

REGIONAL GUIDELINES

La Verna Region

Terms :

Regional fraternity – organic union of all the local fraternities in the region.

Regional Fraternity Council – all the ministers of the local fraternities in the region, the members of the regional executive council and the regional spiritual assistant.

Regional Executive Council – perpetually professed members of the SFO in La Verna region are **elected** to the REC by the members of the regional fraternity council. To fill other needed ministries on REC, professed secular Franciscans may be **appointed** by REC. Appointed members of REC are consultative and do not have a vote on the REC. The regional spiritual assistant is appointed to the REC by his minister provincial or the provincial spiritual assistant to the SFO.

Chapter one – The Regional Fraternity

1. The *Regional Fraternity* of the La Verna Region of the SFO is the organic union of the local fraternities existing in the geographic area of Wisconsin (with the exception of St Elizabeth Fraternity in Eau Claire, WI) and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The *regional fraternity* assures the link between the local SFO fraternities of the region with the SFO national fraternity of the USA (NAFRA). (Cf. General Constitutions – article 61.1)

2. A) The **chapter** of the *regional fraternity council* is held once each year (Cf. National Statutes – article 22.3). The *regional fraternity council* is animated and guided by the *regional executive council* (Cf. National Statutes – Article 23.1). The *regional executive council* is elected every three years. The SFO members of the *regional executive council* must be perpetually professed members of the SFO. The electors are the local ministers of the fraternities of the La Verna region (or their delegate) and the members of the *regional executive council* who are gathered in chapter.

Cf. General Constitutions – articles 61.3 and 62.1 / National Statutes – article 22.1

B) The Provincial or Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the First Order or TOR, with fraternities in the region, appoint a regional spiritual assistant who is an *ex officio* member of the regional executive council. *If they are more than one, they form a conference and render their service collegially.* (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral assistance to the SFO – article 21.2). The regional spiritual assistant (RSA) does not vote on financial matters or in elections. (Cf. National Statutes – article 22.1)

Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO – article 5.1, .2

3. The *regional fraternity council* (local ministers, executive council members, regional spiritual assistant(s)) shall meet in chapter at least once each year. They have the power to *create regional guidelines in conformity with the Rule, the General Constitutions and the National Statutes.* (Cf. National Statutes – article 22.2), as well as the duties set forth in article 62 of the General Constitutions. Many of these duties are carried out by the regional executive council acting in the name of the regional fraternity council. Major changes in the region need the approval of the *regional fraternity council* (e.g. budgets, change in guidelines, etc).

Cf. National Statutes – article 23.5 / General Constitutions - article 62

4. The regional executive council shall carry out the business of the regional fraternity in a spirit of ministry and service. They may carry out business electronically between sessions, provided that any decisions are ratified at their next regular meeting. (Cf. General Constitutions – article 62.1, 2 / National Statutes

– articles 23.1 and 23.6) The *regional executive council* shall meet at least twice a year. (Cf. National Statutes – article 23.7)

Chapter two – The Regional Fraternity Council

1. The *regional fraternity council* includes: (Cf. National Statutes – article 22.1)
 - a. The regional executive council;
 - b. The duly elected minister of each local fraternity in the La Verna Region or his/her delegate;
 - c. The regional spiritual assistant / conference of regional spiritual assistants.

2. The *regional fraternity council* meets in chapter at least once a year to assist in promoting the Franciscan life in the region and the local fraternities. (Cf. National Statutes – article 22.2, .3, .4) The *regional fraternity council* directs the regional executive council to implement the conclusions, recommendations, and policies of the regional fraternity council gathered in chapter.

3. The election of the regional executive council (REC) is held every three years. The REC shall prepare for these elections at least four or more months in advance (Cf. National Statutes – article 11.1) A nominating committee shall develop a slate of nominees for the various offices of the REC. Their names, the office they seek, and their competency as well as a short biography should be sent to the electors at least two months in advance of the elections. The regional minister shall inform the members of the *regional fraternity council* of the place, the day and the time of the elections at least one month in advance (Cf. General Constitutions – article 76.1).

The REC shall request the National Minister to **preside** at the elections (Cf. General Constitutions – article 76.2). The Regional executive council shall notify the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) of the need for someone to **witness** the elections. Both the National minister and CNSA can delegate someone for the election process. These requests should be made at least six or more months in advance of the elections. (Cf. General Constitutions – article 76.2). Neither the presider nor the witness has a right to vote.

4. The regional elections are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the General Constitutions and the National Statutes (Cf. General Constitutions - articles 76 to 80 / National Statutes - articles 7 to 15).

5. Perpetually professed members of the region, in good standing, have passive voice, i.e. can be elected. Members of the *regional fraternity council* have the right to vote (active voice) and to be voted for (passive voice) at regional elections unless otherwise indicated by the General Constitutions (Cf. General Constitutions – article 77.1, 77 .2 and article 79). No member of the *regional fraternity council* can cast more than a single vote even if he/she holds more than one title. (Cf. National Statutes – article 8.4, .5)

6. A member of the regional executive council may also be a member of a local fraternity council. However, the office of minister at two different levels is incompatible. Likewise the offices of minister, vice-minister, secretary and treasurer at the same level are incompatible. (Cf. General Constitutions – article 82).

7. A quorum of the *regional fraternity council* must be present in order to conduct a legitimate election. A **quorum is defined** as the physical presence of more than half of those who have a right

to vote (Cf. General Constitutions - article 77.4). An **absolute majority** is at least one more than half of those who are present to vote. In the elections, a **relative majority** is the highest number of votes when an absolute majority is not required.

8. The common fund of the regional fraternity is supported financially by the canonically established fraternities of the region. The *regional fraternity council* determines the annual *fair share* to be contributed by local fraternities for all active fraternity members who are in good standing - as defined in the National Statutes, article 18.7a, 7b. (Also - Cf. General Constitutions – article 30.3 / National Statutes – articles 3.7b / 25.3 / SFO Rule #25)

Chapter three – The Regional Executive Council (REC)

1 The regional fraternity is animated and guided by the *regional executive council* (Cf. General Constitutions – article 62.1, .2 / National Statutes – articles 22, 23, 24, and 25) The members of the REC are: regional minister, regional vice-minister, regional secretary, regional treasurer, at least one elected councilor (If there is a need, more than one regional councilor may be elected.), and the regional spiritual assistant(s) appointed by their major superior. The La Verna REC ordinarily **appoints** a formation director, a web-master for the region, as well as a regional archivist.

The regional formation director may be elected. (Cf. National Statutes – article 23.2). If the regional formation director is elected, he/she has full rights on the regional executive council. If he/she is appointed, he/she attends the meetings of REC and exercises a consultative role. (Cf. National Statutes – article 23.2) *The La Verna regional fraternity council has presently chosen to appoint the regional formation director as well as a formation team as needed.*

2. The regional spiritual assistant (or the president of the conference of assistants) is a member of REC and provides spiritual support and assistance for the region. As is the case at all levels of the SFO, the principal task of the spiritual assistant is to foster a deeper insight into Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the secular Franciscans of the region (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO – article 13)

The regional spiritual assistant(s) also conduct the **pastoral visitation** of the local fraternities in the region once every three years (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO – article 14). The regional spiritual assistant (RSA) collaborates with local spiritual assistants. The RSA guides their continuing formation, working to develop a fraternal communion among them. (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO – article 14.2)

3. The responsibilities of the *regional executive council* are as follows:

- a. to prepare the celebration of the elective chapter and the regular annual chapter.
- b. to promote, animate, and co-ordinate the life and activities of the SFO and its insertion into the local Church within the regional area;
- c. to detail an action plan of the SFO within the region according to the directives of the national council and/or international presidency of the SFO and in collaboration with them, and to communicate the information to the local fraternities. The REC communicates the directives of the local Church to the local fraternities as needed;
- d. to provide for the formation of the formators who are responsible for the animation

- (formation) of newcomers, i.e. for orientation, initial and ongoing formation;
- e. to offer local fraternities the information which supports their formative and operative needs;
 - f. to discuss and approve the annual report to the national executive council;
 - g. to schedule, as circumstances require, a fraternal visit to the local fraternities even if it is not requested. This is done once every three years.
 - h. to make decisions regarding the use of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters regarding the financial management / economic affairs of the regional fraternity and to have, before its term of office is finished, the regional fraternity's financial and real estate situation audited either by an expert who is not a member of the council, or by the fraternity's board of examiners. Ownership of real estate is not recommended.
 - j. to perform such other duties as are indicated by the Constitutions or are necessary to achieve its own aims.

General Constitutions – article 62.2

Chapter four – Regional officers

1. The duties of the officers of the Regional Executive Council (REC).

The Regional Executive Council (REC) is entrusted with the role of guiding the region in Franciscan life and growth. Each of the officers of the REC contributes to that goal. Collaboratively they achieve the purpose and goal of their servant ministry to the region. Their collaborative efforts support the achievement of that end. Be aware of this common goal as we outline the duties of each REC officer and invite them to competent service to the region. The National Statutes give directions in article 24. Each member of the REC not only fulfills his/her own responsibilities, but contributes to the ministry and dialogue that enriches the Franciscan life of the region.

2. The duties of the regional minister:

- a. to convoke and preside at the meetings of the REC and the regional fraternity council;
- b. every three years to convoke the elective chapter of the regional fraternity council and contact NAFRA and CNSA for someone to preside at and witness the elections. Requests should be made well in advance of the selected date of the elections. The council and the minister dialogue about this issue;
- c. to preside at and confirm the elections in local fraternities either in person or through a delegated member of REC (the spiritual assistant is present to witness elections or delegates someone to witness the elections);
- d. to conduct the local fraternity visitations personally or through a delegated member of the REC. The minister will co-ordinate this **fraternal** visit with the **pastoral** visit of the regional spiritual assistant;
- e. to participate in meetings called by the SFO National minister. The regional minister is an *ex officio* member of the national fraternity (NAFRA) and is required to attend NAFRA meetings or send a delegate. That delegated person is automatically the regional vice-minister (Cf. National Statutes – article 8.3a). If the vice-minister is unable to attend, a member of the REC, selected by that body, shall be the delegate. (Cf. National Statutes – article 8.3b) The regional minister informs the national minister, in writing, of the name of the delegate;
- f. the minister represents the regional fraternity in any issues dealing with the civil order.
- g. the minister, with the regional council, prepares the annual report to the national executive council on the state of the region. Council and minister collaborate in developing tools to get the information from local fraternities;

- h. with the consent of the REC, the regional minister requests a pastoral and fraternal visitation from the national executive council and CNSA. This is done once every three years. The visitation requires the presence of the regional fraternity council as well as the REC for a full weekend. It may be a part of the annual regional chapter. It is important to dialogue with the visitors about the schedule for the visitation;
- i. the minister fulfills any other duties assigned by the REC.

Cf. General Constitutions – article 63

3. The duties of the regional vice-minister. The vice-minister of the REC:
- a. fulfills all the duties of the regional minister in his/her absence or because of the minister's inability to fulfill the duties of regional minister;
 - b. is the official delegate to NAFRA if the regional minister cannot attend;
 - c. is attentive to and supportive of the actions of the REC;
 - d. as the vice-minister feels competent and confident, he/she can accept other responsibilities given him/her by the minister or the REC.

Cf. National Statutes – article 24.2 / General Constitutions – article 52.1

4. The regional secretary has the following duties:
- a. keeps a written record of the minutes of meetings both of the regional fraternity council and the regional executive council. The secretary distributes copies of the appropriate minutes to the members of the regional fraternity council and/or REC as is appropriate;
 - b. the secretary preserves important documents (e.g. Documents of establishment of local fraternities) and correspondence of both the regional fraternity council and the regional executive council. The secretary assists the regional minister in communicating with the fraternities, regional councilors, SFO members, and members of higher level councils as needed;
 - c. the secretary performs other duties assigned by the regional executive council;
 - d. the secretary helps maintain the data base of the NAFRA list by communicating, to the appropriate person, information about professions and deaths of SFO members in the region.

National Statutes – article 24.2 / General Constitutions – article 52.2

5. The regional treasurer has the following duties:
- a. keeps an accurate and up-to-date record of monies received and spent at the regional level and oversees any property of the regional fraternity unless the REC determines otherwise;
 - b. deposits all funds of the regional fraternity in bank accounts determined by the REC in the name of the regional fraternity;
 - c. gives an accurate financial report for approval at each meeting of the REC and at the annual chapter of the regional fraternity council;
 - d. pays all bills or charitable donations only by check, as the business of the regional fraternity requires and the REC approves;
 - e. prepares and presents a budget of the region to the meeting of the *regional fraternity council*;
 - f. limits individual expenses to \$500.00 or less until an expenditure is approved by the REC;
 - g. before an elective regional chapter (every three years) an official audit of the region's financial books is done by an outside expert or the fraternity's board of examiners. Members of the council may not do the audit. An annual audit of the financial books of the region is achieved by competent people chosen by the REC. Financial transparency is expected;
 - h. presents criteria to the REC for spending funds to be used when assisting people in need, (e.g. the retreat endowment fund). Donations given for a specified purpose may not be used for other

purposes;

- i. notifies local councils of their *fair share* donation and invites payments on a quarterly basis;
- j. reimburses REC and regional fraternity council members for travel expenses for meetings and for the annual chapter. The region pays housing costs of official attendees at the annual regional chapter and REC travel expenses for regular meetings of REC. The region pays the travel expenses/housing for visitors from the higher level and offers them a just stipend;
- k. pays the region's *fair share* to the national fraternity.

cf. National Statutes – article 6.4 / General Constitutions – article 52.4

6. The duties of the regional formation director: (Cf. La Verna Formation Manual – Page iv / B3 / Constitutions 52.3)

- a. the regional formation director is encouraged to select a team of secular Franciscans to assist in the work of the regional formation ministry. The regional formation director will establish the number of team members and select his/her team. When a team has been selected, the names are submitted to the REC for approval; (Cf. Formation Manual –Pages iii & iv)
- b. All members of the team shall receive a copy of the *Formation Manual of La Verna Region*. They will use the material of the *Formation Manual* to guide their ministry to the region;
- c. The regional formation director shall preside at meetings of the team. Together they assist the local formation directors and offer them help in whatever way is needed. To upgrade their own formation, the formation director and/or team members will attend formation workshops conducted by the national formation commission or other competent groups. The region may offer financial assistance for such workshops as far as it is possible;
- d. as local fraternity formation needs require, one or more team members shall visit the fraternity in order to have first-hand understanding of how formation, both initial and ongoing, is conducted in the fraternity. First-hand knowledge will help them make suitable suggestions and give practical guidance. They may choose to develop regional formation workshops for the needs of local formation personnel;
- e. the regional formation director shall give regular reports to the REC and offer a report to the annual chapter of the regional fraternity council;
- f. at a suitable time, the regional formation director (and formation team) shall recommend names of SFO perpetually professed members who are competent to serve as a future regional formation director and/or team member.

Cf. Formation Manual – La Verna Region .(2008) – Pages iii and iv, B1to B3

7. The regional councilors: (Constitutions –article 32.1, 32.2)

- a. councilors on the REC serve a particular role in our region. Though we do not elect councilors to represent a particular district, we assign councilors to maintain communication with a particular district. They keep in touch with the fraternities and local councils of the district. They keep the REC informed about the spirit of the fraternities and their members. They assist in the scheduling of the annual district meetings. They may be delegated by the regional minister to conduct fraternal visitations to the fraternities in their district;
- b. separate from official visitations, they may visit fraternities to get first-hand information on the spirit of the fraternities and councils. If the fraternity is doing well, their presence gives encouragement. If things are going poorly, their presence can begin a process of helping them build up the spirit of the members and the fraternity. They keep the REC informed of the status of the fraternities in their district.

8. The regional web-master.

- a. serves for a three year term and is appointed by the REC;
- b. payment for services and expenses he/she incurs, is approved and paid for by the REC;
- d. maintains communication with the REC personally or through a designated REC liaison;
- e. keeps web information up-to-date. The liaison from REC communicates approved changes that the REC may choose to add or delete from the web-site;
- f. with the recommendation of the REC, the web-site log-in and password are kept confidential. The REC secretary and other REC members may receive the log-in and password as the REC designates. This information may be shared only with the approval of the REC;
- g. the Web-master maintains the host (server) contract and provides the REC secretary with a copy of the contract. The web-master does a periodic review of the contract and makes recommendations to the REC concerning the contract as needed;
- h. responds to questions, comments and requests from users of the web-site. The web-master communicates important questions/requests/comments to the REC personally or through the liaison for review by REC;
- i. The web-master gives an annual report to REC personally or through the REC liaison. It might be on a prepared form or through recommendations, information on site-use, possible re-design of site, up-dates and similar issues.
- j. Some qualifications for the service of web-master at the La Verna regional level:
 1. Preferably a professed secular Franciscan but another qualified person could serve.
 2. Must have the skills needed to perform the service of web-master i.e. computer skills, skills in developing, designing, updating our web-site in a competent manner;
 3. Must have access to a computer, e-mail and internet. The computer needs to be capable of the programming necessary to design and update the web-site;
 4. Must recognize copyright restrictions, know about the web-site host and their reliability, how large the web-site can be and any other matters relating to web-site maintenance.

9. Regional archivist.

- a. The archivist is appointed by the REC. He/she should possess some experience as an archivist and/or historian. The archivist should have good organizational skills as well as good writing skills. The REC will offer any necessary financial compensation for expenses that may accrue in the process of archiving our regional material;
- b, The REC will develop guidelines for the archivist and our membership concerning the materials to be kept in the archives of the region. Information from our national archivist can help in this regard.
- c. The archivist will communicate with the region and its fraternities concerning materials that are to be kept in our archives and materials to share with the national archives. They will be kept in a place designated by the REC in consultation with the archivist;
- d. The archivist should have access to a computer and the internet as well as to our web-site. The individual will need to be skillful in the ability to use a computer and the necessary computer programs.