

# The Fraternity Council and its Offices

Source: SFO General Constitutions 2000

## The Fraternity Council

### Article 49

1. The council of the local fraternity is composed of the following offices: minister, vice minister, secretary, treasurer, and master of formation. Other offices may be added according to the needs of each fraternity. The spiritual assistant of the fraternity forms part of the council by right.

2. The fraternity, meeting in an assembly or chapter, discusses questions regarding its own life and organization. Every three years, in an elective assembly or chapter, the fraternity elects the minister and the council in the way established by the Constitutions and statutes.

### Article 50

1. It is the duty of the council of the local fraternity:

- to promote the initiatives necessary for fostering fraternal life, for improving the human, Christian, and Franciscan formation of its members and for sustaining their witness and commitment in the world;
- to make concrete and courageous choices, appropriate for the situation of the fraternity, from among the numerous activities possible in the field of the apostolate.

2. The duties of the council are also:

- a. to decide on the acceptance and admission to profession of new brothers and sisters;
- b. to establish a fraternal dialogue with members in particular difficulties and to adopt consequent measures;
- c. to receive the request for withdrawal and to decide on the suspension of a member from the fraternity;

- d. to decide on the establishment of sections or groups in conformity with the Constitutions and the statutes;
- e. to decide on the destination of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters concerning financial management and the economic affairs of the fraternity;
- f. to assign duties to the councilors and to the other professed members;
- g. to request from the competent superiors of the First Order and the TOR suitable and prepared religious as assistants;
- h. to perform such other duties as are required by these Constitutions or which are necessary to carry out its proper purposes.

## The Offices in the Fraternity

### Article 51

1. While firmly upholding the co-responsibility of the council to animate and guide the fraternity, the minister, as the primary person responsible for the fraternity, is expected to make sure that the directions and the decisions of the council are put into practice and will keep the council informed about what he or she is doing.

2. The minister also has the following duties:

- a. to call, to preside at, and to direct the meetings of the fraternity and council; to convoke, every three years, the elective chapter of the fraternity, having heard the council on the formalities of the convocation;
- b. to prepare the annual report to be sent to the council of the higher level after it has been approved by the council of the fraternity;
- c. to represent the fraternity in all its relations with ecclesiastical and civil authorities. When the fraternity acquires

a juridical personality in the civil order, the minister becomes, when possible, its legal representative;

- d. to request, with the consent of the council, the pastoral and fraternal visits, at least once every three years.
- e. to put into effect those acts which the Constitutions refer to his or her competence.

### **Article 52**

1. The vice minister has the following duties:

- a. to collaborate in a fraternal spirit and to support the minister in carrying out his or her specific duties;
- b. to exercise the functions entrusted by the council and/or by the assembly or chapter;
- c. to take the place of the minister in both duties and responsibilities in case of absence or temporary impediment;
- d. to assume the functions of the minister when the office remains vacant.

2. The secretary has the following duties:

- a. to compile the official acts of the fraternity and of the council and to assure that they are sent to their respective proper recipients;
- b. to see to the updating and preservation of the records and the registers, noting admissions, professions, deaths, withdrawals, and transfers from the fraternity;
- c. to provide for the communication of the more important facts to the various levels and, if appropriate, to provide for their dissemination through the mass media.

3. The master of formation has the following duties:

- a. to co-ordinate, with the help of the other members of the council, the formative activities of the fraternity;
- b. to instruct and enliven the inquirers during the time of initiation, the candidates during the period of initiation formation, and the newly professed;

- c. to inform the council of the fraternity prior to profession, concerning the suitability of the candidate for a commitment to live according to the Rule.

4. The treasurer, or bursar, has the following duties:

- a. to guard diligently the contributions received, recording each receipt in the appropriate register, with the date on which it was given, the name of the contributor, or the one from whom it was collected;
- b. to record in the same register the items of expense, specifying the date and the purpose, in conformity with the directions of the fraternity council;
- c. to render an account of his or her administration to the assembly and to the council of the fraternity according to the norms of the national statutes.

5. The provisions regarding the rights and duties of the vice minister, the secretary and the treasurer apply, with the appropriate adaptations, to all levels.