

GENERAL FRATERNITY GUIDELINES

for Mt. St. Sepulchre Fraternity



GENERAL FRATERNITY GUIDELINES	1
FRATERNITY MEETINGS	2
Contacting the Minister	2
Fraternity Meetings	2
Change of Dates for Fraternity Meetings	2
Courtesy	2
Presentations.....	2
Attendance.....	2
Suggestion Box	3
LIFE OF THE FRATERNITY	3
Unity - through the bond of Peace.....	3
Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace!	3
Committees who Serve.....	4
Franciscan Crown Rosary and Other Devotions	4
YEARLY FUNCTIONS	5
Open House	5
Annual Profession	5
Christmas Party	5
POLICIES	5
FARE SHARE DUES - Active and Excused Members.....	5
Transfer Policy	6
Excused Member Policy.....	6
Lapsed Member Policy.....	6

FRATERNITY MEETINGS

Contacting the Minister

Due to limited time during the day, the best way to reach the Minister is through email at minister@dcsfo.org. If you must do so by phone, due to an emergency or no access to email, the best time to call is in the evening between 7-9pm. If the Minister is unable to respond right away, please do not feel offended. ☺ Thank you. The other Council members' phone numbers are listed monthly in the *Chimes* for your reference. Most of them can be reached by email as well.

Fraternity Meetings

The fraternity meetings are normally held on the third Sunday of each month, unless otherwise noted. After the 11:15pm Mass in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, there will be a time for refreshments and fellowship from 12:15 to 12:45pm in the St. Bonaventure Room downstairs. Fraternity meetings will begin at 12:45pm, and we will adjourn at approximately 2:30pm. This should allow us time for prayer, an update on our infirmed members, any business at hand, and time for talk, Franciscan teachings, and discussion.

Change of Dates for Fraternity Meetings

Sometimes it is necessary to change our regular gathering from the third Sunday of each month to another Sunday. If so, the fraternity will vote on the change in advance. Periodically, this occurs in April, due to Divine Mercy Sunday; or usually in June, due to Father's Day. The change will also be posted in the *Chimes* newsletter to let people know. Formation classes will remain the same day as the fraternity gatherings, unless otherwise noted by instructor.

Courtesy

During the fraternity meetings, let us remember to show courtesy to one another. If someone is speaking, please give them your full attention. Also, please turn off or silence all cell phones during the meetings. Thank you!

Presentations

If you wish to give a presentation or talk at one of the fraternity meetings, please notify the Minister at least one month in advance and please include, in writing or through email, the topic and content of the talk. Talks should be limited to 15-20 minutes. The request will then be evaluated by Council, and you will be notified if the talk is permitted and also when would be the best time for it to be presented; i.e. month, time, etc.

Attendance

Attendance and participation at fraternity meetings is a part of fraternity life. If you are in formation, at most one unexcused absence is allowed for Orientation and Inquiry phases, and at most two unexcused absences are permitted during Candidacy. For all others, if you want to be excused for a particular meeting, please contact the Minister ahead of time. See also Active-Excused status below.

Suggestion Box

If you have a suggestion that you would like to make to help improve our meetings or bring more knowledge to our members, please drop a suggestion in our new **SUGGESTION box**... Please NO complaints.. only suggestions. ☺ Please state things you would possibly like to see implemented and the way in which you can help. Your suggestions will be considered by Council. All suggestions will be held in confidence, so there is no need to sign them unless you would like to...

LIFE OF THE FRATERNITY

Unity - through the bond of Peace

15. Of Peacemakers (from the Admonitions)

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." 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.

The goal of every Franciscan should be to build, not tear down; to give, not to take; to serve, not to be served. Christ's words to Francis - "*Francis, rebuild my church, which has fallen into ruin.*" Let us bear in mind then, that in order to have UNITY, we must be peacemakers, both at work, at home, and when attending the fraternity meetings. This is and should be the way of life for all Franciscans, if we truly want to imitate our founder and walk in the footsteps of Christ, our Savior.

Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace!

Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order Ch. 2, Rule 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.

13. Of Patience (from the Admonitions)

How much interior patience and humility a servant of God may have cannot be known so long as he is contented. But when the time comes that those who ought to please him go against him, as much patience and humility as he then shows, so much has he and no more.

Let us keep in mind that we are a Christian family, striving to forgive one another, and to live in harmony and peace. How do we do that?? We should strive to be kind to each other, to be generous, understanding, and tolerant of each other's faults and failings. Let us treat others, as we would like to be treated ourselves. If you have a grievance against someone or vice versa, please keep in mind that whatever has happened is usually not done by the other person to intentionally hurt you. The quickest way to resolve something is through open dialogue with that person.

Remember Francis' example of peace by visiting the Sultan. Jesus, said, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons and daughters of God.*" Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace!

Committees who Serve

Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order Ch. 2, Rule 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 Christian spirit of service.

This rule applies to all Franciscans. In some manner, we are each called and MUST participate in service in the life of the fraternity, as well as in service to all members of the faithful. In which way do you participate? Each member is responsible in helping the fraternity run smoothly. This responsibility is not limited to the Minister or Council only.

To help this process run more efficiently, there will be a sign up sheet available, which will allow you to sign up for one active duty each month, according to your talent and ability to serve. There is something for everyone to do! We will also be looking for volunteers to serve on different committees; Social, Hospitality, Liturgy, Prayer, Infirm, etc. Thank you in advance for serving one another!

Franciscan Crown Rosary and Other Devotions

Title One – Form of Life - Article 16

1. Rule 9 Mary, Mother of Jesus, is the model of listening to the Word and of faithfulness to vocation; we, like Francis, see all the gospel virtues realized in her^[15].

The brothers and sisters should cultivate intense love for the most holy virgin, imitation, prayer, and filial abandonment. They should manifest their own devotion with expressions of genuine faith, in forms accepted by the Church.

2. Mary is the model of fruitful and faithful love for the entire ecclesial community.

Secular Franciscans and their fraternities should seek to live the experience of Francis, who made the Virgin the guide of his activity. With her, like the disciples at Pentecost, they should welcome the Spirit to create a community of love^[16].

Each month, the Franciscan Crown Rosary is prayed in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel before the fraternity meeting at 10:30am. Everyone is welcome to join in and encouraged to do so! Francis entrusted Our Lady with bringing vocations to the Order. We should do the same. We will also be doing consecrations in May to Our Lady and in June to the Sacred Heart.

YEARLY FUNCTIONS

Open House

An open house is held each October in the Monastery for prospective candidates, who would like to inquire about the way and life of the Secular Franciscan Order. If you know someone, who is interested in joining the fraternity, please let them know that the Open House is available in October for that purpose. It is usually held the morning of the third Sunday of October; the day of our normal gathering. Only professed members and those in formation are allowed to attend the regular fraternity meetings throughout the year. Thank you.

Annual Profession

Each person, who is making their permanent profession, may invite five people to the profession and reception held afterwards. If you wish to invite your immediate family, and your family includes a larger number of members, please let the Minister know and an exception can be made. The purpose of allowing a limited number of people to attend is due to the limited number of space downstairs, as well as fire regulations. We hope you understand, and we appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Christmas Party

Each year we will decide if we, as a fraternity, should have a Christmas party in December. It has always been the policy, because of the expenses involved, the limited seating, as well as fire regulations, that only professed members are permitted to attend. If you depend on a ride to come to the Christmas party, however, then the person providing your ride is welcome to attend with you. Thank you for your understanding of why this policy is necessary.

POLICIES

FARE SHARE DUES - Active and Excused Members

Each year in July, the fraternity treasurer pays to the Regional Council, what is known as Fare Share Dues. The dues for an active member is \$27 per year. The dues for an active excused member is \$17 per year. If you will be unable to attend the meetings for an extended period you should ask to be placed on the active excused list; see Excused Member Policy, below.

Active or Not – Fraternity members who have seen our directory know that it is organized into Active and Inactive sections. The underpinning for this distinction is in the National Statutes of the Secular Franciscan Order, which employs different terms: **Active** and **Lapsed** (Section III, Article 18.7). The designation Active includes the subcategory Active-Excused.

An active fraternity member is one who participates both by attending fraternity meetings and by providing financial support to the community, or whom the fraternity has excused from such obligations.

An active-excused member is one whom Council has excused from attending Fraternity meetings, either on a temporary or permanent basis, for reasons acceptable to Council. Examples of such reasons are health, family, work, or distance. A designation of active-excused does not exempt the member from following the OFS Rule, which includes providing support to the Fraternity.

A lapsed member is described thus: “Those brothers and sisters who neither attend meetings, support the community financially, nor have valid reasons due to health, family, work or distance, and who, after personal invitations to return to fraternity, consciously and deliberately reject or ignore the invitation, will be termed ‘**lapsed**’.”

Transfer Policy

If you know someone, who is a professed Franciscan, and they wish to transfer to our fraternity, please have them contact the Minister or a Council Member. Proper litigation must be obtained from the fraternity to which they belonged prior, before they can be allowed to attend one of our meetings. This policy is in effect to protect the rights of the members who belong to Mt. St. Sepulchre Fraternity and is also required by the Region.

Excused Member Policy

A member, due to particular circumstances in life, may request that Council excuse him/her for certain specific promises: to attend Fraternity meetings, to participate in the life of the Fraternity, and to contribute to the support of the Fraternity. This policy outlines the process by which Council will evaluate a member’s request to be excused. A request may be for a temporary period or be permanent, depending on circumstances. An excusal from one promise does not relieve a member from the remaining promises.

The process starts when a member makes a written request that lists the promises from which the member wants to be excused, along with supporting reasons or circumstances. Council evaluates the request against certain criteria and reaches a decision. These criteria are based on the National Statutes and the Rule, which Council will apply with charity. In unusual circumstances, such as sudden medical problems, Council, on its own initiative, may excuse a member from these promises for a limited period.

The criteria that may be applied toward an excusal from meeting attendance are health, family, recent death of family member, work, distance from the Fraternity, or a combination of these. The main criterion that may be applied toward an excusal from financial support is financial hardship. The main criterion that may be applied toward an excusal from participation in life of Fraternity is if a member has a serious and disabling medical condition.

Lapsed Member Policy

This policy provides criteria by which Council may evaluate if a member has insufficient participation in the life of the fraternity to warrant reclassifying the member to lapsed status, and a process by which Council may act to change a member’s formal status to lapsed.

The process starts with an annual review of meeting attendance, after which Council evaluates if the established criteria are met, contacts the member, and invites him/her back to full participation in the life of the fraternity. Only if these steps fail would Council act to reclassify the member as lapsed.

The criteria that Council would use to evaluate a possibly lapsed member are attendance at Fraternity meetings, absence of a valid reason, lack of communication with Council or other fraternity members, and absence of financial contributions to the support of the fraternity (unless the member lacks the means to do so).