitably and kindly and have such familiarity with them that these same brothers may speak and deal with them as masters with their servants, for so it must be that the ministers are the servants of all the brothers.

Moreover, I admonish and exhort the brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ to beware of all pride, vainglory, envy and greed, of care and solicitude for the things of this world, of detraction and murmuring. Let those who are illiterate not be anxious to learn, but let them pay attention to what they must desire above all else: to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity, to pray always to Him with a pure heart, to have humility and patience in persecution and infirmity, and to love those who persecute, rebuke and find fault with us, because the Lord says: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you. Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. But whoever perseveres to the end will be saved.

XI: The Brothers may not enter the Monasteries of Nuns

I strictly command all the brothers not to have any suspicious dealings or conversations with women, and they may not enter the monasteries of nuns, excepting those brothers to whom special permission has been granted by the Apostolic See; and they may not be godfathers to men or women, so that scandal may not arise among the brothers or concerning them on account of this.

XII: Those going among the Saracens and other non-believers Let those brothers who wish by divine inspiration to go among the Saracens or other non-believers ask permission to go from their provincial ministers. The ministers, however, may not grant permission except to those whom they see fit to be sent.

In addition to these points, I command the ministers through obedience to petition from our Lord the Pope for one of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, who would be the

governor, protector and corrector of this fraternity, so that, being always submissive and subject at the feet of the same Holy Church and steadfast in the Catholic Faith, we may observe poverty, humility, and the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as we have firmly promise.

CONFIRMATION OF THE RULE It is forbidden, therefore, for anyone to tamper with this decree which we have confirmed, or rashly dare to oppose it. If anyone presume to attempt this, let him know that he shall incur the anger of Almighty God and of His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

The Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi (1226) ²¹

In the Testament written near the end of his life Saint Francis recalls the grace of his conversion and the beginnings of the Order, and exhorts the friars to live their Gospel life with fidelity.

"The Lord gave to me, Brother Francis, thus to begin to do penance; for when I was in sin it seemed to me very bitter to see lepers, and the Lord Himself led me amongst them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, that which had seemed to me bitter was changed for me into sweetness of body and soul. And afterwards I remained a little and I left the world. And the Lord gave me so much faith in churches and that I would simply pray and say thus: "We adore Thee Lord Jesus Christ here and in all Thy churches which are in the whole world, and we bless Thee because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

After that the Lord gave me, and gives me, so much faith in priests who live according to the form of the holy Roman Church, on account of their order, that if they should persecute me, I would have recourse to them. And if I had as much wisdom as Solomon had, and if I should find poor priests of this world, I would not preach against their will in the parishes in which they live. And I desire to fear, love, and honor them and all others as my masters; and I do not wish to consider sin in them, for in them I see the Son of God and they are my masters. And I do this because in this world I see nothing corporally of the Most High Son of God Himself except His most holy Body and Blood, which they receive and they alone administer to others. And I will that these most holy mysteries be honored and revered above all things and that they be placed in precious places. Wheresoever I find His most holy Names and written words in unseemly places, I wish to collect them, and I ask that they may be collected and put in a becoming place. And we ought to honor and venerate all theologians and those who minister to us the most holy Divine Words as those who minister to us spirit and life.

And when the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the holy Gospel. And I caused it to be written in few words and simply, and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me. And those who came to take this life upon themselves gave to the

²¹ *The Writings of Saint Francis of Assisi*, Paschal Robinson, trans. (Philadelphia: Dolphin Press, 1906), pp. 81-86, 152-153. Reprinted in Brian Tierney, ed., *The Middle Ages, Vol. I: Sources of Medieval History*, 4th ed., (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983) pp. 255-257.

poor all that they might have and they were content with one tunic, patched within and without, by those who wished, with a cord and breeches, and we wished for no more.

We clerics said the Office like other clerics; the laics said the Paternoster, and we remained in the churches willingly enough. And we were simple and subject to all. And I worked with my hands, and I wish to work, and I wish firmly that all the other brothers should work at some labor which is compatible with honesty. Let those who know not [how to work] learn, not through desire to receive the price of labor but for the sake of example and to repel idleness. And when the price of labor is not given to us, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, begging alms from door to door.

The Lord revealed to me this salutation that we should say: "The Lord give thee peace." Let the brothers take care not to receive on any account churches, poor dwelling-places, and all other things that are constructed for them, unless they are as is becoming the holy poverty which we have promised in the Rule, always dwelling there as strangers and pilgrims.

I strictly enjoin by obedience on all the brothers that, wherever they may be, they should not dare, either themselves or by means of some interposed person, to ask any letter in the Roman curia either for a church or for any other place, nor under pretext of preaching, nor on account of their bodily persecution, but, wherever they are not received let them flee to another land to do penance, with the blessing of God. And I wish to obey the minister general of this brotherhood strictly and the guardian whom it may please him to give me. And I wish to be so captive in his hands that I cannot go or act beyond his obedience and his will because he is my master. And although I am simple and infirm, I desire withal always to have a cleric who will perform the office with me as it is contained in the Rule.

And let all the other brothers be found to obey their guardian and to perform the office according to the Rule. And those who may be found not performing the office according to the Rule and wishing to change it in some way, or who are not Catholics, let all the brothers wherever they may be, if they find one of these, be bound by obedience to present him to the custos who is nearest to the place where they have found him. And the custos shall be strictly bound, by obedience, to guard him strongly day and night as a prisoner so that he cannot be snatched from his hands until he shall personally place him in the hands of his ministers. And the minister shall be firmly bound by obedience to send him by such brothers as shall watch him day and night like a prisoner until they shall present him to the Lord of Ostia, who is master protector and corrector of this brotherhood.

And let not the brothers say "This is another Rule," for this is a remembrance, a warning, and an exhortation and my Testament which I, little Brother Francis, make for you, my blessed brothers, in order that we may observe in a more Catholic way the Rule which we have promised to the Lord. And let the minister general and all the other ministers and custodes be bound by obedience not to add to these words or to take from them. And let them always have this writing with them beside the Rule. And in all the Chapters they hold, when they read the Rule let them read these words also. And I strictly enjoin on all my brothers, clerics and laics, by obedience, not to put glosses on the Rule or on these words saying, "Thus they ought to be understood," but, as the Lord has given me

to speak and to write the Rule and these words simply and purely, so shall you understand them simply and purely and with holy operation observe them until the end.

And whoever shall observe these things, may he be filled in heaven with the blessing of the Most High Father, and may he be filled on earth with blessing of His Beloved Son together with the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, and all the Powers of heaven and all the saints. And I, Brother Francis, your little one and servant, in so far as I am able, I confirm to you within and without this most holy blessing. Amen.”

An Exhortation of Our Holy Father Francis

“O dearly beloved brothers and children ever-blessed. listen to me, listen to the voice of your Father: Great things have we promised, greater things have been promised us; Let us observe the former, and yearn for the later. Pleasure is brief; punishment is eternal. Short the suffering, eternal the glory. Many are called, few are chosen; everyone will be rewarded according to his merit.”²² (Amen)

The Last Words of Saint Francis of Assisi October 3, 1226

“Then, as the hour of his departure was fast approaching, Francis called all the brethren to him. He consoled them with words of comfort about his death, exhorting them with fatherly tenderness to love God. He spoke for a long time about observing patience, and poverty, and fidelity to the Holy Roman Church . . . Then as all the brethren sat around him, he stretched his hands over them, crossing his arms in the likeness of the Cross, for he did always love that sign, and he blessed all the brethren, . . . Then as best he could, he broke forth into the words of [Psalm 141]: “I cried unto the Lord with my voice, with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication,” and went through even unto the end, saying: “The righteous shall gather round me, for you shall deal generously with me.””²³

The Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi Made at Siena, Italy

“Write this way: I bless all my friars, who are in religion and who will come even until the end of the age . . . Since on account of my weakness and the pain of my sickness I cannot manage to speak, in these three words I am briefly making clear my will to my friars, that is: that, in remembrance of my blessing and my testament, they love one another, that they always love and observe our lady, holy poverty, and that they be faithful and subject to the prelates and all the clergy of Holy Mother Church.”

²² Cf. Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*.

²³ Cf. excerpt from *The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi* by St. Bonaventure.

An Exhortation from Our Holy Father Francis to Praise God

"Fear the Lord and give Him honor.²⁴ Worthy is the Lord to receive praise and honor²⁵
All who fear the Lord, praise Him²⁶ Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.²⁷
Praise Him Heaven and earth.²⁸ Praise the Lord all you rivers.²⁹ Bless the Lord you

sons of God³⁰ This is the day which the Lord has made, let us exult and rejoice in it.³¹
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! King of Israel!³² Every spirit praise the Lord.³³
Praise the Lord, since He is Good.³⁴ All you who read this, bless the Lord.³⁵
All you creatures bless the Lord.³⁶ All you birds of heaven praise the Lord.³⁷
All you children praise the Lord.³⁸ You youths and virgins praise God³⁹ Worthy is the
Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise, glory and honor⁴⁰ Blessed be the Holy Trinity
and undivided Unity.⁴¹ Saint Michael the Archangel defend us in battle."⁴²

Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: Of the Imitation of the Lord

"Let us all, brothers, consider the Good Shepherd who to save His sheep bore the
suffering of the Cross. The sheep⁴³ of the Lord followed Him in tribulation and
persecution and shame, in hunger and thirst, in infirmity and temptations and in all other
ways;⁴⁴ and for these things they have received everlasting life from the Lord.
Wherefore it is a great shame for us, the servants of God, that, whereas the Saints have
practiced works, we should expect to receive honor and glory for reading and preaching
the same."

²⁴ Revelation 14:7.

²⁵ Cf. Revelation 4:11.

²⁶ Cf. Psalms 21:24.

²⁷ Luke 21:24.

²⁸ Cf. Psalms 68:35.

²⁹ Cf. Daniel 3:78.

³⁰ Cf. Daniel 3:82.

³¹ Psalms 117:24.

³² John 12:13.

³³ Psalms 150:6.

³⁴ Psalms 146:1.

³⁵ Psalms 102:21.

³⁶ Cf. Psalms 102:22.

³⁷ Daniel 3:90; Cf. Psalms 148:7-10.

³⁸ Cf. Psalms 112:1.

³⁹ Cf. Psalms 148:12.

⁴⁰ Cf. Revelation 5:12.

⁴¹ Cf. Mass for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

⁴² Cf. Mass for the Feast of St. Michael, the Archangel. By "battle" the daily spiritual struggle to observe the moral law is signified.

⁴³ i.e., the Saints (cf. Jn 10:1-6; Mt 25:31-46).

⁴⁴ See John 10:11, Hebrews 12:2, John 10:4, Romans 8:35.

Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: Of Peacemakers

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”⁴⁵ They are truly peacemakers who amidst all they suffer in this world maintain peace in soul and body for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴⁶

“Letter to the Faithful” of Saint Francis of Assisi

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Brother Francis, their servant and subject, sends esteem and reverence, true peace from heaven and sincere love in the Lord to all Christian religious people: clergy and laity, men and women, and to all who live in the whole world.

Because I am the servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and to administer the fragrant words of my Lord to them. Therefore, realizing that I could not visit each one of you personally because of sickness and the weakness of my body, I decided to offer you in this letter and message the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which *are spirit and life*.

The Most High Father made known from heaven through His holy angel Gabriel this Word of the Father – so worthy, so holy and glorious – in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from whose womb He received the flesh of our humanity and frailty. Though He was rich, He wished, together with the most Blessed Virgin, His mother, to choose poverty in the world beyond all else. And as His Passion was near, He celebrated the Passover with His disciples and, taking bread, gave thanks, blessed and broke it, saying: Take and eat: This is My Body. *And taking the cup He said:* This is My Blood of the New Covenant which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. *Then He prayed to His Father, saying:* Father, if it can be done, let this cup pass from me. And His sweat became as drops of blood falling on the ground. *Nevertheless, He placed His will in the will of His father, saying:* Father, let Your will be done; not as I will, but as You will. *His Father’s will was such that His blessed and glorious Son, Whom He gave to us and Who was born for us, should offer Himself through His own blood as a sacrifice and oblation on the altar of the cross: not for Himself through Whom all things were made, but for our sins, leaving us an example that we might follow His footprints.* And He wishes all of us to be saved through Him and receive Him with our heart pure and our body chaste. But even though His yoke is easy and His *burden light*, there are few who wish to receive Him and be saved through Him.”

⁴⁵ Matthew 5:9.

The Praises of God Most High of Our Holy Father Francis

"Thou art the Holy Lord, the Only God, who works miracles, ⁴⁷ Thou art strong, Thou art great, ⁴⁸ Thou are the Most High, Thou art King Eternal, Thou Holy Father, ⁴⁹ King of Heaven and earth. ⁵⁰ Thou art three in one Lord, God of gods, ⁵¹ Thou art Good, all good, Highest Good, Lord God living and true. ⁵²

Thou art Love, Charity; Thou art Wisdom, Thou art humility, Thou art patience, ⁵³ Thou art Beauty, Thou art gentleness; Thou art security, Thou art quiet, Thou art joy; Thou art our Hope and Joy, Thou art justice, Thou art temperance, Thou art all our riches unto sufficiency.

Thou art Beauty, Thou art gentleness, Thou art Protector, ⁵⁴ Thou art our guard and defender, Thou art fortitude, ⁵⁵ Thou art refreshment. Thou art our Hope, Thou art our Charity, Thou art our Sweetness, Thou art our eternal Life: Great and admirable Lord, God Omnipotent, merciful Savior."

Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: On the Body of the Lord

"The Lord Jesus says to His disciples: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would know My Father as well; in a little while will know Him and see Him." Phillip says to Him: "Lord, show us the Father, and that will suffice for us." Jesus says to him: "For so long a time I am with you, and you do not know Me? Phillip, he who sees Me, sees even My Father."⁵⁶

The Father dwells in light inaccessible, ⁵⁷ and God is spirit, ⁵⁸ and no one has ever seen God. ⁵⁹ Therefore, He can be seen only in spirit, since it is the spirit which vivifies, the flesh brings forth nothing. ⁶⁰ But neither is the Son, because He is equal to the Father, seen in Him otherwise than the Father, otherwise than the Holy Spirit. Whence all who saw the Lord Jesus according to the Humanity and both did not see and believe

⁴⁷ Psalms 76:15.

⁴⁸ Cf. Psalms 85:10.

⁴⁹ Cf. John 17:11.

⁵⁰ Matthew 11:25.

⁵¹ Cf. Psalms 135:2.

⁵² Cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

⁵³ Psalms 70:5.

⁵⁴ Psalms 30:5.

⁵⁵ Cf. Psalms 42:2.

⁵⁶ John 14:6-9.

⁵⁷ Cf. 1 Timothy 6:16.

⁵⁸ John 4:24.

⁵⁹ John 1:18.

⁶⁰ John 6:64.

according to the spirit the Divinity also, that He Himself is the true Son of God, have been damned; so even now all who see the Sacrament, which is sanctified by the words of the Lord upon the Altar by the hand of the Priest in the form of bread and wine, and does not see and believe according to the spirit the Divinity also, that this is truly the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, have been damned, since the Most High Himself testifies, who said: "This is My Body and My Blood of the new testament (which is poured forth for the many;" ⁶¹ and "He who eats My Flesh and drinks the Blood of the Lord." All Others, who do not have according to this same spirit and presume to receive Him, eat and drink judgement upon themselves. ⁶² Whence: "Sons of men, how long with a heavy heart?" ⁶³ So that you may know the truth and believe in the Son of God." ⁶⁴

Behold, every day He humbles Himself, ⁶⁵ just as when from royal thrones ⁶⁶ He entered into the womb of the Virgin; every day He comes to us presenting Himself humbly; everyday He descends from the bosom of His Father to the Altar into the hands of the Priest. And just as to the holy Apostles in true flesh, so even now He shows Himself to us in the Sacred Bread. And just as when they gazed at his very own flesh they saw only His flesh, but contemplating with their spiritual eyes believed Him to be God, so even we seeing bread and wine with our bodily eyes, may see and firmly believe them even to be His Most Holy Body and Blood, living and true. And in such a manner the Lord is always His faithful ones, just as He says: "Behold I am with you even to the consummation of the age." ⁶⁷

Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: On Loving

"The Lord says: "Love your enemies [do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who are persecuting and calumniating you]. ⁶⁸ For he truly loves his enemy, who does not grieve over the injury, which has been done to himself, but for the sake of the love of God burns on account of the sin against his own soul. And manifests love for such a one in deeds."

Admonition of Saint Francis of Assisi: On True Love

"Blessed is the servant, who would so love his own brother, when he is infirm and cannot repay him, as when he is healthy and can repay him."

⁶¹ Matthew 14:22,24.

⁶² Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:29.

⁶³ Psalms 4:3

⁶⁴ Cf. John 9:35.

⁶⁵ Cf. Philippians 2:8.

⁶⁶ Wisdom 18:15.

⁶⁷ Cf. Matthew 28:20

⁶⁸ Matthew 5:44.

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order of 1221 ⁶⁹

Here begins the Rule of the Continent Brothers and Sisters:

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHAPTER I: DAILY LIFE

1. The men belonging to this brotherhood shall dress in humble, undyed cloth, the price of which is not to exceed six Ravenna soldi an ell, unless for evident and necessary cause a temporary dispensation be given. And breadth and thinness of the cloth are to be considered in said price.
2. They shall wear their outer garments and furred coats without open throat, sewed shut or uncut but certainly laced up, not open as secular people wear them; and they shall wear their sleeves closed.
3. The sisters in turn shall wear an outer garment and tunic made of cloth of the same price and humble quality; or at least they are to have with the outer garment a white or black under wrap or petticoat, or an ample linen gown without gathers, the price of an ell of which is not to exceed twelve Pisa denars. As to this price, however, and the fur cloaks they wear a dispensation may be given according to the estate of the woman and the custom of the place. They are not to wear silken or dyed veils and ribbons.
4. And both the brothers and the sisters shall have their fur garments of lamb's wool only. They are permitted to have leather purses and belts sewed in simple fashion without silken thread, and no other kind. Also, other vain adornments they shall lay aside at the bidding of the Visitor.
5. They are not to go to unseemly parties or to shows or dances. They shall not donate to actors, and shall forbid their household to donate.

CHAPTER II: ABSTINENCE

6. All are to abstain from meat save on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, except on account of illness or weakness, for three days at blood-letting, in traveling, or on account of a specially high feast intervening, namely, the Nativity for three days, New Year's, Epiphany, the Pasch of the Resurrection for three days, Assumption of the glorious Virgin Mary, the solemnity of All Saints and of St. Martin. On the other days, when there is no fasting, they may eat cheese and eggs. But when they are with religious in their convent homes, they have leave to eat what is served to them. And except for the feeble, the ailing, and those

⁶⁹ Cf. "The Primitive Rule of Life of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance the Original Rule of the Third Order of Saint Francis – 1221" http://www.bspenance.org/The_Rule_of_1221.shtml The Brothers and Sisters of Penance of Saint Francis. September-24-2019 (Date of Access).

travelling, let them be content with dinner and supper. Let the healthy be temperate in eating and drinking.

7. Before their dinner and supper let them say the Lord's prayer once, likewise after their meal, and let them give thanks to God. Otherwise let them say three Our Fathers.

CHAPTER III: FASTING

8. From the Pasch of the Resurrection to the feast of All Saints they are too fast on Fridays. From the feast of All Saints until Easter they are too fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, but still observing the other fasts enjoined in general by the Church.
9. They are too fast daily, except on account of infirmity or any other need, throughout the fast of St. Martin from after said day until Christmas, and throughout the greater fast from Carnival Sunday until Easter.
10. Sisters who are pregnant are free to refrain until their purification from the corporal observances except those regarding their dress and prayers.
11. Those engaged in fatiguing work shall be allowed to take food three times a day from the Pasch of the Resurrection until the Dedication feast of St. Michael. And when they work for others, it will be allowed them to eat everything served to them, except on Fridays and on the fasts enjoined in general by the Church.

CHAPTER IV: PRAYER

12. All are daily to say the seven canonical Hours, that is: Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. The clerics are to say them after the manner of the clergy. Those who know the Psalter are to say the Deus in nomine tuo (Psalm 54) and the Beati Immaculati (Psalm 119) up to the Legem pone (Verse 33) for Prime, and the other psalms of the Hours, with the Glory Be to the Father; but when they do not attend church, they are to say for Matins the psalms the Church says or any eighteen psalms; or at least to say the Our Father as do the unlettered at any of the Hours. The others say twelve Our Fathers for Matins and for every one of the other Hours seven Our Fathers with the Glory Be to the Father after each one. And those who know the Creed and the Miserere mei Deus (Ps. 51) should say it at Prime and Compline. If they do not say that at the Hours indicated, they shall say three Our Fathers.
13. The sick are not to say the Hours unless they wish.
14. All are to go to Matins in the fast of St. Martin and in the great fast, unless inconvenience for persons or affairs should threaten.

CHAPTER V: THE SACRAMENTS, OTHER MATTERS

15. They are to make a confession of their sins three times a year and to receive Communion at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. They are to be reconciled with

their neighbors and to restore what belongs to others. They are to make up for past tithes and pay future tithes.

16. They are not to take up lethal weapons, or bear them about, against anybody.
17. All are to refrain from formal oaths unless where necessity compels, in the cases excepted by the Sovereign Pontiff in his indult, that is, for peace, for the Faith, under calumny, and in bearing witness.
18. Also, in their ordinary conversations they will do their best to avoid oaths. And should anyone have sworn thoughtlessly through a slip of the tongue, as happens where there is much talking, he should the evening of the same day, when he is obliged to think over what he has done, say three Our Fathers in amends of such oaths. Let each member fortify his household to serve God.

CHAPTER VI: SPECIAL MASS AND MEETING EACH MONTH

19. All the brothers and sisters of every city and place are to foregather every month at the time the ministers see fit, in a church which the ministers will make known, and there assist at Divine Services.
20. And every member is to give the treasurer one ordinary denar. The treasurer is to collect this money and distribute it on the advice of the ministers among the poor brothers and sisters, especially the sick and those who may have nothing for their funeral services, and thereupon among the poor; and they are to offer something of the money to the aforesaid church.
21. And, if it be convenient at the time, they are to have some religious who is informed in the words of God to exhort them and strengthen them to persevere in their penance and in performing the works of mercy. And except for the officers, they are to remain quiet during the Mass and sermon, intent on the Office, on prayer, and on the sermon.

CHAPTER VII: VISITING THE SICK, BURYING THE DEAD

22. Whenever any brother or sister happens to fall ill, the ministers, if the patient let them know of it, shall in person or through others visit the patient once a week, and remind him of penance; and if they find it expedient, they are to supply him from the common fund with what he may need for the body.
23. And if the ailing person depart from this life, it is to be published to the brothers and sisters who may be present in the city or place, so that they may gather for the funeral; and they are not to leave until the Mass has been celebrated and the body consigned to burial. Thereupon each member within eight days of the demise shall say for the soul of the deceased: A Mass, if he is a priest; fifty psalms, if he understands the Psalter, or if not, then fifty Our Fathers with the Requiem aeternam at the end of each.
24. In addition, every year, for the welfare of the brothers and sisters living and dead, each priest is to say three Masses, each member knowing the Psalter is to recite

- it, and the rest shall say one hundred Our Fathers with the Requiem aeternam at the end of each.
25. All who have the right are to make their last will and make disposition of their goods within three months after their profession, lest anyone of them die intestate.
 26. As regards making peace among the brothers and sisters or non-members at odds, let what the ministers find proper be done; even, if it be expedient, upon consultation with the Lord Bishop.
 27. If contrary to their right and privileges trouble is made for the brothers and sisters by the mayors and governors of the places where they live, the ministers of the place shall do what they shall find expedient on the advice of the Lord Bishop.
 28. Let each member accept and faithfully exercise the ministry of other offices imposed on him, although anyone may retire from office after a year.
 29. When anybody wishes to enter this brotherhood, the ministers shall carefully inquire into his standing and occupation, and they shall explain to him the obligations of the brotherhood, especially that of restoring what belongs to others. And if he is content with it, let him be vested according to the prescribed way, and he must make satisfaction for his debts, paying money according to what pledged provision is given. They are to reconcile themselves with their neighbors and to pay up their tithes.
 30. After these particulars are complied with, when the year is up and he seems suitable to them, let him on the advice of some discreet brothers be received on this condition: that he promise he will all the time of his life observe everything here written, or to be written or abated on the advice of the brothers, unless on occasion there be a valid dispensation by the ministers; and that he will, when called upon by the ministers, render satisfaction as the Visitor shall ordain if he have done anything contrary to this condition. And this promise is to be put in writing then and there by a public notary. Even so nobody is to be received otherwise, unless in consideration of the estate and rank of the person it shall seem advisable to the ministers.
 31. No one is to depart from this brotherhood and from what is contained herein, except to enter a religious Order.
 32. No heretic or person in bad repute for heresy is to be received. If he is under suspicion of it, he may be admitted if otherwise fit, upon being cleared before the bishop.
 33. Married women are not to be received except with the consent and leave of their husbands.
 34. Brothers and sisters ejected from the brotherhood as incorrigible are not to be received in it again except it, please the saner portion of the brothers.

CHAPTER VIII: CORRECTION, DISPENSATION, OFFICERS

35. The ministers of any city or place shall report public faults of the brothers and sisters to the Visitor for punishment. And if anyone proves incorrigible, after consultation with some of the discreet brothers he should be denounced to the Visitor, to be expelled by him from the brotherhood, and thereupon it should be published in the meeting. Moreover, if it is a brother, he should be denounced to the mayor or the governor.
36. If anyone learns that a scandal is occurring relative to brothers and sisters, he shall report it to the ministers and shall have opportunity to report it to the Visitor. He need not be held to report it in the case of husband against wife.
37. The Visitor has the power to dispense all the brothers and sisters in any of these points if he finds it advisable.
38. When the year has passed, the ministers with the counsel of the brothers are to elect two other ministers; and a faithful treasurer, who is to provide for the need of the brothers and sisters and other poor; and messengers who at the command of the ministers are to publish what is said and done by the fraternity.
39. In all the above-mentioned points no one is to be obligated under guilt, but under penalty; yet so that if after being admonished twice by the ministers he should fail to discharge the penalty imposed or to be imposed on him by the Visitor, he shall be obligated under guilt as contumacious.

The Rule of The Secular Franciscan Order 1978 ⁷⁰

Chapter One: The Secular Franciscan Order

1. The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church, unites all members of the people of God — laity, religious, and priests – who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi.

In various ways and forms but in life-giving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.
2. The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.

⁷⁰ Cf. "Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order" <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/the-rule-of-the-secular-franciscan-order/> National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order October-15-2019 (Date of Access).

3. The present rule, succeeding “*Memoriale Propositi*” (1221) and the rules approved by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

Chapter Two: The Way of Life

4. The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.

Christ, the gift of the Father’s love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.

5. Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of St. Francis, who often said, “I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except His most holy body and blood,” should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.
6. They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialog of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

7. United by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance” and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel calls “conversion.” Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.

On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and the source of grace.

8. As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.

Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

9. The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to His every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.

10. United themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed His will into the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfill the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to Him even in difficulties and persecutions.

11. Trusting the Father, Christ chose for Himself and His mother a poor and humble life, even though He valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children.

Thus, in the spirit of the Beatitudes, and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

12. Witnessing to the good yet to come and obligated to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.

13. As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

14. Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone "who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself," let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.

15. Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

16. Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.

17. In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.

By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for His Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

18. Moreover, they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High,” and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.
19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.

Chapter Three: Life in Fraternity

20. The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels — local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own moral personality in the Church. These various fraternities are coordinated and united according to the norm of this rule and of the constitutions.

21. On various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister who are elected by the professed according to the constitutions.

Their service, which lasts for a definite period, is marked by a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community.

Within themselves the fraternities are structured in different ways according to the norm of the constitutions, according to the various needs of their members and their regions, and under the guidance of their respective council.

22. The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

23. Requests for admission to the Secular Franciscan Order must be presented to the local fraternity, whose council decides upon the acceptance of new brothers and sisters.

Admission into the Order is gradually attained through a time of initiation, a period of formation of at least one year, and profession of the rule. The entire community is engaged in the process of growth by its own manner of living. The

age for profession and the distinctive Franciscan sign are regulated by the statutes.

Profession by its nature is a permanent commitment. Members who find themselves in particular difficulties should discuss their problems with the council in fraternal dialogue. Withdrawal or permanent dismissal from the Order, if necessary, is an act of the fraternity council according to the norm of the constitutions.

24. To foster communion among members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups. It should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life of fraternity. The communion continues with deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them.
25. Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity and the needs of worship, of the apostolate, and of charity, all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means. Local fraternities should contribute toward the expenses of the higher fraternity councils.
26. As a concrete sign of communion and co- responsibility, the councils on various levels, in keeping with the constitutions, shall ask for suitable and well-prepared religious for spiritual assistance. They should make this request to the superiors of the four religious Franciscan families, to whom the Secular Fraternity has been united for centuries.

To promote fidelity to the charism as well as observance of the rule and to receive greater support in the life of the fraternity, the minister or president, with the consent of the council, should take care to ask for a regular pastoral visit by the competent religious superiors as well as for a fraternal visit from those of the higher fraternities, according to the norm of the constitutions.

Abbreviations and Key

OFE	Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist
OFES	Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist Secular
OFE Member(s)	OFE, OFES, and OFE Charter Members
OFE Corporate Board	Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.
Abbey Corporate Board	Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc.

In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The General Constitutions of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist (OFE)

Preamble

By the Grace of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and with the intercession of our founder Saint Francis of Assisi, the General Constitutions are established as the organizational norm for the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist (OFE) as we become more aware of our understanding of the vision left us by Jesus Christ and our founder Saint Francis of Assisi.

We, hereby, affirm these General Constitutions as an instrument of governance and guidance for the Order.

Chapter 1 The Order

Article 1.0: Mission Statement

We, the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist (hereafter called “OFE”) are called to minister to celibate and married [and/or widowed] Roman Catholic and Catholic priests and laity by offering them a welcoming home, support, acceptance, affirmation of their marriages, and validation of their lives and ministries.

Article 1.1: Our Order

§ 1. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are cognizant that, “he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.”⁷¹

§ 2. “The rule and life of [OFE Members] the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people. Christ, the gift of the Father’s love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.”⁷²

⁷¹ Philippians 2:8.

⁷² Cf. “Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order” <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/the-rule-of-the-secular-franciscan-order/> National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order October-15-2019 (Date of Access).

§ 3. We are a community of married [widowed] and celibate Roman Catholic and other Catholic priests and laity who recognize the primacy of our Lord Jesus Christ and strive to live the spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi.

§ 4 The motto of the OFE is our Lord's words spoken to our founder Saint Francis of Assisi: "repair my church" and through ministry, we commit to our Lord's words.

§ 5. The specific pastoral activity of OFE is to create an avenue for married Roman Catholic priests to return to service in Roman Catholic parishes. Married Roman Catholic priests are priests who married after ordination in the Roman Catholic Church.

§ 6. We are challenged by the Franciscan spirituality. Franciscan spirituality is primarily focused on Christ, his Incarnation, his Passion, and his Presence in the Eucharist. We are abled by the Franciscan values, which are Gospel centered, engaged in a continuous pursuit of knowledge, faith, wisdom, and justice, and ever mindful of a tradition that emphasizes reverence for creation, simplicity, service and community, dignity of human persons and support of family unity, compassion, and peacemaking.

§7. Community members of OFE set up home-based friaries or abbeys to minister to celibate and married [widowed] Roman Catholic and Catholic priests and laity by offering them a welcoming home, support, acceptance, affirmation of their marriages, and validation of their lives and ministries. It also welcomes laity who support married and celibate priests. The friary or abbey is a place where members are called to live out the Franciscan "Rule of Life" and to assist OFE to accomplish its mission, goals, apostolic works, and charism. The friary or abbey is where all are welcome to celebrate Eucharist, other sacraments, and where they live a community life.

Friaries or abbeys are self-governing, with friars and brothers supporting themselves and their ministries with secular, church-related, and/or church employment and adhere to the tentmaker tradition of the Apostle Paul, the "modern" term is bi-vocational priest.

Article 1.2: Life According to the Gospel ⁷³

§ 1. "The holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the source of the entire life of the Church in every age and the message of salvation for the whole world." ⁷⁴

⁷³ Cf. *Constitutions*: <https://www.ofmcap.org/en/documenti-ofmcap/constitutions-ofmcap> September-10-2019 (Date of Access).

⁷⁴ Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, 84; *Form of Life for the Poor Ladies*, 12C 15; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:15; Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*, November 21, 1964, 20; Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Dei verbum*, November 18, 1965, 7; Vatican II, decree *Ad gentes*, 1965; *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*, January 25, 1983, 225 §1; 747 §2.

§ 2. "In fact, the Church, led by the Holy Spirit, comes to know Christ through the Gospel and, with faith, accepts His deeds and words, which are spirit and life for those who believe." ⁷⁵

§ 3. "Saint Francis, the founder of our Brotherhood, embraced the Gospel from the very beginning of his conversion and made it the guiding principle of his life and activity. For this reason, at the beginning and end of the Rule, he expressly commanded its observance and, in the Testament, confirmed that it had been revealed to him that he must live according to the pattern of the holy Gospel." ⁷⁶

§ 4. "Since we are his sons, we commit ourselves, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to make continuous progress in understanding the Gospel." ⁷⁷

§ 5. "We follow the Gospel as the highest law in all the circumstances of life. Let us attentively read and meditate on the words of salvation, and, in imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, carry them in our hearts. In this way our life will be ever more formed by the Gospel, and we will grow to the full stature of Christ in all things." ⁷⁸

§ 6. "Saint Francis, a true disciple of Christ and an outstanding example of Christian living, taught His brothers to walk joyfully in the footprints of Christ poor, humble, and crucified, so that through Him, in the Holy Spirit, they might be led to the Father." ⁷⁹

§ 7. "Burning with the love of Christ, we contemplate Him in the self-emptying of the Incarnation and the Cross in order to become more like Him. By celebrating the Eucharist in brotherly joy, we participate in the Paschal Mystery as a foretaste of the glory of His Resurrection while awaiting His coming." ⁸⁰

§ 8. "The Lord granted Brother Francis the grace to begin to do penance by leading him among lepers. He showed mercy to them and after hearing the voice of the crucified Lord at San Damiano he embarked upon the gospel life in order to follow in the footsteps

⁷⁵ *Admonitions*, I 6; *First Letter to the Faithful*, 2:19; *Second Letter to the Faithful*, 3; *Earlier Rule*, 1221, XXII 29-31; *Testament*, 1226, 13; John 6:63; Luke 24:19; Hebrews 1:1; Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Dei verbum*, November 18, 1965, 2,4; 17,19; *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*, January 25, 1983, 225 §1; 747 §1.

⁷⁶ Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, 22-25; Saint Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, III 1; *Legend of the Three Companions*, 25; *The Later Rule* (with papal seal), 1223, I 1; XII 14; *Testament*, 1226, 14; Fourth Plenary Council of the Order, Rome, 1981, 1; 4; 13; Sixth Plenary Council of the Order, Assisi, 1998, 2; *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*, January 25, 1983, 578; 587 §1; 631 §1.

⁷⁷ Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, 102-104; Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Dei verbum*, November 18, 1965, 8.

⁷⁸ *Admonitions*, VII 3; XX 1; XXI 1; *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 1C 84; 90; 110; 2C 102; 105; 216; *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, XIV 5; Luke 2:19.51; Ephesians 4:15; Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*, November 21, 1964, 57; Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Dei verbum*, November 18, 1965, 8; 21; 25; Vatican II, decree *Perfectae caritatis*, October 28, 1965, 2; 6.

⁷⁹ *Earlier Rule*, 1221, VII 16; IX 1; *The Later Rule* (with papal seal), 1223, VI 3; X 7-9; *Letter to the Entire Order*, 50-52; *Admonitions*, VII 1-2; *Second Letter to the Faithful*, 11-13; 1C 84; 89; 2C 61; 90; 148; Saint Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, I 9; 42; 49; Matthew 11:29; 1 Peter 2:21; Ephesians 2:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

⁸⁰ *Second Letter to the Faithful*, 4-5; 8-13; *Admonitions*, I 14-18; *Testament*, 10; *Letter to the Entire Order*, 14-16; 27-32; Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, 84; 2C 199-201; Saint Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, I 2; VI 1; IX 2; X 7; Romans 8:24; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:46; 1 Corinthians 11:26; SC 47; *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*, January 25, 1983, 897; 1246 §1.

of Christ, with a burning desire to pattern his life upon Him in everything. In this way, true love of Christ transformed the lover into the image of the Beloved.”⁸¹

§ 9. “In order to take on the features of a true disciple of Jesus Christ, so wonderfully evident in Francis, we commit ourselves to imitating him, or, rather, Christ in him. Therefore, we diligently cultivate the spiritual inheritance of our Founder in our life and work, and share it with people of every age.”⁸²

§ 10. “After giving him brothers, the Lord revealed to Francis that they were to live according to the form of the holy Gospel. In this way the brotherhood of lesser ones came into being so that, living in communion, they might witness to the kingdom of God preaching penance and peace by example and word.”⁸³

§ 11. “It is necessary, therefore, to know the nature and purpose of our brotherhood in order to remain faithful to the Gospel and to our genuine tradition. We do this by returning through conversion of heart to the original inspiration, that is, to the life and Rule of our Father Saint Francis, so that our Order may be constantly renewed.”⁸⁴

§ 12. “For this purpose, we make every effort to give priority to a life of prayer, especially contemplative prayer. Living as pilgrims and strangers in this world, we practice, both individually and communally, radical poverty inspired by minority, and we propose a life of austerity and joyful penance out of love for the cross of the Lord.”⁸⁵

§ 13. “Gathered together in Christ as a single distinctive family, we develop among ourselves relationships that are fraternally spontaneous, and gladly live among those who are poor, weak and infirm, sharing in their lives and maintaining our characteristic closeness to people.”⁸⁶

§ 14. “The Rule of Saint Francis, which flows from the Gospel, spurs us on to live the gospel life.”⁸⁷

§ 15. “Shortly before his death, after receiving the sacred stigmata, being filled with the Holy Spirit and desiring our salvation more eagerly, our seraphic Father dictated the Testament.”⁸⁸

⁸¹ *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, 13; Saint Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, XIV 4; XIII 5; Philippians 2:5.

⁸² Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, 34; 38; 45; 2C 149; 221; Saint Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, Prol 1; *Constitutions of the Order of Capuchin Lesser Brothers*, 1536, 6; Vatican II, decree *Perfectae caritatis*, October 28, 1965, 2b; 20; *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*, January 25, 1983, 578.

⁸³ *Testament*, 1226 1, 14; *The Later Rule* (with papal seal), 1223 I 1; Saint Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, Prol 1; IV Vatican II, decree *Perfectae caritatis*, October 28, 1965, O 6; Fifth Plenary Council of the Order, Garibaldi, 1986, 64; 82ff; *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*, January 25, 1983, 577.

⁸⁴ Fourth Plenary Council of the Order, Rome, 1981, 1; 13; Vatican II, decree *Perfectae caritatis*, October 28, 1965, 2.

⁸⁵ *Earlier Rule*, 1221, VII 1-2; XXII 19-27; *The Later Rule* (with papal seal), 1223, I 1; V 1-2; X 8-9; XII 4; *Letter to the Entire Order*, 2,29; 50-52; *Letter to Brother Anthony*, 2; *Testament*, 1226, 19; *Second Letter to the Faithful*, 47; *Admonitions*, VI 1-3; PC 13.

⁸⁶ *Earlier Rule*, 1221, IX 2.16; *The Later Rule* (with papal seal), 1223, VI 7; Fourth Plenary Council of the Order, Rome, 1981, 46-48; Fifth Plenary Council of the Order, Garibaldi, 1986, 29-40; Vatican II, pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes*, December 7, 1965, 1; 27; Vatican II, decree *Ad gentes*, 1965, 20.

⁸⁷ *Testament*, 1226, 14; Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, 32; 2C 208; *The Anonymous of Perugia*, 76.

⁸⁸ Saint Bonaventure, *Major Legend*, IV 11; *Earlier Rule*, 1221, XXIV 1-3; *Testament*, 1226, 40.

§ 16. “In it he recalls and re-presents his gospel experience, declares his last will, and entrusts to us the precious inheritance of his spirit.” ⁸⁹

§ 17. “In them we find a sure means of spiritual renewal in Christ and effective help for each brother to bring to completion the total consecration of his life to God.” ⁹⁰

§ 18. “Let us lovingly devote ourselves to the personal and communal study of the Rule, the Testament and the Constitutions so that we absorb their spirit.” ⁹¹

Article 1.3: The Rule of Life

§ 1. A rule is the most straightforward description of a religious way of life. The Rule of 1223 A.D. was written by Saint Francis of Assisi, approved by Pope Honorius III. The Friars, Brothers, and Laity of OFE commit to the General Rule, a modern interpretation of the 1223 A.D. Rule of Saint Francis of Assisi is this:

- a. When Jesus was asked, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” ⁹²
- b. He also said, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” ⁹³
- c. We are to live a life of commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and to serve him faithfully.
- d. We are to acclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the study of the Scriptures. To keep the Eucharist and the Gospel at the center of our lives.
- e. We are to acquire knowledge and inspiration of the Franciscan spirituality of our founder and patron Saint Francis of Assisi.
- f. We are to infuse our daily life with compassion, service, community, simplicity, reverence for creation, dignity of human persons, peacemaking, prayer, and support of family unity.
- g. We are to welcome celibate and married Roman Catholic priests and laity.
- h. We are to be respectful to Popes, Patriarchs, Bishops, Abbot Generals, Minister Generals, and members of our Order.

⁸⁹ *Testament*, 36ff; *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*, January 25, 1983, 587 §1.

⁹⁰ *Earlier Rule*, 1221, XVI 10; Vatican II, decree *Perfectae caritatis*, October 28, 1965, 4.

⁹¹ Vatican II, decree *Perfectae caritatis*, October 28, 1965, 18.

⁹² Matthew 22:36-40.

⁹³ John 15:13.

Chapter 2 Scriptural Understanding

Article 2.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Follow Me

§ 1. “Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”⁹⁴

§ 2. “Then he said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”⁹⁵

§ 3. “And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.”⁹⁶

§ 4. “When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.”⁹⁷

Article 2.1: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Food

§ 1. “Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God is at hand for you.’”⁹⁸

§ 2. “The next day, while they were on their way and nearing the city, Peter went up to the roof terrace to pray at about noontime. He was hungry and wished to eat, and while they were making preparations he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all the earth’s four-legged animals and reptiles and the birds of the sky. A voice said to him, “Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat.” But Peter said, “Certainly not, sir. For never have I eaten anything profane and unclean.” The voice spoke to him again, a second time, “What God has made clean, you are not to call profane.””⁹⁹

§ 3. “I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; still, it is unclean for someone who thinks it unclean. If your brother is being hurt by what you eat, your conduct is no longer in accord with love. Do not because of your food destroy him

⁹⁴ Matthew 19:21.

⁹⁵ Luke 9:23.

⁹⁶ Matthew 19:29.

⁹⁷ Luke 5:8-11.

⁹⁸ Luke 10:7-9.

⁹⁹ Acts 10:9-15.

for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be reviled. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit; whoever serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by others. Let us then pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another.”¹⁰⁰

§ 4. “Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law—to win over those under the law. To those outside the law I became like one outside the law—though I am not outside God’s law but within the law of Christ—to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some.”¹⁰¹

§ 5. “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected when received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the invocation of God in prayer.”¹⁰²

§ 6. “And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same; but yours eat and drink.” Jesus answered them, “Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.””¹⁰³

§ 7. “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.”¹⁰⁴

Article 2.2: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Clothing

§ 1. “He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic.”¹⁰⁵

§ 2. “He said to them, “When I sent you forth without a money bag or a sack or sandals, were you in need of anything?” “No, nothing,” they replied.”¹⁰⁶

§ 3. “Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?”¹⁰⁷

§ 4. “Your adornment should not be an external one: braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or dressing in fine clothes, but rather the hidden character of the heart,

¹⁰⁰ Romans 14:14-19.

¹⁰¹ 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

¹⁰² 1 Timothy 4:4-5.

¹⁰³ Luke 5:33-35.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 4:1-2.

¹⁰⁵ Mark 6:8-9.

¹⁰⁶ Luke 22:35.

¹⁰⁷ Luke 12:27-28.

expressed in the imperishable beauty of a gentle and calm disposition, which is precious in the sight of God.” ¹⁰⁸

§ 5. “...saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens⁺ [hard to carry] and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues.” ¹⁰⁹

§ 6. “So, up to this hour we go hungry and thirsty, poorly clad, roughly treated, wandering about homeless.” ¹¹⁰

§ 7. “John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.” ¹¹¹

§ 8. “For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it. If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that.” ¹¹²

Article 2.3 Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Shelter

§ 1. “She [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” ¹¹³

§ 2. “Jesus answered him, “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head.” ¹¹⁴

§ 3. “Whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. And as for those who do not welcome you, when you leave that town, shake the dust from your feet in testimony against them.” Then they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and curing diseases everywhere.” ¹¹⁵

§ 4. “Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household. If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another.” ¹¹⁶

§ 5. “For as I see it, God has exhibited us apostles as the last of all, like people sentenced to death, since we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and human beings alike. We are fools on Christ’s account, but you are wise in Christ; we are

¹⁰⁸ 1 Peter 3:3-4.

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 23:2-6.

¹¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 4:11.

¹¹¹ Matthew 3:4.

¹¹² 1 Timothy 6:7-8.

¹¹³ Luke 2:7.

¹¹⁴ Luke 9:58.

¹¹⁵ Luke 9:4-6.

¹¹⁶ Luke 10:5-7.

weak, but you are strong; you are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clad and roughly treated, we wander about homeless.”¹¹⁷

§ 6. “The world was not worthy of them. They wandered about in deserts and on mountains, in caves and in crevices in the earth.”¹¹⁸

§ 7. “All these died in faith. They did not receive what had been promised but saw it and greeted it from afar and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth, for those who speak thus show that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land from which they had come, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”¹¹⁹

§ 8. “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.”¹²⁰

§ 9. “He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.”¹²¹

§ 10. “...but he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.”¹²²

§ 11. “In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God.”¹²³

§ 12. “Afterward he journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve.”¹²⁴

§ 13. “About eight days after he said this, he took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray.”¹²⁵

§ 14. “As they continued their journey, he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary [who] sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me. The Lord said to her in reply, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.””¹²⁶

¹¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 4:9-11.

¹¹⁸ Hebrews 11:38.

¹¹⁹ Hebrews 11:13-16.

¹²⁰ Matthew 4:1-2.

¹²¹ Matthew 4:23.

¹²² Luke 5:16.

¹²³ Luke 6:12.

¹²⁴ Luke 8:1.

¹²⁵ Luke 9:28.

¹²⁶ Luke 10:38-42.

§ 15. “Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not undergo the test.” After withdrawing about a stone’s throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done.” And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.” ¹²⁷

§ 16. “After arresting him they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest; Peter was following at a distance. When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin.” ¹²⁸

§ 17. “But at daybreak on the first day of the week they took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee.” ¹²⁹

§ 18. “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.” ¹³⁰

Article 2.4: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Responsibility

§ 1. “After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them baptizing.” ¹³¹

§ 2. “Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, just his disciples).” ¹³²

§ 3. “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.” ¹³³

§ 4. “Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just

¹²⁷ Luke 22:39-44.

¹²⁸ Luke 22:54, 66.

¹²⁹ Luke 24:1-6.

¹³⁰ John 14:2-3.

¹³¹ John 3:22.

¹³² 3 John 4:1-2.

¹³³ Acts 2:41.

as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as [being] dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.”¹³⁴

§ 5. “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”¹³⁵

§ 6. “For to me life is Christ, and death is gain.”¹³⁶

§ 7. “So, we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away.”¹³⁷

§ 8. “So, whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”¹³⁸

§ 9. “For he will be great in the sight of [the] Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord.”¹³⁹

§ 10. “Hannah did not go, explaining to her husband, “Once the child is weaned, I will take him to appear before the Lord and leave him there forever.”¹⁴⁰

Chapter 3 Evangelical Counsels

Article 3.0: Evangelical Counsels

§ 1. The Apostle Luke said, “By seeking and following Christ, particularly in chastity, poverty, and obedience, you give the world a concrete testimony of the primacy of spiritual life.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ Romans 6:3-4, 8-11.

¹³⁵ Colossians 3:1-3.

¹³⁶ Philippians 1:21.

¹³⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:6-9.

¹³⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

¹³⁹ Luke 1:15-17.

¹⁴⁰ 1 Samuel 1:22.

¹⁴¹ Pope John Paul II.

§ 2. The three promises of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience are called Evangelical Counsels (gospel counsels in other words), i.e., advice on living the gospel, point us to characteristics of the person who is at the heart of the Gospel, Jesus himself, so that the claim that the more we live in the spirit of, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, the more closely we come to resemble Christ.

§ 3. Members, through the profession of the Evangelical Counsels, undertake a stable form of living in which they, by following Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, are totally dedicated to God who is loved most of all. In such manner, having been dedicated by a new and special title to his honor, to the building up of the Church, and to the salvation of the world, they strive for the perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom of God and, having been made an outstanding sign in the Church, foretell the heavenly glory.

§ 4. Individual Members affirm that the Evangelical Counsels, based on the teaching and examples of Christ the Teacher, are a divine gift which the Church has received from the same Lord and which he preserves always through his grace.

§ 5. Members profess the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience and, through the charity to which the counsels lead, are joined in a special way to the Church and its mystery.

§ 6. The Order, attentive to its own character and purposes, is to define in the OFE General Constitutions the unique manner in which the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience must be observed for its way of living.

- a. The Evangelical Counsel of poverty is in imitation of Christ who, “for your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” ¹⁴² Members promise to live in the spirit of poverty. Poverty is simplicity of life in all things.
- b. The Evangelical Counsel of marital chastity, which is a source of more abundant fruitfulness in an undivided heart, does not entail the obligation of perfect continence as in celibacy. Members promise to live in the spirit of chastity. Chastity is the grace of intimacy with Christ and a decision to live with all in love, with respect for each person's integrity.
- c. The Evangelical Counsel of obedience, undertaken in a spirit of faith and love in the following of Christ obedient unto death. Members promise to live in the spirit of obedience: Obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Obedience to servant leaders of our Order. We know that such leaders come “not to be served but to serve” ¹⁴³ for the good of the Order.

§ 7. “Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God.” ¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² 2 Corinthians 8:9.

¹⁴³ Matthew 20:28.

¹⁴⁴ Romans 13:1.

Article 3.1: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Poverty

§ 1. “Then Peter said, “We have given up our possessions and followed you.” He said to them, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive [back] an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come.” ¹⁴⁵

§ 2. “I tell you, brothers, the time is running out. From now on, let those having wives act as not having them, those weeping as not weeping, those rejoicing as not rejoicing, those buying as not owning, those using the world as not using it fully. For the world in its present form is passing away.” ¹⁴⁶

§ 3. “For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And I am giving counsel in this matter, for it is appropriate for you who began not only to act but to act willingly last year: complete it now, so that your eager* willingness may be matched by your completion of it out of what you have. For if the eagerness is there, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have; not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your surplus at the present time should supply their needs, so that their surplus may also supply your needs, that there may be equality. As it is written: “Whoever had much did not have more, and whoever had little did not have less.” ¹⁴⁷

§ 4. “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” ¹⁴⁸

§ 5. “In the same way, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.” ¹⁴⁹

§ 6. “No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve God and mammon.”

§ 7. “He said to [his] disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than birds! Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your life-span? If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest? Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? As for you, do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not worry anymore. All the nations of the world seek for these things, and your

¹⁴⁵ Luke 18:28-30.

¹⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 7:29-31.

¹⁴⁷ 2 Corinthians 8:9-15.

¹⁴⁸ Luke 14:27.

¹⁴⁹ Luke 14:33.

Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides.” ¹⁵⁰

§ 8. “[But] whatever gains I had, these I have come to consider a loss because of Christ. More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” ¹⁵¹

§ 9. “For as I see it, God has exhibited us apostles as the last of all, like people sentenced to death, since we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and human beings alike. when slandered, we respond gently. We have become like the world’s rubbish, the scum of all, to this very moment.” ¹⁵²

§ 10. “The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.” ¹⁵³

Article 3.2: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Chastity

§ 1. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” ¹⁵⁴

§ 2. “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” ¹⁵⁵

§ 3. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” ¹⁵⁶

§ 4. “Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage* for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.” And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.” ¹⁵⁷

§ 5. “Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.” ¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁰ Luke 12:22-31.

¹⁵¹ Philippians 3:7-8.

¹⁵² 1Corinthians 4:9, 13.

¹⁵³ Acts 4:32, 34.

¹⁵⁴ John 14:15.

¹⁵⁵ Romans 12:2.

¹⁵⁶ Matthew 5:27-28.

¹⁵⁷ Matthew 19:12, 29.

¹⁵⁸ Matthew 20:16.

§ 6. “Only, everyone should live as the Lord has assigned, just as God called each one. I give this order in all the churches. Was someone called after he had been circumcised? He should not try to undo his circumcision. Was an uncircumcised person called? He should not be circumcised. Circumcision means nothing, and uncircumcision means nothing; what matters is keeping God’s commandments. Everyone should remain in the state in which he was called. Were you a slave when you were called? Do not be concerned but, even if you can gain your freedom, make the most of it. For the slave called in the Lord is a freed person in the Lord, just as the free person who has been called is a slave of Christ. You have been purchased at a price. Do not become slaves to human beings. Brothers, everyone should continue before God in the state in which he was called. Now in regard to virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. So, this is what I think best because of the present distress: that it is a good thing for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek a separation. Are you free of a wife? Then do not look for a wife.” ¹⁵⁹

§ 7. “I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided. An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.” ¹⁶⁰

§ 8. “Let marriage be honored among all and the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the immoral and adulterers.” ¹⁶¹

§ 9. “Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” ¹⁶²

§ 10. “Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry.” ¹⁶³

§ 11. “For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. This is the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from immorality.” ¹⁶⁴

§ 12. “So, turn from youthful desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord with purity of heart.” ¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ 1Corinthians 7:17-27.

¹⁶⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.

¹⁶¹ Hebrews 13:4.

¹⁶² 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

¹⁶³ Colossians 3:5.

¹⁶⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:2-3.

¹⁶⁵ 2 Timothy 2:22.

Article 3.3: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Obedience

§ 1. "There are no words from Jesus highlighting submission to another human being as a distinguishing trait of being His followers. Rather, the whole tenor of Jesus' life, a life of total obedience to the God He called Father, inspires all Christian obedience, but is not in itself sufficient to establish obedience in all our human interaction as a mark especially indicative of Christian life and so of religious life." ¹⁶⁶

§ 2. "But Samuel said: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord's command? Obedience is better than sacrifice, to listen, better than the fat of rams." ¹⁶⁷

§ 3. "He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will."" ¹⁶⁸

§ 4. "For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother." ¹⁶⁹

§ 5. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross." ¹⁷⁰

§ 6. "Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, Behold, I come to do your will, O God.'" ¹⁷¹

§ 7. "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love." ¹⁷²

§ 8. "Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." ¹⁷³

§ 9. "I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." ¹⁷⁴

§ 10. "Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." ¹⁷⁵

§ 11. "Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God. Therefore,

¹⁶⁶ Gerald A. Arbuckle and David L. Fleming, *Religious Life: Rebirth Through Conversion* (New York: Alba House, 1990), p. 29.

¹⁶⁷ 1 Samuel 15:22.

¹⁶⁸ Matthew 26:39.

¹⁶⁹ Matthew 12:50.

¹⁷⁰ Philippians 2:8.

¹⁷¹ Hebrews 10:7.

¹⁷² John 15:10.

¹⁷³ Hebrews 5:8-9.

¹⁷⁴ John 7:29.

¹⁷⁵ Luke 10:16.

whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed, and those who oppose it will bring judgment upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear to good conduct, but to evil. Do you wish to have no fear of authority? Then do what is good and you will receive approval from it, for it is a servant of God for your good. But if you do evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword without purpose; it is the servant of God to inflict wrath on the evildoer. Therefore, it is necessary to be subject not only because of the wrath but also because of conscience.”¹⁷⁶

§ 12. “Obey your leaders and defer to them, for they keep watch over you and will have to give an account, that they may fulfill their task with joy and not with sorrow, for that would be of no advantage to you.”¹⁷⁷

§ 13. “Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice.”¹⁷⁸

§ 14. “I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me.”¹⁷⁹

§ 15. “Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, “My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!””¹⁸⁰

Chapter 4 Purpose

Article 4.0: Mission Statement, Goals, Mission, and Objective

§ 1. We commit ourselves to accomplish the Mission Statement of the Order:

- a. The mission statement is to minister to celibate and married [and/or widowed] Roman Catholic priests by offering them a welcoming home, support, acceptance, affirmation of their marriages, and validation of their lives and ministries. It also supports efforts to restore married priesthood to the Roman Catholic Church.

§ 1. Led by the grace of the Holy Spirit we are called to achieve the Goals of the Order:

- a. We seek out laborers and advisors for our mission.
- b. We voice our story.
- c. We await a college of bishops to rise to oversee our mission.

¹⁷⁶ Romans 13:1-5.

¹⁷⁷ Hebrews 13:17.

¹⁷⁸ Matthew 23:1-3.

¹⁷⁹ John 5:30.

¹⁸⁰ Matthew 26:42.

- d. We seek to openly serve the Roman Catholic Church and minister within Roman Catholic ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

§ 2. We commit ourselves to achieve the Mission of our Order:

- a. Welcome married [and widowed] Roman Catholic priests;
- b. Provide the People of God the Eucharist;
- c. Have married Roman Catholic priests available to Roman Catholic bishops;
- d. Affirm the marriages and lives of married Roman Catholic priests;
- e. Provide a home and support for married Roman Catholic priests through acceptance, communications, and ongoing activities of the Order;
- f. Welcome celibate Roman and Eastern Catholic priests in good standing in the Roman Catholic Church to serve as brothers;
- g. Support efforts of members, other clergy, and laity in their efforts to restore married priesthood to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church.

§ 3. Guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit we are called to achieve the Objective of the Order:

- a. "Clerics, whatever their condition, are to care in their heart for all of the Churches, and therefore to serve her wherever there is great necessity; let them show willingness, especially with the permission or encouragement of their own eparchial bishop or superior, to exercise their ministry in the missions or in regions laboring under a shortage of clergy." ¹⁸¹
- b. The OFE objective is achieved when our religious order and/or priests are recognized and/or incardinated into a participating Eastern Ecclesia which is in union with Rome. The priest and his wife shall then, per Eastern Canon 393, be loaned to a Roman Catholic Diocese which is experiencing a shortage of priests.

Article 4.1: Charism and Apostolic Works

§ 1. "Whoever in obedience to Christ seeks first the Kingdom of God, takes therefrom a stronger and purer love for helping all his brethren and for perfecting the work of justice under the inspiration of charity." ¹⁸²

§ 2. The dimensions of the OFE Charism include:

- a. Recognition of the primacy of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- b. Inspiration from the spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi;
- c. Reverence for creation;
- d. Dignity of human persons;

¹⁸¹ 1990 Code of Canons of Oriental (Eastern) Churches, Canon 393.

¹⁸² *Gaudium et Spes*, 72.

- e. Support of family unity;
- f. Compassion;
- g. Peacemaking;
- h. Service;
- i. Community;
- j. Simplicity;
- k. Welcoming married [and widowed] and celibate Roman Catholic priests and laity.

§ 3. The Lord God himself who said, "it is not good for man to be alone." ¹⁸³

§ 4. The Apostolic Works of the Order are:

- a. Sanctification of families;
- b. Blessing of married Roman Catholic priests.

Chapter 5 Membership

Article 5.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Inquirers and Candidates

§ 1. "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So, they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon." ¹⁸⁴

§ 2. "Then many of his disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father. "As a result of this, many [of] his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?" ¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Genesis 2:18.

¹⁸⁴ John 1:35-39.

¹⁸⁵ Matthew 22:9-14.

§ 3. “Similarly, deacons must be dignified, not deceitful, not addicted to drink, not greedy for sordid gain, holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. Moreover, they should be tested first; then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.” ¹⁸⁶

***Article 5.1: Admission, Dismiss, Retire, and Ancillary Jurisdiction
to the Order***

§ 1. Inquirers and candidates shall request to start the process to be admitted to one of the two branches of the Order in writing.

§ 2. The first branch of the OFE is comprised of priests who are married [widowed], as well as celibate Roman Catholic priests who were ordained by a Roman Catholic bishop. Celibate Roman Catholic priests will function as brothers in each Order. Consideration given for membership of non-Roman Catholic Priests who are of the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.”

§ 3. Inquirers and candidates shall be either a priest who are married or celibate Roman Catholic priests who are in good-standing with the Roman Catholic Church and who were ordained by a Roman Catholic bishop. Celibate Roman Catholic priests will function as brothers in our Order. Consideration given for membership of non-Roman Catholic Priests who are of the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.”

§ 4. A priest is always a priest, therefore “sacred ordination never becomes invalid.” ¹⁸⁷

§ 5. “Like Melchizedek, you are a priest forever.” ¹⁸⁸

§ 6. Married Roman Catholic priests are priests who married after ordination in the Roman Catholic Church who are of the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.”

§ 7. The second branch is OFES. Candidates shall be Roman Catholic lay people in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church and wives of married Roman Catholic priests. OFES members are called to live the Franciscan “Rule of Life” and to assist OFE to accomplish its goals, objective, mission, charism, and apostolic works for married Roman Catholic priests. Consideration given for membership of non-Roman Catholic laity who are of the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.”

§ 7. Inquirers and candidates shall commence the process of learning the history of the Order, mission statement, goals, objective, mission, charism, apostolic works, Rule of Life, the General Constitutions of OFE, etc. This is required of all inquirers and candidates.

¹⁸⁶ 1 Timothy 3:8-10.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 290.

¹⁸⁸ Psalms 110:4.

§ 8. Inquirers and candidates shall commence the process and adhere to the steps taken in order to achieve OFE, and OFES membership that is explained in the OFE and the OFES Membership Video Protocols. This is required of all inquirers and candidates.

§ 9. Inquirers and candidates shall be accepted by the OFE Corporate Board of Directors and Council of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc. and, once accepted, will be members of one of the two branches (OFE, OFES) of the Order.

§ 10. Members are given a Membership Certificate and OFE email address, and are listed on the OFE website membership page. A press release will be written and posted on the OFE website News Briefs Press Releases Page.

§ 11. "Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.""¹⁸⁹

§ 12. Ordained bishops and priests of O.F.E. are authorized to be incardinate with an ancillary ecclesial jurisdiction.

§ 13. Laity members of O.F.E.S. are authorized to become a member of an ancillary ecclesial jurisdiction.

§ 14. Ordained bishops and priests of O.F.E. must notify the Ordinary or his representative in writing that they are incardinate with an ancillary ecclesial jurisdiction.

§ 15. Laity members of O.F.E.S. must notify the Ordinary or his representative in writing that they become a member of an ancillary ecclesial jurisdiction.

§ 16. Ordained bishops and priests of O.F.E. must email or by land mail the Certificate or Letter of Incardination to the Ordinary or his representative.

§ 17. Laity members of O.F.E.S. must email or by land mail the Certificate or Letter of Membership to the Ordinary or his representative.

§ 18. Ordained bishops, priests, and laity members who function in an ancillary ecclesial jurisdiction continue their membership with O.F.E. and O.F.E.S.

§ 19. When bishops and priests of O.F.E. and the laity of O.F.E.S. who function in an ancillary ecclesial jurisdiction, your position will not be dispersed or made public on the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist News Briefs Press Releases Website Page or to other members unless they request it in writing to be made public.

§ 20. When bishops of O.F.E. request to retire they must notify the Ordinary or his representative in writing of such action is email or by land mail. It needs the approval of the O.F.E. Board of Directors and Council members. A bishop retires from a position of distinction as bishop of O.F.E. is granted the honorific title of Bishop Emeritus.

¹⁸⁹ Matthew 28, 18-20.

§ 21. When priests of O.F.E. request to retire they must notify the Ordinary or his representative in writing of such action is email or by land mail. It needs the approval of the O.F.E. Board of Directors and Council members. A priest retires from a position of distinction as priests of O.F.E. is granted the honorific title of Friar Emeritus.

§ 22. When secular member of O.F.E.S. request to retire they must notify the Ordinary of her or his representative in writing of such action is email or by land mail. It needs the approval of the O.F.E. Board of Directors and Council members. A secular member retires from a position of distinction as Secular Franciscan of O.F.E.S. is granted the honorific title of Secular Franciscan Emerita or Emeritus.

§ 23. Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist Secular, Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi, Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist Charters, and the International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops members may relinquish membership in writing of such action is email or by land mail to the Ordinary or his representative. It needs the approval of the O.F.E. Board of Directors and Council members.

§ 24. Any member of this Franciscan Religious Community may be dismissed from membership at the resolve of the Ordinary or his representative. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the issue. The action of dismissal needs the approval of the O.F.E. Board of Directors and Council members.

§ 25. Any Board of Directors and Council Members of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc. and the Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc. may be dismissed from membership at the resolve of the Ordinary or his representative. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the issue. It needs the approval of the O.F.E. and Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos Board of Directors and Council Members.

Article 5.2: Our Profession

§ 1. Through religious profession, we follow Christ, stirred by the Holy Spirit, give ourselves totally to God above all things, living the Gospel in the world, according to the form observed and proposed by Saint Francis of Assisi.

§ 2. Profession of vows is a solemn and ecclesial act by which the candidate, recalling their baptismal promises, affirms their commitment to living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the spirit of our founder Saint Francis of Assisi, and the "Rule of Life" of the OFE, and the OFES.

§ 3. Profession of vows incorporates the candidate into the OFE and the OFES, and is by its nature a perpetual commitment.

§ 4. The Rite of Profession will be performed at the OFE member's friary and/or abbey, local parish, chapel, or retreat center.

§ 5. The OFE member pronouncing the vows may propose the approval of the minister general or minister provincial or his delegate modifications in this formula.

§ 6. When we profess our public vows, we use this formula as the essential guide for our lives:

To the Praise and Glory of the Most Holy Trinity,
I (name) stand in the presence of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God and my Lord,
in the assembly of his church,
and before all here present, I (name)
to profess my vows.
I believe that I have been called
by the Father and led by the Spirit
to offer my life in the service of the Lord
for the needs of our Order and the world.

Therefore, I make to God the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience,
according to the General Constitutions of the OFE.

May the God who allows and invites me to make this commitment strengthen and
protect me to be faithful to it. Amen.

§ 7. Each professed member will date and sign the profession document and it shall be sent to the Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Province of Saint Mary Theotokos. The Abbey is the official repository of all official records dealing with OFE.

Article 5.3: Records, Report, and Communication (Fellowship)

§ 1. "Each parish [abbey/friary] is to possess a set of parishes [abbey/friary] books including baptismal, marriage and death registers as well as other registers prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop; the pastor [friar] is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved." ¹⁹⁰

§ 2. OFE priests shall be responsible for the keeping of proper and accurate records and to register all baptisms, marriages, funerals, and any other services as required.

§ 3. The priests shall safeguard that the records are available for inspection at the request of the minister general, principal bishop, and/or the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

§ 4. OFE priests, and OFES members shall report every three years, in writing, to the Ordinary or his representative on Pentecost Sunday. The report shall include a brief summary of her or his ministerial activities.

¹⁹⁰ Code of Canon Law, 535 §1.

§ 5. OFE Celibate Roman Catholic priests who function as brothers for our Order will *not* write a report. Celibate Roman and/or Eastern Catholic priests have required report from their ordinaries.

§ 6. Each professed member will date and sign the report and it shall be sent to the Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Province of Saint Mary Theotokos. The Abbey is the official repository of all official records dealing with OFE.

§ 7. Members shall make an effort to be in communication (fellowship) occasionally with each other. OFE is a Roman Catholic Franciscan Religious Order, an International Ordinate makes it a unique challenge of a dispersed religious community to have communication (fellowship) with each other. We do this through letters, emails, cell phones, text messaging, Facebook, etc.

The OFE email addresses are emailed to members.

§ 8. The OFE website is the front door of our Roman Catholic Franciscan Religious Order, an International Ordinate and it showcases our mission statement, goals, mission, charism, and apostolic works. Members shall from time to time check the OFE website and the News Briefs link for up-to-date activities.

Chapter 6 Prayer

Article 6.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of the Spirit of Prayer

§ 1. "Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer." ¹⁹¹

§ 2. "And if we know that he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, we know that what we have asked him for is ours. If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin, about which I do not say that you should pray." ¹⁹²

§ 3. "Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise." ¹⁹³

§ 4. "Therefore, I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours." ¹⁹⁴

§ 5. "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." ¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Romans 12:12.

¹⁹² 1 John 5:14-16.

¹⁹³ James 5:13.

¹⁹⁴ Mark 11:24.

¹⁹⁵ Matthew 5:44

§ 6. “He [Jesus] left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again.” ¹⁹⁶

§ 7. “He [Jesus] said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test.””
¹⁹⁷

§ 8. “But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” ¹⁹⁸

§ 9. “But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” ¹⁹⁹

§ 10. “Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.” ²⁰⁰

§ 11. “He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.” ²⁰¹

§ 12. “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. *The Lord’s Prayer*. “This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven ...” ²⁰²

§ 13. “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” ²⁰³

§ 14. “Therefore, I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours.” ²⁰⁴

§ 15. “When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions.” ²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁶ Matthew 26:44.

¹⁹⁷ Luke 11: 2-4.

¹⁹⁸ Luke 6:27-28.

¹⁹⁹ Matthew 6:6.

²⁰⁰ Philippians 4:6.

²⁰¹ Luke 11:1.

²⁰² Matthew 6:5-9.

²⁰³ Matthew 7:7.

²⁰⁴ Mark 11:24.

²⁰⁵ Mark 11:25.

§ 16. “Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” ²⁰⁶

§ 17. “Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed.” ²⁰⁷

§ 18. “When it was evening, he was alone...” ²⁰⁸

§ 19. “In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer^z to God.” ²⁰⁹

§ 20. “...but he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.” ²¹⁰

§ 21. “After withdrawing about a stone’s throw from them and kneeling, he prayed.” ²¹¹

§ 22. “It is my wish, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument.” ²¹²

§ 23. “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances.” ²¹³

§ 24. “So, (my) brothers, strive eagerly to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues, but everything must be done properly and in order.” ²¹⁴

§ 25. “With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones.” ²¹⁵

§ 26. “In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will.” ²¹⁶

§ 27. “If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those who ask him?” ²¹⁷

²⁰⁶ Matthew 5:23-24.

²⁰⁷ Mark 1:35.

²⁰⁸ Mark 6:47.

²⁰⁹ Luke 6:12.

²¹⁰ Luke 5:16.

²¹¹ Luke 22:41.

²¹² 1 Timothy 2:8.

²¹³ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-20.

²¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:39-40.

²¹⁵ Ephesians 6:18.

²¹⁶ Romans 8:26-27.

²¹⁷ Luke 11:13.

§ 28. “Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, [amen,] I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” ²¹⁸

§ 29. “All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” ²¹⁹

§ 30. “My brothers, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man with gold rings on his fingers and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Sit here, please,” while you say to the poor one, “Stand there,” or “Sit at my feet,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?” ²²⁰

§ 31. “And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another [in] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.” ²²¹

§ 32. “Do you not have houses in which you can eat and drink? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and make those who have nothing feel ashamed? What can I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this matter I do not praise you. For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying. If we discerned ourselves, we would not be under judgment.” ²²²

Article 6.1: The Life of Prayer ²²³

²¹⁸ Matthew 18:18-20.

²¹⁹ Acts 1:14.

²²⁰ James 2:1-4.

²²¹ Ephesians 5:18-20.

²²² 1 Corinthians 11:20-31.

²²³ Cf. *General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friars Minor*: <https://ofm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CGSG2016EN.pdf> September-01-2019 (Date of Access)

§ 1. “Faithful to their profession, the friars, [OFE Members] when they pray, follow Christ who gives thanks most profoundly to the Father and “is living to intercede for us.” ²²⁴

§ 2. “Following in the steps of Saint Francis, who “did not just pray but became totally a prayer,” ²²⁵ removing every impediment and setting aside every care and anxiety, the friars [OFE Members] are to serve, love, honor and adore the Lord God with a clean heart and a pure mind,” since they must pray continually and never lose heart,” ²²⁶ for “that is the kind of worshiper the Father wants.”” ²²⁷

§ 3. “Mindful that they have been created in the image of the beloved Son of God, ²²⁸ the friars [OFE Members] are to praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit along with all their creatures; ²²⁹ they are to restore all good things to the Lord God Most High and give him thanks for everything. ²³⁰ They are to exalt and celebrate with renewed joy each day the love which the Father, “who created us and redeemed us and will save us by his mercy alone,” has for the world and for us.” ²³¹

§ 4. “Following the example and teaching of St. Francis, the friars [OFE Members] are to have “all possible reverence and honor” ²³² for the Sacrament of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord, because in it is contained the entire spiritual good of the Church. ²³³ The friars [OFE Members] are to foster in themselves by suitable means the love and diligent care for this great Mystery.” ²³⁴

§ 5. “The friars [OFE Members] are to apply themselves to the reading and meditation of the Holy Gospel and the other Scriptures, ²³⁵ so that by increasing their understanding of the Word of God, they may attain to the perfection of their state more fully.”

§ 6. Members are to have as the supreme rule of life the following of Christ proposed in the Gospel.

§ 7. The first and foremost duty of all members is to be the contemplation of divine things and diligent union with God in prayer.

§ 8. Members will make every effort to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice to receive the most sacred Body of Christ, and to adore the Lord himself present in the Sacrament.

§ 9. Members are to devote themselves to the reading of Sacred Scripture and contemplation.

²²⁴ Hebrews 7:25.

²²⁵ Cf. *Second Life of Thomas of Celano*, 95.

²²⁶ Luke 18:1.

²²⁷ Cf. John 4:23; *Rule of 1221*, 22, 26, 29-30.

²²⁸ Cf. *The Admonitions* 5,1.

²²⁹ Cf. *Canticle of Brother Sun* 3.

²³⁰ Cf. *Rule of 1221*, 17, 17.

²³¹ *Rule of 1221*, 23, 8.

²³² *Letter to the Whole Order*, 12.

²³³ Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5.

²³⁴ Cf. *Testament*, 11.

²³⁵ Cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, 6; *Code of Canon Law*, 663, 3.

§ 10. Members are to observe faithfully an annual period of sacred retreat.

§ 11. Members will make every effort to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours “so that the whole course of the day and night may be consecrated by the praise of God.” ²³⁶

§ 12. “That the Office [Liturgy of the Hours] be said devoutly, not concentrating on the melody of the chant, but being careful that their hearts are in harmony so that their words may be in harmony with their hearts and their hearts with God. Our aim should be to please God by purity of heart.” ²³⁷

§ 13. Members are to have a special devotion to Holy Theotokos Saint Mary. (Theotokos in Greek means “God-bearer,” but it usually referred to as the “Mother of God,” and is the title for Mary).

§ 14. Members are to have devotion to the Seraphic Father Francis and are always to follow his life and teaching and is the model of our Order.

§ 15. Members are to strive to pray with the people, taking on the experience of their lives and sharing sincerely in their hope and faith.

Chapter 7 Instruction and Evangelization

Article 7.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Instruction

§ 1. “Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. He said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, “Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.” ²³⁸

§ 2. “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.” ²³⁹

§ 3. “But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.” ²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 84.

²³⁷ Saint Francis of Assisi Letter to a General Chapter.

²³⁸ Luke 24:27, 44-46.

²³⁹ John 14:16-17.

²⁴⁰ John 16:13-14.

§ 4. “They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.” ²⁴¹

§ 5. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” ²⁴²

§ 6. “You have followed my teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, persecutions that I endured. Yet from all these things the Lord delivered me. In fact, all who want to live religiously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But wicked people and charlatans will go from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But you, remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known [the] sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” ²⁴³

§ 7. “Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.” ²⁴⁴

§ 8. “Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God.” ²⁴⁵

§ 9. “For what can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them. Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse.” ²⁴⁶

§ 10. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God.” ²⁴⁷

§ 11. “Rather, the law of the Lord is his joy; and on his law he meditates day and night.” ²⁴⁸

²⁴¹ Acts 2:42.

²⁴² Matthew 28:19-20.

²⁴³ 2 Timothy 3:10-17.

²⁴⁴ Hebrews 4:12.

²⁴⁵ 2 Peter 1:20-21.

²⁴⁶ Romans 1:19-20.

²⁴⁷ Hebrews 12:1-2.

²⁴⁸ Psalms 1:2.

Article 7.1: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Evangelization

§ 1. “Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so, ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.” ²⁴⁹

§ 2. “Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, “Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.” ²⁵⁰

§ 3. “After this the Lord appointed seventy [-two] others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit.” ²⁵¹

§ 4. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” ²⁵²

§ 5. “For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!” ²⁵³

§ 6. “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.” ²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ Matthew 9:37-38.

²⁵⁰ Matthew 10:1, 5-8.

²⁵¹ Luke 10:1.

²⁵² Matthew 28:19-20.

²⁵³ Romans 10:13-15.

²⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

§ 7. “For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power, love, and self-control.” ²⁵⁵

§ 8. “And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well.” ²⁵⁶

§ 9. “Remind people of these things and charge them before God to stop disputing about words. This serves no useful purpose since it harms those who listen.” ²⁵⁷

§ 10. “Avoid profane, idle talk, for such people will become more and more godless.” ²⁵⁸

§ 11. “Avoid foolish and ignorant debates, for you know that they breed quarrels. A slave of the Lord should not quarrel, but should be gentle with everyone, able to teach, tolerant, correcting opponents with kindness. It may be that God will grant them repentance that leads to knowledge of the truth.” ²⁵⁹

§ 12. “Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.” ²⁶⁰

§ 13. “Then he said to the host who invited him, “When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” ²⁶¹

§ 14. “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply, Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’” ²⁶²

§ 15. “And he said to them in reply, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me.” ²⁶³

²⁵⁵ 2 Timothy 1:6-7.

²⁵⁶ 2 Timothy 2:2.

²⁵⁷ 2 Timothy 2:14.

²⁵⁸ 2 Timothy 2:16.

²⁵⁹ 2 Timothy 2:23-25.

²⁶⁰ 2 Timothy 4:2.

²⁶¹ Luke 14:12-14.

²⁶² Matthew 25:35-40.

²⁶³ Luke 7:22-23.

Article 7.2: The Friars [OFE Members] Have Been Called to Evangelize ²⁶⁴

§ 1. “The witness of one’s life, or the silent proclamation of the kingdom of God, is a kind of initial step and the first method of evangelization. ²⁶⁵ It can and must be given by all the friars [OFE Members], clerics and lay, ²⁶⁶ by those who preach, pray or “work”, by the young and the old, by the healthy and the sick, ²⁶⁷ in such a way that, as they live their life as minors [OFE Members] in fraternity, they make known the fact that they are Christians.”

§ 2. “The witness of the Word, or explicit proclamation, ²⁶⁸ is another way of evangelization and it is carried out by those who, by their word or their office, announce the name and the doctrine, the life and the promise, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God.”

§ 3. “As the Son was sent by the Father, so all the friars [OFE Members], guided by the Holy Spirit, are sent to proclaim the Gospel in the whole world, to every creature and to make everyone know by the witness they give to his voice, that no one is all-powerful except God.” ²⁶⁹

§ 4. “All the friars [OFE Members] are to share in the task of evangelization that belongs to the whole Church. After the example of Saint Francis, who “made a tongue out of his whole body,” ²⁷⁰ they are to be ready to receive the inspiration of the Lord, ²⁷¹ and, wherever they have been called and sent, they are to build up all the nations in word and deed through the purity of their entire life.” ²⁷²

§ 5. “Wherever they are and whatever they do, the friars [OFE Members] are to dedicate themselves to the task of evangelization: in fraternal fellowship through their contemplative and penitential life and the various tasks they perform for the fraternity; in human society through their intellectual and material activities, through the exercise of a pastoral office in parishes and other ecclesiastical institutions; and finally by announcing the coming of God’s kingdom through their witness of a simple Franciscan presence.” ²⁷³

²⁶⁴ Cf. *General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friars Minor*: <https://ofm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CGSG2016EN.pdf> September-09-2019 (Date of Access).

²⁶⁵ Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 21; *Rule of 1221*, 16, 6.

²⁶⁶ *Rule of 1221*, 17, 5.

²⁶⁷ Cf. *Rule of 1221*, 23, 7.

²⁶⁸ Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 22; *Rule of 1221*, 16, 7.

²⁶⁹ Cf. *Letter to the Whole Order*, 9.

²⁷⁰ Cf. *First Life of Thomas of Celano*, 97.

²⁷¹ Cf. *Rule of 1223*, 12, 1.

²⁷² Cf. *Letter to the Whole Order*, 9.

²⁷³ Cf. *Vocatio missionaria franciscana in mundo hodierno*, “Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, 13; “The Gospel Challenges us”, Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983, 17.

§ 6. “In fulfilling the task of evangelization, the friars [OFE Members] are to proclaim Jesus Christ and him crucified; ²⁷⁴ desiring only to follow in his footsteps, they are to bring to everyone they meet the peace and the good of the Lord, as well as the certain hope of a better world.” ²⁷⁵

§ 7. “When they wish to admonish people about penance, ²⁷⁶ the friars [OFE Members] are first to bear fruits worthy of penance themselves, ²⁷⁷ knowing that no one can evangelize who has not first accepted evangelization.” ²⁷⁸

§ 8. “Since this fraternal fellowship, based on prayer and penance, is the first and foremost witness to the Gospel ²⁷⁹ and a prophetic sign of a new human family, the manner of life of the friars [OFE Members] among the nations is to be such that whoever sees or hears them will glorify and praise the heavenly Father.”

§ 9. “The friars [OFE Members] are to promote union and cooperation among all members of the [OFE] Franciscan family, for a more effective proclamation of the Gospel.” ²⁸⁰

Chapter 8 Penance

Article 8.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of Correction

§ 1. “‘If your brother sins [against you], go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that ‘every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁸¹

§ 2. “Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, ‘I am sorry,’ you should forgive him.” ²⁸²

²⁷⁴ Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:12.

²⁷⁵ Cf. “*La vocation de l’Ordre aujourd’hui*,” Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973, 31.

²⁷⁶ Cf. *Letter to the Custodes*, I, 6.

²⁷⁷ Cf. *Letter to the Faithful*, II, 25.

²⁷⁸ Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 24; “The Gospel Challenges us”, Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983, 15.28-29.

²⁷⁹ Cf. James 13:35; *Code of Canon Law*, 673; *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 69; “*Vocatio missionaria franciscana in mundo hodierno*”, Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, 10.

²⁸⁰ Cf. “*Vocatio missionaria franciscana in mundo hodierno*,” Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, p.II, c.III 4-6.

²⁸¹ Matthew 18:15-17.

²⁸² Luke 17:3-4.

§ 3. “This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person, so that on the contrary you should forgive and encourage him instead, or else the person may be overwhelmed by excessive pain. Therefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.” ²⁸³

§ 4. “After a first and second warning, break off contact with a heretic.” ²⁸⁴

§ 5. “But I now write to you not to associate with anyone named a brother, if he is immoral, greedy, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a robber, not even to eat with such a person. For why should I be judging outsiders? Is it not your business to judge those within? God will judge those outside. “Purge the evil person from your midst.” ²⁸⁵

Article 8.1: Life of Penance ²⁸⁶

§ 1. “The Lord has kindly given the Friars Minor [OFE Members] the gift “to begin to do penance.” ²⁸⁷ Always heeding the words of Jesus Christ, “Repent and believe the Good News,” ²⁸⁸ the friars [OFE Members] are to renew without ceasing their spirit of conversion.”

§ 2. “Just as Saint Francis began a life of penance by serving lepers and saw Jesus Christ in them, so the friars [OFE Members] are to seek to serve the least of humanity in penance, recognizing in them the Son of God.” ²⁸⁹

§ 3. “The Father, who is rich in mercy, has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given to all men and women the ministry of reconciliation. The friars, [OFE Members] therefore, are to be reconciled to the Lord God, to themselves, to the fraternity and to all of humanity. They are to exercise this ministry in their words and deeds, acting as ambassadors of Christ.” ²⁹⁰

§ 4. “Remaining steadfast under the correction of God’s mercy, the friars [OFE Members] “are to examine themselves most diligently daily” ²⁹¹ so that they may observe more sincerely the Rule that they have accepted. ²⁹² They are to approach the sacrament of reconciliation frequently ²⁹³ and they are always to begin to serve the Lord God.” ²⁹⁴

²⁸³ 2 Corinthians 2:6-8.

²⁸⁴ Titus 3:10.

²⁸⁵ 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

²⁸⁶ Cf. *General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friars Minor*: <https://ofm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CGSG2016EN.pdf> September-09-2019 (Date of Access)

²⁸⁷ Cf. *Testament*, 1.

²⁸⁸ Mark 1:15.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Matthew 25:31-46; *Rule of 1221*, 23, 4.

²⁹⁰ Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

²⁹¹ *First Life of Thomas of Celano*, 42.

²⁹² Cf. *First Life of Thomas of Celano*, 34.

²⁹³ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 664.

²⁹⁴ Cf. *First Life of Thomas of Celano*, 103.

Article 8.2: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of the Life of Penance

§ 1. “By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!” ²⁹⁵

§ 2. “From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ²⁹⁶

§ 3. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” ²⁹⁷

§ 4. “But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.” ²⁹⁸

§ 5. “But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.” ²⁹⁹

§ 6. “But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.” ³⁰⁰

§ 7. “Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.” ³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ Luke 13:3.

²⁹⁶ Matthew 4:17.

²⁹⁷ Matthew 5:22-24.

²⁹⁸ Matthew 5:28-30.

²⁹⁹ Matthew 5:34-37.

³⁰⁰ Matthew 5:39-48.

³⁰¹ Luke 6:30-31.

§ 8. “But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.” ³⁰²

§ 9. “But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful. “Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.” ³⁰³

§ 10. “A Pharisee invited him to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. “Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days’ wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?” Simon said in reply, “The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven.” He said to him, “You have judged rightly.” Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.” He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” The others at table said to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” But he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” ³⁰⁴

§ 11. “Then each went to his own house, while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So, what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again, he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So, he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She replied, “No one, sir.”

³⁰² Matthew 5:44.

³⁰³ Luke 6:35- 38.

³⁰⁴ Luke 7:36-50.

Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin anymore.” ³⁰⁵

§ 12. “He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. “Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.’ But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” ³⁰⁶

§ 13. “When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.” ³⁰⁷

§ 14. “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” ³⁰⁸

§ 15. “And do this because you know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.” ³⁰⁹

§ 16. “According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire [itself] will test the quality of each one’s work.” ³¹⁰

§ 17. “Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, insincerity, envy, and all slander; like newborn infants, long for pure spiritual milk so that through it you may grow into salvation, for you have tasted that the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let

³⁰⁵ John 8:1-11.

³⁰⁶ Luke 18:9-14.

³⁰⁷ Luke 5:8-11.

³⁰⁸ Romans 12:1-2.

³⁰⁹ Romans 13:11-14.

³¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 3:10-13.

yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”³¹¹

§ 18. “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory. Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming [upon the disobedient]. By these you too once conducted yourselves, when you lived in that way. But now you must put them all away: anger, fury, malice, slander, and obscene language out of your mouths. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator.”³¹²

§ 19. “That you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth. Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, and do not leave room for the devil. The thief must no longer steal, but rather labor, doing honest work with his [own] hands, so that he may have something to share with one in need. No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification. And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice.”³¹³

§ 20. “Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting among holy ones, no obscenity or silly or suggestive talk, which is out of place, but instead, thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that no immoral or impure or greedy person, that is, an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the disobedient. So, do not be associated with them.”³¹⁴

§ 21. “Watch carefully then how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord. And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.”³¹⁵

§ 22. “My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world.”³¹⁶

³¹¹ 1 Peter 2:1-5.

³¹² Colossians 3:1-10.

³¹³ Ephesians. 4:22-31.

³¹⁴ Ephesians 5:3-7.

³¹⁵ Ephesians 5:15-18.

³¹⁶ 1 John 2:1-2.

§ 23. “If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.” ³¹⁷

§ 24. “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.” ³¹⁸

§ 25. “Tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.” ³¹⁹

Chapter 9 Formation

Article 9.0: On-going Formation ³²⁰

§ 1. “The on-going formation of the friars [OFE Members] is a journey of their whole life, both personal and in community, in which their own gifts, their witness to the Gospel and their choice of calling are constantly developed, after the example of Saint Francis, who always invites us anew “to begin to do good.” ³²¹

§ 2. “On-going formation is to be based on Franciscan spirituality. It is always to take account of every dimension of the Friar Minor [OFE Members] and should be able to further his progress on a personal, spiritual, doctrinal, professional and ministerial level.” ³²²

§ 3. “It is the duty of each friar [OFE Members], as the one ultimately and decisively responsible, to take care of his on-going formation and to follow it through.” ³²³

§ 4. “Since the primary center of on-going formation is the local fraternity itself, the duty of making sure that the ordinary life of the fraternity promotes formative action belongs to each friar [OFE Members].” ³²⁴

Chapter 10 Ministries

³¹⁷ 1 John 1:9.

³¹⁸ James 5:16.

³¹⁹ Luke 15:7.

³²⁰ Cf. *General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friars Minor*: <https://ofm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CGSG2016EN.pdf> September-05-2019 (Date of Access)

³²¹ Cf. *First Life of Thomas of Celano*, 103; “*Document sur la formation*” Plenary Council, Rome 1981, 81 45-46.

³²² Cf. *De institutione in Ordine Fratrum Minorum*,” Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, 42; “*Document sur la formation*” Plenary Council, Rome 1981, 81 48; *Code of Canon Law*, 661.

³²³ Cf. “*Document sur la formation*” Plenary Council, Rome 1981, 81 48.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

Article 10.0: Admission as an Ecclesiastical Affiliation OFE Charter

§ 1. Charter inquirers and candidates shall request to start the process to be admitted as an Ecclesiastical Affiliation Charter of OFE in writing.

§ 2. We establish Ecclesiastical Affiliation Charters with monasteries, abbeys, churches, hermitages, congregations, religious orders, missions, societies, associations, educational institutions, ministry organizations, archdioceses, and dioceses to help them fulfill their respective missions.

§ 3. Each charter member will operate independently, maintaining their current system of disciplines and teachings.

§ 4. Charter members accept the authority of the OFE overall matters of Faith and Practices.

§ 5. The charter members may not legally or financially obligate the OFE in any way.

§ 6. Charter inquirers and candidates shall commence the process of learning the history of the Order, mission statement, goals, objective, mission, charism, apostolic works, "Rule of Life, General Constitutions, etc. This is required of all charter inquirers and candidates.

§ 7. Charter inquirers and candidates shall commence the process by completing an Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist Ecclesiastical Affiliation Charter Application.

§ 8. The Ordinary or his representative can assure the accuracy of the Affiliation Charter Application to request that the charter application be updated periodically.

§ 9. Charter inquirers and candidates shall be accepted by the OFE Corporate Board of Directors and Council of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc. Once accepted, they are charter members of OFE.

§10. Charter members are given an Ecclesiastical Affiliation Charter Certificate, charter number, and posted on the OFE website.

§11. An Ecclesiastical Affiliation Charter may be revoked at the resolve of the Ordinary or his representative. The action of a revoked charter needs the approval of the O.F.E. Board of Directors and Council members.

Article 10.1: Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi

§ 1. “In leading family life and in educating children married clergy are to show an outstanding example to other Christian faithful.” ³²⁵

§ 2. Prayer for the Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi:

- a. “Holy Jesus, we commend to your merciful care our dear families, to strengthen the bonds between parents and children, so that they can resist the temptations of the world and hold fast to their faith in the saving grace of your Cross, from which you announced to your Blessed Mother and to your Beloved Disciple, John, “Behold your Mother... Behold your Son.” We pray in your Name, who with the Father, and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.” ³²⁶

§3. Mission Statement:

- a. God has chosen for the Sanctification of His people through the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer. As an International Confraternity of prayer and ministry, we strive to strengthen the bonds between families, parents, and children. Every child deserves to grow up in a secure, unwavering, and nurturing environment. Families are the best means to provide the positive interaction and healthy surroundings that children need to blossom.
- b. “...many elements of Sanctification and of Truth” are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church: “The written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements.” Christ’s Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation, whose power derives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church. All these blessings come from Christ and lead to him, and are in themselves calls to “Catholic unity.” ³²⁷
- c. We necessitate to utilize the concept of God’s mercy to all human relationship, including families, parents, and children. The Sanctified Family can be a model of merciful forgiveness to the world and humankind outside the family. The all-inclusive families can eyewitness to this unexpected mercy, as parents forgive each other and set this example for their children. Mercy renews and redeems because it is the meeting of two hearts: the heart of God who comes to meet the human heart. ³²⁸

³²⁵ Cf. 1990 Code of Canons of Oriental Churches, Canon, n. 375.

³²⁶ Cf. The Most Rev. Thomas O. Gore, O.C.R., S.F.U., MD.

³²⁷ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 819.

³²⁸ See Apostolic Letter, *Misericordia et misera*, 20 November 2016, 16.

- d. Forgiving, merciful children can transmit this sanctifying grace to their peers, spreading this holiness into the lives of others, opening up the probability of unconditional love, acceptance, and understanding throughout humanity. This is the precious gift that the Sanctification of Families can give to the world.
- e. The Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi members follow Christ, stirred by the Holy Spirit, give ourselves totally to God above all things, living the Gospel in the world, according to the form observed and proposed by Saint Francis of Assisi. Grow in Christ-likeness together, to love one another deeply, to honor God through prayer, faith, service, ministry, and impacting our community and the world around us.

§ 4. Confraternity inquirers and candidates shall request to start the process to be admitted as a member of the Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi in writing.

§ 5. The Sanctification of Families Union of Saint Francis of Assisi is an international confraternity of prayer and ministry of the OFE, OFES, and Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc. It is comprised of priests, religious and laity from all religious traditions who commit to prayer for the sanctification of families and of married Roman Catholic priests.

Article 10.2: International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops

§ 1. Conference inquirers and candidates shall commence the process by completing an International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops Application.

§ 2. The International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops (ICCAB) is an assembly of the hierarchy of bishops who jointly exercise pastoral functions on behalf of the Christian faithful.

§ 3. The mission work of the International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops (ICCAB) shall be the propagation and defense of the Faith and in service as the visible sign and expression of the Unity of the Church.

§ 4. Each bishop in active episcopal ministry shall be included in the International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops (ICCAB) exercise in a communal and collegial manner certain pastoral functions entrusted to them by the Lord Jesus of sanctifying, teaching, and governing.³²⁹

§ 5. When the International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops (ICCAB) have nine members it shall elect the archbishop from among its members.

³²⁹ See Lumen gentium, no. 21.

§ 6. The International Conference of Catholic and Autocephalous Bishops (ICCAB) will meet with such frequency as best serves its chief work, and at the call of the archbishop or one quarter of the episcopal members.

Chapter 11 Changes in the Constitutions

Article 11.0: Amendments to the OFE General Constitutions

§ 1. Any member of the Order and charter members may submit a proposed amendment to any chapter, article, or section of the General Constitutions.

§ 2. The General Constitutions are subject to correction or amendment by a majority vote of the OFE Corporate Board of Directors and Council of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.

§ 3. Amendments and revisions to the General Constitutions shall take effect immediately upon passage.

§ 4. No amendment to or revision of the General Constitutions shall have *ex post facto* effect.

Chapter 12 Governance

Article 12.0: Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.

§ 1. "Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God." ³³⁰

§ 2. The Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc. was incorporated as a non-profit Religious Corporation.

§ 3. The specific purpose of this non-profit Religious Corporation is to minister to celibate and married Roman Catholic priests and laity [non-Roman Catholic priests and laity].

§ 4. The governance of OFE is the Corporate Board of Directors and Council of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.

§ 5. The corporation's name is Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.

§ 6. This corporation adheres to the terms of the Articles of Incorporation of a non-profit Religious Corporation, Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Policy, and the General Constitutions.

³³⁰ Roman 13:1.

§ 7. This corporation is a non-profit Religious Corporation and is not organized for private gain of any person. It is organized under the non-profit Religious Corporation Law exclusively for religious purposes.

§ 8. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).

§ 9. No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and this corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of any candidate for public office.

§ 10. The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to the purposes in Article 4 of the incorporation document and no part of the net income or assets of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or member thereof or to the benefit of any private person.

§ 11. Upon the dissolution or winding up of this corporation, its assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of this corporation shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational and/or religious purposes and which has established its tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).

Article 12.1: OFE Corporate Board of Directors and Council Members

§ 1. Members of OFE are a spiritual family in Christ, raised up by the Spirit, integrating celibate and married Roman Catholic priests and laity. The Corporate Board of Directors and Council of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc. (hereafter called "OFE Corporate Board").

§ 2. The OFE Corporate Board, which holds supreme authority and governing body in the community, according to the norm of the General Constitutions, is to be composed in such a way that, representing the entire Order, it becomes a true sign of its unity in charity.

§ 3. The OFE Corporate Board exists under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer who is the Bishop Ordinary of the Order. The OFE Corporate Board adheres to the terms of the Articles of Incorporation of a non-profit Religious Corporation, Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Policy, and the General Constitutions.

§ 4. The Bishop Ordinary enjoys ordinary authority over OFE members, as well as over the particular expression of the community.

§ 5. The Bishop Ordinary is the Spiritual Father of the community.

§ 6. The founder, the Bishop Ordinary, is the Spiritual Father and Minister General of the whole community during his lifetime.

§ 7. If at any time the founder become unable to actively govern, his lawful successors will take his place, but, even then, he'll have a permanent place of honor in the OFE Corporate Board and with consultative voice.

§ 9. The OFE Corporate Board generally convenes each year, and may meet as frequently as necessary during the year.

§ 10. The OFE Corporate Board's role is to generally govern the whole community. It may also take general disciplinary action directed toward any member of the community.

§ 11. For reasons of death, resignation, inability to serve, or the extraordinary desire of the community, an OFE Corporate Board of elections may be called.

§ 12. The OFE Corporate Board shall consult with the Bishop Ordinary, non-voting OFE members for guidance, direction, and consultative voice.

Article 12.2: General and Provincial Chapters

§ 1. The General Chapter ensures and promotes both communion and vitality in the OFE in view of its mission. It represents all the members of the Order.

§ 2. The General Constitutions are to define the composition and extent of the authority of a Chapter; proper law is to determine further the order to be observed in the celebration of the Chapter, especially in what pertains to elections and the manner of handling affairs.

§ 3. According to the norms determined in the General Constitutions, any Member can freely send wishes and suggestions to a General Chapter.

§ 4. The General Chapter meets ordinarily every six years. It analyzes the mission, goals, charism, and apostolic works of the order, reviews and amends the constitutions, elects bishops, auxiliary bishop, coadjutor bishop, minister provincials, minister general, vicar minister general, etc. and divides or suppresses provinces. It requires the presence of two-thirds of all the members of the Order for valid acts with the approval vote of the OFE Corporate Board of Directors and Council.

§ 5. The Provincial Chapter meets ordinarily every three years. It analyzes the state of the province's common life and mission, determines major policies for the future, elect officers, and delegates within its competence, and erects and oversees the development of districts. It requires the presence of two-thirds of all the members of the Order for valid acts with approval vote of the OFE Corporate Board of Directors and Council.

Article 12.3: Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc.

§ 1. The Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc., was incorporated as a non-profit Charity Corporation.

§ 2. The mission statement of the Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc. is to relieve the suffering of humanity.

§ 3. The name of the corporation shall be Abbey of Saint Mary Theotokos, Inc. (hereafter called "Abbey Corporate Board").

§ 4. The corporation will adhere to the terms of the Article of Incorporations of a non-profit Religious Corporation, Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Policy, and the General Constitutions.

§ 5. The Abbey Corporate Board exists under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer, who is the Bishop Ordinary of the Order.

§ 6. The Chief Executive and Abbey Corporate Board generally convenes each year and may meet as frequently as necessary during the year.

§ 7. For reasons of death, resignation, inability to serve, or the extraordinary desire of the Chief Executive, the Abbey Corporate Board of elections may be called.

§ 8. Said corporation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes, including for such purposes as the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

§ 9. This corporation is a Non-profit Public Benefit Corporation and is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is organized under the Non-profit Public Benefit Corporation Law for public and charitable purposes.

§ 10. The sole purpose of our non-profit organization is to gain financial support to relieve the suffering of humanity.

§ 11. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation except from federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of future federal tax code, or (b) by a corporation, (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

§ 12. Upon the dissolution of the corporation, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Article 12.4: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of the Leader

§ 1. "But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant." ³³¹

§ 2. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, 'Give your place to this man,' and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you, he may say, 'My friend, move up to a higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." ³³²

§ 3. "And said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me." ³³³

§ 4. "Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness." ³³⁴

§ 5. "Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us." ³³⁵

§ 6. "But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant." ³³⁶

³³¹ Mark 10:43.

³³² Luke 14:8-11.

³³³ Matthew 18:3-5.

³³⁴ Matthew 10:1.

³³⁵ Acts 1:21.

³³⁶ Matthew 20:25-26.

§ 7. "They appointed presbyters for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith." ³³⁷

§ 8. "And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." ³³⁸

§ 9. "So, I exhort the presbyters among you, as a fellow presbyter and witness to the sufferings of Christ and one who has a share in the glory to be revealed. Tend the flock of God in your midst, [overseeing] not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." ³³⁹

§ 10. "Therefore, a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not aggressive, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with perfect dignity; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of the church of God? He should not be a recent convert, so that he may not become conceited and thus incur the devil's punishment. He must also have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, the devil's trap." ³⁴⁰

Article 12.5: Primate and Presiding Archbishop, Coadjutor Bishop, Auxiliary Bishop, and Bishop-Elect

§ 1. Christ the Lord, Son of the living God, came that He might save His people from their sins (cf. Matthew 1:2) and that all men might be sanctified. Just as He Himself was sent by the Father, so He also sent His Apostles. (cf. John 20:21) Therefore, He sanctified them, conferring on them the Holy Spirit, so that they also might glorify the Father upon earth and save men, "to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12), which is the Church.

§ 2. The bishops themselves, however, having been appointed by the Holy Spirit, are successors of the Apostles as pastors of souls.³⁴¹ Christ gave the Apostles and their successors the command and the power to teach all nations, to hallow men in the truth, and to feed them.³⁴²

³³⁷ Acts 14:23.

³³⁸ Ephesians 4:11-12.

³³⁹ 1 Peter 5:1-4.

³⁴⁰ 1 Timothy 3:2-7.

³⁴¹ Cf. First Vatican Council, fourth session, part 1 of Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, c. 3, Denz. 1828 (3061).

³⁴² Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, chap. 3, nos. 21, 24 and 25: A.A.S. 57 (1965) pp. 24-25, 29-31.

§ 3. Archbishop is the Bishop Ordinary and is the chief teacher, sanctifier, and shepherd of God's people.

§ 4. Archbishop will have the title of Primate and Presiding Archbishop.

§ 5. Archbishop will have the title of Titular Archbishop of Epiphania.

§ 6. Archbishop will hold the office for life.

§ 7. Coadjutor Bishop is appointed to assist the Bishop Ordinary in his duties, providing support and guidance in the administration of the Order, with the right of succession upon the death of the Archbishop.

§ 8. If a Coadjutor Bishop has not be appointed. Upon the death of the Archbishop the Board of Directors and Council will convene a meeting for the election of a bishop to be elevated to the Office of Primate and Presiding Archbishop and Titular Archbishop of Epiphania.

§ 9. Auxiliary Bishop is appointed at the request of the Bishop Ordinary to assist him in the governance of the Order.

§ 10. Auxiliary Bishop is appointed to assist the Bishop Ordinary in his duties but does not have the automatic right of succession.

§ 11. Qualifications of a Bishop:

- a. This saying is trustworthy: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. ³⁴³
- b. Therefore, a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not aggressive, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money. ³⁴⁴
- c. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with perfect dignity; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of the church of God? ³⁴⁵
- d. He should not be a recent convert, so that he may not become conceited and thus incur the devil's punishment. ³⁴⁶
- e. He must also have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, the devil's trap. ³⁴⁷

§ 12. Selection of a bishop:

³⁴³ 1 Timothy 3:1.

³⁴⁴ 1 Timothy 3:3.

³⁴⁵ 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

³⁴⁶ 1 Timothy 3:6.

³⁴⁷ 1 Timothy 3:7.

- a. Process begins with prayers among bishops, priests, laity, friends, family of O.F.E., and prayers for the Holy Spirit who would teach and guide us.
- b. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, Jesus told his beloved disciples that he would send one (the Holy Spirit) who would teach and guide all those who believe in him.³⁴⁸
- c. The Holy Spirit distribute spiritual gifts according to his will.³⁴⁹ The Holy Spirit comforts us³⁵⁰ and teaches us.³⁵¹ The Holy Spirit also takes on the role of Guide and Counselor, leading us in the way we should go and revealing God's truth.³⁵²
- d. The Ordinary or his representative will email potential Bishop Candidates among O.F.E. priests.
- e. A Letter of Interest is require from potential Bishop Candidates. The candidates will email or by land mail to the Ordinary or his representative a Letter of Interest.
- f. The Ordinary or his representative will review the candidates qualifications. The selected candidate for consideration is notified by email or by a telephone call. It needs the approval of the O.F.E. Board of Directors and Council members.
- g. Bishop-Elect Very Reverend will be consecrated as a bishop. His ecclesiastical title is Auxiliary Bishop or Coadjutor Bishop of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist.

Chapter 13 Community Life

Article 13.0: Our Scriptural Understanding: Of the Community Life

§ 1. "The community of believers was of one heart and mind."³⁵³

§ 2. "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many

³⁴⁸ Acts 1:5; John 14:26; 16:7.

³⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

³⁵⁰ John 14:16.

³⁵¹ John 14:26.

³⁵² Luke 12:12; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10.

³⁵³ Acts 4:32.

wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” ³⁵⁴

§ 3. “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.” ³⁵⁵

§ 4. “As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.” ³⁵⁶

§ 5. “Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gift.” ³⁵⁷

§ 6. “If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So, faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” ³⁵⁸

§ 7. “Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute [you], bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who

³⁵⁴ Acts 2:42-47.

³⁵⁵ I Corinthians 12:4-7.

³⁵⁶ Corinthians 12:12.

³⁵⁷ I Corinthians 12:27-31.

³⁵⁸ I Corinthians 13:1-13.

weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all. Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” Rather, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.” Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.” ³⁵⁹

§ 8. “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put-on loves, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” ³⁶⁰

§ 9. “If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others.” ³⁶¹

§ 10. “I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” ³⁶²

Chapter 14 Fellowship

Article 14.0: Fraternal Fellowship ³⁶³

§ 1. “As sons of the heavenly Father and brothers of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, ³⁶⁴ the friars, [OFE Members] following the Gospel way of life revealed by the Lord to St.

³⁵⁹ Romans 12:9-21.

³⁶⁰ Colossians 3:12-17.

³⁶¹ Philippians 2:1-4.

³⁶² Ephesians 4:1-6.

³⁶³ Cf. *General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friars Minor*: <https://ofm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CGSG2016EN.pdf> October-01-2019 (Date of Access)

³⁶⁴ Cf. *Letter to the Faithful II*, 49-53.

Francis, ³⁶⁵ lead a brotherly life in common, ³⁶⁶ and love and support one another more than a mother loves and supports her child according to the flesh.” ³⁶⁷

§ 2. “Since the love of God that has been poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit, ³⁶⁸ all the friars [OFE Members] are to have among themselves, to the highest degree, a family spirit ³⁶⁹ and mutual friendship. They are to practice courtesy, cheerfulness and all other virtues in such a way that, united in real fraternity and encouraging one another unceasingly to hope, peace and joy, ³⁷⁰ they may achieve full human, Christian and religious maturity.”

§ 3. “Every friar [OFE Member] is a gift of God to the fraternity. ³⁷¹ Therefore, even though they possess different characters, cultures, customs, talents, abilities and qualities, the friars [OFE Members] are to accept one another just as they are and as equals, so that the whole fraternity may become a privileged place of meeting with God.” ³⁷²

§ 4. “All the members of the Order are brothers [and sisters] and minors [OFE Members] in name and in fact, although they may exercise different offices, duties and ministries in the Order.”

§ 5. “The friars [OFE Members] are to exercise a fitting and gracious hospitality towards everyone, but especially towards their brothers and sisters of the whole Franciscan family.”

§ 6. “In order that their fraternal life in Christ Jesus may become the leaven of fellowship among all mankind, the friars [OFE Members] are to receive everyone with kindness and be well-disposed to friend and foe alike, ³⁷³ whether they come to us, or we go to them.” ³⁷⁴

Chapter 15 Peace and Humble

Article 15.0: Peace and Humble ³⁷⁵

³⁶⁵ Cf. *Testament*, 14.

³⁶⁶ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 607, 2.

³⁶⁷ Cf. *Rule of 1223*, 6, 8.

³⁶⁸ Cf. *Romans* 5:5.

³⁶⁹ Cf. *Rule of 1223*, 10, 5.

³⁷⁰ Cf. *Rule of 1221*, V 7, 16.

³⁷¹ Cf. *Testament*, 14.

³⁷² Cf. “*La vocation de l’Ordre aujourd’hui*,” Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973, 12.

³⁷³ Cf. *Rule of 1221*, 7, 14.

³⁷⁴ Cf. “*La vocation de l’Ordre aujourd’hui*,” Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973, 15, 17.

³⁷⁵ Cf. *General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friars Minor*: <https://ofm.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CGSG2016EN.pdf> September-22-2019 (Date of Access)

§ 1. “As followers of Jesus Christ, “Who humbled himself, even to accepting death”,³⁷⁶ and faithful to their specific calling as Minors, [OFE Members] the friars [OFE Members] are to go through the world “in joy and gladness”³⁷⁷ as the servants and subjects of all, peaceful and humble of heart.”³⁷⁸

§ 2. “Conscious “that what a man is before God that he is and nothing more,”³⁷⁹ the friars are to acknowledge God as their supreme and only good; they are to strive to please him always in all things, and they are to be glad that they are thought of as worthless, simple and despicable.”³⁸⁰

§ 3. “In order that they may follow more closely and express more clearly the self-emptying of the Savior,³⁸¹ the friars [OFE Members] are to have the life and condition of the little ones in society, always living among them as minors [OFE Members]. In this social environment they are to work for the coming of the Kingdom.³⁸² By their way of life, as a fraternity and as individuals, the friars [OFE Members] are to behave in such a way that no one is kept from them, particularly those who usually are socially and spiritually neglected.”

§ 4. “Constantly denying themselves³⁸³ and in an uninterrupted conversion to God, the friars [OFE Members] are to display a prophetic image by the example of their lives, in order to refute “the false values” of our age.”³⁸⁴

§ 5. “The friars [OFE Members] are to live in this world as promoters of justice and as messengers and agents of peace,³⁸⁵ overcoming evil and doing good.³⁸⁶ The friars [OFE Members] shall proclaim peace by word and cherish it so deep in their hearts that no one is stirred to anger or scandal, but rather that everyone is called back to peace, meekness and kindness through them.”³⁸⁷

§ 6. “In protecting the rights of the oppressed, the friars [OFE Members] are to renounce violent action and have recourse to means that are otherwise available even to the powerless.”³⁸⁸

³⁷⁶ Philippians 2:8.

³⁷⁷ *The Admonitions*, 20, 2.

³⁷⁸ Cf. *Rule of 1221*, 16, 6; *Letter to the Faithful II*, 47; *Salute to the Virtues*, 16-18.

³⁷⁹ *The Admonitions*, 19, 2.

³⁸⁰ *The Admonitions*, 19, 1.

³⁸¹ *Lumen Gentium*, 42.

³⁸² Cf. “*La vocation de l’Ordre aujourd’hui*,” Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973; “*The Gospel Challenges us*,” Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983, 28.29.

³⁸³ *Rule of 1223*, 2, 17; *Rule of 1221*, 1,3; 17, 14.

³⁸⁴ “*The Gospel Challenges us*,” Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983, 31.

³⁸⁵ Cf. “*La vocation de l’Ordre aujourd’hui*,” Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973, 16; “*The Gospel Challenges us*,” Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983, 38; “*De institutione in Ordine Fratrum Minorum*,” Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, 56b; “*Vocatio missionaria franciscana in mundo hodierno*,” Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, 25.26.

³⁸⁶ Cf. Romans 12:21.

³⁸⁷ Cf. *Rule of 1223*, 3, 11; *Rule of 1221*, 14, 2-4; *Testament*, 23; “*La vocation de l’Ordre aujourd’hui*,” Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973, 31.

³⁸⁸ Cf. “*Vocatio missionaria franciscana in mundo hodierno*,” Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, 27.35.

§ 7. Conscious also of the terrible dangers that threaten the human race, the friars [OFE Members] are to denounce in the strongest terms every kind of warlike action and the arms race as a very serious calamity for the world and a very great injury to the poor;³⁸⁹ they are to spare neither work nor sacrifice to build up God's kingdom of peace."³⁹⁰

§ 8. "Freed of all fear by the poverty they have chosen and joyfully living in the hope that is based on the promise,³⁹¹ while also promoting mutual acceptance and benevolence among men and women, the friars [OFE Members] are to be instruments of the reconciliation that has been brought about by the cross of Jesus Christ."

§ 9. "Following closely in the footsteps of Saint Francis, the friars [OFE Members] are to maintain a reverent attitude towards nature,³⁹² threatened from all sides today, in such a way that they may restore it completely to its condition of brother and to its role of usefulness to all mankind for the glory of God the Creator."³⁹³

Chapter 16 Repair My Church

Article 16.0: Repair My Church

§ 1. "Three times Christ on the Cross came to life, and told him: "Go, Francis, and repair my Church in ruins." This simple occurrence of the word of God heard in the Church of Saint Damian contains a profound symbolism. At that moment Saint Francis was called to repair the small church, but the ruinous state of the building was a symbol of the dramatic and disquieting situation of the Church herself. At that time the Church had a superficial faith which did not shape or transform life, a scarcely zealous clergy, and a chilling of love. It was an interior destruction of the Church which also brought a decomposition of unity, with the birth of heretical movements. Yet, there at the center of the Church in ruins was the Crucified Lord, and He spoke: He called for renewal, He called Francis to the manual labor of repairing the small Church of Saint Damian, the symbol of a much deeper call to renew Christ's own Church, with her radicality of faith and her loving enthusiasm for Christ."³⁹⁴

§ 2. "They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves

³⁸⁹ Cf. *"The Gospel Challenges us,"* Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983, 38.

³⁹⁰ Cf. *"Vocatio missionaria franciscana in mundo hodierno,"* Document of the extraordinary General Chapter, Medellin 1971, 25-27; *"The Gospel Challenges us,"* Plenary Council, Salvador de Bahia 1983, 32-36.

³⁹¹ Cf. *"La vocation de l'Ordre aujourd'hui,"* Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973, 24.

³⁹² Cf. *Canticle of Brother Sun; Salute to the Virtues*, 18.

³⁹³ *"La vocation de l'Ordre aujourd'hui,"* Declaration of the General Chapter, Madrid 1973, 25.

³⁹⁴ Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, 01/27/2010.

energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.”³⁹⁵

§ 3. Francis of Assisi was poor only that he might be Christ-like. He loved nature because it was another manifestation of the beauty of God. He did great penance that he might be totally disciplined for the will of God. His poverty had a sister, humility, by which he meant total dependence on the good God. But all this was, as it were, preliminary to the heart of his spirituality: living the gospel life, summed up in the charity of Jesus.”³⁹⁶

“May whoever observes all this be filled in heaven with the blessing of the most high Father, and on earth with that of his beloved Son, together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.”³⁹⁷

THE GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS
of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist
were approved by the Board of Directors and
Council of the Order of Franciscans of the Eucharist, Inc.,
1 November, 2019 Solemnity of All Saints



³⁹⁵ Cf. Rule of Secular Franciscan Order, Chapter 2, The Way of Life, Rule 6.

³⁹⁶ Cf. excerpt from the book "Saint of the Day" 5th revised edition, edited by Leonard Foley, O.F.M. and revised by Pat McCloskey, O.F.M., p. 267.

³⁹⁷ Blessing of St. Francis from the Testament 1226.