



Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada
Secular Franciscan Order (OFS)

ESTABLISHED IN 1996
UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF BLESSED FR. FRÉDÉRIC JANSOONE

REGIONAL STATUTES

July 30, 2022

STATUTES
Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada
Secular Franciscan Order (OFS)

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STATUTES

Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

Secular Franciscan Order (OFS)

ABROGATION:

By the present act, the previous Statutes of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada are abrogated.

DEFINITION:

Article 1:

- 1.1 The Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, OFS is the organic union of all those Local Fraternities which are located within a territory defined as the provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, as well as the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall, and the Diocese of Pembroke in the province of Ontario, and which have signed a Local Fraternity Commitment asking to be included in this Region.
- 1.2 The western boundary of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, OFS may be amended to reflect the needs of Local Fraternities in that area, provided that these amendments are made in collaboration with the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada. The western boundary of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, OFS may be amended to reflect the needs of Local Fraternities in that area, provided that these amendments are made in collaboration with the adjacent regions.
- 1.3 The Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, OFS shall comprise three Areas, divided by geographic realities, the Quebec Area, Eastern Ontario Area and the Atlantic Area, each with its own priorities for the purposes of fostering unity among the Local Fraternities within those respective Areas but always under the animation and guidance of the Regional Council.
- 1.4 The Regional Council is the executive committee that acts in accordance with the Regional Chapter in animating and guiding the Regional Fraternity.
- 1.5 The Regional Spiritual Conference is a gathering of the Regional Fraternity whose objective is to provide formation in living the Secular Franciscan way of life and in building fraternity at the regional level. It is comprised of the Local Ministers, Directors of Formation, Spiritual Assistants, members of the Regional Council and other Secular Franciscans according to the norms of the Regional Council. The Regional Spiritual Conference convenes whenever it is called by the Regional Minister at least once within his/her term of office.

PURPOSE:

Article 2:

- 2.1 The purpose of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada is:
- a) to carry out the duties of the Regional Fraternity as described in Article 62 a) to j) of the General Constitutions;
 - b) to provide in general, for the spiritual life of the Secular Franciscans within the region;
 - c) to foster spiritual unity among the Local Fraternities;
 - d) to be a link between the Local Fraternities and National Fraternity as well as with the First and Second Orders;
 - e) to implement the decisions of the Regional Chapter, and Council, the National Chapter, and the National Council.

THE REGIONAL COUNCIL:

Article 3:

- 3.1.1 The Regional Council shall comprise the following offices. All officers except the Spiritual Assistant (Ref: GC 51, 52, 53) are to be elected by the Regional Chapter.
- Minister,
 - Vice-Minister Atlantic,
 - Vice-Minister Eastern Ontario,
 - Vice-Minister Quebec,
 - Secretary,
 - Treasurer,
 - Director of Formation,
 - Spiritual Assistant.
- 3.1.2 In conducting its affairs, the Regional Council may appoint, when it is deemed necessary, resource persons to the Regional Council (e.g. Youth Animator and JPIC Animator). These individuals shall not have voting privileges at meetings nor be counted for quorum purposes.
- 3.1.3 Following the election of the Vice Ministers, a vote shall be taken to determine which of the Vice-Ministers will replace the Minister in case of absence, illness or other valid reason. The result of the vote will be determined by absolute majority.

- 3.1.4 The Regional Secretary may appoint a Secretarial Assistant who shall attend meetings of the Regional Council for the purposes of recording minutes and generally assisting the Regional Secretary. Because this position is not an office of the Council, the Secretarial Assistant shall not vote on any matter.
- 3.2 The Regional Council shall make all decisions necessary to carry out its mandate according to the purpose outlined in Article 2 of these statutes.
- 3.3 The Regional Council shall:
- a) provide for the pastoral and fraternal visits to Local Fraternities;
 - b) establish in collaboration with the competent Religious Superior and the Local Ordinary, where necessary, new fraternities at the request of the concerned brothers and sisters;
 - c) ensure that the concerns affecting the Areas shall be considered in all decisions of the Council.
 - d) hold at least one meeting with the local fraternity Ministers during their mandate;
 - e) In addition to the Regional Chapter every 3 years, hold one Regional Spiritual Conference within their mandate.
- 3.4 The Regional Council shall meet face to face at least once per year at a date and place agreed upon by the members of the Council, and hold additional Council meetings by video conferencing or similar as deemed necessary to fulfill the duties of the Council.
- 3.5.1 Each of the Area Vice-Ministers shall ensure that his/her Area holds an Area Assembly once per 3 year term and have a focus on Area formation priorities.
- 3.5.2 The Area Vice-Minister shall be a link between the Local Fraternities of his/her Area and the Regional Council, reporting on progress and concerns arising from Area Assemblies.
- 3.5.3 The role of the Regional Vice-Ministers includes the following:
- a) attend all Regional Council meetings;
 - b) take part in the deliberations and decisions of the Regional Council;
 - c) familiarize themselves with the International, National, and Regional documents, including the General Constitutions, Statutes, Formation programs, procedures and Ritual;
 - d) to act as a liaison between the Regional Council and the Local Fraternities in their respective Area;

- e) to act in the capacity of Visitor to the Local Elective Chapter when so designated by the Regional Minister or Council;
 - f) to co-ordinate the activities of certain Regional Council committees, and/or ad-hoc committees when assigned by the Regional Minister or Council.
- 3.6.1 The Area Assembly shall be the gathering of Local Fraternity Ministers and Spiritual Assistants, the Area Vice-Minister, other Regional Council members if available, and members of the Local Fraternities, for the purposes of fostering spiritual growth and unity among the brothers and sisters.
- 3.6.2 An Area Assembly may also combine a meeting of the Local Fraternity Ministers and Spiritual Assistants, the Area Vice-Minister, and other Regional Council members, for the purposes of Area planning.
- 3.6.3 The Area Assembly shall formulate objectives for the next year based on current needs throughout the Area and on an assessment of progress on objectives from the previous year. These objectives must be in complete compliance with Regional Statutes, as well as resolutions and objectives of the Regional Council. Prior to the Area Assembly, the Area Vice Minister along with their local ministers shall review the Regional priorities, assess applications for their Area, assess progress, and set new objectives. The selected priorities with objectives must be in complete compliance with Regional Statutes, as well as resolutions and priorities of the Regional Council.
- 3.7 At the Area Assembly, the Vice-Minister shall preside and shall appoint a Secretarial Assistant for the purposes of recording minutes and other related duties. The position of Secretarial Assistant is not an elected office and not permanent. The Regional Secretary shall distribute the Area minutes.
- 3.8 Whenever possible, to reduce costs, conference-calls or video conference meetings should be considered as a viable alternative to meetings of the Regional Council and its committees requiring travel.
- 3.9 The Treasurer will have the financial records of the Regional Fraternity reviewed by compilation by a financially competent person, independent of the Regional Council, before the end of the Council's mandate and a final report shall be given to the Regional Elective Chapter.
- 3.10 The Regional Council may appoint both standing and Interim Regional Committees in order to carry out its mandate and to better serve the needs of the Region and local fraternities. All Regional Committees report to the Regional Council. No financial costs may be incurred by such committees without the prior approval of the Regional Council. Members of such committees are not members of the Regional Council but act either as advisors to the Regional Council or provide specific assistance to the Regional Council.

THE REGIONAL CHAPTER:

Article 4:

- 4.1 After consultation with the Regional Council, the Regional Minister shall convoke the Chapter of Elections every three years. Written notice (NS-4.6) shall be forwarded to the Local Ministers at least six months before the Chapter.
- 4.2 The Regional Minister shall convoke the Regional Chapter at least three months prior to the date of the Chapter.
- 4.3.1 At least three months prior to the date of a Chapter of Elections the Regional Minister, in collaboration with the Regional Council, shall appoint a Nominations Committee who will receive nominations for all offices of the Council. Consent must be secured from each nominee.
- 4.3.2 When the Chairperson of Nominations accepts to run for office at the Chapter, he/she shall arrange to delegate the duty of presenting the nominees for election to a member of the Nominations Committee.
- 4.3.3 The Chairperson of Nominations has the right to vote in accordance with Article 4.5 of these same Regional Statutes.
- 4.4 The nominees for the office of Vice-Minister for each of the three Areas must live within the Area represented by that same office.
- 4.5 The Regional Chapter shall comprise the members of the Regional Council as well as the Local Minister and Spiritual Assistant, and one delegate from each Local Fraternity. The members of the outgoing Regional Council shall be entitled to vote until the dissolution of the Chapter.
- 4.6 Only permanently professed members within the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada may be delegates to the Regional Chapter. The Local Fraternities (NS-4.3) elect these delegates from among their fraternity members.
- 4.7 Local fraternity members of the Secular Franciscan Order may participate in the Regional Chapter as observers according to the norms established by the Regional Council.
- 4.8 At least two months prior to the Regional Chapter or Regional Spiritual Conference an agenda shall be made available to all the Local Fraternity Ministers.
- 4.9 The Regional Chapter shall:
 - a) evaluate the actions taken by the Regional Council since the last Regional Chapter;
 - b) formulate priorities for the next three years based on the current need throughout the Region and an assessment of progress on priorities for the previous three years;

- c) table these priorities and circulate them to the local fraternities for their consideration and adaptation;
 - d) elect two permanently professed Secular Franciscans from the Region as delegates to the National Chapter, in addition to the Regional Minister and Regional Spiritual Assistant who are members of the National Chapter by virtue of their office (Ref. National Statutes 4.3)
- 4.10 The Regional Council shall ensure the proper implementation of these priorities.
- 4.11 The site for the Regional Chapter and Conferences shall alternate to the extent possible between the Areas, or will be held at a mutually agreeable central location within the Region.

FINANCE:

Article 5:

- 5.1 The fiscal year shall extend from January 1 to December 31.
- 5.2 All moneys shall be deposited under the name of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, OFS.
- 5.3 All cheques and money orders shall be made payable to the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada, OFS.
- 5.4 To provide for the needs of the Regional Fraternity and to support the higher levels of the Order, the Regional Treasurer shall prepare a 3-year budget to be presented at the Regional Chapter for approval. It is the responsibility of the Regional Minister, after consultation with the Regional Council, each year, to inform the Local Ministers of the financial needs of the Regional Fraternity.
- 5.5 Any unusual expenditure not budgeted for may not be transacted without the prior approval of the Regional Council.
- 5.6 For the needed financial resources of the Regional Fraternity, the Regional Common Fund shall receive an annual contribution from each Local Fraternity. Ref.: OFS Rule, Article 25.
- 5.7 This contribution shall be due at the date specified by the Regional Minister, with the consent of the Regional Council, and shall be based upon the number of active professed members recorded in the last census.

- 5.8.1 The expenses for the fraternal and pastoral visits by the Regional Minister or delegate and the Regional Spiritual Assistant or delegate shall be paid from the Common Fund of the Regional Fraternity.
- 5.8.2 When on official business for the Regional Council, travel and living expenses shall be paid or reimbursed from the Regional Common Fund.
- 5.8.3 Official travel must receive prior approval from the Regional Minister and normally shall be by the most economical mode of travel available and by the most direct route.

HERITAGE FUND

Article 6

6.1 Purpose and Objectives

To provide financial support for:

- a) Leadership training
- b) Education of Spiritual Assistants who are members of the OFS
- c) Youth Initiatives
- d) Outreach Ministry
- e) Franciscans International
- f) Training for Franciscan priests and brothers
- g) Other projects for the strengthening of the OFS

6.2 Board of Directors

- a) The fund will be administered by a Board of Directors made up of Three (3) OFS members appointed by the Regional Elective Chapter, one of whom will also be a member of the Regional Council.
- b) Members appointed to the board will serve for three years until the next Regional Chapter, and will be eligible for re-appointment. The Board of Directors will appoint from among themselves a chairperson at their first meeting.
- c) A board member may resign by submitting a letter to the Chairman

- d) The Regional Council is authorized to appoint a replacement of a member who resigns, who will remain in office until the next Elective Chapter.

6.3 Administration

- a) Financial support for the items given under Article 6.1, will be restricted to the amount of interest earned on the capital.
- b) Decisions for the investment of capital or the disbursement of funds will require a unanimous vote by board members.
- c) The investment of capital will be limited to Canadian Bank Guaranteed Investment Certificates, Bank bearing Savings accounts or Government of Canada Bonds.

6.4 Financial Statements

- a) The fiscal year will be January 1 to December 31.
- b) An annual financial statement made up of a Balance Sheet and an Income and Expense report is to be provided to the Regional Minister.
- c) The Regional Elective Chapter will appoint an auditor or reviewer by a compilation for a three year term to examine the books and records of the fund. The auditor or reviewer will submit a report each year to the Regional Council. A report will also be submitted to the Regional Elective Chapter.

FORMATION:

Article 7:

7.1 The Regional Director of Formation shall meet at least once a year, in person or by video conferencing with all Local Directors of Formation to assess their formation programs and where necessary formulate recommendations for change.

7.2 The Regional Director of Formation shall provide workshops and teaching materials to the Local Directors of Formation.

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION:

Article 8:

8.1 The Regional Minister and the other officers of the Regional Council shall be the respective Directors of the Corporation, officially known as **Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada**.

8.2 The voting members of the corporation are the professed members of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada. All such voting members will be invited to an annual corporation meeting of the Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada.

INTERPRETATION:

Article 9:

9.1 Outside the Regional Chapter, the authentic interpretation of the Statutes shall be the responsibility of the Regional Council. Such interpretation made outside the Chapter shall remain binding until the next Chapter.

AMENDMENTS:

Article 10:

10.1 The Regional Council has the authority to make provisional amendments to these Statutes, subject to the approval of the Regional Chapter and the National Council, OFS.

10.2 Any proposed amendments must be forwarded to the Local Ministers at least two months prior to the Chapter for consultation with their Fraternities. The proposed amendments shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Regional Chapter for approval.

**Approved by the Regional Chapter of the
Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada**

**Approved by the National Council of
Canada**

Gerald F. Gabriel
Regional Minister

Jewel Jasmins
National Minister

January 17, 2023

March 13, 2023