

# **Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order**

## **VISION STATEMENT**

*The Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity is a network of local Secular Franciscan Fraternities in northeastern Illinois united:*

- *to promote Gospel living in the Franciscan way;*
- *to intensify efforts in formation, vocation promotion, and apostolate;*
- *to achieve social justice through understanding, better communications, and service to those in need.*

## **Norms**

### **Chapter One - The Regional Fraternity**

1. The Mother Cabrini Regional Fraternity is an organic union of the local Secular Franciscan Fraternities within the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Dioceses of Joliet and Rockford.
2. The Regional Fraternity shall have a Regional Council (also called the "Chapter of Ministers") and a Regional Executive Council.
  - 2.1 The Regional Council is composed of the Regional Executive Council and the local Minister, or official representative, of every Fraternity constituting the Regional Fraternity and the Regional Spiritual Assistants.
  - 2.2 The only members eligible to vote are members of the REC and local ministers or their proxies.
  - 2.3 If a Minister cannot attend the Chapter of Ministers, they must designate a proxy in writing, via email or hard copy, to the Regional Minister before the Chapter of Ministers.
  - 2.4 A proxy cannot bring the designation letter the day of the event because it cannot be verified as to have come from the local Minister.
  - 2.5 If a Minister cannot attend the Chapter of Ministers and does not provide the Regional Minister with a letter designating their proxy before Chapter, their fraternity will not be considered an eligible voting member.
  - 2.6 The Regional Executive Council is composed of the regional officers, Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, Councilor at Large, at least six regional councilors, and the President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants.
3. The Regional Fraternity meets together as follows:

- 3.1 All Secular Franciscans and Spiritual Assistants are encouraged to gather for:
- a) The Regional Day of Prayer or Retreat;
  - b) The Regional Day of Study or Congress;
  - c) The Feast of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini to be celebrated on November 13th or on the Sunday closest to the feast.
- 3.2 The Chapter of Ministers or Regional Council will ordinarily meet during the Easter Season.
- 3.3 The Regional Executive Council will ordinarily meet at least quarterly.
- 3.4 The local Formation Directors and the local Spiritual Assistants will each meet once a year.

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**Chapter Two - The Regional Council**

4. The Regional Fraternity is represented most fully at the meeting of the Regional Council or "Chapter of Ministers."
5. The Regional Council suggests and approves policies to be implemented by the Regional Executive Council in accord with Article 62 of the SF0 General Constitutions.
  - 5.1 Notice of the meeting of the Regional Council or Chapter of Ministers shall be given in writing by the Regional Secretary upon the convocation of the Regional Minister at least six weeks prior to the meeting
  - 5.2 A quorum is established by a simple majority of the members eligible to vote.
    - 5.2 (a) The only people eligible to vote are members of the REC and local ministers or their proxies.
    - 5.2 (b) If a Minister cannot attend the elective chapter, they must designate a proxy in writing, via email or hard copy, to the Regional Minister before the election.
    - 5.2 (c) A proxy cannot bring the designation letter the day of the event because it cannot be verified as to have come from the local Minister.
    - 5.2 (d) If a Minister cannot attend the elective chapter and does not provide the Regional Minister with a letter designating their proxy before the election, their fraternity will not be considered an eligible voting member.
  - 5.3 The Regional Spiritual Assistants do not have a vote in matters concerning finances or elections.
6. The Regional Council becomes the Elective Chapter every three years.
  - 6.1 The National Minister or his or her delegate shall preside at the elective chapter and confirm the election of the Regional Executive Council.
  - 6.2 A representative of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants shall act as ecclesial witness during the elections of the Regional Executive Council.
  - 6.3 The Regional Council shall determine nomination procedures at the Chapter of Ministers prior to the Chapter of Elections in accordance with the provisions of general and particular law.
  - 6.4 Election procedures and provisions for vacancies shall follow the norms of general and particular law.

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- 6.5 The Elective Chapter shall elect
- a) the Minister, Vice Minister, Formation Director, Secretary, Treasurer; and Councilor at Large.
  - b) the newly elected Regional Executive Council shall appoint the six Regional Councilors.
- 6.6 Nominees for Minister will introduce themselves and present their platform for up to two minutes prior to the voting of their office. Nominees for other offices may also do so if they so desire. These introductions will be made in order of the nominees' date of profession.

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**Chapter Three - The Regional Executive Council**

7. The responsibilities of the Regional Executive Council are:
  - 7.1 to foster cooperation and community among the local fraternities, to suggest helpful policies to the Regional Council, and to carry out the decisions and policies of the Regional Council;
  - 7.2 to foster contact with other branches of the Franciscan Family within the confines of the Regional Fraternity, to make the charism of our Seraphic Father present in the life and mission of the local Church, to be a voice in the public forum for Secular Franciscans, to represent Secular Franciscans in contact with other Church and civil organizations, and to promote mutual relationships with such other organizations when appropriate;
  - 7.3 to promote knowledge of the Franciscan way of life and commitment to it;
  - 7.4 to coordinate among the local fraternities the formation program for the preparation of Inquirers, Aspirants and Candidates;
  - 7.5 to provide a forum for discussion of common problems and goals;
  - 7.6 to approve the request of a newly-developing group of professed Secular Franciscans to become an "emerging community" and to confirm an emerging community's petition to be canonically established by a friar province;
  - 7.7 to confirm the decision of a local Fraternity Council to grant the request of a member for permanent and definitive withdrawal (dispensation) from the Secular Franciscan Order and to dismiss a member from the Order upon the request from a local Fraternity Council in accord with Article 58 of the SFO General Constitutions;
  - 7.8 to present the agenda for the annual Regional Council meeting or "Chapter of Ministers";
  - 7.9 to choose a substitute when the office of a Council member becomes vacant; the Minister shall appoint a substitute, ratified by the Regional Executive Council, who will not be a voting member of the Regional Executive Council unless elected to another office of the current Council;
  - 7.10 to provide, in general, for the life of Secular Franciscans at the level of the Regional Fraternity.
- 1.1 7.11 Shall communicate the business of the Region to the local fraternities as appropriate to their roles via email to local fraternity council members.
- 1.2 7.12 Appropriate examples of such emails are: updates from the Regional Minister to local ministers, Formation Director forwarding Formation Friday newsletters to formation directors,

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etc.

- 1.3 7.13 The purpose of these emails is to communicate and conduct the business of the Region, and not to pontificate personal opinions. Sending unsolicited mass emails expressing personal opinions is prohibited.
  - 1.4 7.14 Only current members of the REC and Regional Spiritual Assistants have authority to send unsolicited mass emails to members of the Region, to conduct the business of the Region. Anyone not serving on the REC or as a Regional Spiritual Assistant, including former REC members, is prohibited from sending unsolicited mass emails to members.
8. The Regional Executive Council meets at least four times a year, at a time and place determined by its membership.
- 8.1 Notice of meetings of the Regional Executive Council shall be given in writing by the Regional Secretary upon the convocation of the Regional Minister at least one month prior to the meeting.
  - 8.2 A simple majority (50% + 1) of the Regional Executive Council members constitutes a quorum for doing official business at any meeting.

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- 8.3 Special meetings may be called at the request of the Regional Minister or at the written request of two or more of the elected council members.
- 8.4 After three unexcused absences from Regional Executive Council meetings the Regional Executive Council member will be asked to resign.

**Chapter Four - The Members of the Regional Executive Council**

- 9. The Regional Minister, as the chief executive officer of the Regional Fraternity, shall:
  - 9.1 carry out the duties of office as determined by the provisions of general and particular law;
  - 9.2 preside at the meetings of the Regional Executive Council and the Regional Fraternity (or "Chapter of Ministers");
  - 9.3 conduct the fraternal visit and preside at the election of the local Fraternities, either in person or by delegate;
  - 9.4 be the spokesperson for the Regional fraternity in all Church, civil, and public contacts.
- 10. The Regional Vice Minister shall:
  - 10.1 substitute for the Regional Minister in his/her absence;
  - 10.2 perform the duties assigned by the general and particular law;
  - 10.3 carry out the responsibilities designated by the Regional Council
  - 10.4 administer and facilitate the Ministry of Prayer and Praise.
- 11. The Regional Formation Director, as chair of the Regional Formation Commission, shall:
  - 11.1 develop and promote a coordinated vision and common guidelines for formation in the Regional Fraternity;
  - 11.2 coordinate programs and resources for formation among the local Fraternities;
  - 11.3 prepare and update local Directors of Formation;
  - 11.4 evaluate the quality of formation in local Fraternities;
  - 11.5 facilitate the implementation of ongoing formation or continuing education in the local Fraternities.

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12. Appointed Regional Councilors shall include Councilors for each of the following positions: Apostolates, Vocation Promotion, Life in Fraternity, Communications and Public Relations, Visitations and Elections, and Youth and Young Adult.



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13. The Regional Spiritual Assistants, from the OFM and the Conventual obediences, shall provide the pastoral care and spiritual guidance to the Regional Fraternity, to its Chapter of Ministers, and to the Regional Executive Council according to the norms of international statutes for spiritual assistance and the national guidelines for regional spiritual assistance, including the pastoral visit to the local Fraternities.
14. The Regional Secretary shall:
  - 14.1 prepare, distribute, and keep all records of the minutes of both the Regional Executive Council and the Chapter of Ministers;
  - 14.2 preserve the important documents and correspondence of the Regional Fraternity;
  - 14.3 assist the Regional Minister in sending out announcements of forthcoming meetings;
  - 14.4 perform such other duties as assigned.
15. The Regional Treasurer, who is to be bonded, shall:
  - 15.1 keep accounts of all money and shall oversee the property of the Regional Fraternity, unless otherwise determined by the Regional Executive Council;
  - 15.2 deposit all funds of the Regional Fraternity in such bank accounts as the Regional Council designates and in the name of the Regional Fraternity;
  - 15.3 make written financial reports for approval at each regular meeting of the Regional Executive Council and Chapter of Ministers;
  - 15.4 pay out money, by check only, as the business of the Regional Fraternity may require, on the order of the Regional Executive Council.

**Chapter Five - Financial Matters**

16. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity is supported financially by its canonically established local Fraternities. The Regional Council shall determine the per capita contribution made from the common fund of each local Fraternity for each of its active professed members.
17. The common fund of the Regional Fraternity shall pay the travel expenses of the Regional Executive Council when on official business.
18. An audit of the Regional Treasury shall be conducted every three years by two professed members selected by the Regional Executive Council, who do not currently serve on the Executive Council.

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19. The Regional Fraternity shall contribute annually to the common fund of the National Fraternity as called for by the directives of the National Executive Council.

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**Chapter Six - Relations with the National Executive Council**

20. At least once every three years, the Regional Minister, with the consent of the Regional Executive Council, shall request a fraternal visit from the National Minister and a pastoral visit from the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.
21. The Regional Executive Council shall prepare an annual report for the National Executive Council,
22. The Regional Minister is a member of the National Council and is to attend its meetings. If he/she is impeded from attending the annual meeting of the National Council, he/she shall be represented by the Regional Vice Minister or, if necessary, by some other member of the Regional Executive Council. It is expected that anyone who is delegated to represent the Region at the national meeting is elected by the Regional Council

**Chapter Seven - Responsibilities of Local Fraternities**

23. Local Fraternities are responsible to submit to the Region, by December 15 annually:
- 23.1 a written Annual Report, in a form supplied by the Regional Fraternity, or in lieu thereof, a document reporting the state of their Fraternity, containing at least but not limited to the following: Officers' names, addresses and telephone numbers, terms of office, numbers of professed (active, inactive and lapsed), number of inquirers and candidates, number of professions, number of members who died, commission activities, major apostolates and/or charities supported, the Fraternity's health and any major problems, and financial status, all for the specific year being reported.
- 23.2 per capita assessment.
- 23.3 total census indicating at a minimum: name, address, telephone, date of profession, and status, i.e. active, inactive, lapsed.
24. Local fraternity members are responsible for maintaining a spirit of harmony among themselves, and will not hesitate to act if a member is being disruptive, abusive, or bullying another member or members, or otherwise acting in way that is inconsistent with our way of life.
24. 1 The local council will act in accordance with General Constitutions Article 56 as appropriate, using the Franciscan Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for Suspension, or Dismissal, or Removal from Office to aid their discernment.
- 24.2 The local council will always have access to the REC for help, support, and guidance as

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desired, but the REC does not have authority to suspend any member; that power lies with the local fraternity council alone.

25. Pursuant to the National Guideline on Virtual Participation in Meetings and Gatherings, the Mother Cabrini Region has adopted the following guidelines:

- 25.1 Local fraternity council meetings may meet virtually or in person, except when the council must vote by secret ballot (i.e. suspension or other disciplinary measures).
- 25.2 Local fraternity visitations and elections may only occur in person, without exception.
- 25.3 Gathering in person is preferred for local fraternity gatherings.
- 25.4 Local fraternities may use a hybrid option for monthly fraternity gatherings, provided there is a valid hardship preventing a member or members from meeting in person.
- 25.5 When utilizing the hybrid option, a majority of members must meet in person; enough to have a quorum of professed members attending in person.
- 25.6 A local fraternity gathering may occur virtually at the local Minister's discretion, in inclement weather, not to occur more than two consecutive months.

**Chapter Eight – Local Fraternity Councils**

26. Local fraternity councils are elected every three years, and serve a three-year term per GC Articles 31, 63, and 76.

26.1 Local fraternity councils are responsible for coordinating with the REC via the Visitations and Elections Animator to schedule their elections.

26.2 Local councils will only request a date for an election when they have completed a full slate or list of nominees (at least one name per office) for all elected positions: Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director (if applicable), and Councilor At-Large (if applicable).

26.3 Having the full list of nominees does not negate or minimize the importance of the Presider of the election to request additional nominees from the floor. This step must never be omitted.

27. Local fraternity councils have access to sensitive information about their members, which must be protected and kept confidential.

27.1 Members must refrain from sharing sensitive information about other members, especially those outside their fraternity without permission.

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27.2 Sensitive information includes email addresses, phone numbers, and any disciplinary action they may be subject to. The council may share this information with each other or any higher level council as appropriate.

27.3 The local fraternity council may discipline any offenders in accord with the General Constitutions, Statutes, and Norms.

**Chapter Nine - Amendments**

28. These Regional Norms may be amended by an absolute majority of all of the members of the Regional Council or "Chapter of Ministers."

Approved: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), The Vigil of Pentecost, May 29, 1993

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), The Vigil of Pentecost, June 3, 1995

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), May 4, 1996

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), May 16, 1998

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), May 18, 2002

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), May 17, 2003

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), May 15, 2004

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council), May 19, 2007

Amended: Chapter of Ministers (Regional Council) May10<sup>th</sup>,  
2025