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REGIONAL GOVERNANCE *Secular Franciscan Order* *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Region*

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Region of the Secular Franciscan Order is to proclaim and witness to the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, inspired by the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, by promoting and supporting the local fraternities in the Northern New England area.

Together through the lives of diverse Catholic men and women in local fraternities, we profess commitment to these ideals. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we strive to humbly serve all people, especially the poor and forgotten.

We celebrate joyfully the gift of life in all creation and recognize God's living presence in the world.

CHAPTER ONE

The Regional Fraternity

1. The Regional Fraternity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary is an organic union of all the local Fraternities officially established by the National Fraternity of the United States in the geographical area of the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and portions of Massachusetts, and northeastern New York.
2. The Regional Fraternity will have a Regional Fraternity Council made up of:
 - a. The Regional Minister,
 - b. The Regional Executive Council Officers,
 - c. A representative of each of the canonically established local fraternities in the Region,
 - d. The Conference of the Regional Spiritual Assistants.
3. The Regional Fraternity will have a Regional Executive Council made up of:
 - a. The Regional Minister,
 - b. The Regional Executive Council Officers,
 - c. President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants.
4. Once constituted, The Regional Fraternity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary recommends the establishment of new Local Fraternities, according to the provisions of the *General Constitutions Art. 46, The Process for Establishment of a New Fraternity (Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order, pp. 349 - 354, CSNA, Jan. 11, 1996)*, and the *National Statutes of the Secular Franciscan Order*.
5. The Regional Guidelines may be amended from time to time by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of the Regional Fraternity Council.

CHAPTER TWO

The 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 Regional Executive Council and a representative from each local fraternity, (the Minister or the Vice Minister or a duly elected alternate) and the Regional Conference of Spiritual Assistants.
 - b. The Regional Fraternity Council will meet at least once a year to promote the life of the Regional Fraternity and the local Fraternities.

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- c. The Regional Fraternity Council proposes and approves policies that will be carried out by the Regional Executive Council.
7. The purpose of the Regional Fraternity Council is as follows: (*Art. 62 General Constitutions*)
- a. To prepare the celebration of the elective chapter;
 - b. To promote, animate, and co-ordinate the life and activities of the SFO and its insertion into the local Church within the regional area;
 - c. To detail the action plan of the SFO within the region according to the directives of the national council and in collaboration with it and to publicize that program to the local fraternities;
 - d. To communicate the directives of the national council and of the local Church to the local fraternities;
 - e. to provide for the formation of those responsible for animation;
 - f. to offer to local fraternities activities which support their formative and operative needs;
 - g. to discuss and approve the annual report to the national council;
 - h. to schedule, when circumstances recommend so, the fraternal visit to the local fraternities, even if it is not requested;
 - i. to make decisions regarding the use of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters regarding the financial management and the economic affairs of the regional fraternity;
 - j. to have, before its term of office is finished, the regional fraternity's financial and real estate situation audited either by an expert who is not a member of the council or by the fraternity's board of examiners;
 - k. to perform such other duties as are indicated by the Constitutions or necessary to achieve its own aims
8. More than one half of the membership of the Regional Council constitutes a quorum for doing official business at any meeting.
9. The Common Fund of the Regional Fraternity is supported financially by the local Fraternities. The Regional Council determines the annual contribution made from the Common Fund of each local Fraternity for each of its active and excused professed members.

CHAPTER THREE

The Regional Executive Council

10. The Regional Fraternity is animated and guided by the Regional Minister and the Regional Executive Council. The Regional Executive Council will include at least the following:
- a. Regional Minister,
 - b. Regional Vice Minister,
 - c. Regional Secretary,
 - d. Regional Treasurer,
 - e. Regional Formation Director,
 - f. Number of District Councilors,
 - g. Regional Spiritual Assistant or the President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants,
 - h. Other appointed positions as deemed necessary. (Only those elected to a particular office have voting rights within the Regional Executive Council).
11. The Regional Executive Council meets at least twice a year, at a time and place determined by its membership.
12. Special meeting may be called at the request of the Regional Minister or at the written request of two or more of the elected Councilors.

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13. Notice of Regional Executive Council Meeting will be given in writing by the Regional Minister at least one month prior to the meeting.
14. More than one half of the Regional Executive Council members will constitute a quorum for doing official business at any meeting.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Regional Executive Officers

15. The Regional Minister is the chief executive officer of the Regional Fraternity.
 - a. The Regional Minister will carry out the duties of his or her office as determined by the provisions of general and particular law. (*General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order, Art. 51.2*), [hereafter, *G. C.*], (*the NAFRA Statutes*) {[hereafter, *NS*]}. - b. The Regional Minister will preside at the Meeting of the Regional Executive Council and the Regional Fraternity Council,
 - c. The Regional Minister is the spokesperson for the Regional Fraternity in all contacts with other church and civil organizations and with the public.
 - d. The Regional Minister is a member by right of the National Fraternity Council according to the *National Statutes of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America, Art. 3.1 and 8.2*.
16. Regional Vice Minister:
 - a. Besides the duties assigned by general and particular law, the Regional Vice Minister performs such duties as the Regional Executive Council may designate.
 - b. Should the office of the Regional Minister become vacant, the Regional Vice Minister will succeed to the office according to the provisions of *G. C. Art. 81*.
 - c. In case of incapacity of the Regional Minister the Regional Vice Minister will attend the National Fraternity Council and perform the duties stated in *Art. 8* of the *National Statutes*.
17. The Regional Secretary:
 - a. The Regional Secretary makes and keeps records of the Regional Fraternity Council and of the Regional Executive Council.
 - b. The Regional Secretary transcribes and distributes the minutes of both the Regional Executive Council and Regional Fraternity Council.
 - c. The Regional Secretary preserves the important documents and correspondence of the Regional Fraternity.
 - d. The Regional Secretary assists the Regional Minister in sending out announcements of forthcoming meetings of the Regional Executive Council and Regional Fraternity Council.
 - e. The Regional Secretary performs other duties as the Regional Executive Council requests.
18. The Regional Treasurer:
 - a. The Regional Treasurer guards diligently the contributions received, recording each receipt in the appropriate register, with the date on which it was given, the name of the contributor, or the one from whom it was collected.
 - b. The Regional Treasurer records in the same register the items of expense, specifying the date and the purpose, in conformity with the directions of the fraternity council.

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- c. The Regional Treasurer renders an account of his or her administration to the assembly and to the council of the fraternity according to the norms of the National Statutes. (*GC Art 52.4*)

19. The Regional Formation Director chairs the Regional Formation Team:

Each District shall have an appointed representative as a member.

The Team has the following duties:

- a. to establish model programs for initial formation and ongoing formation in conformity with those established at the National and International levels (Cf. *G.C.*, Art. 52.3).
- b. to aid the local Fraternity by assisting the local Formation Director to do his or her job more effectively.
- c. to be a resource for Formation material, e.g., books, courses, meetings, etc.
- d. to perform other duties as the Regional Executive Council may direct.

20. The Regional District Councilor:

The St. Elizabeth of Hungary Regional Fraternity serves the local fraternities in a large geographical area, thus making it necessary to divide the region into districts. Regional Councilors are elected to serve the fraternities in a particular district. Councilors should have a grasp of the Rule, the General Constitution, the Ritual, the National Statutes, and the Regional Guidelines.

The Regional District Councilor serves as a liaison between the Regional Executive Council and the local fraternities. This includes making regular reports to the Executive Council and reporting information and activities of the Regional Fraternity to the local fraternities by frequent contact (written, phone, informal visits) as appropriate.

Further, the Regional District Councilor calls the fraternities to come together in fraternal gatherings to foster the Franciscan charism of fraternity beyond their own local fraternity.

The Regional District Councilor is encouraged to do what is necessary to help build up the local fraternities, to be present to them with the purpose of helping the fraternity remain faithful to our Catholic tradition and our Franciscan spirituality and to comply with our SFO Rule #22, “The local fraternity...(is the)...basic unit of the whole order...and the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and (our) Franciscan vocation...”

To help build up the local fraternity, the Regional Councilor also needs to be available:

- to assist with formation
- to facilitate the transition meeting between incoming and outgoing councils
- to encourage attendance at Regional Events
- to ensure local fraternities receive the important forms from the Regional Fraternity
- to bring the concerns of the local fraternity to the Regional executive Council
- to stimulate communications from the local fraternity to the Regional Fraternity
- to preside at elections and fraternal visits when delegated by the Regional Minister
- to encourage the development of servant leaders

21. The Regional Spiritual Assistant

The Regional Spiritual Assistant:

- a. Is a member by right of the Regional Executive Council,
- b. Provides for the spiritual welfare of the Regional Fraternity, with the Regional Executive Council,
- c. Assists in achieving the purpose of the Regional Council,

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- d. Provides for other assistance and advice as may be requested from time to time,
- e. Attends meetings of the Regional Fraternity Council and of the Regional Executive Council, collaborating with these bodies in all their activities,
- f. Cooperates with the Regional Formation Director to accomplish the Regional Formation goals,
- g. Exercises his active voice in matters which come before these bodies for all decisions except in financial matters,
- h. May not vote in elections
- i. Attends the meetings of the National Conference of Spiritual Assistants.

CHAPTER FIVE

Relations with the National Fraternity Council

- 22. Once every three years, the Regional Minister and Regional Executive Council must invite the National Minister to make a Fraternal Visit to the Regional Fraternity. A Fraternal Visit by the National Minister may also be requested at other times for important reasons.
- 23. Once every three years, The Regional Minister, with the consent of the Regional Executive Council, must request a Pastoral Visit from the National Conference of Spiritual Assistants.
- 24. The Regional Minister is a member of the National Fraternity Council and is to attend its meetings. If he or she is impeded from attending the annual meeting of the National Fraternity Council, he or she will be represented by the Regional Vice Minister or, if necessary, by some other Regional Executive Council member with a letter of authorization from the Regional Minister.
- 25. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity will pay the travel expenses of the Regional Executive Council when on official business.
- 26. The Regional Fraternity contributes annually to the common fund of the National Fraternity as called for by the directives of the National Fraternity Council.

CHAPTER SIX

Finance

- 27. A tentative budget will be prepared by the Regional Treasurer and presented to the Regional Executive Council who approves it. When approved it is then submitted to the Regional Fraternity Council at its annual meeting. At that time, it may be amended or adjusted and then voted on for final ratification.
- 28. An audit of financial records will be conducted once every three years (*GC 54.3 & NS 4.5*).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Regional Elections

- 29. The Regional Fraternity Council meets for the purpose of elections once every three years as the Chapter of Elections.
 - a. The National Minister, or his or her delegate, will preside at and confirm the election b. The President of the National Conference of Spiritual Assistants, or his delegate, will witness and confirm the election.
 - c. The Regional Minister may not, at the same time, be a local fraternity Minister. (A local Fraternity Minister may be nominated for Regional Minister, but if elected, must resign the present office).

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- d. The Regional Fraternity Council will determine nomination procedures according to the provisions of general and particular law.
- e. Election procedures will follow the norms of the General and Particular Law (*G.C., Art. 76 to 80*).
- 30.** With the exception of the Spiritual Assistant (*Statutes of SA 12.3 & GC Art 77*) all elected members of the Regional Fraternity Council as defined in *Article 6.a* above have active voice, and may vote.
- a. The Minister of each local Council has the responsibility for casting the vote for the Local Fraternity.
- b. In the event a Local Fraternity Minister is impeded from attending the Chapter of Elections the delegate will be the Vice-Minister. If both are so impeded from attending, then a member of the Fraternity Council will attend and exercise his or her powers as delegate. Such delegate must present a written evidence of his or her authorization to represent the Local Fraternity. (*NS 8.3b*)
- c. Even if a person has a right to vote in his or her own name by more than one title, such person may cast only one ballot.
- 31.** Regional Executive Council will consist of a Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, and District Councilors. The terms are in accordance with the General Constitution and the National Statutes. The Formation Director is a non-voting appointed by the Regional Executive Council.
- 32.** Elections will take place according to the norms of The *Code Canon Law '164 to 179*, the *General Constitutions, Art. 76 to 84*, the *National Statutes* and the present *Guidelines*.
- 33.** The convocation of the Regional Fraternity Council for elections will be governed by the provisions of Art. 76 of the General Constitutions.
- a. At least four months prior to elections, the Regional Executive Council will appoint a Nominations Committee and its Chairperson. The Nominations Committee, acting according to the directives of the Regional Executive Council, will present a slate of nominees for the various offices of the Regional Executive Council. The presentation will be made approximately two months prior to the date set for the elections.
- b. It will be the duty of the Nominations Committee to ensure that each candidate meets the qualifications for the office for which he or she is proposed, that the candidate has reviewed the duties of that office, and is willing and able to serve if elected, (*Cf. National Statutes, Art. 11.2*).
- 34.** Office vacancy, resignation, and dismissal will be governed by the *General Constitutions Art. 81 to 84*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Regional Apostolic Commission

- 35.** The Region will participate in the Apostolic Commissions as outlined in the Rule (Art 14,15,16,17,18). Mission statements are found at www.nafra-sfo.org
- a. Family,
- b. Peace and Justice,
- c. Ecology,

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d. Work

CHAPTER NINE

Local Fraternities.

Definitions

36. A Professed Member is a person who has made an act of profession as defined in the *Rule, Art. 23* and the *General Constitutions, Art. 2* of the Secular Franciscan Order. For the purposes of determining local fraternity contribution to the Regional Fraternity, a **Professed member** is:

- a. One who participates both by attending fraternity meetings and by providing financial support to the fraternity according to his or her means;
- b. One who has been excused from attending fraternity meetings, either on a temporary or permanent basis, but does provide support to the fraternity;
- c. One who neither attends meetings nor supports the fraternity financially, but whom the fraternity has excused from such obligations.

CHAPTER TEN

Local Fraternity Council

37. The Fraternity Council will consist of Minister, Vice-Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, a specific number of Councilors. (The number is to be determined by size and needs of the Fraternity) and Spiritual Assistant. Their duties are specified in the *General Constitutions, Art. 51 and 52*.

38. Fraternity Elections will be conducted according to the provisions set forth in the *General Constitutions, Art. 76 to 80*, the National Statutes, the Ritual, and the procedures established by the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.

39. The Local Fraternity Council will perform their duties as described in the *General Constitutions, Art. 50* and also carry out the directives and decisions from the higher-level Fraternities.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Local Fraternity Properties

40. When a Fraternity disbands its records and properties will be distributed according to the *General Constitutions, Art. 48.1*, the *National Statutes, Art. 4.6*, and the *Conference of Spiritual Assistants Guidelines*.

41. All correspondence is evaluated and kept, only if it has a historical or establishment relevance to the Fraternity and/or its members.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Interpretation of the Guidelines

42. Interpretation of these Guidelines will follow the rules of Canon Law, the General Constitutions, the National Statutes, and Civil Law where applicable, and may have recourse to Robert's Rules of Order regarding procedural matter, with the understanding that in an event of any dispute the most cogent resource is prayerful consideration of our Father and Founder, Saint Francis of Assisi, that most courteous and peace-loving man, and his probable point of view.

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43. Interpretation of these Guidelines will also be used in conjunction with the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants Guidelines, as officially approved.

(Approved by the Appointed Executive Council of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Region, July 13, 1996).

(Amended and approved by the Regional Fraternity Council April 24, 1999)

(Amended and approved by the Regional Fraternity Council, April 4, 2003)

(Amended and approved by the Regional Fraternity Council, April 3, 2004)

NOTE: Original Version (July 13, 1996)

7, c. A Regional Executive Council Officer may not also hold another office either on the Regional or local level in the Region (Cf. *The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America, National Statutes, Art.11.4*), [Hereafter, *National Statutes*].

Patricia Brandwein Ball, SFO, Regional Minister

4-3-04

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