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*The*  
***Third Order***  
***Director***

*Practical Hints*  
*for Administering the*  
*Fraternity*



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THE  
THIRD ORDER  
DIRECTOR

PRACTICAL HINTS  
FOR ADMINISTERING THE  
FRATERNITY

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THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS IN THE U. S.  
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1943

**Deacidified**

## INTRODUCTION

The present handbook is a first attempt towards harmonizing existing guides for administering the Third Order. It is especially designed to meet the ever-present problems arising from transfers among the clergy, and to help such as are new to the task of guiding members of a religious order. Hence, the handbook pretends to offer no more than the practicalities, as the subtitle indicates.

The manual should prove no less helpful to the so-called Moderators of the Third Order—such namely, as are not indeed priests, but quite capable of guiding a group of laymen in the pursuit of Christian perfection according to an approved rule of life. Instances of institutional fraternities capably moderated by Brothers and Sisters of the various religious communities are multiplying. Most of the administrative functions here outlined can be performed by such moderators; while the few remaining ones requiring a priest's ministrations can be supplied by a chaplain, resp. the Visitor.

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## I. Establishing a Third Order Fraternity

### PRELIMINARY STEPS

1. Fraternities of the Third Order Secular most commonly grow out of a desire on the part of a few Tertiaries, more or less isolated, for spiritual direction in observing the rule of their order and therefore, too, for something resembling a religious community. Whether or not such a nuclear group is at hand, the priest who wishes to introduce the Third Order should first obtain from among the many existing Provincial headquarters (see roster on page 30) personal faculties to invest and profess Tertiaries.

2. Priests interested in getting for their projected Third Order the services of a community speaking a language other than English will be properly directed if they inquire at the Office of the National Secretary, 3200 Meramec St., St. Louis, Mo.

3. When the group of Tertiaries gives evidence of stability, arrange for the canonical establishment of a fraternity.

CANONICAL ESTABLISHMENT

4. With proper authorization by both the Ordinary of the diocese and a Superior of the First Order or Third Order Regular (T. O. R.), a fraternity of the Third Order of St. Francis may be canonically established in any parish or institution administered by the secular clergy or a religious community other than Franciscan. There may be several fraternities in the same place.

5. Apply to one of the Provincial headquarters of Franciscans for the "Documenta Erectionis" authorizing the establishment of a fraternity.

6. Present the document to the chancery office for the signature of the local Ordinary. A fraternity may not be established without the Ordinary's permission in writing.

7. After securing the local Ordinary's permission, forward the document to the Franciscan Superior who issued it in order that the Bishop's permission may be properly recorded along with the authorization on the part of the Franciscan Order.

8. The Third Order Ceremonial (Titulus VII) has a special ritual "For Establishing



a New Fraternity." After carrying out this ritual the authorized Third Order Director places his signature upon the document and the date as well as the names of two witnesses to the act of establishment.

9. The document should be preserved, preferably framed for keeping in a conspicuous place; for instance, in the sacristy.

10. By signing the document the Ordinary consents to the annual visitation of the fraternity as provided for in Chapter III of the Third Order rule.

11. Following is a facsimile of the "Documenta Erectionis."

## DOCUMENTA ERECTIONIS

Congregationis Tertii Ordinis

S.P.N. Francisci

Licentia RMI. Ordinarii

*Hisce praesentibus concedimus ut in  
Ecclesia* .....

*in* .....

*Dioceseos Nostrae Congregatio Tertii  
Ordinis S. Francisci erigatur.*

*Datum die*.....*mensis*.....*anni 19*.....

*L. S.* .....

Commissio Superioris  
Ordinis Fratrum Minorum

*Praesentium tenore Reverendo Domino \_\_\_\_\_  
facultatem facio erigendi in Paroecia \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in civitate \_\_\_\_\_  
juxta normas ab Ecclesia praescriptas,  
et praevia Reverendissimi Ordinarii  
loci licentia, Congregationem Tertii  
Ordinis Saecularis S. P. N. Francisci,  
et pro ea titulo Directoris fungendi;  
simulque illi communico omnes facultates  
ad hoc officium spectantes, et  
etiam, ut possit pro se substituere  
alium sacerdotem in omnibus, quae  
pertinent ad praefatum officium.*

*Debet tamen P. Commissarius Tertii  
Ordinis quotannis rogari ut P. Visita-  
torem mittat, qui ad normam Regulae  
Congregationem adeat coetumque hab-  
eat.*

*Quae omnia valent etiam pro Ora-  
toris in Paroecia successoribus, serv-  
atis tamen in omnibus de jure servan-  
dis.*

*Praedicta Congregatio etiam Provinciae Tertiariorum.....  
 aggregatur et aggregata manet quam-  
 diu Statuta ejusdem Provinciae fidel-  
 iter observat.*

*Datum ex Conventu nostro.....  
 ad S. .... die..... mensis  
 ..... anni 19.....*

-----  
*Commissarius Tertiariorum  
 Provincialis*

*Testimonium Ereptionis*

*Die..... mensis..... anni 19.....  
 Ego infrascriptus sacerdos canonicè  
 erexi Congregationem Tertii Ordinis  
 S. P. N. Francisci in Ecclesia.....*

*L. S. ....*

-----  
*Testis*

*Testis*

## II. Material

1. The scapular and cord are indispensable for the ceremony of investiture. They are the Tertiaries' religious garb which they must habitually wear. "If they do not," says the rule, "they deprive themselves of the rights and privileges of the order." A word or two on the significance of the Tertiary habit addressed to the newly-invested novices (see ritual) will forestall their seeking relaxations on the score of inconvenience.

2. The scapular must be of woven wool of brown, black, or gray color. The Third Order scapulars usually supplied have a print with a Franciscan subject attached; but this is merely an embellishment.

3. The strings connecting the two pendants of the scapular may be of any material and color. Hence, the scapular may always be properly worn hanging from the shoulders without being in the least conspicuous.

4. The cord may be of wool, hemp or cotton with either three knots in honor of the Most Blessed Trinity or five, symbolic of the Five Wounds of Our Lord.

5. Each Tertiary should have at least the text of the Third Order rule with a brief commentary now available in a variety of inexpensive editions. Next in order of usefulness is a manual containing, besides the rule, a calendar of Franciscan feasts and days of indulgence and the ritual prayers of the Order.

6. Usually, the Franciscan headquarters issuing the needed faculties is in a position to supply the needed material.

7. To supplement the monthly instruction, both Director and Tertiaries will derive much benefit from currently reading **Franciscan Herald and Forum**, national organ of the Third Order. (5045 S. Laflin St., Chicago, Ill.—\$1.00 a year.)

8. The large habit is generally not worn by Tertiaries in the United States except as a shroud for burial.

### III. Organization

1. The number of officers in a fraternity depends on the character of its membership. Sufficient for its ordinary functioning are: a prefect, a secretary, a treasurer, and a mas-

ter or mistress of novices. The last named officer is responsible for the novices being properly instructed and prepared for profession.

2. The standard manuals of regulations issued by several Third Order provinces outline the duties of these and other fraternity officers.

3. The officers constitute the fraternity council, and they should meet at regular intervals to transact the spiritual and temporal business of the fraternity. Such business includes: preparing for the forthcoming monthly meeting of the Tertiaries; communications from Third Order headquarters; reviewing applications for admission and approving novices for profession; disbursements from the common fund; care of the sick members; promoting the observance of the rule among the members and information about the Order among non-members.

4. The first officers of a fraternity are appointed by the Director. Thereafter they are elected.

5. The term of office is three years. The Prefect should not hold office more than two terms in succession.

6. In assignments or elections to special duty on behalf of the fraternity the Director will do well to urge the motivation mentioned in the rule itself (Chapter III., par. 1): that Tertiaries accept a given charge in the spirit of obedience, and fulfil it in the spirit of ready charity.

#### IV. Records

1. First among the essential records of the fraternity is the register of admission and profession. Essential entries are: name and address of those received into the Third Order; date of investment; name of priest officiating at the investment; date of profession; name of priest officiating at the profession. A blank space is advised to provide for posting the Tertiary's death or transfer to another fraternity.

2. Since ready-made Third Order registers are hardly obtainable, a standard record book of durable ledger paper will serve the

purpose. Inscribe across both open pages the captions here appearing in the margin.

3. It is advisable to have a special work book with the names and addresses of fraternity members (card system is preferable) to safeguard the official register against disfigurement, wear and tear, or even loss.

4. It is necessary to enter the Tertiary's name upon the fraternity register for canonical affiliation with a Third Order fraternity. Non-recorded Tertiaries are isolated members of the Third Order — a status not envisioned by the rule.

5. The Book of Minutes, which records the highlights of the council meetings and general monthly meetings as well as the theme of the monthly spiritual conference, goes far to insure continuity of the fraternity's life in a turnover of officers and for the guidance of succeeding spiritual directors.

6. A Record of Receipts and Disbursements from the common fund is, in the nature of things, an essential record. The Church (Benedict XIII, "Paterna Sedis") forbids the Director to administer the common fund independently of the members.

3

Transfer

Obit.

Remarks

Priest

Prof. Date

||

Priest

Inv. Date

Name

No. |

2



7. Most fraternities keep a Record of Attendance at the monthly meetings, since either attendance or the request to be excused is the commonly accepted criterion of good standing in the fraternity. For good standing in the fraternity most Tertiary provinces require that a Tertiary does not miss more than four meetings in the year without some form of excuse.

8. Asking to be excused from the meeting, before or after, is customary in Third Order circles by way of an exercise in the virtues of obedience and humility and as a practical implication of par. 6 of Chapter III.,—paramount to a dispensation. Tertiaries who are occasionally or permanently excused from the meeting are accounted in good standing.

## V. Obligations (of the Director)

1. The Third Order, unlike other Catholic societies, follows largely the lines of government prevailing in the First Franciscan Order in respect to its local, provincial and national administration. Thus we speak of a fraternity as being affiliated with such-and-such a province of the Franciscan, Conventual, Capuchin or Third Order Regular

obedience. Hence the importance of carrying out assumed obligations in the spirit of religious obedience.

### APPLICATION

2. A fraternity is automatically affiliated with a given Tertiary province when it receives from its headquarters the document for its canonical establishment. Through the Tertiary province it is incorporated into the National Third Order Organization. A transfer to another jurisdiction may not be made without observing certain formalities. Tertiaries appreciate being made acquainted with this feature of their membership: fellowship with other Tertiaries in a province and in a nation- or world-wide order.

### FISCAL OBLIGATION

3. Payment out of the common fund of a small annual assessment per each professed member is made to the Tertiary province with which the fraternity is affiliated. One-half of this amount the Tertiary province employs for its administrative needs, forwarding the other half to the national Third Order treasurer for administering the National Organization.

## MEETINGS

4. The monthly meeting is an important feature of the Third Order rule and of the Tertiary's observance, as well as the center of the fraternity's corporate life and action. Accordingly, a day and hour will be chosen best suited to insure good attendance. Frequent departures from an established meeting schedule injure the morale of the fraternity.

5. To achieve the best results and win the undisguised appreciation of the Tertiaries, the Director will devote his chief care to giving his charges a systematic course of instruction on the rule of the Third Order, the spirit of St. Francis, and the ways of practicing the Christian virtues suitable to laymen. There is now an abundance of homiletic aids for this particularized spiritual direction.

6. Novices above all should be well instructed on the rule before they are admitted to profession. For this reason, too, the main test of their vocation and worthiness of advancing to profession should be their fidelity in attendance at the monthly conference.

7. Tertiaries gain a plenary indulgence by attending the meeting, provided the usual condition has been complied with, *scl.*, Confession and Holy Communion. The importance of the fraternity meeting is reflected in the fact, too, that the plenary indulgence is gained in case the Tertiaries meet in the Director's absence. In an emergency one of the Tertiaries may read to the assembly an instruction designated by the Director. This procedure is preferable to dropping the meeting or curtailing it in the unavoidable absence of the Director.

8. The normal routine of a fraternity meeting would include the following: Ritual prayers before the meeting; recitation of the Tertiary Office in common; the conference or discourse; imparting the Indulgenced Blessing or Papal Blessing when permitted; announcements and business of interest to the assembly; ritual prayers after the meeting. Interspersing the program with an occasional hymn, and concluding with Sacramental Benediction go far to enhance the attractiveness of the meeting. The Tertiary office, prescribed by rule, is more fittingly recited at the meeting than the rosary.

## THE INDULGENCED BLESSING

(General Absolution)

9. Certain days are assigned on the Franciscan calendar on which the Tertiaries are privileged to receive the Indulged Blessing. On the vigil of such a day, beginning at noon, the Indulged Blessing may be given in the confessional (*forma brevior*), even though sacramental absolution is not imparted to the petitioner. Also, it may be imparted privately or publicly within the octave of the privileged dates.

10. Every approved confessor can impart the Indulged Blessing in the confessional (*forma brevior*) by reason of the personal privilege of Tertiaries to receive it.

11. Only an authorized Third Order Director may impart the Indulged Blessing publicly.

12. Over and above the days privileged for the Indulged Blessing, the Director may give it four times a year on days of his choice. A schedule of the monthly meetings might be made by the Director far in advance, with a view to allocating these four occasions to such meeting days on

which the Indulgenced Blessing might not otherwise be imparted. For, the Tertiaries are not entitled to the Indulgenced Blessing merely by reason of the monthly meeting.

13. The Director, if he is a Tertiary priest, when imparting the Indulgenced Blessing also receives it.

14. The conditions for the Plenary Indulgence are: Confession, Holy Communion and one Pater, Ave and Gloria for the intention of the Pope.

#### PAPAL BLESSING

15. Twice a year at the discretion of the Director; same conditions as above. The ritual for this as well as for the Indulgenced Blessing is part of the approved ceremonial of the Third Order, and to be found in the standard Tertiary manuals.

#### ANNUAL VISITATION

16. Prescribed in the rule of the Third Order and vital to its continuance and inner growth.

17. If possible, accept the date suggested by the Visitor. He arranges his schedules with a view to other neighboring fraternities.

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18. Answer his inquiry promptly so as not to impede the rounding out of his schedule.

19. Impress on the Tertiaries the importance of the visitation and of being present at it.

20. Arrange for a special meeting of the council with the Visitor, preferably before the general meeting because upon his consultation with them will largely depend what recommendations he shall make for the fuller observance of the rule.

21. Instruct the officers to present the fraternity records for the Visitor's inspection, and suggest to the council the propriety of offering the Visitor a reasonable stipend to defray his traveling expenses.

22. The custom of arranging a social event after the visitation is well in harmony with the fraternal spirit which the order aims to develop. The occasion enables the Visitor to become acquainted with the Tertiaries and gives him an opportunity for informal and private instruction.

## VI. Ritual

1. Only those may be received into the Third Order who have completed their fourteenth year of age. This provision of the rule also hints at the ideal—the formative years as being best suited for the spiritual formation which a rule of life has to offer.

2. Pastoral prudence will counsel that in establishing a fraternity due regard is had at the outset for a representative group and an eye to future growth rather than to numbers and elements easily induced to join up with any new society.

3. Those already belonging to one of the approved Third Orders cannot at the same time belong to another. However, for a weighty reason, such as the assurance of better spiritual direction through a fraternity, a member of one Third Order may drop one order and enter another.

4. For validity of the investment and profession, the ritual prayer must be said in Latin, except the petitions proffered by the candidates and the formula of profession which, in the nature of things, will be in the



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vernacular. This caution regarding the use of Latin for the investment and profession ceremonies is made to preclude errors arising from a Director's employing certain popular manuals evidently not designed for use at the altar. There are prayer books for Tertiaries which carry some of the Third Order ritual prayers in the vernacular only. This is calculated for the members present at these ceremonies, to aid them in following the rite intelligently.

5. In the case of mass receptions the prayers may be said in the plural number. Thus, for example, after the "Induat vos . . ." Tertiaries are invested with scapular and cord one after the other without repeating the formulas for each.

6. Giving the novice a religious name is not required by the ritual, but it is recommended.

7. It is recommended, too, that when taking the profession of a class of novices, the priest prompt the profession formula phrase by phrase to safeguard against omissions.

## VII. The Postulancy

A wise policy of discrimination in admitting members into the Third Order counsels a period of time in which an applicant's vocation is given some kind of trial even before the actual novitiate. Many fraternities have the custom of requiring a postulant to join in the monthly meetings and listen to from one to three conferences before being admitted to investment. Especially so, since it is unwise to have public investment more often than once or twice a year.

## VIII. The Novitiate

1. The novitiate lasts one year and one day. At the expiration of that time the novice may be professed.

2. Profession may be deferred a reasonable period of time, either because of inability on the part of the novice to be present on the date set for the profession, or by way of further trying a novice who did not meet the reasonable requirements which the fraternity lays down for novices.

3. Profession may not be anticipated under pain of nullity unless a novice is critically

ill; should the novice in the latter case recover, the profession must be repeated at the end of the novitiate.

4. Profession may be made in a place other than that of reception.

5. Novices enjoy the same spiritual favors as the professed.

### IX. Delinquent Tertiaries

Professed Tertiaries who have not observed the rule by failing to wear the scapular and cord, to attend the meetings, to say their daily office, and the like, and who wish to regain good standing, need not be re-invested. All they need do is again to resume observance of the rule. However, they may be put on a period of probation, followed by a renewal of profession.

### X. Faculties

1. In fraternities established at a Franciscan church or institution the Religious Superior is *ex-officio* the Director unless a particular friar has been appointed to that office by the Father Provincial or his council.

2. In non-Franciscan churches and institutions the pastor or chaplain is ex-officio the Director with faculties to invest and profess and to impart publicly the Indulgenced Blessing. (See the text of the document of establishment, page 8.)

3. In case of the pastor's or chaplain's removal or death, his successor automatically becomes Director with all the necessary faculties.

4. Generally, the ex-officio Director can within his jurisdiction sub-delegate his faculties. For instance, the pastor may permanently appoint an assistant to serve as Director of the Third Order.

5. Directors can dispense from observance of points of the rule in individual cases; not, however, an entire fraternity or in points essential for validity, for instance, cutting short the year of probation.

6. The ordinary faculties of a Director do not include the faculty to bless the Franciscan Crown.

## XI. Indulgences and Privileges

1. The prime purpose of the Third Order is personal sanctification. Indulgences are secondary—merely a reward for faithful observance of the rule.

2. For a list of Third Order Indulgences and the conditions to gain them, consult the standard manuals and the Franciscan calendar.

3. Those accustomed to confess their sins every two weeks need not make a special confession to gain the indulgences to which Tertiaries are entitled, including that of the Portiuncula Indulgence.

4. Daily communicants may gain the indulgences without confession even though they omit Holy Communion once or twice a week.

5. Holy Communion may be received on the day of the indulgence, on the preceding day, or within the octave.

6. Confession and Holy Communion may be received in a church other than where the indulgence is to be gained for a visit.

7. Tertiaries who live a mile from a Franciscan church or a church where the Third Order has been established, may gain the Third Order Indulgences (Portiuncula Indulgence included) by visiting the parish church. This is one of the personal privileges of Tertiaries.

8. Tertiaries in institutions, prevented from visiting a Franciscan church or a church where the Third Order has been established, may gain the Third Order indulgences by visiting the chapel of the institution.

9. Sick and convalescent Tertiaries can gain the Third Order indulgences by substituting for the visit to the church some other good work designated by the confessor as, for instance, five Our Fathers and Hail Marys for the intention of the Holy Father.

10. All Third Order indulgences, except that for the hour of death, are applicable to the souls in purgatory.

11. At death Tertiaries may gain a plenary indulgence if they

- a) receive the Sacraments or, if unable, make an act of perfect contrition, and

b) pronounce orally the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

12. Every altar is privileged whenever a Mass is said for a deceased Tertiary.

13. Tertiaries gain a plenary indulgence each time they recite the Franciscan Crown (Rosary of the Seven Joys). Meditation on the single mysteries is not necessary, nor the holding of a Franciscan Crown properly blessed. The Faithful at large must hold a Franciscan Crown properly blessed in order to gain the plenary indulgence.

14. Canonical establishment of the Third Order in a non-Franciscan church or institution does not as such grant the Portiuncula Indulgence privilege to the church or institution. It is a personal privilege of the Tertiaries that they may make their visits in the canonical headquarters of their fraternity instead of in a Franciscan or privileged church.



*The numeration of paragraphs within a given chapter does not necessarily signify the introduction of a new topic. It is made to facilitate reference both in our current literature and when correspondence on moot points becomes necessary.*

## XII. Franciscan Provincial Headquarters

Address inquiries to: The Provincial Commissary of the Third Order. On the envelope add: "Please forward."

The official names of the several jurisdictions are placed in italics as a matter of information. These titles need not be included in the address.

### Friars Minor [O. F. M.]

*Commissariat of the Holy Family*

Chicago, Ill.; 2823 Princeton Ave.

*Province of St. John the Baptist*

Cincinnati, Ohio; 1615 Vine St.

*Commissariat of the Holy Cross*

Lemont, Ill.; P. O. Box 608.

*Province of the Immaculate Conception, B.V.M.*

New York City; 151 Thompson St.

*Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus*

New York City; 135 W. 31 St.

*Province of Santa Barbara*

Oakland, Calif.; 1500 — 34 Ave.

*U. S. Foundation—Franciscans of Lithuania*

Pittsburgh, Pa.; 310 Orchard St.

*Province of the Assumption, B.V.M.*

Pulaski, Wisc.; Assumption Monastery.



*Commissariat of St. John of Capistran*

Roebing, N. J.; Assumption Friary,  
Knickerbocker Rd.

*Province of the Sacred Heart*

St. Louis, Mo.; 3140 Meramec St.

*Commissariat of the Holy Redcemer*

Valparaiso, Ind.; R. 4, Box 63.

*Commissariat of the Holy Land*

Washington, D. C.; Mt. St. Sepulchre.

*Canadian Province of St. Joseph*

Montreal, Canada; 2080 Dorchester, West.

### **Friars Minor Conventual [O. M. C.]**

*Province of St. Anthony of Padua*

Chicopee, Mass.; 566 Front St.

*Province of Our Lady of Consolation*

Louisville, Ky.; 2222 West Market St.

*Province of St. Bonaventure*

Lake Forest, Ill.; St. Bonaventure's Novitiate  
955 E. Ringwood Rd.

*Province of the Immaculate Conception*

Syracuse, N. Y.; 81 N. Salina St.

### **Friars Minor Capuchin [O. F. M. Cap.]**

*Province of St. Joseph*

Detroit, Mich.; 1740 Mt. Elliott Ave.

*Irish-American Custody of St. Patrick*

Los Angeles, Calif.; 1541 Golden Gate Ave.

*Italian-American Provincial Custody of the Stigmata  
of St. Francis*

Orange, N. J.; 103 S. Center St.

*Province of St. Augustine*

Pittsburgh, Pa.; 2220 — 37 St. (1 Distr.)

*English-American Provincial  
Custody of St. Lawrence of Brindisi*

Providence, R. I.; 262 Blackstone Blvd.

### **Third Order Regular [T. O. R.]**

*Province of the Immaculate Conception*

Hollidaysburg, Pa.; St. Bernardine Friary.

*Province of the Sacred Heart*

Loretto, Pa.; St. Francis College.

*U. S. Foundation of the Province of the Immaculate  
Conception (Spain)*

Waco, Tex.; 301 Jefferson Ave.

*Croatian Foundation, T.O.R.*

Pittsburgh, Pa.; St. Nicholas Friary,  
1326 E. Ohio St., N. S.

If in doubt which jurisdiction might render best service because of location, language, etc., address inquiries to:

The Office of the National Secretary  
3200 Meramec St., St. Louis, Mo.

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