





# RULE

OF THE

## Third Order Secular of St. Francis

English Version Approved by the  
Very Reverend Provincials  
in the United States



### NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Third Order of St. Francis  
in the United States

As Amended, October 5, 1926

*Imprimi Potest:*

*Fr. EDMUNDUS KLEIN, O. F. M.*

*Min. Prov.*

*Cincinnati, November 11, 1926.*

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*Nihil Obstat:*

*H. GRIMMELSMAN,*

*Censor Ll.*

*November 15, 1926.*

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*Imprimatur:*

*\* JOHN T. McNICHOLAS,*

*Archbishop of Cincinnati*

*November 15, 1926.*

**Declassified**

# Rule of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis

Promulgated May 30, 1883, by Pope Leo XIII.

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## CHAPTER I.

### Reception, Novitiate and Profession.

1. Only those may be received as members who have completed their fourteenth year, and are of good character, peace-loving, and above all of tried fidelity in the practice of the Catholic Faith and in loyalty to the Roman Church and the Apostolic See.

2. Married women may not be received without the husband's knowledge and consent, unless their confessor judges otherwise.

3. The members shall wear the small scapular and the cord as prescribed; if they do not, they deprive themselves of the rights and privileges of the Order.

4. All who enter the Order must pass the first year in probation; then they shall duly make their profession upon the Rule of the Order, pledging

themselves to observe the Commandments of God and of the Church, and to render satisfaction if they have failed against their profession.

## CHAPTER II.

### Rule of Life.

1. In all things let the members of the Third Order avoid extremes of cost and style, observing the golden mean suited to each one's station in life.

2. Let them with the utmost caution keep away from dances and shows which savor of license, as well as from all forms of dissipation.

3. Let them be temperate in eating and drinking, and devoutly say grace before and after meals.

4. They shall fast on the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception and on that of St. Francis; they are to be highly commended who, according to the original Rule of the Tertiaries, also either fast on Fridays or abstain from fleshmeat on Wednesdays.

5. They shall approach the Sacraments of Penance and of the Holy Eucharist every month.

6. Tertiaries among the clergy, since they recite the Divine Office daily, shall be under no further obliga-



tion in this regard. Lay members who recite neither the Canonical Hours, nor the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, shall say daily twelve Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glorys, unless they are prevented by ill health.

7. Let those who are entitled to make a last will and testament, do so in good time.

8. In their daily life let them strive to lead others by good example and to promote practices of piety and good works. Let them not allow books or publications which are a menace to virtue, to be brought into their homes, or to be read by those under their care.

9. Let them earnestly maintain the spirit of charity among themselves and towards others. Let them strive to heal discord wherever they can.

10. Let them never take an oath except when necessary. Let them never use indecent language or vulgar jokes. Let them examine their conscience every night whether they have offended in this regard; if they have, let them repent and correct their fault.

11. Let those who can do so, attend Mass every day. Let them attend the monthly meetings called by the Prefect.

12. Let them contribute according to their means to a common fund, from which the poorer members may be aided, especially in time of sickness, or provision may be made for the dignity of Divine Worship.

13. Let the officers either personally visit a sick member, or send some one to perform the services of charity. In case of serious illness let them remind and urge the sick person to arrange in time the affairs of his soul.

14. At the funeral of a deceased member the resident and visiting Tertiaries shall assemble and say in common five decades of the Rosary for the soul of the departed. Moreover, let the priests at the Holy Sacrifice and the lay members, if possible, having received Holy Communion, pray with fervent charity for the eternal rest of the deceased.

### CHAPTER III.

#### Offices, Visitation, and the Rule Itself.

1. The offices shall be conferred at a meeting of the members. The term of these offices shall be three years. Let no one without good reason refuse an office tendered him, and let no one discharge his office negligently.



2. The Visitor, who is charged with the supervision of the Order, shall diligently investigate whether the Rule is properly observed. Therefore it shall be his duty to visit the Fraternities every year, or oftener if need be, and hold a meeting, to which all the officers and members shall be summoned. Should the Visitor recall a member to his duty by admonition or command, or impose a salutary penance, let such member meekly accept the correction and not refuse to perform the penance.

3. The Visitors are to be chosen from the First Franciscan Order or from the Third Order Regular, and shall be appointed by the provincial or local superiors when requested. Laymen cannot hold the office of Visitor.

4. Disobedient and harmful members shall be admonished of their duty a second and a third time; if they do not submit, let them be dismissed from the Order.

5. Those who offend against any provision of this Rule, do not incur the guilt of sin unless in so doing they also transgress the Commandments of God or of the Church.

6. Should a just and serious cause prevent a member from observing any provision of the Rule, such person may be dispensed therefrom, or the regulation may be prudently commuted. For this purpose the ordinary superiors of the First and the Third Order Regular, as also the aforesaid Visitors, shall have full power.

### NOTE.

The above translation of the Rule was approved by the Very Rev. Provincial Ministers of all the English-speaking Provinces of the Franciscan Family in the United States during the Second National Convention of the Third Order of St. Francis, held October 3-6, 1926, in New York City. The following were present. The Very Rev. Martin Strub, O.F.M., St. Louis, Mo.; the Very Rev. Benvenutus Ryan, O.F.M., New York City; the Very Rev. Turibius Deaver, O.F.M., San Francisco, Cal.; the Very Rev. Ferdinand Mayer, O.F.M., Syracuse, N. Y.; the Very Rev. Seraphin Schlang, O.M.C., Louisville, Ky.; the Very Rev. Benno Aichinger, O.M.Cap., Detroit, Mich.; the Very Rev. Henry Kluepfel, O.M.Cap., Pittsburgh, Pa. The Very Rev. Edmund Klein, O.F.M., Cincinnati, O., and the Very Rev. John P. M. Doyle, T.O.R., Loretto, Pa., not present, also gave their approval. It is the expressed wish of the Very Rev. Provincial Ministers that this translation be considered as the standard in the United States and that for the sake of the uniformity it be exclusively used.

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

OF THE

## Third Order of St. Francis in the United States

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### Article 1—Name.

This National Tertiary Organization shall be known as the Third Order of St. Francis in the United States. For brevity's sake, it is in this Constitution also called the "National Organization."

### Article 2—Objects.

The objects of this National Organization are to further the full observance of the Rule of the Third Order, i. e., to promote a truly Christian life according to the spirit of St. Francis, notably:

1. To foster National union and co-operation among the Tertiary Provinces, the Fraternities, Directors and members of the Third Order.

2. To co-operate in augmenting religious, charitable and social work of the Fraternities.

### Article 3—Government.

The National Organization shall be presided over by two Boards of Officers, called the National Directive Board and the National Executive Board.

#### **Article 4—The National Directive Board.**

All Provincials and Commissaries of the three branches of the First Order and of the Third Order Regular constitute the National Directive Board.

No new measure of concerted action of the National Organization shall be adopted without the previous approval of the National Directive Board.

#### **Article 5—The National Executive Board.**

The members of the National Executive Board shall be as follows:

1. Three members of the First Order, namely, one Friar Minor, one Friar Minor Conventual, one Friar Minor Capuchin, and one member of the Third Order Regular—of whom one shall receive appointment as Chairman, one as Vice-Chairman, and one as Secretary, by the National Directive Board.

2. Three Consultors, namely one secular Tertiary priest and two Tertiary laymen, who shall be elected at each National Convention.

At the first session of the Board thus elected one of the number of Consultors will be elected National Treasurer.

#### **Article 6—Duties of the Executive Board and its Officers.**

It shall be the duty of the National Executive Board to promote the good and welfare of the National Third Order Organization, to guide the National Convention, and to co-operate in carrying out the program of action that will be adopted at such National Convention.



The Executive Board shall also attend to all business that may arise when the National Convention is not in session.

The **Chairman** shall call the meetings of the National Executive Board and preside thereat.

The **Vice-Chairman** shall preside in the absence of the Chairman.

The **Secretary** shall—

1. Keep minutes of the meetings of the Board;

2. Keep records and statistics of the Tertiary Provinces and Fraternities belonging to the National Organization;

3. Urge non-affiliated Fraternities by correspondence to affiliate with a Tertiary Province of their choice and to enter the National Organization;

4. Send reports of the meetings of the National Executive Board to all Provincials, Commissaries and Directors of the Third Order as also to the press in as far as it may be to good purpose.

5. At the expiration of his term of office transfer to his successor all records, books, documents and official correspondence.

The **Treasurer** shall receive all monies belonging to the National Organization, giving a receipt therefor. He shall keep an account of all monies received and disbursed.

He shall annually or whenever called upon by the Executive Board submit a detailed financial statement.

He shall give such security as the Directive Board may require and at the expiration of his term of office deliver to his successor all monies and property belonging to the National Organization.

The **Consultors** will co-operate with the other officers in carrying out the purpose of the National Organization.

### **Article 7—Meetings of the National Executive Board.**

A meeting of the National Executive Board must be held at least once a year. In case of inability of one of the Board to attend the meeting, the respective Provincial shall appoint a substitute.

Each Province of the First Order or the Third Order Regular not represented on the National Executive Board by a member, may appoint a representative to attend all the meetings and sessions of the Board in an advisory capacity.

### **Article 8—Vacancies.**

A vacancy in any office caused by death, resignation or otherwise among the members of the Executive Board of the First and Third Order shall be filled by the respective Provincial; a vacancy among the Consultors shall be filled by the Executive Board at their next meeting.

### **Article 9—Membership.**

The National Organization consists primarily of the Tertiary Provinces of the United States. Fraternities not attached to a Tertiary Province, but in good standing, are also eligible to membership. A Fraternity is in good standing if it is canonically erected, regularly has its meetings and its canonical visitation.

Admission to membership in the National Organization shall be made by diploma issued to each Fraternity by the National Executive Board.



## Article 10—National Meetings.

(a) Every five years a National Convention of the Third Order of St. Francis in the United States shall be held at the time and place designated by the National Directive Board and communicated to the National Executive Board within twelve months after the last Convention. The Convention shall be under the auspices of a different Province each time.

(b) If the National Directive Board finds it advisable to change the time and place of the Convention, such change shall be announced at least one year in advance of the time previously designated.

(c) A National Convention shall not be called in a city without the previously obtained consent of the Ordinary of the city and the Provincials concerned.

(d) After consultation with the respective Provincials, the National Executive Board selects the Reverend Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and at least three members of the local Convention Board, and a Convention Secretary, who shall be chosen from the Province which has charge of the Convention.

(e) The National Executive Board shall arrange the general plan, select subjects and speakers, supervise the meetings and determine the number of votes to which each Fraternity represented in the Convention is entitled.

Every Fraternity may have as many representatives in the Convention as it chooses, who shall have a voice in the deliberations. But each Fraternity shall be entitled to only one voting delegate for every one hundred members or fraction of this number. Furthermore, each member of the hierarchy and each prelate present, each member of

the National Directive Board and of the National Executive Board, each Fraternity Director present, shall be entitled to one vote.

(f) The Local Convention Board shall attend to all local arrangements according to instructions given by the National Executive Board.

### **Article 11—Sectional Meetings.**

Annual conventions in various local centers and sectional meetings of members of the Third Order at frequent intervals are strongly recommended and the National Executive Board shall co-operate with the various Provincials to foster and systematize such meetings.

### **Article 12—Autonomy.**

In furthering the objects of the Third Order of St. Francis in the United States, the National Organization shall not in any way interfere with the government, or disturb the autonomy of any Third Order Fraternity, or group of Fraternities.

In the case of Fraternities aggregated to a Tertiary Province, the National Executive Board shall send reports of its meetings directly to the Directors, but shall receive the statistics and collect the financial dues through the Tertiary Province headquarters.

### **Article 13—National Finances.**

In order to carry on its work, the National Organization shall receive an annual contribution of two cents per capita from each Tertiary Province and from the isolated Fraternities which are affiliated to the National Organization.

After every National Third Order Convention, the monies not expended shall go to the National Third Order Treasury.

Extraordinary expenses shall not be made without the consent of the National Directive Board.

On travel to and from meetings of the National Executive Board mileage only will be refunded to its members from the National Third Order Treasury.

#### **Article 14—Emergencies.**

In case of any financial or other emergency, the National Executive Board shall apply for instructions to the National Directive Board.

#### **Article 15—Change of Constitution.**

Any proposed amendment to this Constitution must first be submitted in writing to the National Executive Board at least six months before a National Convention.

After due consideration, the National Executive Board shall report on the proposed amendment to the National Directive Board at least three months before said Convention.

If the National Directive Board approve thereof, the amendment shall be submitted to the National Convention for final decision.

## **BY-LAWS**

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#### **Article 1.**

The National Tertiary Organization is placed under the special protectorate of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of Mary Immaculate.

Every year within the month of the Sacred Heart, the Reverend Third Order Directors will have their Tertiaries publicly renew their consecration to the Sacred Heart.

## Article 2.

The order of the meetings of the National Executive Board shall be as follows:

1. Call to order and prayer;
2. Roll call;
3. Reading of the minutes;
4. Remarks by the Chairman;
5. Report of the Secretary;
6. Financial report;
7. Reports of the Fraternities;
8. Reports of Committees;
9. Reports of instructions from the National Directive Board;
10. The good and welfare of the National Tertiary Organization;
11. Recommendations of Commissaries and Directors;
12. Unfinished business;
13. New business;
14. Appointments of Committees to report at the next meeting;
15. Closing prayer and adjournment.

## Article 3.

The Directors of Fraternities not aggregated to a Tertiary Province shall annually fill out a report blank furnished them by the Secretary of the National Executive Board.

## Article 4.

A bond of at least \$5,000.00 shall be furnished by the Treasurer of the National Executive Board and the premium shall be paid out of the National Treasury.

## Article 5.

Any amendment, change or revision of the by-laws shall be subject to the requirements of Article 15 of this Constitution.





# National Organization of The Third Order of St. Francis in the United States.

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## *NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:*

REV. BEDE HESS, O.M.C.,  
Seaside Park, N. J., Chairman.

REV. DENNIS ENGELHARD, O.F.M.,  
Cincinnati, Ohio, Secretary.

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY:  
1615 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Reverend Father:

Kindly accept the enclosed little pamphlet, which is sent you in pursuance of a resolution adopted at the Second National Third Order Convention held October 3-5, in New York City.

If you have occasion to quote the Rule of the Third Order in English, the National Organization requests you to use the new version presented herewith, it having recently been approved by the Very Reverend Provincials.

Our Board begs leave to invite your earnest cooperation and lively interest in the Third Order. "There must be a reason" for the repeated urgent calls of the Supreme Pontiffs of our times to the hierarchy and clergy to promote the Third Order everywhere.

Information concerning reception into the Third Order, and establishment of Fraternities, as also additional copies of the pamphlet—single copies, five cents; two or more copies, the low cost price and postage—may be obtained from the office of the Secretary.

With St. Francis wishing you "Pax et bonum,"

Very sincerely yours,

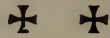
REV. D. ENGELHARD, O.F.M., Secretary.







# *There must be a reason:*



## **POPE LEO XIII.**

“Let us propagate, and propagate, and propagate the Third Order. Would that the Tertiaries were multiplied tenfold, twenty-fold, yea, a hundred thousandfold! Yes, we wish that all faithful followers of Christ would become Tertiaries, but above all do we wish that the seraphic spirit spread everywhere.” (To the Tertiaries of Lombardy, February 18, 1888.)

## **POPE PIUS X.**

“What more can we desire than to witness the growth and prosperity of an institution which possesses the latent power to instill into modern society a spirit of wisdom and Christian discipline?” (To the Third Order of Ragusa, March 12, 1910.)

## **POPE BENEDICT XV.**

“It is desirable, therefore, that every town and village and hamlet should have members of the Order—not indeed slack members, content with the mere name of Tertiaries, but active and eager for their own and their neighbor’s salvation. Why should not the numerous and various associations of young people, of workmen, of women, existing everywhere throughout the Catholic world, join the Third Order, and inspired with St. Francis’ zeal for peace and charity devote themselves persistently to the glory of Christ and the prosperity of the Church?” (Encycl. *Sacra propediem*, January 6, 1921.)

## **POPE PIUS XI.**

“Urge those who have not yet entered this distinguished militia, to do so this year; and let those who are too young, become Cord-bearers of St. Francis, so that even the children may grow accustomed to the life.” (Encycl. *Rite expiatis*, April 30, 1926.)



