

REVISED 2009 (Approved by Chapter 18th October 2009)
The Third Order, The Society of St Francis
European Province
The Statutes of the European Province

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The Statutes of the European Province

MISSION

The Third Order of the Society of St Francis is the revival within the Anglican Communion in the 20th century of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance originally by St Francis. Its mission is to build a community of those who accept Christ as their Lord and Master, are dedicated to him in body and spirit, with a desire to fulfil the three aims of the Order: to make our Lord known and loved everywhere, to spread a spirit of love and harmony, and to live simply. The Third Order aims to attract, nurture and empower Christian men and women, loyal members of their own Churches, who wish to follow Christ in the distinctive way of Francis and Clare. The aim of these Statutes is to provide a simple structure which will best facilitate the Mission.

See the Constitution of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis 1:1

DEFINITIONS

- (i) *The Province* shall mean the European Province of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis, and shall be divided into Areas as defined herein;
- (ii) *The Chapter* shall mean the Provincial Chapter of the Province;
- (iii) *Tertiary* shall normally mean a novice or professed member of the Order who is a communicant member of the Anglican Communion or of churches in communion with the See of Canterbury;
- (iv) *The Order* shall mean the Third Order of the Society of St Francis;
- (v) *The Local Group* shall mean the basic structural unit of the Province;
- (vi) *The Area* shall mean a collection of Local Groups that are conveniently situated geographically with one another;
- (vii) *The Area Team* shall mean those officers, as listed below, who are responsible for the life of the Tertiaries within the Area;
- (viii) *Cluster of Areas* shall mean a number of Areas within a defined geographical region, as decided by the Chapter;
- (ix) *Link Tertiary* shall mean a Tertiary elected to serve on the Chapter by a Cluster of Areas;
- (x) *The Constitution* shall mean the *Constitution of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis*.

1 THE LOCAL GROUP

1.1 Structure

1.1.1 The Local Group is the basic structural unit of the Province where Franciscan spirituality is discovered and shaped. It should be the place where a vocation to the Order is tested and nurtured.

1.2 Membership

1.2.1 Every Tertiary shall belong to a Local Group.

1.2.2 The size, normally between 8 and 20 Tertiaries, membership and number of Local Groups will be decided by the Area Team, in consultation with the individual Tertiaries, and may vary according to geographical constraints, ability to attend meetings and availability of leadership.

1.2.3 Membership will be expressed in different ways, bearing in mind that age, ill-health, family, or work commitments and vocations to a solitary life may prevent attendance at meetings.

1.2.4 Changes in the number of Local Groups within an Area shall be determined from time to time as necessary by the Area Team.

1.3 Responsibilities

These are:

1.3.1 To meet on a regular basis to further the aims of the Order by building up the life of the Community in the love of Jesus Christ;

1.3.2 To share in care and concern for each other and for new members and those who are sick or in any difficulty;

1.3.3 With the Area Team, to nurture any person introduced as wanting to test his/her vocation;

1.3.4 To support each other and the members of the Area Team in prayer.

1.4 Method of Working

1.4.1 The members of a Local Group shall select a Convenor from among their number who shall ensure the functioning of the Local Group, convene its meetings and be a member of the Area Team.

1.4.2 The Role Description of the Local Group Convenor is contained in the *Area Team Handbook*.

1.4.3 The content and frequency of meetings shall be decided by the membership of the Local Group.

1.4.4 Permission must first be sought from the Area Minister before any visitor may attend a Local Group Meeting. Visitors of Enquirer status should not, except in very exceptional circumstances, attend more than two Local Group Meetings before their status is redefined.

2 THE AREA

2.1 Structure

2.1.1 The number of Areas in the Province shall be determined by the Chapter and may be varied by the Chapter from time to time.

2.2 Clusters of Areas

2.2.1 Each Area shall be part of a Cluster of Areas, the number to be determined by the Chapter, and each Cluster shall elect one Link Tertiary to serve on the Chapter.

2.3 The Area Team

2.3.1 Each Area shall have a team of officers, The Area Team, which shall be led by the Area Minister, shall have overall responsibility for the corporate life of the Area.

2.4 Membership

- 2.4.1 The Area Team shall consist of:
The Area Minister
The Area Secretary/Treasurer
The Area Formation Guardian
The Area Novice Guardian
The Area Retreat Secretary, *if one is appointed*
All Local Group Convenors
and such professed members as the Area Team shall decide for specific tasks and periods.
- 2.4.2 The role descriptions of the members of the Area Team are contained in the *Area Team Handbook*.

2.5 Responsibilities

These are:

- 2.5.1 To provide pastoral care and nurture in the Franciscan life of all Tertiaries, postulants and aspirants in the area;
- 2.5.2 To meet on a basis agreed between the members, as well as members consulting individually with the Area Minister;
- 2.5.3 To plan and further the life of the Area, including the frequency and character of Area meetings, to include a meeting at Francistide;
- 2.5.4 To receive from the Area Treasurer and agree the Area budget and to receive a twice yearly financial statement for monitoring purposes;
- 2.5.5 To appoint an Area Treasurer and Secretary. In some circumstances it may be possible to combine these roles;
- 2.5.6 To support the Area Formation Guardian in the choice of the Area Novice Guardian and, where required, of an Area Retreat Secretary;
- 2.5.7 To consider any matters of pastoral concern;
- 2.5.8 To consider any matters referred, either by the Chapter, or any of the Area Team or any Local Group;
- 2.5.9 To relate to the Local Groups and to individual Tertiaries within the Area and to receive reports from Local Group Convenors;
- 2.5.10 To receive from the Area Novice Guardian the names of postulants deemed ready for novicing and, if thought appropriate, to approve them;
- 2.5.11 To receive from the Area Novice Guardian the names of novices ready for profession and, if thought appropriate, to elect them, subject to ratification by the Chapter;
See the Constitution 2:3 (b)
- 2.5.12 To review prayerfully the persistent absence of Tertiaries within the Area from Third Order meetings, and also to consider requests to withdraw from the Order, subject to ratification by the Chapter;
See the Constitution 2:4(a)
- 2.5.13 To agree the setting up new Local Groups, splitting or closing them down;
- 2.5.14 To arrange meetings, retreats and quiet days for the Area.

2.6 Method of Working

- 2.6.1 Subject to the specific provisions of the Statutes, and to the guidance and advice of Chapter through the Link Tertiary, to formulate its own procedures and method of working.
- 2.6.2 Permission must first be sought from the Area Minister before any visitor may attend an Area Meeting. Visitors of Enquirer status should not, except in very

exceptional circumstances, attend more than two Area Meetings before their status is re-defined.

- 2.6.3 There shall be at least one Area Meeting in each Area in each year for the Renewal of pledges and other meetings as arranged. The meeting for the Renewals shall be held at or as near as is convenient to Francistide, at which the Eucharist shall normally be celebrated. When it is not possible to celebrate the Eucharist, the Tertiary Office or other Franciscan devotions may be used.

See the Constitution 2:3 (c) & (d); 4:3 (a) & (b)

- 2.6.4 Novicings and professions may take place at Area meetings within the context of the Eucharist, at any time of the year. Area Teams may like to consider arranging such meetings as near as is convenient to the major Franciscan festivals.

See the Constitution 2:3 (b), (c), (d) & (e)

3 THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

3.1 Membership

- 3.1.1 The Province shall have a Chapter whose membership shall constitute the Trustees of the Province.

- 3.1.2 The Chapter shall consist of:

The Minister Provincial;

The Provincial Formation Guardian, (*Assistant for the Minister Provincial*);

The Provincial Novice Guardian;

The Provincial Secretary;

The Provincial Treasurer;

The Provincial Communications Co-ordinator;

All Link Tertiaries and

The Minister General

See the Constitution 1:3 (d)

- 3.1.3 The role descriptions of the members of the Chapter and other Provincial officers are contained in the *Area Team Handbook*.

- 3.1.4 The Chapter may co-opt up to four professed members of the Order to attend Chapter meetings for particular purposes and for limited periods. They shall not be members of the Chapter and will have no vote.

- 3.1.5 There may be other officers as the Chapter may decide for the Province, none of whom shall be members of the Chapter but who shall attend Chapter meetings as and when required, but will have no vote.

- 3.1.6 The Ministers Provincial of the First Order Brothers (SSF) and First Order Sisters (CSF) of the European Province, and the Abbess of the Second Order Sisters (OSC) of the European Province shall be invited to attend the Chapter once in each year, normally at Francistide, but may not vote.

- 3.1.7 The Minister Provincial, the Provincial Formation Guardian and one other professed member chosen by the Chapter shall represent the Province at meetings of the Interprovincial Third Order Chapter (IPTOC).

See the Constitution 1:4 (c) (ii)

- 3.1.8 The Minister Provincial or his/her nominee shall represent the Province at meetings of the First Order of the Society of St Francis, when invited.

3.2 Responsibilities

These are:

- 3.2.1 To be the Trustees and the central authority of the Province;

See the Constitution 3:3 (a)

- 3.2.2 To be legally responsible for the organisation, government and all financial matters of the Province;
- 3.2.3 To oversee the formation and pastoral needs of the Province
- 3.2.4 To ratify, prior to the event, novices elected to profession from the relevant Area Team;
See the Constitution 2.3(b)
- 3.2.5 To ratify leave of absence, and any extension thereof, granted to a professed member by the Area Team; in each instance a written statement shall be issued in the name of the Chapter, defining the period of leave and the conditions upon which it is granted, including decisions about the observation of the *Personal Rule of Life* and provision for Renewal.
See Statutes 2.5.13; 4.5.2.
- 3.2.6. To ratify withdrawals from the Order, on the proposal of the relevant Area Team, before their finalisation;
See the Constitution 2.4 (a)
- 3.2.7 To consider the life, overall needs and forward planning of the Province and to make the consequent policy decisions;
- 3.2.8 To appoint the Bishop Protector of the Province after consultation with the Ministers Provincial of the First Order and the Abbess of the Second Order in the European Province.
See the Constitution 3:2

3.3 Method of Working

- 3.3.1 Subject to matters specifically referred to below, the Chapter shall formulate its own procedures and method of working.
- 3.3.2 The Minister Provincial, or in his/her absence the Provincial Formation Guardian, shall chair the Chapter. The chairperson shall have a casting vote.
- 3.3.3 The Chapter may delegate specific matters to ad hoc subcommittees as required for particular purposes and for limited periods as defined by the Chapter.
- 3.3.4 The Chapter shall meet at least three times each year.
- 3.3.5 The Provincial Secretary shall give notice of the meetings of the Chapter to all members at least four weeks before the date set for the meeting of the Chapter.
- 3.3.6 There shall be a General Chapter of the Province held as and when decided by the Chapter, normally with a gap of from five to seven years between such Chapters.

4 FORMATION

4.1 Responsibility

- 4.1.1 The Chapter shall have overall responsibility in the Province for formation through the Provincial Formation Guardian and the Provincial Novice Guardian.
Guidelines on novice guardianship from the Enquirer through to Profession can be found in 'The Toolkit for Area Novice Guardians' (TANG).

4.2 Enquirer, Aspirant and Postulant

- 4.2.1 An Enquirer may attend Local Group and Area meetings a limited number of times, with a maximum of twice at each type of meeting.
- 4.2.2 An Aspirant is one who has already had an in depth discussion with a Novice Guardian and who may attend a Local Group during the time of determining whether to enter into a fuller commitment. The length of this time should be held under review by the Novice Guardian,
- 4.2.3 A Postulant is one who has expressed a wish to become a Novice and will be welcomed into a Local Group. Application for admission to postulancy shall be approved by the Area Formation Guardian and Area Novice Guardian, subject to

ratification by the relevant Area Team. The Basic Rule of Life will be agreed in principle at Postulancy with the Area Novice Guardian, to be personalised at least by the time of Profession. Postulants may be admitted to the Noviciate provided that they have kept the Basic Rule of Life for at least six months. However, the length of Postulancy must not exceed 24 months.

Agreed by Chapter 21-22 June 2003

4.3 Novice

4.3.1 Application for admission to the noviciate shall be considered for approval by the relevant Area Team, provided that applications from persons under the age of 18 years shall be referred to the Provincial Novice Guardian for a decision whether or not they may be admitted.

See the Constitution 2:2 (b)(i), (ii) & (iii)

4.3.2 Every Novice shall be a member of a Local Group

4.3.3 Every Novice shall be cared for by a Novice Guardian, with a Spiritual Director decided at least by the time of Profession.

See the Constitution 4:1(a) & (b); 4:4

4.3.4 Novicing shall normally take place at Area meetings, but at the discretion of the Area Novice Guardian may take place at a Local Group meeting.

See the Constitution 2:3 (c) & (d)

4.3.5 The Noviciate is normally of two years duration. However, this can be longer, but must not exceed four years.

Agreed by Chapter 21-22 June 2003

4.3.6 The Novice Guardian shall report to the Area Novice Guardian. The Area Novice Guardian shall report to the Provincial Novice Guardian.

This will bring the reporting process in line with that of the Formation Guardians as stated in section 4.4.4 of these Statutes and section 4.4 of the Constitution.

4.3.7 It is an obligation upon all Tertiaries to make a financial contribution annually to Provincial funds.

4.4 Profession

4.4.1 Election to Profession is the responsibility of the Area Team, subject to ratification by the Provincial Chapter. Professions shall normally take place at Area Meetings. In exceptional circumstances such as long term illness, profession may take place elsewhere, in the presence of more than one Tertiary, with the agreement of the Area Team.

See Constitution 2:3(b), (c) & (e)

4.4.2. It is an obligation upon all Tertiaries to keep their Personal Rule of Life, and to renew it annually. Renewals will normally take place at Area meetings and may only be made otherwise in exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances renewals should be made in the presence of the Local Group, Area Team, or their representatives, and reported to the Area Minister.

See the Constitution 1:1; 2:3 (c) & (d); 4:2; 4:3 (a) & (b).

4.4.3 It is an obligation upon all Tertiaries to make a financial contribution to Provincial funds.

4.4.4 Professed members shall report in writing annually to their Area Formation Guardian on the keeping of their Personal Rule of Life. The Area Formation Guardian shall report to the Provincial Formation Guardian.

See the Constitution 4:3 (c)

4.4.5 Tertiaries unable to attend either Area or Local Group meetings should inform the Area Minister or Local Group Convenor of their reasons.

4.4.6 Failure by any Tertiaries to attend Third Order Meetings for one year shall be referred to the Area Team.

4.4.7 Tertiaries living overseas outside one of the existing Provinces shall be obliged to fulfil the requirements of a personal Tertiary life as set out in 4.4.2, 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 of these Statutes, reporting on their Personal *Rule of Life* and making their annual renewal by correspondence.

4.5 Leave of Absence

4.5.1 A professed member may apply to the Area Team for Leave of Absence, giving reasons for such Leave and the amount of time estimated to meet those reasons.

4.5.2 The granting of such leave is the responsibility of the Area Team, subject to ratification by the Chapter *See 2.5.13; & 3.2.5 of these Statutes*

4.6 Withdrawal from the Novitiate and release from Profession

4.6.1 A novice may withdraw from the Order by informing the Area Team.

4.6.2 Repeated failure by any Tertiary to discharge the requirements of the novitiate or profession shall be referred to the Area Formation Guardian by the Area Team.

4.6.3 The Area Formation Guardian shall bring to the Area Team the names of those who he/she believes should be required to be released from the Order. The Area Team, after sensitive enquiry and discussion, is empowered to request the release from the Order of that Tertiary: such request to be ratified by the Chapter.

See the Constitution 2:4 (a) & (b)

4.6.4 A Tertiary whose release has been requested by The Area Team has a right to claim a year's grace.

4.6.5 Upon the expiry of the year's grace, the Area Team shall report back to the Chapter, whose decision shall settle the matter, subject only to a right of appeal to the Minister Provincial.

4.6.6 A professed member may request to be released from membership of the Order. Such a request shall be made to the Area Team for its consideration through the Area Formation Guardian. The Area Team shall decide whether to grant the release, subject to ratification by the Chapter.

See the Constitution 2:4 (a)

4.6.7 Professed members from whom no communication has been received for an extended period of time shall have their membership of the Order terminated by ratification of the Chapter upon the decision of the relevant Area Team.

See the Constitution 2:4 (b) and the Area Team Handbook – Withdrawals, Release and Returns.

4.7 Readmission

4.7.1 Professed members whose withdrawal has been required, or who have requested release from membership, or whose membership has been terminated, may be re-admitted to profession upon application to the Chapter upon the recommendation of the relevant Area Team. However, re-admittance after a lengthy absence should be through the Provincial Novice Guardian who will decide, in discussions with the Area Novice Guardian and Area Formation Guardian, on the duration of the re-admission process. The re-admission should take place after a period of refreshment and renewal in the life of the Order. The Order of Service for the Re-admission of Former Professed Tertiaries into the Third Order TSSF should then be used.

See the Area Team Handbook.

5 ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE HOLDERS

5.1 Nomination and Election

Any professed Tertiary may hold office in the European Province. In the case of Chapter members (Trustees of the Charity), all names nominated, together with the denomination of each, shall be sent to the Bishop Protector for ratification.

Approved by Chapter, March 2011

- 5.1.1 The nomination and election of officers shall be as follows:
- (a) Minister Provincial and all other Provincial office holders who are members of the Chapter, by all professed members;
 - (b) Link Tertiaries, by all professed members in the Cluster of Areas;
 - (c) Area Minister and Area Formation Guardian, by all professed members in the Area.

5.2 Appointments

- 5.2.1 The appointment of officers shall be as follows:
- (a) Additional officers, as decided by Chapter, shall be appointed by the Chapter;
 - (b) Area Treasurer and Secretary, by the Area Team;
 - (c) Area Novice Guardian, by the Area Formation Guardian in consultation with the Area Minister;
 - (d) Novice Guardians, by the Area Novice Guardian in consultation with the Area Formation Guardian

5.3 The Local Group Convenor

- 5.3.1 The selection of the Local Group Convenor shall be made by all Tertiaries in the Local Group.

5.4 Requirements

- 5.4.1 Appointments, elections and co-options should be prayerful decisions made in the light of informed assessment.

- 5.4.2 No person other than a professed Tertiary shall hold any office or appointment except as provided by these Statutes.

5.5 Voting

- 5.5.1 Professed members shall be entitled to cast one vote only in any election in which they may participate, except when the Statutes provide for a casting vote.

5.6 Restrictions

- 5.6.1 No person shall normally hold more than one office at a time at Provincial level, or at the same time hold an Area office.

- 5.6.2 Where offices are combined in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes and guidelines they shall count as one office for the purpose of the formation of any quorum and shall carry only one vote.

- 5.6.3 Wherever possible, no two members of the same family should hold office simultaneously at either Chapter or Area level with the exception of one being selected as a Local Group Convenor.

5.7 Tenure of Office & Procedural Rules

- 5.7.1 The initial period of tenure of an elected or appointed office, apart from Novice Guardians, shall be three years, with the option of extending for a further three years by mutual agreement, and the holder shall thereafter be ineligible for further tenure of that office for a further period of three years.

5.7.2 Procedural Rules for all elections and appointments shall be decided upon from time to time by the Chapter.

6 APPEALS

6.1 Procedure

6.1.1 Every Tertiary and any employee of the Order shall have a right of Appeal to the Minister Provincial who, in consultation with the Provincial Formation Guardian, will appoint any three members of the Chapter who are considered by them appropriate to hear the appeal. If the appointees consider it desirable they may appoint an independent person from inside or outside the Order to advise them. The appellant will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by another Tertiary or, in the case of an employee only, a trade union or professional association representative.

7 AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES, GUIDELINES & PROCEDURAL RULES

7.1 Statutes

7.1.1 Amendments to the Statutes may be proposed in writing following a resolution by any single Area meeting in consultation with the Link Tertiary, or by the Chapter.

7.1.2 Such proposed amendments, together with a supporting explanatory statement, shall be submitted by the Chapter to all Area meetings for consideration.

7.1.3 After consideration in the Areas, the Area Ministers, in consultation with the Link Tertiary, shall submit to the Chapter the observations of their Area, with a supporting statement and their own observations.

7.1.4 The Chapter shall resolve by a simple majority whether the amendment shall be accepted or not.

7.1.5 These statutes shall be reviewed every five years.

7.2 Guidelines (*Area Team Handbook (ATH)* and the '*Toolkit for Area Novice Guardians (TANG)*) and Procedural Rules

7.2.1 The *Guidelines* and *Procedural Rules* shall not form part of these statutes and amendments to them may be made from time to time by resolution of the Chapter.

Provincial Chapter