

# **Fr. Solanus Casey Region SFO-USA**

## **Regional Guidelines**

### **Our Mission Statement**

**Through our profession to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, we, the brothers and sisters of the Fr. Solanus Casey Regional Fraternity, SFO-USA, commit ourselves to live the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.**

**Like our Seraphic Father, we shall strive to “rebuild the Church” by encouraging the spirit of service, cultivating strong leaders, promoting apostolic activities, and developing formation programs to inspire and nurture our members.**

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## **CHAPTER ONE - ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE**

1. The Regional Fraternity of the Fr. Solanus Casey Region is an organic union of the local fraternities officially established by the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA<sup>1</sup> in the geographical area of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and adjacent portions of New York and Massachusetts.
2. The Regional Fraternity shall have a Regional Fraternity Council composed of the ministers of the local fraternities, members of the Regional Executive Council, and the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s), all of whom have active voice. No Spiritual Assistants, religious or secular, at any level, however, shall vote on questions involving financial matters or in elective chapters.
3. The Regional Fraternity shall have a Regional Executive Council made up of its officers and President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants.<sup>2</sup>
4. For matters not addressed by these Guidelines, the various provisions set forth in the SFO General Constitutions and the NAFRA National Statutes shall be used as a model for the administration of the Regional Fraternity and the Local Fraternities, insofar as these provisions may be adapted to local needs and circumstances.
5. These Guidelines may be amended at a Regional Fraternity Council meeting by a two-thirds majority.

## **CHAPTER TWO - REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL**

6. The Regional Fraternity is represented most fully at the Regional Fraternity Council.
  - A. The Regional Fraternity Council is composed of the ministers of local fraternities, members of the Regional Executive Council, and Regional Spiritual Assistant(s).
  - B. The Regional Fraternity Council shall meet at least once a year to promote the life of the regional and local fraternities.
  - C. The Regional Fraternity Council suggests and approves policies to be implemented by the Regional Executive Council.
7. Every third year, the Regional Fraternity Council shall conduct elections of its Regional Executive Council.
  - A. The National Minister or his/her delegate shall preside at and confirm the election of a Regional Executive Council.

- B. With the approval of the Regional Executive Council, an elected member of the Regional Executive Council may hold an office at the local fraternity level. The offices of minister at two different levels, however, are incompatible.<sup>3</sup>
  - C. Nomination and election procedures shall follow the norms of general and particular law.<sup>4</sup>
8. No official business may be transacted at the Regional Fraternity Council meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as the presence of more than half of the number of those having the right to vote.
  9. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity is supported financially by its canonically established local fraternities. The Regional Council shall determine the annual fair share contribution made from the common fund of each local fraternity for each of its active members (professed and candidates).
  10. The Regional Fraternity Council has the duties set forth in Article 62 of the General Constitutions.

### **CHAPTER THREE - REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

11. The Regional Fraternity is animated and guided by the Regional Executive Council, which shall be composed of a Regional Minister, Regional Vice-Minister, Regional Formation Director, Regional Secretary, Regional Treasurer, the President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants, and at least one elected Regional Councilor.
  - A. The Regional Executive Council must be composed of at least six elected professed members. More councilors may be added when, prior to its meeting for elections, the Regional Fraternity Council recommends a number of additional councilors and specifies the need for adding them.
  - B. The Regional Executive Council may appoint positions as deemed necessary, however, only those persons duly elected to office shall have voting rights within the Regional Executive Council; all others shall act in consultative roles. Appointments are valid until the next elective chapter, or otherwise revoked by the Regional Executive Council.
12. The President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants is a member of the Regional Executive Council.
  - A. Holds active voice, except in financial matters and elective chapters.
  - B. Performs duties in accordance with the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.

13. The Regional Executive Council shall perform the duties set forth in Article 62 of the General Constitutions. In cooperation with the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s), the Regional Executive Council shall also perform the following in accordance with the directives of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants Secular Franciscan Order – USA:<sup>5</sup>
  - A. Establish new fraternities.
  - B. De-activate established fraternities.
  - C. Re-activate established fraternities.
  - D. Attach de-activating fraternities to active fraternities.
  - E. Suspend canonically established fraternities.
  - F. Transfer a canonically established fraternity to the altius moderamen of another friary entity.
14. The Regional Executive Council meets a minimum of twice a year, at a time and place determined by its membership. Notice of Regional Executive Council meetings shall be given in writing by the Regional Minister at least two months prior to the meeting.
15. Special Meetings may be called at the request of the Regional Minister or at the written request of two or more elected members of the Regional Executive Council.
16. When not in session, the Regional Executive Council may conduct business electronically (i.e., email, telephone, fax, etc.) provided that any decisions and determinations made in this way are reviewed and ratified at the next regular meeting of the Council.
17. No official business may be transacted at a Regional Executive Council meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as the presence of more than half of the number of those having the right to vote.
18. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity shall pay the travel expenses of the Regional Executive Council, and those serving in appointed positions, when on official business.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR – REGIONAL OFFICERS**

19. The Regional Minister is the chief executive officer of the Regional Fraternity, and shall carry out the duties of the office as determined by the provisions of general and particular law.<sup>6</sup> When necessary, the Regional Minister may approve extraordinary, non-budgeted expenditures not to exceed \$250.00. Such expenditures that exceed the approval of the Regional Minister will require the approval of the Regional Executive Council.

20. The Regional Vice-Minister shall carry out the duties of the office as determined by the provisions of general and particular law, as well as such duties as designated by the Regional Council.<sup>7</sup>
21. The Regional Formation Director shall carry out the duties of the office as designated by the Regional Council. In particular, the Regional Formation Director shall animate and guide those responsible for formation at the local fraternity level.
22. The Regional Secretary shall carry out the duties of the office as determined by the provisions of general and particular law, as well as such duties as designated by the Regional Council.<sup>8</sup>
23. The Regional Treasurer shall carry out the duties of the office as determined by the provisions of general and particular law, as well as such duties as designated by the Regional Council.<sup>9</sup>
  - A. The Regional Treasurer deposits all funds of the Regional Fraternity in such bank accounts as the Regional Executive Council designates and in the name of the Regional Fraternity.
  - B. The Regional Treasurer shall prepare financial reports for approval at each regular meeting of the Regional Executive Council and Regional Council.
  - C. The Regional Treasurer pays out money, by check only, as the business of the Regional Fraternity may require, at the direction of the Regional Executive Council.
  - D. The Regional Treasurer shall prepare a budget each year, in consultation with the Budget Committee.
  - E. An audit shall be conducted once every three years, or whenever a new Regional Treasurer takes office, by two competent professed members selected by the Regional Executive Council who do not currently serve on the Regional Executive Council.
24. The Regional Councilor(s) shall carry out the duties of the office as designated by the Regional Council.

#### **CHAPTER FIVE - REGIONAL STANDING COMMITTEES / COMMISSIONS**

26. The activities of all commissions and committees of the Region are subject to the direction and approval of the Regional Executive Council.
27. Budget Committee
  - A. The Budget Committee shall be composed of the Regional Treasurer as Chair, the Regional Minister as ex-officio member, and a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council.

- B. This committee shall prepare a proposed budget for presentation to the Regional Fraternity Council, and propose the allocation of funds for charitable and emergency purposes.

25. Formation Commission

- A. The Formation Commission shall be composed of the Regional Formation Director as Chair, the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) and a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
- B. The duties of this Commission shall include:
  - 1. Provide, implement, and promote initial and on-going formation programs.
  - 2. Provide assistance in making formation workshops and retreat programs available throughout the Region.
  - 3. Promote establishment of Regional formation teams.
  - 4. Investigate and recommend to the Regional Council means for promoting the Secular Franciscan Order.

26. Leadership Committee

- A. The Leadership Committee shall be composed of the Regional Vice Minister as Chair, the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) and a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
- B. This Committee implements sound leadership principles in the Region by:
  - 1. Designing and presenting leadership programs for fraternity ministers, fraternity councils, and future leaders.
  - 2. Providing and updating handbooks on practical administrative procedures and on leadership principles for the fraternity ministers and fraternity councils.

27. Apostolic Commissions

- A. The Apostolic Commissions shall be composed of the Regional Commissions Coordinator<sup>11</sup> as Chair, the Vice Minister as ex-officio member, the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) and a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council representing the Regional Apostolic Commissions of Ecology, Family, Peace and Justice, and Work.
- B. This Commission fosters and implements the Apostolic Commissions in the Region by:
  - 1. Designing and implementing programs to foster involvement in the Commissions.
  - 2. Coordinating programs within the Region to identify ministries.

3. Fostering participation in local, regional, national, and international Commission training programs; providing a connection between the National Commissions and local fraternities.
- C. Although not an Apostolic Commission, the Youth and Young Adult Commission is represented by a variable number of members appointed by the Regional Executive Council to promote the Franciscan charism among youth. This Commission will collaborate with the Regional Commissions Coordinator.

## **CHAPTER SIX - DISTRICT REPRESENTATION**

28. The Regional Executive Council will establish districts within the Region, based on geographical boundaries, making revisions as necessary.
29. Each district will be represented by a District Leader appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
30. District Leaders, working in union with the Regional Councilor<sup>10</sup> representing them on the Regional Executive Council, have the following duties to the local fraternities and emerging communities within an assigned district:
  - A. Foster cooperation and encourage common spiritual, apostolic, and educational activities.
  - B. Animate and guide local fraternities and emerging fraternities through:
    1. Regular contact with local fraternity ministers.
    2. Visit and observe fraternity and sponsored community council meetings at least once in a three-year period.
  - C. Disseminate information to local fraternities and/or gather information from local fraternities, as requested by the Regional Executive Council.
  - D. Communicate local needs to the Regional Executive Councilor.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN - FRATERNITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

31. Fraternity life is to exist at various levels: local, regional, national and international. The local fraternity, however, is the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church. It is here where the brothers and sisters develop a sense of Church and their Franciscan vocation.
32. Local fraternities shall follow the various provisions set forth in Section III of the National Statutes in regards to:
  - A. Fraternity Life
  - B. Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations
  - C. Establishment and Administration of Local Fraternities
  - D. Formation
  - E. Transfer, Withdrawal, Suspension and Dismissal from the Fraternity and from the Order

32. Every third year, local fraternities shall conduct elections of its secular members to the Fraternity Council. Nomination and election procedures shall follow the norms of general and particular law insofar as they may be adapted to the local fraternity. <sup>4</sup>
  - A. The Fraternity Minister shall in a timely fashion contact the Regional Minister, requesting that he/she or a delegate preside over forthcoming elections.
  - B. The Fraternity Minister shall in a timely fashion contact the Regional Spiritual Assistant, requesting that he or a delegate attend forthcoming elections as the ecclesial witness.
33. Local Fraternities shall follow the norms of general and particular law in regards to vacant offices, incompatible offices, resignation of office and the removal from office of Fraternity Council members. <sup>14</sup>
34. The Local Fraternity will present to the Regional Minister or delegate and to the Regional Spiritual Assistant or representative a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required at the time of fraternal and pastoral visits, and also on the occasion of their presiding over and witnessing elections.
35. The Local Fraternity common fund shall support the higher levels of fraternity as described in Chapter Nine of these Guidelines.

#### **CHAPTER EIGHT - RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL FRATERNITY**

36. Once every three years, the Regional Minister, with the consent of the Regional Executive Council, has the duty to request a fraternal visit from the National Minister. A fraternal visit may also be requested at other times for important reasons.<sup>12</sup>
37. Once every three years, the Regional Minister, with the consent of the Regional Executive Council, has the duty to request a pastoral visit from the President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.<sup>13</sup>
38. The Regional Minister is a member of the National Fraternity Council and is to attend its meetings. If one is impeded from attending the annual meeting of the National Fraternity Council, one shall be represented by the Regional Vice Minister or, if necessary, by some other elected member of the Regional Fraternity Council.
39. The Regional Fraternity contributes annually to the common fund of the National Fraternity as called for by the directives of the National Fraternity.

40. At the time of the pastoral and fraternal visitations, and on the occasion of their presiding and witnessing elections, the Regional Executive Council shall take care to present NAFRA officers and delegates of the President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants a stipend appropriate to the journey made and the length of stay required.

#### **CHAPTER NINE - FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

41. According to Article 25 of the SFO Rule, the members of each local fraternity shall contribute monthly to the local fraternity common fund according to their means.
42. Local fraternities of the Region are obligated to support the fraternities of the higher levels (regional, national, international). Therefore, on an annual basis, each canonically established local fraternity shall submit to the Regional Treasurer a fair share donation on behalf of all its active members (professed and candidates), whether regularly attending meetings or temporarily/permanently excused. This donation is to be made from the fraternity's common fund.
- A. A fair share donation for excused members will constitute only the sum payable to the National Fraternity.
  - B. A fair share donation for Candidates will constitute only the sum payable to the Regional Fraternity.
  - C. A fair share donation is not to be submitted for those members who have disassociated (lapsed) from the fraternity.
    - 1. A lapsed member is one who, without valid reasons of health, family, work, or distance, neither attends meetings nor provides financial support to the fraternity, and who, after personal invitations to return to fraternity, consciously and deliberately rejects or ignores the invitation.
    - 2. A member cannot be reported as lapsed repeatedly without local fraternity councils taking the necessary actions as set forth in Article 56.2 (suspension) or Article 58.2 (dismissal).

#### **CHAPTER TEN - REGIONAL NEWSLETTER**

43. The Regional Newsletter shall be issued on a regular basis as determined by the Regional Executive Council and shall be sent to each Fraternity Minister. The Editor of the Newsletter shall be appointed by the Regional Executive Council.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN - SPECIAL NOTICE TO PERMANENT DEACONS

44. A permanent deacon, who is a candidate for elective office, on any level of fraternity, must have written authorization from his Ordinary. The request and permission must be so stated that it is clear that the Bishop understands that, during the term of office, the Fraternity has priority. This ruling is in keeping with the directive received from the CIOFS Presidency, October 1986.

## CHAPTER TWELVE - INTERPRETATION

45. Interpretation of these Guidelines shall follow SFO legal instruments, canon law, and civil law, were applicable, and may have recourse to Robert's Rules of Order in regard to procedural matters, with the understanding that in the event of any dispute that a pastoral point of view prevail in keeping with the spirit of Our Father and founder St. Francis, a most peace-loving and courteous person.

**Attested as approved on April 16, 2005, by the Fr. Solanus Casey Regional Fraternity Council.**

  
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Harry Harned, Minister

  
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Sally Haddad, Secretary

### RESOURCE NOTATIONS

- 1 Hereafter, NAFRA
- 2 The Regional Spiritual Assistants are appointed by superiors of the First Order. They act as a collegial body to animate and provide for the spiritual welfare of the Region, and they nominate one of their number to act as President of their Conference to vote at meetings of the Regional Executive Council
- 3 SFO General Constitutions, Article 82; at the 2004 National Chapter, the NAFRA Statutes, Article 28 was amended to read that Article 11.4 and 13.3 do not apply to Regional and Local fraternities.
- 4 SFO General Constitutions, Chapter III, Title IV; NAFRA Statutes, Section II
- 5 Conference of National Spiritual Assistants to the SFO Handbook
- 6 SFO General Constitutions, Article 63; NAFRA Statutes, Article 24.1
- 7 SFO General Constitutions, Article 52.1; NAFRA Statutes, Article 24.2
- 8 SFO General Constitutions, Article 52.2; NAFRA Statutes, Article 24.2
- 9 SFO General Constitutions, Article 52.4; NAFRA Statutes, Article 24.2
- 10 The Regional Executive Council will designate a Regional Councilor to represent District Leaders
- 11 Appointed by the Regional Executive Council
- 12 NAFRA Statutes, Article 26
- 13 NAFRA Statutes, Article 26
- 14 SFO General Constitutions, Article 81 - 84; NAFRA Statutes, Article 15