

**NATIONAL STATUTE
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
SINGAPORE
Fraternity of St Anthony of Padua**

FEBRUARY 2021

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NATIONAL STATUTE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER FRATERNITY OF ST ANTHONY OF PADUA, SINGAPORE

INTRODUCTION

Definition

Article 1

The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (“OFS”) of Singapore is the organic union of all the local fraternities, canonically erected and existing in the territory of the State (cf. GGCC 65.1).

Seat

Article 2

The National Fraternity of the OFS of Singapore has its seat at 5 Bukit Batok East Ave 2, Singapore 659918 (cf. GGCC 65.3)

Purpose

Article 3

1.The purpose of the National Fraternity is to live the Gospel in fraternal communion, in the way of St. Francis of Assisi, and promote it among the ecclesial realities and the public life of the OFS in Singapore (OFS Rule 4 and 14) respecting the common culture, the social structures, the civil organization and the identity of ethnic groups.

2.The National Fraternity, with the appropriate guidelines, aims to keep the relations alive and active with the local fraternities directly in a way that provides a fruitful cooperation, a vital reciprocity and a mutual assistance among them.

3.It is the duty of the National Council to keep the relations alive and active with the International Fraternity.

THE LOCAL FRATERNITY

The Fraternity Council and the Minister

Article 4

Each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and a minister, elected in the way and on terms provided for in this Statute.

The Spiritual Assistant is a member of the Council, and exercises his/her office in accordance with Article 90.2 of the GGCC and Article 12.3 of the Statute for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS.

The Fraternity Council

Article 5

1.The Fraternity Council, formed in accordance with Article 49 of the GGCC exercises its duties entrusted to them according to Article 50. The duties of the council are:

- to prepare the fraternity meetings;
- to promote, with the spirit of a family, prayer and formation meetings, the apostolic charitable activities, together with the members of the Franciscan Family in its boundary;
- to decide on the waiver of the time of initiation;
- to decide on the admission of candidates for initial formation;
- to discern the opportunity to extend the time of initial formation;
- to decide on the admission of candidates to the profession;
- to adopt provisions relating to the GGCC, Arts. 56-57, for those who disregard the obligations of the fraternity life, and Article 58, in cases expressly foreseen;
- to decide in the establishment of sections or groups within the fraternity or jointly with other local fraternities;
- to entrust the animation and guidance of the sections or groups to a council member or another professed member of the same fraternity or a nearby fraternity;
- to request the council of the superior level the transfer of the Local Fraternity to the pastoral care of other obedience of the First Order or the TOR.

2. Where YouFra exists, it participates in the Fraternity Council with a representative. If this person is a professed member of the OFS, he/she has the right to vote (cf. GGCC 97.4).

The Minister

Article 6

1. The Minister is the primary responsible person of the fraternity (cf. GGCC 51.1) and exercises his/her office collegially with the Council.

2. The duties of the Minister are indicated in Article 51 of the GGCC. The Minister has to look after the functioning of the various offices, and monitor if the incomes and expenses are handled according to the indications approved previously by the Council.

The Franciscan Youth (YouFra)

Article 7

1. The Local Fraternity, following the guidance of the superior level, and in collaboration with the spiritual assistant, finds the best ways to promote the creation of a Franciscan Youth Fraternity.

2. The Franciscan Youth has its own Statute, organization and pedagogic methods of formation, appropriate to their own requirements (cf. GGCC 96.5)

3. The fraternity should organize gatherings with young Franciscans (OFS Rule 24).

4. To share their faith experience, the OFS fraternities and YouFra make joint efforts and work to provide the Franciscan charisma, in the task of evangelization and in the vast field of temporal realities.

5. Each Local Fraternity appoints a suitable member for the support of the Franciscan Youth Fraternity as fraternal animator (cf. GGCC 97.2).

6. The OFS Council at every level appoints one of its members to be part of the YouFra Council of the same level and a member of the YouFra Council will be part of the OFS Council (cf. GGCC 97.4).

Franciscan Children and Adolescents

Article 8

OFS and YouFra fraternities endeavour to create groups of children and adolescents, educating them to a simple and joyful family life, at school and in their environments, and introduce them to the knowledge and love of Saint Francis and the Franciscan life (cf. Const. OFS 25).

Period of initiation

Article 9

The goal of this period is to verify the Christian and Franciscan vocation of the candidate and aims to start a fraternal reciprocal acquaintance with the brothers and sisters; this period has a reasonable duration decided by each Local Fraternity, not less than six months. (cf. GGCC 38).

Period of Formation

Article 10

It covers a period of study and understanding of Franciscan spirituality, a term not less than a year (cf. GGCC 40.1). The initial formation lasts until the profession and is fulfilled in accordance with the provisions of Articles 40 and 41 of the General Constitutions.

Integration

Article 11

The Ministers and those responsible for formation in the local fraternities must organize gatherings among candidates of local fraternities in the area, besides the time required for formation in their own fraternity. Similar gatherings are recommended also among the newly professed. In these gatherings topics of formation will be discussed, as well as exchanging ideas on the objectives of the Order, on experiences of evangelical life in the fraternity, etc., seeking a vocation maturation and growth in unity among the local fraternities (cf. GGCC 40.1 and 44.2).

Minimum Age for Profession and External Sign of Belonging

Article 12

1.The minimum age for the profession is 21 years.

2.The distinctive sign of belonging to the OFS in the nation is the Tau (cf. GGCC 43).

Ongoing Formation

Article 13

1.Ongoing formation is a necessary tool to help the Secular Franciscans in the path of personal conversion and in their mission in the Church and in society.

2.The National Council will prepare the ongoing formation programs, in accordance with the demands of current life, trying to incarnate the Franciscan charisma in the light of the signs of the times, in harmony with the ecclesial and temporal realities.

3.The National Council should schedule deepening and upgrading courses for all those responsible for the animation and guidance of local fraternities.

4.The Local Fraternity Council determines the ways to carry out the formation programs indicated by the National Council.

5.The Local Fraternity responsibly evaluates the participation in the formation events and in the initiatives offered by the National Council and the local Church.

6.The National Council is responsible for the formation of the brothers and sisters to promote and animate the Secular Franciscan vocation.

7.All members of the Secular Franciscan Order must be committed to the promotion of vocations, based upon the testimony of their own life.

Participation in the Life of the Local Fraternity

Article 14

1. Life in the Secular Franciscan Order is fulfilled concretely in the fraternal encounters.

2.The members of the OFS, because of their vocation and membership, are jointly responsible for the life of their own Fraternity and the Order.

3.The Council at the various levels should be diligent to see that the regular fraternity gatherings and meetings (cf. GGCC 53) are aimed to increase the fraternal communion between the brothers and sisters, their spiritual growth and maturity.

4.In the various fraternity gatherings, adequate time is reserved for dialogue, formation, the study of the Word of God, the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours and typical Franciscan devotions.

5.People who do not belong to the OFS, but wish to share its life and activities, can participate in the fraternity life (cf. GGCC 53.5 and 103.1). So that the presence of these people will not de-nature the identity of the fraternity, their number should not exceed 20 % of the members of the fraternity (cf. Circ. 35/02-08 1 January 2006).

Article 15

1.The fraternity - autonomously or in collaboration with the Franciscan family or other associations or movements - promotes apostolic, charitable and social initiatives, in which its members can take part through their personal availability, financial contribution, prayer and silent offering of sufferings.

2.The fraternity, if it cannot promote its own initiatives, is to be involved in the apostolate of each of its members, by being informed and by working together through prayer, counsel and fraternal affection.

Article 16

The Local Fraternity Council takes appropriate initiatives to promote vocations to the OFS, organizing "vocation days" or other gatherings, in accordance with the environment and using subsidies and promotional materials: brochures, posters, fliers, etc.

THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY

Governing Bodies of the National Fraternity

Article 17

The governing bodies of the National Fraternity are:

- the National Chapter
- the National Council
- the National Minister

The National Chapter

Article 18

1a) The National Chapter is the representative body of all the fraternities of the State.

1b) The Chapter has legislative, deliberative, and elective power in the area of the National Fraternity.

1c) The National Chapter, in elective seat, has the name of "National Elective Chapter."

1d) The Chapter's duties are in particular to:

- deliberate on the organization, formation, Christian animation of temporal order and charitable activities, in its respective area;
- review and approve the report on the activity developed by the National Council;
- review and approve the report on the economic and patrimonial management of the National Fraternity;
- elect every three years, the national minister, the other secular members of the National Council in the number approved by the Chapter, and the International Councillor;
- amend and vote on its own Statute, in order to submit it for the approval by the Presidency of the OFS;
- establish the annual contribution of the local fraternities.

2. The National Chapter is composed of:

- The members of the National Council;
- All permanently professed members (cf. GGCC 77.2);
- the National Spiritual Assistant(s) and local assistants;
- The National YouFra delegate (if any) with voting rights if he/she is a professed member in the OFS.

Article 19

1. The National Chapter is presided by the National Minister. The elective session is presided by the General Minister or his/her delegate.

2. The National Chapter is convoked in an ordinary form, at least once every three years and, extraordinarily, if requested, any time when it is requested by at least one third of its members, or when the National Council considers it necessary.

3. The National Elective Chapter is convoked every three years.

4. It is the duty of the National Minister, after listening to the Council, to convoke for the ordinary National Chapter at least 30 days before the date of the meeting, indicating the subjects to be dealt with.

5. It is the duty of the National Minister to convoke the National Elective Chapter, after listening to the National Council on the formalities of the convocation, at least 30 days before the date of the meeting. The Minister General must be informed at least one year in advance. (Cir No. 11/14-20).

The National Council

Article 20

1.The National Council is the governing body of the National Fraternity. It performs the functions provided for in Article 66.2 of the GGCC.

2.It also concerns to the National Council to:

- prepare and approve programs and assistance for the initial and ongoing formation;
- propose to the Elective Chapter the number of members of the National Council to be elected.

Article 21

1.The National Council consists of the Minister, the Vice-Minister, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Formator, the Vocation Promoter, the International Councillor and at least 4 elected members.

2.The members of the National Council by their own faculty are also:

- the National Spiritual Assistant;
- The National responsible of YouFra (if any) with a voting right if he/she is a professed member of the OFS.

3.The Vice-Minister, the Secretary, Vocation Promoter and the Treasurer have, with appropriate adaptations, the functions provided for in Article 52.1, 2 and 4 of the GGCC.

4.It is the responsibility of the Formator:

- to prepare and update the programs and material for the initial and ongoing formation, taking into consideration the guidance of Presidency of the CIOFS, and adapting them to the local realities, submitting them for approval to the National Council (cf. GGCC 66.2.c);
- to take care of the editing works of the formation materials, in collaboration with experts;
- to promote, at the national level, the organization of courses, workshops and updating seminars;
- to maintain contacts with the local formators.

Article 22

The National Minister convenes the National Council at least 14 days before the date of the meeting, indicating the topics to be discussed.

The National Minister

Article 23

The Minister has primary responsibility of the National Fraternity and exercises his/her office collegially with the Council. He/she represents, for all purposes, the National Fraternity and performs the functions provided for in Article 67 of the General Constitutions. He/she also ensures the accomplishment of the various offices and the distribution of the incomes and expenses based on the instructions previously approved by the National Council.

CIVIL JURIDICAL PERSONALITY PATRIMONY FINANCIAL PRACTICE OF THE FRATERNITY

Civil Juridical Personality

Article 24

1. Since each OFS Fraternity, at various levels has juridical personality in the Church, it is up to the respective Council to obtain juridical personality by the State, in view of the possibility to acquire and to distribute goods and in order to be able to operate as a juridical entity in the celebration of legal acts when the OFS takes part in them.

2. From the National Council, the criteria of the juridical forms to be adopted will be unified so that they can be extended to all the Fraternities of the OFS.

Patrimony

Article 25

1. The Patrimony of the local and national fraternities, consists of:

- the contributions of its members, or the annual contributions provided regularly by the National Chapter;
- the remaining of the previous year;
- movable and immovable property, by purchase, inheritance, donation or returns of any nature, becomes in any case the property of the Local Fraternity.

Article 26

1. The power of supervision over asset management of each OFS Fraternity, at every level, is exercised by the Chapter and an examiner, not a member of the Council.

2. While acknowledging the autonomy of individual Fraternities at every level, in the administration and use of their own patrimony, it is necessary to seek the consent of the respective Chapter or Assembly for the sale, exchange and purchase of property, for accepting or rejecting donations, or carrying out economic/financial transactions of which the value exceeds two thirds of the amount established by the National Episcopal Conference. Having obtained agreement, the Council must request authorization through an action from the extraordinary administration.

- For the Local Fraternity: National Council;
- For the National Fraternity: Presidency of the OFS International Council.

Article 27

The fiscal year begins on January 1st and ends on December 31st of each year. Before 31st January the Treasurer of the Fraternity presents the balance of incomes and expenses for the previous year, which must be approved by the respective fraternity council.

Article 28

At the beginning of the administration of each triennial, the Council should make an inventory of the fraternity assets, and it should be reviewed periodically.

Article 29

1. In the case of cessation of a Local or National Fraternity, the goods are transferred to the fraternity of the higher level (cf. GGCC 48.1).

2. In case of revival, according to the General Constitutions and the Canon Law, the Fraternity will regain its existing patrimonial goods, its own library and archive. (cf. GGCC 48.2).

Article 30

1. At the end of its term, before the celebration of the elective chapter, the council must entrust **an** examiner, not a member of the Council, the verification of the fraternity's financial and patrimonial

situation. The certification must be submitted to the Assembly of the Chapter (cf. GGCC 54.3, 62.2,j; 66.2, 1).

2. At the end of the term, the minister gives his/her successor the fraternity's records and documents, as well as the administration books; they will be duly signed by the Minister and the Treasurer. The Treasurer, at the end of his/her term, gives his/her successor the updated inventory and the amount in cash on hand available.

PROCEDURE FOR THE ELECTION OF OFFICES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Common Rules

Article 31

1.The elective Chapter is convoked by the Minister of the fraternity concerned, as indicated in Article 51.2 of the GGCC (local level) and the Article 19.4 of this Statute (national level).

2.The Fraternity Minister of the higher level can advance or postpone the date of the elective Chapter for a maximum of two months after or before the term of three years is completed from the date of the celebration of the preceding Chapter.

3.Having reached the end of its mandate, the Fraternity Council should complete the functions necessary for the fraternity life, which cannot be deferred to the future Council.

Article 32

1.The vote for the election of each office has to be preceded by:

- the Chapter approval of the distribution of offices that have been attributed to a defined number of Councillors, in addition to those offices indicated in the General Constitutions;
- the appointment of the Secretary and two scrutinizers, by the President of the Chapter, chosen from among the delegates;
- the presentation by the Chapter members, of at least two candidates for each of the offices, taking into account the availability and qualifications of the candidates, without prejudice to the freedom of choice of each brother/sister not legally prevented.

2.The election of each office must be separate and with distinct ballots, according to the following order:

- in the first instance, the Minister (cf. GGCC 78.1);
- second instance, the Vice-Minister (cf. GGCC 78.2);
- successive instances, other Councillors, in accordance with the provisions of Article 78.3 of the General Constitutions. The vote for the election of Secretary, Treasurer, Formator and Vocation Promoter, the International Councillor and the Substitute of the International Councillor, is separate for each one of the offices. Voters enter a single name on each ballot.

3.For the election of other offices, at the request of the chapter and if the President has no difficulty, you can proceed to vote enbloc, with a single ballot for all other officers to be elected.

Re-Elections and Vacant Offices

Article 33

1.The re-election of the offices are to be proceeded in accordance with Article 79.1-3 of GGCC.

2.For the third successive election of Councillors, the two thirds majority will apply for Councillors who have held office the preceding two consecutive terms. This is regardless of the function fulfilled previously (Secretary, Treasurer or other). (cf. GGCC 79.3).

3.Considering that the Minister cannot be elected Vice-Minister, the triennium mandates given to the offices of minister, vice minister and councillors are different in their respective turns, therefore, if someone is moving from one office to the other (from Councillor to Minister/Vice Minister), previous mandates are not counted.

4.For each office the mandate of those elected lasts three years. When the office of Minister or Vice-Minister becomes vacant during the triennium, it applies to Article 81.1 and 2 of the GGCC. If an office of a Councillor becomes vacant, the Council shall replace it in accordance with Article 81.3 — the Council elects a professed person; after obtaining the agreement of the elected person to accept the position, the Council writes to the Minister of the higher level to confirm the election of the substitute Councillor. [Having obtained written confirmation, the Council presents the new Councillor to the National Chapter or the Local Chapter who exercises fully the functions of the office until the end of the Council's term of office.](#)

Participants at the Elective Chapter

Article 34

1.The participants of the Elective Chapter

1a) with the right to vote:

1a.1) on the local level:

according to the Article 77 of the General Constitutions, all perpetually professed members of the Local Fraternity have active and passive voice, those who are not legitimately disabled. The temporarily professed members (if any) have only active voice;

1a.2) on the national level

- [the secular members of the outgoing council, including the YOUFRA representative \(if any\), if he/she is a professed member of the OFS.](#)
- All perpetually professed members of OFS.

1b) without the right to vote

1b.1) on all the levels of the Fraternities

- The President of the Chapter and the spiritual assistant(s) of the higher level or his/her delegate (cf- GGCC 76.3)

- The spiritual assistants of their respective level (cf.Statute for the Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS 12.3)

2.Those who do not participate at the elective chapter of the Local Fraternity:

- Those who do not participate at the elective chapter of the Local Fraternity are those brothers and sisters who have been suspended under Article 56.2 of the GGCC. The Council of the Local Fraternity will prepare the list of those members of the fraternity excluded from the right of active and passive voice, and it is to be published together with the convocation;

- To calculate the "quorum" in the Local Fraternity, those who, for valid reasons of health, family, work or distance are not able to participate on the elective chapter and have been justified by the Council, will be preventively excluded (cf. GGCC 53.3 and 77.4).¹

SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL ASSISTANCE

Article 35

1. The major superiors of the First Order and TOR exercise the spiritual and pastoral care of the OFS by themselves or by their delegates (cf. GGCC 86.1 and Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 5.1-2).

2. The mentioned major superiors are responsible for the quality of pastoral service and spiritual assistance to the OFS fraternities at various levels (cf. Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 5.3).

3. The major superiors establish together the most adequate means to carry out the spiritual assistance to the Local Fraternity, which, because of causes beyond their control, remain without it. (cf. GGCC 88.4 and Assistance Statute 7.1).

4. The major superiors with jurisdiction in the same territory, are to establish together the most adequate means for carrying out their duties collegially for their spiritual assistance to the national OFS fraternities (cf. GGCC 88.5).

5. The spiritual assistant(s) is appointed by the competent major superior, in writing, after hearing the Council of the interested Fraternity (cf. Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 15.1 and 3).

6. When it is not possible to give the fraternity a spiritual assistant(s) of the First Order or the TOR, the competent major superior can entrust assistance to:

- a) Religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institute;
- b) Secular Franciscans, clerical or lay, specially prepared for this service;
- c) Other diocesan clergy, or non-Franciscan religious (cf. GGCC 89.4 and Assistance Statute 15.4).

The number of Assistants at the national level corresponds to the number of Orders that effectively provide assistance to in the area of the National Fraternity. (See Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 16.1).

7. The principal task of the assistant is to communicate Franciscan spirituality and to cooperate in the initial and ongoing formation of the brothers and sisters of the assisted OFS Fraternity (cf. GGCC 90.1 and Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 13.1).

8. It is the duty of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants to coordinate the formation of assistants and the fraternal union among them, and promote the interest of the friars of the First Order and the TOR for the OFS; (See Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 19.3 and 21.3).

¹ (For example:

1. Those who have the right to vote = 50 persons. Quorum (more than half = 26 persons
2. Those who are not able to participate for valid reasons justified by the Council = 15 persons
3. Therefore, the quorum is to be calculated of 35 persons = 18)

9.The National Assistant(s) should inform the major superiors of their own order on the life and activities of the OFS and YouFra, this as part of their responsibility (cf. Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 20.1and22.1).

10.The local assistant promotes the communion inside the fraternity and also between it and the religious community to which he/she belongs (cf. Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 23.2).

11.To request a spiritual assistant:

a)in the local fraternities: every three years the Council will request an Assistant from the competent major superior, after dialogue and exchange of views with the local Superior as a concrete sign of communion and reciprocity (cf. GGCC 91.2, Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 23.1).

b)in the National Fraternity: according to the General Constitutions 91.2, b-c, and Statute of the Spiritual Assistance 19.1 and 21.1.

12. The National Spiritual Assistant(s) and all Local Spiritual Assistants are to participate at the National Chapter. (cf. Assistance Statute 16.4).

THE FRATERNAL AND PASTORAL VISIT

Article 36

1. The fraternal and pastoral visits will be performed, if possible, jointly (cf. GGCC 93.4), in the spirit of the Rule, the provisions of the General Constitutions (Article 94-95), this Statute and the Statute for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS.

2.For a better development of the visits, both fraternal and pastoral, the visitors prepare themselves in advance, committing to:

- obtain copies of the reports of previous visits and any other significant element;
- communicate with the Council concerned regarding the program and purpose of the visit;
- request a preliminary report of the fraternity that is visited on its present up-to-date situation;
- be open to suggestions from the Fraternity visited.

3.The visitor will prepare a report of the visit, usually within two months, for both the concerned council and for himself. These reports, if they were not performed together, must be exchanged between the fraternal and pastoral visitors and properly preserved in the archives of the recipients.

4.The visitor may not make decisions on matters that require a collegial deliberation of the Council. In this case, he/she immediately informs his/her own council, and the visit, if necessary, will remain open for future dialogue.

5.After an appropriate period of time, the visitor requests records of the discussions and decisions made as a consequence of the visit.

THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

Article 37

1.The National Council is integrated into the organization of the Franciscan family, with whom it collaborates actively to enforce the presence of the common charisma in the life and mission of the Church.

2.The National Council shall work actively in the intensification of unity and vital reciprocity among all the members of the Family and organizations of Franciscan inspiration.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 38

1.Decisions of collegial bodies are valid when at least an absolute majority of its members (more than 50%) is present.

2.Unless this Statute provides otherwise, decisions are taken by an absolute majority of those present. In case of tie, the President can decide with his/her vote.

3.Voting with effects on a person should be a secret ballot. In other cases, the vote can be proceeded either by raising hands or by secret ballot. The petition for a secret ballot may be made by any voting member of the Assembly, before the collegiate body is invited to vote by raising the hands.

Article 39

1.The practical interpretation of this Statute, to bring its application in different areas, and different levels of the National Fraternity belongs to the National Chapter.

2.The clarification of the specific items that require immediate decision, belongs to the National Council, with a validity until the next National Chapter.

3.Any amendments to this Statute may be proposed by the National Council.

4. The amendment of National Statute is the responsibility of the National Chapter, with an absolute majority.

5. The Statute and its amendments must be approved by the Presidency of the OFS.

6. Once the approval has been obtained, the Statute becomes executive after 14 days from its promulgation signed by the National Minister.

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