

Amish Barn Raising

The Amish set an example for the OFS



What Is an Amish Barn-Raising?

An Amish barn-raising is a community event (or Frolic) in which Amish and Mennonite people come together to help build a barn for one of their neighbors. The event is often, but not always, held on a Saturday and hundreds of Amish workers from many communities can attend. Usually, it is held at the home of somebody in the church, perhaps an elderly person who just can't get things done as well. Or younger couple or a widow. Both barn-raising and frolics are wonderful illustrations of the sense of community that the Amish still espouse. The Amish are not just building a barn, they're **building community**. Along with the work, there's a chance for **fellowship** and the opportunity to meet church members they might not otherwise cross paths with...Most of the time, these barn raisings occur in 10 days or less.

The encyclopedia **Britanica** explains who the Amish are: In [Amish: Beliefs and way of life](#)

“...Amish are famous for their barn raisings... (That preserve their agricultural economy). These cooperative efforts often involve hundreds of men, as well as scores of women who feed the workers. These custom-made barns are a constant reminder of Amish tradition, community, industry, and craft ...”

So, simple pictures point out “community, industry, and craft” that are a good example for all.

What does an Amish barn raising have to do with the **OFS Rule**? The visual shows that all able-bodied men and boys of age, take a combination of beams or planks to the construction. Thus, they take ownership of building a new barn. First, they develop a firm inner frame, and then take the external pieces of the barn and put them in place. Thus, the Amish provide example to others. Let us Compare and contrast the Amish and their barn raising with the **OFS Rule**. And, let us examine the **OFS Rule** with the aid of Lester Bach's **The Franciscan Journey**.

Conceive of Chapters 1 and 3 of the **Rule** as the interior beams:

****CHAPTER ONE: THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER****(p.9, Articles 1-3)

(In “Journey” Chaps 1-11)

1.Franciscan Family

- Unites laity, religious, and priests.
- Follows Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi [¹][1].

2.Special Place of Secular Franciscan Order

- Organic union of Catholic fraternities worldwide [²][2].
- Strive for perfect charity in secular state [³][3].

3.Adaptation of the Rule

- Succeeds previous rules.
- Adapted to changing times and needs of the Church.

****CHAPTER THREE: LIFE IN FRATERNITY****[¹⁰][10] (p.33 Articles 20-26)

(In “Journey” Chaps 28-33)

1.Structure of the Order

- Divided into fraternities of various levels [¹¹][11][11].

2.Guidance and Service

- Councils and ministers elected by members.

3.Local Fraternity

- Basic unit and visible sign of the Church [¹²][12][12].

4.Admission Process

- Initiation, formation, and profession.

5.Communion Among Members

- Regular meetings and growth in Franciscan life.

6.Financial Contributions

- Support fraternity expenses.

7.Spiritual Assistance

- Request for well-prepared religious assistance [¹³][13][13].

Conceive of Chapter 2 of the **Rule** as the individual planks that cover these interior beams with siding and roof:

****CHAPTER TWO: THE WAY OF LIFE****^[4] (p.15 Articles 4-19). (In “**Journey**” Chaps (11-27)

1. Observing the Gospel

- the example of St. Francis.
- Devote to reading the gospel ^[5].

2. Encountering Christ

- In brothers and sisters, Sacred Scripture, Church, and liturgical activity

3. Witnesses and Instruments

- Proclaim Christ by life and words.
- Live in full communion with Church authorities.

4. Conversion

- Daily radical interior change.
- Sacrament of reconciliation.

5. Prayer and Contemplation

- Participate in sacramental life, especially the Eucharist ^[6].

6. Devotion to Virgin Mary

- Imitate her self-giving and pray earnestly.

7. Fulfilling Duties

- Follow the poor and crucified Christ ^[7].

8. Detachment from Temporal Goods

- Simplify material needs.

9. Purity of Heart

- Free to love God and others.

10. Acceptance of All People

- Joyful and courteous spirit.

Conceive of Chapter 2 of the **Rule** as the individual planks that cover these interior beams with siding and roof:

1. Building a Fraternal World

- Promote justice and exercise responsibilities.

13. Promoting Justice

- Testimony of life and courageous initiatives.

14. Esteem for Work

- Sharing in creation, redemption, and service [⁸][8].

15. Family Life

- Cultivate peace, fidelity, and respect for life [⁹][9].

16. Respect for Creation

- Move from exploitation to universal kinship.

17. Bearers of Peace

- Seek unity and fraternal harmony.

- Next, let us examine “The Franciscan Journey” by Lester Bach OFM and see how it reflects and develops the Rule. Let us start in “Journey” with the Table of Contents:

- The blue brackets encase the interior support beams;
- The yellow bracket includes the siding and roof planks;
- The orange circle relates Fr. Bach’s chapters with the articles of the Rule.

- Fr. Bach has more to say about the Rule in his Chapters 28 through 33 than the Rule itself...The Rule in these chapters discusses basically boiler-plate topics such as organization, membership development and fraternity rules and regulations.... In these chapters Fr. Bach develops and suggests areas of growth. By suggesting an international data base on the Article topics of the Rule, The International Fraternity could provide growth opportunity for the fraternities at all levels.

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Reasons Why:

“CHAPTER THREE: LIFE IN FRATERNITY 20. The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels -- local, regional, national, and international.”

“... Secular Franciscans at every level are joined to and supportive of the fraternities at each level...The interchange of creative ideas...for the common good...are normal tasks for Secular Franciscans...” (*Journey* p.307).

1.Example of Youth:

Article 24: “To foster communion among members... (and have) ...meeting(s) with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups.”

Comments: 1. To be clearly said, the future is built upon today’s youth.

2. With a growing lack of Spiritual Assistants, a world-wide data base of significant topics, although not a substitute for SAs, certainly is an area of support.

2. Example of the Franciscan Vision:

Reason Why:

“Though total vision is never quite achieved, it can inspire, motivate, stretch, challenge, broaden and deepen the meaning of a group’s mission.” (*“Journey”* p.314)

3.Other Examples:

These a just a few of the ways that the International Fraternity can develop with a world-wide data base for a more robust and inclusive SFO.

Thus, we have from the Amish the significance of good internal beam support in the construction of a barn.

