



**SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
LOS TRES COMPAÑEROS/THE THREE COMPANIONS REGION
REGIONAL GUIDELINES
August 27, 2006**

TITLE 1—GENERAL NORMS

CANON 1—These guidelines regard only Los Tres Compañeros/The Three Companions Region of the Secular Franciscan Order.

CANON 2—Acquired rights and privileges obtained by groups or persons remain intact unless the canons of these guidelines expressly revoke them.

CANON 3—When these guidelines take force, the guidelines approved on October 4, 2003 are abrogated.

CANON 4—Insofar as they repeat the former guidelines, the canons of these guidelines must be assessed in accord with canonical tradition.

CANON 5—The canons of these guidelines must also be read and assessed in light of the Code of Canon Law, the Rule, the General Constitutions and the National Statutes.

CANON 6—Matters not referred to in these guidelines devolve to the Code of Canon Law, the Rule, the General Constitutions and the National Statutes.

CANON 7—The canons of these guidelines must be understood in accord with the proper meaning of the words considered in their text and context.

CANON 8—If anything in these guidelines is discovered as being contrary to the Code of Canon Law, the Rule, the General Constitutions or the National Statutes, the matters so mentioned in the guidelines shall be regarded as not having even the semblance of law.

CANON 9—These guidelines regard the future, not the past, unless they expressly provide for the past.

CANON 10—Only those canons must be considered invalidating or disqualifying which expressly establish that an act is invalid or a person is unqualified.

CANON 11—Ignorance or error about invalidating or disqualifying laws does not impede their effect, unless it is established otherwise.

CANON 12—These guidelines bind all local fraternities within the Region and all professed Secular Franciscans who are members of those fraternities. These guidelines also bind all inquirers and candidates who are preparing for profession in those local fraternities.

CANON 13—Professed Secular Franciscans who are members of local fraternities outside the Region, as well as inquirers and candidates attached to those fraternities, are bound by these guidelines only insofar as these guidelines provide for public order.

CANON 14—Laws of the United States, laws of the State of Texas as well as the municipal and county ordinances in force where a local fraternity exists have the full force of law in these guidelines, insofar as they are not contrary to divine law.

CANON 15—Without prejudice to the prerogatives of the Apostolic See, authentic interpretation of these guidelines is reserved to the Regional Executive Council, as well as to those persons or groups to whom the Regional Executive Council has entrusted the power of authentically interpreting. When the Regional Council is meeting, it alone possesses the authority of authentic interpretation.

TITLE 2—THE REGIONAL FRATERNITY

CANON 16—This Regional Fraternity is called Los Tres Compañeros/The Three Companions Region.

CANON 17—Los Tres Compañeros/The Three Companions Region is an organic union of all local fraternities and is officially established by the Council of the National Fraternity.

CANON 18—The Regional Fraternity consists of all local fraternities within central Texas from the Oklahoma border south to Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico, west to San Angelo and Abilene but excluding Lubbock, Amarillo, Midland/Odessa and the Texas Panhandle and east to (but not including) Paris, Tyler, Centerville/Huntsville or Houston.

CANON 19—The Region is divided into three districts, officially called Portions. These Portions are called the Angelo Portion, the Leo Portion and the Rufino Portion.

CANON 20—The Angelo Portion consists of all local fraternities within the Dioceses of Dallas, Fort Worth, those parts of the Portion within the Diocese of Austin and those parts of the Region within the Diocese of San Angelo.

CANON 21—The Leo Portion consists of all local fraternities within the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the Dioceses of Austin and Victoria excepting those fraternities located in the Angelo Portion.

CANON 22--The Rufino Portion consists of all local fraternities within the Dioceses of Laredo, Corpus Christi and Brownsville.

CANON 23--The Regional Fraternity is served by the Regional Council and a Regional Executive Council as specified in the canons which follow.

TITLE 3—THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

CANON 24—The Regional Council consists of the ministers of all the local fraternities within the Region, the regional minister, the regional vice-minister, the regional secretary, the regional treasurer, the regional formation director, the Angelo Portion councilor, the Leo Portion Councilor, the Rufino Portion councilor and the president of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants.

CANON 25—If a local fraternity minister is impeded from attending a regional council meeting, the fraternity vice-minister shall substitute. If both the minister and vice-minister are impeded, a member of the local fraternity council selected by that council shall substitute. Such a substitute shall receive a letter of delegation from the fraternity minister. Such a substitute is automatically delegated with all the rights and responsibilities normally exercised by a fraternity minister at such meetings.

CANON 26—If a portion councilor is impeded from attending a regional council meeting, the portion alternate shall substitute. The portion alternate is then automatically delegated with all the rights and responsibilities normally exercised by the portion councilor at such meetings.

CANON 27—If the regional minister is impeded from presiding at a regional council meeting, the regional vice-minister shall preside. If both the minister and vice-minister are impeded, a member of the Regional Executive Council selected by that council shall preside. Such a substitute is automatically delegated with all the rights and responsibilities normally exercised by the regional minister at such meetings.

CANON 28—The Regional Council shall meet at least once a year to promote the life of the Regional Fraternity and the local fraternities.

CANON 29—For the Regional Council to conduct any business validly, more than half of its members or their delegates must be present.

CANON 30—The Regional Council shall have the duties set forth for it in Article 62 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 31—The Regional Council may also suggest and entrust policies to be implemented to the Regional Executive Council.

CANON 32—Every three years the Regional Council shall conduct a regional chapter of elections. Such a chapter shall be conducted in faithful accord with canons 89 to 93 of these guidelines.

TITLE 4—THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CANON 33—The Regional Executive Council is at the service of the Regional Council to animate and guide the Regional Fraternity.

CANON 34—The Regional Executive Council consists of the regional minister, the regional vice-minister, the regional secretary, the regional treasurer, the regional formation director, the Angelo Portion councilor, the Leo Portion councilor, the Rufino Portion councilor and the president of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants.

CANON 35—The members of the Regional Executive Council, with the exception of the president of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, shall be chosen at the regional chapter of elections.

CANON 36—If the regional minister is impeded from presiding at a regional executive council meeting, the regional vice-minister shall preside. If both the minister and vice-minister are impeded, a member of the regional executive council delegated by the minister shall preside. Such a substitute is automatically delegated with all the rights and responsibilities normally exercised by the regional minister at such meetings.

CANON 37—If a portion councilor is impeded from attending a regional executive council meeting, the portion alternate shall substitute. The portion alternate is then automatically delegated with all the rights and responsibilities exercised by a portion councilor at such meetings.

CANON 38—The Regional Executive Council shall meet at least twice a year at a time and in a place determined by its membership. It may meet more often at the request of the regional minister or two other members of the council.

CANON 39—For the Regional Executive Council to conduct any business validly, more than half of its members or their alternates must be present.

CANON 40—Under the direction of the Regional Council, the Regional Executive Council has the responsibility of animating the Region and the Regional Fraternity with the charism of our Seraphic Father. For this reason the Council is to foster cooperation and communion among the local fraternities. The Executive Regional Council shall suggest helpful policies to the Regional Council and shall carry out the decisions and policies of the Regional Council. The Regional Executive Council shall provide a forum for the discussion of common problems and goals.

CANON 41—It is the responsibility of the Regional Executive Council to approve the formation program for the instruction of inquirers and candidates in the local fraternities.

CANON 42—The Regional Executive Council is to make fraternal visitations and pastoral visitations to local fraternities when requested, or deemed necessary, and in faithful accord with articles 94 and 95 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 43—The Regional Executive Council is charged with the preparation of the agenda for the regional council chapter.

CANON 44—The Regional Executive Council has the task of making the charism of our Seraphic Father present in the life and mission of the dioceses within the Region. By appropriate means the council shall promote knowledge and appreciation of the Franciscan way of life and commitment to it in the various dioceses of the Region.

CANON 45—The Regional Executive Council has the task of ecumenical and interfaith outreach. The council is to represent Secular Franciscans to other churches and religious bodies and is to promote relationships with such organizations as is appropriate.

CANON 46—The Regional Executive Council is to be a voice in the public forum for Secular Franciscans. The council is to represent Secular Franciscans to various governmental entities and civic organizations as is appropriate.

CANON 47—The Regional Executive Council may provide for additional persons or groups of persons to assist it in an advisory capacity in its various functions and responsibilities. The council may appoint them to such duties as are needed for the life of the Regional Fraternity and the Region. The Regional Executive Council is to make such provisions by General Executory Decree in the sense understood in the Code of Canon Law. Such decrees are to specify expressly the nature of the duties to be undertaken, the qualifications of the persons or bodies to be entrusted with those duties and other matters as may be deemed appropriate by the council. Such decrees are to be signed by the regional minister and promulgated by publication in the regional newsletter *Paz y Bien*. Such decrees are to be diligently preserved in the archives of the Regional Fraternity.

CANON 48—The regional minister shall appoint persons or groups of persons to such established positions by Singular Decree in the sense understood in the Code of Canon Law. Such decrees are to be signed by the regional minister and diligently preserved in the archives of the Regional Fraternity.

TITLE 5—THE REGIONAL MINISTER AND VICE-MINISTER

CANON 49—The regional minister is the chief executive officer of the Regional Fraternity and shall carry out the duties described in article 63 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 50—The regional minister is the spokesperson for the Regional Fraternity in all contacts with church and civil organizations and with the general public.

CANON 51—The regional minister shall, at the time of his or her election, have domicile in the Region. The regional minister shall be a perpetually professed Secular Franciscan and be an active member of a local fraternity within the Region.

CANON 52—The regional minister shall be elected at the regional chapter of elections in faithful accord with articles 76 to 79 of the General Constitutions, article 23 of the National Statutes and canons 164 to 179 of the Code of Canon Law.

CANON 53—If the regional minister is impeded temporarily in the discharge of his or her responsibilities, those duties shall be discharged by the regional vice-minister. The vice-minister shall also discharge other duties that may be entrusted to him or her by the Regional Council or Regional Executive Council.

CANON 54—The qualifications and mode of election of the regional vice-minister shall be the same as for the regional minister.

TITLE 6—THE REGIONAL SECRETARY

CANON 55—The regional secretary keeps and distributes all records of the minutes of both the Regional Council and Regional Executive Council. The regional secretary preserves the documents and correspondence of the Regional Fraternity. Under the direction of the regional minister the regional secretary assists in sending out announcements of forthcoming meetings of the Regional Council and Regional Executive Council. The regional secretary also performs other duties as the Regional Executive Council requests.

CANON 56—The regional secretary shall, at the time of his or her election, have domicile in the Region. The regional secretary shall be a perpetually professed Secular Franciscan and be an active member of a local fraternity within the Region.

CANON 57—The regional secretary shall be elected at the regional chapter of elections in faithful accord with articles 76 to 79 of the General Constitutions, article 23 of the National Statutes and canons 164 to 179 of the Code of Canon Law.

TITLE 7—THE REGIONAL TREASURER

CANON 58—The regional treasurer has responsibility for the monetary assets of the Regional Fraternity. The treasurer shall guard diligently the contributions received, recording each receipt in the appropriate register, with the date on which it is given and the name of the contributor or the one from whom it was collected. The treasurer shall record in the same register the items of expense, specifying the date and the purpose, in

conformity with the directions of the council. The treasurer shall render an account of his or her administration to the council according to the norms of the National Statutes.

CANON 59—The regional treasurer shall submit a Financial Report of the Region as well as the Fraternity Fair Share Report for approval at each regular meeting of the Regional Council and the Regional Executive Council.

CANON 60—The regional treasurer shall pay out money, by check only, as the business of the Regional Fraternity may require on the order of the Regional Executive Council.

CANON 61—In addition to the regional treasurer, at least two other members of the Regional Executive Council shall have signature privileges on the regional checking account.

CANON 62—At the end of his or her term of office the regional treasurer shall submit the Regional Fraternity's financial records to an audit. This audit shall be conducted by two professed Secular Franciscans selected by the Regional Executive Council but neither of whom serves on the council. The Regional Executive Council may also choose to have the audit conducted by an independent Certified Public Accountant.

CANON 63—The regional treasurer shall, at the time of his or her election, have domicile in the Region. The regional treasurer shall be a perpetually professed Secular Franciscan and be an active member of a local fraternity within the Region.

CANON 64—The regional treasurer shall be elected at the regional chapter of elections in faithful accord with articles 76 to 79 of the General Constitutions, article 23 of the National Statutes and canons 164 to 179 of the Code of Canon Law.

TITLE 8--THE REGIONAL FORMATION DIRECTOR

CANON 65—The regional formation director is responsible for the programs of formation within the region. The formation director shall supervise diligently the implementation of articles 37-45 of the General Constitutions and article 19 of the National Statutes within the Region and under the direction of the Regional Executive Council. The formation director shall also discharge other duties that may be entrusted to him or her by the Regional Council or Regional Executive Council.

CANON 66—The regional formation director shall, at the time of his or her election, have domicile in the Region. The regional formation director shall be a perpetually professed Secular Franciscan and be an active member of a local fraternity within the Region.

CANON 67—The regional formation director shall be elected at the regional chapter of elections in faithful accord with articles 76 to 79 of the General Constitutions, article 23 of the National Statutes and canons 164 to 179 of the Code of Canon Law.

TITLE 9—THE PORTION COUNCILORS AND ALTERNATES

CANON 68—Three councilors shall serve on the Regional Council and the Regional Executive Council as voting members. These councilors are called the Angelo Portion councilor, the Leo Portion councilor and the Rufino Portion councilor.

CANON 69—Each portion councilor shall have particular duties relating to the Portion which he or she serves and represents. Each portion councilor shall make contact with each local fraternity in the Portion at least twice yearly. Each councilor shall encourage and facilitate the occurrence of meetings of the whole Portion for the purposes of shared formation, community building and apostolic service.

CANON 70—The portion councilors shall participate in the deliberations and ministry of the Regional Executive Council. The portion councilors shall bring to the Regional Executive Council issues that are of concern or interest to their respective Portions.

CANON 71—The portion councilors shall preside at local fraternity chapters of elections within their Portions as appointed by the regional minister.

CANON 72—The portion councilors shall discharge other duties within their respective Portions as assigned by the Regional Executive Council.

CANON 73—The portion councilor shall, at the time of his or her election, have domicile in the Portion which he or she serves. The portion councilor shall be a perpetually professed Secular Franciscan and be an active member of a local fraternity within that Portion.

CANON 74—Each portion councilor shall be elected at the regional chapter of elections in faithful accord with articles 76 to 79 of the General Constitutions, article 23 of the National Statutes and canons 164 to 179 of the Code of Canon Law.

CANON 75—The candidate who has the highest number of votes shall be portion councilor for that Portion. The candidate with the second highest number of votes shall be the Portion Alternate.

CANON 76—If the portion councilor is impeded temporarily in the discharge of his or her responsibilities, those duties shall be discharged by the portion alternate. The portion alternate shall also discharge other duties as may be entrusted to him or her by the Regional Council or Regional Executive Council.

CANON 77—If the portion councilor is impeded from attending a meeting of the Regional Council or Regional Executive Council, the portion alternate attends that council meeting as a deliberating and voting member.

TITLE 10—THE REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

CANON 78—The Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants is composed of one friar from each of the four orders of Franciscan friars who give spiritual assistance to the local fraternities of the Region. Together they provide for the spiritual welfare of the Regional Fraternity, communicate the Franciscan charism to the Region and provide each other with advice as may be required.

CANON 79—The President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants is a member of the Regional Council and the Regional Executive Council.

CANON 80—The President of the Conference of Spiritual Assistants cannot vote validly in financial matters, nor can he vote validly in the regional chapter of elections.

CANON 81—If the President of the Conference is impeded from attending a meeting of the Regional Council or Regional Executive Council, he may designate another member of the conference to substitute for him. The delegate attends that council meeting as a deliberating and voting member but cannot vote validly in financial matters.

CANON 82—The members of the Conference and their president are chosen by the friars in accord with their proper law and procedure.

TITLE 11—COMMUNION WITH THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY

CANON 83—The Regional Fraternity maintains communion with the National Fraternity primarily through fraternal visits, pastoral visits and meetings of the National Fraternity Council. The fraternal visit is a moment of communion, an expression of the service and concrete interest by the national leadership so that the Regional Fraternity may grow and be faithful to its vocation. The pastoral visit is a privileged moment of communion with the Franciscan friars. It is carried out also in the name of the Church and serves to guarantee and promote the observance of the Rule and the Constitutions and fidelity to the Franciscan charism.

CANON 84—Once every three years the regional minister, with the consent of the Regional Executive Council, must request a fraternal visit from the national minister. A fraternal visit may also be requested at other times for important reasons. Fraternal visits will be conducted in accordance with article 94 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 85—Once every three years the regional minister and Regional Executive Council must request a pastoral visit from the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. Pastoral visits will be conducted in accordance with article 95 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 86—The regional minister is a member of the National Fraternity Council and is to attend its meetings. If the minister is impeded from attending the meeting of the

National Fraternity Council, the regional vice-minister shall substitute. If the vice-minister is also impeded, the Regional Executive Council shall elect another member of the council to substitute. Such a substitute shall receive a letter of delegation from the regional minister or Regional Executive Council. Such a substitute attends the meeting as a deliberating and voting member.

TITLE 12—THE REGIONAL CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS

CANON 87—Every three years the Regional Council shall conduct a Regional Chapter of Elections. The National Minister or a delegate shall preside. A delegate of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants shall witness the elections.

CANON 88—At a suitable time before the Chapter the Regional Executive Council shall appoint a Nominations Committee. The Committee shall have the responsibility, under the direction of the Council, of preparing all that is necessary for the Chapter and especially for receiving nominations for the various regional offices.

CANON 89—The proceedings of the Chapter of Elections are to be conducted in faithful accord with articles 76 to 79 of the General Constitutions, article 23 of the National Statutes and canons 164 to 179 of the Code of Canon Law.

CANON 90—The president of the chapter and the delegate from the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants cannot vote validly in the Chapter.

CANON 91—The President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, if he is present, cannot vote validly in the Chapter.

TITLE 13—STATUS IN THE LOCAL FRATERNITY

CANON 92—A professed Secular Franciscan who is a member of a fraternity in the Region has a status reflecting his or her communion with the local fraternity. These forms of status are: active, active but excused, withdrawn from the local fraternity, suspended from the local fraternity, withdrawn from the Order, and dismissed from the Order.

CANON 93—A member is designated as **active** when that member strives to take part fully in the life of the fraternity by attending meetings and ongoing formation sessions diligently, supporting the fraternity monetarily to the extent possible and living the Franciscan charism. *A professed Secular Franciscan from a fraternity either inside or outside the Region who wishes to transfer to another fraternity within the Region shall be admitted in faithful accord with Article 55 of the General Constitutions. The council of the accepting fraternity shall exercise due diligence in discerning the motives for the transfer request and the member's stability. If necessary, the council of the accepting fraternity may delay formal transfer but it is earnestly recommended that such a delay last

no more than 1 year. In matters of doubt the local fraternity council shall consult the regional minister and regional formation director for guidance. During this period the applicant remains a member of the region/fraternity of origin for all canonical and practical purposes. In accordance with article 55 of the General Constitutions the local council also has the option of denying the application for transfer.* All professed members are considered active unless designated otherwise by the following canons.

CANON 94—A member is designated as **active but excused** when that member strives to live the Franciscan charism but is unable to attend fraternity meetings due to age, frailty, chronic illness, family commitments, work schedule, distance or other serious reason.

*Canon 93 was amended following approval at the 2011 Chapter of Los Tres Compañeros. The text enclosed in asterisks is the approved amendment to the canon

It is for the local fraternity council to designate the member as being in this category either by request of the member or determination of the council itself after evaluating the seriousness of the reasons for absence. Such a member is not to be considered an isolated member but remains in full communion with the fraternity. The fraternity shall display special solicitude toward that member. The fraternity membership has an obligation to maintain ties with such a member by frequent contacts, periodic visits to the member and even occasional fraternity meetings at the member's own residence if circumstances permit. The member likewise has the duty of living out the charism of our Seraphic Father in his or her life and supporting the fraternity by prayer and also monetarily to the extent possible. The fraternity member, and the reasons for absence, shall be reviewed by the fraternity council once every 6 months.

CANON 95—A member is designated as **withdrawn from the local fraternity** when that member's request for voluntary withdrawal is accepted by the fraternity council. The council is to evaluate the member's request and in doing so must apply diligently the norms of article 56 of the General Constitutions and the October 4, 2004 Instruction from the Presidency of the International Council. A member designated as withdrawn remains a Secular Franciscan but is no longer a member of the local fraternity. He or she cannot attend fraternity meetings or activities, is not obliged to support the fraternity monetarily and loses both active and passive voice in fraternity elections. Such a withdrawal must be noted in the fraternity's membership register. The member may resume active membership at a later date but only in accord with article 57 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 96—A member is **suspended from the local fraternity** when that member refuses to withdraw voluntarily and yet engages in repeated and prolonged default in the obligations of the life of the fraternity and other conduct in serious opposition to the Rule. The penalty of suspension is imposed by the fraternity council and in doing so the council must apply diligently the norms of article 56 of the General Constitutions, the October 4, 2004 Instruction from the Presidency of the International Council and canons 125 to 136 of these guidelines. A member thus suspended remains a Secular Franciscan but is no longer a member of the local fraternity. He or she cannot attend fraternity meetings and activities, is not obliged to support the fraternity monetarily and loses both active and passive voice in fraternity elections. The suspension must be noted in the fraternity's membership register. Such a member may request that the suspension be removed at a later date and may resume active membership but only in accord with article 57 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 97—A member is designated as **withdrawn from the Order** when that member's request for withdrawal from the Secular Franciscan Order is accepted by the fraternity council. The council is to evaluate the member's request and in doing so must apply diligently the norms of article 58 of the General Constitutions and the October 4, 2004 Instruction from the Presidency of the International Council. Such a member ceases to be a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. This definitive withdrawal must be noted in the local fraternity's membership register and must be communicated to the Regional Council.

CANON 98—A member is **dismissed from the Order** when that member refuses to withdraw voluntarily from the Secular Franciscan Order and yet continues obstinately to display behavior that is so serious that his or her definitive separation from the Order is necessary. The penalty of dismissal is imposed by the Regional Council upon recommendation by the local fraternity council. The decree of dismissal must also be confirmed by the National Fraternity Council. The council of each level must apply diligently the norms of article 58 of the General Constitutions, the October 4, 2004 Instruction from the Presidency of the International Council and canons 125 to 136 of these guidelines. Such a member ceases to be a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. The penalty of dismissal must be noted in the local fraternity's membership register.

TITLE 14—LIFE IN FRATERNITY: THE HABIT AND TAU CROSS

CANON 99—The Franciscan habit in its various forms is reserved exclusively to the friars, the Poor Clares and the various institutes of professed Franciscan sisters and brothers. Professed Secular Franciscans are to refrain from wearing the habit in any form and at any time. All customs to the contrary, including those which are immemorial or worthy of special mention, are henceforth reprobated and not permitted to revive in the future.

CANON 100—The insignia of professed Secular Franciscans in the United States is the TAU cross. It may be worn as a pendant, a pin or a ring.

CANON 101—Secular Franciscans, whether clergy or laity, who are either presiding or assisting at liturgical rites in vestments, are to refrain from wearing the TAU cross in the form of a ring. They may wear the TAU cross as a pendant or pin underneath the alb or surplice.

TITLE 15—LIFE IN FRATERNITY: THE FRATERNITY MEETING

CANON 102—Regular and frequent meetings are the primary means of fostering communion within the local fraternity. The fraternity must offer to its members opportunities for coming together and collaborating on means of enhancing the Franciscan charism and apostolate.

CANON 103—Fraternity meetings should take place once a month and should last at least two hours. Only for a serious reason, such as adverse weather, should the fraternity minister make the decision to cancel or shorten a meeting.

CANON 104—Fraternity members should not excuse themselves lightly from fraternity meetings. Only for a serious reason should a member miss a meeting and this should be done with prior notification to a member of the fraternity council. In those fraternities where the formation of the inquirers and candidates takes place separately from the

fraternity meetings, the inquirers and candidates are nevertheless obliged to participate in the monthly fraternity meeting along with the professed. Likewise, a fraternity member should not leave a meeting early without a just reason.

CANON 105—The fraternity minister or vice-minister should preside at the meeting, all customs to the contrary notwithstanding.

CANON 106—The presiding minister should strive assiduously to make sure that the members limit their comments to the matters under discussion without digressions or diversions. The members should conduct themselves with civility and courtesy, as is befitting disciples of our Seraphic Father, and with profound respect and affection for each other. The spiritual assistant should be especially diligent and quick to remedy any deficiencies in these matters.

CANON 107—The fraternity meeting should include a business meeting, continuing formation of the fraternity, a time for informal fraternizing, an address by the spiritual assistant and other activities deemed laudable by the fraternity council. Members wishing to address the fraternity at length should do so with prior permission from the fraternity minister.

CANON 108—The fraternity meeting should always begin and end with prayer. This may take the form of the prayers in the Ritual, an appropriate hour from the Liturgy of the Hours or some other form of Franciscan prayer.

TITLE 16—LIFE IN FRATERNITY: FORMATION

CANON 109—Individuals aspiring to become Secular Franciscans must participate in the full program of formation as specified in articles 37 to 43 of the General Constitutions, article 19 of the National Statutes and the Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.

CANON 110—It is the duty of the Regional Executive Council to issue subsequent instructions and clarifications regarding initial formation and to approve the formation program for the Region.

CANON 111—Inquirers and candidates who are intellectually challenged shall participate in a formation program adapted to their needs. Nevertheless, such a program shall contain all the essentials of the Franciscan charism and the time intervals shall not be shortened. The fraternity director of formation should consult experts in developmental psychology and the regional formation director for guidance in these matters.

CANON 112—Inquirers and candidates who are intellectually gifted, even if they are clerics, shall not be allowed an abbreviated formation. They shall participate in the full program of formation and shall be challenged even further by material consistent with

their intellectual abilities. They shall be given the opportunity to delve even further into the profundity of our Seraphic Father's life and thought, its development in the writings of Franciscan theologians and philosophers and the application of the Franciscan charism to their own particular state in the world and in the Church. The fraternity director of formation should consult the spiritual assistant and the regional formation director for guidance in these matters.

CANON 113—The ongoing formation of professed Secular Franciscans shall not be neglected but shall take place in faithful accord with article 44 of the General Constitutions. The fraternity council shall provide sufficient opportunities for the professed to deepen their understanding of the Franciscan charism. In those fraternities where formation of the inquirers and candidates takes place during the regular fraternity meeting, it is earnestly recommended that the professed members separate for their own ongoing formation session.

TITLE 17—LIFE IN FRATERNITY: THE SACRED LITURGY

CANON 114—The Church fulfills its sanctifying function in a particular way through the sacred liturgy. In the sacred liturgy, the whole worship of God is carried out by the Head and members of the mystical Body of Jesus Christ. The Secular Franciscan should have a deep love for the sacred liturgy as the summit of Christian prayer.

CANON 115—Consistent with our Seraphic Father's deep love for all things Roman and Apostolic, fraternities shall celebrate the sacred liturgy in faithful accord with all directives and instructions issued by the Apostolic See.

CANON 116—Fraternities which meet on Sunday should reserve the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy for special occasions, particularly professions. At other times the members shall participate fully in the Mass at their local parishes, thus acting as a leaven in their parishes and in the universal Church.

CANON 117—Fraternities shall strive to become familiar with the Liturgy of the Hours and shall endeavor to make it, at least occasionally, a part of fraternity prayer.

CANON 118—Other forms of fraternity prayer shall be in harmony with the liturgical year. Fraternities shall give pride of place to those sacramentals, blessings and devotions that are intimately connected with the liturgical year.

TITLE 18—LIFE IN FRATERNITY: TEMPORAL GOODS

CANON 119—The acquisition, administration and alienation of money and all other temporal goods shall be conducted in full compliance with Book V of the Code of Canon Law, article 54 of the General Constitutions, all laws of the United States, all laws of the

State of Texas and all local municipal and county ordinances in which each local fraternity exists.

CANON 120—Consistent with the example set by our Seraphic Father, local fraternities should generally refrain from the acquisition of homes, buildings and land.

CANON 121—If a local fraternity believes genuinely that the acquisition of real estate will enhance its Franciscan charism or further its apostolate, it shall refrain from finalizing any purchase without consulting the Regional Executive Council. The fraternity shall furnish the Regional Executive Council with all necessary data, including the detailed reasons for the proposal, the cost, relevant documents and other information and materials that the council may deem necessary for its decision.

CANON 122—Members of the local fraternity, both professed and candidates, who disagree with the proposal, may make their reasons known to the Regional Executive Council.

CANON 123—The Regional Executive Council shall deliberate diligently and at length over the proposal before issuing its opinion. If a member of the Regional Executive Council is also a member of the local fraternity, he or she shall be absent from the deliberations.

CANON 124—If a real estate acquisition is finalized by a local fraternity, copies of all relevant documents shall be sent without delay to the regional secretary and regional treasurer for preservation in their respective records.

TITLE 19—PENALTIES IN GENERAL

CANON 125—The penalties for behavior seriously contrary to the Rule or to the Catholic Faith are suspension from the local fraternity and dismissal from the Order. The penalty of suspension carries with it the effects indicated in article 56 of the General Constitutions and canon 98 of these guidelines. The penalty of dismissal means that the individual is no longer a member of the Secular Franciscan Order.

CANON 126—Misconduct shall not be punished with a penalty immediately. The erring member shall be met by genuine solicitude from the council and indeed from the entire fraternity. The minister and spiritual assistant shall have conferences with the member and those members of the fraternity who have close ties with the erring member shall show special concern and attempt to reason with him or her.

CANON 127—When attempts at fraternal correction on the part of the fraternity and pastoral solicitude on the part of the spiritual assistant have failed, the erring member shall be advised to seek withdrawal from the fraternity or the Order. This advice may be tendered either by the minister or spiritual assistant and a written record shall be made by the secretary.

CANON 128—If the member requests to withdraw from the fraternity or the Order, the matter shall be handled according to the norms of article 56 and 58 of the General Constitutions. If the erring member declines the invitation or 30 days have elapsed without a reply and with no indication of repentance, the fraternity council shall begin proceedings to impose a penalty.

CANON 129—The fraternity council shall warn the erring member that penalty proceedings are about to begin. If the warning is delivered by letter, it shall be done by certified mail to ensure that the member has received the warning. If the warning is delivered verbally, it shall be done by either the minister or the spiritual assistant and the secretary shall make a record of the event.

CANON 130—The erring member shall be given a suitable time to reflect and repent. The time for reflection shall be set by the minister after consulting the council. It is earnestly recommended that this time should not be extended beyond 30 days. The time for reflection shall be counted from the date of delivery indicated on the green card, if the warning was mailed, or from the time of the verbal warning, as indicated in the secretary's record. If the time of reflection has passed without result, the proceedings may continue.

CANON 131—If the penalty of suspension is being considered, the fraternity council meets without further delay and proceeds according to article 56 of the General Constitutions and the October 4, 2004 Instruction from the Presidency of the International Council. If the council votes to suspend the erring member, the suspension is effective from the time the vote occurs and the secretary records the event in the fraternity membership register. The member is to be informed in writing and the notification sent by certified mail.

CANON 132—If the penalty of dismissal is being considered, the fraternity council meets without further delay and proceeds according to article 58 of the General Constitutions and the October 4, 2004 Instruction from the Presidency of the International Council. If the council decides that dismissal from the Secular Franciscan Order is necessary, it sends its request, along with all documentation, to the regional minister. The regional minister convenes the Regional Council, which meets at the earliest possible time to consider the matter.

CANON 133—The Regional Council considers the matter and likewise proceeds according to article 58 of the General Constitutions and the October 4, 2004 Instruction from the Presidency of the International Council. If the council votes to dismiss the erring member, a decree of dismissal is drawn up and is transmitted immediately, along with all documentation, to the National Council for its confirmation.

CANON 134—If a member believes that he or she has been wronged by a decree of suspension or dismissal, he or she may appeal the decision according to the norms of article 59 of the General Constitutions.

CANON 135—If a suspended member is genuinely repentant, that member may petition the local fraternity council for readmission. That council proceeds according to article 57 of the General Constitutions. If the council determines that the member has indeed changed his or her ways, that member is welcomed back and the reinstatement is recorded in the fraternity membership register.

CANON 136—If someone dismissed is genuinely repentant, that person may seek readmission into the Secular Franciscan Order in either the original or another fraternity. In either case, all documentation is to be sent to the Regional Executive Council. The council, after consulting with the fraternity council which recommended dismissal initially, shall recommend a program of formation for the individual prior to making a new profession.

TITLE 20—PENALTIES FOR SPECIFIC OFFENSES

CANON 137—A member who repeatedly misses fraternity meetings without explanation or valid excuse may be suspended from the fraternity.

CANON 138—A member who is repeatedly uncivil, discourteous or disruptive at fraternity meetings may be suspended from the fraternity.

CANON 139—A member who repeatedly offers opinions contrary to Catholic doctrine may be suspended from the fraternity.

CANON 140—A member who deliberately rears his or her child in a non-Catholic religion may be suspended from the fraternity.

CANON 141—A member who makes injurious or insulting remarks about the Holy Father or the local bishop may be suspended from the fraternity.

CANON 142—A member who engages in a job or career clearly contrary to Catholic doctrine or the Franciscan charism may be suspended from the fraternity.

CANON 143—A Secular Franciscan cleric, whether a priest or deacon, who consistently celebrates liturgical rites contrary to the norms of the Apostolic See may be suspended from the fraternity.

CANON 144—A member who publicly rejects the faith or defects from ecclesiastical communion or upon whom an excommunication has been **imposed** or **declared** ceases to be a member of the Order. Article 58 of the General Constitutions shall be followed in formally declaring this penalty.

CANON 145—A member who obstinately persists in the behaviors specified in canons 137 to 143, even after suspension and further warning, may be dismissed from the Order.

CANON 146—A member who commits an offense which carries an **automatic** excommunication or **automatic** interdict as specified in the Code of Canon Law may be dismissed from the Order.

CANON 147—A member who attempts marriage before a judge or non-Catholic minister without dispensation from the Church may be dismissed from the Order.

CANON 148—A member who engages in public concubinage may be dismissed from the Order.

CANON 149—A member who goes beyond the injurious or insulting remarks specified in canon 141 and actually slanders the Holy Father, the local bishop or a local priest, deacon or religious may be dismissed from the Order.

CANON 150—In addition to the cases established here, other behavior that is seriously contrary to the way of our Seraphic Father may be punished with the penalties of suspension from the fraternity or dismissal from the Order, depending on the gravity of the offense and the need to prevent or repair scandal.

TITLE 21—THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN IN THE WORLD

CANON 151—Secular Franciscans of the Region shall strive to be at the service of the local Church. In addition to their fraternity apostolate, Secular Franciscans shall endeavor to be involved in the ministries of their respective parishes whenever possible. They shall also endeavor to be involved in the ministries of their dioceses, should the opportunity present itself.

CANON 152—Secular Franciscans of the Region who are impeded from active ministries by age, poor health or other just causes shall support those in active ministries chiefly by their prayers and also by occasional contacts, including letters if their abilities permit. These Secular Franciscans may laudably regard themselves as the contemplative branch of the Region and the Order.

CANON 153—Even outside of fraternity, parish and diocesan ministries, Secular Franciscans shall always be ready to share their way of life with interested individuals that they meet in their secular lives. While refraining from an annoying evangelism, Secular Franciscans of Los Tres Compañeros/The Three Companions Region shall ever have before their eyes that they are heralds of the Great King and that the salvation of souls is always the supreme law.

PAX ET BONUM!

ATTESTED AS APPROVED ON AUGUST 27, 2006 BY THE REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL OF LOS TRES COMPAÑEROS/THE THREE COMPANIONS, LTC/TX.

Delia E. Banchs, SFO
Regional Minister

Pura Reyna, SFO
Regional Secretary



Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Approval Date	LTC Regional Minister	LTC Regional Secretary
7/9/12	9/10/2011 2011 Chapter	Joshua Molidor, ofs	Patricia Philipps, ofs